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Title Testament of Christian Civilization

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THE TESTAMENT OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

THE TESTAMENT OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

BY

JOSEPH McCABE

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PREFACE

IT is difficult to indicate in a title the purpose and the achievement of this work. It is not a history of Christianity, but a connected series of translations of documents or odd pages of works which have a vital bearing on that history, yet have, with a very few exceptions, never before been translated into English. It will have occurred to many that, while there has in recent decades been much industry in translating historical documents, these are very rarely works which may disturb the conventional estimate of the value of Christianity to civilization. The general public are still unable to read the books from which older and more candid historians, like Dean Milman, quoted suggestive passages, usually leaving them in the tantalizing shroud of a dead language, or the letters and reports which such experts on the mediaeval Papacy as Dr. L. Pastor and Dr. Von Ranke relegated, untranslated, to Appendices.

It is a convenient arrangement for the professional apologist. From the hundreds of documents that are thus protected from the profane eye he can select the little that is calculated to edify, and ignore the much that throws too lurid a light upon contemporary life. But this prevents the general reader, who hears only the witnesses for the defence, from attaining sound judgment on an issue in which he is deeply interested: the inspirational value and the achievements, from a social point of view, of the Christian religion. I have had occasion, in writing forty or fifty historical works, to spend many days in this forbidden territory and have translated hundreds of short passages for my readers. Although I have been scrupulously careful never to isolate a sentence from a context which might modify its apparent meaning, many readers would like to have a translation in full of relevant passages as short documents. Here I present to English readers all the passages of primary interest from the first century to the nineteenth.

In the earlier chapters there are a few extracts from works which have at some time been translated, but the translations are inaccessible to the general public, and the translator has often

refined the harsher phrases with a delicacy of sentiment which, however much we may admire it, does unfortunately blur the outline of historical truth. The learned Duchesne, for instance, calls Marcia, the most brazen hussy in the hectic harem of the Emperor Commodus, his " morganatic wife," whereas the Greek original has a very ugly word for her; and he calls Hyacinth, the Christian eunuch who presided over the harem, her " tutor." No Christian writer ever ventures to translate literally some of the phrases used by St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, or St. Augustine, to say nothing of some of the mediaeval saints. I have in these cases reproduced the original in English as far as the modern police will permit me to repeat the language of these holy men. But from the sixth century onward I give excerpts of works or short documents which had not hitherto been translated.

In the selection of these passages I have paid strict attention to their sociological value. In spite of the general adoption of scientific standards in history in our time, religious history, or religious argument that is based upon history, is still painfully fallacious because the writer gives the story of exceptional individuals or small groups, and conveys the impression that the rich virtue of these is characteristic of the age to which they belonged. In the third century, for instance, we are offered a picture of the austere life of Cyprian and a few of his followers, while his own broad statements about the viciousness of his bishops and clergy are ignored. For the fourth century we have fragrant accounts from the letters of Jerome of the virtue of less than a dozen ladies who were his special pupils, but we are not told that in letter after letter he describes the Church to which they belonged as comprehensively and amazingly corrupt. For the fifth century and later we have deeply edifying stories of monastic life, but not the repeated and blistering assurances of Jerome, Augustine, and Benedict himself that the great majority of the monks were corrupt idlers and hypocrites. Eschewing this partisan and deceitful practice, I give in the following chapters only passages which broadly characterize the life of entire provinces of the Church or of the Church as a whole. The pleasant work of describing such virtue as there was in each century has been repeated until it wearies us. It is the turn of the *advocatus diaboli.*

J. M.

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CHAPTER I

THE RAPID DECAY OF THE CHURCH

FOUR works by non-Christian writers are quoted as containing references to Christianity in its earliest phase. The Ιουδαίκη ἀρχαιολογία (*On Jewish Antiquities*) of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, which was probably written in the ninth decade of the first century, has two such passages. In Bk. XVIII, ch. iii, § 3, he writes:—

> About that time [the preceding paragraph is about Pilate] lived Jesus, a wise man, if he ought to be called a man. For he wrought remarkable deeds and was a master of such men as receive the truth gladly, and he attracted many of the Jews and even of the Gentiles. He was the Christ [the Anointed or Messiah]. And when he was denounced by our leading men, Pilate condemned him to the cross, but those who followed him did not desert him. For he appeared to them alive on the third day, the divine prophets having foretold this and a thousand other marvellous things about him. The sect of the Christians which takes its name from him exists to this day.

In Bk. XX, ch. ix, § 1, he says:—

> And the brother of Jesus who is called the Christ, one James by name, he condemned to be stoned for breaches of the law.

It is generally accepted that these are either interpolations or adulterations and expansions of original references to Jesus, since even the most liberal Jew would not call Jesus the Messiah. The latter theory seems to be confirmed by the learned Christian writer Origen when, referring to Josephus, he says in his work against Celsus (1, 47):—

> He did not acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ, but when he asks why Jerusalem and the Jews were destroyed, instead of saying that it was on account of the plot against Jesus he . . . reluctantly, does not depart very far from the truth.

There is no reference to Christianity in any Roman writer of the first century, but, apart from the question whether the small Greek–Jewish community in the foreign quarter across the river would be likely to interest them, many Roman historical works written between A.D. 70 and 100 have perished. In his *Literary History of Rome in the Silver Age* (1927) Prof. J. W. Duff names ten such writers whose works are lost. The earliest pagan docu-

ment that mentions Christ is a letter (No. 96) of Pliny, Governor of Bithynia, to Trajan asking instructions about the treatment of Christians. This would be about 112. The letter is usually quoted as evidence of the spread of Christianity. It speaks of " men who meet at daybreak on certain days to sing a hymn to Christ as a god and take an oath to abstain from crime " and says that they are found " not only in the towns but in the villages and country." It is equally important as evidence that the first fervour was already lost, for the great majority abjured the faith and execrated Christ when they were threatened:—

I received an anonymous communication with the names of many. They denied that they were, or had ever been, Christians. They repeated after me an invocation of the gods and offered incense and wine to your statue, which I had for that purpose placed among the statues of the gods, and they execrated Christ, which it is said to be impossible to get a genuine Christian to do, so I dismissed them. Some, who were named by a witness, said that they were Christians and then denied it. They had been, they said, but had given it up three or more or even twenty years ago. All these worshipped your statue and those of the gods and execrated Christ.

The historian Tacitus has a passage in his *Annals* (XV, 44), which must have been written somewhere about the same time:—

In order therefore to destroy the charge [against himself] Nero laid the guilt upon, and subjected to the most exquisite tortures, certain men already hated for their crimes whom the people called Christians. The name is taken from Christ, a man who had been put to death in the reign of Tiberius by the Procurator Pontius Pilatus. The detestable superstition was suppressed for a time but broke out afresh, not only in Judaea, the source of the evil, but also in Rome, where all atrocious and shameful things are collected and cultivated. First those who confessed were punished. Then, on their testimony, a large number of others were convicted, not so much of the crime of arson as of hatred of the human race. Mockery was added to the punishment. Some were dressed in the skins of beasts and torn to pieces by dogs, others crucified or burned alive, so that when the day came to a close they glowed like lamps in the night.

Some controversial writers have questioned the authenticity of this passage and said that it is not found in the oldest manuscripts of Tacitus. The proper authorities, the experts on classical literature, accept it, and it is found in the oldest manuscript, a parchment of the ninth century which is in the Lorenzian Library at Florence. See the Oxford edition of the *Annals* (1906) and Conybeare, *The Historical Christ* (1914, p. 162).

Of a slightly later date we have the reference of Suetonius, who, in the chapter on Claudius (XXV) in his *De XII Caesaribus* (*Lives of the Twelve Caesars*), says:—

> Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome for constant rioting that was instigated by [or, was over] a certain Chrestos.

It would be too remarkable a coincidence if the Jews were violently agitated about some obscure Chrestos just when we know that they were inflamed over Christos, and the writers who claim that it is not a misspelling of Christos overlook the fact that in his chapter on Nero (XVI), in the same work, Suetonius has said:—

> The Christians, a race of men of a new and poisonous superstition, were visited with punishment.

Since these references fall in a period when there certainly were Christians in Rome, their only historical value is to confirm the tradition of the Neronian persecution. More important than these, and very little controverted—"There is no serious argument against its authenticity," says Prof. Guignebert—is a document that is usually styled *The Letter of Pope Clement to the Corinthians*. The title is worse than inept. The letter never mentions any Clement or Pope, and it is a late and unreliable Roman story that there was then a Bishop of Rome named Clement. It is a collective admonitory letter of the Roman Christians to those of Corinth, whose conduct had been marred by serious disorders from the time of Paul (1 Cor. v, 1). It begins:—

> The Church of God which sojourns in Rome to the Church of God which sojourns in Corinth, elect and sanctified by the Will of God through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Brethren, owing to the sudden and repeated calamities which have fallen upon us we feel, beloved, that we are late in writing to you about the disputes which have arisen amongst you, the quarrels and shameful seditions, so alien to the elect of God, which a few bold and selfish men have carried to such a pitch of madness that your name, once so respected, esteemed, and dear to many, has become a thing of blasphemy. Righteousness and peace have departed from you, for each of you has forsaken the fear of God and follows the lusts of his own evil heart (ch. i).

The reference to recent calamities dates the letter (Loisy and one or two others dissenting) about the year 96 or at the close of the Domitian persecution. It goes on to speak of Peter and Paul, and in such sharply contrasted language that it is plain that

Peter never reached Rome, though Paul suffered martyrdom there:—

> Let us take example from holy men of our own generation. Owing to jealousy and envy the greatest and most upright pillars [of the Church] were persecuted and put to death. Let us set before our eyes the good apostles. Peter, owing to wicked jealousy, suffered not one or two but many labours, and he bore witness to the faith and went to his appointed place in glory. A victim of jealousy, Paul also won the reward of patient endurance. Seven times in prison, driven into exile, stoned, herald of the faith in the East and the West, he reaped the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness in the whole world and reached the farthest bounds of the West. And, having borne witness before the authorities, he departed from the world and went into the holy place (ch. v).

A later passage confirms the Neronian persecution:—

> And to these many holy men we must add a large number [usually but incorrectly translated "an immense multitude"] of the elect of our own community who suffered many indignities and tortures owing to jealousy, and so set us a beautiful example. Even women were persecuted by reason of jealousy, as Danaids and Dircae [suspected to be an interpolation], suffered terrible and cruel things but safely reached the goal (ch. vi).*

The letter gives us a general impression of the early Church not unlike that which we get from reading Acts and the Pauline Epistles: a picture of small groups of Greek or Greek-speaking followers of Christ in the cities who, while generally observing an ascetic standard of life and having no ecclesiastical organization or ritual, are nevertheless rent by ominous quarrels about doctrine and leadership. This defect became far worse in the first half of the second century owing to a very acrid quarrel everywhere with the Gnostics—the references to it are too scattered to make quotation of any use—and towards the end of the century we get a vivid picture of life in the Roman community which shows how very far it has drifted from the primitive virtue and simplicity.

The work, Κατα πασων αἱρεσεων ἔλεγκος (*The Refutation of All Heresies*) is a remarkable survey of all the religions and philosophies of the ancient world, but at one point (Bk. IX,

* There is a translation of the letter, with the Greek text, by Bishop Lightfoot in "The Apostolic Fathers" series (2 vols., 1890). It is of further interest that, while the writers make long and numerous quotations from the "Old Testament" as the Christian sacred book, they never quote the Gospels or Epistles. The two short sayings of Jesus which they cite are not worded as in our Gospels.

ch. vii) it gives us a detailed account of life at the time (190–220) in the Roman community. The author, Bishop Hippolytus, is the only scholar to appear in the Roman Church during many centuries, and a man of unchallenged integrity—he is a Saint in the Catholic calendar—and we hardly wonder at the irony with which he describes the career of his rival for the Papacy, " St." Callistus:—

He was a slave in the house of Carpophorus, an official of the imperial palace [and a Christian]. Carpophorus, seeing that he was one of the faithful, entrusted him with a sum of money and directed him to make a profitable use of it in money-lending [the sin of usury]. Callistus opened a bank with it in the money-lenders' quarter, and in the course of time he, in the name of Carpophorus, received other sums for investment from widows and other brethren. All this money Callistus embezzled, and he found himself in difficulties. Carpophorus being informed of this, demanded an account of the money and Callistus, learning of his peril, fled to a ship. Finding a vessel at Portus which was ready to sail he boarded it, prepared to go wherever it went. But he could not escape, for Carpophorus was told what he was doing and hurried to the port before the ship set sail. It was in the middle of the harbour and, as the boatman was slow, Callistus saw him coming and, knowing that he would be arrested, he became desperate and threw himself into the sea. But the sailors took to the boats and rescued him in spite of his resistance, and he was handed to his master who took him to Rome and put him in the mill [treadmill for grinding corn]. After a time, however, the brethren came to Carpophorus and asked him to release the fugitive slave, as Callistus said that he could collect money that was owing to him.

He was released, and then arrested by the civic police for brawling at the Jewish synagogue, flogged, and sent to the penal mines in Sardinia. Hippolytus goes on:—

After a time, as there were other martyrs in that place, Marcia, a concubine [properly, " a slave bought for the harem "] of Commodus, a god-fearing woman [generally considered ironical] who desired to do some good deed, summoned the blessed [Pope] Victor, bishop of the Church, and asked him what martyrs there were in Sardinia. He gave her the names of all of them except Callistus, whose misdeeds he knew. Marcia received the order to release them from Commodus and gave it to a certain Hyacinth, her foster-father, a eunuch and an elderly man.*

* As the Greek word for " priest " really means " elderly man," some translate it here as priest. *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* says that Hyacinth was " a eunuch who was a priest (or old man)." I have more regard for the Church. The meaning seems to be that Hyacinth was a Christian eunuch who had in earlier years made his living, as many did, by collecting abandoned female babies and rearing them to sell as slaves or prostitutes, and was now head of the harem and, like Marcia, on good terms with the Pope.

To condense again, Hyacinth went to Sardinia and was persuaded or bribed by Callistus to put his name on the list. Pope Victor was angry and would not have him in Rome; but Victor died in 198, and his successor, Zephyrin, "an ignorant and unlettered man," was "bribed" to allow Callistus to return, and made him the highest officer of the Church.

This remarkable picture of life in a Christian community is confirmed by the semi-official *Book of the Popes*, which acknowledges that Callistus was a slave of Carpophorus; by Bishop Eusebius, who says (*Ecclesiastical History*, v, 24) that Pope Victor made the first claim of Papal supremacy and was "bitterly attacked" by the eastern bishops for his arrogance; and by the contemporary historian Dio Cassius, who says, in his Ρωμαϊκων Ἱστοριων Βἰβλια (*History of Rome*, lxxii, 4), not only that Marcia was a brazen adventuress who tried to murder the Emperor, but that she "showed great favour to the Christians and rendered them many services." Lampridius tells us in his life of Commodus, the most depraved of the emperors, in the *Historia Augusta* (*Lives of the Emperors*, x), that the harem over which Hyacinth and Marcia presided, in a palace in which the Pope was a respected visitor, contained 300 women and 300 boys.

Hippolytus goes on to say how Callistus, having virtually ruled the Church for twenty years under the stupid and venal Zephyrin, became Pope in 217. He greatly strengthened the priestly caste, but his most remarkable work was to make a bid for rich Roman women by abolishing the stern discipline that had hitherto excluded sinners. Callistus announced that he could forgive sins committed after baptism, and he proved by various parables from the Gospels that the Church was to consist of sinners as well as saints. He went further:—

> He also permitted women who were not married and burned with desire but did not want to lose their position through a legal marriage [to a man of lower rank than themselves] to take to their beds any man they chose and consider him a husband. Hence many who were counted amongst the faithful began to use noxious drugs and to bind their bodies tightly to procure an abortion, so that on account of their rank and wealth [which they would lose] they might not have a child by a slave or any man of inferior condition. To what depth of impiety did the wretch descend in thus permitting both murder and adultery.*

* There is a translation of the book in the Ante-Nicene Library, vol. VI. The Greek text which I have followed is published in *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Drei Jahrhunderte* (1916).

Tertullian, the grim African leader at the time, a rigorist, confirms and bitterly condemns this as well as the new Roman claim of supremacy. He opens his treatise *De Pudicitia* (*On Chastity*) with the sardonic apostrophe:—

> I hear that an edict, quite a peremptory edict, has been issued. The supreme Pontiff, that is to say the Bishop of Bishops, declares: I can absolve from even adultery and fornication if the offenders do penance. A noble deed! And where is this liberality paraded? In the very gates of lust, under the very ensigns of lust.

But the next documents which we have to rescue from a virtual oblivion show that this rapid and remarkable demoralization of the Christian body had spread to the African and all other branches of the Church.

The Roman province of North Africa had then a higher degree of civilization than the region has ever enjoyed since, and its Church was extensive and prosperous. It had about a hundred bishops long before the conversion of Constantine. And in the year 250 there burst upon it the first general persecution under Decius, and the letters of its leader, St. Cyprian, groan with complaints of general apostasy and of the vices of the bishops which the strain had revealed. In his treatise *De Lapsis* (*On the Lapsed*, vol. 4, of the Migne Library of the Latin Fathers) he says:—

> The long peace had corrupted the discipline imposed upon us by God. . . . All sought only an increase of their property, forgetting what the faithful had done in the time of the apostles and ought always to do. They devoted themselves with an insatiable greed to the acquisition of wealth. There was no piety in priests, no sound faith in ministers, no mercy in any, no discipline in morals. Men cut their beards in grotesque shapes, and women defaced the eyes that God had given them, dyed their hair, and painted themselves. Cunning fraud was used to deceive the hearts of the people, and the brethren were led astray. They married unbelievers and prostrated themselves to the Gentiles. They not only swore freely but committed perjury. They despised and reviled their superiors, cursed each other with foul names, and quarrelled with fierce hatred. Very many bishops, who ought to give counsel and set a good example to others, neglected their divine mission and devoted themselves to profane affairs. They abandoned their sees and people and, wandering in other provinces, sought to make a profit in the markets while the brethren hungered in the Churches. They were greedy for money, seized estates by fraud, and made great profit by usury.

Cyprian's letters to Rome, in which he and his bishops scornfully repudiate any sort of Papal jurisdiction—see especially

Letter LXXII to Pope Stephen (" the Bishop of Bishops, who seeks by tyrannical threats to compel his colleagues to obey him ")—complain bitterly of the vile character of the African bishops who have gone to it for its facile absolutions. There is Bishop Felicissimus, who has been honourably received at Rome, yet is " a traitor to the faith, an embezzler of money entrusted to him, a violator of virgins, a despoiler of many marriages " (Letter LIV). Of Bishop Martialis he says:—

> Besides having for a long time attended the foul and filthy banquets of the heathen and having buried his sons, who had been admitted to the same company, amongst them, he has confessed that he lapsed into idolatry and denied Christ before the public officials. They [several bishops] are accused of other grave crimes.*

In Letter LXII he writes to a brother bishop about women who have taken the vow of chastity, yet " are discovered to have slept with men, one of whom was a deacon." He goes on:—

> How many we have known who were ruined in this way, how many virgins corrupted by these illicit and dangerous connections. . . . And let not any woman imagine that she is safe because she can be examined and proved to be a virgin. Midwives are often deceived . . . [an indelicate passage], and even if she is found to be a virgin in the narrower sense she may have sinned in other ways that cannot be detected.

We shall find the African Church in the same painful condition—even find bishops almost boasting, in episcopal conferences, of murder—fifty years after this date, and indeed until that Church is extinguished by the Vandals.

But the remarkable conditions of Church life which were brought to light at this date (250) by the Decian or first general persecution were not confined to Africa. J. A. F. Gregg (later a Catholic bishop) confesses, in his work *The Decian Persecution* (1897), that after exhaustive search he found the names of only six Christians who died for the faith out of the 20,000 or more (including 150 clerics) at Rome. On what happened in the second chief centre of Christendom, Alexandria, we have a letter written by the bishop of that see, Dionysius, which Bishop Eusebius has preserved in the *History of the Church* (vi, 41) which he wrote half a century later. The work is rich in fantastic and, as Catholic experts now admit, spurious martyrdoms, which

* This letter (LXVII) is from Cyprian and thirty-six of his bishops to the clergy and Christian people of Spain. The letters are in vol. III (this passage is in col. 1021) of the Migne series.

are reverently used in religious literature, but I know no religious historian who quotes this episcopal eye-witness of what really happened in Alexandria. The letter runs:—

> Certainly all were marvellously terrified. Many men of the highest rank at once hastened to obey [the imperial edict], and others who were in the public service pleaded that their office compelled them to do the same. Others were reported by letters or by friends, and, their names being called, they took part in the impure and profane sacrifices. Some, pale and trembling, looked as if they were not men about to offer sacrifice, but themselves victims to be offered to the idols. So the crowd that had gathered around laughed at them, as they plainly showed that they had not the courage either to die or to sacrifice. Others boldly rushed to the altars protesting that they had never been Christians. . . . The remainder either followed the example of these or took to flight, and some of them, after a few days in bonds or in prison, abjured the faith before they were brought to trial. Some of them bravely sustained the torture for a time and then lost their courage at the prospect of further torments.

This was the general experience in all parts of the Church. Origen, replying shortly afterwards to the pagan Celsus, who complained that the Christians had, as shown by the number of their martyrs, proved as disloyal as the Jews, said that " only a few, whom you could easily count, died at different dates for the Christian religion " (*Against Celsus*, iii, 8). We should remember, too, that when Decius ordered this first general persecution—and it is not agreed that he imposed sentence of death—the Christians had justly incurred the anger of Rome by treasonably supporting the usurpation of the murderous Arab Philip because he was a Christian.

It was the same when, after fifty years of peace, Diocletian set afoot the second (and last) general persecution. The semi-official *Book of the Popes* speaks of 17,000 martyrs in thirty days—though it admits that the Pope led the rush of apostates at Rome—but even the modern Catholic experts on martyrs (Duchesne, Delehaye, Ehrhard, etc.) can trace very few records of martyrdom, and the end of the persecution was followed everywhere by bitter complaints that the overwhelming majority of both clergy and laity had offered sacrifice or given up their copies of the Scriptures or bribed officials to give them false certificates that they had done so.

The African Church was in a graver state of demoralization than ever. Optatus, the austere bishop of Milevis, tells us in his

De Schismate Donatistarum (*On the Donatist Schism*, vol. 11 of the Migne series) that, when peace was restored, twelve bishops met at Cirta, " a most noble and powerful city," in the heart of Roman Africa, to discuss the situation:—

> These bishops admitted, when they were interrogated by Secundus of Tregesis [the presiding bishop], that they had handed over [the Scriptures]. Secundus himself was taunted by Purpurius with the fact that he had been set free after being in the hands of the soldiers for some time, and this could only be because he had handed over. Whereupon all stood up and began to murmur. Secundus, alarmed by their anger, was advised by his nephew to leave it all to God. The others agreed, and Secundus said, " sit down," and they sat down and said " Thank God " (I, 14).

Optatus gives the record of the proceedings—shorthand was quite familiar to the Romans—in an appendix, but Augustine gives an unabridged record in his book *Contra Cresconium* (ii, 27). From this we learn that when the bishops had acknowledged their apostasy—one pleaded in extenuation that he had (doubtless after bribing the official) handed over a medical work instead of his Bible—the president turned to Bishop Purpurius:—

> He said, " It is alleged that you murdered two of your nephews at Milevis." Purpurius replied, " Do you think you can frighten me as you have the others? What did you do when you were ordered to hand over [the Scriptures]? How did you get off unless you gave them up or ordered that they should be given up? They didn't let you go for nothing. But if you want to know, I *did* commit murder, and I'll murder anybody who gets in my way. So don't you press me to say more. You know that I never interfere in anybody else's business."

It was after this that the prelates decided to leave the matter to God: as indeed they did, after months of acrid discussion, in all parts of the Church. There is probably no aphorism more untrue to fact, though it has a massive ground in primitive fiction, than " the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians."

To what appalling and murderous discord these events led in the African Church we shall see later, but there is another untranslated document of this date (about the year 300) which shows that the Spanish Church was just as far removed from the idyllic and familiar picture of primitive Christianity. Nineteen bishops met at Elvira (Illiberis), and the eighty-one canons they drew up, thirty-two of which were concerned with sexual offences, put the faithful of Spain in just the same light as those of Rome, Africa, or the East. Most of the canons I quote refer to classes

of sinners who are to be excommunicated, so that I need not give the primitive formula in each case: *

V. If any woman, stung by jealousy, beats one of her slaves so severely that he dies a cruel death within three days. . . .

VI. If any man kills another by real black magic, in such wise that the practice of idolatry is involved in the crime. . . .

VII. If one of the faithful relapses into fornication after having done penance for a previous offence. . . .

VIII. Likewise women who without cause leave their husbands and copulate with other men. . . .

IX. Likewise a woman of the faithful who deserts an adulterous Christian spouse and marries another man. . . .

XII. A mother or relative or any Christian woman who keeps a brothel. . . .

XIII. Virgins dedicated to God who sacrifice their virginity and follow their lusts. . . .

XIV. Virgins not under vow who have married a man with whom they had fornicated shall do penance for a year.

XVIII. Bishops, priests, and deacons who have been detected in adultery. . . .

XIX. Bishops, priests, and deacons shall not leave their stations to engage in business nor follow the fairs from province to province in quest of gain.

XX. If a cleric is known to have accepted interest on money he shall be degraded.

XXVII. A bishop or any other cleric shall have no other woman in his house than a sister or daughter who is vowed to virginity.

XXXV. Women shall not spend a night of vigil [over the dead] in cemeteries, as they often commit crimes under the pretence of prayer.

XLVIII. At baptism the recipient shall not, as is commonly done, put money in the box.

LII. Let those be anathema who put libels in the church.

LXIII. Any woman who has misbehaved in the absence of her husband and has then killed her offspring. . . .

LXIV. Women who live adulterously with a man until he dies. . . .

LXV. The wife of a cleric who commits adultery. . . .

LXVIII. A candidate for baptism who has misbehaved and committed abortion shall not be baptized.

LXXI. Those who commit rape on boys. . . .

LXXII. Widows who commit adultery. . . .

LXXVIII. Christian wives who commit adultery with Jews or Gentiles. . . .

It should be understood that these are not new laws or rules of the Church, but are its standing disciplinary code, which is, apparently, flagrantly violated.

* Bishop Hefele gives the canons in Latin in his *History of the Christian Councils* (1871), and, with his usual skill, he translates only the less suggestive.

These general characterizations of the leading provinces of the Church describe its condition in the first three centuries (or after the middle of the second century) and are an essential part of the history of the early Church. At the best we can say only that the Christians were, as a body, certainly no better than their pagan neighbours, and their laxity permitted a remarkable amount of looseness in the clergy.

The great majority of religious writers, having to sustain the thesis that the austere lives of the Christians at last, in the fourth century, attracted the Greeks and Romans into the Church—a thesis at which the reader will presently smile—take amazing liberties with the evidence. The few who know the history of that century murmur that a vast accession of wealth under Christian emperors, and the power won from them to enforce the new religion by law, would not lead to moral improvement. But there is not one who candidly explains how the character of the new Christian dynasty excited the disdain and disgust of the pagans.

Constantine, natural son of a rural tavern-girl (as St. Ambrose casually observes even in his sermon on the death of the Emperor Theodosius) and a Roman officer, waded through rivers of blood to the throne, and he was driven from Rome to Constantinople by the scorn of the Romans because he "put to death, first his excellent [natural] son, and the son of his sister, a boy of promising character, then his wife and a number of friends." This summary statement of a terrible crime, which Eutropius makes (*Brevarium historiae Romanae*, x, 6), is confirmed by St. Jerome (*Chronicle*, year 329) and not now disputed. "There was too much blood in his character," says Mgr. Duchesne, after making out the best case he can for Constantine. But even Duchesne, who admits that the *Life of Constantine* by the contemporary and courtly Bishop Eusebius is "a triumph of reticence and circumlocution," loses his candour when he reaches the death of the Emperor. He refuses to mention an even greater crime, though it is recorded by no less orthodox a contemporary than St. Athanasius. Speaking of the Emperor Constantius, son of Constantine, he says:—

> What wonder that he should rage against the bishops seeing that in the treatment of his relatives he showed himself devoid of the common feelings of humanity. He slew his uncles and his cousins.

He had no mercy on the father-in-law whose daughter he had married, or on his relatives in their affliction. He treated his brother infamously, and he now announces that he is building a sepulchre for him, and he delivered his wife to the barbarians (*History of the Arians*, ch. 69).

The personal complicity of Constantius is questioned by some historians, but, in order to secure the division of the Empire between the three sons of Constantine, nearly all the other male relatives (two uncles, seven cousins, and their supporters) were murdered in the imperial palace. Thus the rule was made safe for the three Christian princes and the bishops. Then the eldest son fell into civil war with the youngest and was slain; Constans, the youngest, proved a monster of vice and tyranny and was assassinated; and Constantius, now sole ruler, adopted what some still call the vile heresy of the Arians, and others call the superior creed of the Unitarians, and he turned the Era of Religious Peace which his father was supposed to have inaugurated into an era of such red-hot passion, murder, and torture on religious grounds as the world had never seen before.

It is ironic that the repulsive struggle that fills the first half of the fourth century should have turned upon the question whether Jesus was God or was merely of so beautiful a characacter that he was " like " God. Still more ironic that the first emperor upon whom the bishops prevailed to adopt the policy of coercion should have adopted also the Arian heresy and applied in its favour the principle of violence, which was, they assured him, consecrated by the interest of religious truth. However that may be, Constantius, surrounded by the vile and unscrupulous eunuchs with whom Constantine had filled his court, made ten times as many Christian martyrs in twenty years as the pagan emperors had made in 250, and introduced methods of savagery which even the Goths and Vandals would not emulate. Speaking of Alexandria, Athanasius describes an early stage in his Απολογία περὶ της φυγης ἀυτου (*Apology for His Flight*, vol. 25 of the Migne Greek series):—

After the Easter week consecrated virgins were thrown into jail, bishops were led away in chains by the soldiers, the houses of widows were broken open and the bread of orphans stolen, and many Christians were slain by night and their houses sealed up. Sebastian, an officer . . . attacked the people on the Lord's Day with a troop of soldiers who were armed with drawn swords, bows and arrows, and spears. . . . Kindling a great fire, he had the sacred virgins pushed

close to it in order to make them say that they were Arians; and when he saw that they endured the violence and took no notice of the fire, he stripped them naked and had them beaten so grievously on their faces that for some time no one could recognize them. Seizing forty men he had them flogged in an unheard-of manner. Cutting branches with the thorns still on them from palm-trees, he scourged their backs so severely that for some time it required surgical assistance to remove the thorns, and some died from the violence of the blows. And they sent away the men and virgins to the Great Oasis under such cruel conditions that some died on the way and others in the place of exile (ch. vi).

In a later chapter (xxiv) of the same work Athanasius describes the attempt to arrest him in the year 356:—

The night had fallen and some of the people kept vigil (in the Cathedral) preparing for communion, when the general of the army Syrianus suddenly burst upon us with more than 5,000 soldiers with drawn swords, bows and arrows, spears, and clubs. He surrounded the church with masses of soldiers so that no one could get out. . . . I sat on my throne and directed the deacon to read a psalm. But the general broke into the church and surrounded the sanctuary with the purpose of arresting me.

Athanasius made a miraculous escape and fled abroad, and the persecution fell heavily upon the faithful. In the long letter which is usually cited as *A History of the Arians* he gives further details about the callous ingenuity of the eunuchs of the Court. Here is a glimpse of the method of discrediting a Catholic bishop (ch. xx):—

On Easter day itself they put a public whore, naked, in the bed of Bishop Euphrates at night. . . . But when she saw an aged man sleeping and unconscious of what was happening and recognized that he was a bishop, she cried aloud that she was being forced to act as she did. . . . And when the day broke the affair was noised abroad and the whole city rushed to the place.

The historian Socrates Scholasticus (the lawyer) has many passages on the long persecution in his Εκκλησιαστίκη ἱστορία (*History of the Church*, vol. 67 of the Migne Library of the Greek Fathers). In chapter xvi of the Second Book he tells us how the imperial Prefect of Constantinople went to the cathedral with troops to instal the Arian Archbishop Macedonius, who was substituted for Athanasius, and so vast a crowd of the orthodox filled the building that the soldiers could not force a way through it for the Prefect. What follows is attributed by the orthodox historian to a misunderstanding of the intentions

of the people by the soldiers, but one wonders why so many thousands of the faithful should attend the installation of a heretical prelate and so block the way that the imperial guard had to cut a way through them:—

They [the troops] therefore fell upon the people [in the Cathedral] with drawn swords and cut down those who were in the way. It is said that 3,150 were killed, either stabbed by the soldiers or crushed and trampled under foot by the crowds.

They inflicted all kinds of scourging and torture, and they confiscated property. Many were exiled, and some died under torture and others on the way to exile. These atrocities were committed in all the cities of the East but especially at Constantinople (ch. xxvii).

Many who had a high reputation for piety were arrested and tortured because they would not communicate with him [the Arian archbishop]. They prised men's mouths open with pieces of wood and forced the sacrament down their throats. . . . Women who refused to communicate with them had their breasts squeezed in a wooden frame and cut off. Other women had their breasts burned with red-hot irons or had hot-boiled eggs pressed against them. This kind of torture, which the pagans had never used against us, was invented by men who called themselves Christians (ch. xxxviii).

The new archbishop and his supporters then spread terror over the district:—

He drove those who refused to communicate with the Arians from the churches in Antioch and, it is said, had many drowned in the Orontes (Bk. IV, ch. xxiii).

Consecrated virgins, who had not at this time begun to live in communities and were probably the loudest in their anathemas of the heretics, suffered most of all. They were stripped in public —as most of the Fathers say that they were commonly *not* virgins, we can guess what happened—scourged with branches of thorn-bushes, made to sit on hot plates or charcoal fires, tortured in their breasts, or raped by the soldiers. And the tragedy, which lasted throughout the reign of Constantius as sole Emperor (nine years), again takes on a tinge of irony when we learn that it was brought to a close and decency restored throughout the Empire by Julian, whom Catholic literature still represents as an instrument of the Devil. When he died it was resumed and maintained for a further fourteen years in the East by the Christian Emperor Valens:—

They were mocked and scourged. They were stripped naked, bound, stoned, stabbed to death, or driven wandering over the desert clad in the skins of sheep and goats (ch. xxiv).

He even sent troops against the monks of the desert, and Socrates quotes the report of one of the best known of them:—

> Some they beat and reviled, others they fined or imprisoned. They inflicted every kind of intolerable evil.

This persecution of Christians by Christians, of which we hear so little, while the fabulous stories of persecution by the pagans are retailed on every side, lasted ten times as many years as the two general persecutions of pagan days, was conducted with a barbarity that had been unknown to the pagans, and, on the basis of modern critical studies, Catholic and Protestant, must have had more than ten times as many victims. It raged especially in the East, but when Constantius became sole Emperor it spread to the West. The great majority of the Romans were still pagans, and the roasting of Christian Vestal Virgins and scourging of naked monks were hardly likely to occur in the West. But the doctrinal quarrel led, even in the Roman Church, to such murderous fights that the grave Ammianus Marcellinus wrote—not "See how these Christians love one another," which no pagan ever said—but, "I have never seen wild beasts that were so cruel to each other as these Christians." The general character had sunk to a lamentable level.

CHAPTER II

THE CREED OF VIOLENCE AND HATRED

IN the ecclesiastical histories which began to be written in the fourth century little notice is taken of the Roman Church. Its bishops had no distinction, and their few attempts to assert supremacy were disdainfully rebutted. The compliments it occasionally received were elicited by its wealth and by the legend—fabricated in Rome as far as Peter is concerned—that it had been founded by the two leading apostles. Its wealth grew amazingly after the conversion of Constantine, and this and the Arian controversy led to sanguinary struggles which betray the poverty of the general character.

It was with obvious trepidation that Constantius visited the city from which his father had been driven as a murderer, and he had to proceed with moderation. However, Pope Liberius (352–66) was sent into exile; but after a few years of unpleasant experience he in some form " embraced the heretical perversity " (St. Jerome says) and was allowed to return. But the substitute—Pope Felix—would not yield, and the faithful split into two bitterly hostile factions. The ecclesiastical historian Theodoret says (ii, 17):—

> There was a general persecution [fight] in the city so that the clerics and priests could enter neither the churches nor the baths.

Even the semi-official *Liber Pontificalis* (*Book of the Popes*), says, under " Liberius ":—

> From that day forward there was a persecution of the clergy [by rivals] so that priests and clerics were slain in church and were crowned with martyrdom.*

In other words, for there was no longer any pagan persecution, the clergy, who now probably numbered several hundred, fought savagely, and apparently the Christians were excluded from the princely Diocletian baths on account of their proneness to fight.

Felix, the root of the scandal—it is characteristic of Catholic

* This work was compiled by the Papal clergy, but the writing did not begin until the seventh century, and, as Dr. Loomis, who translated it with the above title, says, it is full of legends and inaccuracies for the first few centuries.

literature that it makes the man a " saint and martyr "—died in 365, Liberius died in the following year, and both parties prepared for a furious struggle over the election of a successor. Ursinus was the Liberian candidate. The opposition, which seems to have included the larger and looser body of the community, chose a handsome and ambitious Spanish priest named Damasus—" St." Damasus, of course; though he had at the time a repute of looseness, and what follows will sufficiently reveal his character. The full story is told in a preface to a petition that was presented to the Emperors twenty years later—the long reign of the Arian Emperor Valens explains the delay—by two Roman priests of some distinction. After a disdainful account of the earlier career of Damasus, it comes to the election in 366 *: —

The priests and deacons, Ursinus, Amantius, and Lupus, with the devout people who had been loyal to Liberius while he was in exile, met in the Julian Church and elected the deacon Ursinus Pontiff in the place of Liberius. But the perjured followers of Felix demanded that Damasus be elected to succeed Felix. Ursinus was consecrated by Bishop Paulus, and when Damasus, who had always wanted to be bishop, heard this he bribed the charioteers and the mob, led them armed with clubs to the Julian Church, and for three days there was a great slaughter of the faithful. Seven days later he occupied the Lateran Church [part of the Papal palace] with his perjurers and the gladiators he had heavily bribed, and he was consecrated bishop there. He induced the authorities to send into exile the venerable Ursinus, who had been consecrated before him, and the deacons Amantius and Lupus. When this was done Damasus found that the Roman people would not walk before him in the procession, and he had them beaten and many of them killed. He also tried to get seven priests who were arrested sent into exile, but the faithful people saved them and took them to the church of Liberius.

Then Damasus and his clergy got together a band of gladiators, charioteers [race-gangs or ostlers, etc.], and grave-diggers, armed with axes, swords, and clubs, and they laid siege to the church at the second hour of the day on the seventh day of the November Kalends under the Consuls Gratianus and Dagelasius, and there was a terrible battle. They broke down the door and set fire to the church, and they waited at the door for those within to emerge. Some of his servants mounted and broke the roof of the church and attacked the faithful with the tiles. Then the Damasians broke into the church and slew 160 men and women and wounded a large number of others, many of whom

* *This Libellus Precum* (Petition) of the priests Faustinus and Marcellinus is published in vol. 13 (cols. 81–84) of the Migne series of the Latin Fathers. It has never been translated, but it will be enough to give here the part referring to the election-riots.

died, though no one was killed in the party of Damasus. Three days later the devout people met and began to pray and sing hymns in the Liberian church, calling upon the Emperor (or Prefect) and the bishops to put an end to this fifth war of Damasus, a man so stained with impiety and so notorious with women that he was called the Tickler of Matrons' Ears. . . . Damasus bribed the imperial officials and got them [his opponents] exiled. But the people, fearing God and not intimidated by persecution, met for prayers in the catacombs without priests. When a large number of them met in the cemetery of St. Agnes, Damasus fell upon them with his armed satellites and wrought great havoc. This cruelty so displeased the bishops of Italy that when he invited them to a sumptuous celebration of his birthday and tried by bribes and entreaties to get them to condemn Ursinus they refused.

This appalling picture of the life of the Roman community just at the time when it is usually represented as attracting the pagans by the fragrance of its virtues is too well supported by contemporary evidence for even the boldest modern Jesuit to attempt to discredit it. St. Jerome, who was probably studying in Rome at the time and was later the Secretary of Pope Damasus, says in his *Chronicle* (at the year 369), after recording the consecration of Damasus:—

After a short time Ursinus, elected by certain bishops, invaded the Sicinian church with his followers and, the followers of Damasus attacking it, the most cruel deaths were inflicted on people of both sexes.

Rufinus also, a devout priest and a friend of Jerome, describes the dual election in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (ii, 10, in vol. 21 of the Migne series), and adds:—

From which such a sedition, indeed such a war, arose, as the people defended one or the other, that the holy places were full of blood.

Another and impartial eye-witness was the retired Roman general and historian Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan. There is now a fine translation, with the Latin text, of his *Res Gestae* (*Record of Events*) in the Loeb Classical Library (3 vols., 1935), so that I need quote only a few lines (xxvii, 12–13):—

Damasus and Ursinus, bent with inhuman frenzy upon gaining the episcopal see, engaged with fierce strife in the conflict of their ambitions, and the supporters of both parties went as far as inflicting wounds and death. As Viventius (the pagan Prefect) could neither curb nor mitigate the violence, he had to retire to the suburbs. It is known that in a single day 137 bodies of the slain were counted on the

floor of the Sicinian church [now Sta. Maria Maggiore], where the Christian services were held, and the fury of the people continued long afterwards.

The reader may find what consolation he can in the fact that the number of the slain is here reduced, and in other slight discrepancies, but Ammianus augments our astonishment when he adds that the Roman police were driven from the Forum into the Subura by the fury of the Christian mobs. He has another passage on the scandalous display of wealth by the Popes, but he is quoted in religious works only for his strictures on the decadence of the " smart set " of Roman society.

In connection with the character of Damasus we find, in the sketch of his life in the *Book of the Popes*, that he was " charged with adultery " by some of his clergy, but was acquitted by a council of bishops. But adultery was a crime in Roman Civil Law, and we learn, from a letter of a Roman Synod to the Emperors (in Mansi's *Collection of Councils*, iii, p. 626), that the charge was laid before the Civil Court, and only the intervention of the Emperor, at the request of the bishops, averted the scandal of a trial.

The unpleasant suggestion conveyed to us by these documents is more than confirmed by the letters of St. Jerome. There is a translation of these, though it glosses over some of the unpleasant passages, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. VI; but this is available only in theological colleges (and the British Museum), and we have here one of the most flagrant proofs of the need of such a work as the present one. Jerome's letters are, in all religious works, the one source of evidence of the *virtue* of the Roman Christians at this date; yet, though they tell of only *ten* ladies, his special pupils, who led austere lives, the very letters which he writes to these ladies insist that both clergy and laity, monks and consecrated virgins, in the Roman Church, were generally and remarkably corrupt. He lived in Rome under Damasus until its evil odour drove him into the Syrian desert; and he was a fanatical, if singular, apostle of chastity. His language is often gross—his patrician friends, to his great annoyance, had to suppress one of his books on virginity—and his temper was fiery. " How often," he says of a monk with whom he often argued on sacred matters, " he roused me to fury! How often we spat in each other's faces! " (Letter

L. 4). But he knew Rome thoroughly; and the letters he wrote, in better Latin than that of Augustine, from the desert to his aristocratic lady-pupils contain more picturesque descriptions of vice and decadence among the Christians than Ammianus (who is counted the chief witness to " the vices of the pagans " at that time) gives us of the antics of the " smart set " at Rome.

In Letter XXII he, at great length and with a frankness that must have given qualms to her pious mother, a matron of the highest noble family in Rome, tells the virgin Eustochium, a refined patrician girl of eighteen, what a treasure virginity is and how, in order to guard it, she must cut herself off from the entire Christian community. Only a few passages from the very lengthy letter, or treatise, can be given, but the general indictment they bring against the clergy and laity, monks and consecrated virgins, is not modified by any other passages in the letter or in other letters:—

2. I do not write to tell you of the inconveniences of marriage, the swelling of the belly, the wailing of infants, the heartburning caused by your husband's mistress, the cares of a household, and all the other supposed good things which, in any case, cease at death . . . but to enjoin you when you fly from Sodom to remember the fate of Lot's wife. . . .

11. Job says of the devil: His strength is in his loins and his power in his navel. This is a delicate reference to the male and female organs. [There follows a long paragraph proving that whenever the Old Testament says " loins " or " thighs " it means the male organ.] When Jacob's " thigh " shrank after he had wrestled with the Lord (Gen. xxxii, 25) he engendered no more children. . . .

13. It is painful to tell you how many [consecrated] virgins fall every day, how many children mother-church loses from her womb, upon how many stars the proud enemy raises his throne. . . . You will see many widows who before they marry again cover their miserable consciences with a garment of lies and, if the swollen belly or the cry of a child does not betray them, walk with head erect and joyous step. Others take drugs to cause abortion and murder the unborn. . . . If they meet a woman who is pale and severe of cast they call her a miserable Manichaean [non-Christian]; and naturally, for they themselves regard fasting as a heresy.

16. I do not want you to have any intercourse with married women or go to the houses of noble ladies . . . and you must keep away from such as are widows from necessity, not choice. . . . Their houses are filled with flatterers and banquets. The priests, who ought to earn their respect by their precepts, kiss them on the forehead and then hold out their hands—you would think they were blessing them if you did not know better—for the price of the kiss. . . . And because,

having once felt the authority of a husband, they prefer the freedom of widowhood, they are said to be chaste and are called nuns; and after a dubious supper they retire to dream of the apostles.

28. Avoid also the kind of men you see in chains, with long hair like women and beards like goats, with black cloaks and bare feet even in cold weather [the monks]. These are all tricks of the devil. . . . When they find their way into the houses of the rich and deceive little women who are loaded with sins . . . they put on an air of sadness as if from long fasting, but they feed up during the night. I should be ashamed to tell you the rest. . . . There are others (I speak here of men of my own order) who became deacons and priests only in order to approach women with more license. All that they care about is their dress, their perfumes, and the neatness of their shoes. Their long curly hair tells of the use of the tongs, their fingers glitter with rings. . . . I will give you a short description of one who is a master of the art, and you will recognize the disciples from the master. He rises with the sun and almost makes his way into the chambers of the ladies before they are awake. If he sees an elegant cushion, or a cloak, or a piece of furniture, he praises it, fingers it, in fact extorts it. He detests chastity and fasting.

He tells the maid of some real monks in Syria, but says of those who are the more common in the part where he lives:—

They often quarrel. . . . It is true that they vie with each other in fasting, but they make a boast of what ought to be a private matter. They are out for show in everything. They have loose sleeves, rough shoes, and coarse robes. They sigh repeatedly, visit virgins, and slander priests. And when a feast-day comes they gorge until they vomit (c. 24).

In Letter LII, to a priest, repeating his strictures on priests and monks, he refers to the law which Valentinian I had passed, twenty years earlier, fixing an extraordinary stigma of greed upon them by declaring all legacies to them invalid:—

I am ashamed to reflect that pagan priests, actors, charioteers, and even whores can receive legacies, and that only priests and monks are legally prevented from doing so. And this prohibition does not come from pagan emperors but Christian. I do not complain of the law, but it pains me to think how we deserved it. . . . If in discharge of your duties as a priest you have to see any widow or young women do not enter the house or be alone in their company.

To one of his patrician lady-pupils he gives the complementary advice never to be alone with a priest. If, he elegantly advises her, you do find yourself alone with one, " make the excuse that a necessity of the bowels or the bladder compels you to leave the room."

In Letter CVII he advises a lady of the highest aristocracy how to rear her daughter—and remember that to the Romans the bath was almost as sacred an institution as the temple:—

I am aware that some have laid it down that virgins of Christ must not bathe with eunuchs or married women, because the former still have the minds of men and the latter may present the ugly spectacle of swollen bellies. For my part I say that mature girls must not bathe at all, because they ought to blush to see themselves naked.

In Letter CXXV he returns to his monotonous theme of women who, as he says, " think of nothing but the belly and something that is close to the belly," and monks:—

I know women of mature age who take pleasure in their young freedmen and call them their spiritual sons, but, gradually losing all sense of decency, pretend to be their mothers and enjoy the licence of matrimony. . . . Then there are men who, girded with ropes, wearing dark gray tunics, and with long beards, are incapable of keeping away from women, remain under the same roof with them, dine with them, have young girls as servants, and enjoy every pleasure of matrimony without the name.

When we compare the tone and content of these letters—I could, if it were not too monotonous, fill twenty pages with such extracts—with the quality of the numerous extant letters of Symmachus, the pagan Prefect at the time, and his friends, or the imaginary conversations of the patricians in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, in which not a word offends good taste, and the character is uniformly admirable, we are astonished that any responsible writer should ask us to believe that this Church of the fourth century raised the Greeks and Romans to a higher level.

Jerome, I said, fled from the corruption of Rome to the Holy Land, which had already become the goal of pilgrimages. One might expect that amidst the shrines which were now the most venerated in Christendom we should find the primitive virtues still flourishing, but the only Christian leader of the time who describes, from personal observation, the life of Jerusalem undeceives us. St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa (Asia Minor), made the pilgrimage in 382, and in his letters he warns Christian ladies to keep away from Palestine. In his second letter he writes:—

If there were more divine grace to be obtained in the shrines of Jerusalem there would not be so much habitual sinfulness amongst those who live there. There is no kind of uncleanness that is not perpetrated there. Malice, adultery, theft, idolatry, poisoning,

quarrelling, murder, and the worst evils are so common there that there is no other place in the world where you will find such promptness to kill, such animal propensity to shed blood for gain as there. How then will you make out that there is more grace to be obtained there?

In the third of his few extant letters (in Migne) he repeats the warning. He returned home from Jerusalem, he says,

greatly distressed after the warm anticipation I had had of seeing joyful things, reflecting in my mind how true is the word of the Lord that the whole world lieth in wickedness (I John v, 19).

And it need hardly be said that the rich African province showed no moral improvement in the new prosperity and freedom of the Church. As I said in the last chapter, the acrid quarrel over the general apostasy at the last persecution led, not only to a painful exposure of the corruption of the clergy, but also to a schism which rent the African Church for more than a hundred years and filled it with violent passion. Eighty years after the events I described, which opened the schism, 279 Donatist bishops walked in procession, chanting lustily, through the streets of Carthage to a church in which they were to meet 286 orthodox bishops in debate. How the controversy was conducted is illustrated in this paragraph from the history of the schism (quoted in the preceding chapter) by Optatus:—

Donatus, Bishop of Bagaia . . . sent messengers over the entire district to all the fairs, summoning his fighting Circumcellions [the shock-troops or zealots of the rebels] to a certain place. When these men wandered from place to place, when in their madness they called Axido and Fasis Captains of the Saints, no one's possessions were safe. Certificates of debt lost their value, and no creditor could collect. All were terrified by the letters of these men who boasted that they were the leaders of the Saints, and if there were any delay in complying with their orders a frenzied mob appeared at once and there was a reign of terror. . . . Masters were thrown out of their chariots and compelled to run before their slaves, who took their place. . . . Taurinus [the Governor] ordered an armed force to go through the fairs, where the fury of the Circumcellions was wont to be exercised, and on the instructions of Octavian a large number were slain, many being beheaded, and you may count their bodies to-day by the whitened altars and tables [whitewashed tombs]. . . . Later they grew again in number, and Donatus, Bishop of Bagaia, led a demented mob against Macarius. To the same class belong the men who, seeking a false martyrdom, brought about their own deaths, and those who cast their vile souls from the summits of lofty mountains (Book III, ch. iv).

Against this early Protestant and democratic movement, as it really was, which captured about half the African Church, the orthodox found a champion, towards the end of the century, in Augustine. It was mainly because of the almost complete failure of his arguments against the Donatists that Augustine persuaded himself that the parable of the banquet (Matthew xxii, 2) endorsed the principle of religious coercion.

But Augustine found at once, when he entered the clergy, that the corruption of the orthodox was an even more formidable problem. In an early letter (year 392, No. XXII in Migne) to Aurelius of Carthage he says that he is taking up arms against " the many carnal foulnesses and diseases from which the African Church suffers." He refers particularly to the *agapae* (called, in Africa, *laetitiae* or " joy-feasts ") in the churches:—

> Banquets and drunkenness are thought to be so permitted that they are enjoyed even in honour of the blessed martyrs, not only on solemn festivals, which must be painful to any man who has seen them with his own eyes, but every day. And this turpitude, which is not merely wicked but a sacrilege, ought in the opinion of many to be tolerated. . . . As these orgies of drunkenness and rich feeding in the cemeteries are believed by the sensual and unlettered people to do honour to the martyrs as well as give some consolation to the dead, it seems to me that it will be easier to abolish the vileness and turpitude if we quote the scripture forbidding offerings to the spirits of the dead.

That the bishops and priests took part in these " drunken carousals," as Augustine calls them, we gather from the canon passed in 393 by the Council of Hippo:—

> No bishops or clerics shall assist at banquets in the church . . . and the people shall as far as possible be forbidden to do this.

Shortly afterwards he tells Bishop Alypius of the struggle he is making:—

> So we preached on dogs and swine (Matthew vii, 6) so that the men who barked loudest against the commands of God and were the most addicted to carnal pleasure should be compelled to blush, and I ended by hoping that they would see how vile it was to do in the name of religion and within the walls of a church what they dare not do in their own homes without fear of losing the pearl of the faith.

He seems to have succeeded after a terrific fight in Hippo, but years afterwards we find him complaining that the practice is as scandalous as ever in other parts of the African Church. In Sermon 311 he says that the faithful dance and sing all night in

the venerable church of St. Cyprian at Carthage. In another Sermon he says that he narrowly escaped serious assault for attacking the scandal in that city. The custom was general in the Church. In his *Confessions* (vi, 2) Augustine tells us how, when his pious mother had taken her modest portion of wine and cake to church at Milan to do honour to the martyrs, she found that St. Ambrose had suppressed the *agapae* there because they had degenerated into orgies of drink, dancing, singing, and the inevitable unchastity.

Augustine's sermons, of which we have hundreds—as I said, shorthand was used everywhere in the Roman World—reflect a much lower average type of character than one finds in a modern Christian congregation—one smiles at the idea of these turning their chapels into night-clubs several times a month *—but the sermons of the eloquent St. John Chrysostom, of which we have about a thousand, at Antioch and Constantinople show a still lower general character. He complains bitterly and repeatedly that not only is unchastity general, but that the men claim a right to it and will not come to hear him preach on it. In a sermon delivered at Antioch in the year 384 he says that about a fifth of the population (total about 500,000) of the city are Christians, but that "amongst so many thousand Christian men there are not a hundred who will be saved, and I have a doubt even about these." They are, he says again, worse than the Jews of old; worse than the men of Sodom. They decorate their luxurious homes with nude marble statues and have flute-girls and obscene dances at their banquets. It is needless to quote. The dirge runs all through his ethical sermons.

In 397 he became Archbishop of Constantinople, and the note does not change. He had, he says in one extraordinarily candid sermon, to depose thirteen bishops in two small provinces of Asia Minor for corruption. He chased the crowds of free-living monks from the city and drove the "sacred virgins" from the houses of the priests, and then he fell upon the people. It was, naturally, the wealthy who received his heaviest invectives, and his rival, Archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria—not at all a

* For a full description of the state of the African Church see my *St. Augustine and his Age* (1902). This book was on the reading list in the historical school of several American universities until the present reaction (under Catholic influence) began, and the author delivered special lectures on mediaeval thought in the historical school at Columbia.

rival in asceticism—got these into a coalition with the Court and the other bishops to get rid of him. The long struggle gives us safer evidence of the general character than do the sermons of a puritan.

An ardent admirer of Chrysostom, the contemporary Greek historian Sozomen, admits that the preacher dropped the word "Jezebel" in one of his references to the Empress. Eudoxia was a spoiled and voluptuous beauty, but not a vicious woman; and the episcopal plotters got the Emperor to order John, whom they deposed, into exile. But this led to so formidable a riot that they had to recall him. Then, says Sozomen in his Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἱστορία (*Ecclesiastical History*, viii, 19–20):—

> The struggle between the two parties became so fierce that blood flowed; many were wounded and some killed. Severian and the other bishops who did not support John feared for their lives and fled from the city. Theophilus also fled from the city. . . .

Soon afterwards a silver statue of the Empress was erected at the door of the Senate, which was opposite the door of the cathedral, and Chrysostom stormed. "Herodias again seeks the head of John," he began his sermon; and, though some pretend that the sermon must be spurious—it is not in the least out of character—we may trust Sozomen. Chrysostom was again deposed, and while he remained in his house the faithful who supported him gathered in the cathedral for the baptisms on Easter Eve, and the soldiers fell upon them with drawn swords. Bishop Palladius describes the scene in his enthusiastic life of the saint (prefixed to the Migne collection of Chrysostom's works):—

> They made their way into the church as far as the baptistry and put a stop to the baptisms. They fell upon the deacons and spilled the holy symbols, and they beat the aged priests with clubs until the sacred font was covered with blood. That angelic night in which even the demons flee in terror was turned into a labyrinth. Naked women and men [stripped for baptism], fearing death or defilement, fled in terror. [Sozomen adds that the soldiers accused the priests and women of "certain acts."] Here a man wounded in the hand wept. There a soldier tore the clothes off virgins and dragged them along. They seized the sacred vessels and made off with them. The priests and deacons were arrested and imprisoned.

Such scenes in the churches and such sanguinary riots of Christian mobs occur with lamentable frequency in the chronicles from (as we saw) the seizure of Athanasius (356) to the time

(1203) when the Western Crusaders made a disorderly house of the great church at Constantinople.

And lest too much blame be laid upon the degenerate Byzantinian Court, we must remember the terrible act of the most pious Emperor, the most generous and docile benefactor the Church had yet had—Theodosius I. The abbot Theophanes gives the best account of it in his χρονογραφία (*Chronography*, year 384, in Migne, vol. 108:—

> This year Theodosius set out against the tyrant and reached Thessalonica with his army when, partly on account of the burden of his camp and partly because of the affair of a charioteer and one of the Prefect's pages, there was a sedition of the citizens. They loaded the Emperor with insults and murdered the Prefect. The Emperor, dissembling for a time and deceiving the people with soft words, ordered chariot-races; and he then commanded his troops to fall upon the people, who were assembled for the games, with their arrows. Fifteen thousand of the people were killed.

Sozomen, who was nearer to the events, reduces the slain to 7,000, but in other respects makes the massacre still more repulsive (*Ecclesiastical History*, vii, 25):—

> When Butherius was general of the army in Illyria, a charioteer one day saw one of his cup-bearers indecently exposed and made proposals to him. He was arrested and imprisoned. But soon afterwards a great chariot-racing show was to be held and the people demanded the release of the prisoner, who was, they said, necessary for the success of the festival. The request was refused and they rose in sedition.

St. Ambrose compelled the Emperor to do penance for the horrible and treacherous massacre of somewhere about 10,000 men, women, and children in the Hippodrome, or we should never hear about it to-day, but it was not quite the isolated outrage it is represented. Theophanes tells us in the preceding paragraph that the Emperor had similarly ordered a massacre of the people of Antioch for dragging a statue of the Empress through the mud, but on this occasion he was disarmed by a delegation of the citizens.

CHAPTER III

SINKING INTO THE DARK AGE

IT was at one time the fashion, and it is still the practice of most religious writers, to imagine that the virtue of the Christians of the third and fourth centuries lured the masses of Greeks and Romans from their official cults or from the rival religions—Mithraism, Manicheeism, etc.—which had spread over the Empire. This repute for virtue was based either upon the character of a few individuals or small groups, or upon fictitious martyrdoms and a literature which even Catholic scholars do not now defend. But the false education of the public was in still larger part due to a concealment of the fact that soon after the death of Constantine the bishops induced the emperors, who had refused to do more than put indirect pressure upon the older religions, to suppress by law all other cults than the Christian. I next translate the successive decrees or rescripts in which the law was promulgated. They are collected under Title 10 of Book XVI of the Theodosian Code:—

2. (Year 341.) Let superstition cease and the insanity of the sacrifices be abolished. Whoever shall dare to offer sacrifices against the law [a forgery attributed to Constantine] of the blessed prince, our father, and against this command of our clemency, shall be fittingly punished and the present sentence carried out.

3. (346.) Although all superstition is to be entirely abolished we nevertheless wish to have all temple buildings outside the walls preserved intact. . . .

4. (346.) It is our pleasure that in all places and cities the temples be closed forthwith and permission to approach them be absolutely refused. It is our will also that all shall abstain from offering sacrifices. If any man does anything of this nature let him suffer the avenging sword. Their resources shall, we decree, be confiscated to the treasury, and the governors of provinces shall be similarly punished if they neglect to carry out the law.

6. (356.) We command that any who offer sacrifices or worship idols shall be put to death. . . .

Pagan disdain at the repugnant spectacle of the Arian struggle, the restoration of freedom by Julian, and the refusal of his successor Valentinian I to persecute, left these laws ineffective in the Empire at large. Then a succession of boy emperors in the West,

and the accession of a docile and superstitious soldier, Theodosius, in the East, gave the bishops firmer ground for pressure and the law was renewed:—

> 7. (381.) If any man, in a mad and sacrilegious contempt of authority, shall resort to the forbidden sacrifices, whether by day or by night, and shall presume to think that he may approach a shrine or temple for the commission of this crime, let him know that he is subject to the provisions of the law. . . .

This is repeated in 382 and 385. In 391 heavy fines are imposed; in 392 a long rescript condemns officials of various kinds who claim exemption. Although we are not surprised that few men were prepared to lay down their lives for Jupiter, whose amorous adventures had long been a joke, the fact that rescripts continued to be issued every few years until 426, a hundred years after the conversion of Constantine, proves the extreme reluctance of the mass of the people to change their religion.

The most effective measures were that the funds of the temples were confiscated and the doors were sealed and put under police guard, so that the people had no alternative but a secret meeting (which was stamped out in the fifth century by the Popes by means of an inquisition and the death sentence) or the Christian Church. In 399 permission was given to destroy the temples in rural parts, and, though the law still demanded the preservation of the buildings in the cities, which were rather museums of religious art than empty meeting-places like the churches, the priests and monks fired the Christian mobs against them. Socrates the Scholastic (Lawyer) describes, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (v, 16), how the archbishop of Alexandria, Theophilus, in 391, got from the Emperor Theodosius, who was now in his dotage, permission to destroy the great temple of Serapis, to which was attached the second (after Athens) greatest centre of art and culture of the ancient world and the most valuable library yet known. In this Serapeum the pagans had taken up defensive arms when Theophilus, "a bold bad man whose hands were alternately polluted with gold and with blood" (Gibbon), drew up his forces in expectation of the imperial order:—

> When he got this power he did everything he could to pour contempt upon the mysteries of the gentiles. He cleaned out the cave-temple of Mithra and destroyed the Serapeum. He exposed in public the bloody emblems of the cult of Mithra, and in order to bring con-

tempt upon the cult of Serapis he had the enormous phalli carried about the public Forum.*

And when the pagans who lived in Alexandria, especially the professors of philosophy, saw these things they could not contain themselves, and they committed graver crimes than they had ever before perpetrated. At an agreed signal they bore down upon the Christians and killed any whom they found. But the Christians began to defend themselves. The evil grew worse. The fight went on until they were tired out with killing. Not many of the pagans perished but very many of the Christians, and the wounded on both sides were countless.

The zealous Christian historian goes on to describe how the civil government and the imperial troops helped the Christians in the work of destruction, which spoils his pious suggestion that an overwhelming mass of armed pagans had fallen upon an inoffensive Christian minority. The issue is eloquent enough. In the most beautiful city, after Athens, of the ancient world, and its most wonderful cultural centre, the temples and colleges were laid in ruins and the vast library of half a million volumes was destroyed. It is a late and entirely negligible story that it survived to be destroyed by the Arabs in the seventh century. Socrates, in fact, presently (Book VII), not only gives away the true character of these Christians of Alexandria, but also lets slip the fact that Archbishop Theophilus had armed regiments of ignorant and fiery monks from the large monasteries in the mountains to assist in the destruction of paganism and the triumph of the gentle religion of the Galilean. He describes the events which led to the murder of the last venerable figure of the great schools of Alexandria, the aged and learned Hypatia, in the year 415:—

Ch. 13. About this time the Jews were expelled from Alexandria by the bishop Cyril [successor of Theophilus in the archbishopric]. The people of Alexandria delight in disorder more than any other, seize every opportunity to break into intolerable crimes, and do not desist until blood has been shed. . . .

Orestes, the Prefect of Alexandria, was very angry and concerned that so great a city should be deprived of such a body of citizens (40,000) and he reported the matter to the Emperor. Cyril sent a

* The devout Socrates is here clearly confused. The cult of Serapis was austere and had no phallic features. Whether there was also a temple of Priapus (the phallus in which was large enough for a matron in search of fertility to sit upon) or a temple of Osiris with the popular emblems of that God, we cannot say. The learned men of the Serapeum would not tolerate such nonsense.

report to the Emperor about the crimes of the Jews, and in the meantime he tried to effect a reconciliation with Orestes, as the people of Alexandria insisted that he should. But Orestes would not listen. . . .

14. Some of the monks who dwelt on the mountains of Nitria, men of a fiery temper whom Theophilus had illegally armed for use against Dioscorus [a rival bishop] and his brethren, were now aflame with zeal and resolved to fight for Cyril. So about 500 of them left their monasteries and descended upon the city. They see the Prefect in his chariot, call him an idolater and pagan, and hurl other epithets at him. He, suspecting that it was a plot on the part of Cyril, replied that he was a Christian, baptized at Constantinople by Bishop Atticus. The monks paid no need to his words, and one of them, by name Ammonius, threw a stone which hit Orestes on the head and covered him with blood; and nearly all his guards fled and mingled with the crowd. But the people of Alexandria came to the rescue of the Prefect, put the monks to flight, and seized Ammonius. He was tortured in accordance with the laws, and this led to his death. . . . Cyril had the body of the monk exposed in a church and declared that his name henceforward should be Thaumasius [the Wonderful] and he should be counted amongst the martyrs. . . .

15. There was a woman at Alexandria named Hypatia . . . who was so learned that she far surpassed all the philosophers of the time. . . . All respected her for her high character*. . . . She was often consulted by Orestes, and the report got about that it was she who prevented friendly relations between Cyril and the Prefect. Some of the more hot-headed, therefore, led by Peter the Reader [a cleric], entered into a plot against her. They watch her returning to her house, pull her out of her carriage, and drag her to the Caesarean church. There they strip off her clothes and kill her with tiles [some translate " shells " or " bits of crockery "]. They tore her body limb from limb and burned the parts in a place called the Cinaron.

Such had Alexandria, the second Athens of the ancient world, become by the fifth century. The contemporary ecclesiastical historians or chroniclers, fully confirmed by the great preachers, give the same character to all the cities of the Greek half of Christendom.

A new heresy was ravaging the Church. Modernist theologians do not impress us when they say that the dogmas about Christ and the Trinity which they are discarding were due to " the subtlety of the Greeks." They were hammered out by rival bishops and abbots of no intellectual distinction, but with masses of grossly ignorant monks and people to support them, and, too often, the favour of equally ignorant women or scheming eunuchs

* That she was a beautiful *young* woman and held the Neo-Platonist superstitions is an error which even some Rationalist writers have incautiously borrowed from Kingsley's novel. Contemporaries (Malalas, etc.) describe her as an " old woman."

at Court. The cult of Mary, replacing that of Isis and Cybele, had begun, and the simple question was raised whether she should be called the Mother of God or the Mother of Jesus. The learned and devout Archbishop of Constantinople, Nestorius, declined to give the name God to a baby in his mother's arms—the divinity may have joined the humanity in manhood, he thought—and the unlearned and undevout Archbishop of Alexandria, Cyril, took the field (literally) against him. He contrived to get the inevitable Council located at Ephesus, where the cult of Mary was as fierce as had once been that of Diana, for the Church had not yet discovered that the body of Mary had been "assumed into heaven" and it was supposed to be buried in Ephesus. Cyril arrived early, with a formidable guard, and he and Memnon, Bishop of Ephesus, snatched a premature verdict. John, Archbishop of Antioch, arrived two days later with a crowd of bishops and deposed Cyril and Memnon for their irregular action. In short, the three archbishops and 200 bishops and the half-million amateurs made the air blue with anathemas.

The various accounts are summed up in the *Breviarium* (*Synopsis of History*, Migne, vol. 68) of Liberatus the Deacon. It is enough to say that he cannot conceal the vicious character of Cyril, who "falsified the works of Nestorius in order to confute him, for he was said to be an enemy of his." Both sides appealed to the Emperor, who, bewildered by this strange manner of settling what the Gospels really taught, ordered all the bishops, priests, and monks to go home. Nestorius quietly submitted for the sake of the peace of the Church, but the orthodox prelates took their sacred fury back into their respective provinces, and the Church was swept by a fire of passion which in a few years led to an appalling scene.

Cyril died in 444, and, unlovely as his character had been, his successor Dioscorus was revolting in comparison. He charged the new Archbishop of Constantinople, Flavian, with favouring Nestorianism, and demanded a new Council at Ephesus. The quarrel here was so scandalous that you find Church historians lightly dismissing it as the "Robbers' Council"; but it was attended by the four archbishops, legates from Rome, and 360 bishops, and our attention is diverted from it chiefly because it proved an appalling revelation of the character of the bishops, monks, and people. The short account of it given by Liberatus

the Deacon (ch. xii) tells how Dioscorus hurled the terrible anathema at his brother of Constantinople in the great church of Ephesus in the presence of the united representatives of the Church and a vast throng of the faithful. He goes on:—

> Whereupon some of the venerable bishops clasped the knees of Dioscorus, begging him not to condemn Flavian, but they soon desisted out of fear of the soldiers with drawn swords and the monks armed with clubs who confronted them. . . . All these evils were due to Dioscorus.
>
> Flavian was beaten and injured so severely that he died of his wounds. . . . And the bishops went their ways, and there was a worse schism than ever, the Egyptian, Thracian, and Palestinian bishops following Dioscorus, while the Oriental and Asiatic bishops were faithful to [the memory of] Flavian. The schism continued until the death of [the Emperor] Theodosius (450).

Evagrius Scholasticus (or Evagrius the Lawyer), a distinguished orthodox Greek of the following century, throws further light upon these amazing occurrences in his Εκκλησιαστίκη ἱστορία (*History of the Church*, vol. 86 of the Migne collection of the Greek Fathers, Bk. I):—

> Eusebius said [in a report to the Emperor] that Flavian was deposed owing to the intrigue of Chrysaphius, the Minister [chief eunuch] of Theodosius, because when he [the eunuch] demanded that Flavian should give him gold for procuring his ordination [as archbishop], Flavian, thinking that he would make him ashamed, sent him the sacred altar-vessels. . . . He also said that Flavian was beaten and kicked by Dioscorus himself and died a painful death.

He accuses Dioscorus of trying to make himself Primate of the entire Eastern Church and says that he used bribery and enlisted " a disorderly rabble."

An equally unquestioned authority, the Archbishop Nicephorus (*History of the Church*, vol. 146 of the Migne Greek series), confirms that Flavian was beaten and kicked by his right reverend brother and died three days later. He says, in fact, that " Dioscorus kicked him in the belly "—the monk Zonaras (Epitome, xiii, 23) says that the prelate (in full pontificals) " kicked like a wild ass "—and that the bishops were forced by soldiers with drawn swords to sign the condemnation of Flavian. He also explains that, as is not questioned, Dioscorus had the assistance of a bitter feud of two royal ladies, the Empress Eudocia and the Emperor's chaste and ambitious sister Pulcheria, and the Court eunuchs. As Pulcheria supported Flavian, the chief eunuch,

who hated her and sided with the Empress, had induced the Emperor to call the Synod at Ephesus and later to endorse the action of Dioscorus.

But I confine myself here to the facts which illustrate the general character of the Church. The Synod was duly convened by Church and State, and was attended by a most weighty representation of all sections of the Church, and it is just the fact that it illumines the general character—it ended in a free fight of monks, priests, and people while the bishops crept under the seats—that makes ecclesiastical historians push it out of sight under the opprobrious title of the "Robbers' Council"! But there was worse to come.

To represent the uglier features of the Council as due to a few individuals or a sudden loss of temper is not honest. Twenty years of fierce struggle and intrigue had preceded it, and twenty years of impassioned and often bloody struggle followed it. Theodosius died in the following year, and Pulcheria, now a married virgin, swept the court of her enemies and the Church of heretics by convening the Council of Chalcedon (451), in which Dioscorus was deposed and his chief supporters bribed or coerced to submit, but Egypt and Syria were stirred to greater fury than ever. Proterius was appointed Archbishop of Alexandria in the place of Dioscorus, and Evagrius (Bk. II, ch. v) describes the sequel:—

> And when he occupied the see a terrible riot occurred in the city, the people taking sides. . . . The rhetorician Priscus tells us in his history that he visited Alexandria at the time and saw the crowds attacking the civic authorities. When the soldiers tried to stop the riot, they were stoned and put to flight. They took shelter in what used to be called the Temple of Serapis, but the people laid siege to it and burned them alive. The Emperor, hearing this, sent 2,000 soldiers who were raw levies . . . and this made things worse than ever, for they raped the wives and daughters of the citizens.

The Prefect had to summon the citizens to the Circus and bribe them by heavy material rewards to quit their violence. Meantime the conflagration had spread to Syria. The Empress Eudocia, a charming and exceptionally cultivated woman, had been beaten in her feud with the grim and virtuous Pulcheria and had gone to live in Palestine. The date is not quite definite, but we may trust Count Marcellinus, who puts it, in his *Chronicon* (in Migne), before the death of Theodosius. He says:—

Saturninus, Count of the Domestics, was sent to Jerusalem by the Emperor Theodosius, and he slew the priest Severus and the deacon John, who were in the suite of the Empress Eudocia; and she in her anger at once had Saturninus beheaded. For this she was, by the order of her husband, deprived of her royal insignia, and she remained in Jerusalem until she died.

It appears that the virtuous and vindictive Pulcheria accused her of adulterous relations with the priest. Evagrius (i, 22) described how she built monasteries in the Holy Land and how, when the news came of the death of Theodosius, the swarms of monks, who agreed with her in supporting Dioscorus and reprobating the Synod of Chalcedon, cast aside all restraint:—

Some of the monks who had been at the Synod and were opposed to its decrees came into Palestine (from the desert) and began to stir up and inflame the whole of the monks. They demanded that the Bishop of Jerusalem, Juvenal, should retract his signature to the Synod and condemn it. He fled to Constantinople, and the opponents of the Synod met in the Church of the Resurrection and ordained Theodosius bishop; the man who had been the most disorderly at Chalcedon and had brought them the first news of it . . . a monk who had been caught in evil conduct by his own bishop and expelled from his monastery and who, when he had gone to Alexandria to support Dioscorus, had been sorely beaten, put on a camel, and taken through the streets as a malefactor. Many came to this man from the cities of the three Palestines and were ordained bishops by him. . . . The Emperor Marcian sent back Juvenal [apparently with troops], and when he arrived many bitter and lamentable things were done, each side doing whatever fury inspired them to do.

Gibbon, piecing together the fragments of news in the different chronicles, says of the monks that "in the name of the one incarnate nature (of Christ) they pillaged, they burnt, they murdered, the sepulchre of Christ was defiled with blood, and the gates of the city were (for years) guarded in tumultuous rebellion against the troops of the Emperor." The unhappy Empress, an Athenian lady of fair culture, had to pass the remainder of her life in this sombre environment, collecting such holy relics (a contemporary says) as phials of the virgin's milk and bits of her divine baby's underclothing. The Jews had begun their profitable and cynical trade in relics.

It was worse at Alexandria, when, in 457, the news came of the death, under suspicion of poison, of the Emperor Marcian who had held the city in sullen obedience. Evagrius says (ii, 8):—

When they heard of his death the citizens of Alexandria let loose their anger against [Archbishop] Proterius and were more bitter and violent than ever. The common people everywhere are easily fired with anger and seize upon the smallest pretext for violence, but the Alexandrians are the worst of all. . . . Taking advantage of the absence of the military commander Dionysius, who was in Egypt, they chose a certain Timotheus Aelurus as bishop. . . . Dionysius returned as swiftly as possible on account of the atrocities that were committed, and some of the Alexandrians, instigated by Timotheus, murdered Proterius, stabbing him in the belly when he had taken refuge in the Baptistry [of the Cathedral]. They then exhibited the body, suspended by a rope, in the place called the Tetrapylum, jeering and shouting that they had killed Proterius. They dragged the body through the streets [" beating and hacking it," another authority says] and burned it [or "what was left of it"]; and, as is stated in the petition which the bishop of Egypt and the clergy of Alexandria presented to the Emperor Leo, they even, in the manner of beasts, ate part of the intestines.

Such had the stately and learned Alexandria of the Ptolemies, the second greatest city of the old world, become after a century and a half of Christian leadership.

We will return to the Greek world in the next chapter. But the claim of Catholic writers who, forgetting for a moment that they must hold that the Goths and Vandals had demoralized Europe, say that the Church was more successful in the West cannot be entertained. There is, in the Migne collection of the Latin Fathers (vol. 59), a long letter of Pope Gelasius, the best Pope of the fifth century, which ought (if they ever read such things) to warn them. A Senator, representing the Roman laity, has criticized him for abolishing the licentious old festival of the Lupercalia, the last trace of the pagan cult, on which they pretended to think that the fertility of their women depended. The Pope replies, angrily, that it is their sins that have brought evil days upon Rome:—

Our morals, thefts, murders, adulteries, injustices, iniquities, ambitions, greeds, perjuries, false testimonies, oppression of the unfortunate . . . our unprecedented perversity in all things (*Adversus Andromachum*).

Rome was, in fact, much as it had been in the days of Damasus, without the colonies of chaste women. Anastasius, the successor of Gelasius, caused a schism in the Church by urging concessions to the Greeks in order to secure reunion, and when he died, in 498, two Popes, Laurentius and Symmachus, were set up. A

fragment of a contemporary life of Symmachus in Migne says (vol. 62):—

There was such disorder as wild beasts make among the whole people and the clergy so that the fear neither of God nor man could check them. They were compelled to submit the matter to the King [the Goth Theodoric, an Aryan] and by the use of bribes Symmachus got his rival sent away and made Bishop of Nocera. A few years later Symmachus was accused of grave crimes [adultery and theft]. . . . Laurentius came to Rome and ruled the Church about four years [his rival ruling it from another Church in Rome] and this is not the place to tell what civil wars were waged and how many murders were committed in that time.

Theodoric, a finer monarch than any Roman emperor since Diocletian, wearily awarded the Papacy to the new Tickler of Matrons' Ears, but half of the clergy and people angrily refused to submit as long as he lived, and his story is not edifying. But we have a more important document than the short accounts of this Roman quarrel of 498–514, and it gives us an extraordinary picture of the entire Western Church in Gaul, Spain, Africa, and Italy.

About the year 450 a distinguished and respected priest of Marseilles, Salvianus, wrote, in the form of an open letter to a bishop, a survey of the Western Church which forms quite a large book, with the title of *De Gubernatione Dei* (*On God's Government*).* Augustine had, in his *City of God*, tried to reconcile Christians to the fall of Rome by arguing that the collapse of civilization did not matter. Salvianus takes the line that the wreck of the Empire by the barbarians, whom he represents throughout as more virtuous and pleasing to God than their victims, was permitted or directed as a punishment of sin; and, after every allowance is made for the zeal of a preacher, he gives us an extraordinary account of corruption. I translate from the original (Migne collection, vol. 53):—

It is a grave and painful thing that I am going to say. The very Church of Christ, which ought in all things to appease God, does

* A translation of it by E. V. Sanford is included in the *Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies* published by Columbia University. The original plan of this work, in which the present author was invited to co-operate, did not provide for "studies," but, rather on the lines of the present work, proposed to translate hitherto untranslated works on Christian history. Unfortunately the project passed under the control of others, and of the twenty-five volumes published, or announced, only three, including the above, are translations of ancient works or "Sources."

nothing but provoke his anger. Apart from a very few who avoid evil, what is nearly the whole body of Christians but a sink of vice? How many will you find in the Church who are not drunkards, gluttons, adulterers, fornicators, rapers, gamblers, robbers, or murderers? I ask this of the conscience of every Christian; of the vices and crimes I have named how many men are not guilty of some, if not all? You will more easily find the man who has committed the whole of them than the man who has committed none. You will more easily find men guilty of all crimes than men innocent of all; more easily men guilty of the graver crimes than the lighter; that is to say, men who have committed both the graver and the lighter than men who are guilty only of the lighter. For to this turpitude of morals nearly the entire population of the Church has sunk, so that in the whole of Christendom it is deemed a sort of holiness if you are not very vicious (III, 9).

What rich men or noble keeps himself virtuous or abstains from all sorts of crimes? . . . I say nothing of the lighter sins. Let us see if he is free from the two capital sins: murder and fornication. Which of them is not stained with human blood or foul with the slime of impurity: a single one of these brings eternal punishment upon him, yet there is hardly one rich man who has not committed both (10).

And since there is no section of all the Christians of the world, almost no corner of Christendom, that is not full of every sort of offence and every stain of mortal sin, why do we flatter ourselves that we are Christians? (11)

Are the populations of the cities that were unchaste in the days of their prosperity now chaste in their adversity? Has drunkenness, which had grown with peace and abundance, decreased during the hostile invasions? Italy has been devastated so many times: have the vices of the Italians ceased? Rome has been conquered: have the Romans quit blaspheming and brawling? The barbarians have flooded Gaul: are not the crimes of the Gauls as bad as ever? (VI, 12).

In the whole of Gaul those who are first in wealth are first also in vice. Nowhere else in the world is pleasure more vicious, life more contaminated, morals more corrupt. . . . Is this the case in Aquitaine alone? Let us pass to other parts of the world lest I be thought to speak only of the Gauls. What? Have not the same or even greater crimes destroyed Spain? . . . God, when he allowed the Vandals to conquer Spain to give proof alike of his hatred of carnal licence and his love of chastity, chose these Vandals because of their zeal for chastity and let them enslave the Spaniards because of their terrible impurity (VII, 2).

What reform was there amongst us? What part of the Roman Empire was chastened by its afflictions? Gaul was devastated. Did Spain, which is next to it, reform? . . . The Spaniards began to burn in the flames that devoured Gaul, and the most evil feature of it all is, as I said, that the fire burned their bodies but not their vices (12).

The Vandals might have remained in Spain without fear, but the divine hand that had brought them to punish the vices of the Spaniards drove them on to Africa. . . . The Vandals did not cross to Africa

because of God's severity but because of Africa's vices. The Africans drew them by their profound and persistent iniquity. Other men are part good and part evil . . . but in Africa there is no balance of good and evil because all are evil. Apart from a very few servants of God, what was the whole land of Africa but a house of vice like unto the bronze pot of which the Prophet (Ezekiel xxiv, 6) said: Woe to the bloody city! Just as all the filth of a vessel collects in the bilge, so the vices of the whole world poured into Africa. I know no kind of wickedness in which they did not excel. Pagan and savage nations have their own vices but they are not wholly corrupt. They have elements of both good and evil, but there is scarcely a man in Africa in whom there is any good. They are inhuman . . . most fraudulent . . . very greedy and treacherous. Their impurity and blasphemy must not be confused with these because the vices I have enumerated they share with other nations, but in impurity and blasphemy they surpass themselves (13).

Who does not know that the whole of Africa has always blazed with the torches of lust, not behaving like a land of peace and the home of men, but like an Aetna of impure flames. Who does not know that the whole of the Africans are unchaste except, perhaps, those who have been converted to God, that is to say changed their lives. But this is so rare and novel that it is like saying that Caius is not Caius. It is so rare that to say that an African is not unchaste is like saying that an African is not an African. . . . To speak of Carthage . . . and chiefly of its obscenities and blasphemies, I see a city boiling over with vice . . . not all are drunk with wine but all are with sin (16).

But let us pass over these matters, for they are the same in almost every part of the Roman World. . . . When were these things ever done by the barbarians? None of the Vandals were polluted by the same open incests as the Romans. They completely abolished carnal impurity (17).

Salvianus was no cloistered monk or overheated and unbalanced fanatic. For the age he was a writer of cultural distinction, and, living in the cosmopolitan port of Marseilles, he was well placed to know the extensive world he surveys. Yet not one writer who repeats the legend that the new religion improved—it is usually suggested that it transformed—the morals of the Roman world ever notices this contemporary characterization and the repeated assurance of Salvianus that there has been no improvement whatever in morals.

Since the ecclesiastical writer has to tell how, about the end of this fifth century, the first great monastic order was founded by St. Benedict, and something of our modern sociological interest has to be infused into this, he recollects that the barbaric invasions had now destroyed civilization and that Benedict rendered service

by providing these quiet refuges from the violence and vice of the world. Here he not only ignores the emphatic testimony of Salvianus, but he refuses to reproduce Benedict's own assurance, in the first chapter of his Rule, that he was moved by the general depravity of the monks of his time. We have, in fact, here another proof that there was no sudden deterioration of morals when the Goths, Vandals, Franks, etc., overran the Empire, but a continuity of conduct from the fourth century into the Dark Age. We saw what heavy strictures Jerome made upon the monks of his time. Basil and Chrysostom were almost as severe, and Augustine used much the same language as Jerome about the wandering monks, who were the majority. In his work *De Opere Monachorum* (*Of the Work of Monks*—it would be better rendered *Shall Monks Work?*) he says:—

> Some of them sell limbs of the martyrs—if they really are martyrs. Others broaden their fringes and phylacteries, while others again lyingly say that they have heard that their parents or relatives live in this or that country and that they are going to visit them. All of them demand and receive a fee for their lucrative poverty or a reward for the unpretended holiness (ch. 25).

Unfortunately, Augustine in his later years, when he wrote the works which had most influence in Europe, was a sleepy and credulous pietist, far removed from the Augustine whom most people have in mind, and in writing the first Rule for monastic life he gave extraordinary advice about the admission of neophytes. Every man who applied, slave or free, was to be admitted " even though it be not clear whether they have come for the purpose of serving God or have merely fled lazily from a life of poverty and toil, to be fed and clothed, and perhaps honoured, by those who had once despised and beaten them."

The result might easily have been foreseen. Crowds of worthless men entered monasteries to get a sort of official seal on their profession, and in a short time joined the streams of what were called " vagabond monks." Benedict a hundred years later, and Isidore of Seville two hundred years later, found the situation so similar to that which had elicited the scorn of Jerome and Augustine that, in discussing it, they just quote the very words that Jerome and Augustine had used. In the first chapter of his Rule (Migne, Vol. 66) Benedict says that there are four classes of monks—coenobites (living a communal life in monasteries),

hermits, those who were then called sarabaites, and the vast army of roving pseudo-monks:—

> The third class, a vile class, is that of the irregular monks who do not live under an approved rule but . . . lie to God when they have their heads shaved. They live in pairs, or groups of three, or even singly, without a pastor, not enclosed in the Lord's sheepfolds but their own. Whatever they think or desire they call holy, and what they do not want they say is not lawful. The fourth class is that of the vagabond monks who all their lives travel from province to province or remain a few days in cells of a sort, always on the move and never still, satisfying their own lusts and in search of good food, and in all things worse than the preceding class.

Cassianus, contemporary of Benedict and patron of monks, had said (*Coll.* XVIII, 7), using the familiar language about them, that the wandering monks were "a poisonous plant that had come into the Church from Ananias and Saphira." This theory, and all the previous censures of the monks, are repeated by Isidore of Seville, the great Spanish prelate and scholar, in the seventh century. In his *De ecclesiasticis officiis* (*Of Ecclesiastical Offices*, II, 16, Migne series, No. 83) he distinguishes six classes of monks, "of which three are admirable and three vile." The latter are Benedict's third and fourth classes. His fifth class he describes as:—

> Circumcellions who wander about everywhere in the robes of monks, carrying their hypocrisy into all provinces, never on a mission and never fixed, never standing and never sitting. . . . Some sell limbs of the martyrs, if they really are martyrs [he reproduces Augustine]. . . . The sixth class, the worst of all, is that which took its rise in Ananias and Saphira . . . ostentatious in all things, loose sleeves, old shoes, coarse robes, perpetual sighs, visits to virgins, libels of priests, and gorging until they vomit on feast days [quoting Jerome].

Thus there was so little change in this gross scandal of Church-life everywhere, from the middle of the fourth century to the seventh, that the Fathers reproduce each other's words about them from Syria to Spain. All of them use the Latin expression *teterrimum genus*, "a most vile class." Yet, as in regard to all other aspects of religious life at the time, we get in our modern literature most admiring accounts of the small minority of strict monks who followed Jerome, Augustine, Benedict, and Isidore, but no reference whatever to this far larger brood of lazy sensualists who filled every province during centuries.

CHAPTER IV

DEBASEMENT OF THE GREEK WORLD

THE extracts from contemporary Christian writers which I have given bring us to the sixth century—the first century of the Dark Age. Catholic apologists are not yet agreed whether the Dark Age was a myth, as they have induced some of the less important American writers on the history of Europe to say, or whether it is better to persist in the older position, that the devastation of the Roman Empire by the barbarians necessarily led to a Dark Age. But the Greek or Eastern or Byzantine half of the Roman Empire, having a formidable barrier against the northern avalanche in the Black Sea and the Balkan mountain masses, was not so devastated, and the reader will expect a few further glimpses of its condition before we confine ourselves to mediaeval Europe.

Lecky, who strained the evidence of his own facts, in his *History of European Morals*, to pay compliments to Christianity, but broke down when he came to the Byzantine Empire, quotes, without translating, this deadly statement of Professor Rambaud: that, of 109 Byzantine emperors, only thirty-four died in bed and only eight in war or by accident. Further, Rambaud says:—

> We count 12 who abdicated, voluntarily or otherwise, 12 went to prison or a monastery (under compulsion), three were starved to death, 18 were mutilated or had their eyes cut out, and 20 were poisoned, suffocated, strangled, stabbed, or thrown from a height.

The Church was in particularly intimate alliance with this blood-spattered Court, but a few extracts must be given to show the general character of the Greeks.

The scalding passions and acts of violence inspired by the controversy about the real nature of Christ and the Trinity, which our theologians humorously trace to " the subtlety of the Greeks," continued. The names of Flavian, Dioscorus, and Chalcedon, which we met in the last chapter, continued to stir the blood for six or seven decades. In 473 Emperor Zeno appointed a new bishop of Antioch, but the Zealots, says Theophanes in his χρονογραφία (*Chronography*, Migne series, 108), find him unsound and " stab him with sharp reeds in the baptistery of the Church

of the holy martyr Barlaam and throw his body into the Orontes." In the pages of this monk-chronicler these things are stated with less emotion than the portents, comets, riots, etc., that occur in every chapter: the dragon's gut 120 feet long, with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* written on it; the fire which fell from heaven and was 50 feet deep on the roofs until the Virgin turned it into dust; the dog that can pick out in the crowd the women who are adulterous, pregnant, or whores; and so on.

Bishop Victor is little better when he describes, in his Chronicle (Migne 68), the state of Egypt in the year 508:—

> Unclean spirits took possession of the people of Alexandria and of the whole of Egypt, great and humble, clerics and monks, even foreigners who were just passing through. They were deprived of human speech and barked like dogs day and night. . . . They were bound in chains and dragged to the churches because they bit their own hands and arms. An angel in the form of a man appeared to them and told them that it was because they had put an anathema upon the Council of Chalcedon.

This Council had been held fifty-seven years earlier! Even the lawyer Evagrius has some piquant (but quite serious) pages on the lengths to which this zeal for correct doctrinal formulae carried folk. He tells us in his *Ecclesiastical History* (III, 332) how the Empress Ariadne chose one of the minor palace officials to be her husband and consort in 491. Less responsible contemporaries say that she had attained the blessed state of widowhood and power by burying alive her husband, a repulsive and murderous ruffian. However that may be, her new choice, Anastasius, a very pious and virtuous man, bribed the people to accept him, but the archbishop scented heresy and forced him to sign a profession of faith. He became emperor and wanted to recover it:—

> Anastasius tried every sort of trick to deprive Macedonius of the bishopric. So they brought to court [the law court] a number of boys who accused Macedonius of having committed a base offence with them. It was, however, found that the bishop's genitals had been cut off [one account makes him prove this in open court], and they had to resort to other tricks.

Anastasius is one of the " good " emperors, and he provoked a sedition by attempting to reform the morals of the people of Constantinople. In the same chapter Evagrius says:—

The Monks of the district of Cynegyrica and all those who lived in the first province of Syria gathered together and burst into the city [Antioch] with great noise and disorder. They wanted to compel [Archbishop] Flavian to anathematize the Synod of Chalcedon and the Epistle of [Pope] Leo. When he emphatically refused to do this and the monks pressed, the people of the city rose against the monks and killed an enormous number, who found their graves in the Orontes [river].

Evagrius, being a sound man in theology, visibly chuckles in writing this. He goes on to tell how the next Archbishop of Antioch, Severus, being unsound about Chalcedon, two of his bishops deposed him:—

They instructed Aurelian, archdeacon of the cathedral of Epiphanes, to deliver the writ. He, fearing Severus and his power, dressed as a woman when he got to Antioch and approached Severus joking and with a lascivious air, pretending in all ways that he was a woman. He wore a veil and lowering this over his face and sighing deeply, presented the writ as if it were a petition [then mingled with the crowd and fled].

In the same year (518), Evagrius continues (III, 44):—

There was a terrible sedition at Constantinople, as if an attempt were being made to destroy the foundations of the Christian religion, because the Emperor wanted to add the words, Who wert crucified for us, to the Trisagion [" Holy, Holy, Holy "]. Archbishop Severus relates in a letter to Sotericus that Macedonius [Archbishop of Constantinople] and his clergy were responsible for this sedition. . . . When it was found impossible to curb the people the lives of many nobles and distinguished men were in danger, and many buildings in the city were burned down. And the people found a rustic monk in the house of Marinus the Syrian and, saying that he was the author of the proposal, they cut off his head and carried it through the streets on a pole, shouting that this was the enemy of the Trinity.

" Bread and games " had, we are told, been the absorbing passions of the Greek–Roman pagans. " Theology and games " were the still more violent interests of the new Greeks. But while the pagan workers had never needed to break heads in their eagerness for bread (which was given them free), and had rarely broken any heads over the games of either Circus or Amphitheatre—even the bloody animal fights of the Amphitheatre still continued in the East—the new Greeks slew each other in their tens of thousands in struggles over each of their great passions. It is usual to ascribe the riots over the chariot races to the Empress

Theodora, whom the Blues * had mortally offended in her lurid early years; but a passage of Theophanes at the year 512, when Theodora was still a little gutter-girl of a few summers, seems to have been overlooked:—

> This year the Green faction caused riots in all cities. They did great damage with stones, murdered many, and intimidated the civic authorities themselves. . . . The rioting began at Antioch and spread to other cities, and it lasted five years. The Greens killed the Blues with their swords, even entering their houses and cutting off their heads.

Theophanes significantly never mentions Theodora, and he gives a wrong date to the culminating riot in which no fewer than 35,000 persons were killed. It was in 532, and doubtless the favours secured for the Greens by that time were largely responsible. The affair is called a battle of the factions, but the whole city must have taken part in it. The carnage was appalling—equal to that in a great modern battle—and, in spite of its formidable guard, part of the palace was burned down as well as the cathedral and many of the city's finest buildings.

As there is some scepticism about the account given by the lawyer Procopius, though he was probably living in Constantinople at the time, we may take the shorter account given by Theophanes in his *Chronography* (at the year 524). The Blues, protesting that the Greens persecuted them—it appears that by this time both sides roamed the city armed with swords, assaulted women, and broke into houses—appealed to the Emperor in the Hippodrome, as citizens had a right to do. The long dialogue between the spokesman of the Blues and the Emperor's Announcer, which Theophanes gives, is fairly polite, though according to other authorities there were such cries as " Ass, thou liest " hurled at the very resplendent and pompous monarch. However, the Greens left the Hippodrome and gathered in the streets. The Gothic mercenaries—heavily armed giants they seemed to the Greeks—were sent against them, and seven of the ringleaders were arrested. Four were hanged, and Theophanes takes up the story at the point where the other three are to be executed:—

> One of them died at once, but the rope broke and the other two fell from the gallows. They were hanged again and fell once more. The

* At Constantinople there were only two rival colours of charioteers and their supporters—the Blues and the Greens; and the Hippodrome (sometimes called the circus) combined the entertainments of the Roman Amphitheatre, Theatre, and Circus.

people seeing this (and taking it to be a sign of the divine will) shouted, Take them to the Church. The monks of St. Conon took the prisoners to the Church of St. Laurence, as it had the right of sanctuary. The Prefect sent soldiers to watch them, but the people flocked to the Praetorium and demanded that the troops be removed, and he refused. In a rage, therefore, the people burned down the Praetorium and all buildings from the Hall in the Forum to the door of the Palace and killed every soldier they could find. They broke into the houses and looted them. They set fire to the Porch of the Palace, the barracks of the guards . . . [follows a long list of public buildings and churches which they destroyed]. The Emperor got together his money and treasures and prepared to fly to Thrace. The factions dragged the bodies of the dead, of both sexes, through the streets and threw them into the sea; and when they heard that the Emperor and Empress were fleeing to Thrace they hailed the patrician Hypatius as Emperor.

The fiery little Empress, it seems, shamed her cowardly husband —Evagrius as well as Procopius says that he here showed himself a sheer coward—won over some of the mob-leaders by bribes, set the rival factions against each other, and then sent the troops upon them. Theophanes, drawing upon some contemporary account, says that 35,000 were killed in the four days of rioting. If this, apart from the number of the victims, were an exceptional event in the Greek cities it would be misleading to quote the passage. Such riots were, on the contrary, quite common. The work of Theophanes teems with riots in which " many were slain," and twenty years later we still find him drearily describing bloody fights of the factions " in all the cities of the Empire."

The particular importance of the terrible riots of 532 is that they fall in the one period of Byzantine history in which religious, and indeed some historical, writers find an element of greatness. From the sociological point of view the character of " Justinian the Great " is not in itself a matter of importance, but, shorn of romantic and religious untruths, it agrees with all other indications of the real debasement of the Greek world. Naturally, religious historians were determined to have at least one " great " man in a thousand years of Christian influence, in a part of the world that combined the heritage of Greece and Rome and was not devastated by the barbarians. Such traditions are not easily dislodged from history, but modern authorities admit that he was " not great in the ordinary sense of the word." In point of fact he, like Louis XIV, took the credit of the work of his servants. The pagan lawyer Trebonian compiled the Justinian

Code for which he is most praised, and his great generals Narses and Belisarius (whom he basely robbed) extended his Empire.

It is sometimes suggested that only Procopius, a lawyer and at one time Secretary of Belisarius, and one of the most accomplished men of the time, impugns Justinian. This is false. Evagrius, who belongs to the next generation and was a strictly orthodox Christian—many believe that Procopius was a pagan or sceptic—is hardly less bitter. He says (*Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 30) that Justinian " sold all offices," confiscated the property of the rich on corrupt pretexts, and protected any who paid him to evade his laws; that even a prostitute could get the property of a rich man by making a false charge (generally of sodomy) if she shared the wealth with Justinian or his wife. He even says that " there was something in Justinian that surpassed the cruelty of beasts " (IV, 32), and his mordant obituary notice is that " Justinian filled the world with disorder and went to the tortures that awaited him in hell " (V, 1). The two men who had been the chief agents of his cruelty and greed, one of whom, Evagrius says (V, 3), was a notorious paederast—whereas one of the moral gems of the Justinian Code is its severity in punishing sodomy—were executed when he died. Finlay, one of the highest authorities on Byzantine history, says that " many pagans believed with Procopius that Justinian was the demon destined to complete the catastrophe of the human race " (*A History of Greece*, 1877, I, 225).

The attempt to relieve the character of his wife Theodora is even more desperate, and the comparative candour of such works as Masefield's *Basilissa* (1940) is misleading. Unfortunately, in view of that protection of virtue by the literary censorship which is on the historical side a protection of untruth, I cannot give a full translation of her story as it is told in Procopius's Ἀνέκδοτε (*Anecdotes*). An elegant edition of this, with an English translation (under the title *Secret History of the Court of Justinian*), was published by the Athenian Society in 1896. The editor observes that Procopius is " the most important of the Byzantine historians," and that in this book—he wrote also several large historical works—he presents " a mixture of crime and debauchery not less hideous than that of Messalina." But the work was printed and published privately, so that I cannot quote it as having already passed the censor, and the reader must be content with the following unsatisfactory version.

Acacius, the father of Theodora, an animal-keeper for the Greens at the Hippodrome, died and left his widow with three daughters—Theodora, an elder sister Comitona, aged seventeen, and a young child. The mother took on a new partner and wanted to get the job for him, but the Blues had already sold it. The story continues:—

> The mother, seeing the spectators going to the Hippodrome, put crowns [the emblems of virginity] on the heads and hands of her daughters and sent them to appeal to the people. The Blues would not listen to them but the Greens were sympathetic. Comitona, the elder, was already well known as a prostitute, and Theodora, who was next to her in age, waited on her sister in all things, dressed as a slave, and used to carry the chair on which she sat. At that time Theodora was not yet mature enough to have relations with men in the normal manner and she prostituted herself to the vilest slaves who attended their masters at the theatre [in perverse fashion]. . . . For a long time she did this in the brothels [attached to the Hippodrome]. As soon as she became mature her mother destined her for the theatre, and she was counted amongst the actresses who used to be called the foot-soldiers, for she neither played nor danced nor was in the chorus in any capacity, but she hired all parts of her body to any who paid the price. Later she served the actors in all things, and she played various absurd parts [obscene acting which he describes later]. For she was very witty in a foul sense, and she drew the eyes of all, especially as she had no sense of shame but exhibited herself as far as the law permitted. No other woman ever wallowed in pleasure as she did. She would pass a night feasting with two or more rich youths . . . and then pass, insatiable, to their thirty or more slaves. She grumbled that nature had not provided woman with more orifices . . . [she was not only a nymphomaniac, but a pervert in both senses]. She was not simply obscene, but the most ingenious mistress of all the arts of obscenity. . . . When decent men met her in the streets they turned aside lest they defile themselves by touching her clothes.

I reproduce this awful page as far as one may, because it not only gives us a picture of life in Christian Constantinople—and it is not surpassed by any authentic picture of vice in ancient Rome—but because nothing more surely indicates the character of Justinian than that he should venture to make such a woman, after she had passed under the care of several rich men, first and quite openly (in the palace) his mistress and then Empress of what was then the richest Empire in the world. Historians accept the account as substantially true, and Procopius himself says that he takes some details from rumours or gossip. But the substance of it is decisively proved by a small work the manuscript of which was discovered in the last century. In this

Syriac * work, which was written by a bishop, John of Ephesus, who was under the deepest obligation to Theodora and not for a moment minded to defame her, she is quite casually described as "Theodora of the Brothel," even in her imperial days. The monk-historian Zonaras charges her, as Procopius does, with great cruelty and corruption in seizing funds, and contemporary Latin writers on Papal history describe her acting with sacrilegious ferocity to a Pope who would not obey her. "Bring him to me or by the living God I will have your skin," she wrote to her commander in Italy, according to Anastasius the (Papal) Librarian; and the Pope, covered with blood and dust, a rope round his neck, was dragged through the streets of Constantinople "like a bear" between lines of jeering citizens. So says the semi-official biographer of the Popes. Procopius describes the grisly dungeons she had underneath the palace for her prisoners—and it is piquant that these were now generally men who differed from her on points of theology:—

> The Empress had a large number of men, many of whom were quite innocent, put to death. She had friends of Belisarius [Justinian's greatest commander] and Photius, and even men who were mere acquaintances of theirs, so severely flogged that to this day no one knows what became of them. Theodosius, a Senator . . . she robbed of all his possessions and lodged in her dark underground prison, fastened by the neck to a manger by so short a rope that whichever way he turned his body it was never slack. . . . He was kept thus for four months, and he became insane. . . . Theodora had secret prisons so deep underground that you could not tell the difference between day and night. She kept Photius [a noble] bound in one of these for years.

Photius escaped and fled to a church. But neither she nor Justinian ever respected the Church law of sanctuary, and he was dragged out and again committed to the dungeon.

Such is the broad picture of life in the "golden age" of the metropolis of that half of Christendom for which no excuse of barbaric invasions can be made. But instead of repeating these scenes as they occurred one generation after another, let me say a few words to link this with what happened thirty years later.

Justinian died in 565, and his nephew Justin, who was married to Theodora's shrew of a niece Sophia, seized the purple before the people knew that the Emperor was dead. They made short

* A Latin translation (*Commentaria de Beatis Orientalibus*, 1889) was published in Holland, by Dorin & Land.

work of their only rival, but in a few years Justin was found to be a homicidal maniac. Sophia consoled herself with a handsome commander of the Guard, a married man, and to her great anger the people hailed him as Emperor when Justin died. She " set on foot plots without number against him," and according to some authorities she succeeded in poisoning him. Another handsome officer, Maurice, then received the purple, and the chronicle again gives us sordid pictures of the life of Constantinople.

Maurice was a pious man, of very mediocre intellect, whom the citizens quickly learned to despise. They pelted him with stones one day when he walked in a solemn religious procession, and another day, finding a man who resembled him, they clothed him as a monk, crowned him with garlic and led him gaily on an ass round the city. A regiment in the provinces sent its commander, Phocas (who probably engineered the plot), to Constantinople. Theophanes says (year 594):—

> Speaking in the presence of Maurice and the Senate he poured insults upon the Emperor so that some of them struck him and tried to pull out his beard by the roots.

Phocas returned to lead his troops against the city, and Maurice ordered chariot races to cover up the situation. But both Blues and Greens roared at him in the Hippodrome to act like a man and defend his Empire:—

> So, deceived by their loyal cries, he instructs them to guard the walls of the city. They send and ask his son Theodosius, who is hunting with his father-in-law Germanus, to come and take over the Empire or leave it to Germanus as they cannot tolerate Maurice any longer. Maurice, learning of this, sends for his son and Germanus and accuses them. Theodosius he had scourged; Germanus fled to the church of the Virgin. Maurice ordered the guards to drag him from the church and there was a great riot in the city. Germanus was willing to surrender but the people would not let him. They hurled gross insults at Maurice, crying: Let any man who loves thee be skinned alive. . . . So Maurice, putting off the royal robes and dressing as a private person, took to the boats with his wife and children in the middle of the night. The crowds continued all night to revile the Emperor and the Archbishop Cyriacus. There was a great storm but Maurice reached the church of St. Autonomous safely, though that night he was seized with gout. . . . Meantime Germanus asked the leader of the Blue faction to help him to seize the crown. He promised to reward him and the Blues, but they, objecting that he had supported the Greens and might return to them, refused. They went instead to greet the tyrant Phocas.

This man, an officer of no distinction, a deformed and ugly little man of vile character, received the imperial crown from the archbishop when he promised to keep to the strict line of orthodox doctrine, from which Maurice had slipped, and installed himself and his equally repulsive wife in the magnificent Blachernae Palace. But a few days later, when he gave some decision in favour of the Greens in the Hippodrome, the Blues cried ominously: "Remember that Maurice is not dead." The abbot Theophanes continues:—

> The tyrant, hearing this, began at once to plot the death of Maurice and sent soldiers to make an end of him and his family. Under the eyes of Maurice himself (who had been dragged from sanctuary) his five sons were killed first, so that Maurice should suffer all the more torture.

Then Maurice was dispatched, and shortly afterwards his widow and three young daughters were, with a refinement of torture, dragged to the same spot and beheaded. But the citizens soon found that Phocas was as beastly in character as in bodily form. His short reign was a nightmare of tyranny and debauchery, and there was the usual revolt. Archbishop Nicephorus tells us:—

> While this was being done a certain Photius, whose wife the Emperor had raped, forced his way into the palace with a band of soldiers, seized Phocas, stripped him of the royal robes, clothed him in a gray tunic, tied his hands behind his back, and took him on a ship [to the fleet of the new aspirant to the throne, Heraclius]. Heraclius ordered that he should be beheaded and mutilated on the ship. His right hand and his virile member were cut off, and the latter was taken through the streets on a pole with the body, which was burned in the Cattle Market.

It may sound ironic to add that Heraclius proved to be the best emperor in several centuries of Byzantine life; but there are more ironic documents than this, and they refer, not to the debased life of the East, but to the West under the greatest of the early Popes, the saintly monk Gregory I. It seems that it is to-day quite improper to draw the thinnest cloud over the glory of these greater heroes of ecclesiastical history, but the reader may find that it is vital to his conception of clerical statesmanship in its most religious form to see these documents.

They are letters which Pope St. Gregory wrote to the Emperor Phocas and his Empress Leontia—who was, says Archbishop Nicephorus, "as bad as he"—after the horrible murder of

Maurice and his family. I should explain that Gregory was exceptionally well informed on events in Constantinople, where he had spent several years, and that, on the other hand, the Emperor Maurice had, in a letter to him, called the Pope an "old fool" and refused to obey him. The first letter, written as soon as the news of the murder reached Rome, begins:—

> Gregory to the Emperor Phocas. Glory to God on high who, in accordance with what is written, changes the times and transforms kingdoms. . . . We feel ourselves strengthened by the abundance of this gladness, and we rejoice that the benignity of your piety has been raised to the height of imperial rule. Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, and let the whole people of the country which has hitherto been so grievously afflicted, rejoice in the benignity of your acts . . . (Letters, in Migne, XIII, 31).

The second letter was sent after a sufficient interval of time to permit Gregory to get accurate news of events and learn the character of Phocas:—

> Gregory to the Emperor Phocas. It pleases us to reflect, with joy and great thanksgiving, what praise we owe to Almighty God because the yoke of sadness is lifted and we have reached an age of liberty under the imperial piety of Your Benignity. . . . (38)

The letter to the Empress, a vulgar and vicious adventuress, was written at the same time:—

> Gregory to the Empress Leontia. What tongue can utter, what mind can compose, the thanks we owe to Almighty God for the serenity of your empire. . . . Let the choirs of angels sing of glory in heaven to the Creator of all. . . . (39)

In the next chapter we shall find Gregory writing similar letters to the vilest queen in Europe. The motive is the same in all these letters: the monarch has promised to be good to the Church and respect the Papacy. Gregory is counted, by all Catholic authorities, the greatest and most deeply religious Pope in the first thousand years of Papal history.

We have reached the year 600, nearly two centuries after the imperial penal rescripts have extinguished every religion except the Christian, and it might seem to be enough to observe that no improvement took place in the Byzantine world while the Dark Age was deepening over Europe. But let us, since pretty pictures of Byzantinian life now multiply—pictures of the art of the craftsman, the learning of an occasional scholar, the piety

of an occasional saint—glance at the history of two further centuries.

A particular feature of Byzantine life that intrigues the social historian is the number of hard, aggressive, often repulsively cruel women who appear in the chronicles after the year 450, when the Empire becomes solidly Christian. It is one of three features—the others are sexual licence and the frequency of horrible mutilations (eyes, ears, noses, tongues, hands, feet, breasts, and sex-organs), both in law and in private quarrels—in which this period anticipates what is humorously called the Age of Chivalry in Europe. The idea that woman had, in comparison with the Roman woman of the imperial period, become modest and virtuous provokes the smile of the informed student. Theodora, her equally vicious friend Antonina, and her niece Sophia, were by no means the first callous and aggressive women to appear in the history of the Byzantine Court, and many followed them. In the eighth century Martina, second wife of Heraclius and almost the successor of Leontia, had married her uncle in defiance of the Church, and at the death of Heraclius she pushed her son aside and ruled the Empire vigorously and successfully until she found herself in exile with a slit tongue, legally inflicted for a charge of murder. But a worse, if more religious, royal mother soon appeared.*

For a century after the death of Martina, in 642, the Byzantine chronicle is a dreary and repulsive record of crime and debauchery. Her son was driven out and in the end dispatched by his bath-attendant with a heavy soap-dish: his son, who slit the noses of his royal brothers and castrated a noble youth for mourning when his father was executed, touched the high-water mark of brutality; the grandson, who allowed eunuchs to lay the lash on the naked back of his mother in the palace and strangled offenders with his own hands, fell little short of it. The soldiers and citizens concluded that it was time to extinguish the brood of " Justinian the Great," and the monk Zonaras describes the blood-bath in his Επίτομη (*Epitome of History*, XIV, 25):—

His [Justinian II] son Tiberius had, with his maternal grandmother

* These horrible mutilations quickly spread over Europe from Greece, and were common until the beginning of modern times. Some historians, who do not know the Byzantine world (as few do), arbitrarily trace them to the Teutonic invaders, who did not stoop to such things. The inquiring student would do well to look to pre-Islamic Persia.

Anastasia (for his mother Theodora was dead), taken refuge in the chapel of the Blachernae Palace. He crept under the holy altar of the sacred edifice and clung to one of the columns that supported it. [In the boy's hands, says Theophanes, they put a fragment of the true cross and they loaded his neck with relics.] But the men who had been sent to capture him dragged him from the sanctuary [stripped him] and cut his throat like a sheep.

So ended, in 711, the tainted brood of Justinian and Theodora; and six years later began the dynasty of the Iconoclasts (statue-breakers) and a worse confusion than ever.

The first, Leo the Isaurian (717–40), was content with temperate measures to compel the Church to abandon the worship of statues—I do not know why historians insist on saying "images"—probably to effect a much wider reform of religion. It is characteristic of the age that, because his baby son Constantine did something which polite people do not now talk about in the baptismal font, he was known to his people all his life and is known in history as Constantine *Copronymus*, which I may not translate. Constantine (740–775) proved a crusader for religious purity, Zonaras says (XXV, 7):—

Stung with fury against the monks, he had many of them seized and during the chariot-races he made them walk round the arena arm in arm with prostitutes. And he beheaded two of the chief nobles and cut out the eyes of others, and he confined them in a prison to which he sent men every year to flog them. He . . . dismissed Archbishop Constantine on the charge that he was an accomplice of the imprisoned nobles, and he put in his place Nicetas, an illiterate eunuch of servile origin who was better acquainted with the affairs of women than those of the Church. He had Archbishop Constantine, who had been tortured so severely that he could not stand, brought back from exile and carried into the cathedral. There, in the presence of a vast crowd that had been summoned for the occasion, while Nicetas sat on his throne, the crimes of the archbishop were read out. He received a slap in the face for each item and was anathematized. His hair, beard, and eyebrows were shaved off, and he was led on an ass, covered with dust and spit from the people, round the Circus.

Anastasius the Librarian says (at the year 757):—

He was put back to front on the ass, holding on to its tail, dressed in a short and sleeveless woollen tunic. The ass was led by his nephew Constantine, whose nose had been cut off.

In a long and prosperous reign of thirty-four years Copronymus burned monasteries or turned them into barracks, made monks

and nuns parade arm in arm in the Hippodrome and either marry or lose their eyes, oiled and fired the beards of recalcitrant monks, stripped and flogged nuns, castrated an archbishop and mutilated or killed a large number of people. In the end, says the monk chronicler, " there was not a monk to be seen in the streets of Constantinople." His son Leo IV. was as violent in his later years. After his coronation he had taken the field against the Arabs, leaving the noble Artavastus as Regent. The clergy persuaded this man to usurp the Empire and restore orthodoxy, and he and his supporters " seized the friends of Constantine, flogged and shaved them, and put them in prison." Leo returned hastily, and Theophanes says:—

He put out the eyes of Artavastus and his two sons . . . and put to death many of his supporters, blinded large numbers of others, and cut off the hands of some and the feet of others. He ordered chariot-races, and he had Artavastus and his sons and friends taken round the arena in chains. He had Archbishop Anastasius, whose eyes had been put out, mounted on an ass, face to tail, and led round the arena.

As a reward for this zeal a council of 338 bishops saluted Leo as " the thirteenth apostle " and endorsed his condemnation of the worship of statues. A few years later he learned that his wife, " the most Pious Irene," as she is called in Greek religious literature, was secretly keeping statues—to get the crown she had sworn a solemn oath that she would not—and many rich women were involved. So, says Theophanes (at the year 757, though it was in 764):—

He was driven with fury against all who feared God. . . . Not a few of the nobles were accused of worshipping statues and were subjected to dire torments. . . . He compelled the archbishop to mount the pulpit and take an oath that he had never worshipped statues [he had been the soul of the revolt to restore them] and they compelled him—and he had formerly been a monk—to put on a nuptial crown, eat meat, and lend his ears to singing girls at the royal table. . . . He held up the monastic costume and institution to ridicule in the Circus. He made the monks march round the Circus holding the hands of women while the people spat and jeered at them. Nineteen of the leading nobles were driven round with mock solemnity.

The hope of the Church was Irene, who dissembled until Leo died. Some say that she poisoned him; some that he robbed a richly robed statue of the Virgin, broke out in carbuncles, and perished miserably. However that may be, he left a son Constantine, aged ten when he died. Irene and her clerical friends

discovered a convenient conspiracy and passed from prayer to action.

Three princes and several of the highest nobles and their friends (some of them women) were scourged, exiled, or turned into monks and nuns, but there was so little popular demand for a return of the saints that Irene had to wait. When her son reached his eighteenth birthday there was another purification:—

> Stauracius [her eunuch chief minister] and Irene were told that her son was conspiring against her, and Stauracius incited the Empress against her son. She seized his officers and had them flogged, shaved [turned into monks], and exiled. Finally she had her son cruelly flogged and confined to the palace . . . and she compelled the soldiers to swear that he should not rule as long as she lived.

They mutinied and deposed her, but she was back within a year, and royal uncles and others lost their eyes, and three princes had their tongues cut out. She then made every effort to keep her son occupied with dissipation so that he would leave the Government to her. There was another revolt in a few years. Constantine fled, and the nobles stealthily joined him:—

> She writes to her friends [these nobles]: Unless you find some way of delivering my son to me I will expose your intrigues with me. They were afraid and they seized Constantine while he was at prayer and sent him to Constantinople. They bring him to the palace in the early morning and, on the instructions of his mother and her councillors, they cut out his eyes with such brutality that he nearly died. Thus did his mother Irene obtain the Empire.

All authorities support Theophanes in this statement. I am glad to add that the most Pious Irene died in misery, betrayed by her ministers and stripped of power and wealth. The skull of the rogue who took over her power became in a few years a silver-mounted drinking-cup; his successor was hacked to pieces in the royal chapel on Christmas morning; and a few years later the second "great" Byzantine Empress and patroness of true religion, St. Theodora, appeared on the scene.

She had, like Irene and all the other empresses, solemnly sworn before her coronation that she detested the worship of statues, and, like Irene, she had a secret collection of "dolls" (as she called them when servants detected them). When her husband died she demanded that the Archbishop, John (the most learned man of the time), should relieve her of her vow, and he refused, so they held a council and deposed him. We

have from this point onward a vivid and detailed account of events by the anonymous "Continuer of Theophanes," * who lived shortly afterwards. He says (Bk. IV):—

> John was lying on a couch in the dining-room of the episcopal palace when the imperial order was brought to him. He replied that he would give serious thought to the matter and dismissed the messenger. Then, seizing a knife or lancet, he opened the veins of his belly so that the flow of blood would win for him the support of the people. At once the clamour of the crowd beset the church and even reached the palace before the messenger returned.

The Empress sent her brother Bardas, who declared that the wounds were self-inflicted, and the priest was exiled. Other accounts make it clear that the soldiers had wounded him, and some say that he was flogged and blinded. By way of revenge the Iconoclasts bribed a woman to say that the new archbishop Methodius, a monk of high repute, had raped her. The Continuer of Theophanes says:—

> At once a formidable and tremendous tribunal is set up and preparations are made for both a civil and religious trial. Not a person either pious or impious failed to be present. The whole of the monks and everybody who could see or hear were present, some attracted by the novelty of the crime, others to insult the accused. He [the prelate], realizing the calumny and influenced with zeal lest the cause of the Church and Christianity should suffer on his account; knowing that there was more danger in modesty and silence, rising a little from his throne [clearly in open court] denuded his body and exhibited his sex-organ, which was shrivelled and not as it usually is in men. And he explained when they saw the miracle that once when he had gone to Rome and had been troubled by the lusts of the flesh and was about to yield to temptation, he had raised his hands in prayer to the apostle Peter in his church and implored his help. At length, wearied with long prayers, he had fallen asleep, and the apostle had come to him in a dream and touched his . . . and extinguished his lust.

He was triumphantly acquitted, the cult of statues was restored, and a grand clerical banquet closed the proceedings. The Iconoclasts were condemned to make a torchlight procession every year to the church of the Virgin on the anniversary of the restoration of statue-worship.

With these two pictures—the greatest queen in the world (Charlemagne wanted to marry one of his numerous daughters

* The Greek text and Latin translation are in the *Corpus Scriptorum Byzantinae Historiae*, Pars XXII. It is heavily biased in favour of the orthodox.

to Irene's son) cutting out the eyes of her son so as to keep the rule herself, and the greatest prelate in the world exhibiting his nakedness to a sort of Albert Hall audience—I might conclude this series of vignettes of life in the rich and Christian East. But the reader will probably want to know how the new saintly queen, Theodora, and her son figure in history. Finlay, one of the chief authorities on Byzantine history, says that the two most incompetent Emperors in a thousand years were the sons of Irene and Theodora, and that " both appear to have been corrupted by the education they received from their mothers." He might have added that these mothers—one a " saint "—who pushed their sons into pleasure (and largely vice) in order to keep the power themselves, as all admit—acted mainly in the interest of religion and were surrounded by priests. Michael the Drunkard, Theodora's son, entrusted to her dissipated brother Bardas for education, had a fearful revenge. He soon depleted the treasury; the Continuer of Theophanes says:—

> Great as was the sum in the treasury, it was dissipated by the madness and stupid extravagance of Michael. He delighted in horse-racing more than any other and used to ride in the Circus. He spent prodigious sums in gifts at the baptism of children of those who shared his wild revels, giving thirty, forty, or fifty pounds of gold to each. Once, at a banquet, the noble Himerius (who was so ugly that he was called " the Pig ") used foul language at the imperial table and even dared to blow out a candle with his . . . [censored] in the presence of the Emperor and others. Michael gave him a hundred pounds of gold for the feat. He gave the same sum to a charioteer to whose son he was godfather. He wasted a vast amount of public money in this disgusting fashion . . . and melted down the treasures of the palace.

In the quarrels, which naturally thickened, Uncle Bardas was disembowelled by an assassin, but Michael went further in his drunkenness and coarse dissipations. He had taken up and ennobled, in time sharing the throne with, a groom named Basil, and this man in turn was threatened by a groom who won the Emperor's favour in a drunken fit:—

> So an atrocious plot against Basil was woven. During a hunt Michael's servants were to run a spear through his back, pretending that they aimed at a beast, but the man who was ordered to do it confessed the plot . . . and Basil was saved. This became known and was considered a ground for sharpening the sword against Michael.

In his fifth book the historian returns to Michael's picturesque orgies:—

He even ridiculed the holy symbols of the faith, ordering a number of infamous men from the theatre to dress in the robes of the venerable priests and expose them to ridicule. He chose one of his companions as archbishop, and this man appointed eleven others as bishops. This profane and vile Grullus, with a harp under his priestly robes, and the others used to perform a parody of the sacred rites [apparently in the church]. They put a mixture of mustard and vinegar in the sacred vessels, which glittered with pearls and precious stones and were used at the altar on festivals, and passed them round with the filthiest language and gestures.* Once when the holy Archbishop Ignatius, surrounded by his usual suite, set out to hold a service in a shrine outside the walls, it happened that he met the impious and profane pseudo-archbishop Grullus wearing the priestly stole and riding on an ass with his vile company of assistants, playing, singing, dancing, and cocking a snoot at the archbishop and his clergy. . . .

Another time the insane Emperor did this in order to bring contempt upon the Archbishop Ignatius and ridicule upon his own mother. He bade the mock patriarch Grullus sit in his pontifical robes in the golden room of the palace, in the seat which the Archbishop usually occupied, his beard and hair covered, and he sent word by a eunuch to his mother that the holy archbishop wanted her to come and pray with him. She came at once, and not venturing to lift her eyes and suspecting no evil, she knelt at the feet of the archbishop and asked his prayers. He, raising himself from his seat and turning his back . . . [made a rude and very loud noise whereat Michael and his friends roared with laughter].

She left the great Blachernae Palace [on the European side] and retired to the palace on the Asiatic side. But the last gem in the *saga* of Michael the Drunkard is that she invited him and his besotted companions to dine with her one night, and her servants and Basil put them to bed in a drunken stupor and in the middle of the night sent them down the dark road of Byzantine emperors (866). And there we may leave this story of life in the half of Christendom in which the influence of the Church was not hampered by barbaric invasions, and turn back to the West.

* These parodies of the Mass were borrowed in Europe and were, we shall see, performed for centuries in Western churches and cathedrals, even in the chapels of nuns, in many places until the Reformation.

CHAPTER V

THE LAND OF SAINTS

BY the sixth century the vast raw armies which had emerged, with their women and children, from the forests of Germany and broken up the old civilization had settled amidst its ruins and were making the new nations of Europe. The Eastern Goths occupied Northern Italy, and they made a fine attempt to rebuild or preserve civilization until the Popes and the Greeks ruined their work. The Vandals crossed Spain and settled in North Africa. The Western Goths took over the Roman province of Spain, with what result we shall see presently. The Franks settled in Gaul, which some claim to have been the least devastated of the Roman provinces, while the Franks were themselves the most docile to Rome of the Teutonic peoples. And in the *Historia Francorum* (*History of the Franks*) * of Gregory, Bishop of Tours, who lived in that century and writes largely as an eye-witness, we have a very full account of life in the new kingdom, which is, like England in its first fervour, often called the Land of Saints.

As it is possible to give only a few extracts from this large work, and those extracts disclose an appalling state of morals, the suspicion may arise that the selection is misleading. It is therefore necessary here to give the verdict of modern historians on the book and the period; and it is our most faithful description of contemporary life between Salvianus (about 450) and the biographer of Charlemagne (about 800). Lecky, who gives a long and shuddering summary of the book in his *History of European Morals* (1911 ed. 11, 99–100), says that it depicts "a society which was almost absolutely anarchical." He approvingly quotes Gibbon's saying that "it would be difficult to find anywhere more vice or less virtue"; Hallam's view that Gregory's pages "impressed on the mind a thorough notion of the extreme wickedness of almost every person concerned in them and consequently of the state to which society was reduced"; Dean Milman's opinion that "it is difficult to conceive a more dark

* For the original see Migne, vol. 71. There is, however, in this case, a good English translation by B. M. Dalton (1927). The Columbia University version is sadly abridged.

and odious state of society." The following passages will suffice to illustrate this:—

Theuderic, King of the Franks, going against the Thuringians, reminded his soldiers . . . what the Thuringians had done to them and said: Avenge, I pray you, the injury done to me and the death of your families. Remember how the Thuringians fell violently upon your families and wrought great evil. We had given them hostages and wanted to have peace with them, but they slew the hostages in various ways and fell upon our people and seized their possessions. They hung boys on trees by the sinews of their thighs. They inflicted a cruel death on more than 200 girls, tying their arms over the necks of horses and spurring the horses so that they darted in different directions and tore the girls limb from limb. They laid others in the ruts of roads and pinned them down with stakes, then they drove heavily laden wagons over them and broke their bones and fed their bodies to the dogs and birds (III, 7).

Such was the art of war in the sixth century. But the chronicle of peace—when there is peace—is a monotonous record of murder, torture, seduction, rape, and rapine. On his return from the Thuringian war Theuderic murders his brother, who has murdered his brother-in-law, and leads his troops to plunder churches and rape women. One has to read Gregory's occasional record of virtue cautiously. He says:—

Theuderic, once established in his Kingdom, showed himself a great king endowed with all virtues, for he ruled justly, respected the clergy, enriched the churches, and helped the poor [and a few pages later he tries to kill his brother Lothar and get his Kingdom].

Clovis, the first Christian King of the Franks, has left three sons besides Theuderic, and one of them dies:—

Childebert and Lothar [the other two] send Aratius to the Queen Mother with a pair of scissors and a naked sword. Showing these to the Queen he said:—O most glorious Queen, thy sons, our masters, would know thy will about the boys [sons of her dead brother]. Are they to live with shorn locks [as priests] or to die? . . . Lothar seized the elder boy by the arm, threw him on the ground, and slew him cruelly with his knife. Childebert pushed the [second] boy over to Lothar, who thrust his knife into his side. And they divided the kingdom of Chlodomer between them (III, 18).

Theuderic's son Theudebert takes over his father's chief mistress when Theuderic dies, and as the lady's daughter threatens to be a rival, she drowns her. A royal cousin of Theuderic elopes with a slave. Her mother sends men to kill the slave and bring her back, and she puts poison in the " Blood of Christ " which

her mother is to drink at Mass, and she is dispatched in a bath of boiling water. Lothar has seven sons " by divers women " and is married incestuously to his deceased wife's sister. King Chilperic, who is " the Nero and the Herod of our time," learns that his royal brother has been stabbed with poisoned knives, by slaves sent by his mistress Fredegond (a monster to whom we will return), and one of them is arrested:—

He was seized by King Chilperic, who had red-hot irons applied to all his joints and then had him torn to pieces.

King Charibert is so bad that " the mind can conceive no lust or debauchery that he did not practise." He was even rude to bishops. A dying queen makes her husband take an oath to kill the two doctors who have failed to save her. . . .

Let us, for relief, turn to the prelates. Gregory tells us of quite a number who were saintly men—and doubtless some were—but Gregory's estimates of saintliness are often peculiar, and his book offers us one of the strangest galleries of episcopal portraits in history:—

Cantinus, being raised to the bishopric [Clermont], behaved so badly that he was cursed by everybody. He was very drunken; often so drunk that it took four men to carry him from the room. This drunkenness he often exhibited in public. . . . There was at this time a priest named Anastasius, a man of good character, who had a certain property . . .[the bishop demanded it and he refused]. He was arrested by order of the bishop and told that if he did not yield the property he would be starved to death. There was an ancient crypt in the church of the holy martyr Cassius with a sarcophagus of Parian marble that contained the body of a man who had died long before. The priest was buried alive with the body of the dead man (IV, 13).

Euphrasius the priest, son of the Senator Ennodus . . . was elegant in his conversation but not chaste in his acts. He often made the barbarians drunk but never fed the poor (35).

Palladius, son of Count Brittianus, a Count of Givaudan, had a quarrel with the bishop of that place, Parthenius. . . . He showered invectives upon the bishop and plundered the church property. . . . They sought an audience of the King and brought all sorts of charges against each other, Palladius affirming that the bishop was a sodomist and shouting at him, Where is the husband you live in sin with? (40) Our Fathers were converted from the temples to the churches: to-day our people plunder the churches daily. Our Fathers enriched the monasteries and churches: now they are plundered and destroyed (49).

There are scores of these peccant, sometimes extraordinary, bishops. The Bishop of Lyons and his wife commit many

murders. The Bishop of Soissons goes mad through excessive drinking. The Bishop of Le Mans and his wife murder and torture people to get their property:—

> Often did she cut off men's sex-organs together with the skin of the belly, and she burned the sex-parts of women with red-hot plates.

A nun of royal blood seizes a convent and hires a band of ruffians to protect her and her gay companions. There is a long story of two brothers who were bishops:—

> There was a rising of the people against Bishop Salonius and Bishop Sagittarius. . . . Once they had been consecrated they did what they pleased—murder, adultery, and all sorts of crimes. . . . One day when Bishop Victor was celebrating his birthday, they and their men fell upon him with swords and bows and arrows. They tore off his robes, killed his servants, and stole the vessels and furniture of his table. [A synod now condemned them but they went to Rome and got (bought) a letter from the Pope ordering the archbishop to reinstate them.] Salonius and Sagittarius then daily committed worse crimes than ever. . . . They dressed as secular soldiers and killed many with their own hands, and they beat a number of their own citizens with clubs until they died.

King Guntram summons them to Court, and Sagittarius jeers at him and says that he is merely the bastard of a slave, but " as wives no longer count, all the boys a King procreates are recognized as his sons." The King puts them in prison, but his sons fall ill, and, convinced that it is a curse at work, he releases the gay bishops, who drink, wanton, and murder more than ever (V, 23).

After all this it is needless to speak of the " nobility." Here is a sample, but this one paragraph of the long story of Duke Rauching must suffice:—

> When a page held a lighted candle before him at dinner he had the candle fixed between the youth's bare legs until it burned down and then he lit another, so that the page's legs were badly burned. If any man made a sound or stirred, Rauching threatened him with his sword, and he roared with laughter when they wept. It is said that at this time two of his serfs fell in love, and when this had lasted two years they fled to a church. Rauching went to the priest and demanded that they should be given up to him [the priest makes him swear a solemn oath not to separate them]. And he at once had a tree felled and split lengthways and hollowed out . . . and he dug a pit a few feet deep and put the tree in it. He had the girl, half dead, put in the tree and the youth on top of her, and he buried them alive.

The young Count Eulalius strangles his mother with her own hair shirt for rebuking his vices, slays his wife's lover, and abducts a beautiful nun, who is murdered by one of his concubines. Duke Amalo abducts a beautiful maid, but she fights his men and is brought to him covered with blood. He drags her into his bed, but fortunately he is very drunk and she stabs him. Count Gundwald, a royal bastard, has a bishop in the wild troop with which he sacks churches and cities.

One of the most interesting features of this lengthy and minute account of life during a hundred years in one third (after 720 more than a third) of Latin Christendom is that, as in the East, the women are as hard, aggressive, and callous as the men. From Visigothic Spain, which is regarded as a superior civilization, one of the kings gets a beautiful and "accomplished" (she knows Latin) princess named Brunhild (or Brunichild). Her husband is promptly murdered with poisoned knives by the enterprising adventuress (and later Queen) Fredegond, one of the most vicious women in history, and the feud of these two, who are more like Greek Furies than Teutonic Valkyries, fills sixty pages of Martin's *History of France*. Gregory is lenient to Brunhild—she is the great queen of his time—though he admits that her second marriage was incestuous and she was suspected of murder; but the continuation of his work (Fredegar's *Chronicle*) after her death shows that she shrank neither from murder nor from more amiable misconduct in her fierce pursuit of power and wealth. And since the greatest of the Popes in a thousand years (St. Gregory I) now ruled the Church, many will ask what he did about this shocking and chronic condition.

You cannot gather from the large volume of his extant letters that he found the Franks any worse than the rest of his flock; but what you do find is that, as in the case of the brutal and debauched Phocas of Constantinople, he wrote most flattering letters to Brunhild, and for the same reason—she promised obedience to Rome. In Letter VI, 50, he writes:—

> Gregory to Brunichild, Queen of the Franks. Your various letters, which reflect your religious spirit and the zeal of a pious mind, have led us . . . to grant freely all that you asked. For we could not withhold what you asked in Christian devotion and the desire of an upright heart, especially as we know that you were asking what would protect the belief of the faithful and effect the salvation of souls. . . .

In point of fact, she had asked the pallium (archbishopric) for a

worldly bishop who was obsequious to her and had begged him to refuse it (as he did) to the best bishop in France, Desiderius, who rebuked her. Letter VI, 59, runs:—

Gregory to Brunichild, Queen of the Franks. The goodness of your Excellency, which is renowned, is attested both by the government of your kingdom and the education of your son, for whom you have not only reserved intact the glory of his temporal heritage but have made sure that he will have the reward of eternal life. . . .

Letter IX, 11, announces that he is granting the pallium to her pet bishop and tutor of her son (who maintained the tradition of his royal house):—

How deeply the mind of your Excellency is rooted in the idea of Almighty God is shown amongst other things by your love of his priests, and we take great joy in your Christian disposition. . . .

Some writers beg us to remember that these Franks had been Christians only from about the year 500, and that it would take time to civilize them. The truth is that while we find no improvement whatever in the hundred years covered by Gregory's history —in fact we shall presently see that the Franks were as bad as ever in the eighth century—we elsewhere find equally raw barbarians who have contact with Rome civilized in one or two generations. The Ostrogoths in Italy adopted the Roman civilization in a generation; the Lombards later restored this in two generations; the Arabs who settled in Syria were brilliantly civilized in a single generation. The work in these cases was done chiefly by restoring culture and education, and it is from the opposite policy that religious Popes like Gregory failed.

We saw above that Brunhild hated a good bishop, Desiderius of Vienne, and got Gregory to refuse to promote him. Worse than this, Gregory, hearing that Desiderius was doing something to restore letters and education, wrote him a violent condemnation (VI, 54):—

Gregory to Desiderius, a bishop of Gaul. . . . We have received information that we cannot contemplate without a blush, that you are teaching grammar to your people [teaching them to read]. This news we heard with such sorrow and vehement repugnance that what I wrote you before I must now retract with sighs of sadness, because praise of Christ cannot be in the same mouth as praise of Jupiter. Consider yourself what a crime it is for bishops to sing what even laymen may not. And though our beloved son the priest Candidus denied this in reply to our questions and made excuses for you, we still

think that it is horrible (*nefandum*) for a priest to do this. If it transpires that it is false that you occupy yourself with trifles and profane letters we shall thank God that he has not allowed your heart to be polluted with the blasphemous sports of the wicked . . . [he is sending monks to see that Desiderius obeys him].*

It was a persistent Roman tradition, and quite in keeping with Gregory's character, that he destroyed the last collection of the Roman classics that remained in Rome. Bishop John of Salisbury, a cultivated and very reliable writer, says in his *Polycraticus* (II, 26):—

> Moreover, the most holy doctor Gregory, who irrigated and invigorated the whole Church with the honeyed rain of his eloquence, not only forbade the teaching of mathematics but, as we learn from our forerunners, had the works of classical antiquity burned.

One suspects a little irony. Gregory, as his namesake's description of France shows, assuredly did not irrigate and invigorate the whole Church. And we must remember how small the Church then was. North Africa passed to the Arian Vandals in the fifth century and never returned to communion with Rome. North Italy was lost to the pagan Lombards, and England was not yet civilized (after the Roman collapse) or Christianized. Gregory, who made the Papacy by far the richest power in Europe, ruled only Italy, France, and Spain (to 711). His letters say worse things about Italy (to which we come presently) than about France.

Spain had passed to the Western Goths (Visigoths), and though it was culturally a little higher than France, we gather from short references in letters of Popes and decisions of Council that the general moral level was scarcely higher than in France. But, poor as historical literature now becomes, we have in the letters of St. Boniface, the archbishop missionary to France and Germany—and no man knew them better—a sombre light on the general condition of Europe. The Columbia University series

* The chief historian of the Papacy at this stage Mgr. Mann (*Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages*, 1902, etc.), a very resolute sophist, says that Gregory is merely condemning pagan literature. But Gregory does *not* suggest teaching "grammar" from the Bible and the Fathers—the only alternative; nor would a worthy bishop be in the least likely to choose Ovid or Catullus (or fail to make his Christian pupils laugh or blush at Jupiter or Venus). Mann quotes praise of secular learning from what he calls Gregory's *Commentary on the First Book of Kings*. Even the Benedictine editors of the Migne edition point out that this work is spurious.

includes a good translation of these letters, but I here follow the text and numbering as they are given in Migne (vol. 89).

Letter XLIX, written to the Pope, is a scalding indictment of the French Church. According to all the authorities it had been in a scandalous condition for nearly a hundred years, which leaves only a short interval from the period we found described by Gregory of Tours:—

. . . Also be it known to your Paternity that Carlomann, Duke of the Franks . . . has invited me to summon a synod in that part of the Kingdom of the Franks which he rules. He promised to effect the reform of the ecclesiastical life which had been trodden under foot and devastated for at least sixty or seventy years . . . for the Franks, the older men amongst them say, have not held a synod or had an archbishop or paid any attention to Canon Law for more than eighty years. For the most part the episcopal sees in the cities have been given to greedy laymen or the revenues of them have been assigned to adulterous and fornicating clerics and publicans for their secular enjoyment. . . . I find amongst them deacons, as far as the name goes, who have from youth lived in adultery and fornication and all kinds of filth, men who were known to have that character before they became deacons and now, as deacons, have four or five or more concubines in their beds at night, yet do not blush to read the Gospel [in Church], and to call themselves deacons. They continue in their incests when they become priests, adding sin to sin, saying that they can intercede for the people and offer up the holy sacrifice [the Mass]. Later I found even worse. Men with such reputations pass through every grade and become bishops. If, I say, I find such men among them I beg to have your authority to deal with them as sinners. Some bishops there are amongst them who say that they are not fornicators or adulterers, but they are given to drink, violence, and hunting. They fight in the army and perhaps shed the blood of many a Christian with their own hands. . . . Therefore I ask your Paternity to point out the truth of the matter so that there shall not be scandalous clerics among the priests of the Church, and Christian people shall not say that we are too severe, because carnal men, Germans, Bavarians, or French, seeing the things that are done in Rome, may think that they are permitted. They say that they have seen in Rome, even near St. Peter's, by day and night, on the first of January of each year, troops of sinners rioting in the streets in pagan fashion, shouting and singing sacrilegious songs, their tables heaped with food day and night, while no one will lend a neighbour fire or iron or any commodity. . . . Bishops and priests who have been adulterous and assiduous in vice, as is proved by the children born of their sins, have been to Rome and say that the Pope has given them permission to hold the episcopal office in the Church.

The Pope, in reply, evaded the more awkward points—it was quite true that Rome already, as a rule, acquired or supported

any man who brought a full purse—but what life was in Rome and how this extraordinary laxity persisted in the French Church will appear presently.

A few years later (745) Boniface, who was an Englishman and had constant correspondence with the better English clergy, gave an even worse character to his own country. The letter (LXII) is to one of the Saxon Kings:—

Boniface to Ethelbald of Mercia. To his dearest lord, to be preferred in the love of Christ before all other kings, holding the glorious sceptre of the empire of the Angles, Ethelbald. I give thanks to God for his prosperity, faith in God, and good work but . . . an unpleasant rumour about the life of your Piety has reached us. It distresses us, and we hope it is not true. We have heard from many quarters that you have never legitimately married, as the Lord ordained. . . . And if, which God forbid, you neither married nor observed the abstinence of chastity, to please God, but under the domination of your lust you earned a boastful repute before God and man for the crime of venery and adultery we grieve to hear it. . . . And, what is worse, my informants say that you commit this shameful crime mainly with nuns and virgins consecrated to God in their convents. . . . The pagans themselves regard it as a shame and disgrace because, though they know not the true God, follow the law of nature in these matters, they marry wives and punish fornicators and adulterers . . . [several examples of drastic Teutonic law]. If the English people, as is said in that country and in France and Italy, despise lawful marriage and live filthily like the people of Sodom we must expect that such intercourse with whores will give us a degenerate and ignoble people, seething with lust. . . . And it must be noted that another hideous crime goes with this—murder. When these whores, whether nuns or lay women, have conceived in sin, they for the most part kill their offspring, filling the graves with bodies instead of the Church with sons. And it is said that you have taken away or violated many privileges of Churches and monasteries . . . and that your prefects and counts do more violence to monks and priests than any earlier kings did. . . . Ceodred, King of Mercia, and Osred, King of Deira Bernicia, publicly, with diabolical instinct, practised these two sins and gave a scandalous example of crime in England. Persisting in these crimes—superstition and adultery with nuns and breaking into monasteries—they incurred the just judgment of God and were cast down from the height of royalty. . . . Osred, wholly devoted to vice and fornication with sacred virgins in their convents, pursued his vile ways until he lost his glorious Kingdom, his young wife, and his immortal soul.

It must not be imagined that these relations of the English princes and their nobles and officers with nuns had anything furtive about them. There is ample literature testifying that these con-

vents, in England, France, and Germany, were hunting stations and brothels for the nobles, resounding after the day's hunt with the songs of the drunken men and the barking of their hounds. This is intimated in Canon 20 of the Council of Clovesho, in the diocese of Canterbury, held under the Archbishop in 747 at the instigation of Boniface. The Latin text is given in A. W. Haddan's *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents* (1869). Canon 20 runs:—

> The bishops must watch carefully that monasteries (of both sexes) in their parishes are worthy of the name . . . not resorts of buffoonery: that is to say, of poets, harpists, musicians, and jesters . . . and that laymen shall not be allowed to wander where they like or talk in the interior rooms of the monastery lest cause for scandal arise therefrom. . . . So let the houses of nuns [by an amusing accident the word " not " has here dropped out of the text] be hotbeds of filthy conversation, feasting, drunkenness, and vice.

The next canon mildly urges monks and priests to avoid drunkenness, and a later canon (29) runs:—

> That from this date it shall not be lawful for clerics, monks, and nuns to live any longer with lay people in their houses.

The Council of Chelsea, forty years later, suggests that there has been no improvement, while the Penitentials (lists of sins with penances attached) still more strongly suggest a general grossness. In the above work, Haddan's *Councils*, we have (in Latin) the Penitential of (by) Archbishop Egbert of this date, and the fourth and fifth sections have some clauses that one may not translate to-day. In the fourth section we have such clauses as:—

> 2. If a cleric has fornicated with a quadruped let him do penance for, if he is a simple cleric, 2 years, if a deacon, 3 years, if a priest, 7 years, if a bishop, 10 years.
> 3. For fornication with his mother a man must do penance for 15 years.
> 4. If with his daughter or sister 12 years.
> 5. If with a natural brother he shall abstain from meat for 15 years.
> 6. If a mother has fornicated with her young son . . .

The fifth section deals with the sins of clerics, and it is an amazing document. It assigns penances for twenty-one varieties of the gravest sexual offences, working out the various possible associations of bishops, priests, monks, nuns, and laymen, and it considers three forms of sexual perversion as well as ordinary misconduct. The former it is unnecessary to translate; the latter

it is impossible. *The Book of Gomorrah*, of Cardinal Damiani of the eleventh century, has been described by a religious writer as worse than anything in classical literature, and is often mentioned—with the implication, of course, that it helps to justify the imposition of celibacy—but Egbert's list is just as gross; and we shall find even worse in Germany in the next century. These works were current in the Church from the eighth century onward; and to understand them it is necessary to recall that there was then no Church-obligation to confess to a priest. I leave it to the reader to picture to himself a state of society in which bishops thought fit to circulate such documents among their clergy, monks, and nuns, and to say what he thinks of recent professors who deny that there ever was a Dark Age.

One further passage in a letter of St. Boniface (LXIII) must be translated as a document illustrating the general character. Writing to the English Archbishop Cuthbert, who was probably his chief informant on the moral condition of England, he warns him that all Christian Europe is so foul that nuns and lay women must not be permitted to go on pilgrimage to Rome:—

> I will not conceal from your Charity . . . that the good, the decency, and the chastity of the Church are mocked, and it would be some mitigation of the foulness if a synod or your princes were to forbid women and nuns to make the journey to Rome, as they do, because for the most part they perish, few returning unsullied. There are very few cities in Lombardy and France in which you will not find English whores or adulterous women, which is a scandal and a disgrace to the whole Church.

Boniface was a contemporary of Bede, whose idyllic pictures of English virtue are always quoted. Boniface is almost never quoted. But Boniface was the most travelled man in Europe and a very practical man, while Bede was a dreamy recluse. Even Bede, however, tells (Bk. IV, 25) of a joint monastery of monks and nuns that was destroyed by fire by God because of its corruption, and in a letter to King Egbert he admits that there are large numbers of disorderly nuns.

It is time we turned to documents which tell the state of Rome at this period, but it cannot be understood unless I premise a word of historical explanation. The Lombards, at first raw and ruthless barbarians, had occupied North Italy and contested Central Italy with the Papacy. The Frank kings whom I described were ending in a travesty of royalty, and their Mayors (Major

Officers) of the Palace had taken over the real power. The most powerful of these, Charles Martel (the Hammer), owes his name to his decisive defeat of the Arabs, who had invaded Gaul from Spain, and we still teach pupils in our history classes how the noble Frank saved Christianity and civilization from the Moslem. In all serious history he is a brutal and licentious ruffian who " totally destroyed the Church of the Franks " (as Martin says). He gave all the richer bishoprics to his most valiant (and grossest) captains and despoiled the abbeys mercilessly. It is the Frank Church as he left it that Boniface describes. But the Popes wanted his aid against the Lombards, and, while the French monk chroniclers heaped curses upon him, Pope Gregory II (in Migne) flattered him to his teeth:—

Gregory to the Most Glorious Lord, my son Duke Charles, knowing that you, most beloved in Christ, have a religious spirit . . . we notify to your Dignity, which is beloved of God, that [we are sending Boniface] and we recommend him to your glorious benevolence. . . .

Charles Martel ignored his call for help, and he was still deaf when Gregory III sent him the keys of St. Peter's Tomb and a few precious filings from " St. Peter's Chains " with a piteous appeal for help. He left two sons, a pious weakling, Carloman, who, after desperately trying to help Boniface for a few years, fled to a monastery, and Pippin, a son worthy of his father.

Pippin consulted Pope Zachary—the average life of a Pope in the Dark Age was four years—as to whether, since he was now the real master of the whole of France (and part of Germany), he might not take the crown. The Pope replied that he not only might, but must, and then, claiming that he had founded the Carlovingian Dynasty, demanded help. Pippin refused until the Pope not only visited France, but had the royal monk (who might still give trouble) arrested as a vagabond monk (and apparently dispatched). But the Lombards spread south again after Pippin's return to France, and when Pippin again refused to move, the new Pope, Stephen II, wrote him, in 756, a singular letter. It purported to have been written by St. Peter in heaven. It is very long, but a few specimen sentences will suffice. The opening sentence is twenty lines in length and is difficult even to abridge:—

Peter [it begins], called to be an apostle, by Jesus Christ, who . . . through me, and the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church, head of

all the Churches of God, founded on a rock by the blood of our Redeemer, and Stephen bishop of that Church . . . [summoning Pippin] to save the same holy Church of God and the people of Rome committed to me from the hands of the persecutors, to you, most excellent men, Pippin, Carl, and Carloman [his sons] . . . I, the apostle Peter, called by Christ, son of the living God. . . . Therefore I, Peter, the Apostle of God. . . . Therefore, I entreat and warn you . . . as if I were alive in the flesh in your presence. . . . I commend to God, through the hands of my Vicar [the Pope] the Church which the Lord entrusted to me . . . [if you do not come] know that by the power of the apostolate committed to me and on the authority of the Holy Trinity you are shut out from the Kingdom of God and from eternal life.

Pippin came, post-haste, and annexed half of Central Italy for the Papacy. He was a gross, illiterate, and very superstitious man, and the pretence of Catholic writers that the Pope had written in this form for rhetorical effect, and not with intent to deceive, is absurd.*

We shall see presently the sequel as concerns the Temporal Power of the Popes, but the defence of Rome against the charge of grave fraud is little more than a protest that the Pope and his clergy were too virtuous to do such a thing. However, the Papal Librarian Anastasius gives us, in his *De Vitis Romanorum Pontificum* (*The Lives of the Roman Pontiffs*, Migne, 128, col. 1004), this picture of life in Rome about ten years after Pippin had enriched it (or in 767 and 768):—

While Paul III lay dying a certain Duke Toto of Nepi, with his brothers Constantine, Passivus, and Paschal, got together a large body of soldiers and peasants of Nepi and other towns of Tuscany and entered Rome by the Pancratian Gate. They settled in Toto's house and chose his brother Constantine, a layman, to be the Pope, and with their troops they lodged him in the Lateran Palace. Taking him into the city, they summoned Bishop George and compelled him to ordain Constantine. He at first refused and threw himself at the feet of Constantine imploring him by all the divine mysteries to abandon so nefarious and bold a design . . . [they persisted, and Constantine was hastily put through the clerical grades and consecrated by three bishops]. Christopher, the Primicerius [highest official], and his son George, the Sacristan, seeing this and preferring to die rather than witness so impious an outrage to the Apostolic See, wept daily and said that they wanted to become monks. They asked Constantine to release them and let them go to a monastery. . . . He exacted an oath from Christopher that they would do so and let them go. But when

* Letter V of Stephen II (sometimes counted III) in Migne, vol. 89. All other letters of Stephen begin: "Pope Stephen to . . ."

they drew near the frontier of the Lombard territory they changed their course. . . .

They were just greedy adventurers who went to plot with the Lombard King and hoped for a reward. Their friends in Rome open the gates to them and the Lombards and they stab Toto in the back. When their friends elect a Pope who is not of their choice—the whole business is a scramble for the wealth of the Papacy, which is now very considerable—they extinguish him and elect " a chaste and holy monk," Stephen III:—

When the blessed man was elected a few wicked men seized Bishop Theodore [one of the bishops who had consecrated Constantine] and cruelly cut out his eyes and his tongue. They cut out also the eyes of Passivus . . . and seizing all their possessions they imprisoned Bishop Theodore in the monastery of the Scaurian Hill, where they left him, crying for water, to die of hunger and thirst. They shut Passivus in the monastery of St. Silvester. Constantine, the usurper of the Apostolic See, was brought out and, with heavy weights to his feet, was put in a woman's saddle on a horse and sent off to a monastery. . . . Afterwards they seized the Tribune Gracilis, who had assisted at the consecration of Constantine . . . and some wicked companions, egged on by others, dragged Gracilis from prison and cut out his eyes and tongue. Then they invaded the monastery in which Constantine was kept and, dragging him out, cut out his eyes and left him blinded on the street. They next accused the priest Waldifert, a Lombard, of plotting with the Duke of Spoleto and others to murder Christopher and other leading nobles. He took refuge in the church of the Virgin but they dragged him out, carrying in his arms a statue of the Virgin, and flung him in prison. A few days later they dragged him from the prison and cut out his eyes and his tongue, and he died from the injuries.

It is hardly necessary to warn the reader not to take seriously the Papal biographer's " chaste and holy monks " and " wicked men " who commit atrocities. Pope Stephen was, we shall see, fully involved, as were all the nobles and clergy, in the murderous scramble for the wealth of the Papacy. Stephen, Christopher, and Sergius now thought that they had it and could defy the Lombards who had helped them. So next year:—

King Didier, in a fury of indignation against Christopher and Sergius, sought their lives. In order to accomplish this he pretended that he was coming to Rome to say his prayers in St. Peter's and hoped to get them. So, secretly making presents to Paul Afiarta, the [Pope's] Chamberlain and his accomplices in order to inflame the Pope [the chief accomplice] against Christopher and Sergius, he laid plans to destroy them.

To put these Roman ruffians in their proper perspective let me explain that King Didier was the most decent and most accomplished monarch in Europe (outside Moslem Spain), and his Lombard cities compared with Rome and Paris as London compares to-day with a secondary Balkan town (except in wealth). Briefly, the Pope and Afiarta treacherously changed sides and, while Christopher and Sergius headed the Papal troops defending Rome, crossed to St. Peter's to plot with Didier. Stephen ordered Christopher and Sergius to come to St. Peter's or enter a monastery, and the Romans deserted them:—

A certain Captain Gratiosus, a relative of Sergius, gets together a few Romans, and they take one of the gates off its hinges and go to St. Peter's. Sergius lets himself down from the walls by night and goes to St. Peter's. He is caught on the steps of the church and taken to the Lombard King. Christopher follows him, and the Pope orders them to enter a monastery for their own safety. [The Pope then returns to the city—St. Peter's was still outside the walls—and leaves them in St. Peter's.] And at night the said Afiarta and his allies gather a crowd and go to see Didier. After seeing him they drag Christopher and Sergius out of St. Peter's and, taking them as far as the gates, cut out their eyes. Christopher was taken to a monastery but died of his injuries three days later.

The Catholic historians who follow the Papal Librarian in blaming the horrors on Afiarta and the Lombards conveniently overlook the fact that Pope Hadrian I, the best Pope since Gregory I, who was then a cleric in Rome, assured the Lombard envoys a few years later—and this we learn from the official *Book of the Popes* itself—that it was Stephen who "caused the eyes of Christopher and Sergius to be cut out." Hadrian ordered a search for the body of Sergius:—

They found it covered with wounds, with a rope round its neck, and it was clear that he was strangled and buried while he was still alive.

To the "great" Pope Hadrian we will return; but Anastasius gives us another picture of Roman life, in 799 (when Charlemagne was already its Over-Lord), that should be inserted here. The successor of Hadrian, Leo III, sets out on horse from the palace in a religious procession while all Rome lines the streets:—

When the venerable Pontiff issued from the palace he was met by Paschalis the Primicerius (the highest Papal officer) . . . and Campulus the Sacristan [second Papal officer] who, with treacherous minds, walked in the Papal suite and spoke smooth words that were not in

their hearts; for they were wicked, false Christians, in fact pagans and sons of the devil. On the route they had armed men hidden near the monastery of Sts. Stephen and Silvester, and these suddenly rushed from their hiding place and tried to kill the Pope, while Paschalis and Campulus stood by. Whereupon the people, being unarmed as it was a holy day, fled in terror. The plotters . . . seized him like beasts and threw him to the ground, and they cut out his eyes and tried to blind him altogether. They cut out his tongue and, they thought, left him blind and dumb in the middle of the street. Paschalis and Campulus dragged him into the church of the monastery and again, in front of the altar, cut out his eyes and tongue. They beat and wounded him and left him, half-dead, in a pool of blood before the altar. Later they imprisoned him in the monastery.

The incoherence of the narrative reflects the eclipse of culture in Europe, but the author tries to cover his contradictions by saying that St. Peter miraculously restored the Pope's eyes and tongue. The truth seems to be that there were spirited fights, and the plotters were interrupted several times in their foul work. Do not forget that the leaders of the ruffians were the two highest Papal officials. The Pope's friends got him to St. Peter's, and he recovered. Then both sides appealed to Charlemagne, and that monarch came to Rome and decided the matter by the easy device of allowing the Pope to swear before all Rome that he was innocent of the charges [adultery, etc.] that had been brought against him. And the Papal Librarian, completely unconscious that he is giving us the key to these sanguinary brawls—they continued for years—goes on to describe the wonderful wealth and treasure of St. Peter's under Leo III.

That wealth now grew very rapidly. The Life of Hadrian which is prefixed to his letters in Migne describes Charlemagne's first visit to Rome:—

On the fourth day the said Pontiff proceeded with his judges, both of the clergy and the lay militia, to the church of St. Peter's and entering into conversation with the king, he begged and admonished him, and with paternal affection pressed him [apparently Charlemagne was reluctant, and Eginhard says that the French nobles were violently opposed] to carry out in full the promise which his father, Pepin, of blessed memory, the noble Charlemagne himself and his brother Carloman, and all the authorities of France had made to the Blessed Peter and his vicar Pope Stephen, in regard to the concession of various cities and territories of Italy to the Blessed Peter and his vicar for ever. And when Charlemagne had had the promise read to him he and his counsellors approved of all the contents, and with good will and of free choice Charlemagne bade his chaplain and secretary draw

up a promise like the earlier, in which he granted the same cities to the Blessed Peter and the Pope.

Charlemagne " signed it " and put a copy on the body of the Apostle in his tomb, and all swore " a terrible oath " to observe it.

Charlemagne, as his secretary Eginhard says and nobody doubts, never succeeded in learning to write his own name, but the whole proceeding reeks with deceit. Historians are agreed that the description of territory (nearly all Central Italy) included in the promise in the *Book of the Popes* is fraudulent, and the original treaty signed by the Franks was soon " lost." But the gravest point is that the territory was claimed in virtue of a document in which the Emperor Constantine, leaving Rome for Constantinople, handed over Italy to the Papacy, and not even Catholic historians question that this was forged. That the " great " Pope Hadrian used it he plainly intimates in a letter a few years later to Charlemagne (Letter LX):—

> Just as in the time of the Blessed Silvester, Bishop of Rome, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church was elevated and exalted by the most pious Emperor Constantine the great, of holy memory, and he deigned to bestow upon it power in these western regions. . . .

So that " temporal Power " of the Popes over which during the next seven centuries almost as much blood was spilt as over England, the power in virtue of which the Pope now exchanges ambassadors with the Powers of the earth, was based upon the clumsiest forgery in history. In the year 800 Hadrian's successor crowned Charlemagne—again reluctant, for he knew what it was to accept a crown from the Papacy—Roman Emperor, and another occasion for centuries of bloodshed was created.

CHAPTER VI

THE AGE OF CHARLEMAGNE AND OTTO

It is customary in non-academic literature, and unhappily to-day in some literature that is academic, to repudiate the odious name of Dark Age at this period on the ground that the great Christian hero Charlemagne brought about a mighty reform. In expert works this legend is so little respected that some historians would make the Dark Age actually *begin* in the period following the death of that monarch. Since I am quoting only documents which throw light upon the general character, I cite no passages about Charlemagne. It is acknowledged, even in the idyllic biography of him by the monk Eginhard, that he defied the Church regally in his morals, and from other sources we learn that his court was corrupt, and even his daughters, with his connivance, licentious. He cut out eyes in the fashion of his age and was barbaric in war. What services he may have rendered—the alleged service to education, which is most praised, is repudiated by modern paedagogists—is disputed by experts on law and constitutional history. But from our sociological point of view the answer is peremptory, for within twenty years of his death Europe was—culturally, morally, and socially—as bad as ever, and, in a century, worse than ever; and this in spite of the fact that the suppression of the cult of statues in the East (from 717 onward) drove crowds of Greek artists to Europe, that the Lombards had created a fine civilization in North Italy—the conventional Christ in art is still a Lombard, not a Jewish type—and that from 720 onward the Arabs filled Spain with an even higher civilization—indeed, the second greatest in history.

The Capitularies (decrees) of Charlemagne and his Council, which largely consisted of bishops, reflect this social futility from age to age. There is, in fact, an appalling monotony about these decrees of synods and princes throughout the Dark Age, and I shall be content to quote one occasionally just to show the moral stagnation. The first General Capitulary, in 769 (in Migne), recalls Gregory of Tours in such clauses as:—

(3) We forbid servants of God to hunt with hounds or have falcons.
(5) If priests have several wives or shed the blood of either pagans or Christians . . . let them be deprived of the priesthood.

A Capitulary of 779 contains the first reference to Gilds:—

Let none presume to bind themselves together by oath in Gilds.

This condemnation was repeated over and over again during the next hundred years; yet popular writers, and even some experts on the history of the Gilds, ignore this evidence of the bitter hostility of the Church and declare that it actually protected the workers by founding the Gilds.* In 802 we find the bishops at Aix uttering the same warnings:—

That fugitive and vagabond clerics must not be received by anybody when they have no credentials.

That priests, deacons, and other clerics shall not have strange women [as servants] in their houses.

That monks and clerics shall not enter taverns to eat and drink.

That virgins consecrated to God and living in communities shall not wander about and run the risk of bringing scandal on the Church.

But the clauses and paragraphs are the same at all the innumerable Councils until the death of Charlemagne, in 814. After that, at least until the latter part of the eleventh century, the tone deepens. The son to whom Charlemagne left power, Louis the Pious, had actually to begin to cleanse the Church of the scandalous prelate-nobles whom Charlemagne had promoted. His own piety was consistent with ordering that the eyes of his nephew, who rebelled against him, should be cut out, and in later life he married and was enslaved by a voluptuous girl, and the Empire broke into a horrible confusion. France, in 833, saw the repulsive spectacle of the aged and reputedly holy king kneeling in penitential garb in the cathedral at Soissons and compelled by his son Lothar, who was supported by the entire body of the French prelates, to read a confession of a number of the gravest sins—a confession that probably was not even true.

Ten years later the most respectable authority of the period, the *Annales Bertiniani* (*Annals of the Abbey of St. Bertin*, included in Waitz's *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, 1883) describes how Louis's three sons, Lothar, Louis, and Charles, met to put an end to their sanguinary quarrels:—

They met at Thionville, discussed for several days, and swore that there should in the future be no further violation of brotherhood and

* The condemnation commonly speaks of "pagan" features or complains of suppers at which priests get drunk and sing. It seems safe to conclude that the Gilds were in some way a continuation of the unions of the ancient Roman workers and their periodical suppers.

charity. They also resolved to guard against men who sowed discord between them, and they promised to reform the condition of the Church, which had been defiled by recent events, its offices given to improper, that is to say, lay persons.

The impression is confirmed by the extant "chapters" of the Bishop of Orleans (in Migne, vol. 105) "to the priests of his diocese." They must have no women in their houses, must avoid drunkenness, and "not frequent taverns, and must not have conversation with women or impure people of any kind." In a letter which is subjoined his warnings discuss sex with the familiar grossness (bestiality, incest, paederasty, etc.). An episcopal council at Aix la Chapelle (the capital of the Empire), in 836, has a canon (12) headed:—

On the monasteries of young women, which in some places seem to be brothels rather than monasteries.

Nine years later the "chapters" of a large council of French bishops at Vernon (in Migne, vol. 138) show the persistence of the scandals:—

2. Owing to the civil—indeed more than civil—discord we have neglected many things in ourselves and those committed to us, and necessarily neglected them, so that religion has suffered grievous hurt in all orders, some tending to destruction through ignorance, others, from long familiarity with licence, thinking that they may sin with impunity.
3. We find that in the holy places, the monasteries, many have abandoned their profession and wander about. . . .
4. We order monks who wander about from greed and imprudently bring disgrace upon the name of religion to return to their monasteries.
5. Those who have illicit intercourse with nuns or sacrilegiously marry them must be excommunicated.
6. A girl married to one man and carried off by another must return to her husband. As to the man who seized her, it seems best, since such men despise ecclesiastical excommunication, that he be left to the civil law.
7. Nuns who in a false religious zeal have adopted the costume of monks and cut their hair must be admonished and punished.

The list of irregularities is long, and varies little from one generation to another. At Chalons (893) the bishops are obviously embarrassed by cases of priests who publicly marry, with the cordial support of their parishioners. Many councils concern themselves with the marriages of nuns, and it becomes general and completely futile to forbid the clergy to have any

female in the house. The ancient canons had tried to check the early licence by enjoining that a priest could have as housekeeper or servant only a mother, sister, or aunt. Incest has now become so common through this order that the zealots try to prevent even this. We have (Migne, 131) the Statutes of Riculph, Archbishop of Soissons, and his bishops, and we read:—

> Neither bishop, priest, deacon, nor any cleric shall have a woman in his house . . . [recalls the permission of the older canons] but we say that priests must keep away also from their mothers, aunts, sisters, and other relatives lest that happen of which we read in the Scriptures about Thamar, the sister of Absalom, whom he violated, or Lot, who when he was drunk corrupted his daughters. And if any of you invites his mother, sister, or aunt to supper he must send them away before it is dark, to their homes or to some hostel far away from his house. . . . And priests who are invited by monks or nuns shall not get drunk and sing at table.

But instead of reproducing a score of these amazing directions to bishops and priests—and we shall presently realize that half at least of the prelates, in these councils were what is now euphemistically called "worldly"—we will take from the *Bertinian Annals*, the most respectable contemporary authority, the account of the chief tragi-comedy of the ninth century or of a series of episodes which throw a broad light upon the grossness of the age in all classes. The monk-writers casually tell of scandals on every page. At the year 853 we read:—

> Ermengarde, the most Christian wife of the Emperor Lothar [grandson of Charlemagne], having died two years before, he took two girls from one of the royal estates. . . . His sons also lived in adultery (862). King Charles hears on his arrival at Soissons that his daughter Judith, widow of the English King Ethelbald . . . who is in the custody of the bishop at Senlis until she marries again if she feels that she cannot be continent, has adopted the dress of a man and, with the consent of his [royal] brother Louis, has gone to live in adultery with Count Baldwin.

In the same year, they say, King Lothar is bewitched by the black magic of his mistress Waldrada and wants to get rid of his queen Theutberga and put Waldrada in her place. But this is the beginning of the great epic of Lothar and Waldrada, which was soon the chief topic of all France, Germany, and Italy, if not all Europe, and I will first quote a passage of a letter which Pope Benedict III wrote in 860 to all the archbishops and bishops of France (Migne, vol. 115):—

To whom [wicked men] we hear that the cleric [and abbot] Hubert, son of (Duke) Boso and Countess Ingetrude [whom the Pope has excommunicated for her notorious life], is similar in his conduct; for he is sunk in such filth that he has no share in eternal life. Our Legates have heard from the groans of good men a good deal about his wretched audacity. We learn that he was once numbered amongst the sacred clergy and, being a subdeacon, he entered the pulpit during Mass and read to the people. Now he associates with the vilest and most wicked men and is steeped in crime and vice, to the peril of his immortal soul. We have heard from many sources that he does not scruple to spend his days with actresses, women who ruin souls and bodies and drag them down to the lowest depth . . . and that he is for ever committing murders and adulteries, vile fornications and intolerable outrages. And not only this but we have many witnesses that he has debauched the monastery of St. Maurice [he was abbot of St. Martin], and with such thoroughness that not a trace is left of its former religious spirit. The resources which once supported servants of God are now squandered upon whores, hounds, hawks, and wicked men. . . . And he forced his way into the monastery of Peter the Apostle at Lucon, which women were at all times forbidden to enter, and remained there for days with his loose women. And he handed over to one of his men a certain woman who had, out of zeal for chastity, left her husband and devoted herself to God [become a nun] and then, stung by the devil, had fled from her monastery. . . .

That the Pope should write a solemn letter to all the archbishops and bishops of France about a dissolute subdeacon might be represented as proof that such conduct was not common. But—aside from the fact that the whole literature of the time testifies to a general corruption—Hubert was a member of one of the highest noble families in France and brother of the Queen, and there must already have been in circulation a dark story about his association with his royal sister. Before this new and amazing chapter opened, however, Pope Benedict died and was succeeded by the first Pope, Nicholas I, who claimed supreme power in matters secular as well as ecclesiastical over all kings. If in what follows we admire his stern championship of justice and virtue, we may remember also that the dominating passion of his life was the assertion of Papal power. The *Annals* (year 862) say:—

[King] Lothar, insane with his passion for Waldrada [his mistress] and the hatred of Queen Theutberga which she had inspired, sought by every means to repudiate the queen. First by intermediaries and then directly he tried all sorts of tricks to get Günther, Archbishop of Cologne [and his chief chaplain], to favour the idea of divorce, and in order to secure his consent he gave him to believe that he would marry his [Günther's] niece as soon as the bishops made him free to

leave Theutberga. Günther, who was of poor mentality and was imprudent in his conduct [he was quite unscrupulous], was flattered, and he laid the matter before Theutgand, Archbishop of Trèves, whom he knew to be a man of poor intelligence and of little knowledge of the Scriptures and the Canons. So he put before him and falsely interpreted various passages from the rules of the Church . . . [they convoke a synod at Aix and summon Theutberga to it]. They produced witnesses who accused her in writing of enormous crimes and said that she confessed to having committed incest with her own brother.

The extraordinary corruption of the age is more plainly shown by Archbishop Hincmar's account of this stage. He was, after the Pope, the greatest prelate in Europe, and, stung later by the reproach that he had at least tacitly (as he certainly had) acquiesced in these proceedings, he wrote, besides the last part of the *Bertinian Annals* (it is believed) the work *De Divortio Lothari* (*The Divorce of Lothar*, Migne, vol. 125) against the Günther party in the Church. Like all other prelates of the time, he speaks about sex-matters with a freedom—his modern successors would say coarseness—which one may not entirely reproduce, but a few lines must be quoted:—

They say first: The wife of King Lothar was charged with adultery in the sense that her brother had had intercourse with her in masculine fashion . . . and she conceived and took a drug to cause abortion and conceal it. She denied this, and her champion sustained the ordeal of boiling water and, as he was uninjured, she was ordered to return to her husband's bed.

In theory, that is to say, she was abominably treated, and the archbishops presently put before Hincmar a secret memorandum in which Theutberga was represented as confessing that her abbot-brother had raped her in ways that cannot be described here, and that she had received an internal injury which unfitted her for marriage, and wanted to enter a nunnery. The bishops then summoned the council at the capital, Aix la Chapelle. The fact that the archbishops of Cologne and Trèves were amongst the leaders reminds us that western Germany was now richly developed, and it was an august assembly of prelates of both countries that met and at great length discussed the delicate business. Their conclusion is given by the annalists:—

" We consider that the woman, who is convicted of incest by her own confession, has never been a legitimate wife in the eyes of God. We cannot therefore refuse Our Glorious Prince [a disreputable ruffian],

in view of his zeal for religion and his care in governing and defending the State, the freedom which God has given him to enter into a legitimate marriage." After this Waldrada appeared in public with a magnificent retinue of officers, and crowds hastened to greet her as queen. Günther's niece was brought to the King, and he kissed her once and sent her back ignominiously to her uncle. Pope Nicholas, being informed of these events by the brothers of Theutberga, sent Legates to France. There they were corrupted with gold and they supported iniquity instead of justice. They were loaded with rich presents and returned to Rome.

Another account adds that this was the second time in two years that two of the Pope's Legates were corrupted, and that the synod was persuaded by the bribed Legates to send Günther and Theutgand to Rome, where the Pope condemned them severely, so they went to Benevento to inflame the Emperor:—

Louis, Emperor of Italy, was persauded by Günther that he had been insulted when the Pope degraded his brother's ambassadors, whom he had himself recommended to Rome. In great wrath he set out for Rome with the Empress, Günther, and Theutgand, with the intention of compelling the Pope to restore them or to punish him. The Pope, hearing this, ordered processions and a fast. When the Emperor reached Rome and was near St. Peter's the people and clergy came in procession, headed by a crucifix, but the Emperor's men fell upon them and, as they mounted the steps of St. Peter's, knocked them down, beat them, and broke their crosses and banners, and all who could do so ran away. In the fight the wonderful and venerable crucifix made by St. Helena and containing a piece of the true cross was broken and tossed into the mud. . . . The man who broke the crucifix died and the Emperor contracted a fever, so Louis sent the Empress to see the Pope.

Needless to say, after this sign of divine anger they were reconciled and Günther was disowned. But he was not beaten. He gave his brother, a cleric, a troop of soldiers and sent him to see the Pope; and if the Pope refused, and barred the way with his soldiers, he was to cut his way through them in St. Peter's and throw a scandalously defiant letter (" Listen to me, Nicholas," etc.) upon the tomb of the Apostle, which he did. The Emperor's troops meantime

ravaged and destroyed the houses of the Romans, raped the nuns and other women, killed priests and other men, and left Rome.

The reconciliation seems to have been imperfect, but Günther hastened back to Cologne and packed up the treasure of the cathedral. Next year Pope Nicholas sent a very pompous Legate,

Bishop Arsenius, to France to threaten the King with excommunication if he did not take back Theutberga. It is amusing to read that Arsenius launched a letter of the Pope full of " terrible and unprecedented imprecations, far removed from the modesty of the Holy See," against an unknown thief who had stolen some of the Legate's luggage! Lothar's supporters desert him, and he solemnly swears, through twelve noble sponsors, that he will take back Theutberga—the poor woman now wearily and in vain begged the Pope to let her retire to a convent—and Legate Arsenius started back for Italy with the siren Waldrada. She " escapes "—whether she paid him in gold or kind is not stated—on the journey and rejoins the Court. But at that juncture Nicholas dies (867) and a less rigid Pope, Hadrian II, succeeds him.

The story occupies a score of pages, so that I am compelled to abridge; but the last phase is just as characteristic of the age. Lothar persuades his royal brother to approach the new Pope and coax or bribe him to grant a divorce. After this preparation Lothar goes to the famous Abbey of Monte Cassino :—

> He compels the Pope, with orders from the Emperor, to join him there, and, loading him with presents and employing the good offices of [the Empress] Ingelbert, he gets the Pope to promise to sing a Mass for him and give him communion if he will swear that he has never had any carnal intercourse or even conversation with Waldrada since Nicholas excommunicated him. And the wretch, pretending like Judas to be in good faith, did not hesitate, in his brazen impudence, to receive the communion on this condition, and his supporters also, including Archbishop Günther, received communion . . . [they go to Rome] and on the second day he dined with the Pope in the Lateran Palace and gave him gifts of gold and silver vessels.

In what sacrilegious comedy the affair might have ended we may guess, for the annalists say that Lothar considered that he was now free to divorce Theutberga and marry Waldrada. But Lothar died, and the Papal Court hastened to explain that he had put a false interpretation on the Pope's acceptance of his gifts.

This long story, covering six years and introducing the corporate action in the most solemn councils of an immense body of French and German archbishops, bishops, and abbots, the corruption of Popes and Papal officials, and the wantonness of princes and all their nobles and ladies, may seem to the reader to throw more light upon the age which followed Charlemagne

than sketches of a saintly bishop or a serious scholar here and there. I may add that it is also the age when the Forged Decretals make their appearance, and both Nicholas and Hincmar, the two greatest religious leaders of Europe in five centuries, make use of them, even against each other, though both must have known that they were fraudulent.*

It is common to say that critics of the Papacy give their readers a false impression because they dwell at length on the antics of " a few bad Popes " and ignore the influence on the world of the greater Popes. Apart from the fact that this misleading selectiveness is notoriously the practice of the apologists themselves, the responsible critic, instead of ignoring the " good " Popes, freely discusses their work because, however much theoretical moralists may admire their stern language, the historical facts show that they did *not* improve the vicious and violent mediaeval world. The century to which I devote so much space—the ninth century—includes the two best and most powerful Popes (Hadrian and Nicholas) in nearly five centuries (600–1073), besides Charlemagne and Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims (the greatest provincial prelate in the same centuries); yet we find no improvement of character, and we shall see that the world was really slipping into the deepest abyss of the Dark Age. At the beginning of the century (815) Abbot Eginhard notes in his *Annals*:—

> The Emperor received information that some of the leading Roman nobles were plotting to murder Pope Leo, and that when the Pope discovered it he had the leaders in the conspiracy killed.

Charlemagne sent his nephew to make an inquiry, but—by this time, as his letters show, he was wearily disdainful of the Popes—he easily accepted Leo's excuses. Leo died next year, and his successor Stephen within two months had to fly to France to complain of murderous plots against him. He disappeared within a year, and six years later (823) Eginhard records:—

> The Emperor hears that Theodorus, the Primicerius [Prime Minister in modern language] of the Roman Church, and his son-in-law, Leo the Nomenclator, have had their eyes cut out and have been beheaded in the Lateran [Papal] Palace, and that this happened to them because in all things they had been loyal to the young Emperor Lothar; and there were some who said that this had been done by either the command or the counsel of Pope Paschal . . . [he sends representatives

* See my *Crises in the History of the Papacy* (1916), pp. 113–16. The Pope's powers are still to a great extent based upon them.

to inquire] and when they reached Rome they could not ascertain the truth of the matter because Pope Paschal had purged himself by oath,* and he refused to give up those who had killed the said nobles, saying that they were members of St. Peter's family [the Papal service] and that the dead nobles had been guilty of treason and justly blinded.

Paschal died before the matter was settled, and the feud of the Pro-Germans, or Imperialists, and the Papalists—a consequence of the Papal coronation of Charlemagne which was destined to redden Rome and Italy for seven centuries—boiled over once more. The Imperialists, the richer faction, elected Pope Eugenius, and Lothar, King of Italy under his father the Emperor, was sent to clear up the foulness of the Papal city:—

He made known his mission and he then, with the Pope's consent, reformed the condition of the Roman people which had long been depraved owing to the perversity of certain rulers [the Popes, as they held the civil power], and all those whose property had been grievously plundered rejoiced.

The clergy had the humiliation of seeing the reform decree of Lothar (who, by the way, was no more puritanical than the Emperor Lothar) posted on the walls; though their annoyance was mitigated by the fact that no one but they themselves could read. Catholic historians boast that in 826 Pope Eugenius ordered a reform of education. It was Lothar who, finding some zeal for culture in the Lombard cities of the north, ordered the opening of schools; and the Pope complained that he could not find teachers of anything but the usual religious stuff.

By the middle of the century Rome was, largely through its fraudulent acquisition of the Papal States, very wealthy. The highest authority on the history of Rome, Gregorovius, estimates that it was as rich in the days of Leo IV (847–55) as in the opulent days of Leo X (1513–21), who dissipated £2,000,000 (in modern values five times as much) in a few years. It attracted the "Saracens," Moslem fanatics from Africa who had settled in

* Perjury had, on account of the crude method adopted in the absence of proper courts of justice of allowing priests and princes just to swear that they were innocent (others underwent the ordeal), become as common as rape or murder. As belief in the sincerity of the oath waned, the most blood-curdling formulae were used and the man loaded with relics—sometimes a little of the "blood of Christ" from the chalice was poured into the ink with which they signed written oaths—but (as we saw in the case of Lothar) it made no difference. One result was that in daily life men began to swear pleasantly by organs of God ("Belly of God" is a mild example) which would make moderns shudder.

Sicily, and they ravaged Italy as far as and including St. Peter's. But even this did not stop the bloody quarrels of the factions in Rome. When Leo died, in 855—and Italy was still in so crude a condition that a legend that Leo was succeeded by a woman, Pope Joan, became generally accepted *—the fight for the great prize was renewed. We read in the official *Book of the Popes* that the lower clergy and the people elected Benedict III; but a certain Cardinal Anastasius, who had been degraded by Leo, took arms at the head of the Imperialist faction. They invaded St. Peter's, and Anastasius cut to pieces with an axe a painting of the scene of his degradation which Leo had hung on the wall. Then they went to the Lateran Palace, where Benedict sat, trembling, in pontifical state:—

He [Anastasius] ordered that Benedict, whom all Rome had elected, should be thrown out of the Palace. He stripped him of the pontifical robes and showered insults upon him; and he gave him into the custody of two priests who had been deposed by Leo for their crimes.

But the Papalist, or Italian, party recovered power and Benedict held the See for three years. His successor was one of the "great Popes," Nicholas I. No one questions the sincerity of his creed, but what happened immediately after his death (867) shows once more the complete social futility of these great Popes. His successor, Hadrian II, had, I should explain, been a respectable married priest. The *Bertinian Annals* (868) say:—

On the fourth day of Lent Eleutherius, son of Arsenius [the bishop-legate of Pope Nicholas previously mentioned], seized the daughter of Pope Hadrian, who was already married to another man, and took her to his house, and the Pope grieved exceedingly. Arsenius hastened to the Emperor Louis at Benevento, and, falling ill there, he put his treasure into the hands of the Empress Ingebert [who, it seems, quietly appropriated the bribe] and having intercourse with the devil, it is said, went to his appointed place. Pope Hadrian sent messengers to the Emperor and from him got permission to try Eleutherius according to Roman law, but he, on the advice of his brother [a priest], whom Hadrian had appointed Librarian of the Roman Church, killed Stephania, the Pope's wife, and then the daughter whom he had seized, and he [Eleutherius] was then killed by the Emperor's officers.

* The legend first appears several centuries later. Since part—possibly the original part—of it was that, from that date, elected Popes were anatomically examined to make sure that they were men, I suggest that it may have grown out of a peculiar marble seat, popularly called the Dung Seat, which at this time was used at the door of a church in the election-ceremonies. We will return to this in the next chapter.

It is significant that just about this time Archbishop Hincmar, who is believed to have been the author of this part of the *Annals*, thought fit to write for his bishops a special treatise (in Migne entitled *On the Need to Check the Rape of Widows, Girls, and Nuns*). Hincmar now found that the Forged Decretals, which he had used against Nicholas, cut both ways:—

> King Charles was angry with Hincmar [a nephew of the archbishop and promoted by him] Bishop of Laon because he had gone to Rome [appealed to the Pope against both King and archbishop] without his permission and obtained certain letters and contumaciously defied the King. He sent officers to bring Hincmar to him. But Hincmar and his clergy and certain bishops sat near the altar, and they dare not bring them out of the church.

It is a long story. Briefly, Hincmar the bishop was a corrupt and greedy man who, at first under the protection of his archiepiscopal uncle, who bade the king leave him alone, and then under the protection (for which he paid) of the good Pope Hadrian, plundered the estates of the nobles for years, until king and archbishop told the Pope in very strong language to mind his own business, and the eyes of the rebellious bishop were cut out. Next year:—

> Carloman, son of King Charles, and head of many monasteries [as youngest son he had been provided for in the usual way], was accused of plotting against his father and was deprived of his abbeys and arrested. . . . Charles released him but ordered him to remain at the Court. He fled to Belgium by night and, getting together a band of sons of Belial, he wrought such cruelty and satanic devastation that only those who saw it would believe it.

This man also, although utterly cruel and depraved, secured the protection of the Pope (under the Forged Decretals), and Hincmar, in the name of the king, had to send to Rome a letter (it is preserved by Cardinal Baronius in his *Annales*, year 871) of extraordinary contemptuousness of the Papal claims. "What hell has vomited these things upon us?" he says of the Pope's letters. They removed Carloman's bright eyes.

There were many other cases—Archbishop Ebbo, Bishop Rothrad, etc.—but these will suffice to give the reader the true measure of what is called by some "the French renaissance of the ninth century," and to show that "grand figures" like Hincmar need not compel us to abandon the phrase "Dark Age."

It was worse, if possible, in Italy. Ten years later the *Annals* report:—

> [Emperor] Louis . . . heard that his brother Carloman is paralysed and dying and that Arnulph, a son of his by a concubine, has seized part of his kingdom. . . . Meantime Boso [Duke of Lombardy], instigated by his wife, who said that she, a daughter of the Emperor of Italy and espoused to the Emperor of Greece, did not care to live unless her husband became a king, persuaded the bishops of those parts, partly by threats and partly by appealing to their greed with promises of abbeys and towns, to anoint and crown him King. And Hugo, son of Lothar and Waldrada, collected a large army of brigands and invaded the kingdom.

This Boso, one of the growing number of brutal adventurers, had poisoned his first wife to get the Emperor's daughter. Pope John VIII, hard pressed by the Saracens, flies to him for help and, to flatter him, formally accepts the brute as his son and uses his power of anathema to get him not merely a crown, but the Empire.

At the other end of Italy character had sunk to savagery. The monk-chronicler Erchembert (Migne, vol. 129) notes at the same year (c. 40):—

> Sergius, commander of the troops [for the Greek Emperor], did not like to dissociate himself from Adelgis and Lambert, and he was anathematized and began to make war on Guaifer. On the eighth day of the month he captured the Neapolitan soldiers and had them beheaded as the Pope had ordered. A little later he was captured by his own brother [Athanasius, Bishop of Naples] . . . his eyes were cut out, and he was sent to Rome where he came to a miserable end; and his brother usurped his place. Athanasius, Bishop of Naples, was now commander of the troops. He had, as we said, driven out his brother, and he entered into an agreement with the Saracens [then quite savage enemies of the Church]. He laid waste all the territories of Benevento, Rome, and Spoleto, all the monasteries and churches, the cities and towns, the villages, mountains, and islands . . . including the venerable abbey of St. Benedict (Monte Cassino) and that of St. Vincent, which were burned down, and others without number.

John was a fighting Pope—literally, on land and sea—but, according to the *Annals* of St. Fulda, a relative poisoned him, and, as he was a long time dying, finished him off with a mallet.

Rome and the Papacy were now entering upon a long period of degradation which lasted more than a century and a half, and I must be content to illustrate it, and the corruption of the

countries subject to it, by a series of extracts from the writings of the most respectable and best educated prelate of the time, Liutprand, Bishop of Cremona. In the work which is usually quoted as the *Antapodosis* (*Repayment*, or the fate of vicious princes), though this is a sub-title to *A History of the Deeds of Kings and Emperors*, he tells us how at the election of 891 there was the familiar schism in Rome. Pope Formosus, apparently not a bad type for the age, was elected, and his rival Sergius, a brutal bishop, was driven to the provinces, where he began to whip up troops to invade Rome. Formosus summoned to his aid the Marquis Arnulph, whose habitual conduct Liutprand thus describes (I, 30):—

God's priests were dragged to prison and sacred virgins and married women were raped. There was no safety in taking refuge in a church, for his soldiers made merry in them with lewd gestures, profane songs, and rioting. And women prostituted themselves publicly to them.

Sergius found a patron in the almost equally savage Marquis Adalbert, and he cut his way to Rome:—

Formosus was now dead, and his successor expelled, so Sergius is made Pope by Adalbert.* He, ignorant of sound doctrine, has Formosus [buried nine months before!] dug up from his grave and placed, clad in the pontifical robes, on the Papal throne. And he says to the corpse: Why did you invade the Roman See when you were already Bishop of Portus? Then, stripping off the robes and cutting off three of the fingers, he ordered that the body should be thrown into the Tiber . . . and Formosus was so holy that when fishermen later found the body and took it to St. Peter's, some of the statues saluted it. I often heard this from religious men at Rome.

The character of Sergius and the nobles who supported him Liutprand describes in ch. 47 of his Second Book. The ladies here introduced belong to the highest family of the Roman nobility; yet, as Gregorovius shows, they could not sign their own names. It will be noticed that all chronicles from this time tell of hard, aggressive, cruel, and completely unscrupulous women, heralds of " the Age of Chivalry."

At that time John of Ravenna held the Roman pontificate, and he had obtained it by a terrible crime against all right and decency.

* Liutprand, who is here writing of events when he was a boy, is inaccurate. It was Pope Stephen VI who, though under the control of Sergius, committed the ghastly outrages. Sergius became Pope eight years later. Liutprand's works are in vol. 136 of the Migne series, but there is now a good translation in " The Broadway Mediaeval Library " (1930).

Theodora, a shameless whore [wife of the highest papal official], grandmother of the [Prince] Alberic who died recently, was then a monarch of Rome and—though it is a shameful thing to have to say—she ruled it manfully. She had two daughters Marozia and Theodora, and they were not merely like her but even more assiduous in the service of Venus. Marozia had had an adulterous connection with Pope Sergius and had given birth to John who became Pope after the death of John of Ravenna; and by the Marquis Alberic she gave birth to the Alberic who afterwards in his turn usurped power over Rome. While Peter was Bishop of Ravenna he often sent John, who was a priest of his church, on a mission to Rome. Theodora, a shameless harlot, seeing that he was a handsome man, fell violently in love with him and not only invited but compelled him to be intimate with her . . . [she got him rapidly promoted and elected Pope John X].

55. At this time the Marquis Adalbert died, and his son Guido was appointed Marquis by King Berengar. But his widow Bertha wanted to inherit her husband's power when he died. By means of cunning bribery and the use of her body she won many over to her, so that when she was presently captured by Berengar and put into prison at Mantua, they did not hand over all her towns and castles to Berengar, and she and her son were later set at liberty. She had three sons by her husband . . . and a daughter Ermengard who indulged as much as she in the sweetness of Aphrodite.

This Bertha was a bastard daughter of the Waldrada, who had—see an earlier page—set Europe aflame, and her son Guido sustained the repute of the family for indulgence in every variety of crime and vice:—

III, 43. Meantime Guido, Marquis of Tuscany, and his wife Marozia began to plot to get rid of [Pope] John, because they hated his brother Peter to whom he showed too much favour. So when Peter was in Rome Guido had a number of soldiers in hiding, and one day when the Pope and Peter were in the Lateran Palace, the soldiers of Guido and Marozia fell upon them and killed Peter before the Pope's eyes. Then they seized the Pope and put him in prison, and he died there soon afterwards. It is said that they suffocated him by putting a pillow over his mouth. Then they made John (XI), who was the son of Marozia and Pope Sergius, Pope. Guido died soon afterwards, and his brother Lambert succeeded him.

C, 44. Marozia, rather a shameless harlot, sent messengers to King Hugo (of Provence, another unspeakable brute) and invited him to come and take Rome, but only on condition that he married her. . . . He was received with honour by the Romans, and he went at once to Marozia's bed in the Castle of Sant Angelo [which is misleading—the Pope married his "shameless harlot" of a mother and Hugo with much ceremony in this Papal residence], and feeling secure in his incestuous union with her, he began to despise the Romans. Now Marozia had [another] son named Alberic, by (her first husband) the

Marquis Alberic, and when he one day, at his mother's behest, poured out water for Hugo to wash his hands, Hugo slapped him on the face for doing it clumsily. Determined to avenge the insult he called the Romans together . . . and they deserted Hugo, chose Alberic as their lord, and besieged Sant Angelo. . . . Hugo was so alarmed that he let himself down by a rope from the walls and fled with his wife, and Alberic became monarch of Rome.

With the disappearance of Marozia, what Cardinal Baronius called the forty years' " Rule of the Whores " at Rome ended, strictly speaking; but through Alberic it may be said to continue, and at all events Rome and the Papacy remained in the same foul condition for another hundred years. Alberic decided to unite the secular and religious powers in his son, and, after one or two colourless Popes had filled the See until he reached the mature age of eighteen, he became Pope John XII. There is no more dispute about his depravity than about the preceding facts. The official *Book of the Popes* (which also calls John XI " the son of Sergius ") admits that the new John " spent all his life in adultery and vanity," and the contemporary monk-chronicler Benedict of Soracte (who reflects the general cultural condition by making ten gross grammatical mistakes in every twenty words of his Latin, Migne, vol. 139) confirms this. But we may continue to follow Liutprand, who carries the story on in his *De Rebus Gestis Othonis* (*The Deeds of the Emperor Otto*); and if some of the details seem incredible we must remember that Liutprand was now an eye-witness of events—he was in the suite of the Emperor in Italy—and a bishop of religious character:—

While [King] Berengar and [Marquis] Adalbert were still reigning—indeed raging and playing the tyrant—in Italy the Supreme Pontiff and Universal Pope John, whose Church had suffered grievously from the fury of the said Berengar and Adalbert, sent envoys to tell the Most Serene and Potent King Otto and beg his aid. . . . While the Roman envoys made their complaints the venerable Waldfert, Archbishop of Milan, escaping half-dead from the fury of the said Berengar and Adalbert, also sought the King, and Waldo, Bishop of Como, followed him. Otto collected his forces, marched into Italy, and drove out Berengar and Adalbert. . . . He was received with great ceremony in Rome and was anointed Emperor by the said Pope John; and he not only gave back all the possessions of the Church but gave the Pope also immense treasures of jewels, gold, and silver. And he received from the Pope and the leading men of the city an oath, on the body of St. Peter, that they would never help Berengar and Adalbert, and he went off to Pavia. But Pope John immediately

forgot his oath and sent men to ask Adalbert to come, now taking an oath that he would help him against the Emperor . . . [the Emperor has inquiries made at Rome and is informed of the Pope's vile character]. Pope John (they tell him) is the enemy of all virtue. This is no secret. Take the case of the widow of his vassal Rainerius whom, in his blind passion for her, he has put at the head of many cities and has given crucifixes and vessels [of gold] from St. Peter's. Take the case of Stephania his aunt [a concubine of his Father], who lately had a child by him and died in childbirth. He has turned the Lateran Palace into a brothel and made a wife of the sister of the said concubine Stephania. Notice that there are no foreign women in Rome. They are afraid to make the pilgrimage, as they have heard that a short time ago John raped a number of married women, widows, and virgins. Look at the roof of St. Peter's which lets in floods of water upon the altar. That is why he has differences with the Emperor. When the envoys reported this to the Emperor he said: He [the Pope] is only a boy. I will hope that after a little genial scolding he will drop all these things . . . [the Pope sends priests and nobles]. He admits that he has done a few childish things in the ardour of youth; but it is all over. . . .

With colossal impudence the gay young Pope then accused the Emperor himself of breaches of his oath, and Otto took a step which would seem incredible if we did not know that Liutprand was now in the Emperor's service and was an eye-witness of events:—

The Emperor sent officers to Rome, and he directed them to say that if the Pope did not accept his denials he challenged him to a duel.

The Pope, refusing either to fight or to purge himself by oath, resorts to all sorts of trickery, but he flies when Otto marches on Rome. The Emperor summons all the Italian bishops, with many German and French, to hold a synod to examine the witnesses against the Pope, and a revolting story is unfolded. Besides the rapes and adulteries mentioned above, he has cut out the eyes of a priest and castrated a cardinal who rebuked him. He uses pagan oaths when he is gambling, blasphemes terribly, neglects religious services, and so on. They summon the Pope to answer the charges, and when he refuses, in a saucy letter (which might have been written by a boy of fifteen after a few months at Latin), they elect Leo VIII. It appears that there was not a priest in the Roman Church fit to be Pope, so they hastily ordained and consecrated a layman. Otto, seeing the apparent acquiescence of the Romans, sends the bulk of his army north:—

When the Pope heard this, he sent men to Rome to offer the leaders all the treasures of St. Peter's and other churches if they will kill the Emperor and Pope Leo. The Romans, deceived by the reduction of the army, blow their trumpets and rush to kill the Emperor. He meets them on the bridge over the Tiber, which they barricade.

The Germans defeat them, and the Emperor gets a new oath of loyalty and departs. Then:—

The women, not of ignoble rank and not few in number, with whom John had been wont to take his pleasure, spur the Romans to kill Leo.

They open the gates to the profligate and his men, Leo flies, and a new synod of bishops makes solemn oaths of loyalty to John; but he enjoys his spiritual sovereignty, after a few mutilations and tortures of the clerical pietists, only three months:—

On a certain night when he was with a man's wife outside the city the devil [probably the husband] struck him so severely on the temples that he died in eight days.

And they raised a fine monument in St. Peter's over the remains of the Holy Father, on which pilgrims read that he had been "the Ornament of the Entire World." It is on these epitaphs that Catholic lives of the Popes are based.

This sort of thing continues, with intervals when a strong German force checks the Romans, for another century. The Romans, who have sworn to the Emperor never to elect a Pope again without his consent (and Leo is still alive), elect Benedict V, and the Emperor has to lay siege to Rome to get rid of him. Within a few months they rebel once more, and the party of piety stoops to such atrocities that the Greeks, to whom Otto sends Bishop Liutprand with his compliments, treat him as a visitor from a savage country and pour the dregs of the dictionary upon Rome (966). Even the rotting bodies of dead anti-Germans are dug up, cut up, and thrown on the muck-heaps by the priests. A German Pope is elected (973), and two years later a Roman deacon (a priceless ruffian) strangles him and, as Boniface VII, takes his place. A "horrid monster," says the later Pope Sylvester II (the famous Gerbert); "a man who in criminality surpassed the rest of mankind," said the French prelates at the Council of Rheims in 991. When the Germans proved too strong for him he packed up the Papal treasures and went to enjoy the gaieties of Constantinople; but Otto II died, and he came back and murdered another Pope and excised many eyes.

Then the Germans returned and slew him, and the new young Emperor, Otto III, made a Pope of a pious young cousin of his; and six months later this man fled before the Romans.

A Count Crescentius, grandson of Theodora (of odorous memory), had led the revolt. Thietmar, Bishop of Merseburg, says in his *Chronicon* (Migne, 139):—

> When the Emperor heard this he hastened to Italy and bade the Pope meet him. John, the usurper of the Papacy, fled, but he was captured by loyal followers of Christ and the Emperor and he lost his tongue, eyes, and nose. Crescentius fortified himself in Sant Angelo . . . he was captured, beheaded, and hung up by the feet (with twelve other leaders) by order of the Emperor, who cast a terrible fear into all.

The Countess Crescentia, the widow, was " handed over to the German soldiers to be raped," and she nearly died. Three years later she contrived—she was a beautiful woman—to catch the eye of the young Emperor, shared his bed, and poisoned him. Some of the chroniclers of the time say that she also poisoned the Pope, but he recovered for a time. Both died within a year, at all events; and perhaps we are not altogether surprised that even the learned Dean Milman loses his way in this bewildering world and—presumably by mistake—reproduces the official panegyric of this Pope, Gregory V, and speaks of his " blameless life and gentle virtues." The contemporary *Estensian Chronicle* says that the atrocities were committed by order of the Pope, and they were certainly a joint action of Pope and Emperor.

This Emperor Otto III, a neurotic son of a Byzantine princess, had the dream of reforming the world, with Rome as its centre, by an alliance of German culture and Papal authority. The horrible outrages of the year 986 were the first fruits. When his Papal cousin died, the unbalanced prince tried the experiment of giving the tiara to a man of learning, Gerbert or Silvester II—the only Pope who ever knew science, which he had learned in the Arab schools in Spain. It was futile and disastrous, and when, as I said, Pope and Emperor speedily passed away under suspicion of poison, an Italian noble family, the Counts of Tusculum, took over the control of Rome and the Papacy.

It will be enough to quote how their less violently corrupt rule ended in the second greatest scandal of this stretch of Papal history. In 1032 the ruling family put forward as candidate, and the clergy and people of Rome, accepting a heavy bribe,

elected, a boy of their kin, twelve (the chronicler Glaber says ten) years old and, as it proved, a thoroughly vicious person. Pope Victor II, who came ten years after him, says in his *Dialogue* (Migne, 149, col. 1003):—

Benedict (IX) got the pontificate through his father paying a large sum of money. I shudder to think how vile, how base, how execrable his life was after he became Pope. When he had for a long time perpetrated rape, murders, and other terrible things against the Roman people, they, unable to bear him any longer, deposed him and expelled him from the city . . . [they elected John] but Benedict, being of the family of the Consuls, came back and recovered his seat . . . and persevered in his evil ways.

Bonitho, Bishop of Piacenza a little later, says in his *Liber ad Amicum* (*A Book to a Friend*, Migne, 150, col. 817):—

At the death of John, Theophylactus [his baptismal name] succeeded him, and he feared neither God nor man. He was ironically named Benedict [Blessed] and, after perpetrating many vile adulteries and murders with his own hands, he wanted to marry his cousin . . . so he sold the Papacy . . . which would have been very laudable but for the terrible sin that followed [the purchaser naturally squeezing the price he had paid out of the Romans].

It was the minority of virtuous priests who had urged this man to buy the tiara for two thousand pounds of gold. We have a letter in which their leader, " St." Peter Damiani, warmly congratulates him on this successful act of simony; and they knew well what Benedict would do with the money. The Romans, moreover, set up another Pope, Sergius III, and, as Benedict returned when all his money had gone and he failed to get the bride he wanted, three rival Popes ruled Rome from the three great Churches—St. Peter's, the Lateran, and Sta. Maria Maggiore —and the last State was worse than the first. William of Malmesbury, of the next century, describes it in his *Chronicle of the Kings of England* as very corrupt; but Bishop Bonitho, who lived in the next generation, makes reflections at this stage in the above work which no critic would care to improve upon. The pious priest, who had given his fortune for the Papacy, was keen to keep it, and he went to meet the Emperor and insisted that he was particularly worthy because he had been chaste all his life. The good bishop says:—

That seemed to the Romans of that time not merely praiseworthy but almost angelic.

But he admitted the sin of simony and resigned, and they had to look for another candidate. The Bishop says:—

> They had no fit man [priest] in their own diocese [Rome], and the disease of the head had led to such disease of the members that in the entire Church hardly one could be found who was not either illiterate or simoniacal or an adulterer.*

So the Emperor imposed on them a virtuous German bishop, Clement II, and—so they thought—the great purification of the Church began. In serious history the Dark Age now came to a close.

* There is in Migne a contemporary life of St. John Gualbert which says of the Roman clergy: "Clerics who were not either married or living with concubines were extremely rare."

CHAPTER VII

THE END OF THE DARK AGE

THE few American historians who have in recent years contended that the term Dark Age is a libellous myth of the last century—it was, in fact, Cardinal Baronius who invented the phrase—make the extraordinary mistake of assuming that, as Professor Haskins says, it comprises "all that came between 476 and 1453." Every responsible European writer makes it end about the middle of the eleventh century. From that time begins the steady revitalization of the economic life which is the basis of what we call civilization, since it necessarily entails the growth of towns and of the middle class (lawyers, writers, doctors, etc.), and therefore of art and culture. This re-awakening is easily traced to the Lombard cities of North Italy—where culture was never entirely lost—the contact of Germany with the Greek world by the marriage of Otto II to a Byzantine princess, and, especially, the rise of a very advanced Arab civilization in Spain and Sicily. If there were any real and deep influence of the Church we should find it in morals, especially sexual morals, for the sincere Churchman is disdainful of the secular features of a civilization, but a fanatic about vice.

In the next few chapters we find that contemporary writers record no such improvement. Indeed, paradoxical as it may seem, the average character appears to become worse—there is certainly no decrease of vice, violence, cruelty, injustice, and treachery—as art and culture develop. If we must say that we come to the end of the Dark Age it is to enter upon an age of Savagery in Silk. Since this continuity of vice through the Middle Ages is now apt to be suppressed by historians, who prefer to dilate on the glorious art, the imaginary Age of Chivalry, and so on, I am compelled still to dwell on these less agreeable features. I have shown the continuity in some places, but it was general. Some thirty miles from Rome, for instance, at Farfa, was one of the richest Benedictine abbeys in Europe, and an eleventh-century monk of the abbey, Gregorio de Catino, gives us in his Chronicle a strange story of Italian monasticism in the tenth

century. It is spread over fifty pages, and I must abridge severely *:—

Under Abbot Ratfrid there were in the monastery two scoundrels of very depraved life who passed as monks. One, who had studied medicine there, was named Campo. The other was Hildebrand, who came from a distant abbey. These two began to plot to murder the abbot, and they agreed to settle by lot which of them would take his place. . . . They poisoned him, and Hildebrand went to Pavia to see King Hugh who, for a large sum of money, let them have the abbey. Campo ruled it as the twenty-sixth abbot, and he was the worst source of distress to it after the pagans. [Hildebrand was given a dependent abbey, but he and his mistresses, who made dresses out of the silk altar-vestments, and their children got so drunk one night that they set it on fire.] They were rather wolves than monks, and the peace between them lasted only a year. . . . Campo had seven daughters and three sons, all of whom he enriched out of the abbey property . . . and thus things stood until the time of Alberic [who wants a share, drives out Campo, and instals Abbot Dagobert who, after five years of struggle, is poisoned by the monks, and the infamous Pope John XII appoints Abbot Adam]. But he persevered in a religious spirit only for a short time, and he then began to follow the example of Campo and Hildebrand. He was arrested by the soldiers of the said Pope for the crime of rape.

This state of things in a great abbey, almost under the eyes of the Papacy, lasted thirty years, if not seventy, as we read again of trouble in 988; and the only men who interfered from Rome were the unscrupulous Hugh, Alberic, and John XII, of whose careers I have spoken. *The Cambridge Mediaeval History* says (V, 5) that " the great Italian monastery of Farfa is typical of the general condition." A century later we have a shocking picture of life in the still greater abbey of Monte Cassino. Cardinal Damiani says in one of his letters (IV, 8):—

He [Bishop Alberic of Marsico] was entangled with an obscene whore, but when he heard that the Emperor Otto was coming he had to profess to be celibate. So he decked the woman in religious robes and passed her off as a nun. When the Emperor had gone he returned to his evil ways, and he had a son from the same diabolical stable. When this boy grew up he made him his associate-bishop, but in time the father regretted having divided his power and prestige and conceived a devilish plot. Taking counsel with certain pestilential men, men who knew not God, he made a bargain that for the sum of a hundred pounds they should cut out the eyes of the abbot of Monte Cassino and hand over the abbey to him, and he and they should

* The work, *Il Chronicon Farfense*, is published in the *Fonti per la Storia d'Italia* (vol. 18) of the Istituto Storico Italiano (1903, p. 306 and following).

control it. It was part of the bargain of this first-begotten son of Satan that he should send his servants with part of the price and need not pay the rest until the abbot's eyes were in his hands. So, collecting money from men and jewellery from women, he sent sixty pounds to the town of San Germano. When his servants arrived there they were directed to a certain crypt and the Satellites of Satan cut out the abbot's eyes, wrapped them in a cloth. and gave them to the bishop's messengers [who returned home with the eyes to find that the wicked bishop had miraculously died just at the time of the outrage].

In the North of Italy a strict bishop, Ratherius of Verona, wrote a work with the title *Praeloquia* (*Preludes*, Migne, 136), the fifth book of which is one long vituperation, which I must condense, of the priests and bishops:—

But why do I complain of laymen when I see so many of disgraceful life in the priestly order . . . preferring dice to the Scriptures, lewd songs to the truth, actors to priests, drunkards to philosophers, fools to wise men, the impure to the pure, mimes to monks. The bishops have rich and wonderful banquets . . . every sort of music and dancing girls . . . while there are so many ruined Churches, widows, orphans, strangers, poor folk without number, captives, blind, lame, and infirm. . . . They have horses with gold and silver trappings and German bridles and they hurry to whatever sport appeals to their lusts. Their beds are encrusted with gold and have silken covers, their seats are upholstered with Gothic tapestry. . . . They rush through rather than chant the Mass, often omitting it altogether, and off they go [to the hunt] on their gold-caparisoned horses [returning in the evening to gay banquets and taking the girls to bed with them].

Life was, as I said, beginning to be civilized—this was in the Lombard cities—in those aspects which religious bishops deplored or despised, but there was no increase of virtue, and the dukes and counts who now divided Italy between them were almost as gross as ever.

Another of these rare virtuous bishops, Atto of Vercelli, tells us in one of his letters (No. 9 in Migne, 134) that the priests—Ratherius says that the office was largely hereditary—were in fact such as we should expect to find under corrupt prelates. It is a letter to the priests of his own diocese:—

Moreover—we are ashamed to say it but it would be dangerous to pass it over—some have gone so far in impurity as to have obscene harlots living in their houses, and they eat and go about with them in public. They are so much under the spell of these women that they put them at the head of their households and when they die leave them their property, handing over to them all the money they have

saved. While harlots are thus honoured, the churches are impoverished, and the poor starve. Public authorities force their way into the houses of priests to get at the women and the bastards they have borne. If the women and their bastards go to law, priests in contempt of their sacred office oppose them, heap invectives upon them, and threaten them. To enrich their families they become greedy, avaricious, usurious, and dishonest. . . . Some of them argue with their bishops in defence of these things and refuse to obey.

I need not quote documents to show that the bulk of the clergy, higher and lower, remained in this condition as long as the Papacy lingered in the corruption we saw in the previous chapter. There is, however, one document that sheds a broad and almost incredible light on the coarseness and looseness both of Rome and the entire Italian Church. Older Catholic historians were so familiar with these evidences of grossness in the Ages of Faith that this document is reproduced by the learned Benedictine monk Father Mabillon in his *Museum Italicum* (1724, II, 86). It is a fragment of a Roman ritual book describing the appointment of a bishop, written in the usual half-illiterate Latin, and apparently in use in the tenth and eleventh centuries:—

When the death of a bishop of some place occurs another must be chosen by the people of the town, and the priests and people must draw up a document and send to the Apostolic Lord [the Pope] a suggestion, that is to say, a Petitioning Letter begging him to consecrate as their bishop the man they have sent. Then the Apostolic Lord orders the Secretary or Nomenclator to take him to the Archdeacon who will, in compliance with the canons, examine him on these four points: if he is a sodomist, which means with a male, if he has relations with a woman who is consecrated to God or, as the French say, a nun; if with a quadruped; if with another man's wife or if he has taken the wife from another man.*

In the same work Father Mabillon discusses (II, 21) a marble chair at the door of a church in Rome in which the elected Pope sat during his procession round the city. I suggested in the previous chapter that this may have led to the legend that a new Pope's sex was verified by examination, and possibly to the legend

* The grossness of the passage (and the Age) cannot be fully appreciated unless one can read the mediaeval Latin. The word used for sodomist is *arsenochita*, which has been expunged from our Latin dictionaries. Du Cange, probably the highest Catholic authority in these matters, gives the word in his *Glossarium* and shows that it is used in other ritual books and that Bishop Ratherius, whom I quoted above, says that "every priest is either an adulterer or an *arsenochita*." The Latin phrase which I translate "with a quadruped" is *pro quatuor pedes*: which indicates that the cultural level was as low as the ethical.

of Pope Joan. It was called " the Dung Chair." Father Mabillon protests that, since it is not described as having a hole in the seat, the Italian version of its purpose (in public) is wrong, and he argues, rather feebly, that it got its name from the fact that when the Pope sat in it the choir chanted, from Psalm 113: " He lifteth up the needy from the dung." The age was obviously so gross that the other theory may be correct.

Much better known is the evidence of this provided by the *Liber Gomorrhaicus* (*Book of Gomorrah* Migne, 145) of Cardinal St. Peter Damiani, which is described by a classical authority as worse than anything in Greek or Latin literature. Monks of a few reformed monasteries in Germany had captured the Emperor Henry the Pious, who appointed German Popes to reform Rome. The first two were, apparently, soon poisoned by the Romans, but the third was a soldier—literally—and to him—Leo IX—Damiani offered this fragrant contribution to the cause of virtue. He accepted and greatly praised it. Damiani had been a swineherd, and he had mastered the Latin equivalent of the swineherd's vocabulary, so that I may not translate the most characteristic passages of this appalling description of the vices of the bishops, priests, and monks. The keynote is in the letter of introduction:—

> Unnatural vice has crept like a cancer and reached up into the sacred order . . . it rages with such audacity and freedom that . . .

The saint explains in some detail to the Pope the various types of masturbation, paederasty, and bestiality and the different degrees of guilt of bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, and monks. He flays bishops who say that clerics need not be deposed except for sodomy, and only in flagrant cases of this. He is disgusted with the leniency of the Church canon which says: " A bishop who sins with a quadruped shall do penance for ten years. . . ." Another of these German reforming Popes tell us of a contemporary abbot who cut out the eyes of some of his monks whom he caught in sin, and says that, when the bishop proposed to punish him, Pope Gregory VII forbade it and rewarded the abbot with a bishopric. Ought we to regard these virtuous acts as proof that the Dark Age was really over?

With Damiani, in the purification of the Church, was now closely associated Hildebrand, later Pope Gregory VII, and, while he lost the German sword through the death of the Em-

peror, he got the troops of the very virginal Countess Mathilda of Tuscany and—strangest police an apostle of virtue ever had—the semi-civilized and entirely ferocious Normans. As Hildebrand was the second greatest of the Popes, and most deeply religious, we have here the chief ground on which sincere but ill-informed apologists base their claim. Such Popes as Gregory VII and Innocent III must, they feel, have raised the moral level of Europe. The extracts which will follow show that in point of fact there was no moral improvement after the death of either Pope. I am concerned here with general indications of character, not individuals, but may point out that it was the pious unscrupulousness of these "good Popes" that defeated their preaching. Gregory, for instance, induced the anti-Pope Benedict, who had retired to an impregnable castle, to yield and resign voluntarily on condition that he would receive no sort of punishment. Gregory got thirty Roman nobles to pledge their honour as guarantors of this, but when Benedict came to Rome and resigned he trumped up a list of obviously false charges against him and mercilessly punished him. He then induced a Roman Council to decree, and to seal the decree with terrible anathemas, that in future the cardinals alone could elect a Pope; yet when he felt that the time had come for him to take the reins, he had himself informally elected by popular clamour, not by the cardinals. He used forgery, lying, and an incredible amount of violence and bloodshed in the attainment of his objects. He died in exile, driven into solitude by the just anger of the Roman people, and whatever Catholic writers and complaisant historians say of the *theory* of his life-work, the following chapters will show clearly that, while he raised the power of the Papacy and the Church to its highest point, that power was not used to improve the social-moral aspects of civilization.

The outstanding achievement of Hildebrand was to enforce upon the clergy that law of celibacy—not a practice of virtue, but a prohibition of marriage at whatever cost—which stricter prelates had demanded for nearly a thousand years. That this led to an increase of vice and hypocrisy is a platitude of mediaeval history, but for the moment it will suffice to illustrate the gross and unscrupulous methods by which this spiritual triumph was won.

The fight was fiercest in the cities of Lombardy, especially Milan, where the great majority of the priests were respectably

married, and the great majority of respectable folk supported clerical marriage. Damiani and Hildebrand and their lieutenants here got their way chiefly by using mob violence in its crudest form and spurring it on by incredibly coarse vituperation. When the anti-puritans again elected an anti-Pope, the not unworthy Bishop of Parma, Cadalus, Cardinal "St." Damiani, thus described him in a letter to the Emperor:—

> This disturber of the Church and enemy of man's salvation . . . this root of sin, herald of the devil, and apostle of Antichrist . . . this arrow from the quiver of Antichrist, rod of Asur, son of Belial, son of perdition . . . this whirlpool of lust, shipwreck of chastity, shame of the priesthood, poison of vipers, stench of the globe, filth of the age, disgrace of the universe, slippery serpent, human ordure [to translate politely], latrine of crime, sink of vices, etc., etc.

We have in Migne many sermons of the eloquent saint, and here is a gem from one on the married priests' wives (Migne, 145):—

> I address myself to you, you darlings of the priests, you tit-bits of the devil, poison of minds, daggers of souls, aconite of drinkers, bane of eaters, stuff of sin, occasion of destruction. To you I turn, I say, you gynecaea of the ancient enemy, you hoopoes, vampires, bats, leeches, wolves. Come and hear me, you whores, you beds for fat swine to wallow in, you bedrooms of unclean spirits, you nymphs, you sirens, you harpies, you Dianas, you wicked tigresses, you furious vipers. . . .

These women had been as publicly and legally married as the wives of the laity, for there was still no law of the universal Church against clerical marriage; but as nine-tenths at least of the people were still totally illiterate and very coarse, and as there was free looting in the attacks on priests' houses, we understand how the puritans got such crowds of followers that they literally bludgeoned clerical marriage out of existence in North Italy. Landulph, a priest (possibly married) of Milan, has left in his *Historia Mediolanensis* (*History of Milan*, Migne, 147) a very diffuse account, which it is necessary to condense, of the beginning of the struggle. His opinion of the puritan leaders, Landulpho and Arialdo, is dark, but we will not forget that he is of the opposition:—

> At that time [about 1050], when the Feast of St. Nazarius was being celebrated by all the citizens of both sexes with lighted candles in their hands . . . Landulpho and Arialdo, who had vituperated the married priests in the streets over the greater part of the city, swollen like frogs in the country, came and argued, like hogs fighting with

dogs, with the priests. . . . One priest, gnashing his teeth and rolling his eyes like a wild animal, threw himself upon Arialdo. When the news reached Landulpho, he rescued Arialdo and, shouting, made for the theatre with a few others. They sent men with messages into the city and rang the bells, while the women shrieked . . . and brought together the whole of the city. Arialdo mounted a sort of pulpit, and, his eyes flaming like those of a lion, poured out a flood of vituperation like a river in flood bearing away stones, trees, men, and beasts . . . [they stir up the crowd, " especially debtors " and the very poor]. They rush through the city like bears robbed of their young, and fall upon the houses of the priests and plunder them, not from love of God but of the priests' money, and then they tear their wives away from them with swords and clubs. They shower insults upon them and their families and, when they had spent the wealth they had seized, they went out from the city and spread over the country.

The authorities generally were on the side of the married priests, but cowered before the vast armed mobs. " Once," says Bishop Bonitho (of the Papal Party), " half of Milan was burned down," including the churches, and " everybody laid the blame on the Patarenes " (the mobs supporting the puritans). The streets ran with blood. Married priests were castrated or had their ears and noses cut off, while their wives and children suffered atrociously. As the loot lessened, the party languished; but in 1057 Arialdo's brother, a knight, came home from the Holy Land, and they raised his zeal to a white heat by telling him that a priest had seduced his lady-love. Hildebrand also joined them, and they got the blessing of the new Pope. In short, the fight went on for twenty years, and even then no council of the universal Church could be got to forbid absolutely the marriage of priests. In many places they continued to marry for a hundred years.

Overshadowing this was the great fight which the puritans were making to win the Papacy. In spite of all the Ottonian Renaissances and German Popes, Rome was still very corrupt, and the wealthy were in any case fiercely opposed to " the monks," and they now had the general support of the Germans. Bishop Bonitho (of Piacenza) has many sidelights on the state of Rome in his *Book to a Friend* (Migne, 150). In the Seventh Book he introduces Cenci, son of the Prefect (about 1070), who makes a picturesque appearance later:—

He murdered his kinsman for no reason and razed his house to its foundations. He consorted and shared with robbers, and by his adulteries and protection of adulterers he enslaved Rome. He built a very high tower [Roman nobles now began to live in narrow tower-

like houses, up to 50 to 60 feet high, massively fortified against each other] on the Bridge to St. Peter's, and all who crossed had to pay tribute. There were very many criminals at Rome, many of them sons or relatives of the priests who lived in concubinage. . . .

There was also an ancient and vile custom which the Pope [Gregory VII] suppressed. In St. Peter's there were sixty or more lay officials, married or living in concubinage, who had charge of the church day and night, and they controlled all the altars except the principal one and sold permission to pray at them. They were clean shaven and wore mitres, and they called themselves priests and cardinals and deceived the people, especially the rustics of Lombardy who asked their prayers. During the night they robbed the people [pilgrims slept in the church] and raped the women, and the Pope had great difficulty in getting rid of them.

Gregory's reforms were for the most part buried with him. The famous Abbot, William of Malmesbury, writes in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (*Chronicle of the Kings of England*, Migne, 179) at the year 1096 (twenty years later):—

The Romans who were once the masters of the world are now the laziest of men, selling justice for gold and putting a price on the law of the canons.

We shall see all Europe repeating this presently, so it is needless to dwell on the fight of the puritans to obtain a supreme power which made so little difference to the moral aspect of Europe. When Hildebrand and his friends elected Alexander II, their opponents elected Bishop Cadalus (Honorius II), and the tide of real battle ebbed and flowed. The imperialists call a meeting in the ruins of the ancient Great Circus, and Pope Alexander, an austere man of great dignity, rides into the arena with his cardinals and is driven out by the jeers of the people. This encourages Cadalus and, over the bodies of the Papal troops, he occupies St. Peter's. But the Archbishop of Cologne, a Hildebrandian, kidnaps the boy-emperor and promises aid, and Cadalus retires. Next year the Archbishop of Bremen, who is opposed to Hildebrand, steals the royal child from him, and Cadalus again cuts his way through Norman and Papal troops to Rome and holds it for a couple of years; but the Archbishop of Cologne kidnaps the boy again, and there is another Papal revolution. There was, as I said, no higher standard among the German prelates than amongst the Roman.

In 1073 Hildebrand bowed, he said, to "popular clamour" and took the throne. The ex-peasant electrified Europe with his

language, and the nobles and princes swore; and in 1075 an Italian noble, the Cenci mentioned in a previous passage, threatened to put a premature end to his reign. Bonitho says:—

> At that time a terrible and unheard-of crime was committed: Cenci, hateful to God, seized the Pope while he was saying Mass in St. Peter's on Christmas night, wounded him and dragged him into a lofty tower he had in Rome. But the Romans laid siege to the tower and captured and would have despatched the scoundrel if the blessed Gregory had not begged them to spare him [Gregory never in his life did such an act]. On the following day the Romans expelled him and his accomplices and razed their towers [the suggestion that he was an isolated noble-bandit from the country is obviously false] to the ground. . . . Cenci the Prefect [another Cenci], a most Christian man, was slain by the brother of the exiled Cenci, and the Romans captured the castle in which the murderer had taken refuge, cut off his hands and head, and burned the trunk. The hands and head they hung up in the porch of St. Peter's [with the gentle Pope's permission].

Gregory and his lieutenants added new forgeries to the Forged Decretals and created the omnipotence of the mediaeval Papacy. Addressing a synod of his bishops at Rome, in 1080, Gregory said (Migne, vol. 148, col. 818):—

> So act, I pray you, Holy Fathers and Princes, that the whole world may know and understand that if you can bind and loose in heaven, on earth you can take away from any man his empire, kingdom, princedom, duchy, marquisate, county, or any possessions, and give them to whom you will. You have taken patriarchates, primacies, archbishoprics and bishoprics from unworthy men and given them to the worthy. And if you can pass judgment on these spiritual matters, what can you not do in secular affairs? If, rising above the angels, you can judge powerful princes, what can you not do with their servants? Let the kings of the world learn who you are and what you can do.

Gregory was quite ignorant and uncultivated enough to believe that this ingenuous sort of logic, starting from a mass of forgeries, was sound—naturally, any archbishop who thought that the Pope meant that he had such power soon learned his mistake—and he set Europe aflame from end to end. In particular he entered into a conflict with the German emperors which let loose rivers of blood in Germany and Italy for several centuries, and, as his beloved Countess Mathilda could not give him sufficient armed force to fight the Germans, he entered into alliance (promising to recognize their conquests in Italy) with the half-savage Normans and brought about his own ruin. "When Gregory," says

Landulph (IV, 3), " saw himself abandoned by the citizens and many cardinals " he sent for the Normans:—

These men, who knew not God, had been reared in crime and murder, and they daily practised adultery and fornication. They threw themselves upon Rome like beasts and committed every crime of fire and sword. They raped the consecrated virgins and the wives of the Romans, and they cut the rings from their fingers. Three-fourths of the city and the palaces ot the Roman Kings were burned down, and Gregory, unable any longer to live in the city, set out with Robert for Salerno.

Hardly any writer who quotes Gregory's last words, " I have loved justice and hated iniquity and therefore I die in exile," explains the situation. There was never a falser epitaph. He was sent into exile by the fury of the Roman people; and even religious men everywhere deeply censured his violence and his unscrupulous alliances.

It is ironic that the first spectacular use of the power that Gregory had fabricated was, in the eyes of nearly all modern historians, a sordid crime. Gregory had bequeathed to his successors his bloody feud with the Emperor, and in 1095 Urban II convoked a council of 3,000 bishops, abbots, and other clerics and 30,000 of the laity to hear him excommunicate Henry on the ground that his wife and son, who were present, had been compelled by him to have commerce with each other. The wife and son (a neurotic youth) had concerted the false charge with the pious Countess Mathilda and the clergy.

This continuity of unbridled conduct, in spite of renaissances and great Popes, is found also in France, a great part of which the Normans had ravaged, in England, torn by the Danes, and in all countries. We have (in Mansi, vol. XVIII, 263–308) the report of a Council which the Archbishop of Rheims and his bishops held at Troslé in 909. This was under the first impact of the Norman barbarians:—

Lest we seem to spare ourselves let us acknowledge that we bishops neglect our duties. We never preach. We spend our time in wickedness, so that the carnal say, when we reproach them, look at yourselves. What we should say of, not the condition but the decay, of the monasteries, is not in doubt. Some have been burned, destroyed, or plundered by the pagans, but there is no regularity of life in those that survive. Whether they be houses of monks, canons, or nuns they have no proper authorities . . . and they are corrupt in their morals. They not only do not differ from the common people in their life but are a laughing-stock to them. . . . In these houses of

monks, canons, and nuns there are lay abbots with wives and children, soldiers, and hounds . . . [follows a long account of the looting of churches, the rape of girls and the marriages of nuns]. This pest [impurity] has gone so far that the priests, who ought to cut out the putrid flesh, themselves rot in the dung of chastity. Not content with their own perdition, they bring ill fame upon good priests, because the laity say: There are your priests for you.

The Archbishop groans for several pages over their fighting, lying, perjury, and vice, and this is the common note of such councils, of the records of which we have vast collections, century after century. The priests even had a memory-verse, like our " Thirty days hath September," which reflects their grossness. We find the Bishop of Paris, Eudes de Sulla (Migne, 212), repeating it to his clergy 200 years later:—

For incest, rape, or murder, see the bishop [for absolution]: for absolution from arson, sacrilege, parricide, sodomy, striking a cleric, or simony, apply to the Pope.

A body of clergy that needed a memory-verse for such crimes. . . .

More broadly illustrative is the council held at Rheims in 991. The Bishops had, at the King's request, elected a royal bastard, Arnoul, a youth of notoriously vicious life, Archbishop of Rheims, the greatest prelate in France. The rake soon offended the King, who pressed for his deposition, and the presiding bishop said, in a list of Arnoul's crimes (in Mansi, XVII):—

You have not respected the chastity of virgins: you have left nude matrons whom even the barbarians respected. . . . You went to the church of the Virgin, which is venerated by all mortals, broke open the doors, and polluted and violated it. Whatever the eye could see or the hand reach you took.

Yet he was so popular with the bishops that they refused to depose him until the king and a body of nobles broke in and insisted. His friends had wanted to submit the matter to the Pope, and this led to so scornful a discussion of the greed, venality, and low cultural conditions of Rome that the Pope, three years later, sent Legates to summon a Council and force them to reinstate Arnoul, who placidly resumed his vices.*

* An amusing feature is that Arnoul's secretary (or, as some say, accomplice) was secretary of the Council, and in his report gave such prominence to the vituperation of Rome that the Father of Catholic History, Cardinal Baronius, makes a 20 (folio) page attack on him and bitterly accuses him of lying. The joke is that this secretary was Gerbert, who a few years later became Pope Silvester II, the only Pope who ever knew science and one now very much pressed upon our admiration.

These are reports of the deliberations of the highest prelates and abbots of France, not of bishops in rural districts. We reach the level of the lower clergy and the people in the tenth-century work of the Abbot Regino of Prum, *De Disciplinis Ecclesiasticis* (*Church Discipline*, Migne, 132). He had been asked by his bishop to compile from the canons two lists of sins: one to be used by the bishop in examining his priests when he visited them, and one to be used in the examination of the laity. As usual, it is concerned mainly with carnal sins, and it sufficiently reflects the prevailing coarseness when we find that the priest is to be asked such questions as:—

If his house is near the church, or if he has a suspicious place in the district.
If he is suspected in regard to any woman or has one in his house.
If he is drunken or quarrelsome.
If he hunts with hounds or falcons.
If he drinks in the taverns.
If he has dared to pledge the chalice or the paten [the little silver dish on which the sacrament rests] or a priestly vestment to an innkeeper or a trader.
If he can read the Epistles and Gospels.

In the second part are questions to be asked of the people, who seem to have been notified to assemble for the visit of the bishop or his representative and to have been examined publicly. The interrogation begins with startling bluntness:—

1. Have you committed murder?
2. Have you cut off anybody's hands or feet or cut out his eyes?
3. Have you committed perjury?
5. Have you committed adultery with the wife of another or corrupted a virgin? A nun or a lay virgin?
6. Have you had relations . . . [unnaturally] with your wife or servant?
7. Have you had relations with your wife during forty days before childbirth? [For this, which is not now forbidden, the penalty is the same as for No. 6.]
8. Have you had any relations with your wife on a Sunday or in Lent?
9. Have you raped a virgin or a widow?

The list passes on to the heavy sins, lightened here and there by such questions as " Have you drunk a liquid with a dead mouse in it? " and it is bewildering. These people who, though married, must abstain from sex on about a third of the days of the year (three weeks before Christmas and Whitsun, and during the

menses, besides the above) are, it seems, familiar with every variety of perversion that is known to Krafft-Ebing, besides parricide, matricide, witchcraft, causing sterility, etc. Their ways of stimulating passion and fertility in either sex I may not describe or translate. It is enough that this devout abbot has contrived to write a hundred closely-printed quarto pages on varieties of sin (mostly sexual) and the punishments therefor. Such lists or Penitentials circulated in every country, though there was as yet no obligation of annual confession.

These documents and a rare passage in a chronicle are the only means we have of learning something about the life of the workers, who were nine-tenths of the population. They lived like cattle and were treated as such. For my purpose, however, it is more important to consider the nobility and clergy, who are much more likely to show Church influence; and for this we have an invaluable document at this stage, the end of the Dark Age and beginning of the so-called Age of Chivalry, in the *Ecclesiastical History* (Migne, 188) of the Norman-British monk Ordericus Vitalis. It skips from saints to deep-dyed sinners in the most engaging fashion. Incidents of this kind (in Bk. III) abound:—

> A certain priest named Ansered, who lived in Le Sap, was very loose in many ways in his conduct. At last he fell very ill and he asked the monks of Ouche to admit him . . . [he recovered and had to be expelled for his gaiety]. Presently he took up with a certain woman. They set out together with the pilgrims who were going to a certain shrine but the woman gave him the slip. . . . He entered her room by night and found her sleeping with another priest, and this man seized an axe and split Ansered's head open.

Or take this picture of manners at the Court of William the Bastard (later transformed into the Conqueror), which is usually represented as stately with the new courtesy:—

> William Rufus and Henry, who were closer to their father than their brother Robert and considered that they were as strong as he, were angry because Robert was to have the full inheritance and the same control of the armed forces as his father. So they went to a house in L'Aigle and began to play dice on a balcony. Robert and his men were below, and they [William and Henry] made a great noise and poured water upon them. Ives and Alberic de Grandmenil said to Robert, Why do you put up with such an outrage? Your brothers go above us and smirch us with filth.

The last sentence makes it quite clear what the brothers had done, and the foul trick led to a savage civil war.

Violence and bloodshed were more lightly considered than ever. At the year 1080 Ordericus records—and the report is used in Mansi—that a great Council of all the bishops, abbots, and nobles of Normandy was held at Lillebonne. In Canon 13 it lays down that " a priest must not accept a challenge to a duel without the permission of his bishop," and in another canon it is ordered that all trials by ordeal must take place " in front of the church " (the priest blessing the boiling water, red-hot iron, etc.). The fifth canon says that " no money is to be demanded by a bishop of his priests on account of their wives," and the reports of many other synods and bishops confirm that the law of celibacy was evaded by the priests bribing their bishops to overlook their marriages.

The nobles were the worst class in France, Normandy, and England. Postponing until a later chapter the body of the evidence, I may here quote from Ordericus the story of Mabille, the greatest " lady " of Normandy, and, later, as Countess of Shrewsbury, of England, the source of all the blue-blooded Montgomerys of English history, as it well illustrates the continuity of vice and violence through the supposed period of reform.

Robert de Mont-gomeri, whose wife she was, was the greatest noble at William's Court, yet Mabille and her family were most prominent in the savage banditry in which the highest nobles, and even princes, now indulged. Her father, Count Talvas, a noble of high birth, had strangled his first wife because she was cold and pious, and at his second wedding he had, it is said, for some unknown reason—probably drink, but I find no details—strewn the hall with the eyes, ears, noses, and testicles of the guests. Mabille surpassed him in greed and crime. From the time of her marriage to the very rich Mont-gomeri she for thirty years practised the most cruel brigandage, though she was greatly honoured at Court and (because she and her husband founded abbeys and churches) by the prelates. She rode in armour at the head of her knights—she was a small, slender, beautiful woman with the morals of a jaguar—when they swept the country in search of abbots or merchants to bleed, and she tortured her captives fiendishly. Of her five sons, one was, in the generation after Hildebrand's " reform," the most vicious and most savage of the Norman nobles.

I will return later to that point. Ordericus tells how the young

noble (the usual type of rake and bandit), Ernould d'Echaufour, incurred her hatred:—

Mabille prepared poisoned food and drink and invited Ernould to her table, but one of his friends who was privy to the plot warned him. So when Ernould was pressed by the lady's servants to sit at table he remembered the warning and refused. But Gislebert, brother-in-law of Robert de Mont-gomeri, who was with Ernould and did not know of the plot, took the cup that was proffered him while he was still on horse, drank the wine, and died in agony [he was her only brother]. Mabille, furious at the miscarriage, made other criminal attempts. By dint of entreaties and favours [she slept with the man] she seduced the knight Roger, who was Ernould's chamberlain. Then she again prepared a poisoned drink and had it offered to Ernould [he drank it and died].

In 1102, says Ordericus (Part II, Bk. V), Mabille ended her thirty years of shameless vice and crime:—

Roger de Mont-gomerie . . . plagued the abbey of St. Evroul in various ways as long as his wife Mabille lived. At last this wicked woman, who was stained with the blood of many men and had compelled so many nobles whose estates she had seized to beg their bread in foreign parts, fell by the sword of Hugh; from whom she had stolen a castle. In his anger he conceived a bold plan. In company with his three brothers he made his way one night to the countess's bedroom, where he found her lying on the bed after a bath, and he cut off her head. The mutilated body was buried in the monastery of Troarn . . . as a favour to her friends. And the abbot had the following epitaph engraved on her tomb. . . .

I need not attempt to translate the graceful Latin verse of the good abbot, and will merely say that it was a string of such pearls as this:—

She was famous among celebrated women and she won a reputation throughout the world by her own merit. . . . She was small in stature but great in virtue.

Her noble husband, the Earl of Shrewsbury and founder of Shrewsbury Abbey, sent men over half the world to catch and kill the murderers of his gifted wife, and such scenes were witnessed as this " trial " of a noble who was suspected of complicity:—

At Rouen in the presence of the clergy [and all the citizens] he faced the ordeal of the hot iron. He carried the glowing iron in his hand and was not injured; and the priests and people sung the praises of God. His enemies were present in arms, ready to cut off his head if the ordeal should prove him guilty.

But we have here passed beyond the Dark Age and are well into the Age of Chivalry.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AGE OF CHIVALRY BEGINS

THE year 1066, a date that is familiar to everybody as that of the greatest filibustering enterprise in history (under a banner blessed by the Pope), may be taken as, roundly—the change spreads over half a century—marking the transition from the Dark Age to the second and brighter part of the Middle Age. From that period date the scholastic movement which culminated in the founding of the first Christian universities, the artistic burgeoning (at first in the art of the troubadours) which led to the development of Gothic architecture in France and of sculpture and painting in Italy, the so-called Age of Chivalry, the Crusades, the revival of trade and accumulation of wealth, and the social vitality which issued in the emancipation of the serfs and the establishment of the free cities. These broad developments, rapid in comparison with the six centuries of stagnation which preceded them, are not noticed by the chroniclers of the time and are, indeed, not strictly relevant to the purpose of this work, which is a study of *the relation of Christianity* to the growth of European civilization. The root of these developments was manifestly the economic advance, the causes of which I have stated. But we will keep them in mind in surveying mediaeval literature from the ethical point of view, which properly concerns the Church.

The story of Peter Abélard, in the first half of the twelfth century, is the most broadly characteristic of the age. As most readers will know, he was the most brilliant master and promoter of the school-life which had, in a modest form, spread from Arab Spain to the South of France in the eleventh century. In his pursuit of Heloise he had lodged with her uncle (if not father) Fulbert, a canon of the Paris Cathedral, and when she became pregnant, he removed her, with Fulbert's consent, and secretly married her. But Fulbert boasted of the marriage, and Abélard removed Heloise to the royal nunnery at Argenteuil. Abélard says*:—

* The story is told in the letters of Abélard and Heloise, especially the first (*The Story of My Calamities*). Most of the translations are romantic falsifications. That of Scott Moncrieff (1925) is sound, but he surprises

They were furious and plotted against me, and one night, while I slept in a secret room at my hostel, they, bribing one of my servants, wreaked a most cruel revenge on me, and the whole world was astounded to hear of it. They cut off those parts of my body with which I had committed what they resented. They fled, but two of them were arrested, and they lost their eyes and their genitals. One was my servant whom they had bribed.

So as late as 1120, in the most advanced city of Christendom, castration was so familiar that a canon of the cathedral had it performed on the most brilliant scholar in Europe, and the law imposed it as reprisals. Abélard says that by law Fulbert also incurred it, and he clamoured for it. When this was refused, Abélard told his friend Prior Fulques that he was going to appeal to Rome, and the monk ironically asked him, in an extant letter, where he would find the money:—

O pitiful and wholly useless proposal! Hast thou never heard of the avarice and impurity of Rome? Who is wealthy enough to satisfy that devouring whirlpool of harlotry? Who would ever be able to fill their avaricious purses? *

Abélard entered the famous abbey of St. Denis, near Paris, and he says:—

The life of the abbey which I had joined was very worldly and shameful. . . . The abbot himself surpassed the others in infamy of life just as he did in power [this Abbot Adam had ruled it since 1094]. And as I often rebuked him for his filthiness, both in private and public, I became very obnoxious to all the monks.

He was tried and condemned for heresy, and, in deep dejection, he "almost decided to seek Christ amongst his enemies." He means that he thought of seeking a civilized life in one of the Arab cities of Spain, but no one seems to see the irony. Instead, he accepted the office of abbot of the monastery of St. Gildas, the oldest in Brittany, and found the religious world worse than ever:—

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me by leaning to the eccentric opinion of George Moore that the first letter is a forgery. In conversation with Moore I found that he knew very little about the period. I here translate from the Latin.

* This passage is cut out of the monk's letter as it is published in the Migne collection, but it is given in Deutsch's and Hansrath's biography of Abélard. For a full picture of the time see my *Peter Abélard* (1901). We shall see that this language was common throughout Christendom for the next few centuries. It was not half a century since the "reforms" of Gregory VII.

The land was barbarous and I did not know its language. Everybody knew that the life of the monks was vile and intolerable, and the people were uncivilized. The monks came to me every day to press me to supply their needs [the nearest bandit-noble having appropriated their estates]. They had no communal resources, and each one had to provide for himself, his concubine, and his children. . . . They stole and carried off everything that they could. . . . The lord and his satellites tormented me abroad, and in the monastery the brethren plotted against me all the time. How often did they not try to poison me. They even put poison into the chalice and tried to kill me while I said Mass. . . . I could not eat the food they cooked for me, and a monk who did so died.

He contrived to get an emissary from Rome, but it made no difference, and he fled secretly from the district.

In his fourth letter Abélard says that "almost all the monasteries of our time are corrupt." Heloise had found the great convent at Argenteuil just as corrupt, and the famous reforming abbot of St. Denis a few years later, Suger, speaks, in his *Life of Louis the Great* (Migne, 186), of "the foul enormity" of the life of the nuns in it. In one letter Heloise reminds Abélard how, until she formally took the veil, they continued their marital relations in corners of the convent chapel. Another monk-writer of the century, Cardinal Jacques de Vitry, says that no convents in France except those of his own (Cistercian) order, which were few, were fit for a decent woman to live in. I will quote him later. In 1107 the Bishop of Paris had suppressed a nunnery that was close to the palace, in the heart of Paris, because the relations of the nuns with the nobles were too notorious. Somewhere about the same date the Bishop of Chartres, St. Ives, says in one of his letters (No. 70 in Migne, vol. 162):—

I have heard from both the monks of Tours and the Countess Adela very dreadful things about the monastery of St. Fara. They say that it is no longer a house of nuns but a brothel of diabolical women who prostitute their bodies to the base use of all kinds of men.

Corruption in nunneries was, in fact, so familiar that we find Abélard discussing it in extraordinary language in the sermon "On Susannah" (in Migne) which he preached to the orderly nuns of Heloise's later convent:—

Few [nuns] observe the difficult law of carnal continence. We see so many who have taken the vows lead disorderly lives that they do not trouble to wear a mask: so many who, forgetting respect for God and their vows, are so driven by lust that when they find none to share their passion they hire men with money.

The whole long sermon runs on these lines. The far greater part of the conventual world had caught the new spirit of the age of the troubadours, and monasteries and nunneries resounded with loose songs and laughter. It is, in fact, very difficult to understand the way in which even men and women of regular life combined their faith with, according to their station, the coarseness or the looseness of the age. Compare, for instance, the language of Heloise twenty years after her conversion and while Abélard, to whom she writes, is a puritan monk and she is the abbess of a respectable convent:—

> In your letter you gave many of the reasons with which I sought [in 1120] to dissuade you from marriage, but you said nothing about the arguments in which I put love before marriage, freedom before the bond. I call God to witness that if Augustus, lord of the world, were to deign to offer me the honour of marriage and the title of mistress of the world for ever, it would be dearer to me and would seem more worthy to be thy mistress than his empress. What matron or maid did not sigh for you in your absence, or burn in your presence? What queen or noble lady did not envy my joy and my bed? If the name of wife seems holier and safer, the name of friend—nay, if you will not be angry, of concubine or harlot—has always seemed to me sweeter.

This is the language of the contemporary Courts of Love (under Queen Eleanor, etc.) in the mouth of the learned and mature abbess of a convent of regular life. How many folk were there likely to be with that delicate attitude to virtue which recent writers on the Middle Ages attribute to them?

These writers suppress also another feature of Church life in France. In fact, no English or American writer has ever candidly described this, and the facts seem incredible to people of our time, yet we have the plainest testimony to them in contemporary clerical writers. On one day at least in the year, usually at Christmas, there was held in the cathedrals, parish churches, and monastery and convent chapels, a festival of the most licentious and extraordinary character. In an earlier chapter I described how the debauched Archbishop of Constantinople, Theophylactus, introduced travesties of the services with indecent dances into churches. They seem to have been copied in the West at first in less boisterous form, and it confirms one's feeling that Latin Christendom became morally looser after the end of the Dark Age and supposed reform of the Church when we find this gross scandal spread and become more dis-

gusting after the tenth century. It was in a sense a revival of the old Roman Saturnalia and New Year rejoicing, though one can imagine the feelings of a Roman layman, much less a priest, if the revellers had begun the licence in the temple of Jupiter. There were at first several festivals (the Feast of Fools, the Feasts of the Drunken Deacons, of the Ass, of the Abbot of Unreason, of the Innocents, and of the Kalends), but the first gradually absorbed the others.

We find the first mention of it in 1182, in a work, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* (*The Meaning of the Divine Services*, Migne, 202), by Dr. Beleth of Paris University. He resents "the December Licence" in which even archbishops and bishops at Paris, Rheims, and other places play "games" in the churches with their clergy. In 1198 Bishop Eudes de Sully wrote a letter (also in Migne) to his Chapter on the subject, and he quotes a Papal Legate saying:—

> When, in the discharge of my office as Legate to France, I reached the said church [Notre Dame at Paris], I learned from very reliable sources that at the feast of the Circumcision of the Lord such enormities and wicked things were done in it that the holy place was polluted, not only by filthy language but also by bloodshed. Audacity had gone so far that the holy day on which the Lord was circumcised was called the Feast of Fools.

The bishop ordered the suppression of the feast. "On the pretext of ancient custom," he said, "licence of morals went so far that sometimes enormities and wicked deeds were perpetrated." But on the following New Year's Day the festival was held as usual in his cathedral, and in a second letter he offers considerable money bribes to those of his clergy who will support reform. It was just as futile, for the Council of Paris, in 1212 (in Mansi), passed this canon (Part IV, C. xvi): "They [the clergy] must strictly avoid Feasts of Fools. This applies even more stringently to monks and nuns."

But we find the scandalous festival still held everywhere in the fifteenth century, and we learn not only the broad features of it, but that the laity are willing to give it up (in the churches) and the priests are not. In 1444 the professors of the theological faculty at Paris University—note that the desecration of Paris Cathedral had lasted all through the period of Thomas Aquinas and the pious Schoolmen—made a solemn appeal to the archbishops and bishops to make an end of the scandal:—

Zeal for divine worship, the demands of many of the faithful, and the complaints of certain bishops constrain us to tell you how much we abhor and detest the festivity which its partisans call the Feast of Fools . . . in which priests and clerics defile themselves, internally as well as externally, with filth and pollute the churches. . . . What diabolical plot handed on [from pagan days] to the priests and clerics the practice of celebrating this on the pretext of joy at the Nativity? . . . They turn to filth and uncleanness and, imitating the vile Janus, ridicule and defile the worship of God, doing such things as the old pagan priests would not have suffered to be done in the temples of their idols. The licence of the Romans was not perpetrated in the temples but in the woods, the fields, and rustic theatres, and by the laity. But the accursed folly that is called the Feast of Fools is performed in the churches. What decent-minded Christian will not condemn those priests and clerics whom he sees wearing monstrous masks during divine service or dressed as women, even whores, leading theatrical dances, singing indecent songs in the choir, eating black-puddings at the altar during Mass [a blasphemous parody of it], playing dice on the altar-steps, burning dung for incense in the censers, shouting, dancing, and behaving obscenely in the whole church. Then they are taken in carts through the streets to infamous shows, making lewd gestures to excite the laughter of the spectators, shouting scurrilous and most obscene words at them, doing other things which decency forbids us to describe. What would your holy predecessors [saints of the early Church] have said if they had seen, as we see to-day, the clergy alone clinging to these excesses? *

The last sentence makes a mockery of the apologetic explanation that the clergy had to fight a wicked and obstinate laity. The festival lasted, in the cathedrals, churches, and convents of France, parts of Germany, Spain, and England—Scott introduces the Feast of Fools (in Scotland) in *The Abbot* (ch. xiv)—until the Reformation, or for at least five centuries, and it was then continued in the square before the cathedral and the streets until the seventeenth century. And we are asked to believe that the men who built those wonderful cathedrals *must* have been profoundly religious. A religious mind could not tolerate such a spectacle once in a century.

* This letter was printed, in the original Latin, by Chancellor Savaron in 1611, and I translate from that. The older Catholic writer, Du Cange, gives many of the facts, but not the worst, in several articles (*Festum, Kalendae*) of his *Glossarium Mediae at Infimae Latinitatis*, 1678). There is a large amount of curious research on the subject in Du Tilliot's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Fête des Foux* (1741). This work reproduces seals and banners that were used at the festival, and one of these represents an act of obscenity on the part of two men in the public street which I may not here describe (not sodomy) even in vague language; yet this is a copy of the banner, in the possession of the author, that was carried in the procession at Dijon.

The next document I quote illustrating the character of the age in all classes, from people to Pope, makes one wonder indeed if France had made any moral progress at all since the sixth century. It is the autobiography (*De Vita Sua*, Migne, 156) of a strict abbot, Guibert of Nogent, written about the year 1110, and in the part which I quote it describes events in the city of Laon (then one of the most important in France) in which Guibert took part. There is a good translation included in the Broadway Translations, but it is never quoted, and it softens or leaves in Latin certain passages, so I translate from the Latin. After mixing a few scandals—of an Archbishop of Rheims, for instance, who " horrified all good men by his thoroughly depraved and stupid morals " and led a troop of soldiers to rob his own cathedral—with his pious reflections, he comes to the troubles which a succession of " wicked bishops " brought upon Laon. The root of the trouble, one sees, is that the bishopric is, like all other clerical offices, sold to the highest bidder. In 1106, when the bishop died, a Norman–English cleric named Gaudrec presented himself with a recommendation from Henry I of England (which still controlled that part of France) and heavy bags of money to persuade the clergy and people to elect him:—

Before he was elected two archdeacons of the cathedral, Walter and Ebal, had been elected by rival parties but they were dismissed by order of the Holy See. Walter was more of a soldier than a cleric and Ebal was flagrantly immoral. When these were dismissed a third candidate presented himself at the court and, pretending that he spoke on behalf of another man, worked for his own election. He agreed to make rich presents to the King and returned home to arrange with the King's officers to be installed on the following Sunday. But God struck the wicked man with a dreadful disease, and he died the same day. His body was placed in the cathedral in which he had hoped to be elected, and it broke wind and filled the choir with a horrid stench.

Then came Gaudrec. The master of the school (then the most famous in France) and oracle of the city, Anselm, sent a protest against him to the Pope, who was in France:—

But the officials of the Papal Court heard that Gaudrec was very rich and they supported him.

The Pope came to Laon and asked the assembled clergy for their objections:—

But none of the priests could reply as they had hardly even an

elementary knowledge of Latin [in the chief scholastic city of France], and he turned to the abbots.

Guibert himself was set up to defend Gaudrec. He does not give a word of explanation of this or why, as he says, the great Anselm stood by him in silence. So the Pope accepted Gaudrec, and the cardinals afterwards congratulated the young abbot:—

But their pleasure arose not from the excellence of my speech but from the expectation of receiving some of the money that the bishop-elect had brought: for I and my fellow-abbots had each twenty pounds' weight of gold from it.

This confession does not prevent him from being "horrified at finding myself the intermediary in such a bargain," when the Pope's chamberlain approached him privately and told him that they expected him to keep the new bishop docile to Rome. Gaudrec was consecrated, and the Papal party departed in high spirits:—

But the immense sum of money he [Gaudrec] had brought from England was soon gone. I heard from Master Anselm, who went with him to England [for more gold] after his consecration, that people there angrily asked him on all sides when he was going to restore their sacred vessels or money, and the Master saw that he had got by fraud the money he had brought to France. . . .

About three years after his consecration we had this sign of the times. One of the nobles of Laon, Gerard de Crecy, who was Chatelain of a nunnery [from which later the nuns were expelled for their vices] . . . abandoned his mistress, the Countess Enguerrand and married the wife of the Governor of Laon, a man who had helped to elect Gaudrec on condition that the prelate would perform a new and adulterous marriage for him.

Gerard had also kidnapped two rich German students from the school for ransom, and was a typical bandit-noble of the time. His rejected Countess entered into a savage feud with her rival, and the whole province was ravaged with war. But the bishop heard that Gerard had attacked his vices, and he was furious:—

He concerted a plot to murder Gerard and, engaging nearly all the nobles of the city under oath to take part—and a number of rich women [led by the Countess] were in the plot—he set out for Rome, not to do honour to the apostles but in order to have an alibi for the crime. . . . And on the sixth day of the octave of the Epiphany Gerard went at daybreak to the cathedral accompanied by several knights. . . . Rarig, the bishop's brother, and others (including the bishop's steward) made for the spot where Gerard was praying and

seized him from behind [and murdered him with the help of two archdeacons—there was obviously a bloody fight—in the cathedral]. The king's prefect of the city, Ivo, summoned troops, attacked the house in which the murderers had taken refuge, set fire to it, and drove them out of the city. . . . The bishop waited in Rome for news . . . and the Pope heard of the great crime that had been committed in the church . . . but the bishop saw the Pope and made him rich presents, and he thus escaped suspicion. . . . The king, who believed that the bishop was guilty, ordered that all the corn, wine, and meat should be taken from his palace. But the bishop heavily bribed the king's son and was restored; and to the great anger of the clergy and the people he went on to excommunicate those who had punished the murderers. . . . He could not be put on trial in the Church because the Pope had exonerated him.

But he had to go to England for more money, and, laying aside their fierce mutual hatred, the nobles, clergy, and people plotted together against him. Guibert points out that this was remarkable, seeing that the nobles mercilessly robbed the people, the monks debased the coinage, and so on. Quite in the manner of modern racketeers, the nobles now accepted a lump sum to " protect " the citizens in future—from themselves—but Gaudrec brought back so much money that he bribed the King, the prince, and the nobles to attack the people. Modern social historians who admire the " Communes " (free towns), which multiplied about this time, would do well to study Guibert and to note the irony with which he quotes the word. The people learned of the plot, and the bishop had to have an armed guard even at the altar: " On the fifth day of Easter week . . . the people break into the cathedral with swords, axes, bows and arrows, clubs and spears. . . ."

In short, the nobles rallied to Gaudrec and there was a mighty slaughter in the church and the palace. Gaudrec, who was found hiding in a wine-cask, was killed and his body was thrown out into the street. Then, fearing the King's vengeance, the citizens summoned Thomas of Marle, a notorious bandit-noble and son of the lord of the region, Count Enguerrand (who, however, insisted that he was a bastard of the countess). Guibert is here fully supported by the famous abbot of St. Denis, Suger, in his *Life of Louis the Great*, when he says of Thomas:—

From early youth he had robbed the poor and the pilgrims on the way to Jerusalem. He had entered into an incestuous marriage and had killed men without number. His cruelty was such that men who

have a reputation for cruelty killed beasts more humanely than he killed men. He often cut off with his own hands the testicles of captives whom he held for ransom, and the vital parts oozed out from their bodies. Others were hung up by their thumbs or even by their genitals, tying a heavy stone on their shoulders, walking underneath them or beating them furiously when he could not extract from them what he wanted. It is not possible to say how many died in his dungeons of hunger, disease, or torture.

Guibert was present one day when the noble sadist tore the eyes out of a score of captives and let them die in great misery; though in the end he was buried by the monks with the customary eulogy. He could not hold Laon against the royal troops, and he persuaded the citizens to join him in the country; whereupon the citizens of the other towns came to Laon and stripped the houses. The royal troops proceeded against Thomas (whose army included a regiment of women), the Church hurled anathemas at him from every pulpit, and his step-mother, the second Countess, who " had a mind fiercer than that of a savage bear," frantically urged his father to destroy him. They ravaged the whole province, often burning the citizens in their timber houses, as was customary, and it all ended in a compromise.

Such was life in one of the chief cities of the most advanced country in Christendom in the Age of Chivalry, forty years after the Hildebrandian " reform." Guibert almost confines himself to what he saw, but the few notices he gives of other cities suggest that if there had then been forty Guiberts in France we should have about forty such descriptions. I have given his reference to Rheims, the royal city and ecclesiastical centre. Later he speaks about the almost equally important city of Soissons:—

The Countess of Soissons, among other miracles of her power, had the tongue and eyes of a deacon cut out. She was emboldened to do this because she had, with the aid of a Jew, already poisoned her brother in order to get the county from him.

When she died and the clergy asked her son, the new Count of Soissons, for money to pay for masses for her soul, he recalled her crimes and said: " Why should I waste money on her soul when she did nothing about it herself? " But he " did far worse things than his parents." He became a heretic; and, of course, he then behaved shockingly:—

He had a beautiful young wife but he set her aside for a wrinkled old woman, and he lay with this woman in odd corners of a Jew's

house . . . and he ordered a parasite of his to go to bed with his wife in his place. . . . He spared neither nun nor monk in his foulness.

And the last word of the abbot is that terrible heresies are spreading in France. The Broadway translation has here to leave a long passage in the Latin original. It is enough to say that the new European version of the old Manichaean religion, the asceticism of which had (according to Jerome) shamed Christianity in the fourth century, was spreading in France, and good Christians, who were so very sensitive about virtue, were telling about the heretics just the same libels (sex orgies, etc.) as in the days of Augustine.

Since France was the special theatre of those developments which seem to justify the historian in saying that the Dark Age was over and the rebirth of European civilization had begun—the intense school-life and rise of the universities, the beginning of the Gothic cathedral architecture, the reform by St. Bernard of the Cistercian monasteries, of the movement that is called chivalry—I should like to translate the relevant passages from all the chief chroniclers of the time in proof of the continuity of vice and violence after the end of the Dark Age. Whether we should say that the morals of Christian Europe became worse after 1050 I leave to the reader. But at least I must give a few further extracts on the question of the morals of the clergy and of the knights and nobles, if the foregoing has left anyone in doubt on that point.

The most important chronicler—in his case one might almost say historian—of the eleventh century is the Norman-English monk Ordericus Vitalis, who knew both countries well. What he says about England, where he spent most of his life, we shall see presently, and his picture of life in France (in his *Church History in Normandy and Britain*, Migne, 188; there is an English translation in the Bohn series) fully agrees with Abélard and Guibert—his contemporaries. Speaking of the first half of the eleventh century (Pt. II, Bk. V) he says:—

Chastity was so little regarded by the clergy after the coming of the Normans that not only priests but bishops freely used the beds of concubines and were openly proud of the number of their sons and daughters. . . . Priests of Danish descent and little education occupied the parishes and took an armed part in the feuds of the laity.

Under Duke William—the Conqueror or the Bastard, according to the predilection of the chronicler—there was, we read, in

Ordericus, an improvement. William spent so much in building churches and endowing abbeys that Ordericus is always slipping into unmerited praise of him. But under William's son, Duke Robert (who was not so generous to the Church), all the improvement was lost (Pt. III, Bk. VIII, ch. v):—

> Arson, plunder, and murder were everyday events, and the people sank under the burden of their afflictions. Sons of iniquity rose in Normandy, and with enormous greed and every sort of crime they cruelly devoured the body of their mother. An insolent lubricity spread with such impunity that sodomitic Venus infested the effeminate and damnable people. The marital bed was openly polluted with adultery, and no one cared to observe the law of God. Bishops anathematized the outlaws; theologians admonished the offenders against God. But pride and greed, with all their satellites, took no notice of these things. Towns of adulterers were established, and in these the sons of bandits were raised like the whelps of beasts. They sought every opportunity of fighting, and in their conflicts they ravaged, burned, and plundered their neighbours.

This, we shall realize, is a faithful picture of Normandy and France, and to a great extent of England, during the greater part of the twelfth century. Neither the new art, the school life, the reform of some of the monasteries, the work of Hildebrand, nor the supposed wave of piety that is said to have swept men to the First Crusade, had raised the general moral level. The picture is false only in its suggestion that the higher clergy tried to check the passions of men and the licence of the clergy. A few did, but the chronicles are full of stories of prelate-nobles—I have quoted several—who filled the episcopal and archiepiscopal sees only in order to secure the revenue; men who pillaged their own cathedrals and did not trouble to conceal their mistresses and children. Instead of introducing a score of these—for some might still say that they were the minority—I may quote the verdict of Professor Luchaire, a liberal Catholic and the highest authority on the twelfth century, in Lavisse's standard *Histoire de France*, which ranks with our Cambridge History:—

> It seems that owing to circumstances the number of evil prelates was then *far greater* than that of good prelates (Vol. III, p. 319).

And in the next volume, in the course of a learned and revolting analysis of French character in all classes, he says:—

> If we are to believe the preachers and polemists of the time, the French episcopate was in a condition of profound decadence.

Two illustrations, one of a wicked and one of a virtuous prelate, may be given. Bishop Arnulph says (about the year 1130) in an open letter (in Migne) to Gerard, Bishop of Chartres:—

I have borne with you valiantly, Gerard, while the stench of your crimes reached me daily . . . [he describes at length the bishop's sordid origin and youth and corruption as a bishop]. One of your archdeacons made the abbess of Angoulême pregnant, and in time the swollen womb betrayed the crime. The whole city was struck with astonishment. . . . The Count [of Anjou], a relative of the abbess [a lady of princely rank], decided at first to kill the archdeacon but he submitted the matter to you for canonical punishment . . . [he told the bishop that it was an unnatural crime]. You answered, with a lewd laugh, that you marvelled at the simplicity of the Count in saying that it was unnatural for a woman to conceive by a man; that the miracle would be if a man conceived by a woman. . . . Yet, as if all were well in your diocese, you got yourself appointed Papal Legate and had power over two archdioceses. . . . You then, armed with the prerogative of unchallengeable power, went on with your career of crime in the Church.

Here is the good prelate (in 1119). Pope Calixtus II came to France to enforce the law of clerical celibacy, of which, forty years or more after Hildebrand, few in France took any notice. The Pope addressed a gathering of fifteen archbishops and about 200 bishops at Rheims, and they accepted the law (as they did in every synod). Ordericus goes on (Pt. III, Bk. XII), with his customary picturesqueness:—

But when the wicked and restless Satan saw the kings and potentates at peace he scattered the weeds of lethal discord amongst the priests of the Church.

The Archbishop of Rouen collected his priests in his cathedral and told them of the decision:—

When they shuddered and murmured at the prospect of such a burden [the observance of their vow of chastity] . . . the archbishop ordered that the priest Albert [the ringleader] should be arrested and put in prison. But when the other priests saw him thus thrown into prison like a thief without a trial there was an uproar. . . . The archbishop summoned men whom he had ready for the purpose, and they burst into the church with clubs and weapons and fell upon the priests. Some took to flight through the muddy streets; others seized benches and stones and fought. The archbishop's men were ashamed to have to flee before a body of unarmed priests and they called upon the cooks and bakers and other townsfolk and renewed the fight in the sacred edifice and the cemetery.

In fine, the priests fled, covered with blood, to their " strumpets " in the town and over the country and told them that they had in future to be virtuous; and the Archbishop fumigated his cathedral. From that date, French history says, the clergy were unmarried. We saw from the letters of Abélard (who lived just afterwards) what they really became, and Cardinal Jacques de Vitry, a stern and much-travelled Cistercian monk, fully confirms him in his small works. What he says about the complete demoralization of the Crusaders in Palestine I shall quote in the next chapter, but in his *History of the West* (*Historia Occidentalis*, Migne, 185) he gives us a dark picture of Europe in general and France in particular at the end of the eleventh century. It shows just the same moral condition as Ordericus described in the tenth century:—

Monstrosities and prodigious abominations grew and involved the entire world. All were filled with vomit and filth; fornication, wine, and drunkenness conquered the heart of man. . . . Those who had renounced the world and devoted themselves to religion fell away, and the higher their position the lower they fell. The chief cause of all these evils was the corruption, vices, and ignorance of the prelates . . . [he speaks of Paris, which he knew well]. The clergy are worse than the common people; they are like scabby goats and diseased sheep. . . . They hold that simple fornication is no sin. You see whores on all sides dragging clerics through the streets to their brothels. If they will not enter, the women shout " Sodomite." That vile and abominable vice had, like an incurable leprosy, so spread in the city that it was thought decent of a man to have publicly one or more concubines. In the same building you would find a school above, and a brothel downstairs . . . [learning, he says, was the last thing students sought at Paris]. The nuns had nearly everywhere become so corrupt that good women could not go to their houses or those of Canonesses.

There is a vignette of rural priestly life in a rescript of Alexander II to the Abbot of S. Remy (in Denifle's *Chartularium*, No. 5) in 1170:—

We have heard that when a certain priest of the town of S. Remy danced on a Sunday in the presence of clerics and laymen, forgetting the clerical dignity, and the scholars ridiculed him, he, to the applause of many, broke open the doors and windows of the school and laid violent hands on some of the scholars. . . .

In the same collection of documents we have (No. 1) the decree of Pope Alexander, of the year 1163, in which monks are forbidden under pain of excommunication to take up the study of science or of civil law. This is now often denied by Catholic

writers, and it may be useful to the reader if I translate the essential sentences of the decree:—

> The ancient enemy [the devil] does not in his envy greatly strive to ruin the weaker members of the Church but reaches his hand out after its treasures and tries to bring down the elect. Hence, disguising himself, as usual, as an angel of light, and pretending to bring succour to the bodies of the brethren and to assist in the better discharge of ecclesiastical tasks, he draws monks from their convents to study law and to attend physical lectures [the Pope contemptuously says "confections"]. We command that no one who has taken the monastic vows and made his profession in a religious house shall be allowed to go out to study physics or human law.

Thus the Franciscans at Oxford defied Papal instructions, instead of being typical, in allowing Friar Bacon and others to study Arab science, and his long imprisonment by his authorities was in accordance with that law. The result was that the crowded universities of the Middle Ages, of which we hear so much, were not properly universities, but colleges of theology and religious philosophy for clerics and monks.

In quoting these extracts about clerical life in the mythical Age of Chivalry * I have included a good deal of information about the princely and knightly class and their "ladies." Hundreds of short biographical sketches of these could be given, but a few must suffice; and we return to the knights of England and other countries in the next chapter. I referred earlier to Count Talvas and his appalling daughter Mabille and her husband, the first Earl of Shrewsbury. Their son, Robert of Bellaime, the third Earl, more than sustained the tradition of the family—one of the greatest in Normandy and England. William had to imprison him, but Duke Robert released him at his father's death, and by horrible methods he conquered or ravaged half of Normandy. Ordericus says (III, 6):—

> He was very cruel and of insatiable greed and lust. . . . He humbled very many by burning their castles and reduced them to extreme poverty, or cut off their limbs or deprived them of their eyes. . . . He

* The myth was fabricated by two French writers, sycophants of the nobility, M. de Valson and C. F. Monestrier, in the seventeenth century. No leading authority on any country in Christendom from 1100 to 1400 has ever given it the least encouragement or failed to emphasize the corruption of the knightly class. When the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* so far yielded to convention as to include articles on it, they had to entrust these to romantic writers of no historical authority whatever. I give a few such authorities later.

thought nothing of cutting out men's eyes or their limbs off, and he took a delight in inventing new forms of torture. When he imprisoned men for any reason, he tortured them mercilessly while he laughed and joked with his parasites. He took pride in torture and in being cruel. He would rather inflict pain on his captives than get money for their ransom.

Later the monk introduces Bertrada, daughter of the Pope's friend and Crusader, Simon de Montfort, who had married her to the bestial Count of Anjou (III, 8):—

Bertrada, Countess of Anjou, fearing that her husband would do to her what he had done to two [some say four] other wives and that she would be reduced to the position of a vile strumpet . . . confided to a friend of King Philip what she had in mind [to become his mistress]. . . . He [the King] got rid of his noble and distinguished wife and cordially welcomed and married Bertrada. . . . Bishop Odo gave him an accursed dispensation for this and was rewarded with several benefices. . . . So the impudent strumpet left her adulterous husband and lived with the adulterous king until he died. Rome laid an interdict on the kingdom, but the bishops, as he was their lord, allowed him to have a chaplain to hear mass with his family.

The Monk Pierre de Vaux-de-Cernay tells us, in his *History of the Albigensians* (in Bouquet's *Receuil*, Vol. XIX, ch. 80), about the famous noble, Robert de Cahusac, and his wife:—

Half a league away was a castle of marvellous strength called Montfort. The lord of it was Bernard de Cahusac, a very cruel and most wicked man, who had fled in fear from our Count and deserted his castle. So terrible and so numerous were the cruelties, savageries, and enormities of this man that it is difficult to believe or imagine them; and the devil had given him a fitting accomplice in his wife, who was a sister of the Count de Turenne [one of the highest nobles]. This woman, another Jezebel, indeed far worse and more cruel than Jezebel, was the worst of all bad women and quite equal to her husband in cruelty and wickedness. Both of them looted and destroyed churches, robbed pilgrims, maltreated monks and the poor, and cut off the limbs of the innocent. In one monastery our monks found 150 men and women [monks and nuns then often lived in one house] who had had their hands or feet cut off, their eyes torn out, or other parts [the breasts of the nuns and the genitals of the monks] cut off by the said tyrant and his wife. For the wife, who was blind to all mercy, had the breasts or the thumbs of the women cut off so that they could not work. But I could not tell the thousandth part of the wicked deeds of this tyrant and his wife.

He goes on to tell us about "one of Simon de Montfort's best soldiers," one of the pious heroes of the Albigensian Crusade:—

The said Foucand was a man of great cruelty and insolence. He had, it was said, made a rule that every man he captured in war was to be

put to death unless he paid a hundred gold pieces. He tortured his captives with hunger in a dungeon and sometimes they were brought out half-dead or dead and thrown on the dung-hill. It was, and is still, said that when he was setting out for his last battle [in the Crusade] he had two captives, a father and son, brought out, and he compelled the father to hang his son. His family lived in the greatest uncleanness. Many openly kept concubines and others took married women by force.

The series of biographical sketches might be extended indefinitely, but it will be better to quote the general verdict of Bishop John of Salisbury, one of the most learned and most respected writers of the twelfth century. He not only knew both France and England well, but he took a keen interest in the military art, and devotes a whole book (VI) of his *Policraticus* (Migne, vol. 199) to the subject. He declares very emphatically and repeatedly, in the middle of what we call the Age of Chivalry, that the soldiers of pagan antiquity were far superior, in sense of honour and justice, to those of Christendom:—

Why do I recall the glories of the ancients? Our age has sunk until it is almost of no account. Swollen with honours it knows not the types of honour; glorying with the vanity of titles it despises the fruits of reality. Gamblers, hunters, and singers of folly [troubadours] who have never done a manly deed. . . . If you do not believe me, believe the facts. I am ashamed to say how ignominious they are. While our armed men, our glorious soldiers, more and more assail the chastity of others and prostitute their own, lounge about the houses and at the banquets of the rich, sonorously tell how (without bloodshed) they slay the Saracens and Parthians and other enemies, the natives despise them, the unarmed Britons rebel against them. . . . If our soldiers cannot be induced by manly exhortations to do virile things let the mothers and wives of their victims move them. But what we are asking of our age has perished, and the virility of our ancestors has passed to others.

This is the classic verdict on the Age of Chivalry by one of its most authoritative writers; and, whilst almost every reference to it in our general literature is based upon the trash of modern romantic writers, our leading historians entirely agree with the bishop. Banditry, gross injustice to the weak, sadistic torture, sordid greed were the general characteristics of the noble and knightly orders. In all my reading of mediaeval chronicles, of which this work gives proof enough, I have never found a single instance—Bayard comes along after the Age of Chivalry—of a knight-errant in the sense in which nine-tenths even of our educated people understand the word. It will be enough to quote our two highest modern authorities. *The Cambridge Mediaeval*

History (V, 593) says: "*Everywhere* the barons perpetrated the same excesses." Prof. Luchaire, the chief French authority on that period, says in the standard French history, *Lavisse's Histoire de France* (II, 249): "*Almost everywhere* the lord of the castle was a brutal, pillaging soldier." In his special study of the period, *Social France at the Time of Philip Augustus* (1180–1223), Luchaire sets aside a small "elite class" of knights, ladies, a few dozen who were not brutal, but he admits that they laughed at virtue and despised the people.

The ladies of the noble and knightly orders are described by all the leading experts on the life of France, England, Germany, Italy, and Spain at this period as extraordinarily corrupt and, as a body, extremely callous and often sadistically cruel. Luchaire thus sums up the historical evidence in his *Social France*:—

> In the *majority of cases* the lady of the castle (*chatelaine*) in the time of Philip Augustus was still what she had been in the centuries preceding feudalism; a virago of violent temperament, of strong passions.

The "fair maid" and "tender matron" of the Middle Ages is as legendary as the knight-errant. As Prof. Medley says, in Traill's authoritative *Social England*, if a knight met a maid, unprotected, on the road he raped her; and the troubadour literature often approves this. If she was a woman of his own class, married or unmarried, there was no need for violence. These women fought for his "favours," as the whole literature of the time tells. The Church is now said to have abolished divorce (as well as clerical celibacy) in the eleventh century, but all these women had, says Luchaire, "at least three husbands" (in succession). When the pious King Louis VII was persuaded that it was politic to get rid of his wife Eleanor (later Queen of England), a loose and voluptuous woman who loathed his cold virtue, the Churchmen "found" that the marriage was never valid because Louis's great-great-grandfather had married Eleanor's great-great-grandmother. Any rich man or woman could get such discoveries made, but most of these noble lords and ladies preferred to ignore the clerical theory of virtue and justice and make better use of their money.

CHAPTER IX

THE AGE OF CATHEDRAL-BUILDING

I HAVE given a full chapter to French life in the eleventh and twelfth centuries because France was then the most advanced and most enlightened province of Christendom. It was the nearest to Spain and the great Arab civilization, and in the eleventh century it is from the South of France that we find the new and gayer ways, the new luxuries and school-life, spreading over Europe. We followed its development well into the twelfth century, and must now glance at contemporary life in England, Rome, Germany, and Christendom generally and ask whether here also it is true that, whatever improvement there was in the material and artistic aspects of life, character actually deteriorated. We ought to know what to expect, since nine out of ten of the Normans, lay and clerical, who came to England in 1066 were of the picturesque type I have described: callous, vicious, and quite unscrupulous.

At the time the apologists for the Normans said that they found England in a lamentable moral and social condition and really effected some reform. The Norman-English monk Ordericus Vitalis, whom I have already quoted, voices this plea in his *Church History* (Pt. II, Bk. IV, ch. 10):—

> Human institutions, which are ever prone to evil, had lost their rulers and become abominable in the infamy of their conduct. This demoralization extended to both the clergy and the laity and led both sexes into every kind of lasciviousness. The abundance of food and drink nourished their lust, and the frivolity and effeminacy of the nation caused them to embark upon every variety of crime. The monasteries were destroyed, and the monastic life was in such decay that the rigour of the canons could not be restored until the time of the Normans. For a long time back the monks had sunk so low that their life differed little from that of the laity. They were monks in name and costume only, and they were addicted to gluttony and were foul hypocrites.

That this was a generally sound, if exaggerated, characterization of Anglo-Saxon life—and it will be noted that I confine myself as far as possible to *general* characterizations—we have already seen. But that the Normans effected a moral reform is an

amazing suggestion, and presently the English half of the monk grasps the pen and writes thus of the Normans:—

> After seizing the enormous wealth that others [the Saxons] had accumulated the Normans threw off all restraint and, swollen with pride, impiously sacrificed the people whom God was scourging for their sins. The noblest girls became the playthings of the lowest grooms and, raped by the infamous scoundrels, could do naught but weep over their dishonour. Ladies of the highest birth and elegance groaned over their afflictions and preferred death to life. Stupid parasites wondered, in their cowardly vanity, whence they had got such power and imagined that whatever they wanted was lawful. Even many priests who were reputed wise and religious followed the court at all times in order to get the dignities they coveted, and, to the disgrace of religion, stooped to the basest flattery. The ancient abbeys were terrified by the threats of the secular power, and the monks were unjustly evicted and replaced with venal men who were tyrants rather than monks and had no respect for the sacred canons.

To " enforce the rigour of the canons " on one page, and a few pages later credit these reformers with a contempt of the canons, may seem to be a feat even for a monastic historian; but the truth is, we shall see, that neither nation, nor the joint nation which resulted from their fusion, had, save in exceptional cases, any respect for moral rules either then or throughout the Middle Ages.

It is usual to declare that an English Hildebrand, St. Dunstan, had reformed the monastic life in the Anglo-Saxon Church. Responsible historians know that Dunstan, building on the vices and fears of young kings and on bogus miracles, " reformed " less than fifty monasteries out of the multitude in England, and that the reform was in many cases very incomplete and in most cases transient. King Edwig, a boy of fifteen or sixteen, left the table at his coronation-banquet to retire with two women of notorious life—an audacity that startled even that liberal age—and Dunstan hurled anathemas at the three of them. The monk-biographer of the saint exults in his heroism:—

> The harlot [the elder of the women] turned bloodshot eyes upon him and said: " You threaten me with eternal death! Very well, I'll tear your limbs from your body and send you into perpetual exile. . . ."

But Dunstan won in the end. Hell was a powerful persuasive in those days. Then the next young king, Edgar, drags a beautiful nun out of her monastery and debauches her, and his remorse plays into Dunstan's hands. Next year we find (in Mansi, vol.

XVIII) Dunstan putting into the mouth of the King a stern condemnation of the monasteries. He adds:—

> I have vowed to restore them, and I have already rehabilitated forty-seven. If God spares me I will raise the number to fifty.

Fifty virtuous abbeys in a land that had 30,000 priests and monks to about 3,000,000 people! Pope John XIII, corrupt enough himself and probably bribed, supports the King in a letter and tells him to evict those " vessels of the devil," the disorderly monks of the great abbey of Winchester, because of " the flagrant turpitude of their vices." It appears that candidates for the life of virtue were so few that the abbot let some of the old monks remain, and they attempted to poison him.

It was always the same with these conversions at the point of a pike. A few years later (about 1000) we find the Archbishop of Canterbury very courteously urging his clergy to quit their vices. " We cannot force you to be chaste," he says, " but we admonish you." We have in the year 1009 the Church Council of Egham (in Mansi, vol. XIX) saying:—

> We beg and admonish all ministers of God, especially priests, to cultivate chastity. . . . They must surely know that a priest must not have a wife, and it is far worse when one has two or more. Some even wed another woman while the one they have cast off still lives: a thing which no Christian ought to do.

Five years later Bishop Wulstan, Dunstan's pupil and successor, bemoans, in a sermon, that the country is a sink of vice. Freeman acknowledges, in his *Norman Conquest*, that he has read it in the Anglo-Saxon—I do not find it in Hickes, as he says—but it is " such a frightful picture of national wretchedness and national corruption " that he declines to give more than a polite few-line summary of it. But, if a reader wants to see the wearisome repetition of these laments until the Norman invasion, let him consult Lea's *Sacerdotal Celibacy*.

The idea, however, that the Normans imported virtue as well as silk and lutes and damascened armour—possibly also greater national efficiency and some measure of reform of law—is grotesque. All historians tell how they brought an epidemic of sodomy, were fiendishly greedy and cruel, and, by seizing the wealthy abbeys and churches for their own clergy and the bastards of their nobles, further corrupted the English Church.

But we now reach an age of increasing literacy among the clergy, and it will be enough to quote the principal English writers of the time. Chief of these is William of Malmesbury (librarian of the abbey), whose work *On the Deeds of the Kings of England* (*De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, in Migne, 179),* covers the greater part of that period. That the monk is not very critical appears in this pretty story about the body of St. Dunstan:—

The Abbot Ailward opened his tomb in 1052 and found the body uncorrupted. This fact, instead of inspiring him with reverence, moved him to audacity, for, as he found the place he had prepared for the body too small, he cut it up and the blood poured out and filled the spectators with fear.

The abbot met with a fatal accident soon afterwards, of course. On the other hand, this passage about Gerbert (later Pope Silvester II), which Catholics would now like to suppress, reflects the very critical attitude to Rome of even pious mediaeval folk:—

When he reached the years of discretion he, either from disgust with the monastic life [he had been put in a monastery while a French peasant boy] or out of ambition, fled by night to Spain. . . . He reached Seville [more probably Cordova] and satisfied his desires. He learned to surpass Ptolemy in the use of the astrolabe . . . [he, in short, learned the whole of Arab science, but his Moslem host refused to explain one book] so he resorted to trickery. Plying the man with wine he, with the help of his daughter, with whom he was intimate, stole the book from under his pillow and fled back to France.

Of the Anglo-Saxon Church he gives the same account as Ordericus (Bk. III, 245):—

The clergy, content with a very slight degree of learning, could only stammer the words of the ritual. Any priest who knew grammar was a portent and a miracle to the others. The monks wore soft robes and ate all kinds of food and made a mockery of their rule. The nobles, absorbed in gluttony and vice, did not go to church in the mornings. . . . Many sold their servants when they had made them pregnant, either to brothels or into slavery. They all drank night and day . . . and the vices that accompany drunkenness followed.

Then we get the usual statement that the Normans restored

* There is, or was, an English translation of *William of Malmesbury's Chronicle* (1847) in Bohn's Antiquarian Library, but these old translations of mediaeval chronicles are to-day pushed out of sight. We have to admire the Middle Age without reading what it said about itself—and to deprecate the prejudice against it of the historians of the last century who *did* read its literature.

religion, which means that they built (by forced labour) a large number of churches; but the criticism begins at once:—

> They were almost unable to live without war . . . and when they were not strong enough to attain their object they got it by fraud and bribery. . . . They plundered their subjects and were loyal to their lords but disloyal the moment they received the slightest offence.

William I, the friend of the Church, he, as is usual, lets off lightly, though his greed and cruelty are well known from other sources. Stories that are told about the Conqueror are treated as gossip:—

> William, it is said, had [in 1084] an affair with the daughter of a priest, and the queen had the girl hamstrung by one of her servants. For this William had the man exiled, and he had the queen scourged to death with a horse's reins.

William's brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, whom the Conqueror made the second power in the land, is admitted by all to have been a monster of greed and cruelty, and the monk-chronicler tells us how he nearly became Pope, apparently in succession to the reformer Hildebrand himself:—

> He nearly bought the Papacy from the city [Rome]. He filled the pockets of pilgrims with letters and money. But the king heard of his intention to go to Rome and was furious and had him thrown into prison. . . . His friends, under threat of torture, surrendered such a mass of gold that the world was astounded.

William II he, like all other chroniclers, admits to have surpassed all others in that sadistic age in his greed and callousness:—

> The robber had the rope taken from his neck if he promised to pay the king. All military discipline ceased, and the nobles devoured the substance of the people, stealing the food from the mouths of the poor. Long curly hair and luxurious dress came in, and the young men vied with the women in the effeminacy of their bodies and gait . . . assailers of the chastity of others, prodigal of their own. Troops of effeminates [sodomists] and droves of harlots followed the court. . . . Archbishop Anselm tried to correct the abuses but he got no support from the bishops, and he left the Kingdom.

The next leading document is *The Saxon Chronicle*, or *Peterborough Chronicle*, an Anglo-Saxon work by the monks of Peterborough, of which I use the old translation by Ingram (1823):—

> Year 1066. Bishop Odo and Earl William lived here [England] from that date and raised castles widely throughout the country and harassed the miserable people.

There follows a long and terrible story of crass banditry, plundering of cathedrals as well as towns—it may be commended to those who boast that their ancestors "came over with the Conqueror"—but what happened to the Anglo-Saxons can be read in any good history. You will not, however, read passages like this:—

1083. This year there was the quarrel at Glastonbury between the abbot Thurstan and his monks. . . . One day the abbot went into the chapter house and spoke against the monks and tried to mislead them; and he sent for some laymen, and they came fully armed into the chapter house and fell upon the monks. Then were the monks very much afraid of them and did not know what to do, but the men advanced, and some of the monks ran into the chapel and locked the door after them. But the men followed them into the Church and tried to drag them out, and they dare not go out. A rueful thing happened on that day. The Frenchmen [the abbot's troops] broke into the choir and hurled their weapons toward the altar where the monks were; and some of the soldiers went to the upper floor [gallery] and shot their arrows down incessantly towards the sanctuary, so that they fired many arrows into the crucifix on the altar. And the poor monks lay about the altar, and some crept underneath it . . . but the bowmen continued to shoot their arrows, while others broke down the doors and came in and slew some of the monks, and wounded many so that blood flowed from the altar upon the steps. Three were killed and eighteen wounded.

1087. Such a sickness came upon the land that nearly every other man was in a wretched condition. . . . Afterwards came so great a famine over all England that many hundreds of men died in misery and from hunger. . . . In the same year the holy Church of St. Paul's, in the episcopal see of London, was burned down with many other Churches and the greatest and richest part of the whole city. And at the same time nearly every chief port in England was burned.

Such was the culmination of the reign of the Conqueror (who died that year) and the benefits of "Norman blood"; yet the monks close this section with high praise of the King, the great church-builder. For his son and successor no one has a good word. In 1088 the country rebels and bishops lead armies on both sides. At his death, in 1100, the monks almost rejoice, but in 1104 they observe that "it is not easy to describe the misery of the land" (under Henry I), and a few years later "this nation was severely oppressed":—

1124. This year Ralph Basset and the King's thanes held an assize in Leicestershire. . . . They hanged forty-four men and deprived six of their eyes and their testicles. . . . The wretched people are oppressed

with all unrighteousness. First they are bereaved of their property and then they are slain.

In 1135 the monks sing the praises of Henry on their highest note and forget all that they have written about him. Then came Stephen and the Civil War, and we learn what blue-blooded Normans really were:—

1137. They [the nobles] took those whom they believed to have any property, even labouring men and women, threw them into prison for their gold and silver, and inflicted on them unutterable tortures. Some they hanged up by the feet and lit a fire with foul smoke underneath them; and some by the thumbs or by the head, and attached heavy coats of mail to their feet. They tied knotted cords round their heads and twisted them until the pain went to the brain. They put them into dungeons wherein were adders, snakes, and toads and so destroyed them. Some they put in a crucet house: that is to say, in a chest that was short and narrow and not deep, wherein they put sharp stones, and so thrust the men therein that they broke all their limbs. . . . They placed a sharp iron collar round a man's neck and throat and fastened it to a beam so that he could in no direction either sit or lie or sleep. Many thousands they wore out with hunger. This lasted nineteen winters when Stephen was king, and it grew steadily worse and worse. . . . You might go a whole day's journey and never see a man sitting in a town or the land tilled. . . . Never did heathen men do worse than they did . . . every man who could robbed another.

This was the England in which the writer lived: seventy years after the Conquest and after Hildebrand's spiritual triumphs, fifty years after the First Crusade, and many decades after the opening of the Age of Chivalry.

The monk Eadmer, of Canterbury, is more interested in Church matters, especially in his city, in his *History of Recent Events* (*Historia Rerum Novarum*, Migne, 159). In the fourth chapter of Book III he has a long account of the quarrel of Archbishop Anselm and the king (William Rufus) in connection with the marriage of priests. At first sight it seems incongruous to find the saintly Archbishop quarrelling with a king for using stern measures to make the priests give up their wives and mistresses and conform to ecclesiastical law, but the truth is that the greedy and totally unscrupulous King smelled money in the matter. He confiscated the property of recalcitrant priests; and, in fact, he often sold them permission to have wives. He sold everything, from licence in crime to sacred offices. Eadmer says:—

He invaded the church of Canterbury . . . and made it venal, granting authority in it to any man who could pay more than another. The price was changed every year . . . and whoever promised more than the holder of an office had paid got it. . . . What scandals, quarrels, and other disorders arose from this it would be tedious to tell; and this was done not only in the church of Canterbury but in all its daughters throughout England.

In 1102 there was a great Church Council at London to enforce celibacy. It was sternly laid down that subdeacons must take the vow of chastity (maintaining it, of course, as deacons and priests), and that the sons of priests were not to be recognized as having an hereditary right—as was still common—to the father's office: and there was the usual thunder about the plague of sodomy and a complaint that men are often sold into slavery. Curiously, we have a letter (No. 62 of Anselm's letters in Migne, vol. 159) of the Archbishop of Canterbury to his brother of York, written after the Council, moderating its zeal, or hinting at some sort of trickery:—

I should like you not to make public at present the resolutions of the Council, because they were *not read out in full at the time*, and they were passed without proper consideration. There are points to be added, perhaps a few changes to make. . . . [The decree against sodomy must be handled carefully.] It must be borne in mind that hitherto this has been so common that no one found any shame in it.

I have written a general history of morals and I say deliberately that there is no other period of history of anything like equal length, except in certain parts of China in recent times, when sodomy was so flagrant as it was during this period (tenth to fifteenth century), which some amazingly represent as an age of virtue and a model civilization. As to the sons of priests, who are now said to have been " a few unhappy cases," we have the testimony of the Pope of the time, Paschal II, in a letter (No. 221 of his letters in Migne, vol. 163) to Anselm:—

I fancy that Your Fraternity knows what the law is in the Roman Church about the sons of priests. But in England the *larger, if not the better, part of the priests are of this class*, and we leave the question of dispensation to your discretion. We agree that any who are suitable in knowledge and conduct may, according to the needs of the Church, be promoted by you.

Henry I, another quaint royal reformer, called a second Council of London in 1108, as the decisions of the first had had no effect. Of the new age Eadmer says:—

Henry, seeing that the whole kingdom was in such misery, set out to reform it. . . . In his brother's time it had been the custom for those who travelled with the court to take anything they wanted and ravage the whole region where the court rested. Many of them, getting drunk, took away to sell or destroy what they could not consume in their lodgings, or if it was drink, they washed the feet of their horses with it. . . . The coinage also was debased, to the ruin of many. . . . Many of the clergy refused to comply with the statutes of the Council of London about putting away wives, or they married new wives.

Anselm died in 1109, and a sigh of relief, the monk says, went up from the priests. But the King pressed them hard, and the good monk ends his work with an admission that worse vices ensued:—

If the Lord punished fornicators and adulterers, the defilers of their cousins and even of their sisters and mothers will surely not escape judgment.

Henry (archdeacon) of Huntington, a very conscientious witness, gives us here a piquant illustration of the situation. He says, in his *History of the English* (in Migne, vol. 195), that Henry asked the Pope to send a Legate who should enforce the austerity of Rome (!) in England. The Pope sent Cardinal John of Crema in 1126, and he travelled over the country and delivered moving addresses:—

He presided at the Council of London and used very austere language about the vices of priests, saying that it was a vile crime to rise from the side of a whore and go to make the body of Christ [in the Mass]; and although on the same day he had made the body of Christ he was caught with a whore in the evening. This was so public that there was no possibility of denying it (col. 950).

The country was full of such stories reflecting cynically on the character of the clergy. Another, which we know on the authority of Giraldus Cambrensis, Archdeacon of St. David's, was that a lady asked the Bishop of Lincoln what she should do in regard to her husband, who was impotent. "We'll make him a priest," said the bishop, with a laugh, "he'll soon be potent." Walter Mapes, Archdeacon of Oxford, the gayest and perhaps finest English writer of the century, has left us a collection of such stories and of the songs which were sung all over the country about the priests and monks.

Church Councils and Papal and episcopal letters testify that there is no change in the situation, and none will be expected,

during the ghastly Civil War (1135–54). As Ordericus Vitalis, the contemporary monk-historian, tells the story (Pt. III, Bk. XIII, ch. 20) it was the bishop of Salisbury who, thinking that Mathilda would be more generous to the Church, inspired the rebellion. He was captured, and the Bishop of Ely, who had joined him, fled to Devizes:—

> When the King heard this he was furious and led his army against it, and he swore that Bishop Roger should have nothing to eat until the town was delivered to him. He seized the bishop's son, Roger, and ordered that he should be hanged before the city gates in sight of the rebels. For the boy's mother, Maud of Ramsbury, the bishop's concubine, had charge of the fortifications.

Another of the noble viragoes of the age. But, as I said, no one looks for virtue in a ferocious civil war. It is the following period that seems at last to show some heroism of virtue in the murder of St. Thomas à Becket. But profane historians describe the quarrel which culminated in that tragedy very differently from the religious writer; and the contemporary chronicles, while full of the "martyrdom"—he did not, of course, voluntarily die for any faith—and the heroism of the Archbishop, plainly show that the moral level of the higher clergy was as low as ever; and the letters of Becket himself exhale a peculiar shade of the odour of sanctity. It will be enough to quote his last letter, written to the Pope just before he was murdered—a letter of vital importance in the affair, though it has never before been translated and is, as far as I can discover in a cursory search, not noticed by any English historian. Cardinal Baronius, who had access to documents in Rome that are no longer available, gives it in his *Annales* (Vol. XIX, p. 376). It begins:—

> On what just and honourable conditions we made peace with our lord the King of England is known to you both from me and from the reports of other visitors, and you know also how the king withdrew from his promise. Yet we do not think that he is so much to blame for this as are those priests of Baal, those sons of false prophets, who were from the first the causes of the whole trouble. Chief of these are the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London. You know that at one time, when you were at Sens, without consulting the king and in my presence in your court, they did not scruple to rob us of our possessions, though it was well known to them that we had two cases in your court. When therefore these standard-bearers of the Balaamites heard that we had made peace with the king they summoned the Bishop of Salisbury and other accomplices and scoured

the land and sea in an attempt to undo it, they themselves persuading the king that the agreement was useless to the kingdom and a disgrace unless the gifts the king had made to our Church should stand and we should be compelled to respect the customs of the country on which we had differed. And they went so far in their perversity that on their advice the king took away all our revenue . . . and we were left with an empty house and ruined barns. . . . They decided therefore to put armed men at the ports at which we [after visiting the Pope] were expected to arrive and told their soldiers and satellites to see that we did not get into the country without their closely examining all our luggage and taking from us all the letters we had received from Your Majesty. But God willed that we should learn of these machinations from friends who resented their insolence. The armed soldiers watched the coast as the Bishops of York and Salisbury had ordered, and for the execution of their evil plot they had chosen knights . . . who were bitterly hostile to me and threatened to cut off my head if I landed; and the said bishops came to Canterbury to egg on the civil officers if they were not hostile enough. . . .

The Archbishop got into England stealthily, sending on in advance the letters in which the Pope threatened to suspend the other bishops, and he was murdered a few days later. In short, Thomas throws the whole blame upon the very un-Christian passions—it was very largely a quarrel about property—of the three greatest prelates, after himself, of the English Church. John of Salisbury confirms this in a letter to the Archbishop of Sens (Migne, 199, 360). He makes a very heavy attack on " the Archdevil of York," as he calls him, and says that the origin of the feud was that Becket had exposed the Archbishop of York for cutting out the eyes of a youth with whom he had had sodomitic relations. The Archbishop, he says, had gone to Rome and got acquitted by the customary bribery. Cardinal Baronius, in accepting this account of the situation, quotes the saintly Peter of Blois saying in a letter:—

This pest and innumerable other evils infect the Church to-day. Laymen invade the sanctuary. The monasteries are turned into camps and markets. The monks play the part of wolves.

Instead, therefore, of the murder of Becket being a strange spasm of insanity in a fair and ordered world, as too much of our historical literature suggests, all the literature of the time shows that it was just an extreme manifestation of the prevailing disorder. It was almost the last day of 1170 when Becket was murdered. A few months later we find Pope Alexander III instructing the Bishops of Exeter and Worcester to go to Canter-

bury and inquire about the abbot-elect * of the great abbey. With them, as secretary, the bishops took the famous scholar, John of Salisbury, and the report to the Pope (Migne, 199, Letter 310) was written by him:—

We have found the abbey so dilapidated that there was little hope of repairing it. It was painful to see the decay of the church, the cloister and the offices open to the rains and wind, the ruin of all the buildings. It was a torture to pious ears to listen to the story of the calamities which the lust and greed of the abbot had brought upon the monastery. He sold a large number of meadows, and to the patrons and partners of his turpitude. He stole the seal of the abbey in order to carry out these deals. The practice of religion was unknown to him and his associates, and he made a public street for his youths and servants, whom he armed, of the cloister. He admitted no one to the monastic life unless he paid. As to his vices, this abbot-elect, this stallion . . . [the next phrase of this " devout " monk writing to the Pope is too coarse to be translated even diplomatically], neighing after fillies . . . held that fornication was no harm unless it was made public. He debauched mothers and daughters alike, did not hesitate to defile the sanctity of marriage and said that fornication was a necessity. In a few years he had so many children that he beat the record of the patriarchs. A devout priest told us that in one village and the surrounding district he had seventeen bastards. . . .

Not far from Canterbury is Faversham, and, at the time, it had a convent of nuns that was known all over England. A few years after the whole country, and especially Kent, had been shocked and, it is suggested, sobered by the murder of the Archbishop, this convent was found to be little better than a brothel. The Abbot Benedict (*On the Life and Deeds of Henry II*, Hearn's edition, 1725, p. 167) says:—

The Bishops of Winchester and Exeter were sent by the king, under a Papal Command to investigate. They deposed the abbess because of the infamy of her life. It was proved that she had three children after taking the vow. They also cleared out the nuns on account of the foulness of their conduct, except those who promised to abandon their evil ways. The king then sent to Fontevraud for nuns to replace them, and he allotted the deposed abbess ten marks of silver yearly so that she should not die of want.

Note the significance of the fact that they do not turn to any convent in England to supply virtuous nuns, but send to France. The abbey of Fontevraud was, writers of the time tell us, under—

* The correspondence speaks of him as the " abbot-elect," but it also speaks of years of dilapidation of the abbey property by him, so that he was no stranger of recent arrival.

or had been reformed by—so strict a Puritan, Robert of Arbrissel, that, as Godfrey of Vendome says, he had " invented a new kind of martyrdom." To curb the weakness of the flesh of his 5,000 nuns he ordered delinquents to strip before him and even to sleep, chastely, with him. For some reason it was nine years before a couple of dozen of nuns arrived from France; and in a few further years the abbey was as gay as ever.

Benedict the Abbot also tells us in the same work (p. 137) how the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard, kept up the acrid quarrel with his brother of York about priority and property:—

> This year there was a grievous quarrel about jurisdiction between Roger, Archbishop of York, and Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury. Meantime, the cardinal whom the Pope had sent to England had ordered that a council should be held in London in the middle of Lent. The king and his son and the said cardinal came [with the prelates], and they met in the chapel of Westminster Abbey. A quarrel arose between the Archbishops as to which should sit on the right hand of the cardinal. . . . While they argued the monks and servants who had come with the Archbishop of Canterbury rushed at the Archbishop of York, threw him to the ground, kicked him, and broke his mitre. He was half-dead when they dragged him away . . . [both appealed to the Pope] but the same day the Archbishop of Canterbury saw the cardinal and promised him much money, and both appeals were dropped.

As the King was flagrantly immoral and blasphemous—he used to roll on the floor, bite the carpet, and " curse God in wild frenzies of blasphemy "—we can imagine the gaiety when he returned to his palace with the story.

Incidental references to the Papal Court warn us what to expect when we turn to Rome. Pope and cardinals earned the disdain of every country in Christendom by their greed, venality, and quite unscrupulous compromises on principle when it suited their interest. William of Malmesbury, who knew Rome well, says (V, 2):—

> Rome, once mistress of the earth, is now a comparatively small town, and the Romans, once masters of the world, are now the laziest of men, selling justice for gold, putting a price upon the Canon Laws.

So said all Europe and would continue to say it until a century after the Reformation, when the naked simony and greed had to be wrapped in a mantle of sophistry, as it is to-day. Nor was this the only symptom that Gregory VII had not raised the moral level of Rome, except that until the later Middle Ages Christendom

would no longer tolerate murderers, adulterers, and sodomists masquerading as Vicars of Christ. St. Peter's itself was still repeatedly washed in blood. Peter the Deacon (in Baronius, XVIII, 254) tells how the Pope refused to crown Henry V, who had come with all his prelates and nobles, until he granted the high Papal claims:—

> The Pope and those with him were put under guard and scarcely allowed to approach the altar. After mass the Pope was compelled to leave his throne, and he sat, under armed guard, before the tomb of St. Peter until the evening. From there he was taken to a hospice outside the church, and a large number of clerics and laymen were made prisoners with him. Boys and others who approached him with flowers or presents were beaten or killed. Then John of Tusculum and Leo Bishop of Ostia disguised themselves and crossed [the river] to the city. When the Romans heard what had happened to the Pope they slew all the Germans in Rome, whether they were there as pilgrims or on business. . . . Next day they fell upon the Emperor's troops, killed many, and drove them back into the porch of St. Peter's. They knocked the emperor off his horse, and wounded him in the face. The Count of Milan gave his horse to the emperor, and for this the Romans cut him to pieces and threw his flesh to the dogs in the street.

This was under the pious monk-Pope Paschal II. When he died (1118) the anti-Imperialists chose another monk, Gelasius II. He was secretly consecrated in a tower-fortress in the Norman quarter, but Cencio Frangipani, a noble of the leading Imperialist family, called out his clan and, as Randulph says:—

> Hissing like a dragon, he broke open the doors of the tower and burst with fury into the chapel. He seized the Pope by the throat [at the altar], knocked him down and trampled on him like a wild beast. He then imprisoned him in his tower.

The Normans delivered him in a counter-assault, but a new German force arrived and the Pope and cardinals fled in great distress. The Pope came back secretly, however, when he learned that the Emperor had set up an anti-Pope; but the Frangipani again burst into the chapel and there was a frightful carnage, the Pope, his vestments flying in the wind, escaping alone by the back door. He then ended the long and bitter feud with the emperors over the investiture of bishops by a compromise which any politician could have thought out long before and sent troops after the anti-Pope. Bribing his protectors, the "strict and virtuous monk" made the man ride through the streets of Rome dressed in a dirty goatskin and astride a mangy camel with

kitchen pots and pans hanging round him, while the citizens beat and stoned him. " Such," says the very temperate Gregorovius, " were the spiritual triumphs of Rome during the Middle Ages."

The Imperialists next elected Innocent II, but the rich bankers, the Pierleoni, bribed the majority of the cardinals and made a member of their family Pope Anacletus; and the supporters of Innocent denounced him as a Jew, a raper of nuns, incestuous, and unfit in various other picturesque ways. Anacletus emptied the contents of the three leading churches into the hands of the mob and secured its support. It was at this juncture that Arnold of Brescia, the noblest figure in Europe, was accepted by the Romans, and they decided to make Rome a republic. One Pope was killed leading his troops against them. But Arnold's demand that the clergy should abdicate all wealth and greed of power was an alarming heresy, and he was betrayed by the Emperor and burned alive by the Pope (1155).

The executioner was the only English Pope—it is said they could not find a decent Italian cardinal—who enters the list. The Emperor was the most lauded German Emperor in three centuries, Frederick Barbarossa. The sacrifice of Arnold was part of the price he paid for coronation in St. Peter's, and he made another private deal with the Pope, who called out his troops and concealed them. Bishop Otto of Freisingen describes what followed in his *De Gestis Friderici Primi* (*The Deeds of Frederic I*, II, 23, in Muratori, VI):—

> Meantime the Roman people and the Senators [the republicans] met in the Capitol. When they heard that the emperor had been crowned and they had been excluded, they were furious and rushed across the Tiber and slew some of the attendants in St. Peter's. There was a great uproar, and the emperor ordered his troops to arms. He drove them on as he feared that the Roman people had attacked the Pope and the cardinals. A battle with the Romans and the Transtiburines ensued, the women watching and spurring on the men. It was a long and evenly-fought battle and lasted from ten in the morning to nightfall, but the Romans were compelled to withdraw. About a thousand Romans were killed or drowned in the Tiber, two hundred were captured and a large number wounded; but of our men only one was wounded and none were killed.

An early German communiqué—the bishop does not tell the sequel, but the continuer of his history, Canon Radevic (also in Muratori, VI) does—relates that our precious British Pope, after carousing with the Emperor and seeing him safely depart, treacher-

ously entered into alliance with his enemy, the King of Sicily. Radevic gives us the scorching letter on the Papacy which Frederick then addressed to the German nation:—

From the head of the Church come causes of quarrels, the seed of evil, the poison of pestilence. . . . They [the Pope's Legates] inflated with the mammon of inquity, the height of pride, the pomp of arrogance, and the execrable elation of a swollen heart, gave us a letter from the Pope [full of contempt and rebuke]. Our princes were so furious that they would have condemned these wicked priests to death if we had not intervened. . . . We found on them a number of similar letters and sealed blank forms, to be filled up by them, by means of which they, as was their custom, could carry the poison of their greed into the churches of Germany, strip the altars, and carry off the sacred vessels of the Houses of God and rob the crucifixes [of jewels].

Such was " the age of docile and tranquil faith." The vitriolic quarrel went on for years, and Milman describes one of the Pope's letters as almost unequalled in scorn, defiance, and unmeasured assertion of superiority (IV, 26).

At the death of Adrian (1159) the feud rose to a white heat and gold was poured out from every side; but the money of Sicily, France, and England outweighed that of Germany, and the cardinals chose the anti-Imperialist Pope Victor. In the traditional manner he murmured " I am not worthy " when they put the Papal cope on him. Very well, said his rival Cardinal Octavian, we will not force you, and he seized the cope and was elected Alexander III. Naturally Victor at once discovered that he was worthy, and a new feud began. Canon Radevic gives us the letters in which both appealed to Christendom. They are models of vituperation. Victor says:—

Octavian went so far in his audacity and infamy as to strip us, with his own hands, of the cope which we had reluctantly, recognizing [as was the custom] our unworthiness, put on. One of the Senators who witnessed the crime, moved by a divine spirit, tore the cope from the hands of the furious man, but he turned, his eyes aflame with rage, to one of the chaplains whom he had previously directed to have another cope ready. By the judgment of Providence it was put on him back to front and many laughed and jeered. . . . Then the doors of the church were burst open, and the troops he [Octavian] had hired rushed in with drawn swords. . . . I and my friends took refuge in a fortified tower near the church so that we should not be killed by the troops; and a Senator, whom Octavian had bribed, kept us prisoners in it for nine days. But the people rose in revolt and they removed us to a safer place. From this the Senators, nobles, and people rescued us three days later.

The Emperor declared for Victor, especially when treasonable letters were found in the possession of his rival, but Rome was too hot for both the furious "Holinesses" and the war raged throughout Christendom for years. Even Victor's successor, Alexander III, a very vigorous and industrious man, spent fifteen of the twenty-two years of his pontificate in exile and all but four years in an acrid, often bloody, struggle with the Emperor. The contemporary Cardinal of Aragon, who writes the life of Alexander that is prefixed to his letters in Migne (vol. 200), says that in 1166 the Romans, 30,000 in number, marched against the Imperialist town of Tusculum and pinned up the Archbishop of Cologne, who commanded the imperial troops in it. Whereupon the fiery and profane Archbishop of Mainz, who led another German army, fell upon them with great skill and energy and cut them to pieces. The Archbishop of Cologne joined forces with him, and they chased the Romans back to the city and ravaged the suburbs with all the savagery of the age. The Emperor joined them with a new army, took the Castle of Sant Angelo by storm, and turned upon the Papal troops and St. Peter's:—

> In great fury he attacked St. Peter's with catapults and archers. As he failed to take it, he set it on fire, but the guards, fearing that it might be totally destroyed, surrendered it.

Otto of St. Blaise (in Muratori, VI) adds that the Romans had fled to the churches when the Emperor approached:—

> The soldiers of the Emperor attacked the churches. They cut down the doors of St. Peter's with axes and made their way to the altar, which they defiled with a great slaughter. And they set fire to the church of the Virgin, killing or taking prisoner all who were in it, and looting the church.

A timely epidemic, in which the Romans saw the hand of God, then almost exterminated the Germans, but Rome remained in such condition that Pope Alexander preferred to linger in exile for the next six years.

These glimpses of the great Barbarossa and the references to two of his fighting archbishops, who were typical knight-bandits in (for the sake of revenue) high position in the Church—and the Archbishop of Mainz was flagrantly vicious—warn us what to expect in Germany. It had more of these knight-prelates than

any other country, even the architect of the noblest of early Cathedrals (Speyer) being a man of that type. The state of the clergy and people can be guessed. The priests generally still openly married or kept mistresses. In the history of the diocese of Liège (in Martene, Vol. IV) we read that Bishop Alberic, about 1140, gave his consent to the public marriage of his priests, and that the citizens preferred them to the laity as sons-in-law. Henry of Salzburg gives, in his *Historia Calamitatum Ecclesiae Salzburgensis* (*Story of the Calamities of the Salzburg Church*, Migne, 196), a letter that purports to have been addressed to the Archbishop by one of his priests, but was probably written by the prelate. It runs:—

My lord, be faithful to the word . . . otherwise the painted Jezebel who now so impudently haunts the homes of priests will in a short time so increase her power that she will despise your episcopal crozier and rejoice in her licence. Except for saying mass there will be no difference between the priest and the layman, and indeed the priest will do what the layman dare not do. For the cleric keeps the layman from adultery and fornication by public penance [in theory] but there is nothing to check the priest. Though his life be utterly vile he will not allow the layman to speak and he despises the dean and the archdeacon. Things have gone so far that the priest who has, like the layman, only one wife and avoids the wives of others is called devout and holy. A certain priest has given his nieces in marriage to other priests and has many children by a woman whom he six times promised my predecessor to put away. Though I forbid it, it is the custom here for the sons of priests with wives whom they took while their husbands were still alive to get ordained and seek parishes.

This was in 1175, a hundred years after Hildebrand had " imposed celibacy," in one of the leading cities of Germany. It was the same in Scandinavia, to which Alexander III wrote a number of letters on the general demoralization of priests and people. In 1171 he wrote (Migne, 200, col. 850) to the Archbishop of Upsala:—

Our heart is rent with sorrow at hearing that in your country a cruel and vile lust has grown so much that some women kill their babies and the men who corrupted them not only consent to but advise the crime. Other men commit incest or pollute themselves with animals. . . . You must impose a severe penance on those who kill their offspring, on parricides, and on all who have commerce with their mothers, daughters, cousins, nieces, or beasts.

Other letters show that Bohemia was in the same condition as

Germany. Decidedly there was no moral improvement in the twelfth century; and we shall see that there was none in the thirteenth, though this is selected by the apologists for the Middle Ages as the most virtuous—indeed, some venture to say, a model civilization.

CHAPTER X

THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

EVERY complete and candid picture of the later Middle Ages must be Rembrandtesque in its presentation of high lights and deep shades. This work is not, and does not include, such a picture. It is a series of translations of documents which have a material relevance to the social history of Christendom, but have never hitherto been translated and are therefore unknown to the vast majority of folk who talk about that social history. The pages of contemporary writers which describe any virtue or grace of the mediaeval period are familiar enough. The record has been exhaustively searched for such passages. Yet, especially when we approach the thirteenth century, it is advisable to glance at these brighter features since some of the more accommodating historians suggest that what they call "the mediaeval mind" was so different from ours that it may well, in spite of its vices, have been as devout and docile as our literary conventions represent.

The chief features selected by the apologist are the artistic splendour, the scholastic activity, the appearance of the friars, chivalry, and "the flame of piety that soars up in the Crusades." The fourth of these, a supposed Age of Chivalry, is as I have shown, and as every passage I quote confirms, a sheer myth. The foundation and spread of the bare-footed friars is little better. Most of what is written to-day about Francis of Assisi—as if it were a spiritual miracle that one Italian, in a foul world, logically acted upon the assurance of the Church that asceticism in a short life would be richly rewarded in an eternal life—and his followers is historically false. It presents a picture that differs amazingly from that which the official historian of the Franciscan Order, Father Luke Wadding, gives us in his *Annales* (1731). It will be enough to translate one passage. In 1220, twelve years after Francis established the fraternity, he went out to the East and left Brother Elias to supervise the brethren in Italy (I, 331):—

While Francis enlarged his family in the East, Brother Elias, who had been left as his Vicar in the West, turned the brethren from the proper faith and introduced a new way of living into the Order. He

used to say in his addresses to communities that it was not given to all the friars to have the purity and holiness of their founder; that his life was to be praised rather than imitated; and that he had enjoined many things which were beyond man's capacity. He attracted many followers, even amongst the heads of the provinces, so that they condemned the simplicity, sincerity, and ascetic life of Francis and said that he was imprudent. They tried to get certain things struck out of the Rule and the rigour of the Order softened.

It should be understood that religious folk had by this time begun to shower wealth upon the "poor friars." A messenger was sent to Francis, and he returned in haste and confronted Elias, whom he found wearing a habit (robe) of fine cloth and cut instead of the beggar's tunic (as the brown robe really is) which Francis had adopted:—

> And when the holy man saw this he, restraining his anger, asked him in the presence of others to lend him the habit. Elias could not refuse, and he went into a corner, took it off, and gave it to the holy man.

The long passage would give a new idea of Francis of Assisi to his admirers, but I must be content to summarize it. Francis put on the fine robe, pulling it all awry, and strutted back and forth before the astonished brethren, with his head in the air, and a foppish expression, saying: "How do you do, good sirs?" Then he "tore off the robe and threw it away with great contempt" and "vehemently scolded Elias" for his pride. Yet next year Elias was made Vicar-General, or next in authority to Francis, and at the death of Francis, five years later, he was made General, and the Order passed into an acrid struggle and corruption. Until the Reformation the lubricity, ignorance, gluttony, and drunkenness of the friars were popular jokes all over Europe.

The idea that the new intense scholastic activity was inspired by the Church is very largely based upon ignorance of the ancient Roman school-life which had been more than restored by the Arabs in Spain, from whom France borrowed. The first universities, Salerno and Montpelier, were medical schools of Arab–Jewish origin, and the University of Bologna was a law school necessitated—like the whole middle-class school movement—by the new economic conditions. As to Oxford, Paris, etc., I have shown how the Church divested them of a university character by forbidding monk-pupils to study science and law, and the monks were given control. Wadding describes (at the year 1254)

how at Paris the friars, after a spirited fight, won control from the proper authorities and turned the university into a school of theology.

The most conspicuous feature of the period, the superb art, makes the greatest impression upon superficial writers, as they see it to-day at least in pictûres; but recent authorities on art follow the commonsense view that the religious art of the Middle Ages—the profane art is just as " inspired "—means only that the Church was the richest employer of the artists. It is the cathedral architecture alone that can be alleged to yield any conclusion to please the orthodox, for the painters and sculptors were notoriously very mixed, and even the most profane, like Lippi and Pinturicchio, painted beautiful religious pictures. Even in the case of some who are known to have been religious, their most " inspired " religious work was not sincere. Giotto, for instance, painted frescoes in the shrine of Francis, at Assisi, which seem to embody a devout admiration of the life of the friars, but he had a real contempt for their ideals. In Vasari's *Lives of the Painters* there is, at the end of the life of Giotto (I, 426 in the 1878 Italian edition), a poem (canzone) which he wrote while he was painting the frescoes. It sternly condemns the central idea of the life of the friars and recognizes their hypocrisy. Involuntary poverty is, he says, one of the greatest of evils:—

> As to the poverty which seems to be of the elect, one may see by experience that it is not observed as much as is said. And even the observance of something that requires neither discretion nor knowledge nor any high qualities ought not to be praised. . . . Certainly it seems to me a great shame to call something a virtue when it puts the good in pawn, and much harm is done by preferring a bestial thing to virtue.

Yet all writers on Giotto except Crowe and Casalcaselle ignore this and encourage the reader to think of religious inspiration.

As to the cathedrals, the " inspiration " could be ascribed only to the architects, and where these are known they are often far from devout. The architect of the finest of the Romanesque cathedrals, at Speyer, was the Bishop of Osnabrück, who was a roystering fighting prelate of the type I have described. As all authorities on it now relate, the Gothic was developed from the Romanesque in a long and purely technical series of improvements, chiefly in the abbeys of the region round Paris, which were habitually corrupt. In any case, I have given abundant

evidence, and will give more, that the people of the time were not devout. The Feasts (of Fools, etc.) they held in the cathedrals, the bloody brawls and battles, etc., are inconsistent with real religion, and we know that the cathedrals were in many cases built by forced labour and with much grumbling. Four-fifths of the people of Europe, in fact, never saw a cathedral. We know these mediaeval men and women quite well from contemporary writers without embarking upon strained inferences from the beauty of a few churches.

Of the Crusades, in fine, which are still, in all our schools and most of our literature, represented as an " heroic " embodiment of the " soul of the Middle Ages," it might suffice to refer to any authoritative writer on them in recent times. All our knowledge indicates that the primary impulse of the overwhelming majority of the Crusaders was the prospect of loot. Even the critical authorities, however, do not tell that Pope Urban II, in summoning the first Crusade, appealed to cupidity. His chief concern was to get the Greek Church subjected to Rome. He did not, of course, say that; but in his famous address at Clermont (Migne, 151, col. 586) he *did* say:—

> The wealth of our enemies will be yours, and you will despoil them of their treasures.

Modern historians point out that local churches made very considerable profit out of the departure of the Crusaders, besides getting relief from their banditry, and that even the very few leaders who had a deep religious motive shared the quarrelling, looting, and savagery.

The chief contemporary historian, William (Archbishop) of Tyre, tells us, in his *History of Events beyond the Seas* (Migne, 261, Bk. III, col. 124), how they engaged in deadly fights over loot before they reached Jerusalem:—

> They [the main army under Baldwin] reached Manistra, which Tancred has seized, and now held. Knowing that he would not admit them into the city they quartered in the suburban orchards. When Tancred heard that Baldwin was encamped outside his city he was furious and, mindful of the wrongs he had suffered from him, called his men to arms and planned to get revenge. Sending men in advance to scatter or seize the horses, he fell upon the camp with five hundred armed knights and almost destroyed Baldwin's men before they could get at their weapons. There was a furious battle, and many were killed or taken captive on both sides.

In such fashion the " Soldiers of the Cross " moved on to Jerusalem, where the Moslem, softened by a long peace, had to yield. The Archbishop thus describes and justifies the butchery of the civilians (VIII, 19):—

Our leader and his followers closed their ranks and made their way through the streets with drawn swords, cutting down all whom they could find without regard to age or condition. Such were the slaughter and the piles of heads that had been cut off that it was impossible to move except over corpses. . . . Our main army was admitted by the East Gate and, closing its ranks, proceeded through the city and wrought a horrible carnage. Those who had escaped the leader and his men fell in the way of the army. Such were the slaughter and the outpour of blood that even the conquerors might have been horrified. A great part of the citizens had taken refuge in the Court of the Temple, as it seemed to be the safest place and was protected by walls and towers, but it availed them nothing. Tancred made for it with the great body of the army and, cutting his way with immense slaughter into the Temple, seized a vast amount of gold, silver, and precious stones, though it is said that he restored these later [?]. The other princes, hearing what was happening in the Temple, made for it and joined in the slaughter, sparing none; and this was a just judgment of God because they had desecrated the Temple with profane rites and taken it from the faithful. It was horrible to see the number of the slain, the limbs scattered about, the blood splashed on all sides. The victors were sodden with blood from head to heel. It is said that 10,000 were killed in the Court of the Temple alone, and the same number of corpses filled the streets of the city. They then searched for fugitives, dragged them out, and slaughtered them like beasts. They entered the houses and cut to pieces the father, mother, and children or flung them from the roofs; and each, as had been agreed, took whatever there was in the house into which he broke.

Then they changed their clothes, went devoutly " with groans and tears " to services, and afterwards divided the booty. The clergy claimed and got a fourth of the blood-soaked city. The Pope had from the start stipulated that the Church must have a large share of the spoils.

It was the same in other cities. At Caesaraea, says the Archbishop (X, 16), the terrified people crowded into the great mosque:—

The doors were broken open, and there was such slaughter of those who had taken refuge in it that the feet of the Christians were steeped in blood, and it was horrible to see the mounds of corpses.

These iron-clad knights who butchered the lightly-clad, unarmed Arabs and their families were the courteous heroes of the Age of

Chivalry. Some had remained at home, deriding the religious character of the adventure, but the stories of priceless loot reached them in Europe. Such was Duke William of Aquitaine, one of the greatest and most immoral nobles of France. When the news came, he washed from his shield the nude painting of his chief mistress and replaced it with the cross. Ordericus says (Bk. X):—

> Hearing of the triumphs of the nobles he was moved to make the pilgrimage, and an army of 30,000 [another chronicler adds " and swarms of girls "] followed his banner.

It seems that hardly a score of them ever reached Palestine, though two other armies under a frivolous prince and a gay countess joined them—the idea that returning Crusaders brought the elements of civilization to Europe, and so the Church *did* render a service, is a modern myth—and the Duke was so little sobered by his " pilgrimage " that on his return he founded an abbey in which the nuns were choice whores and the services were obscene parodies.

They set up Baldwin, an ex-cleric, as King of Jerusalem. Whether he deteriorated in the atmosphere of the Crusade or had never been otherwise is not clear, but he proved to be as greedy and unscrupulous as any of the other leaders in Palestine. The Archbishop says (XI, 21):—

> He did not restrain his carnal desires but he so managed his affairs in this respect that there was no scandal.

The archiepiscopal idea of a scandal is peculiar. Baldwin sent men to offer marriage to the very rich elderly widow of King Roger of Sicily, Adelasia, and told them to take any oath she wanted about his qualifications, especially to conceal the fact that he was already married. She came " with infinite money " (and " chests of jewels," others add) in so gorgeous a fleet that the masts and sides of her vessels glittered with gold. Baldwin asked the Archbishop of Jerusalem, Arnulph, who was as immoral as himself, to help him to deceive and marry her so as to get her wealth, and says William of Tyre (XI, 21):—

> The Patriarch Arnulph exerted all his malice to deceive the noble and honourable lady [she was a Norman virago, implicated in murder]. That she *was* deceived we cannot deny, as in her simplicity she thought that the king was free to marry her. But it was far otherwise, for

the woman he had married at Edessa was still alive. When she landed, the king, the patriarch, and the princes met her, and the false oaths sworn in Sicily were repeated.

The patriarch married them. He was summoned to Rome a few years later to answer for the " enormities " of his life, but at Rome he bribed so generously that he was permitted to return and resume his gaiety. Then the King fell dangerously ill and, seeing the flames of hell on the horizon, told the " noble and honourable lady " that she was not really married to him, and she admitted that she had long since discovered that.

Of the third King of Jerusalem the Archbishop says:—

> In his youth he had feared God and respected the Church, *which was very rare in those days*; but he gambled more than became his royal state, and in following his carnal desires he is said to have defiled the marriage of others.

The fourth King well sustained the royal tradition. When a new Patriarch was required, he and his mother ordered the clergy to consecrate, as they did, a loose-living courtier of theirs, whose relations with the queen-mother were a matter of gossip. The Archbishop of Antioch quarrelled with this man, and the Patriarch had him, though he was old and ill, daubed with honey and exposed to the insects throughout a long summer's day (XVIII, 1). Such was the flower of European chivalry when transplanted into the very hot-house of Christian inspiration. One pious knight, seeing the universal corruption in Palestine, founded a monastic order of knights (the Templars) who really meant business. At first he got only eight adherents, but in fifty years the order was very rich and grossly corrupt.

The Saracens began to recover ground, and a Second Crusade, which utterly failed, was sent out. The Third Crusade is particularly idealized in English literature because Richard the Lion Heart was one of its leaders. Alas for our boasted modern education! Richard was a French bandit-noble—a " splendid savage," our *Dictionary of National Biography* calls him—who hardly knew English; yet a few years ago millions of English folk admired a film in which he was presented as a bluff and thorough Englishman playing with the workers (for whom he had a profound contempt). The new Crusade was worse than the old. We have a letter (quoted in Archer's *Crusade of Richard I*, p. 17) of a chaplain of the Archbishop of Canterbury,

who followed the troops. He says of them when he reached Acre:—

> There we found our army given up to shameful practices, yielding to ease and lust instead of practising virtue. The Lord is not in the camp; there is none that doeth good. In the camp there is neither chastity, sobriety, faith, nor charity.

How Richard, despite his solemn promise, had 4,300 captives murdered in cold blood when the ransom was not forthcoming is well known. The only breath of chivalry that comes into that age is the appearance of Saladin.

We reach the thirteenth century and the Fourth Crusade, and it was the worst of the series, though called by the greatest of the Popes. The Crusaders had not brought money enough to pay the Venetians for shipment, so they first looted the Catholic city of Zara, then took Constantinople. I quote the account of their barbarous conduct in the latter from the Χρονίκη (*Chronicle*, in the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, XIV, 75) of Nicetas, a Greek official and scholar of distinction at the time:—

> They not only took the money of the citizens but, with drawn swords, they stole the things consecrated to God. They threw the relics of the holy martyrs into the vilest places, trod the sacred images underfoot, and, we shudder to hear, spilled the divine blood and body of Christ on the ground. Those who seized the reliquaries broke out the precious stones with which they were ornamented and used the vessels as pots and cups. . . . Their defilement of the great church [Sancta Sophia] is horrible to relate. The High Altar, constructed of precious material of all kinds, was broken into pieces which were distributed among the soldiers, as were all the sacred vessels, the ornaments [of unsurpassable art and valuable material], and the pure silver, inlaid with gold, that decorated the screen, the pulpit, and the doors of the sanctuary. To take them away mules and other beasts were brought right up to the sanctuary, and some that slipped on the marble floor of the church were stabbed and the sacred enclosure was fouled with dung and blood. Moreover, a certain whore . . . sat on the Patriarch's throne and sang lewd songs and danced. All of them committed the gravest crimes. Were those who perpetrated such things likely to spare decent matrons and marriageable maids or virgins consecrated to God? Every attempt to soften them made them furious and they often drew their daggers against an appeasor. No one was spared. In the alleys, streets, and churches, you heard nothing but the mourning of women, the groans of men. You saw nothing but rape, the taking of captives, the severing of families. . . .

The Cistercian monk Günther tells us, in his account (Migne, 212, col. 245), of an Abbot Martin, who " deeming it improper

to commit sacrilege except in the cause of religion," went with two of his monks to a secret chapel and secured a wagon-load of relics. His " bag " included a few drops of Christ's blood, a bit of the cross, bits of the Bethlehem stable, the stone on which Christ had stood for baptism, the spot at which he raised Lazarus, the table of the Last Supper, and so on.

Pope Innocent saw his knights, who had gone to " rescue the holy places," settle down to form a rich Greek kingdom of their own. Characteristically he approved the capture of Constantinople, because it made surer the submission of the Greek Church to Rome, and he bade them remain there a year. In a letter to the clergy and Army (VII, 154 in Migne, year 1204) he says:—

> We read in the Prophet Daniel that it is God who instals the mighty, changes the season, and transfers kingdoms. This we see in our own time in the kingdom of the Greeks. We rejoice, for he who rules the kingdom of man and gives it to whomsoever he will has transferred the kingdom of Constantinople from the proud to the humble, from the disorderly to the devout, from schismatics to Catholics, from the Greeks to the Latins. This, surely, is the change in the right hand of the Most High in which the Most Holy Roman Church is exalted, and the daughter returns to the mother. We thank God who has added this glory to his Holy Name.

We shall see presently that this most religious and most powerful of the Popes repeatedly uses this nauseating language to cover his condonation of some crime that yields profit to the Church. Let us first—since it was mainly English, French, and Norman knights who were involved in the Crusades—see something about the princes and knights of Germany. No historian questions that they were as ferocious, treacherous, and lecherous as the others.

Frederick Barbarossa was drowned on Crusade and succeeded by Henry VI, who far surpassed him in cruelty, but the Pope refused to crown him Roman Emperor unless he surrendered Tusculum to the Romans. We saw how the gay Archbishops of Cologne and Mainz had chased the Romans from that city, which was their deadliest rival and the chief outpost of the Germans in their long struggle with the Papacy. The monk Otto of Saint Blaise, in his continuation of Otto of Freisingen's *Chronicle* (in Pertz's *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, vol. 22), describes what happened in 1191 when Henry yielded to the Pope and treacherously sent a force to open the gates of Tusculum, pretending that the act was friendly:—

Henry . . . entered Italy and went to Rome, where he was gloriously received [a gross perversion of the truth] by Pope Celestine and, to the great joy of all the Romans, was crowned Emperor. He satisfied the greed of the Romans with rich gifts and got their support, and he betrayed to them the city of Tusculum, which had hitherto been a bastion of the Empire against their attacks, to the no small disgrace of his Empire. And the Romans, pouring over the city on Easter Sunday, destroyed the whole city, razing the walls and towers, and in the end setting fire to it.

Conrad of Ursperg adds in his Chronicle:—

Receiving a [friendly] message from the Emperor they unsuspectingly opened the gates to the Romans, who killed many of the citizens and mutilated nearly all of them by cutting off their hands or feet or other members [genitals].

It was not many years since the Romans had seized twenty-five priests of Tusculum and cut out their eyes. From 1191 Tusculum ceases to appear in the Chronicles. Three years later Henry took a formidable army to South Italy. There was some uncertainty about the right to rule the former Arab Kingdom of Sicily and Naples, and Tancred had, with plausible title, taken it over. Henry claimed it; and, although Tancred had sent home without ransom the German–Norman Queen Constantia (whom the Italians had captured) and only one city of the southern Kingdom had resisted Henry, he, with characteristic treachery, fell upon the population with appalling ferocity. Tancred was dead, and his son had yielded at once to Henry. Saint Blaise (in the above work) says:—

Henry [the Marshal, not the Emperor] burst into the city, and, capturing the Bishop who had headed the rebellion, and many nobles, he burned down the city, not even sparing the churches. He set fire to the Church of St. Agatha with a crowd of people of both sexes and all ages who had taken refuge in it, and returned to the Emperor with his noble captives. The nobles in despair conspired to kill the Emperor, and he resolved to meet treachery with treachery [there was no plot, and the letters which the Germans produced were forged]. He summoned the unsuspecting nobles to him, put them in chains, and slew them after inflicting terrible tortures. Margantone, one of the chief barons [the Sicilian admiral], and a learned man named Richard he deprived of their eyes, and he had the skin stripped off another of his victims. Another who had aspired to the crown, he had pierced with iron nails. Some were bound to stakes and burned alive. Some were pierced through the belly with stakes. In this way he struck terror into all nations.

Other contemporaries add that large numbers, including bishops and archbishops, were blinded or castrated. Some were made to sit on chairs with red-hot iron seats, others to wear red-hot crowns. The bodies of Tancred and his son were dug up and foully treated. The second son, who had succeeded to the throne, lost his eyes and his testicles. The Queen and her three daughters were imprisoned. And Henry bore away 160 mule-loads of treasure from the palace at Palermo to Germany. Sicily and South Italy, which had had a wonderful civilization under the Arabs, began their descent under Christian rule—arrested for a time by Frederick II (who was born on the day of the massacre)—to their modern state.

The Massacre of the Albigensians, fourteen years later, throws the same lurid light on the character of the Christian knights and the "great" Pope. About this appalling outrage, one of the worst in mediaeval history, we have not a single book in the English language, though the very untruthful apologies of Catholic writers are often repeated. South-Eastern France was, as I have earlier pointed out, the first part of Europe to recover civilization, because it was in close touch with Barcelona, which had literally adopted the high culture of the Spanish Arabs. In the second half of the twelfth century it was very advanced and prosperous, but full of rebellion against the Church. After years of entirely futile preaching, Pope Innocent announced a Crusade—the name had come to be applied to any military enterprise in the Papal interest—and the grand prize, now so much easier to get than in the land of the Saracens, was dangled before the eyes of the knights of France, England, and Germany. The contemporary William of Puy-Laurens, chaplain to the Count of Toulouse, confesses that the low character of the priests, as compared with the heretics (a mixed mass of real heretics and sceptics), had had much to do with the revolt (*Historia Albigensium—History of the Albigensians*, in Bouquet's *Receuil*, XIX, 193):—

> The Chaplains [priests] were so much despised by the laity that they were put on a level with Jews in oaths. Thus, instead of saying "I would rather be a Jew than do so-and-so," they said "I would rather be a chaplain." When priests appeared in public they hid their small tonsures under their hair. Soldiers [knights] rarely made priests of their sons. They offered the Church the sons of their servants; and the bishops made clerics of them as well as they could. Then the soldiers despised them and joined the heretics with impunity.

The heretics were so much respected that they had cemeteries in which they publicly buried their converts, and they received more in legacies than the priests and were not required to pay taxes. If a soldier travelled with them he was safe from his enemies.

Yet the modern Catholic plea, endorsed even by the writer on the Albigenses in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, is that the principles of their creed were socially dangerous! Outside Arab Spain the province of Southern France which they filled—the Pope says that they had " hundreds of towns "—was high above any other in Europe, and its culture was totally destroyed and hundreds of thousands of them were massacred. What happened in the town of Béziers will sufficiently illustrate the ferocity of the Crusaders and the appalling number of their victims. In Bouquet's *Receuil* (XIX) there is an anonymous contemporary account of the Crusade which is the richest in detail. It is written in Provençal and, like the three or four other contemporary accounts of the terrible tragedy, has never been translated. Of Béziers, the first large town the Crusaders reached, the author says:—

> They entered the city of Béziers and, in spite of the resistance of the inhabitants, they wrought the greatest slaughter of men and women that was ever known. Neither old nor young were spared, and even the babes in arms were killed. All who could had taken refuge in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, and they were all slaughtered.

Apologists question the report that Abbot Arnaud, at the head of the Crusaders, said: " Kill all—the Lord will know his own," but the chroniclers tell us that when the citizens had refused to come to terms with him he had given the order to kill all. The army then spread the same devastation and barbarity over the province. In one district they seized the chief noble lady, threw her alive down a well, and heaped stones on her. It was the same story of savagery and fierce quarrels over loot as in Palestine. How many victims of the massacre there were, no one has tried to estimate; but, as the anonymous Provençal writer says that the knights and footmen, of all nations, numbered 300,000, and all admit that there were at least 200,000 and that they slew and ravaged for two continuous years and resumed the savagery later, several hundred thousand must have perished. The most prosperous and advanced area in Europe became a wilderness.

Pope Innocent not only ordered the " Crusade," although he was certainly under no illusion about the character of his Crusaders,

but he had directed his Legates to goad the Albigensian prince, Raymond of Toulouse, into rebellion by a trick. Raymond had offered not only to submit, but also to lead his own troops against the heretics, and the Pope wrote to his Legates (XI, 232, in Migne):—

> As we have been asked what to do in regard to the army of the Crusaders we recommend you to follow the Counsel of the Apostle, "Being crafty, I caught you with guile" (II Cor. x, 11) because guile of that sort is rather to be called prudence. . . . Provided that the said Count or others shall have no profit from it, do not begin with him, but, putting him off with prudent dissimulation, proceed first to the destruction of the other [weaker] heretics. Then they, deprived of his aid, will be easily crushed, and he, seeing the slaughter of them, will have a change of heart. . . .

In a letter urging Philip of France to take up the Crusade he describes that king, notoriously one of the loosest in Europe, as "exalted by God above all others." All his life he, like the second greatest of the Popes, Gregory VII, made these compromises with truth and justice in the interest of the Church. When the interests of the Church were not involved, or were actually promoted, he would sternly insist on justice; but the writers who count this a contribution to civilization suppress the fact that, as all contemporaries perceived, he subordinated social-moral principles to the increase of the power and wealth of the Church. From Frederick II's mother he got the guardianship (with a rich payment) of her infant son and his great imperial heritage, and he then helped adventurers who tried to seize both the Kingdom of Sicily and the German Empire; and in the latter case he made the amazing excuse that an oath of loyalty to an infant that was not yet baptized—the oath was actually made to the mother—was not binding! He spared the crimes of John of England, Philip of France, and other monarchs, when it was to the interest of the Papacy to do so, and launched his thunders only when that interest was not endangered. We saw his conduct in regard to the Greeks, and he destroyed democracy at Rome and was one of the chief founders of the Inquisition.

His example poisoned the Popes who succeeded him in the thirteenth century. Under the lead of Frederick II—the Wonder of the World, as the finest Christian scholar of the age called him—the recovery of Europe might have been properly directed and accelerated; but three Popes in succession attacked him with

such injustice and foulness of invective that four-fifths of Christendom were scandalized and indignant, and Papal armies ravaged Italy with all the savagery of mediaeval warfare. It will suffice here to show that, while the Popes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were " good men " in the sense that they were chaste and eloquent about justice, there was no moral improvement in Christendom.

On the Inquisition, which is as typical a product of the thirteenth century as the Massacre of the Albigensians, there is no unfamiliar passage to quote. No historical writer of the Middle Ages had even a glimmer of social interest, so that throughout this work I am obliged to select short passages which collectively afford a picture of the times; but there is the special difficulty in the case of the Inquisition that it was a very gradual growth. In fact it goes back, as I showed, to the fourth century. The Christians had not won their freedom from persecution for more than a quarter of a century, when the bishops extorted from the emperors persecuting decrees against all non-Christians. I quoted the letter of Pope Leo I (in 449) endorsing the death sentence, and he expressly said that he was following the imperial decrees. The word " inquisition " means " searching out "; and it is sometimes said that this is the innovation of the thirteenth century. But Leo had ordered a search for heretics in Rome, and it is only the elaborate form of the mediaeval Inquisition that is new.

The Inquisition (or Holy Office), in its present form, dates from the sixteenth century, but it was substantially established by a series of Popes in the twelfth and thirteenth. The various steps may be read in Lea, whose inaccuracies are few and trifling. Innocent III gave it a serious impetus. In a letter to the clergy and people of Viterbo, in 1199 (II, 1), he said:—

> For since you punish traitors with death according to the law and confiscate their property, merely sparing the lives of their children out of pity, how much more those who, by erring in faith, offend God and Jesus Christ should be cut off from the community and be despoiled of their temporal goods, since it is far worse to offend against eternal than temporal authorities.

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) under his guidance elaborated the command (Sec. III):—

> Further, every archbishop or bishop shall either personally or through his archdeacon, or other suitable persons, twice or at least once a

year, visit any parish in which heretics are said to live, and shall compel three or more reliable men or, if it seems advisable, the whole community to swear that if any man knows of a heretic or any who hold secret meetings by night, in any way differing from the ordinary life and ways of the faithful, he shall report the same to the bishop. The bishop shall summon the accused to his presence and, if they do not purge themselves of the charge, or if they return to their former perfidy after purging themselves, they shall receive the canonical punishment.

That Frederick II (an advanced heretic) incorporated this in the imperial law is immaterial in view of the pressure of the Popes and the grave danger of his position. It was mainly his bitter enemy, Gregory IX, who scandalized Christendom, that forced him (Baronius, year 1231) and spurred the Inquisitors to full activity. Catholic writers who ignore the plain words of this and other Popes generally try to exonerate the Papacy by saying that no heretics were put to death in Rome.* This is bold, seeing that the Father of Catholic History, Cardinal Baronius, describes, in his Annals (1231), how Gregory IX had a large number of heretics burned alive at Rome:—

After making a diligent search he [the Senator or Prefect] summoned a large number of priests, clerics, and laymen who were tainted with the leprosy to the doors of Sta. Maria Maggiore, and before the Senate and the Roman people condemned them on their own confession and by witnesses.

This is quoted from the official life of Gregory. He had at the time got the Romans in a painful position, and he forced them to take this action. From his decree, which is given, we learn that:—

Their property must be confiscated, one part to go to those who denounced them and those who arrested them, one third to the Senator [or civic authority carrying out the sentence], and one third to the cost of repairing the walls . . . and their houses must be razed and become sites for the deposit of filth.

This allotting of property to the accusers, whose names were kept from the accused, and to the civic authorities was one of the most damnable features of the Inquisition. It induced a corrupt

* Dr. Ludwig Pastor is a refreshing exception. But he says that when Leo XIII announced that he had thrown open the Vatican Secret Archives to students, and he (Pastor) sought the records of the Roman Inquisition there, he found that they had been removed to a Secret Secret Archive. The public burning of the heretics at Rome is more plainly stated in Richard of San Germano's *Chronicle* (in Muratori, VII, 963).

scramble for wealth. Gregory also, in 1231, in a letter to Conrad of Marburg, laid down the clumsy preliminary procedure. The use of torture no one questions. Yet Catholic writers are now permitted to say, even in such respected works as the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, that it was a model tribunal. It created the very gravest hindrance to the development of the better elements of the mediaeval civilization, the suppression by violence of that freedom of discussion which had spread far and wide and, as Innocent III acknowledged, now gravely threatened the Church. That the people of the Middle Ages were docile is as sheer a myth as that they were devout and virtuous.

How little these heretic-burning Popes, the building of cathedrals, the spread of the friars, and all the other glories of the thirteenth century, affected the general moral character is seen on every page of the Chronicles. After three centuries of bloody struggle with the Germans, whom they had brought in to protect their wealth, the popes turned to the French, and in their lordly way offered them the Kingdom of Sicily. Charles of Anjou and his wife were unscrupulous and ambitious, and the French knights and nobles were bursting with greed for a new looting campaign. Sallas Malespina describes in his *Res Siculae* (*Sicilian Events*, in Muratori, Vol. VII) how they behaved in the first city they took:—

> The French seized wealth on every side, but it did not satisfy their unsatiable thirst. . . . For they not only seized the spoils of the slain enemy but looted the miserable city indiscriminately and killed the citizens, not sparing even foreigners. The slaughter went on night and day [for eight days], and the more the French slew, the fiercer was their thirst to kill and loot. They spared neither sex nor age . . . they profaned the churches . . . few or none escaped the cruel swords of the victors . . . the boy was killed in his mother's or his father's arms. The husband fell at his wife's feet, the wife at those of her husband. They raped the sisters, wives, and mothers of the wretched Italians. The slaughter and the robbing of the dead had hardly ceased on the eighth day. The whole region and the walls were red with blood.

After two years of this bestiality the Italians rebelled under the young Conradin. The Pope excommunicated Conradin, who was captured and executed as a felon; and all the women of Sicily were, as part of the punishment, handed over to the French soldiers. The rebound came fifteen years later (1282) in the fearful revolt which is known as the Sicilian Vespers. Francis Pipini has a short description in his Chronicle (ch. xiii, Muratori, IX):—

On the appointed day agents of the conspiracy went to all the towns of the kingdom. They and their accomplices and supporters seized arms and they fell upon the French in the midst of their rejoicing [it was a religious festival] with loud shouts. They not only slew the French but they cut open the wombs of Sicilian women who had conceived by the French and stoned the unborn children so that no taint of the French should be left in the kingdom.

They slew the nuns in their convents, the priests in their houses. Pope Martin IV, who confirms the worst details, summoned Europe to a Crusade against Sicily, and the slaughter continued for years.

One of the oddest eulogies of thirteenth-century Italy is that o H. D. Sedgwick (*Italy in the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols., 1913), who says that no other country can produce a list of men to match Innocent III, Frederick II, St. Francis, Ezzelino da Romano, Thomas Aquinas, Nicoló Pizano, Giotto, and Dante. He does not seem to have heard of Greece in the Periclean Age, England in the age of Elizabeth, Germany in the eighteenth century, etc., and his selection is peculiar. Frederick was not an Italian, and several others were far from " great." But the oddest feature is the inclusion of Ezzelino in the list of ornaments of his country. Ezzelino da Romano, son of a monk, was surely one of the most cruel fiends in European history, though a distinguished noble. The Monk of Parma, a contemporary, says in his *Chronicle* (in Muratori, VIII, 688, 708):—

Ezzelino, who found no pleasure except in shedding blood, again set out in Umbria and the March to imprison and kill, and he filled the dungeons and camps with crowds of prisoners and tortured them horribly with hunger. In the agonies of hunger and thirst his victims ate filth of every kind, and they were forced to drink urine with unimaginable eagerness. It was considered no small act of kindness if a man shared his urine with his companions. For the intolerable stench, the foulness, the heat, and the darkness were such in Ezzelino's dungeons, that one could hardly breathe, and many died. And so great was the number of the prisoners that they could neither lie down nor sit, yet they were so weak that they could hardly stand. Such were the groans that they seemed to be prisons not made by the hand of man but by devils. . . . Death was desired by all to put an end to their sufferings . . . and no priest was allowed to the dying. . . .

He was entirely merciless, and in cruelty he surpassed all known tyrants. . . . He looted the churches and inflicted a cruel death on priests and monks. Nearly 55,000 men perished miserably, by the sword, hunger, or torture, by his orders. His cruelty was such that men said that he was a fable. As he was an enemy of nature he

wanted to stop the propagation of the human race, for he castrated married men, children, and even women. He also cut off the noses and upper lips of many women and cruelly tortured their breasts, and he even cut out the eyes of their infants.

The fate of his equally brutal brother Alberic is described by Rolandini (in Muratori, VIII, 358):—

The said Alberic was led with his whole family below the tower, and a sort of wooden bridle was fixed on him so that, except when he confessed to a friar, he could not speak to anyone. Then Alberic and his sons, daughters, and wife, the lady Margarita [all beautiful and innocent] were dragged before the jubilant army [another Chronicle says that the robes of mother and daughters were torn off from the waist downwards] and distributed between three cities. The father and his six sons were cut to pieces with swords [the sons first, and their limbs were flourished in the father's face] and his daughters and wife were burned alive.

We are, remember, still at the peak of the Age of Chivalry, and I shall return later to the appalling cruelty, treachery, and lechery of the Italians of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, the golden age of Christian art. But knights and princes were much the same in all countries. Matthew of Paris tells us, in his *History of England*, how King John behaved when the Pope sent three of his bishops to threaten him with an interdict:—

The King in his fury blasphemed the Pope and the cardinals, and swore by the teeth of God that if they or anybody else dared to put an interdict on his Kingdom he would at once send all clerics in England to the Pope and confiscate their property. He added that he would cut out the eyes and cut off the noses of all Romans found in his dominions . . . and he told the bishops to get out of his sight at once if they did not want their own bodies mangled.

This *Historia Anglicana* of Matthew of Paris, a strict and learned monk of St. Albans, gives us a very interesting picture, abounding in characteristic anecdotes, of the life of a partially civilized people, yet there has been no translation of it for nearly a century. At the year 1221 it says:—

On the feast of St. James the Apostle the citizens of London met near the Hospital of Queen Mathilda for a wrestling match with the country folk [and London won]. . . . The Seneschal of the Abbot of Westminster, who was among the losers, brooded over a scheme of revenge. He offered a ram for the winner in a return match at Westminster and got together a lot of strong and skilled men [and as the Londoners were again winning he turned armed men upon them and cut them up].

In 1225, he says, a Legate from Rome convoked the Court and the bishops at Westminster to hear a message from the Pope:—

> He read them a letter in which the Pope admitted the scandal and age-old disgrace of the Roman Church—the charge of greed—and that nobody could do any business in the Roman Court unless he paid out a good deal of money. The cause of this scandal and infamy, he said, was the poverty of Rome, so they must help to relieve its poverty [by each cathedral allotting two livings to the Pope, which was refused].

A terrible light is thrown upon the nobles by their behaviour after the battle of Evesham (1265), where Simon de Montfort, who, with all his faults, was the best man in England—the people believed that scores of miracles were performed at his tomb—fell leading an army against the royal troops and the cream of the nobility. It is usually said, curtly, that Simon's body was "shockingly mutilated." In the Preface (p. xxxii) to his edition of William of Rishanger's *Chronicle*, Halliwell quotes this from a contemporary manuscript in the archives of the City of London:—

> The head of the said Earl of Leicester was, it is said, cut off, and his testicles were cut off and placed on each side of his nose, and the head was then sent to the wife of Roger of the Dead Sea near Wigmore Castle. His hands and feet were cut off and sent to his enemies in various places to dishonour him. His trunk alone was buried in Evesham Church.

These representatives of the English nobility afterwards dug up the trunk, but what they did with it is unknown.

It is hardly necessary to quote passages about their sexual morals; but, though there is now a translation of it in the Columbia Records of Civilization (1941), I must give a specimen of the *De Amore* (*On Love*) of Andrew the Chaplain, the most amazing book ever written by a priest. An ironic tradition makes him the chaplain of the truculent Puritan Innocent III; but he was more probably chaplain to Countess Marie of Champagne, whose views (and those of our Queen Eleanor and the more refined noble ladies of the age) he expresses. It was the manual of the "Courts of Love" which these ladies of the highest nobility held, and it had a wide circulation from about 1220 to the Reformation. In the first chapter we read (I translate from Page's edition in Latin and Catalan):—

> When a man sees a woman who seems to be made for love and for his pleasure he at once desires her. Whenever he thinks about her

his ardour increases and his mind expands. Then he begins to think about how she is made, to distinguish her members, imagine her actions, picture to himself the secrets of her body, and want to enjoy each member. . . . Blindness is an impediment to love because the blind cannot see what would fill his mind with ideas (ch. v).

The sixth chapter is supposed to be the Countess's reply to queries:—

We say, and say emphatically, that there can be no love between a married couple, for lovers give everything in abundance freely, whereas married folk are bound by mutual obligations and cannot deny each other.

The seventh chapter observes that priests are forbidden to love but:—

Since hardly anyone lives without the sin of flesh and priests are more exposed than others to bodily temptations on account of their heavy feeding and idleness, if a priest wishes to enter the lists of love he must proceed according to his rank.

Andrew, throughout, makes no secret of his own amorous experience. In the eighth chapter he warns his readers to keep away from nuns, not from piety, but because the penalty is severe. He says that he, "not being ignorant of the art of soliciting nuns," one day won the consent of one, but drew back at the last moment:—

So be careful, Walter, to avoid solitary places with a nun . . . for if she thinks the place suitable for lascivious enjoyment she will not hesitate to give you what you want.

The implication that priests, monks, and nuns are generally loose is fully sustained by the immense register of the surviving letters of Pope Innocent III at the beginning of the century. Of the 150 letters in the fifth book (year 1202), for instance, I find that a good half deal with clerical irregularities; and it is of particular significance that here, and in a good deal of the literature of the century, local prelates complain that vicious priests block their action by appealing to Rome and getting (buying) favourable letters. The first letter castigates a convent of nuns at Pistoia. The eighth directs a Legate to excommunicate the Archbishop of Magdeburg for his crimes. The twelfth orders an inquiry into the irregularities of the Archdeacon of Chartres and other clerics. The thirteenth orders a trial of the Bishop of Talla. In the seventeenth the Archbishop of Ragusa is deposed. In the twenty-

ninth we read the charge of a Canon of Prague against his bishop:—

> He has a wife and children, is a drunkard and fornicator, and a public gambler, and in a fight with other gamblers he killed one and was himself severely wounded. . . . He has dissipated Church property and bribed the prince.

Several letters (32–5) rebuke the cardinal-bishop of Verona for the state of his diocese:—

> Certain abbots, priests, monks and other clerics . . . live dissolutely and are not ashamed to do scandalous things . . . and in order to be able to continue in their depravity they appeal at once to Rome.

In No. 59 we read of grave charges against the Archbishop of York. In No. 60 the Archbishop of Messina is excommunicated for his crimes; in No. 66, to the Bishop of Exeter:—

> We hear that in the diocese of Exeter it often happens that when the vicar of a church dies his son takes over, and, in order to avoid your censure, appeals to us.

No. 67 repeats the complaint and says that sometimes witless boys of fifteen thus get the living:—

> And if a priest has no son or nephew he gives his benefice as a dowry to his daughter or niece or disposes of it by will.

Another tells of the " enormous excesses " of the gay Archbishop of Lyons, who has a troop of the usual bandits in his service. One letter complains that a layman has cut out the tongue of the bishop of Catania, and another promises absolution to a man who, having been captured and starved by the Saracens, confesses that he killed and ate his daughter (but pleads that he did *not* eat his wife although he killed her).

I have quoted Matthew of Paris and William of Rishanger for England. The works of Giraldus Cambrensis, Archdeacon of St. David's, afford a worse picture of clerical morals in the west and in Wales. In his *Gemma* (II, 3) he argues at great length with the priests who—as a body, it appears—say that fornication is only a venial sin (like a white lie or stealing a sixpence); a nice situation 150 years after the thunders of Hildebrand, recently renewed by Innocent III. In the same work he gives a quaint instance (II, 15) of thirteenth-century sanctity: how the holy (abbot) Anselm of Malmesbury used to sleep with two girls so

that men would revile him while God knew that he was innocent. But the broadest picture is found in his *De Jure et Statu Menovensis Ecclesiae* (*On the Rights and Condition of the Church of Monmouth*, Brewer's ed., p. 128):—

> You know that it is a notorious fact in Wales that nearly all the canons of Monmouth, but especially the Welsh, openly keep concubines and expose their wives and midwives, their nurses and cradles under the very shadow of the cathedral, if not inside it. Then they go so far in following the paternal tradition and imitating the enormous misdeeds of their predecessors that, just as their fathers had begotten and provided for them, so they have sons to follow in their vices and benefices. As soon as these boys reach the age of puberty they marry them to the daughters of other canons . . . all the Welsh and border county are corrupt.

Giraldus (or Gerald de Barri, a pious noble and bishop elect) is wrong in thinking that this wild Welsh disorder is exceptional. My quotations show it in most countries. And there was no change in clerical morals in the course of the century. Clerical vice and drunkenness in taverns are almost perennial complaints in the councils and episcopal constitutions. See the major councils in Wilkins's *Concilia Magnae Britanniae*: London 1200, Durham 1220, Westminster 1225, Scotland 1225, London 1229, Lincoln 1230, Coventry 1237, Winchester 1240, Durham 1255. The note never changes and the words need not be quoted.

It was the same, or worse, in France and Germany. An important Chronicle *Historia Monasterii St. Laurentii Leodiensis* (*Story of the Abbey of St. Laurence at Liège*, in Martene's *Veterum Scriptorum Collectio*, Vol. IV) covers both the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and tells an appalling story (seasoned with a few saints) of violence and corruption. At the year 1135 it tells how Bishop Alexander was deposed for simony—he had spent £2,000 in securing his election—was succeeded by Albero, uncle of the Count of Louvain:—

> Under him clerical discipline and continence perished . . . women entered the monasteries freely night and day . . . the citizens gave their daughters in marriage indifferently to priests and laymen and indeed preferred to give them to priests [the Lord chastised the city] but they quickly returned to their vomit and were worse than ever . . . the priests were married in public.

The story runs on monotonously, and at 1263 we learn that Pope Innocent IV seeks aid in his scandalous fight against Frederick II by giving the bishopric to the son of a high noble:—

Henry was young in morals as well as age and, without becoming a priest, he ruled the diocese for ten years. . . . In the year 1273 Pope Gregory X convoked a great Council at Lyons, summoned Henry to it, and charged him with insolence and the raping of girls [another chronicle says " with the rape of girls and married women and incest with nuns," and a third credits him with 65 bastards]. The Pope asked him whether he would resign or be tried, and he resigned. He lived and plagued the country for a further twelve years. The Pope substituted for him Jean de Anghien, Bishop of Tournai [who turned out bad], and he was captured by Henry's troops, as Henry demanded part of his revenue, and being a very fat man he fell off his horse and died. He was not buried in the cathedral as he had harassed the churches and services were suspended.

Violent quarrels go on for years, and the monk-chroniclers record that during this time three of their own abbots in succession were corrupt. The *Gesta Trevirensium Archiepiscoporum* (*History of the Archbishops of Trèves*, in the same volume of Martene) tells us about a contemporary Henry, Archbishop of Trèves. After years of furious quarrels and some bloody battles the Pope called two rival candidates to Rome. They fought there for two years, but Henry got the see by fraud and by bribing most cardinals. He was one of the familiar bandit-nobles and continued his ways. After a few years he was reported to Rome for " simony, perjury, sacrilege, murder, and various other crimes " and found guilty. But he got Rome to reinstate him, and when he died he was buried in his cathedral with high eulogies. G. Calixtus quotes from a contemporary in his *De Conjugio Clericorum* (*On the Marriage of Priests*, Henke's edition, p. 585) for the year 1230:—

A new Bishop was sent to Lausanne by Gregory IX, and he tried to prevent the priests from marrying. They conspired to murder him and he fled to Rome and dared not come back.

In the year 1299 Guillaume de Nangis notes that the Bishop of Orleans was murdered by a knight whose daughter he had seduced. One could fill a volume with stories of these corrupt prelates of the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries.

Worst of all these pictures of clerical and monastic vice—and no century shows darker pictures after the tenth than the thirteenth—is the account of the trial of the Knights of the Temple. It took place early in the fourteenth century (1307), but refers to their conduct in the thirteenth; and, though the religious Knights were subjected to the most ghastly tortures of the age, it is inconceivable that the Grand Master and his colleagues should so foully

libel themselves and their Order even under torture. I take the moderate account of Canon Jean of Paris in his *Memoriale Historicorum* (*Collection of Histories*, in Bouquet, Vol. XXI):—

Next day, on Friday October 12, something unheard-of since the remotest days occurred. The Master of the Temple, who had come to France [with a sum, for bribery, equal to a million in modern money] at the command of certain lords who handed him over to the King of France to deal with, was arrested in the Temple at Paris, and all the Templars in France were secretly arrested and imprisoned on a certain day. This astonished everybody, but the Pope and the King [who compelled the Pope to agree] had ordered it. . . . The reason for the arrest was a charge of heresy, blasphemy, contempt of Christ and the Christian faith, and compulsory sodomy. This had been known long before from certain high officials of the Order and certain nobles and commoners who had been Templars, whom Guillaume de Nogaret [probably the greatest lawyer of the age] had brought to testify and kept in strict custody under his brother Lambert, the royal preacher and confessor. The day after the arrest the Master of the University and the canons of the cathedral met in the chapter-house of the cathedral with Guillaume de Nogaret, the provost, and other royal ministers, and Guillaume reported to them and told them that of five of the foulest charges brought against them—to wit, that in taking the vows, which was always done by night, they repudiated Christ, spat and trampled on a statue of him, worshipped an idol [a cat-headed statue] and kissed in three places [all authorities agree on one—the buttocks] the priest who received them into the Order; that priests of the Order were forbidden to utter the words of consecration when they said mass; and that all were forbidden to have commerce with women and ordered to have relations with each other. On the following Sunday a public sermon [to the people and clergy of Paris] was preached in the King's garden, and the reasons for the arrests and the charges were explained by the witnesses and the King's ministers. . . . Then the Master of the Temple was arraigned before a meeting in the Temple of all the professors and scholars of the University, and the Master and some others confessed that they were guilty of some of the charges, some of them saying that these scandals had begun forty or more years earlier and been kept secret. In another trial, at the university, the Master and many others confessed to the whole of the charges without reserve, the Master confessing for the whole Order. The almoner and treasurer of the Paris Temple also confessed. So they were put in separate prisons, some in the Temple itself where, it is said, many of them died of hunger or committed suicide. . . . It was said that the Pope was at first disturbed and said that the King had acted hastily . . . but afterwards he was satisfied and approved the arrests.

[Next year Philip ordered the Parlement, the nobles, and the commoners to meet at Tours to try them]. . . . The Masters of Paris University, especially the theologians, were invited to give their verdict and said that they were guilty. . . . The Pope's representatives agreed

that the King might take all their property [the Pope got 100,000 florins] but must not inflict bodily punishment without his consent. . . . In August 1308 Pope Clement approved the arrest of the Templars in every country . . . and ordered an inquiry for the guidance of the coming Council. This year (1310) the commission of inquiry completed its work and the prelates having reported many of the Templars were handed over as guilty to the secular arm . . . fifty-four of them were burned at Paris and others elsewhere, and most people considered it just.

Some who had confessed now said that they had lied under terrible torture, but the Master was not one of these. He confessed to all the charges without torture, and was burned alive. It is not likely that men of noble birth, as many of them were, would accuse themselves of such filth unless it was true.

The tortures themselves—it is said that the "mildest" were oiling and firing their feet, tying weights to their genitals, driving splinters under their nails, etc.—tell us enough about the beautiful thirteenth century; but in spite of them, and though picturesque details may be questioned, it is generally agreed that these elect of the Crusaders, the most powerful and wealthy monks in the world, cultivated sodomy *en masse*; and after the recent revelations about the German friars there is nothing in the least incredible about it.

So the great century ended as it had begun. At the famous Lateran Council in 1215, under Innocent III and Frederick, the vast assembly had laid down (canon 17):—

We grieve to say that not only clerics in minor orders but some prelates spend nearly half the night in superfluous eating and improper conversations or worse matters. Spending the rest of the night in sleep, they are barely able to rise at cockcrow, and they hurry over their morning duties. There are others who chant the mass hardly four times in the year and even disdain to be present at it. If they are present when it is solemnized they break the silence of the church by conversing with laymen. . . .

It is sometimes said, even by authorities on law, that Innocent, in this Council, forbade duelling. He did not. He forbade priests to take part (canon 18):—

No cleric shall give a verdict in a sanguinary duel nor shall he take part in or be present at such a duel. No cleric shall be put in charge of duellists or practise any surgery that involves burning or cutting, nor shall he bless an ordeal by boiling or cold water, or red-hot iron.

So the ordeal continued—again writers deny it—in the thirteenth century. Canon 31 runs:—

In order to abolish the wicked custom which has spread in many churches we strictly forbid the sons, especially the illegitimate sons, of canons to become canons in the secular churches in which their fathers were canons.

And at all the Councils that were held throughout the century, in all lands, the same canons and warnings were given; likewise in all the admonitions of Popes and prelates. There is no historical basis at all for the familiar claim that there was a purification of morals, of either clergy or laity, before, during, or after the thirteenth century. It rests upon vague and often historically false rhetoric about religious art, friars, and schools of law and theology. And this century that had opened with the horrors of the Albigensian Massacre and the Fourth Crusade and saw the establishment of the Inquisition, while loose-living prelates flourished everywhere and convents and abbeys were corrupt for decades, ended in the greatest Papal scandal in four centuries.

Boniface VIII (1294–1303) had entered into a deadly feud with Philip of France and some of the cardinals and Italian nobles. As the price of his helping Clement V to become Pope, Philip demanded the trial of the Templars, which I have noticed, and a posthumous trial of Boniface. The great French lawyers got up the case. The witnesses were in large part pious priests, monks, and lawyers of Rome, some of whom had known Boniface from school-days; and, of course, there was no torture or compulsion. And, on top of the exposure of the great Order of the Templars, all Christendom soon learned that one of the most powerful and pompous of mediaeval Popes, the Pope who had ruled the Church at (according to all historians) the zenith of its mediaeval power, was guilty of infidelity, habitual blasphemy of all religion, adultery, and mockery of the Christian ethics, in addition to the common vices of the Popes, simony, greed, and compromise with principle in the interest of Rome.*

* The only reply of modern apologists that may seem of any value is the statement that in 1312 the Council of Vienne examined the evidence and acquitted the memory of Boniface. That Council did not examine the evidence or pronounce on the case. Indeed, many of the older Catholic historians hold that the case was not brought before the Council. That point is obscure; but what is clear is that King Philip, content with the spoils of the Templars and having no material interest in the condemnation of Boniface, withdrew the prosecution, threw his lawyers and counsellors to the Papal wolves, and allowed Clement to declare (personally) that the charges were false.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE DAYS OF THE RENAISSANCE

In the sixth chapter of his *Service of Man*, Cotter Morison, a writer of a school (Positivist) which is too lenient to Rome, reproduces a number of documents on " Morality in the Ages of Faith." The fourteenth century he does not deign to study, since " that it should have been a period of extraordinary licence and crime cannot surprise us." The thirteenth century, with its " deceptive siren song of beauty," he examines closely, and he finds it " an age of violence, fraud, and impurity such as can hardly be conceived now." The documents I have quoted show that this vicious condition merely persisted in the thirteenth from earlier centuries, and the documents I shall quote in this and the following chapters prove that it was maintained to the end of the Middle Ages. All admit that the fifteenth century was the worst.

After the death of Boniface VIII, in 1303, the Papal Court was transferred to France and presently settled in Avignon, which the Popes brought from Queen Joanna of Naples. Matteo Vilani says, in his *Istorie* (in Muratori's *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Vol. XIV, Bk. I, ch. 18):—

> They [Louis of France and Joanna] were compelled by lack of funds to sell Joanna's jurisdiction over the city of Avignon to the Church for 30,000 gold florins.

Other writers of the time explain how the Pope could buy a rich town with tens of thousands of population, several dependent small towns, and a large territory for 30,000 florins. Joanna, one of the gayest queens of the time, was implicated in the murder of her Hungarian husband, and Hungary thirsted for her blood. She had applied to the Pope, and after her sale of Avignon so cheaply to him, he declared her innocent of the crime and absolved her from her many sins. The greatest scholar of the age, Petrarch, describes life in Avignon some years later in his famous (and untranslated) *Letters without a Title*:—

> V. At the moment I live in the Babylon of the West [Avignon] amidst the most hideous scenes the sun shines upon . . . where reign

the successors of fishermen who have forgotten their origin . . . loaded with gold and purple . . . criminal applause and bands of infamous satellites everywhere . . . feasts reeking with sensuality . . . a cruel and indecent idleness. . . .

VI. "Vice has reached its zenith," said the satirist [Juvenal]. O simpleminded man, you evidently did not live in our day! All that the calamities of history and the groans of tragedy have presented to us is less than what is before our eyes here. What was a crime to the ancients is to us a venial sin. . . . Give us back Nero, I pray, give us back Domitian. The evil that has to be sought out elsewhere is here found at every crossroads.

VIII. All that you have read about Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt, the entrance to Avernus, the forests of Tartarus, or the lakes of sulphur is a fable compared with this hell. . . . This city is now the cesspool of all crimes and infamies, the hell of the living. . . .

XI. The city is . . . swept along in a flood of the most obscene pleasures and a veritable storm of debauch.

XIII. [The Pope] is an ecclesiastical Dionysos with his obscene and infamous artifices.

XV. The streets of this abominable city are not less hideous and painful than the people. The men and the place are obscene, ugly, horrible.

XVII. This modern Babylon, burning, boiling, obscene, terrible. All you ever read about perfidy, cunning, callousness, pride, obscenity, and unbridled licence—all the instances of impiety and evil conduct that the world offers or ever offered—you will see piled up here.

XVIII. Truth passes for folly, abstinence for rusticity, chastity is a reproach . . . the more crimes one commits the more glory one acquires. . . . Childish old men with white hair, flowing robes, and souls so obscene that nothing seems to them falser than the saying of Vergil: "The old man is ice to Venus." These old men [the cardinals and prelates] wallow in vice as if all their glory was in the pleasures of the table and the orgies of impurity that follow in their bedrooms. I say nothing of the men who dare not speak a word though their wives have been seized and they must take them back pregnant. Of this class there was a man [later he says cardinal] who could fertilize any animal. He was as lascivious as a goat, or more. He had long passed his seventieth year and had only seven teeth. . . . His lackeys searched [for women] every street and home, especially those of the poor. I knew this man. People pointed him out in the streets. . . . [Follows a detailed picture of his struggle with a harlot who shrank from him in disgust.]

All this was under Clement VI (1342–52), of whom Vilani (in the above work, I, 43) writes:—

In those days there was no regard for science or virtue. . . . He [Clement] was a man of great courtesy and little religion. He had not avoided women when he was archbishop but had enjoyed himself like other young barons, and as Pope he did not show any restraint

or dissimulation. The leading ladies attended the audiences in his bedchamber with the prelates. Amongst others the Countess de Turenne was so high in his favour that it was through her that he dispensed most of his grants.*

Though Clement VI was one of the exceptionally unscrupulous and sensual Popes, the Papal Court had been in large part corrupted since the days of Boniface, and it so remained until the seventeenth century. It was recalled to poverty-stricken Rome by the fear of losing that city and the Papal States, and at the next election (1378), which was accompanied by three days of bloody rioting, an anti-French Italian monk, a man of austerity and hair-shirts, of low birth but imperial arrogance, became Pope Urban VI. The French cardinals (and some others) repudiated him and set up a French Pope, and Christendom entered upon the Great Schism which was to convulse and disgust it for the next forty years. We have an exceptionally reliable account of the period (never translated) by Bishop Dietrich von Nieheim (*De Schismate*), who was for forty years the chief secretary of the Popes and witnessed most of the more sordid scenes he describes. The Pope turned against Joanna of Naples, who had sold Avignon. She was murdered, and the hair-shirt Pope went to Naples to see how he could enrich his dissolute nephew—if he could not get the crown for him—out of the spoils. I translate from Erler's edition, I, 23, ch. 42:—

Hence it happened that while Urban resided near the said church his nephew Francis, who was nicknamed Butillo, dragged a certain professed and enclosed nun of noble birth from the convent of the Holy Saviour, of the Order of St. Clare, and kept her by force in his hotel for several days. This was not surprising, for the man was wholly devoted to gluttony, pleasure, sleep, and lust, and he was never corrected by Urban. When the Pope was told how foully his nephew lived he used to say, "He is young," though he was over forty. But there was a great turmoil in the city, and many said that such a crime had never been committed in Naples before. The King summoned Butillo but he . . . refused to go and fled to a church,

* Compare also the official Latin documents from the archives of Avignon, and the whole Papal territory, in Dr. le Pileur's *La Prostitution du XIII au XVII Siècle*. The Pope levied a tax on prostitutes and brothels; this would be continued at Rome until the seventeenth century. In one legal document "the noble and religious lady Anthonia of Laon, abbess of the monastery of St. Catherine," is certified to be the owner of a brothel [document 18]. Both monasteries and religious colleges and civic authorities owned these places, and the legal documents of sale and purchase of them often begin "In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

in which he was protected by the Pope. The King held a trial and condemned Butillo to death, whereupon the Pope declared that *he* was lord of the Kingdom and that the sentence was void; and he closed the gates of his palace and had armed men at them night and day. Then, through the mediation of the cardinals, it was arranged that Butillo should wed a noble girl who was related to the King and was the daughter of the Chief Judge, and the King provided a dowry of 70,000 gold florins and gave Butillo the castle of Nocera with all its dependencies. This was done, and the Pope and the cardinals and Butillo repaired to the said castle.

The Pope, treated with general contempt, quarrelled again with the King, who besieged him in the castle, and Urban treacherously summoned to it a number of the cardinals who had resented his conduct:—

> The Pope arrested six of the cardinals and confiscated their property . . . he imprisoned them in great misery, chaining them and throwing them into a broken cistern of the castle. . . . When we [Dietrich and other officials] got to the place in which Cardinal de Sangre lay we found it so small that he could hardly stretch his legs . . . and we found the other cardinals loaded with chains. . . . Two of the [free] cardinals wept at the Pope's feet and he in great anger cried, " Why do you weep like frail women? " and they fled. The Pope's face shone like a lamp with wrath, and his voice became hoarse . . . and he asked where was the confession of the Bishop of Aquileia, whom he had inhumanly tortured on the rack the day before [the bishop in his agony said that the cardinals were guilty but they denied it to the Pope]. So he sent them back to the old cistern, and they remained there in great misery, tormented by hunger, cold, thirst, and worms [vermin?] until he left the castle. I believe he would have died rather than liberate them. Three days later he decided to put them to the question [torture] again in a cellar of the castle. . . . Cardinal de Sangre was brought stripped, almost naked, bound with ropes, while Butillo stood by and roared with laughter. He [the cardinal], was a tall, corpulent man of advanced years, and he was hoisted [by the arms] on the pulley three times. They were all tortured . . . while Urban walked about in the garden reading the office in a loud voice so that we could hear him in the palace.

Pope Urban, hated by everybody, was compelled to take ship for the north. He dragged the mutilated cardinals abroad and, says Dietrich, " they were never seen again." Many historians accept the report that they were thrown overboard. Of the rival Pope, Clement VII, who before his elevation had led the Papal army with such ferocity that in one town 30,000 were butchered by his mercenaries—this Massacre of Cesena made Italy shudder, hardened as it was to cruelty—Dietrich says (I, 19):—

The said Clement, who held court in Avignon, often proceeded against Urban's cardinals and others who supported him, whence arose dire trouble in many kingdoms and provinces. Many prelates and priests were captured as they travelled and were thrown into the water, burned alive, or otherwise cruelly killed. . . . Many towns, cities, villages, and castles, as well as churches and monasteries, were destroyed, and there was great slaughter.

Christendom was, in fact, horribly lacerated and profoundly disgusted by the feud of Pope, anti-Pope, and their followers, yet suffered forty years of this Great Schism, which immediately followed the sixty-seven years of the Babylonian Captivity (at Avignon). When the fifth successor of Urban, who now confronted two anti-Popes, proved to be a man as vile as any Pope of the Dark Age, the laity compelled the Church to end the scandal. Dietrich, who knew the man, wrote a small life of this John XXIII, or Baldassare Cossa, and says of him:—

This Baldassare is rightly compared to beasts, for I never heard of any other man with such a vile record of fornication, incest, adultery, rape, and graver sins. . . . He made a concubine of his brother's wife, a sister of Cardinal Monopolitano. . . . He is said to have been in youth a Neapolitan pirate. . . . It was said that at Bologne [as Archdeacon] he corrupted two hundred matrons, widows, maids, and even nuns . . . and some of them were killed by their husbands or friends (pp. 2–3).

The division of Christendom had reduced the stream of gold to the Papacy, and Cossa, in spite of his notorious character, was made a cardinal by Pope Boniface IX because of his complete unscrupulousness in getting money. He completed the financial system which the Popes of Avignon had instituted, selling every sacred office (and now also indulgences) to the highest bidder. But as the prelates were forced to hold a Council —characteristically this Council of Constance, in 1414, was convoked by the Emperor Ladislaus, a man of flagrantly loose life, and more than a thousand harlots crowded into the city for the occasion—it will be enough to quote the verdict on John XXIII passed by this vast gathering of archbishops, bishops, and abbots. The proceedings of the Council are given in Mansi's Collection (Vol. XXVII), and the indictment alone fills twelve folio pages (662–73). It is enough to quote the chief clauses about his morals:—

Pope John XXIII . . was from his youth, when he was called Baldassare Cossa, of an evil disposition, irreverent, lewd, a liar, a rebel against

his parents, disobedient, and steeped in vice . . . he got promotion by corruption. While he was Cardinal of St. Eustace and Legate at Bologna he governed the city and its people tyranically, inhumanly, impiously, and cruelly. . . . In his evil ambition for the Papacy he plotted the death of the Pope . . . and as Pope he despised the divine offices and the fasts. . . . He was an oppressor of the poor, a persecutor of justice, a pillar of iniquity, a statue of simony, devoted to the flesh, a cesspool of vice, alien from virtue, wholly given to sleep and carnal desires. . . . He was guilty of incest with nuns and with his brother's wife, raped virgins, committed adultery with matrons. . . .

So Pope John was deposed, sent for a few years into a comfortable retirement, and later restored to the rank of cardinal; and the prelates passed on to the trial of John Hus, then the noblest man in Europe, and burned him at the stake.

Dietrich (II, 28) gives us an idea of what Rome had become under the ignoble Popes of this period of Schism. Boniface IX, or his picturesque Secretary of State, Cardinal Cossa, announced a Jubilee for the year 1400:—

A great multitude of people of both sexes flocked to Rome during most of the year, many of them of noble rank and distinguished, and they gave generous gifts to the city and churches. But in the course of the year large numbers of them were seized in the Roman district near the city, robbed of their possessions, and ill-treated. Many beautiful women of noble birth were seized by our soldiers on the journey and ravished, so few came to us from beyond the mountains, and there was also a pestilence in the city. . . . Boniface did nothing to help the unfortunate foreigners, though he had at that time an abundance of all resources. It was his habit to seize property, not to give to the needy. And at that time Lombardy was laid waste by war. It was, in fact, so stricken that even large cities like Padua, Piacenza, and Parma were almost deserted because the inhabitants had either been killed or had fled. Monasteries and churches were destroyed, and there was a great slaughter and raping of nuns and other virgins, adulteries, thefts, and innumerable other evils. Those who called themselves Kings of the Romans [the Popes] said and did nothing, as if it were not their business.

In an age when a monster of corruption like Cossa could rise so high in the Church as to be elected Pope this may not seem surprising, and every document confirms that, in spite of the temporary and local success of a fiery preacher here and there, the corruption of Rome extended to the clergy generally. The leading laymen of various countries met, again under the patronage of the Emperor, with the more earnest prelates at Basle, in 1431, to defy and rebuke the Papacy and reform the Church; and the

Pope defied and eventually ruined the Council. The chief writer on it, then a layman—and, as Voigt shows, in his voluminous biography of him, a very cynical and immoral layman—was Aenaeas Sylvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II), secretary of the Council, who tells in his *Commentarii* how the Emperor's mouthpiece, the elderly and respected Bishop John of Lübeck, addressed the others:—

> It has been useless to take their wives from the priests. Scarcely one priest in every thousand would be found chaste; all lived in concubinage or adultery or something worse [incest or sodomy] and administered the sacraments in a state of pollution. It would be better to perform the mass after the legitimate exercise of marriage rites than after rising from an impious concubinage. The bond of friendship between the clergy and laity could not be maintained on account of this difference of condition; for the priests were suspected by the people of being the enemies of conjugal fidelity, and it cast suspicion upon the freedom of the confessional. . . . His idea was endorsed by very many, though they thought the time was not opportune. Some of the older men condemned it because it would be no advantage to them; and the monks, who were bound by a vow of chastity, did not like to see the priests have wives.

Remember that it is a future Pope who is responsible for the malice of the closing sentence. The attempt to reform the clergy was, however, crushed by the Popes, and the Papacy itself presently entered upon one of its longest periods of corruption. It is therefore with no surprise that we read of the extraordinary viciousness of lay life in this period of the Renaissance, in spite of the princely cultivation of art. We saw that it is a baseless myth that the general character improved in the thirteenth century, and no one claims an improvement in the following two centuries. Civilization rose in Italy to the highest point that it had reached in Christendom since the Fall of Rome; but the average character fell to its lowest point, for the boorish sensuality of the Dark Age was succeeded by refinements of cruelty, treachery, and vice that are even more revolting. The chronicles are now abundant, but they are such monotonous records of criminal ambition, savage fighting, and sexual looseness that a few extracts will suffice. Lest, however, it be suspected that these extracts are chosen in order to give a disproportionate picture of darkness and light, it may be useful to quote the leading Catholic historian, Professor L. Pastor, whose learned *History of the Popes* (from the fifteenth century) makes a desperate effort to relieve the

Church of blame. In the Introduction to the fifth volume he says:—

> Of all the evils which darken Italian life at this period the deadliest was the prevailing immorality . . . it increased to a terrible extent during the age of the Renaissance . . . especially among the cultivated classes [the patrons of art] revolting excesses were common. With a few honourable exceptions almost all the Italian princes of the period of the Renaissance were steeped in vice. Aenaeas Sylvius [Pope Pius II, himself very loose as a young man] said, " Most of the rulers of Italy at the present day were born out of wedlock." . . . Cruelty and vindictiveness went hand in hand with immorality. The histories of the Malatesta of Rimini, the Manfredi of Faenza, and the Baglioni of Perugia are an appalling tissue of malignity, profligacy, and savage brutality. All the glamour round the Court of the Sforza at Milan and the D'Este of Ferrara is insufficient to conceal the fearful immorality which pervaded the brilliant society and the horrors that were enacted within it. The Court of Naples was, if anything, even worse. Ferrante combined considerable intellectual culture with the cunning and cruelty of a beast of prey [and his son was worse] (pp. 114–17).

Almost all the more brilliant writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—Boccaccio, Beccadelli, Valla, Bracciolini, Aretino, Masuccio, Cambio, Villari, Gentile, Ariosto, Bibbiena, Pontano, Sermini—were immoral. Many praised vice, some unnatural vice. To relieve the balance, Pastor describes the life of a small minority of obscure middle-class folk, but when he adds that we are not informed about the character of the people he is strangely inaccurate. They enter the chronicles repeatedly and, as the following extracts will show, always betray the brutality we should expect under such pastors and masters.

Milan became, under the Visconti (whom Pastor does not mention), one of the richest and most powerful of what are ironically called the Italian republics, and Paolo Giovio, Bishop of Nocera (who was as fond of a succulent bit of history as any writer, though courtly to princes), described the dynasty in his *Vitae Duodecim Viscontensium Mediolanorum Principum* (*Lives of the Twelve Visconti Princes of Milan*, in Graevius's *Thesaurus*, Vol. III). To the sixth Duke, who founded the " greatness " of the Visconti, he ascribes the character of a firm and edifying prelate of the Church, and incidentally a great fighter and aggressive conqueror. Poggio Bracciolini, however, tells us in his *History of Florence* (in Graevius, VIII) that Giovanni had bought the archbishopric of Milan from the Popes of Avignon for 50,000

gold florins down and an annuity of 10,000, and the letter which his Commander wrote in demanding the surrender of a town, in 1351, shows that he condoned all the savagery of mediaeval warfare—unbridled rape, loot, and murder:—

Think of the plunder of your property, of you and your children being carried off into captivity. Think of the shame of your wives and daughters. Think of the blows, wounds, and death that fortune compels the conquered to endure. Surely it is better to rejoice that you have saved your country than to lose it and wander in poverty and misery.

The besieged replied: "Come back in three years and we'll talk about it." The virtuous prelate had a man who offered him sound but unpalatable advice beheaded on the threshold of his own house. He left the power to his nephews Matteo, Bernabò, and Giovanni. Of Matteo, Bishop Giovio says:—

He was of a civil rather than a military disposition. . . . He delighted in ignoble idleness, hawking, and those kinds of hunting which do not make one perspire and in which ladies can take part. These exercises during the day were followed by such orgies at night that he wore himself out, body and soul, and used to have the . . . of the two concubines who slept with him drenched with foreign perfumes to whip up his appetite.

His brothers poisoned him, and Bernabò ruled Milan. He was "a man of ignoble greed and terrible cruelty":—

He imposed new burdens and atrocious laws upon the people. He ordered that any who killed boars [reserved for his hunts] or ate boar-flesh at the table of another should be arrested, and they were so cruelly treated that more than a hundred of the poor peasants were hanged. He had distributed several thousand [4,000] hounds, with a large number of officers and servants, amongst the homes of the people in districts that were good for hunting, and they had to be fed and tended by the people at great expense. A register was kept of each hound, and those who let them get too fat or too thin were beaten or fined.

Bernabò had fifteen legitimate children and a crowd of bastards, and he was the scourge of the clergy. Baronius has in his *Annals* (year 1373) a letter about him from Pope Gregory XI:—

Four years ago he arrested Ambrosius Ortulanus, head of the monastery of St. Barnabas at Milan, and tortured him so severely that he died on the rack; and for the greater humiliation of the clerical order and religion he had the body taken in a cart through the streets to the place of public execution. Both Bernabò and this brother

Galeazzo, imitating the cruelty of the impious infidel Decius, had Martinus de Rubrio, head of the monastery of the Order of the Humiliati at the Eastern Gate, and several priests and canons of Milan arrested by their satellites, put in prison in chains, suspended by pulleys and afflicted with various kinds of torture, their arms and other limbs being broken. And in further contempt of the clerical order they had paper mitres put on the heads of the said priests and had them, tied to the tails of horses, dragged through the streets and finally bound to stakes and burned in a slow fire. The same Bernabò, when certain peasants who lived near the Benedictine monastery . . . fell to quarrelling, was moved to a furious rage and went with a troop of his men to the monastery. He ordered his men to kill, cut into slices, and burn in a large fire in his own presence the abbot of the monastery, who was related to him, and one of his monks. He also had another monk hanged by the neck in his monastic robes . . . imprisoned the Bishop of Parma . . . had clerics and priests thrown into the public jails with lay criminals and tortured . . . deposed the elderly abbess of the chief Benedictine nunnery at Milan and replaced her with a young (not 20 years old) bastard daughter of his brother. . . .

He, in fact, displaced a number of prelates and abbots so that loose favourites could get the "revenues." He several times tried to kill his brother Giangaleazzo (or Giovanni), but the brother affected great modesty and religion, and one day he affectionately asked Bernabò to meet him as he was devoutly going on a pilgrimage. But he had an ambush planted and seized and poisoned Bernabò; and that prince died very piously and penitently in the arms of his favourite concubine.

Giangaleazzo had, says Sismondi, "the cold blood and wisdom of the snake and was the very type of Italian statesman." Bishop Giovio finds him a model prince. He patronized culture and built many beautiful churches, including Milan cathedral—note the light on the character of the cathedral-builders—and he is described by all authorities except the courtly bishop as one of the most cruel, callous, and treacherous princes of his time. Of his son, Giovanni Maria, even Giovio says:—

All hated him as a tyrant of unprecedented savagery. . . . He had contracted the disease of insane cruelty, and it was so horrible that when his rage reached the pitch of madness he flung whoever he disliked to savage dogs, and he took great delight in that awful spectacle; and his favourite minister Squercia Jeramo, of noble birth, was equally cruel. . . . He fed immense hounds on human flesh to be ready for these executions. He was a monster hateful to gods and men.

He was killed by conspirators, and a poor prostitute had to take

care of his mangled body. But the next Duke avenged him fiercely and became so nervous that " at the least sound of thunder he fled to the vaults," where he had a secret chamber.

So much for the noble Visconti, one of the highest families of the Renaissance. It was the same in almost every noble house. " We Italians," says Macchiavelli (*Discorsi*, I, 12), " are irreligious and corrupt above all others because the Church and her representatives set us the worst example." We shall see about the Papacy in the next chapter, and I need not prolong the story of the princes. Petro Azario praises Cane de la Scala of Verona in his *Chronicon* (ch. xv, in Muratori, vol. XVI) and then says:—

> He never had a legitimate son but he surpassed all others in his relations with beautiful women. . . . On entering the city [after taking Verona] the Lord Cane had all the companions of the Governor hanged on gibbets, and he hanged also the nude body of the Governor. He had Alboino [a cousin of his] and thirty-four others hanged three times. Alboino deserved to be hanged, as he had in the days of an earlier Scala cut the throat of the Bishop of Verona with his own hand. After that Cane, ruling tyrannically, took great care of himself but none of his mother, his brothers, or even his wife, a very beautiful woman. He had two concubines and many bastards and loved those only.

I gave in the previous chapter an account of Ezzelino da Romano and referred to the " massacre of Cesena " under a cardinal who then commanded the Papal army and later became Pope Clement VI. The massacre was in 1376 and is thus described by Corio in his *Storia di Milano* (III, 6):—

> In those days the Legate of the Holy See, realizing that he could make no headway against Bologna, returned to Cesena with his army of Breton mercenaries [10,000 in number]. The people of Cesena seeing these barbaric men [Bracciolini says that they raped the women daily] and enemies of Italy to boot, began to assail them. . . . They [the Papal army] withdrew into the citadel and summoned John Hawkwood to their aid . . . [he brought his mercenaries and crushed the revolt for the Pope]. They put the people to the sword without regard to age or sex, killing babies in their mothers' arms, so that there were in a short time more than 4,000 victims. The whole city was sacked and noble girls and matrons were treated as whores and slaves. This horrible crime may be added to all the other iniquities committed by the troops of the Pastor of the Roman Church.

Bracciolini, a more important historian, adds that the Cardinal Legate had sworn to spare the inhabitants if they submitted, as they did. These mercenaries (condottiere) ravished Italy, as

often in the service of the Popes as any other, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Sir John Hawkwood was of noble birth, and the Italian writers of the time explain his name by saying that his mother bore him while she was hawking in a wood. He had 3,000 men left idle after the Anglo-French war. The Grand Company had at one time 7,000 horse and 1,500 foot, mostly Germans. When they were not enlisted in the never-ending war of Guelphs and Ghibellines (Papalists and Imperialists), or in the criminal ambitions of the princes, they attacked towns on their own account. They thoroughly looted the houses, raped the girls and women, slew men, women, and children indiscriminately, and generally fired the town. It is sufficiently characteristic of the moral standard of the age that it produced these unique bodies.

Corio adds this bit about a successor of Cane Grande:—

In those days Antonio Scaligero, bastard of the Cane who was prince of Verona, had his brother Bartolomeo murdered so as to get the power for himself. And he had his body put on a public street with the body of a chamberlain of his, and two bloody swords placed beside the bodies, so that when they should be found next morning people would think that there had been a quarrel about sodomy.

For Florence I may quote, since it occurs in the very shrine of letters and art, the short account of the Pazzi Conspiracy (1478) against the Medici in Bruti's *Historiae Florentinae* (Bk. IV, in Graevius, Vol. VIII). The Pope's nephew, the Archbishop Salviati, and the Pazzi concerted, in the presence of the Pope, a plot to murder Lorenzo de Medici and his brother, the Cardinal Giuliano, during High Mass in the cathedral:— *

When the moment arrived for the priest who was singing the mass to give the signal for the assassination, Bernard [the hired murderer] who was standing near Giuliano, stabbed him in the breast with a short sword he had had specially made for the purpose. He fell wounded and dying to the ground, and the Pazzi fell upon him and stabbed him repeatedly so that he lay in a pool of blood. . . . At the same time the two Volterrans [two priests, also hired to murder] wounded Lorenzo, who defended himself, lightly in the throat. Lorenzo, surrounded by his followers, retired to the sacristy. There was great

* That they plotted in the Pope's presence is admitted by Catholics, but these, using the more pious contemporaries, say that the Pope forbade murder. The best authorities, Gregorovius, Sismondi, etc., smile at the quibble. The plot was mainly in the criminal interest of the Pope's nephew. Catholics often quote A. von Reumont as the supreme modern authority on this period, but they omit to state that he was a zealous Catholic official.

confusion . . . and the Cardinal fled to the altar and remained there surrounded by the clergy. . . . The people flew to arms, and either hanged at the windows of the palace or cut down as they fled [Archbishop] Salviati and his followers.

The report of the Milanese ambassadors, the Italian text of which is given by Pastor (Vol. IV, App. 57), adds:—

The ropes by which the archbishop and his brother and nephew were hanged were cut and the bodies fell into the piazza, and the crowd tore them to pieces, and about a hundred other men who were implicated were cut to pieces.

Some contemporaries say that the "signal" given by the priest at the altar was the most solemn moment of the Mass, the Elevation of the Host. Assassinations and other horrors in churches were common. The son of the first Sforza of Milan was "murdered, because of his abominable crimes, before the altar in the middle of the sacred rites." His uncle (a duke of great splendour, who made his rebels eat human excrement until they died) was killed in church by two young men whose sister he had raped. It is, however, wrong to conclude, as Catholic writers do, that there was a general decay of faith. Almost every man I have so far named died at least in a frenzy of piety. The explanation is that the faith, though it was real, did not in the majority of cases hold such brutal minds in check. A violent change in the environment—a fiery preacher, a great catastrophe, and so on—alone would in most cases make the superstition stronger than the normal impulses, and then the effect was apt to be equally hectic and transient. Hence the epidemics of flagellants, dancing mania, and processions of whole towns clad in white. The writer known as the Anonymous Italus thus describes the plague of 1348 in his *Breviarium Mantuanum* (*Epitome of the History of Mantua*, in Muratori, XVI):—

In the year of the Lord 1348 the iniquities and sins of every kind of the race had so multiplied on the earth that the stench and noise of them reached the [nose and] ears of the Almighty. Then the just vengeance of God, as in the days of Noah, sent a furious plague of fiery death over the whole face of the earth [the Black Death]. I will, the Lord said, destroy all flesh because of their crimes [he is careful to add that Saturn was in the ascendant]. . . . Men died on the first, second, or third day, and few who were ill recovered. The sick infected the sound simply by speaking to them, and infinite thousands of men and women died in this way . . . the father kept

away from the sick son, the brother from his brother, the husband from his wife. . . . Nearly 100,000 died in Venice, and such was the number of corpses that few mourners attended a funeral. . . . All beautiful ladies and handsome men saw the end of life approach. Yet all remained wicked. This was shown by their conduct after the pestilence, for we are twice as bad as ever. No one trusts another, and greed and avarice flourish.

It is a neglected aspect of the Black Death that it emphasizes, but does not help us to understand, the religious psychology of the age. To so superstitious a generation a plague that carried off 25,000,000 human beings—one in every two or three—ought to have been a warning of the anger of God that would burn deep into the mind of all; yet the gaiety of life was resumed in a few years. The conventional idea of the depth of religious influence in the Middle Ages is entirely mythical.

All Christendom was in the same general condition. Macchiavelli's complaint—or is it a boast?—that the Italians are worse than others can be admitted, perhaps, in regard to cruelty, treachery, and sodomy, but not in regard to the general level of sexual morality. Curiously we have a document, a letter of one of the best Italian writers of the fifteenth century, in which Germany is enviously described as freer in sexual morals than Italy.* Poggio Bracciolini, the writer, was a leading Papal secretary for thirty years, and one of the most obscene writers of his age. He accompanied the Pope to the Council of Constance, which deposed three Popes (1414), and went on to Baden for relaxation after his arduous labours. To a friend in Italy he wrote:—

There is here no scenery to afford relaxation, but everything else gives intense pleasure. You would think that Venus had migrated here from Cyprus. Whatever pleasure there is elsewhere in the world has come to the baths, and the picture of lascivious entertainment is complete. People here have never read the life of Heliogabalus [one of the most erotic of the Roman Emperors], but they have learned enough from their own nature. Each house has a bath for those who live in it, and there are in addition thirty public and private baths. The public baths have one part for the poorer, and in this women, men, boys, and immature girls bathe together, though there is a partition between the men and the women. It is amusing to see wrinkled old men and nude young women enter the baths in the sight of all, exposing their sex-parts and their breasts to every eye. . . .

* There is a French translation by S. Moray (1868) of this most important letter on life in Germany, but none in English.

I admired their ingenuousness, for they never look at the private organs or think or say any evil [see later]. But the baths in private houses are very ornamental. There also the sexes are separated, but the partition has a large number of windows through which they can talk and drink together and see and touch each other, as is the custom. There are galleries from which the men see the women enter the baths, for the most part nude. In many places there is a common entrance so that a man meets a nude woman or a woman a nude man. The men wear drawers, the women a linen robe slit at the sides of the legs, and they do not conceal the neck, breasts, arms, and shoulders. They have floating tables and eat from them. Two of my friends joined the ladies in the bath . . . which reminded me of Jupiter impregnating Danae in a shower of gold. . . . It was remarkable to see with what complacency husbands saw strangers embrace their wives. In some baths, for relatives and friends, there is no separation of the sexes. Men throw coins into the water for the girls. . . . Many sterile wives come to the place and they have proof of its remarkable virtue. Crowds of folk, noble and common, come from 200 miles away, not for health so much as for pleasure. All lovers come here to satisfy their desires. . . . Vestal, or should I say Floral, Virgins [nuns] come, and abbots, monks, friars, and priests, and they behave with more licence than the others. They often, with silk ribbons in their hair, bathe with the women and forget all about religion.

One of the best-known German nuns of the century, Clara Hitzlerin or " the Nun of Augsburg," has in her book of poems one " On the Seven Greatest Pleasures," and she smacks her lips over the memory of the baths, which were all over South Germany. Guarinonius, another German writer of the time, complains that even well-to-do folk walked along the streets naked to the baths, the nude father sometimes leading his nude wife and children. Gustav Jung, in his *Geschlechts-moral de deutschen Weibs im Mittelalter* (1922), has collected a large number of consistent testimonies from writers of the time or from legal documents. Some of the latter show communities of nuns selling property and paying Rome heavily for permission to go to the baths in secular dress. The Abbot of Kuppel used to keep a table for twenty people for weeks every summer at the baths. Hauck, the ecclesiastical historian, quotes other contemporaries as to the monks and nuns. One says:—

Convents are not houses of holy women but of diabolical women who prostitute their bodies to all sorts of men.

Others call them " Synagogues of Satan." The looseness was, of course, common to all classes. From the twelfth to the sixteenth

century sex was generally a matter of indifference or of hilarity. The Monk-chronicler of the *Annales Colmarenses Majores* (*Greater Annals of Colmar*, in Pertz, p. 19) prosily begins a section (1297):—

> About the time of the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord a priest of the city of Basle had his genitals cut off and hung up in the centre of the city because of a girl [apparently in this case an immature girl].

The Vita B. Bertholdi (*Life of the Blessed Berthold*, ch. 34) says of the Knight Ulrich von Berneke:—

> When he [the saint] came to the house of the man he found twelve women each of whom in turn had to share the knight's bed, as he had lost his wife.

And as late as Luther's time the plaint goes on. Friar Thomas Murner, whose sermons in verse used to make cathedrals ring with laughter, says in one:—

> When I see a picture of a female saint I find her so meretriciously represented, with such clothing and such breasts that I often do not know whether I am in a church or a brothel.

In another he says that a community of nuns chose as abbess the one who had the most children. Prostitution was as brazen in mediaeval Germany as it has ever been in any age. The girls were in some places called " Cathedral Girls " because they sought clients in the cathedral, and the choicer of them sat at banquets with the city-fathers or walked nude [or in transparent veils] in processions to welcome visiting princes.

England was on the same low level, but documents now begin to appear in English and I give few quotations. Although translations of Froissart are numerous enough, I must reproduce a short passage from ch. xiii (Johnes's fine old translation) which throws a broad light on the inconceivable grossness of all classes in the fourteenth century. Baron Hugh le Despenser, notorious for his intimacy with the King, was captured and brought to Hereford, where Queen Isabella, herself an undisguised wanton, held court. The Court, Froissart says, included at the time " a great number of countesses and other noble ladies and damosels," both French and English. Despenser was brought in on All Saints Day, and there was a sumptuous banquet:—

> When the feast was over Sir Hugh, who was not beloved in those parts, was led before the queen and knights assembled, and the charges

were read to him and he made no reply. The barons and knights then passed the following sentence on him, that he should be drawn on a hurdle, attended by trumpets and clarions, through all the streets of the city of Hereford and then conducted to the market place where all the people [obviously men, women, and children and presumably the court with its Countesses and damosels] had assembled. At that place he was bound upon a high scaffold *in order that he might be the more easily seen by the people.* First his private parts were cut off because he was deemed a heretic and guilty of unnatural practices even with the king, whose affections he had alienated from the queen by his wicked suggestions. His private parts were then cast into a large fire that was kindled close to him. Afterwards his heart was thrown into the same fire because it had been false and traitorous. The other parts of Sir Hugh thus disposed of, his head was cut off and sent to London.

London was given a fortnight's merrymaking, and four other cities got quarters of Despenser's body. Isabella's husband, the king, was murdered in jail the following year, and the queen and her paramour reigned in the name of the young (and entirely debauched) Edward III.

The Hundred Years' War with France, which followed, did not, as will be imagined, uplift England, but I will be content to quote a document or two on the social condition on the eve of the Reformation. There are several in Wilkins' *Concilia Magnae Britanniae* (*Councils of Great Britain*, Vol. III) which show the foul condition of clergy and laity at the time which Cardinal Gasquet has " proved " to have been not so bad as it used to be painted. On p. 618 the Archbishop of Canterbury holds a Convocation at St. Paul's, London (1486):—

The lord [archbishop] had converse with his colleagues and the clergy about the reform of the Church. It was reported to them that the privileges granted to the Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in London were badly and enormously abused in those days and that the Gospel-preachers at St. Paul's Cross in London inveighed against the Church and ecclesiastical persons in the presence of the laity, who are ever hostile to the clergy. [The Prior appeared before them and defied them.]

It was reported that the priests of the city behave very badly, some of them having their meals in hotels and some in taverns and sitting there all day long.

The next document, of the same year, is a letter of the Archbishop to Convocation:—

Certain priests and other clerics of this province are so dissolute and insolent that they hardly differ from the laity [in fine clothes,

long hair, etc.] . . . unless we at once check this great lasciviousness of ecclesiastical persons and correct the corrupt morals of the clergy . . . the Church of England, or at least the province of Canterbury, which has fallen so low, will be destroyed.

So it was not merely " certain priests " who swaggered in the streets and taverns with gold belts, swords, long curly hair, etc. In the next document Pope Innocent VIII—whose court and city, we shall see, were completely depraved—urges the Archbishop to reform " the lascivious life " of the English clergy, and in 1488 another Convocation repeats the futile censures. In 1490 (p. 632) the Archbishop gives us, in a Latin letter to the abbot of the great Benedictine abbey of St. Albans, a concrete instance of the amazing corruption:—

It is publicly said, and we have had it confirmed in repeated and reliable reports, that you, the abbot, were, and are, notorious for simony, usury, dilapidation of the property of the abbey, and other enormous crimes and excesses. Not a few of your fellow-monks owing to your fault and remissness live an entirely lascivious life and often pollute the sacred places, even the churches, with fornication with nuns and the shedding of blood and seed. You yourself, amongst the other grave, enormous, and wicked crimes for which you are notorious, have admitted to the convent of Bray, and later made prioress of it, a certain married woman who had left her husband and lived with another man. Thomas Sudbury, one of your monks, notoriously had relations with her and other monks approached her and other nuns of the said priory and others elsewhere, as if they were going to public brothels. Also in the convent of nuns at Sopwell you depose good prioresses at your will and appoint evil and dissolute ones, and you appoint monks as rectors who steal the goods of the priories. You have done the same in regard to several cells [very small monasteries] of monks. . . . You steal the property, even the chalices and the jewels which adorn the Bier of St. Alban, and the monks keep whores in and outside of the monasteries who ply their trade unceasingly.

Such, *pace* Cardinal Gasquet, were English monasteries in the most public positions on the eve of the Reformation. St. Albans was then the last night's stop on the main road into London; and it was one vast brothel. So it remained until the Reformation. Twenty years after the above we find another Archbishop of Canterbury bemoaning the corruption of the abbey of St. Albans. Twenty years later again we have a bull of Clement VII, himself a dissolute Pope, complaining of the " atrocious crimes " of the English clergy, both secular and regular.

On the other main road to London the last stop was Kilburn, where there was a large nunnery. It was another religious brothel. In 1502 it came before the ecclesiastical court in London. A priest has given a child to one of the nuns and is fined 7*s.* 6*d.*; two laymen are found in bed with a nun and are proved to make a practice of it; and seven years later a priest is fined 3*s.* 6*d.* for fornication with a prioress. These cases are in Archdeacon Hale's selection of 198 cases from the records (*A Series of Proceedings and Precedents*, 1847) which throws an amazing light on life, largely clerical life, in London between 1475 and 1640:—

L. Mr. John . . ., a morning chaplain, instead of the benediction before the sixth person, cried out [turning to the people] in a loud voice, " Lick my ——" [he was discharged with a warning].

LXI. Mr. Thomas Ysakr [a priest] exhibited his —— to a large number of women of his parish.

Hale has to leave many of the cases in Latin. Priests fight at the altar. One, while he carried the sacrament to a sick person, " stirred up the pigs outside the cemetery," and another time he broke vessels in a man's window with his stick. Many appeared for fornication—and they were summoned only if denounced and were discharged on their own oath of innocence—or gross behaviour in the confessional. Married couples keep special brothels for priests and friars. A quaint case of a layman (CCVI) is:—

Thomas Shelley is charged on public report that he did make a cross on a certain stile [in the fields] and paid a woman to sit on it with bare —— and then told all who paid to kiss it that they would have eleven days' indulgence.

It is an appalling picture of general grossness at the very culmination of the Middle Ages. It was the same in every country. Of Scotland Aenaeas Sylvius (Pope Pius II) gives us a peculiar picture in the account of his travels (*Commentarii*). The women were " fair, charming, and easily won," he says. Returning, he stayed in a farm on the English side of the Tweed, and when he retired at night " two girls took him to a bedroom strewn with straw and proposed to sleep with him, as was the custom of the country." He *says* that he angered them by refusing.

The gallantry of Spain hardly needs describing, and for the corruption of the clergy it is enough to consult Cardinal Saenz de Aguirre's *Collectio Maxima Conciliorum* (*Great Collection of*

Councils, especially Vol. V). The Synod of Valencia (1255) forbids all country priests to come into the city more than twice in a month and scolds priests for dancing at the church door or in the cemetery, presiding at ordeals, dining in taverns, or giving church property to their bastards. In 1302 the Synod of Toledo, under the Primate, lays down:—

> We decree . . . that no priest shall keep a concubine *openly* in his house or in another house.

In exactly the same words ("openly" or "publicly") this condemnation is repeated in councils in all parts of Spain throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Council of Valencia (pp. 298–9), in 1388, repeats it and has a section "On Married Priests." The important Council of Aranda (pp. 341–51), under the Primate, repeats it in 1473, and the Council of Seville in 1512. This Council, on the eve of the Reformation, describes the corruption as worse. Priests not only assist at the marriages of their children, but have their bastard sons serving them at Mass! In the *Annales* of Cardinal Baronius we have at the year 1335 (No. LXIX) a letter of Pope Benedict XII to Alfonso of Castile saying:—

> We learn that some people in your country, clerical as well as lay, sometimes in high ecclesiastical office, are guilty of adultery and incest, contract incestuous marriages [a very common complaint in the case of Spain], and commit arson, theft, and rape.

In another letter the Pope says:—

> Some of your nobles, and very many people of lower condition . . . are guilty of concubinage, adultery, incest, rape, violence, and murder.

Alvar Pelayo, Bishop of Silva (Portugal), gives a dismal account of both countries in his famous book *De Planctu Ecclesia* (*The Plaint of the Church*):—

> Would that they, especially the Spanish clergy, had never taken a vow of continence, for in some provinces the sons of the laity are hardly more numerous than those of the clergy. . . . They often fornicate with women of their parishes when they come to confession. Many priests, especially in Spain, Galicia, Asturia and elsewhere, publicly and sometimes in official documents promise and swear, especially to women of the nobility, that they will never desert them, and give them pledges from the property of the Church and marry them publicly, giving banquets that are attended by relatives and friends, as if they were legitimate wives.

In fine, one of the most remarkable evidences of the state of Spain is the admission of the official historian of the Franciscan Order, Fr. Luke Wadding (*Annales Minorum*, Vol. XV, pp. 107–8), that in the latter part of the fifteenth century nearly all the monasteries in the country, but especially the Franciscan, were corrupt. Speaking of the Franciscan Cardinal Ximenes, whose fiery language cowed Queen Isabella, he says:—

> He grieved to see that the primitive sincerity of monachism was extinct everywhere, but especially in the members of his own Order, who had lapsed from their early state to a foul degeneration and base ruin. For in addition to sharing the licence of life that was common to all religious institutions they . . . had accumulated estates and wealth. . . . As he had powerful and wealthy opponents [of reform] to meet he sought the aid of the queen . . . and there were very grave quarrels and disturbances. The head of the monastery at Seville used letters from the Pope to neutralize the cardinal's efforts and grant dispensations to the licentious friars. [Ximenes] got royal authority to imprison the man, but he escaped and fled to Rome.

The monk-historian gives a letter of the year 1496 in which the Pope—with, he says, " the unanimous support " of the Cardinals—censures Ferdinand and Isabella, for supporting the Reform! But the fanatical cardinal again intimidated the queen, and the corrupt friaries were handed over to ostensibly good monks. One contemporary describes the lax friars of Seville defiantly marching out, headed by a crucifix and chanting the psalm[1] " When Israel went forth out of Egypt." The Pope had to yield, and Catholic historians conceal his earlier letter and quote the one in which he—Alexander the Scabrous—approves of the punishment of the friars for their " many enormities." But Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isabella* very candidly describes for English readers the corruption of every class in Spain at that time.

For France it will be enough to quote a very authoritative document which states that clergy and laity were alike very corrupt. It is an address by the Chancellor to the King at the States General (Parliament), which was held at Tours in 1484, and it is given in French and Latin in Jehan Masselin's edition of the proceedings (*Journal des Etats Generaux*, pp. 197–9):—

> The condition of the Church is very corrupt. In the Orders of St. Benedict and St. Augustine and the Cistercians almost all the abbeys have merely titular abbots, and these are often unworthy men, so

that there is no devotion or regular discipline in them. Irreligiousness and corruption have crept in everywhere, to the great detriment of the Kingdom. . . . It behoves your Majesty, therefore, to look into these things and to enforce the observance of the rules. And, though there are the greatest irregularities in these Orders and they must be checked, it is still more necessary to pay attention to the hierarchical order in the Church. We find this order very corrupt, the laity, who ought to be ruled by ecclesiastics, being better than the clergy, the feet and lower members superior to the head. . . . We find also gross irregularities in the people.

CHAPTER XII

THE POPES OF THE RENAISSANCE

IN order to see in its proper perspective the history of the Popes of the Renaissance, which it is customary to dismiss with a genial concession that there were "a few bad Popes," let me summarize 375 years of Papal history, from 1294 to 1669. The deep corruption which began with Boniface VIII at the former date, as we saw, continued at Avignon until 1377, and the Papacy then passed immediately into the sordid thirty-six years' scandal of the great Schism which culminated in the reign of the unspeakable John XXIII. Martin V was then set up by the Emperor and a Council to reform the Church, but no one questions that he spent fourteen years in luxurious indifference to reform and that he initiated the nepotism which was soon to drag the Papal Court to its lowest depth. Dr. L. Pastor, the leading Catholic historian, quotes (in Latin) this passage from the unpublished manuscript of Aegidius of Viterbo, a pious contemporary:—

> The schisms and calamities now came to an end and concord and glory began. But, though this enriched the Church with material wealth and art, it almost denuded it of spiritual wealth. For with the increase of treasure and power the authority of decency and virtue perished. Luxury multiplied and every kind of vice flourished.*

There followed the sixteen years of the pontificate of Eugenius IV, a strict Pope, but so violent and unjust that the Romans drove him from the city and he spent ten of the sixteen years in exile. The very orthodox contemporary Paolo di Liello Petrone (in Muratori, Vol. XXIV), says:—

> No previous Pope had done so much for the city of Rome. If only he had not been so cruel! But he was almost compelled to be cruel by the general corruption in Rome and its province, the citizens and peasants committing murder and robbery night and day.

Nicholas V (1447–55), whose personal virtues and assiduous

* *History of the Popes*, I, 282. This vast work of Pastor's, in 34 volumes, minutely, with great erudition and more regard for truth than is usual in Catholic literature, covers the next two centuries. It contains amazing revelations, but it makes a painful effort to restore the balance by exaggerating a few brighter features, and I shall have occasion to point out that even Pastor mistakes the evidence before him.

patronage of art are much admired, admittedly did nothing for the reform of the Church, thus disposing us to reconsider his piety, and he allowed the College of Cardinals to become increasingly corrupt. During all this time Rome and Italy were as I have already described them.

With Calixtus III (1455–58) an extraordinary demoralization of the Papal Court began. There were now so many cardinals of the type that is euphemistically called " worldly," each fighting, intriguing, and bribing for the Papal prize, that the voters had to fall back, disdainfully, upon a gouty and aged Spanish prelate of reputed piety, Cardinal Borgia. He brought into Italy an utterly unscrupulous brood of relatives, the Borgias, who spread graft and depravity on all sides and opened the vilest page in the history of the higher authorities of any known religion. It is a mockery in such cases to speak of his personal virtue. He was succeeded by Pius II, well known in his earlier years as one of the group of defiantly immoral humanist writers, but now aged, gouty, and, it is said, repentant. His virtue was peculiar. In the continuation of the *Annales Ecclesiastici* of Cardinal Baronius we find, at the year 1460, a letter which the Pope wrote to Cardinal Borgia. To the scandal of the whole town of Siena, Borgia and another Cardinal had spent five hours in a secluded garden with a group of the gayest young ladies of the city, and these had entertained them with " dances of the most licentious character " and other things which " modesty forbids me to repeat." Yet he kept Borgia in the highest office because of corrupt favours he had received from him and smoothed his way to the Papal throne. Paul II, who succeeded him (1464–71), took no interest in anything but his rich collections (coins, jewels, etc.), upon which he spent over a million, and then out of a stormy and corrupt election-fight emerged a strange Pope, Sixtus IV (1471–84); a monk " of blameless life," says Pastor, the supreme head (or General) of the Franciscan Order, yet a man who during thirteen years smiled upon such corruption as the Papal Court had never yet seen.

The character of individuals hardly concerns us in this book, and I need not quote the contradictory statements of contemporaries. The Roman lawyer and diarist S. Infessura * causti-

* I have to quote several passages from Infessura's *Diario* (written partly in Italian and partly in Latin) and must say a word about him. Catholic writers falsely represent him as a quite discredited witness. He clearly

cally denies his alleged virtue, and in the course of a quarrel the Florentine authorities described him as "an adulterer's mignon." What he admittedly did is enough for my purpose. He immediately summoned his nephews—grave writers say they were his sons—who were obscure friars of peasant extraction, to Rome, and loaded them with wealth and honours. His favourite nephew Pietro, a crude young friar of no ability, was at once made a cardinal and so enriched with benefices that he had an income of £100,000 (probably equal to £500,000 to-day) a year. The pious Fulgosus says of him in his *De Dictis Factisque Memorabilibus* (*On Memorable Sayings and Deeds*, X, 1):—

He did not merely maintain a mistress Teresia but he spent so much wealth upon her that even her slippers were covered with pearls, and he spent most of his time amongst courtesans and effeminate youth [sodomists].

Infessura (in Muratori, Vol. III, pt. 2, p. 1144) thus describes a feast he gave:—

The Cardinal of San Sisto, popularly known as Frate Pietro, built a [temporary] wooden palace that filled the whole square in front of the Church of the Apostles. . . . [In it] he gave a sumptuous banquet to Madonna Lenora, daughter of the King of Naples, when she married the Duke of Ferrara. . . . It was one of the most splendid sights ever seen in Rome or anywhere outside of it, for between the banquet and the feast a monstrous sum of money was spent. The amount of silver—more than the Church had—was incredible. Madonna Lenora had with her a large number of ladies and baronesses, and it is said that the cardinal gave each of them, besides other gifts, a silver-gilt chamber-vessel.

The description of the banquet alone fills several pages in some of the contemporaries, and this was only one of the friar-cardinal's feasts. He died next year, worn out by his excesses, at the age of twenty-eight. The Pope was heart-broken, "all Rome mourned," and a bishop gave a monstrously eulogistic sermon at the gorgeous funeral. Pietro had spent 300,000 ducats (several million in modern value) in three years and left heavy debts for the Pope to pay. Another nephew, Girolamo, a peasant of the same low intellectual type as Pietro, was made a Count and commander of the Papal army, and he plunged all Italy in war to get more wealth and territory for himself and the Pope. A

loathed the Papacy because of its open corruption, but when at times he introduces Roman gossip about the Popes he warns us that it is rumour.

third, a much abler man, was Cardinal Giuliano, who, though a friar transformed into one of the most powerful and wealthy of the cardinals, fought, hunted, gambled, drank, and swore like any soldier, had several acknowledged children, and was openly charged with sodomy by the highest nobles of Rome. We shall meet him presently as Pope Julius II. Against such a Pope everything that Infessura says is credible. We read (p. 1184):—

> In the closing months of his life he heard that two soldiers of the guard were to fight a duel. They meant to do this outside the city but the Pope ordered them to fight in the *piazza* before St. Peter's near the palace, and forbade them to begin until he got to the window. When he arrived and saw them ready he gave them his blessing and told them to begin. . . . One was killed and the other grievously wounded.

Among other means of raising money for his corrupt relatives Sixtus taxed the prostitutes (a gold piece a week each) and brothels of Rome. Priests and prelates owned brothels—see Cardinal Baronius, vol. XXX, p. 159—and the women, as counted for taxation, " excluding those who lived in concubinage or plied their trade secretly," numbered 6,800.

All Italy was in the same condition of formal religious observance and real perversity of character. I take two piquant illustrations from the *Vita Sixti IV* (*Life of Sixtus IV*) by a pious writer of the time (in Muratori, III, 2, pp. 1055 and 1060):—

> There was a great quarrel about the blood of Christ between the Franciscans and the Dominicans, as [a monk] said in a sermon at Brescia that Christ had not recovered the whole of his blood at his resurrection. The people of Brescia were so bitterly divided about the matter that they very nearly came to blows about it. . . .
>
> Cardinal Peter, Legate for the whole of Italy . . . went to Perugia to settle the grave quarrels that had arisen between the people of Siena and those of Perugia on account of the Virgin's wedding ring, which had been stolen by a friar [of Siena] and sold to the Perugians. There was almost a riot when the cardinal ordered that the friar, whom the Perugians had promised to protect, should be brought before him.

The gaiety of the reign of the friar Pope ended, when he died, in a fierce outburst against him and his family. The Papal Palace itself was, says the Master of Ceremonies Burchard, so thoroughly looted that when they came to wash the Pope's body they could not find a vessel or a towel, or a clean shirt to put on

it. A solitary friar kept watch when it was exposed, in a ragged chasuble and smelling badly, in one of the Roman churches.

The moment the Pope was dead the cardinals had entered upon a deadly and scandalous contest for the succession. Sixtus IV had, in violation of his coronation oath, created twenty-four cardinals, mostly rich and of loose life, and the leaders—Giuliano, Borgia, Colonna, Orsini, Savelli, etc. (all completely immoral)—drew up their thousands of troops (who now had artillery) and began to offer enormous bribes for votes. "It was hardly possible to live in Rome or outside it," complains Burchard, "on account of the robberies committed by the soldiers." *

In the deadlock of ambitions another elderly and obscure cardinal, who promised rich rewards to his supporters—the oath taken by the cardinals (mainly binding the successful candidate to enrich the others) runs to twelve pages in Burchard—became Pope Innocent VIII. Rome smiled at his choice of name. He had been notoriously loose, and his illegitimate son and daughter at once became two of the most prominent figures in Roman society. Infessura says that it was commonly believed in Rome that he had had seven children while he was a priest. Under such a man the "Sacred College," or the body of cardinals who controlled the Papacy, and the whole of clerical Rome sank lower than ever. Infessura says:—

The cardinals, insatiable in their greed, divided amongst themselves all the secular appointments, both in and outside the city, so that each cardinal had one office in Rome and four outside it to distribute [sell]. The twenty-four principal offices in the city were assigned to the twenty-four cardinals. Some of the appointments had been sold for life by Sixtus IV to Roman citizens, but they were taken away and the money was not refunded. . . .

I heard from a very reliable man [Infessura was a lawyer in Rome at the time] who said that he heard it from one of the cardinals, that Count Vergilio Orsini [the leading noble] urged the Romans in a secret letter to rise against the Pope and his cardinals and eject them. . . . He is said to have brought serious charges against Cardinal

* John Burchard, German Master of Ceremonies (virtually majordomo and the best informed person in the Vatican) for the next twenty years, kept a very full diary in Latin which has been edited, with a mass of confirmatory quotations from contemporaries, by Thuasne (3 vols., 1884). Here and there, in its uninteresting mass of accounts of ceremonies, it gives some amazing stories, which I shall quote. The Catholic objection to him runs on the usual lines: Burchard must have been a wicked priest to tell such stories about the Popes; therefore the stories are not reliable! There is no more reliable witness.

Rovere [Julius II], saying that he was a sodomist and ought to be destroyed . . . and that when God had given him victory he would carry the head of the said cardinal on a lance round Rome. . . . And he is said to have told the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, that he was powerful enough to throw him into the river.

[In a Consistory of the same year 1485.] Against the French cardinal rose the Vicechancellor [Borgia] and the Cardinal of Siena, and they heavily vituperated him. The Cardinal Vicechancellor said that they ought to take no notice of him as he was drunk. And the French cardinal retorted with insults, saying that he [Borgia] was of Jewish blood and the son of a whore and of lewd life. There was a terrible row in the Consistory and, as it looked as if the cardinals would come to blows. the meeting was hastily closed. . . . In the same month the Holy Father, not having enough money to pay the soldiers, created 52 new offices and sold them for 500 gold ducats each, so that he made 26,000 ducats [in modern value more than £100,000]. . . .

In the same month [1487] Franceschetto, son of the Pope, and Jerome de Touteville, son of the cardinal of Rouen, went in arms with many companions during the night to seize a certain young married woman of good character, but as there was a fight they fled ignominiously. . . .

Two years later the virtuous Pope (as Catholics describe him) gave the cardinal's hat to his bastard and very loose-living nephew, Lorenzo Cibò, and to the thirteen-year-old boy, Giovanni de Medici. In 1490 a Dominican friar was arrested for conspiracy:—

He was taken through the city in a cart, standing up naked and tied to a stake, and at intervals his flesh was torn with iron hooks and pincers. . . . On the return to the Capitol he was struck on the head with a mallet by the Minister of Justice. Then he was killed by sword thrusts in the breast and the heart and was quartered.

In 1492, a few months before the Pope died, his granddaughter Battistina (daughter of the Pope's illegitimate daughter Teodorina) was married in the Vatican. The Master of Ceremonies, Burchard, says in his *Diarium* at that date:—

On Sunday June 3rd a low seat of gold brocade was put in the first room beyond the pontifical hall and a number of other seats upholstered in velvet for the marriage of the Pope's granddaughter. . . . Besides the Pope and several cardinals there were present the Pope's daughter Teodorina, her daughter Peretta, the bride Battistina [who also was a granddaughter of the Pope], Maddalena, daughter of Lorenzo de Medici and wife of the Pope's [illegitimate] son, and many other women. . . . On the Pope's left were Franceschetto Cibò, the Pope's son, and about forty other noble barons.

In spite of this brazen public exhibition of his vices, Pastor and all Catholic authorities persist in numbering Innocent VIII among the " good Popes." The character of his son, who with Cardinal Borgia ruled Rome and extorted funds by every corrupt expedient, is shown in a preceding extract. The suggestion that the Pope was unaware that anything was wrong is childish. Franceschetto had been for seven years one of the most notorious rakes in Italy, and the moral state of Rome can be imagined. The palaces of most of the cardinals, each of whom had his troops of horse, foot, and artillery and dressed as an ordinary noble or soldier, were centres of the noisiest gambling, feasting, hunting, and quarrelling and had hundreds of silk-clad servants and effeminate pages. It was the heyday of Roman prostitution. Infessura says (at the year 1490) that the Pope's Vicar issued a decree forbidding priests to keep concubines and the Pope revoked it and censured him:—

He said that it was not prohibited: that such was the life of priests and officers of the Court that there was scarcely one without a concubine or a whore—to the praise of God and the Christian Church. Perhaps for this reason the prostitutes of Rome were counted and found to number 6,800, not counting those who lived in concubinage or plied their trade secretly.

Thuasne, in his edition of Burchard's *Diarium* (II, 443, etc.), and Gregorovius, in his classic *City of Rome*, give a good deal of contemporary evidence. For centuries there was in a church at Rome—I cannot ascertain if it is still there—a noble marble monument with this inscription: " Imperia, Roman courtesan, most worthy of her name, who had a beauty that is rare among mortals." Cardinals and prelates drove up to the door of this famous young prostitute, who died in 1511 and had the greatest funeral that Rome had seen for a long time. A colleague of hers made and spent £200,000 in a few years. A fee of £50 was often asked, and the salons of the cosmopolitan élite were crowded with the chief personages, lay and clerical, of Rome. Beccadelli, the leading poet, sang that they were more useful than nuns, and another famous poet Aretino (quoted by the famous Catholic scholar Baluze, *Miscellanea*, IV, 519), said:—

The Pope [referring to Alexander VI], the cardinals, and the rest of the prelates thought nothing of keeping a concubine or a handsome Ganymede and it was rumoured in Rome that Alexander had incestuous

relations with his daughter. Paul II had a large family by a prostitute and made a dunghill of the palace on the Barbo.

Pilgrims to Rome sought, after the visit to the Tomb of the Apostles, a glimpse of these higher courtesans as women visiting Los Angeles to-day wait to see the stars.*

I have given so much space to the reigns of Callixtus III, Sixtus IV, and Innocent VIII because the story of this degradation of the Papacy is now commonly, under Catholic influences, brazenly misrepresented. The truth is that Rome had become very corrupt and the College of Cardinals lax under the " good Popes " before Callixtus, and from 1450 onward they were, under these three " virtuous " Popes, so depraved that the reign of Alexander VI, who is now thrown to the critical wolves, was inevitable. And the quotations that follow in this and the next chapter will show that the corruption lasted, with a few short intervals of rigour, until 1668—a period of more than three and a half centuries of almost continuous degradation.

Innocent died—in the last stage of his illness he was fed at a woman's breasts—in 1492, and a more vicious fight than ever occurred among the rich and unscrupulous cardinals. The leaders were the friar-nephew (or son) of Pope Sixtus, Cardinal Giuliano, for whose election France offered 200,000 ducats in bribes, and Cardinal Borgia—both completely immoral—but Borgia's bribes among the cardinal-electors seem to have been worth more hundreds of thousands of ducats, and he became Pope Alexander VI. As all Rome knew that he had at least six children, and had at this time as mistress a girl of fifteen, Giulia Farnese, the city shook with cynical laughter. Thuasne quotes, from the contemporary Curio, the account of the gorgeous coronation processions. One triumphal arch had the inscription " Chastity and Charity."

As the legal documents concerning six of Alexander's acknowledged children have been published, and are not disputed by Catholic historians, little need be quoted here about his morals. Two little-known passages will suffice to show that the Pope was more deeply corrupt than is generally supposed. Infessura describes the marriage of his daughter Lucrezia in the Vatican:—

* For full information on this extraordinary development at Rome from the middle of the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century, with an interruption after the terrible sack of Rome in 1527 and during a few years of reform, see E. Rodocanachi, *Courtisanes et Buffons* (1894).

The Pope invited one hundred and fifty of the noblest women in Rome and their husbands, and all the officials, senators, and ambassadors, to the wedding in St. Peter's Palace . . . and the Pope and the cardinals and many bishops were present. . . . The Pope afterwards gave them 150 silver cups full of sweetmeats, and these were thrown into the laps of the more beautiful ladies. And all this was done to the honour and praise of God and the Roman Church. . . . Some of the cardinals remained late, and they, the Pope, the bridegroom, and others sat at table with a lot of women, including the Pope's daughter [Lucrezia, at this date certainly a wanton], the fair Giulia [Alexander's girl-mistress, a blonde of noble birth], Pope Innocent's granddaughter [daughter of the preceding Pope's bastard daughter], and others. Each man had one of the young ladies next him at table. They sat there for seven hours, and there were comedies and tragedies, some of them lascivious. Many other things are said about this business but I will not write them here.

The Master of Ceremonies, Burchard, gives this account of an orgy in 1501, when Alexander was seventy years old, on the eve of All Saints Day. The Pope did not attend vespers, but sent the cardinals:—

That night fifty of the more respectable prostitutes, who are called courtesans, dined with the Duke of Valentino [the Pope's son Cesare who had had Lucrezia's husband murdered a few months earlier and his own brother murdered four years before that] in the Apostolic Palace, and after dinner they danced with the attendants, first in their clothes and then nude. Lighted candles were then placed on the ground and chestnuts between the candles, and the naked women, crawling on their hands and knees between the candles, had to pick up the chestnuts, the Pope and Lucrezia looking on. At the end gifts of silk dresses, pairs of drawers, hats, etc., were given to those who had intercourse with the prostitutes the largest number of times. This was done openly in the hall, and the gifts handed to the winners.*

Alexander, under the influence of Cesare, sank lower in depravity as he grew older, and in his last years he began to poison cardinals—two cases seem indisputable—for their wealth, but that the Pope himself was poisoned few admit.

At the time of his death the rivalry was such that no cardinal had the least chance to get the requisite two-thirds majority of

* Pastor ingenuously submits that a priest who can tell such things must be himself lewd and is therefore unreliable. Thuasne, the editor of Burchard, shows that the fact was reported to their authorities by the Venetian and Florentine ambassadors, and that other contemporaries say that at this time the Pope had such orgies repeatedly in the Vatican. No man in the palace was better informed than Burchard, and his Diary was not written for publication. This obscene chestnut-dance was afterwards copied in many princely houses on the Papal model.

votes, and an aged and ailing cardinal who lasted a few weeks was elected. This gave Giuliano time to organize and attain his life-long ambition. He was now sixty years old and presumably " chaste," but his children were prominent in Roman society, and the repute of having been addicted to sodomy still lingered. Apart from this charge, which Catholic historians always frantically dispute, though half a dozen Popes are credibly accused of it and according to Aretino it was common among the cardinals, the character of Julius II is not disputed. His vices are thrust out of sight by eulogies of the fine work he did for the adornment of Rome—note that all the Catholic art there is in Rome was " inspired " in this period of incredible corruption—but all contemporaries witness that even as Pope, and active commander of the Papal army, he had a fiery temper and swore and drank like any other soldier. Pastor (Appendix 90 to Vol. VI) gives the German text of a letter of the Emperor to P. von Lichtenstein, his representative in Rome. Julius was very ill, and such was the disorder of the time (1511) that the Emperor was trying to get the tiara for himself! He says:—

> You will see yourself that the Pope may die at any time as he eats very little, and only fruit, and drinks heavily, so that his hold on life is precarious. In case he does die we are sending the Bishop of York to Rome to help us to get the Papacy. As this cannot be done without spending a considerable sum of money we have decided to distribute a sum of 300,000 ducats [more than a million in modern money] amongst the cardinals and others who help us.

Gregorovius, who often tempers the truth for Catholics, calls Julius " one of the most profane figures that ever occupied the Chair of Peter." It is objected that he is repeating the charge of the contemporary historian Guiccardini, the father of Italian history, that Julius " had nothing of the priest about him except the cassock " (which, by the way, he rarely wore, spending most of his time on campaign or hunting). But that is just the picture of him in contemporary diaries—see, especially, that of the Venetian senator Sanuto—and reports.

Scandalous as these Popes were, the next, Leo X (1513–21), was in my opinion—though he is defended by Catholic historians—the worst of the series. Pastor seems to think that it is enough to say that Leo was " the child of his age," but, though (as we shall see) he falsifies the most serious evidence, the fourth chapter of his volume (VI) on Leo, which is based upon the biography

of the Pope by his friend Bishop Giovio (a loose-living medical man whom he scandalously made a bishop for the sake of the revenue), is one of the most damning indictments of the head of a religion that were ever written.* Giovanni de Medici, destined for the Church by his father for political reasons, was tonsured (made a cleric) at the age of seven and created cardinal at the age of thirteen. He enjoyed life as cardinals did, and became Pope at the age of thirty-seven. That he said in the midst of his Papal luxury, " We owe all this to the fable of Jesus Christ," is a late and unreliable statement, but the contemporary Venetian ambassador, Marino Giorgio, tells us that he said to his brother Cardinal Giuliano, at his election: " Let us enjoy this Papacy which God has given us." That he did spend its huge revenue in the most selfish and often indelicate enjoyment is not questioned. Giorgio puts that revenue at 420,000 ducats a year, largely from the sale of sacred things (indulgences, benefices, etc.) on a scale which had not been equalled before. He spent at least 5,000,000 ducats (equivalent to about £20,000,000 to-day) in eight years and left debts which some estimated at a million. The biography of him by Bishop Giovio (*Vita Leonis X*), who was intimate with him, is an odd mixture of formal praise and cynical suggestion. After much praise of his generosity and kindness he says (p. 96):—

These qualities were overcast by an excess of luxury and by charges of lust, but in such fashion that he seemed to lean to these vices rather from joyousness of spirit and a sort of royal licence than from depravity.

Pastor says that " Giovio passes over the whole truth of the accusations brought against the moral conduct of Leo X." If this is meant, as it seems to be meant, to give the reader the impression that this highest contemporary authority disdainfully ignores the charge of sodomy, it is the reverse of the truth. Giovio returns to the point on p. 98, discusses it at great length, and carefully avoids an explicit denial of it as if it were so notorious in Rome that he dare not deny it:—

He was not free from ignominious reproach, for he would seem to have had an improper affection for and joked too intimately and

* It is amusing that the truth about the Pope which Pastor arbitrarily denies, his sodomy, is unconsciously let out by his English priest-translator. Leo had a passion for hawking, and the priest makes Pastor speak of the Pope's " great devotion to the noble art of venery." It is edifying that the Oratorian priest does not know the second ordinary meaning of the word.

freely with some of his pages of the chamber who were drawn from the highest families in Italy. But has even the best and holiest of princes escaped the shafts of the malicious in this sacred court? Or who will be so wicked and jealous that he would say that he has penetrated the real secrets of the night? . . . If he is unjustly accused—as it is proper to believe—I should consider the lot of princes miserable when a few wicked men can thus assail their morals.

It is obvious that the belief in his guilt was too widespread in Rome for the bishop to ignore it, and his peculiar treatment of it gives the impression that he believed it and thought little of the practice. Nor is it true that, as some say, Giovio alone mentions it. Guicciardini plainly endorses it in his great *Storia d'Italia* (XVI, 12):—

His expenditure was such that he degraded the spiritual authority, corrupted the Papal Court, and was compelled to be always in search of extraordinary methods of raising money. He was passionately fond of music and jesters, and his mind was entirely occupied with these. In the early days of his pontificate many believed that he was quite chaste, but it was discovered that he was excessively devoted to pleasures that cannot even be mentioned with decency.

Pastor is here again guilty of misrepresentation. He says that all the authorities are agreed that Leo was chaste before he became Pope. What the great Italian historian says is that some believed this, but later found that they were wrong. In all other respects Pastor gives a candid account of Leo's scandalous conduct. His duplicity and lying in diplomacy astonished an age in which such things were common. His money was largely spent on a rich collection of jewels and on banquets at which there were contests of gluttony—the chief glutton was a Dominican monk—and crude buffoonery, and in the costly presentation of loose comedies. He made a cardinal of his intimate friend and secretary Bibbiena, a notoriously immoral man, and this man's worst comedy (*Calandria*) was presented by the Pope for the entertainment of the gay duchess Isabella d'Este, who sat with him. The Pope scandalized even Rome once by sitting in front of an audience of two thousand at a licentious play. He had bull-fights in St. Peter's Piazza and delighted in the grossest features of the annual carnival. All this is told at length by Bishop Giovio.

By this time, it will be remembered, Luther had opened his campaign in Germany. Leo was persuaded by heavy pressure

to open a reform council in Rome, and in sittings which were spread over four years (1513–17) an edifying series of decrees were drafted and copies sent to every country. But, as Pastor says, when the provincial Churches found that there was no reform at Rome they shelved the decrees. Germany alone was, under the pressure of the Reformers, compelled to change. At a late sitting of the Council the famous Platonist scholar Pico della Mirandola was permitted to address the gathering, and we still have the fearful indictment he drew up. It is a summary in general terms of the vices we have seen. Rome admired the graceful Latin of the discourse and resumed its comedies and crimes; and in that year Luther nailed his theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg. The gaiety was overcast for a time by the discovery that five cardinals were involved in a plot to murder the Pope. Giovio says (Bk. IV):—

> It is said that Cardinal Petrucci more than once came to the court with a hidden dagger to kill the Pope. . . . For a subtler method he bribed Vercelli, an illustrious surgeon and great friend of his, to murder the Pope. He was to get himself called in instead of the regular physician to treat the Pope's fistula, and he could then apply bandages steeped in poison.

We smile when we read that Leo was so modest that he refused to disrobe in the presence of the new physician. Vercelli went to Florence " to cure the Prefect of the French disease " (syphilis), but an intercepted letter revealed the plot. Cardinal Petrucci was strangled in prison, and his servants had their flesh torn off with red-hot pincers.* Cardinals Riario and Sauli, who confessed (probably under torture), and two other cardinals, suffered severely. And Leo continued to play with his jewels, enjoy his gargantuan feasts, and attend fantastic banquets given by the bankers, with courtesans present—see the two-page account of the Strozzi banquet in Sanuto (XXVII, 74–5)—which emulated the most extravagant records of ancient Roman excesses.

* Rome, like all Italy, indeed all Europe, in many respects still had the barbarism of the Middle Ages. The Venetian ambassador tells casually in his diary how one day (under Alexander) a head was found fixed on a pole with the inscription, " This is the head of my father-in-law, who prostituted his daughter to the Pope "; how a man who was arrested for dressing as a woman was led through the streets by the police with his skirts held up above his waist; how a Jew who had dared to have relations with a Christian whore was castrated and forced to carry his testicles on a pole through the streets of the city, and so on. More than 200 had been killed in the fighting over the Papal election of 1492.

In 1521 the nobles poisoned their contemptible Pope at the age of forty-six. Pastor again betrays that even the best Catholic scholars pervert the truth at times. He says that the results of the post-mortem on the Pope's body and other contemporary evidence refute the story of poison. The highest contemporary authorities, Bishop Giovio and Giucciardini, firmly accept the statement that the Pope was poisoned, and the Master of Ceremonies, P. de Grassis, who ordered the post-mortem (and was apparently present), thus describes it in a letter that is reproduced in the *Annales* of Cardinal Baronius edited by Raynaldus (at the year 1521):—

> The body was buried about the third hour of the night. But I had noticed that it was much swollen and darker than it ought to be, and I proposed in the College [of Cardinals] that it should be dissected, and to this they agreed. The heart was found to be spotted and the liver corroded . . . and when the physicians and surgeons saw these things they were astounded, and said that it was certain that the Pope had been poisoned. . . . So it was clearly proved that Pope Leo had been poisoned, and this was at once accepted.

But Christendom was informed that the Pope had died of a "catarrh," and Catholic pressure now induces some historians to diagnose malaria.

The Sacred College now, Pastor admits, "consisted for the most part of men of thoroughly worldly character"—which is not exactly the expression that Catholic moralists apply to such men in our time—and there was a twelve days' furious fight for the rich prize. Even Wolsey tried for it, and was prepared to pay 100,000 ducats. In the deadlock a pious and sour Dutchman who could not speak Italian had to be put in, and Rome boiled over with indignation. He fought futilely in the cause of virtue for eighteen months when, Rome believed, some poisoner rid Rome of the kill-joy. The fight for the tiara now lasted seven weeks, the representatives of the various Powers and the Romans freely sending advice, bribes, and threats into the "sealed room." Another Medici, a bastard of Cardinal Giuliano, one of Leo's intimates, won the prize, and devoted himself to eleven years of the life of a prince. "The Romans were delighted," says Pastor; "a Medici Pope encouraged their hopes of a renewal of the happy days of Leo X." They were instead, mainly owing to the political incapacity and instability of the Pope, to have the most terrible experience since the sack of

ancient Rome by the Goths; in fact, as far as torture, murder, and rape, in addition to loot, are concerned, a far more terrible fate, if not the worst in the long experience of the Eternal City.

Since more than two-thirds of the soldiers who perpetrated the monstrous outrage in the year 1527 were Catholics and subjects of the Pope—Spaniards and Italians—a few extracts describing it will suffice to show that the general character of Catholic Christendom in the sixteenth century was as low as it had been four centuries earlier. The incompetent Pope entered into alliance with Venice and France against the Emperor. It may be remembered that the crown of the Holy Roman Empire had now passed to the fanatically Catholic grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles V of Spain (1519–56); but even many historians do not seem to realize, or will not say, that it was chiefly the distraction of the Emperor's attention to these southern troubles that enabled the Protestant princes in Germany to consolidate their strength and establish the Reformation. When Charles heard of the Pope's conduct he angrily commented that he had " poured out streams of gold for his [the Pope's] election," and he would now " have his revenge on the poltroon." He sent Cardinal Colonna, whose family had a long and bitter feud against the Medici, and who led the Imperialist forces (mainly Italian and Spanish) in Italy, to chastise him. In his voluminous *Diarii* (Vol. XLII, 701–2) Sanuto says that the Romans, who had already found the Pope mean and tyrannical, refused to take up arms and willingly saw the Papal quarter round St. Peter's occupied and looted:—

> They took the Borgo [the clerical district] and the Palace and thoroughly looted them . . . and they seized goods [church ornaments, etc.] to the value of 300,000 ducats and made a mockery of the Church by defiling the sacred vestments. . . . I believe that not more than two rooms were spared in the palaces of His Holiness and the bishops.

Pastor quotes (in Italian—as he usually leaves his worst material) from an unpublished manuscript:—

> A man on a mule wore the Pope's white cassock and red skull-cap and gave his blessing as he rode along.

And from an unpublished Latin manuscript:—

> It was an unprecedented outrage . . . full of insult to the Holy Father, the Apostolic See, and the entire Christian religion. . . . The

ruffians did not hesitate to don in derision the Pope's robes . . . some dressed in his purple garments, others wore his biretta and gave the Papal blessing.

The Pope and cardinals watched from the Castle of Sant Angelo, firing a cannon whenever the soldiers came within range, and the Romans across the river looked on with indifference or cynical pleasure. But this was only a prelude to the monstrous tragedy of the following year (1527). The miserable Pope still defied the Emperor, and an army of 25,000 besieged and burst into Rome. During eight days they looted it and committed every conceivable outrage. It is admitted by every authority that in torturing to exact loot the Spaniards, who were never more Catholic than in the sixteenth century, were the worst, and the Italians next. Thousands of Italians came in from surrounding Papal provinces to join in the pillage. The Germans, naturally, committed more outrages on priests, monks, and nuns, but the Catholic soldiers also fell upon cardinals (of whom four were killed), bishops, churches, convents, and monasteries. Sanuto has, in his *Diarii*, fifty pages of poignant dispatches on the tragedy, and Pastor's candid summary—except that he leaves the worst passages in Latin or Italian—of all the accounts runs to twenty pages. It was nightfall when the army forced the gates, and Pastor quotes from a contemporary unpublished account:—

The first looters were the Spaniards and the Italians, who went from house to house all night with wax candles seizing the silver and gold.

A few sentences may be taken from Sanuto's *Diarii* (Vol. XLV):—

The Pope and most of the cardinals were in Sant Angelo. The whole of the enemy had entered the city and looted and murdered, without sparing the women and children, and burned the houses. . . . They began to loot and to kill those who could not pay. First they stripped a house and then got together all its inmates, men, women, children, and servants. Those who said that they could not pay the sums demanded of them were horribly tortured and, if they persisted, killed. Those who paid did not escape, as further sums were demanded of them and they were tortured again, and if they did not pay, the house was burned down. So much has the city suffered that hell itself is a prettier sight . . . dead children, thrown from the windows, lie on the street and the women are thrown upon the ground and raped. Cardinal Santiquattro was pulled from his horse and beaten until he died . . . four cardinals were killed. . . . From the monastery of St. Peter in Vincolis they took silver and other things to

the value of 30,000 ducats, and they broke into other monasteries, inflicting the greatest cruelty on priests and monks. They took a great silver crucifix from St. Peter's and broke it into four pieces, and they stalled their horses in St. Peter's and the Vatican [even in the Sistine Chapel]. It was horrible to see the infinite number of the dead, especially murdered children. . . . It is said that the Germans murdered indiscriminately, saying that they wanted the country to settle in. . . . In the Borgo and Trastevere [clerical quarter] alone they buried 9,800 and threw 2,000 bodies into the Tiber. . . . It is said that 500 were murdered in St. Peter's, and the holy relics [head of St. Andrew, Veil of Veronica, etc.] were thrown to the floor [torn out of gold and silver and jewelled cases]. . . .

We have made a proverb of the Goths and Vandals who sacked Rome, but their procedure was gentlemanly in comparison with that of the Catholic Emperor's soldiers, though one may doubt if one in 10,000 of our people ever heard of it. As I have said, Pastor takes twenty pages to make a summary of the evidence. In modern values the loot is estimated at more than £100,000,000, and the population of Rome was reduced from 99,000 to 32,000, mostly beggared. Here is one of the untranslated passages from an unpublished manuscript in Pastor:—

There was no sort of torment that they did not use. Some were hung up by their testicles, others had fires lit under their feet . . . and if they paid and were set free they fell into the hands of other bandits.

Wives and daughters were raped, or killed themselves, in the presence of husbands and fathers, to make them pay. Whole communities of nuns, many of noble birth, were violated, and bodies of monks were dressed as women, raped, and tortured. Asses were dressed in episcopal robes and priests forced to swing the censer to them. The Germans soon brutalized themselves with southern wine and fell to murderous fights with the Italians and Spaniards over the loot. The unburied corpses were eaten by dogs, and long before the sack was over they began—it was May—to putrefy. Plague was added to the horrors, and thousands of soldiers perished and lay about the streets. This went on all summer, and in September fresh German troops renewed the outrages. Few cities in all history suffered as Rome did, and it was not until two years later that peace came and the slow recovery began.

Dr. Pastor does not notice that this vast outrage makes his theory that Rome reformed itself (the Counter-Reformation)

without pressure look childish. Rome was beggared and more than half destroyed. The hell upon earth did for a time what the doctrine of hell had completely failed to do. But only for a time, a very short time. Clement died in 1534, and Cardinal Farnese became Paul III. He had three illegitimate sons and one illegitimate daughter, who were known to all Rome. His eldest and favourite son, Pier Luigi, was one of the most notorious rakes in Rome until he was murdered, and the Pope, who enriched all his family with the most scandalous nepotism, arranged the marriage of a twelve-year-old son of Pier Luigi, with gorgeous ceremony, to a fourteen-year-old natural daughter of the Emperor; and, to the delight of the Roman gossips, she refused to sleep with the graceless boy. The Pope had owed his cardinalate to the fact that his sister Giulia was the acknowledged mistress of Alexander VI—in Rome he was commonly called " the Petticoat Cardinal "—and he had fought for the tiara and offered heavy bribes at three elections. Within a few months of his election he raised two nephews, one aged fourteen and the other sixteen, to the cardinalate and great wealth; and in a few years all Rome knew that the second had syphilis. The Emperor, in fact, stated in a public letter that the Pope, for whom he expressed a ferocious contempt, had had syphilis. Rome recovered wealth, and Paul encouraged the revival of the carnival and other shows with all the old luxury and looseness. He, under pressure from the Emperor, talked about reform all his life; but, beyond the partial suppression of graft in some of the Papal offices, there was no reform. It is therefore needless to quote contemporaries.

Paul died in 1550, when half of Europe had seceded or was—and this applies to France—seething with the attack on the Papacy that preceded secession. Yet the rivalries of the cardinals and the Catholic powers drew out the Conclave for seventy days, and the clash of ambitions led to such a deadlock that they had to elect a man of the grossest type seen in the chair of Peter since the tenth century. No one attempts to defend Julius III, and two short quotations will suffice. One of the best historians of the time, J. E. de Thou, says in his *Historiarum sui temporis libri* (*Synopsis of the Historians of His Time*, Bk. XV):—

> At that time died Julius III, worn out by intemperance of life rather than old age. He . . . had devoted himself entirely to pleasure . . . in which, neglecting his business, he spent almost all the remainder

[after consecration] of his life with friends of his own kidney, in games, dice, comedies, and the other things that go with such pleasures, things unworthy of his high office yet pursued night and day.

Thomas Erastus, one of the most notable physicians of the time, says in his *Epistola ad Pellicanum* (*Letter to Pellicanus*, quoted in Hottinger's *Ecclesiastical History*):—

He has a certain boy [aged 16], a dark, filthy, arrogant beast, ignorant and idle except that he learned a lot of the jokes of the most scurrilous jesters [and regaled the Pope with them]. In a word he is a monster in body and soul. Who he is and who were his parents is so much disputed that no one can be sure. I have met some who said that he was the Pope's son. Others say that Julius found him on the street when he was a little boy with a monkey which none dare touch except himself. This so pleased the cardinal [or bishop as he then was] that he adopted him. This boy the wretched Pope loved so passionately and with such abandon [he is said to surpass all others in the practice of sodomy] that nothing is too strong to believe about it.

De Thou and other reputable writers confirm. The Pope made the vicious and misshapen boy a cardinal at once, though all Rome called him " the Monkey " and " the new Ganymede." Catholic historians are concerned only to reject the evidence, on rather arbitrary grounds, for the Pope's vices and orgies. He is said to have practised sodomy with some of the cardinals, to have kept a love-nest in common with a named cardinal, to have used obscene and blasphemous language, and so on. However that may be, his gluttonous indulgence in heavy food, heavily seasoned with garlic, and admitted gross behaviour and frivolity, make him one of the most contemptible figures in the gallery of Holy Fathers.

From the vicious election fight that followed issued a pious nonentity, Marcellus II, who lasted twenty-two days. It was " apoplexy " this time. The fight was renewed, and at last a puritan and " man of iron," Paul IV, got the tiara, " almost against the rules of the cardinals who elected him," says Pastor. They despised his mixture of asceticism and love of strong wine, virtue, and violent temper—he sometimes laid hands on the cardinals—and coarse language. He was a scandalous nepotist and soon set aside his plans for reform of the Church to make war on Spain for the aggrandisement of his family; especially two nephews who were—though one was a cardinal—orgiastic

in their licence. Paul, counted as one of the very good Popes, is described as ignorant of this until 1559—an incredible statement about a man of such fiery energy and domination—when he punished them and threw his violence into the reform of the Church. His lay-nephew, a noble of high rank, strangled a suspected lover of his wife with his own hands, his cardinal-brother concurring, in the midst of the Pope's " grand work for reform." This work lasted seven months, so we may still decline to see a Counter-Reformation. Nor is the tepid " continuation of reform " under Pius V—a " worldly man entirely devoted to pleasure," says L. von Ranke—worthy of the name. Even Pastor admits that he was " a man of worldly tendencies " and " little imbued with the ecclesiastical spirit," and that " the evil elements immediately awakened once more into activity." It was at his death, in 1566, that the Renaissance ended and a terrific and sincere reformer mounted the Papal throne.

CHAPTER XIII

AFTER THE REFORMATION

THE Papal record had been appalling from 1294, when the entirely amoral and sceptical Boniface VIII had ascended the throne, to 1565, when Pius IV ended his pleasant term of office; and the successful fight to maintain the corrupt regime in face of the spreading revolt of Europe was worse than the vices of Alexander VI. But Paul IV had got more strict cardinals into the Sacred College, and at the death of Pius IV, when the fierce rivalry of the gay cardinals ended in the usual deadlock, one of these, a Dominican monk, became Pius V (1566–72).

The two large and glowing volumes which Pastor devotes to his six years of power are a record of what most people to-day would call pious savagery. Apart from a certain amount of reduction of graft and corruption in the Papal offices, which proved to be only temporary, the monk concentrated his nervous energy against vice and heresy. To their great indignation even the Swiss guards were ordered to marry their concubines, and the Papal cavalry were compelled to go to confession. It is customary for Catholic apologists for the Inquisition to blame " the princes and people " and say that the Roman Inquisition never inflicted death or torture. One must charitably assume that these apologists never read their own best modern historian. Pastor (Vol. XVII) quotes (in Italian) from the contemporary Diary (unpublished) of Cornelius Firmanus for the first year of Pius V:—

> On Thursday the fourth a certain Don Pompeius de Monte was beheaded and his body burned as he was a relapsed heretic. He was a tall fine-looking man of fifty.

Two days later:—

> On Saturday four were hanged on the Bridge, one of them being burned for sodomy [the others as heretics].

A few weeks later:—

> Ten heretics were taken to the church of the Virgin near Minerva . . . one of them was a Canon Regular who had in the previous year preached to great crowds in the church of St. John the Baptist . . .

two cavalrymen of His Holiness's guard were sent to the galleys . . . 25 cardinals and an immense crowd were present.

Several days later:—

Twenty-two cardinals and an infinite number of people [assembled] for the trial of ten heretics. One, a Neapolitan baron . . . was hanged on the Bridge and his body burned.

A little later the heretics include:—

A private secretary of Pope Clement VII, rich in offices . . . a very handsome man of noble demeanour about sixty years old . . . another a Franciscan monk, a venerable old man . . . three more nobles and one a doctor of law . . . one a priest.

So it continues. Clearly Protestantism had spread widely in Italy. Pastor tells us that when (in 1883) Leo XIII threw open the Secret Archives of the Vatican to scholars and bade them tell the truth, he asked for the records of the Roman Inquisition. They had been " removed." As he gathers these details from scattered manuscripts we may conclude that hundreds suffered under Pius V; and, as we found the Roman Inquisition very busy in the thirteenth century (chap. x), and shall find it again later, we are not edified by the Catholic claim that it did not murder heretics. It murdered thousands.

Next to heretics it was the crowd of prostitutes who roused the monk-Pope to something like savagery. From the same Diary (year 1567) Pastor quotes:—

On the Sabbath three prostitutes were scourged [nude to the waist] by the executioner in front of the church of St. Ambrose and through all the streets round about for disobeying the orders and edicts of the Vicar of His Holiness. Amongst them was a certain Armeria the Venetian, a most beautiful girl, and beyond question the most beautiful of all the Roman prostitutes. There were also Nina de Prato and Isabella [two of the most famous in Italy and in great favour with the richer prelates].

Next week several were imprisoned for life, and " the Ganymedes were in despair," yet Pastor finds the evil as bad as ever under Gregory XIII. He quotes:—

The Papal Court is increasingly cruel to the poor courtesans, about 80 of whom have been arrested in two days.

And a few days later:—

Several carriages full of courtesans have been arrested . . . condemned to lose their rings and gold chains and pay a fine of 100 scudi.

A sister-in-law of Cardinal Orsini was taken from her coach by the police. Gregory's successor, Sixtus V, was still more savage. When a priest was detected with a boy, he had *both* burned alive. He banished sixty-nine married women because they had been prostitutes before they married. Incest also was punished with death, and in the end Sixtus enacted the death sentence for adultery; but the Roman officials drew the line there. The excuse is made for Sixtus that the general moral standard had fallen so low in Rome that a girl was not safe with her own mother (who was very apt to prostitute her). Other vices were not spared. Three of the leading Cardinals were punished for heavy gambling, one losing 30,000 scudi (equivalent to more than £100,000 in modern money). Blasphemers had their tongues slit. . . .

But probably no feature gives us a better idea of the appalling conditions in which Rome and Italy still lingered than the story of banditry. Pastor has no less than seventeen amazing pages on it under Gregory XIII, but it began earlier and lasted until the present century. L. von Ranke (Appendix LI to Vol. III) gives an account of its " beginning "—it was really a continuation of the European Age of Chivalry—in a contemporary Latin manuscript:—

At first it was only those who had been condemned for murder and robbery and had fled from the law. Being forbidden fire and water they lived like the birds and beasts in the forests and on the mountains, maintaining a precarious life by stealing. But when the attractiveness of the life and the freedom and impunity of it multiplied them, brigandage began to be regarded as a legitimate business or art. Under certain leaders who were famous for their crimes organized bands of proscribed men and soldiers were formed for the purpose of violence, assassination, and brigandage. Their leaders promoted them on the strength of their crimes, audacity, and savagery. [One of the chief leaders near Rome was a priest who called himself King of the region.] They no longer wandered casually over the land but in a sense ruled it. They hired themselves out to those who wanted an enemy killed or a woman seized for rape. Things went so far that not only the wicked but men of good standing sought the services of these wild beasts. Many princes, disposed to crime by debt or extravagance of life or the thirst for vengeance, not only employed brigands but made treaties with and protected them. They had factions in the cities, with different ways of dressing their hair or different hats, and men would kill their wives to marry the daughter or sister of a man in the faction they wanted to join. They seized and married any woman of wealth or beauty they wanted, and they

had regular law courts of their own. . . . Sometimes they stole the sacred vessels of the altar, so as to make a magical and profane use of the sacrament. The leniency of Pope Gregory had made the evil worse, and the number of brigands was infinite.

It was, in fact, estimated that there were 20,000 of them in Italy in the sixteenth century, and not only the highest nobles, but many leading cardinals, protected them. The commander of one of the largest and fiercest bands—they were often armies—was entertained by a cardinal in his Roman palace (the Medici Palace) in 1583. Sixtus waged a ferocious war on them. The Duke of Ferrara, failing to crush a band, tempted it into the open with a convoy of food. The food was poisoned and they all died in agony; and Ranke quotes a contemporary saying that "when Pope Sixtus heard this he was very pleased." He offered immunity for himself and several friends and a sum of money to any brigand who brought in another *dead or alive*. A foreign ambassador said, in 1585, that brigand's heads were more common in Rome than melons in the market.

Gregory XIII, the Pope who struck a gold medal with the inscription "Slaughter of the Huguenots" when he heard the details of the St. Bartholomew Massacre—it is sheer untruth to say that he was misled by early rumours—was an easygoing, comfortable man. He had had children while he was a priest (Pastor admits), but was now old and chaste, and under pressure of the Jesuits he mildly continued the reform of the Church, but on the whole the thirteen years of his pontificate were not very oppressive to sinners. At his death, however, when the fourteen-day fight of the ambitious and richer cardinals wore itself out, a peasant-friar of "iron will" and ferocious virtue became Sixtus V (1585–90). I have quoted his reform methods, but as we shall see that Rome was almost as bad as ever in the seventeenth century, the point is not important. Indirectly indeed Sixtus, who, like nearly all the "good" Popes was a nepotist, aided the recovery of corruption. For the war to extinguish Protestantism in blood, which was now the dream of every Pope, he nursed the Papal finances until he had accumulated, largely by gross simony, a sum of many millions. Most of this he, knowing his cardinals, securely locked away; but they contrived to lay their hands upon two or three millions when he died, to the joy of Rome, and resumed the election battle.

Three Popes donned and laid down the tiara in a single year, and then, after twenty days of scheming and wrangling, Clement VIII (1592–1605) was elected.

Pastor, who has to sustain his fiction of a Counter-Reformation or reform of Rome without pressure, is here gravely misleading; except that he admits that graft and corruption were almost as rife as ever in the Papal offices. The truth is that there were only twelve years of stern and consistent attempts to reform morals in Rome and the Church during the whole of this period, and we shall find the entire fabric of the Roman Church still corrupt after the middle of the seventeenth century. Such was the situation that, at the death of Clement, the French spent about £125,000 in bribes to secure the election of Leo XI; and it amused Rome when he died in a few weeks. His successor, a harsh and violent man, very religious but equally zealous for astrology, and a nepotist, turned from reform to the war against Protestants, the Thirty Years War, for which Rome had longed for half a century. Gregory XV, who succeeded him, was drawn into the first condemnation of Galileo, but the senile Pope had much less to do with it than the hatred of the Jesuits and Cardinal Bellarmine. Such is modern Catholic sophistry about the matter, however, that it is advisable to give a literal translation of the Church's " censures " as they are recorded in the official documents.*

On p. 61 Favaro gives the Latin text of the condemnation of two propositions which are rightly ascribed to Galileo:—

1. The sun is the centre of the world and entirely immovable from place to place. *Censure.* All [the theologians consulted] said that the above proposition is foolish and absurd in philosophy and formally heretical because it explicitly contradicts the words of Holy Scripture in many places. . . .

2. The earth is not the centre of the world or immovable but moves as a body and with a diurnal motion.

Censure. All said that this proposition incurred the same censure in philosophy, and in respect of theological truth it is at least erroneous in faith.

It was under Gregory's successor that the second and more

* These documents are published for the first time in A. Favaro's *Galileo e l'Inquisizione* (1907). The latest writer on Galileo, F. Sherwood Taylor, who effectually disguises the fact that he is a Catholic, has not seen (or was unable to read) these documents, and his work abounds in errors, especially about the character of the Pope. The translations of documents which he gives are from a nineteenth-century writer, and worthless. A sound work on Galileo and Pope Urban VIII is badly needed.

scandalous condemnation occurred. The documents, Latin and Italian, given by Favaro completely demolish the statement of Taylor and other Catholics that the Pope was not personally hostile and was merely compelled to correct a breach of Galileo's engagement. There is a letter of December, 1632, in which the Pope harshly orders Galileo to appear at Rome within a month. This is followed by a certificate, by three of the leading physicians of Florence, that Galileo is so ill that it would endanger his life. The next letter from Rome is brutal:—

> His Holiness has ordered the Inquisitor to reply that His Holiness and the Sacred Congregation cannot and ought not to tolerate subterfuges of this sort. . . .

He is sending a Commissary, and if this official thinks Galileo able to travel " let him be sent on as a prisoner and bound in chains." There is the official report (June 21, 1633) of his appearance before the Inquisition in which he swears—let us be quite candid; the great scientist, completely broken, was forced to lie—that he has not held the Copernican theory since he was warned in 1616, and " he was told to tell the truth or he would be tortured " (p. 102). I do not suggest that he was tortured, but the documents leave a blank about his residence for some days, and he may have been in the jail of the Inquisition. There is finally the sentence of the Inquisition saying that he is " most vehemently suspected of heresy " and is condemned to " formal imprisonment."

The Catholic case—modern Catholic apologists are less scrupulous than their predecessors—rests in large part on a gross misrepresentation of the character of the Pope, but Pastor does not question that he was one of the most conceited and most arrogant of men, and came to be loathed and despised by the Romans. He was convinced, and it seems to be the case, that Galileo had held him up to ridicule. He was the most scandalous nepotist since Alexander VI, and his family, the Barberini, surpassed all records in criminal greed. Ranke gives (in Italian, Vol. III, Appendix CXI) a letter of the leading ambassador Contarini about the chief nephew, Cardinal Barberini:—

> The Pope's desire to aggrandise his nephews is the first motive of all his actions and declarations. . . . He [the cardinal] must have an income of 80,000 scudi [at least £200,000] from ecclesiastical benefices, and with the governorships and legations he holds he must have

something like 500,000 scudi a year and gets everything that he wants.

Ranke estimates that the family, which was originally poor, got more than £100,000,000. This was at a time when the taxes in Rome and the Papal States were very oppressive, especially on the poor, and the finances were in bewildering disorder. What is worse, the Pope handed over to his relatives the millions which Sixtus V had locked in the vaults of Sant Angelo for the war against the Protestants, and recent Catholic historians of the Papacy here break down and confess that Catholics probably lost the war owing to the Pope's misconduct. And while the Pope contemplated the corrupt gaiety of his nephews for twenty years and savagely humiliated the great scientist who laughed at his conceit, more than half of Europe was suffering, decade after decade, worse agonies than it suffered even in the second World War. In his *Historiarum Nostri Temporis Editio Ultima* (1655) Brachelius describes how the Catholic troops (Spanish, German, Croat, and Italian) behaved, under the fanatically Catholic Tilly (with Jesuits in his camp), when they took Magdeburg:—

> It would be more fitting to write in tears than in ink the fate of the captured city, to such horrors of cruelty did the victors descend. When they saw the gates burst open and the enemy stream in, the citizens threw down their arms and begged for mercy. When the furious soldiers would not give it, some tried to hide and others resumed their weapons, so that armed and unarmed fell together. Neither age nor sex was spared. . . . Boys, girls, and maids were cut down in the mad rage of the invaders. They were first raped and then murdered. Meantime a fire broke out, no one knows how, and the wind spread it over the city. This was the worst calamity of the besieged, for the men who had taken refuge in their houses with their wives and children were driven out by the flames and cut down. The fire continued late into the night and drove out the victors themselves. Next day, when the fire relented, they began to seek loot in the ruins. What was found in the cellars Tilly ordered to be distributed amongst the soldiers. They found the bodies of parents and children together where they had died by smoke or the sword. . . . It is said that Tilly himself shed tears when he saw the ruin of the city. Nothing remained of it except the cathedral and a few fishermen's huts.

The various accounts make it clear that, during the two days' horror, about 30,000 died out of a population of 35,000. These outrages were spread over Europe from southern Bohemia to Denmark, from Alsace to Poland, during thirty years (1618–48). In Bohemia the population was reduced from 3,000,000 to 780,000,

the number of villages from 30,000 to 6,000. Parts of Europe were deserted for a year owing to the rotting piles of unburied corpses. And all authorities are agreed that this war, instigated by the Jesuits and the Papacy in the name of religion, brought morality and all civilization down to its lowest level. Troops on both sides raped, murdered, and looted, and incredible masses of starving German women followed the armies to earn food. One Catholic army of 34,000 men had 127,000 women and other camp-followers.

The suggestion that is sometimes made that the Reformation had raised the moral level in Protestant countries, while Spain, Italy, and France remained as corrupt as ever, is entirely wrong. Luther was not the man to reform sex morals. Our police would not permit the literal translation of hundreds of his expressions, especially in his *Table Talk* and letters, and it is useless to paraphrase them, so I refrain from quoting. His chief Catholic opponent, Friar Thomas Murner, who made cathedrals rock with laughter at his sermons in verse, was often (we have the sermons) equally coarse. In his large history of the German people Jansen gives thirty pages of quotations from contemporaries, Catholic and Protestant, on the appalling state of morals in the sixteenth century. To quote a few:—

> The Churches, which ought to be kept holy as houses of prayer, are converted into taverns by the peasants. They store their Whitsun ale in them to keep it fresh, and swill it down within the sacred walls. They have the audacity also to mock the preacher and the prayers, and they mount the pulpits themselves and turn preaching to ridicule . . . gluttony and drunkenness, general drunkenness on the day of receiving the sacrament . . . adultery, usury, perjury, and every other species of crime and iniquity. . . . The great majority of the people are given up to godless sensual living; only a very few hold firmly to the faith and believe in divine revelation . . . the people live like wild beasts and pay little or no attention to their clergy. All sins are merely laughed at.

Of Magdeburg, in 1554, a contemporary writes:—

> Sins, vices, and crimes of all sorts increase and multiply from day to day and gain the upper hand. The people are growing more and more epicurean, and one religion seems to them as good as another.

For the morals of the clergy themselves see the equally copious quotations in Lea and in Hauck's ecclesiastical history of Germany. From the fifteenth century onwards literature is so abundant

that, it will be understood, I can give here only a very small selection. How the Germans returned to the same general looseness in the eighteenth century, when the scars of the Thirty Years War were forgotten, we shall see later. Whatever change of morals there was after 1500 affected only a very small proportion of the population in every country.

Rome, as I showed, continued its scandalous gaiety even during the religious war. The courtesans again prospered—one is said to have made a fortune of £150,000—and the administrative system of the Church was terribly corrupt, while its crass ineptitude as an international organization was exhibited, to the scorn and merriment of Europe, in the early editions of its Index of Prohibited Books. Luther's name was given as Lutheti, Zwingli became Zironga, Johann Pupper von Goch was turned into Johannes Purpurus et Gorcianus, Clemanges (a pious Catholic) into Elemangio, and English names included " Arturus Britannicus " (the Arthurian legends) and " the works of the Wizard Merlin." Most of the most ludicrous blunders were on the Index for two centuries.

To the despised Pope Urban VIII succeeded the equally despised Innocent X (1644–55). The ambassador Contarini reported to his government (in Ranke):—

> The people of the Papal Court say that he was elected for three reasons: he spoke little, dissimulated much, and did nothing.

Ranke quotes (in Latin) also a passage from a letter of the Greek scholar Nicias Erythraeus, who was in Rome at the time of the election:—

> The city is without law, the republic without dignity. There are more armed men in Rome than I have ever seen elsewhere. Every house that shows any sign of wealth is guarded by a body of soldiers. They would make a large army if they were all brought together. These soldiers enjoy the utmost immunity and licence in the city. Murder is a daily occurrence, and nothing is more frequently heard than that some well-known man has been assassinated.

As the contributions of half of Europe had been cut off, one may wonder how the cardinals and nobles maintained this princely state. The finances were, in fact, in so chaotic a condition that nearly the whole revenue was required to pay interest on the Papal debt, and fresh loans were continually made. One of the chief items of the revenue of the Curia was the sale of

offices and benefices, for this traffic was, a hundred years after the Reformation, as infamous as ever. To the scorn of Rome the Pope now allowed the whole of this to fall into the hands of his sister-in-law Olimpia, a virago of a woman, and his nephews. The Florentine ambassador (in Ranke, Appendix 128) says of her:—

> A lady of great ability and power, which she obtained from the Pope. If any offices fell vacant at the Curia there could be no discussion of them without her participation. If there were any benefices to distribute the officials of the Dataria had orders to inform her at once of the value of the vacant benefice and put it at her disposal. If bishops were needed for churches the candidates had to address themselves to her, and those were preferred who brought the largest gifts.

The Venetian ambassador also speaks of the " insatiable cupidity of her house." Her palace, which was the richest in Rome, was besieged by clerical suppliants, and she proposed to share her fortune with her weak-witted son Camillo. The Pope promised to make him a cardinal, but he got the chance to marry the richest heiress in Rome, and did so. To the delight of Rome, the daughter-in-law defied Olimpia and stole her thunder, and Olimpia then got the Pope to adopt another youth as " the cardinal-nephew." The story of the disgraceful feud runs through the caustic life of Olimpia (*Vita di Donna Olimpia*) by the contemporary Abbate Gualdi (probably a pseudonym of G. Leti):—

> As soon as she heard of the marriage of her son she saw the danger that threatened her. She at once conceived a deep hatred and jealousy of her daughter-in-law, who was a very accomplished and able lady, of fine figure and great wit. . . . She tried every trick she knew to destroy the influence of her son with the Pope.

But the passages are too numerous to quote. The Pope's relatives amassed a huge fortune, yet when he died they let his body lie untended for three days until a priest paid half a crown to a woman to clean it and prepare it for burial.

" Now we will choose an honest man," the cardinals said; and after the customary bitter wrangle they elected another scandalous nepotist, Alexander VII, whose chief nephew rose from poverty to an income of £50,000 a year, and after him an easy-going old man of eighty, who played whist while his nephew ruled Rome. The Papal budget was now about 2,500,000 scudi a year, and

there was an annual deficit of 170,000. How the clerical city contrived to maintain its gaiety in these circumstances, and what the general condition was, we learn from a memoir which the devout Cardinal Sachetti presented to the Pope in 1663. It was suppressed, but the romantic Queen Christina of Sweden got a copy of it from the Swedish Archives, and Arckenholtz reproduces it in his *Mémoires* (Vol. IV, App. XXXII). Unfortunately this rare work, the only one to give Sachetti's report, had to be put in cold storage for the duration of the war, but I read it some years ago, and felt that it fully justified the summary words of Sachetti to the Pope which Ranke quotes:—

> Afflictions, Holy Father, which are worse than the afflictions of the Assyrians and the Egyptians. People, not conquered by the sword but subject to the Roman See, are treated with greater barbarity than the slaves of Syria or Africa.

He is speaking of the oppression of the common people of Rome and Italy by the rich, especially the richer prelates and cardinals. Ranke quotes a description of the law courts from a manuscript (in the Vienna archives) by a lawyer who had worked a quarter of a century in them. All justice was bought and sold, every lawyer getting at least 500 scudi (several hundred pounds) each year in Christmas presents. Ranke concludes:—

> It is evident that the administration of the law must have been utterly perverted and corrupt. The vacations lasted four months, and during the remainder of the year the members of the court led a life of dissipation and excitement.

Bishops and common priests had to pay an annual commission or pension (particularly to cardinals) for their benefices. Many bishoprics were vacant because no priest could afford to accept them, and in 1667 twenty-eight bishops and archbishops in the Kingdom of Naples alone were deposed for not paying the pensions attached to the office. Rome and the Papal States were grossly corrupt, yet historians now repeat the Catholic fiction of a Counter-Reformation.

So they continued until the French Revolutionaries brought something like a moral code into Italy; though we now read how this first eruption of " the Reds " debauched Europe. The Papal Chair saw a long line of mediocrities come and go, even the " devout " character with which all are credited being often of a singular nature. The " saintly " Innocent XIII made a

cardinal—even the Catholic-censored *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that he paid 8,000,000 francs for it—of the French First Minister Dubois, whose obscene and utterly unscrupulous life was known all over Europe. This was in 1723. Next year Benedict XIII, another " saintly " man, delegated his rule to a minister, Cardinal Coscia, who made more than a million out of the Church by corrupt means in six years. His successor, a senile pietist (aged 79) upon whom the cardinals fell back after four months' fighting in the Conclave, made more than a million by lotteries and simony. Then came the one Pope who enjoyed any prestige in Europe in two centuries, the learned Benedict XIV.

Benedict was visited while he was still Archbishop of Bologna by the famous French jurist, President de Brosses. In his *Lettres familières* he writes to a friend (I, 250 in the 1858 edition):—

> When Sainte-Palaye and I do not go there [to meet the ladies of the city, who are " much more than coquettish "] we go to have a talk with the Cardinal-Archbishop Lambertini, a good fellow without any fuss who tells us some very good stories about girls and about the Roman Curia. I took care to memorize some of them to use later. He likes especially to make them up or to learn them about the Regent [the most flagrantly immoral prince in Europe] and his confidant Cardinal Dubois [see above]. I told him all the stories I knew. His conversation is very pleasant, but he makes use of expletives that are not Cardinalitial.

Next year the Pope died, and de Brosses met the cardinal again at Rome during the election. He was " amusing and licentious in speech but virtuous in conduct." De Brosses describes the usual long and futile fight and the need to fall back upon an outsider. Lambertini went about saying, in joke, to the cardinal-electors: " Now if you want a good fellow [*coglione*, a very gross word] elect me." They did. De Brosses then wrote (II, 439):—

> He has a free tongue and makes indecent remarks but is correct in conduct . . . a good man, but he must get rid of a way of talking that is more suitable for a grenadier than a Pope.

As is well known, Benedict had a friendly correspondence with Voltaire. When there were murmurs he said that he " did not find it clear that Voltaire was a stranger to the faith " (Artaud de Montor's *Histoire des Souverains Pontifes*, 1849, I, 246). Voltaire was then more than fifty years old and, one would say, fairly well known.

Since we shall find Rome and the Papal States still as corrupt and disorderly in the nineteenth century, I need not quote further; and one quotation will suffice to illustrate the condition of the rest of Italy. In 1780 a very strict priest, Scipio de Ricci, nephew of the famous General of the Jesuits, became Bishop of Pistoia. From documents in the archives of the Ricci family, and largely in the bishop's own words, L. J. de Potter compiled the *Mémoires* which give us our best and most reliable picture of the time. As a priest, Ricci was in Rome just after the death of Clement XIV, who had suppressed the Jesuits. He says:—

> The account of his illness and death sent to the Madrid Court by the Spanish ambassador to the Holy See contains clear proof that the Pope had been poisoned [by the Jesuits].

After following the Conclave he wrote:—

> I felt that the ambition to succeed was not so inconsistent with the desire to remain honest in any other part of the world as it is in Rome. I decided to give up all thought of it, so horrified was I by what I saw, for it was clear that there was the greatest hypocrisy among the prelates (p. 26).

Six years later he becomes a bishop:—

> As soon as I reached Pistoia I began to use every means in my power to reform the Dominican nuns of the Convent of Sta. Lucia.

But I must condense this story, which runs through the book. The convent was rich, many of the nuns being of the highest families, and was under the control of the Dominican monks, who used it as a brothel. They slept with the nuns and took men to sleep with them. Sixteen years before Ricci came, the preceding bishop had taken up the fight; but Rome had protected the monks and nuns (at a price, of course). The author quotes, from the archives, a letter of the prioress to the rector of the episcopal seminary:—

> [The guilty monks] were all that she had known except three or four in twenty-four years. They said that their principle was that God forbids hatred, not love, and that woman was made for man. The priests become the husbands of the nuns, the lay brothers the husbands of the serving sisters. Nothing goes on but feasts, games, dances, and comedies, especially at the illness or death of a sister, which is made the occasion of a regular carnival for the whole convent. . . . The situation is the same at Sta. Lucia, Prato, Pisa, and Perugia, the same abandonment, the same orgies, everywhere. The

nuns of St. Vincent's a few years ago had an extraordinary passion for two monks.

Ricci confirms that the Dominican monks slept in the dormitory of the nuns, and adds that it was the same with the Franciscan monks and nuns at Florence. Complaints had been made to Rome, without effect, in 1642—it is clear that the mediaeval custom simply continued—and the civil authorities had intervened in 1774, equally without effect. Ricci summoned the police; but the nuns and monks got the General of the Dominican Order (a loose man) and the " Cardinal Protector " of the Order at Rome to induce the Pope to condemn this interference of the civil power in sacred matters. This was the " noble and pious " Pope Pius VI. The nuns then threatened to poison or strangle the few pious members of the community who had complained, and they fled. However, Ricci detected heresy in the two rebel-leaders (of noble families) of the nuns, one of them fifty years old (though " plunged in the most infamous orgies "), and Rome became more attentive. The Inquisitors were brought in. From the archives the following question and answer are quoted:—

Have you abused the Sacred Host?
Yes, to show my contempt of it and because I did not believe what was taught about it I threw it in the closet. About eight years ago I once took it out of my mouth and put it in a little box and later I took it out of the box and pressed it against my . . .

There is a strong suggestion of Satanism, which seems to have been widespread in the convents and monasteries. The nun names the priests who taught her, and the nuns she in turn taught. She taught little girls of seven to put their hands on their . . . and say: " Holy Spirit, come into my heart." It is a Satanist formula. She and her associates were Lesbians. The archbishop took the sacrament to these nuns in the jail:—

" I have brought you the little Jesus," he said. " Then we'll show you our Blessed Virgin," they replied. He fled.

The Jesuits and Dominicans continued to defend them and to persecute Ricci until the Revolution.

To many it may seem that these suggestions of Satanism belong to the rich historical mythology of the Middle Ages and are as fantastic as the absurdities of certain modern novelists on that line. But the only myth about the matter is the modern idea

that withered old hags were called witches and persecuted as such, or that wicked ex-priests in France in the seventeenth century said Black Masses to the devil. After the scholarly work on the witches, of Dr. Margaret Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921), and the three large volumes of material left at his death by H. C. Lea (*Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*, 1939), there is no excuse for these misunderstandings. The word " witch " is misleading on account of its old associations. There was a cult of Satan in Europe, especially from the thirteenth century, which in the course of five centuries had millions of adherents of all ages (babies in arms were dedicated to it), both sexes, and every stratum of society, lay and clerical. It was organized, and its local officials or organizers impersonated " the Spirit," as they called the devil, at the secret nocturnal assemblies. Hundreds defied the judges and preferred death to apostasy. It has been suggested that it was a reaction against the insistence of the Church on chastity, but the picture of European morals I have given in the last few chapters stultifies that theory. I suggest that it arose from the unnaturalness of the theoretical Christian ethic and the hypocrisy of the Church. The devil, who encouraged joy, was the real Friend and Father of Men. It will be enough to quote two or three documents, which show its surprising range. Lea reproduces in Latin the passage in Linden's *Gesta Trevirorum* describing the campaign against it of the Archbishop of Trèves in 1586:—

> The whole country rose to exterminate the witches. This movement was promoted by men in high office who hoped to get wealth from the work of the Inquisition. They went through the towns and villages of the diocese dragging both men and women to trial and torture and burned great numbers of them. . . . Even the leading men of the city of Trèves were not spared. The judge, two burgomasters, several councillors and associate judges, canons of various collegiate churches, parish priests, and rural deans were swept away in the ruin. . . .

Incredible as this may seem, it is confirmed by a mass of other contemporary evidence which Lea gives for Germany, the Lowlands, France, and Spain, especially by a letter written in 1629 by no less a person than the Chancellor of the Prince-Bishop of Württemburg, who started a similar campaign:—

> There are still 400 in the city, high and low, of every rank and both sexes, even clerics, who are so seriously accused that they may be arrested at any time . . . clerics, councillors, doctors, city officials,

and court assessors are to be executed. . . . The Prince-Bishop has over 40 students who are soon to be pastors, and thirteen or fourteen of them are said to be witches. A few days ago a dean was arrested, and two others who were summoned have fled. The notary of our Church Consistory, a very learned man, was arrested yesterday and tortured. A third of the city is involved. The richest and most prominent of the clergy have already been executed. A week ago a maid of nineteen, the fairest in the whole city and a girl of singular modesty and purity, was executed. She will be followed by seven or eight others belonging to the best families. There are 300 children of three or four years who are said to have had intercourse with the devil. . . . I have seen children of seven and promising students of 10, 12, 13, and 15 executed. . . . It is beyond doubt that at a place called Frau Ringberg the devil held a meeting with 8,000 of his followers. . . .

This extraordinary cult—it might be called simply the cult of sex—filled Europe, Catholic and Protestant, especially at the time when the conventional historian represents it as purified by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. One pious writer of the time, an eminent lawyer, explains that the missionaries having recently expelled the devils from India and Japan, they came in droves to Europe and sought followers. The cult was, of course, continuous from the Dark Age, and its remarkable spread in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is only another proof that sexual morals were as licentious as ever. I have quoted Jansen for Germany, and one may read the works of Scherr (*Geschichte der deutschen Frauenwelt*, etc.), Vehse, and others, for similar quotations for the period after the Thirty Years War. Morals in France are sufficiently well known, and how the clergy and the Jesuits drove the soberest and most industrious body of citizens, the Huguenots, out of the country is equally known. Modern Catholic writers have, however, induced so many to think lightly of the famous St. Bartholomew Massacre, representing it as a popular outburst of limited significance, that I may quote a few sentences from one of the leading historians of the time, A. d'Aubigné (*Histoire Universelle*, 1889 ed., pp. 313–30):—

In the evening the Duc de Guise and the leader of the enterprise summoned the French and Swiss captains and said: "Now is the time when, as the king wishes, we must avenge ourselves on God's enemies. The beast is in the toils [the Huguenot leaders had been treacherously invited to Paris] and must not escape." . . . At midnight, the queen, who feared that the king was wavering, went to his

room. . . . Finding him in some doubt about the business she said: "Isn't it better to tear away these rotten limbs than to lacerate the bosom of the Church, the spouse of Christ?" She went on to quote [in Italian] a passage from a sermon by Bishop Bitone: "How can piety be cruelty? How can cruelty be piety?" The king agreed and ordered that the tocsin of the palace should be rung. The streets were already full of armed men. . . . Beaudisne Pluviant [whose murderer took his shoes to his wife and urged her to save herself by marrying him], Berni, and Soubize [high nobles] were dragged through the streets dead to the front of the Louvre and exposed to the gaze of the ladies of the Court, who examined the body of Soubize to see if he really was impotent as his wife had pleaded in court. . . . Brion, over eighty years old and as white as snow, was stabbed, though the Prince de Conti [his boy-pupil] put his little arms round his tutor's neck to ward off the blows. La Force, who was found in bed with his two sons, was killed. The elder boy was also killed, and the younger, a lad of twelve, was covered with their blood and left for dead. . . . At one place thirteen of them were thrown out of the windows, dragged through the streets, and cast into the river. . . . The officers incited the citizens to join in the horrid work . . . the air was filled with the groans of the dying, mutilated bodies were flung from windows, the doors were choked with dead and dying, the middle of the streets [then open sewers] strewn with bodies that were dragged along. It was impossible to count the dead, men, women, and children, some of these issuing from the bellies of their mothers. The lady Yverni, the learned and charitable niece of Cardinal Brissonnet, escaped in the guise of a nun but she was recognized by her crimson-velvet slippers and was told that she would be spared if she would renounce her religion. She refused and was stabbed and thrown into the river, and people ran from all sides to hit the floating body with sticks and stones. Pierre Camus, a famous teacher, was dragged from his study and, his bowels protruding from his body, was whipped along the street by his young pupils. A girl named Royan, finding that a relative of hers and a former lover were hidden in her room, called the killers to them and went to boast of this to the queen, in whose service she was. Children of ten dragged along the bodies of other children. Babies played with the beards of the men who carried them off to die and were stabbed for it. . . .

The carnage continued in the provinces for weeks, and most of our recent historians accept the figure of 30,000 victims. The Pope had a *Te Deum* sung, and even when he had received full news (and, some say, the head of the Huguenot leader) he had a gold medal struck and a picture of the carnage painted and hung up in church.

Most people know what France became after this "purification," but all Europe was as bad. Saint-Simon says in his Memoirs:—

On account of Louis XIV Paris became the main sewer of the lusts of Europe. It was the rendezvous of the mistresses of all European rulers. It received the mistresses of the Kings of England, Denmark, Bavaria, Saxony, Savoy, Lorraine. . . .

There is no need to quote passages on the morals of Louis XIV, over which three Jesuit confessors in succession presided, and his appalling Court, but the Satanism that was mixed up with the epidemic of murder and adultery is now much misrepresented. It is common to say that, while a few ex-priests made money out of the courtiers by saying Black Masses, other details are wild popular gossip endorsed by credulous and uneducated officials. On the contrary, every one of the dozen priests involved was in active sacerdotal work in Paris—one was at a very fashionable church—and the judges who were specially appointed by the King to examine and try the accused were the most respected members of the Royal Council. The idea that we depend on Parisian gossip purveyed by scandal-writers of the time is quite wrong. The verbatim official records of the examinations and trials were—except for the parts exposing the highest persons of his Court, which Louis burned—published (*Archives de la Bastille*, 17 vols.) in 1873 by F. Ravaisson, and though some of the witnesses were grossly ignorant and coarse women who made absurd statements occasionally, the general picture afforded by several years of trials—it is false that the evidence was got by torture—is appalling. Every class, lower, middle, and noble, is involved, a dozen of the highest ladies of the Court employing priests to say Black Masses (to procure deaths, find hidden treasure, or get lovers or advancement) of an obscene nature—generally on the naked abdomen of the lady—and paying immense sums for murder to a large group of the lowest women of the city. The chief priest-criminal Guibourg, a filthy pockmarked little man with a squint, was in clerical service to the end, and a few lines may be quoted about him and other priests. On July 15, 1680 (VI, 251), Lesage (who had never been a cleric, though often described as an ex-priest) testified:—

Guibourg and the women went into a cellar, and he said mass on the belly of one of the women. . . . Another priest, Lefèbre, made the responses at the mass. Lefèbre and Guibourg perpetrated a lot of folly [a sacrilegious sex-orgy] in the house of the priest Fourquet. . . . Those who assisted at the masses freely described what took place to me and others . . . the women on whose bellies the masses

were said were entirely naked. . . . Guibourg has said masses also on the belly of the Countess d'Argenton, the Countess de la Saint-Pont, and the wife of Baudouin [Baldwin] an English tailor, and this was in an apartment of the Royal Palace while the Queen of England was staying there. The Countess d'Argenton and Baudouin's wife wanted their husbands poisoned.

Three days later Lesage said:—

Guibourg said mass on the belly of many women, one an actress [to get influence with the King], all naked . . . on the belly of a lady of quality [Mme. de Montespan, then the greatest lady in France] . . . and on after-births, from which La Voisin afterwards distilled a liquid. . . . He said other masses in a cellar in the presence of women and children who chanted invocations to the devil. . . . The priest Rebours also said mass on the belly of a woman. She would not employ [the priest] Davot because he was a drunkard. . . . Mme. de Vivonne told me that Filastre gave one of her own children as a sacrifice to the devil for the success of her affairs, and this was done by her parish priest and Mme. de Vivonne was present. . . . The priest Tournet also said masses on the bellies of naked women. He ordered one woman to offer her daughter, a fine girl of 14 or 15, to the devil. . . . He said three masses on her and raped her during one of them.

Guibourg's mistress, as foul and ugly as he, was examined on August 9:—

She said that she had had seven children by Guibourg, and he had taken charge of each after birth [and, she hints, killed them] . . . one was born under a hedge in the country. . . .

The daughter of the chief hag, Voisin, describes the masses in detail on August 22 and says that the priests Cotton, Meignan, and Deshayes also performed them. Jesuits and Franciscan friars were in the unholy ring. On October 9 she testified:—

She saw her mother burn three or four infants [sacrificially killed by Guibourg, who was always careful to baptize them] in her baking furnace [the police found this]. At the mass of Mme. de Montespan [the King's famous mistress] a prematurely born child was put in a basin, and Guibourg cut its throat and poured blood in the chalice and consecrated it . . . and her mother took away its entrails to be distilled [for drugs] and the blood and host in a glass vessel that Mme. de Montespan had brought . . . she spoke of the fouling of the chalice by Guibourg, Des Oeillets [chief maid of Mme. de Montespan] and an English Lord.

I have the details, but must leave to the imagination what this last sentence means; though I fear that no one will guess the

truth. I must be content to say that four large volumes of the Archives, covering a dozen years of life in Paris under Louis XIV, are full of this sort of thing. It is an academic scandal that some historians still speak of the " glory " of the age of that gluttonous reprobate.

How far the Satanism that was mixed up with the epidemic of poisoning and the use of filthy and incredible charms and drugs was sincere it would be difficult to say, but a rare work by a distinguished judge of southern France, Pierre de l'Ancre (*Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons*, 1612), shows us that it flourished in an extraordinary degree in 1609. De l'Ancre was sent with the President of the Bordeaux Parlement to inquire into certain disturbances in the Basque province of Labourt (where Biarritz now is). He soon found that the whole province was saturated with witchcraft. A large number of the priests, some of the gentry, many of the men, and the great majority of the girls (from infancy upward) and women were in it. His 500-page book is a complete exhibition of genuine witchcraft:—

There are 3,000 souls in the district of Labourt, and there are very few families that are not tainted with witchcraft . . . the infinite number horrified us. When we arrived they fled in crowds, by sea [with their fishermen-husbands, some to Newfoundland] and land. . . . They created such a panic in Navarre, in Spain, that the Inquisitor came to the frontiers. . . . We found the churches profaned and the priests infected with this ordure (p. 30).

One very important witch said that she had always believed that witchcraft was the best religion as she had often seen some sort of mass said with more pomp than in church. Jeanne Debasson, aged 29, said that the Sabbath [witch meeting] is the real paradise. . . . Marie de la Ralde, aged 18 and a very beautiful girl, said that she had been a witch and attended the Sabbath since she was 10 years old. . . . Marie d'Aspilcoucete, aged 19, said that she had attended since she was 7. . . . Jeannette de Belloc, aged 24, said that she was made a witch by a woman when she was an infant . . . that at great feasts they kissed the devil's buttocks, and that children of 2 and 3, as soon as they could speak renounced Christ . . .! Jeannette d'Abadis, aged 16 . . . (p. 126).*

But all these public ceremonies [the normal services in church] do not prevent the majority of them, especially of the priests, from being

* Very few of the witches were old women, for sexual abandonment in all forms was the chief object at the meetings. It is clear that the men organizers (virtually, and often literally, priests) used artificial phalli. All details will be found in Dr. Murray's work. I agree with her that, seeing that girls were dedicated in infancy and in view of certain peculiar answers of Joan of Arc at her trial, she had probably been initiated.

abominable witches. They [the priests] are so much respected that no one is scandalized by what they do; the cabaret, dancing, lay clothes, ball-games in the streets, the swords and daggers they wear out walking or at the village feasts, are not criticized. Going on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Irun and other shrines with three or four beautiful girls is quite common, both with the Navarrese priests across the frontiers and ours, as we have often noticed. Such was their position that at the beginning of our inquiry we dare not accuse them, but in the end Satan could not prevent an elderly priest of good family from giving them away [after enjoying the orgies until he was old]. . . . We arrested seven of them [the rest fled], mostly men in charge of the best parishes in Labourt [one over 60]. . . . After renouncing the Creator, joining in obscene dances and eating the heart of an unbaptized infant—after a hundred thousand obscene embraces, including sodomy and other devilry—listening to an infinite number of boasts of crimes and vices and seeing a number of toads burned to make poison for men and crops, they went on to make a mockery of the Holy Sacrament. . . . The priest Bocal actually sang his first mass at the Sabbath [the collection was given to his mother, who was present], and to complete the mockery he sang one next day in his parish church with great pomp and magnificence. . . . Two of the priests refused to say anything though accused by 40 witnesses (p. 417).

Such was France more than 1,000 years after its conversion. Lea gives abundant evidence that Spain was as bad as any country in Europe; but, for the best all-round picture of what the peninsula had become 200 years after the end of its magnificant Arab civilization, read the account of two well-educated and temperate English travellers of the seventeenth century. As the only work in which they are found, Dr. John Harris's *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliothica* (2 vols., 1705), is now very rare I will quote a few passages. The first is an account by F. Willoughby in 1664 (II, 702):—

Spain is in many places, not to say most, very thinly populated and almost desolate [in the tenth century it had had a population of 30,000,000 and been extraordinarily rich]. The causes are (1) a bad religion, (2) the tyrannical Inquisition, (3) the multiplicity of whores, (4) the barrenness of the soil, (5) the wretched laziness of the people, (6) the expulsion of the Jews and Moors, (7) wars and plantations. . . . The people were . . . most horribly rude, insolent, imperious, and uncivil to strangers. Their children are the most unmannerly and ill-bred of any in the world. . . . They are extremely prone to lying. When they are angry *cornuto* [cuckold] is the first word. . . . For fornication and impurity they are the worst of all nations, at least in Europe, all the inns in Andalusia, Castile, Granada, etc., having whores who dress the meat and do all the business. They are to be

had at a very cheap rate. It were a shame to mention their impudence, lewdness, and immodest behaviour and practices. They are so lazy that in their shops they will say they have not a commodity rather than take pains to look for it. . . . The French do almost all the work in Spain. I have heard some travellers say that should the King of France recall his subjects from Spain the Spaniards would hazard being starved to death.

Willoughby was an experienced traveller and business man. The next writer is a " gentleman " who visited Portugal and Spain in 1693. Arriving at Lisbon in Lent, he saw the famous religious processions with bands of penitents scourging themselves:—

But amongst the true devotees are to be seen many others hired on purpose by the religious societies to increase the number of penitents: a thing so scandalous that even the foreign Catholics residing here blush at it, there being scarce any but the most profligate and debauched wretches, that will expose themselves to such dangerous mortifications for lucre's sake. . . . Their predominant vice is the conversation of lewd women. . . . Madrid is only a village, but it may deservedly be called the largest in Europe. . . . Some of the streets are regular, spacious, and noble but very dirty, nauseous, and full of filth. . . . The gentlemen of Valencia . . . are so bigoted in their foolish niceties or Spanish punctilios that upon a very slender occasion they will either murther one another themselves or hire others to do it. The friends of the murthered party think themselves obliged to revenge his death and go in strong parties, some a hundred in a body, armed each with five guns. . . . Not long ago two of such fellows were executed at Valencia who confessed that one of them had murthered 33 persons and the other 77.

Spanish or Latin America generally was worse. Two Catholic generals were sent by Spain to report on South America, and they—Jorge Juan and A. de Ulloa—submitted a manuscript of a fairly long work on it in 1740. This was not published until an Englishman, Don Barry, obtained a copy of it seventy years later and brought it out in Spanish, in London. The eighth chapter of the second volume is on the morals of the clergy and is one of the most amazing pictures of clerical morals in all literature, but it has never been translated. From the 1918 (Madrid) edition of the work, *Noticias secretas de America*, I translate a few passages:—

The ecclesiastical body in Peru is divided into secular priests and regulars [monks]. Each body lives so licentiously, scandalously, and wilfully that you will not find worse in any country. . . . The secular priests live evilly but . . . they do not sink to the level of the monks,

whose conduct from the first step they take, and even in their convents, is so notorious that it fills the mind with horror. . . . Of the vices that flourish in Peru the most scandalous and most general is concubinage. Everybody practises it: Europeans and Creoles, married and single, priests and monks. . . . It is so common for people who live in these countries to indulge in it that it is a point of honour even among the common people to have a mistress, and if a foreigner comes to live amongst them and does not adopt the custom they attribute this, not to virtue, but to poverty or economy. . . . The liberty which the monks enjoy in these countries opens the door to disorder. In the large towns the majority of them live outside the monastery, in private houses, leaving the monasteries to those who cannot afford to keep private establishments. It is the same in the small towns and villages. There is no closure [against women] in the monasteries, and the monks have their mistresses living with them in their cells, just as the monks outside have them [and their children] in their houses, so that they live in the same way as married folk. They travel with their wives and children and so make quite public the disorder of their lives [all the monks wearing the familiar monastic costume everywhere]. We have repeatedly met them in this fashion on the roads, and it is particularly notable at the time of the chapters [annual religious conferences of monks] because they take their families openly with them to these. While we were at Quito the chapter of the Franciscan Order was held there, and for a fortnight before it opened we watched monks [in their brown robes and sandals] making for the city with their concubines. . . . But this is nothing to what follows. In places with a small population the monasteries are turned into brothels, and in large towns they are the theatres of unheard-of abominations and execrable vices [sodomy, etc.]. . . . Women go in and out at all hours, and they cook and wash for and serve the monks, taking the place of lay-brothers. The concubines also go in and out at all times. . . . We went once to see certain monks whom we knew, and we found three girls in the prior's cell. They were rubbing him with oil, as he had had an accident the day before when he visited a convent of nuns with his mistress [and was so drunk that he fell].

In a footnote we are assured that this sort of thing had been universal since the beginning of the Spanish occupation 200 years earlier. Rome quite certainly knew of it from its visiting prelates, but it was not until the revolution and the growth of the Liberals that there was any change. Indeed, ten years ago an American who had lived twenty years in Ecuador sent me, from that republic, a description of clerical life that vies with the above, and twenty years earlier an American resident in the Canaries told me that in his district the monks and nuns made money by lending the keys of their outhouses to lovers. The Ages of Faith still live.

It is a point of great importance to bear in mind, in considering the radically new turn that the history of Europe took with the outbreak of the French Revolution, that this extraordinarily low moral standard was still general in Christendom in the eighteenth century. Moral censors of our modern "degeneration" seem to be entirely ignorant of this, though the literature about the state of England and the American colonies is open to everybody. The condition of France is notorious, and such cosmopolitan works as Casanova's Memoirs give a broader picture, even including Switzerland. German life, which had recovered from the effects of the Thirty Years War, was as loose as at the height of the Middle Ages; but even untranslated literature is now so extensive that here I can give only a few specimens. Scherr's *Geschichte der deutschen Frauenwelt* is particularly valuable and reliable because it consists mainly of quotations from contemporary writers, and I translate fragments of these about Prussia. One is a description of Berlin by the English ambassador Lord Malmesbury in 1772:—

> Berlin is a city in which, if by strong you mean honourable, there is neither a strong man nor a chaste woman. There is a complete corruption of morals in both sexes and all classes. . . . The men all seek to lead a life of luxury on inadequate means. But the women are harpies who have sunk so low rather from lack of shame than lack of anything else. They yield to the one who pays best and have not the least idea of refinement and real love (II, 204).

Scherr confirms this by a quotation from the distinguished German, Georg Forster, who visited Berlin seven years later. Writing to Jacobi, he says:—

> I was greatly mistaken in my preconceived ideas of this city. I found it externally much finer than I had expected but inwardly much fouler. Berlin is assuredly one of the finest cities in Europe, but its people! Hospitality and refined enjoyment have degenerated into sensuality, debauch, and gluttony; free and enlightened thought into unbridled licence. The women are corrupt everywhere.

Scherr shows that the situation grew steadily worse all over Germany until the Napoleonic war. He quotes from *Confidential Letters on the State of the Prussian Court* (1799):—

> The women are so corrupt that even ladies of aristocratic families stoop to the level of procuresses. They attract young women and girls in order to seduce them, learn how to cure slight infections, and sell them contraceptives. In many cases these corrupt women com-

bine and hire a furnished apartment, and in this they instal their lovers and hold bacchanalian orgies. There are women of rank in Berlin who are not ashamed to sit in the seats of the prostitutes at the theatre, find customers there, and go to their houses with them. As Berlin is the seat of the Prussian monarchy, the centre from which all good and evil spread to the provinces, this corruption has gradually conquered them. The military officers have done most to spread these things. They trample upon all that is considered sacred—religion, conjugal fidelity, and all domestic virtues. Their own wives are common property amongst them. No respectable civilian can find a wife who has not already been contaminated by them or will not presently be pursued by them.

Controversial writers connect such conditions with Frederick the Great because he was a Deist, but it was the same in every German Court and province. Apart from Scherr this is amply shown in the specialist work of Vehse, *Süddeutsche Fürstenhöfe* (3 vols., 1921), which gives amazing pictures of the life of the Catholic as well as the Protestant Courts; but a book would be required to give an adequate account of German social morals in the eighteenth century.

The state of French morals is, as I said, notorious; but there is a mistaken idea that there was a great reform in the later years of Louis XIV, and that the vices of the Regency that followed his death in 1715—in spite of his extraordinary sexual life, Louis had left only a great grandson of the age of four to succeed him and the Duc d'Orleans was Regent—are represented as a new growth. The *Cambridge Modern History* (VI, 132) emphatically denies this: "The most flagrant sins and the most notorious sinners existed without disguise under the Maintenon regime." The leading writer of the period and a distinguished courtier, the Duc de Saint-Simon, says—in his *Mémoires* (22 vols., 1813 edition)—of the head of the French Church during the later days of Louis, the Cardinal de Bouillon:—

> His morals were infamous, and he made no secret of them. Few men of distinction have dishonoured themselves so completely as he, and in some of the gravest respects—his debauches, his ingratitude, his felonies (XI, 101).

Of the Regent, even before the death of Louis, Saint-Simon says (XI, 178):—

> He became so accustomed to debauch that he could not do without it. That is why his orgies were often so strange and scandalous. He wanted to surpass all other debauched men, to introduce the most

blasphemous talk into his conversation, and to find a particular pleasure in holding his worst orgies on the holiest days of the Church. . . . I have heard him express admiration to the point of veneration for the Grand Prior because for forty years he had never gone to bed sober or hesitated to make a public parade of his mistresses. . . . He and Mme. the Duchess de Berry [his daughter and generally believed to be intimate with him] used sometimes, while she dressed in the presence of Mme. de Saint-Simon, to dispute which of them knew most about orgies. . . . He persisted in the impiety and debauches he had learned from Dubois [his first minister, to whom Rome sold the cardinal's hat for 8,000,000 francs] but he never surpassed the notorious crimes of his tutor. . . . He did not hesitate to say that the obscure and mostly criminal folk with whom he consorted in his debauches were *roués*. . . . One Christmas Eve he accompanied the King to mass at Versailles, and he surprised the court by his close attention to his book, but to one who congratulated him he said, " You are a fool; it was a copy of Rabelais which I brought because I feared I would be bored." . . . The Duchess de Berry was a model of all the vices all her life. . . . She often drank until she became unconscious and was angry because her husband would not do the same. . . . She never controlled herself because there were others at the table [her father got drunk with her]. . . . The one woman who had her entire confidence had a talent and resourcefulness of the most horrible description. . . . Their [the Regent and the Cardinal] suppers were always in strange company; his mistresses, sometimes an actress from the Opera, often his daughter, and the dozen obscure men and women whom he called his *roués*. . . . They drank heavily and shouted filth and impiety.

It was for criticizing this Regent that Voltaire was sent to the Bastille while the leading prelates lived like princes. On the eve of the Revolution the head of the French Church was the Cardinal de Rohans—a man who, like the Cardinal de Bouillon, disdained to conceal his vices; while Archbishop de Brienne (Archbishop of Paris and First Minister), Archbishop Dillon, Archbishop Cicé, and most of the bishops, led lives of equal luxury and disorder. The time had come for the opening of an entirely new chapter in the story of man.

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

FOR the last 150 years a very large part of the literary record of Christendom is in English, and a large part of the remainder has been translated into English. There are, however, still many works which tell historical facts that the appeasement policy infecting modern literature would prefer to keep from the public, and a few passages from these may be selected to complete my task. One of the gravest faults of history in our own time is that it does not clearly state that a pregnant new era, an age of revolution against privilege and counter-revolution, opened in 1789 and continues in the world-disturbance of our time; and that torture and death were the means employed by the royalist-clerical counter-revolutionaries, and on an appalling scale, from their first recovery of power. With this is associated a refusal to tell how the mediaeval Church retained its mediaeval features until the second half of the nineteenth century. It is chiefly suppressed passages on these points that I have to translate.

The first relates a fact which few historians now notice even in the briefest terms: the fact that in 1789 the French aristocracy and (with less promptness) prelates voluntarily accepted the revolution and surrendered their privileges. I take the account from the anonymous *Histoire de la Révolution de 1789* (12 vols.), which was published two years afterwards and takes the account from the *Moniteur*, the official daily, of the day after this remarkable scene in the National Assembly on August 4th, 1789:—

> The Vicomte de Noailles [leader of the nobles] proposed, " (1) that the representatives of the nation have decreed that taxes shall be paid equally by all individuals of the nation in proportion to their income; (2) that in future all public charges shall be an equal burden upon all; (3) that all feudal rights shall be purchasable by the Communes or exchanged; (4) that the levies of the landowners, mortgages, and other personal obligations shall be annulled without compensation."
>
> The Duc d'Aiguillon [the second leader of the nobles] seconded and said: " The effervescence of the people who have affirmed our liberty when the guilty ministers [of the king] wanted to rob us of it, is an obstacle to liberty. . . . This insurrection, though culpable like all violence, has some justification in the vexations that were imposed upon them. . . . In this age of light, when sound philosophy has

regained its sway, in this happy epoch when, assembled to promote the public welfare and disavowing our personal interests, we are working for the regeneration of the State, it seems to me that before we set up the Constitution which the nation awaits we must prove to all citizens our good intentions and create as speedily as possible the equality of rights which ought to exist between all men and which alone assures them of freedom. I am sure that the feudal proprietors are prepared to sacrifice their rights on the altar of justice. They have already renounced their privileges and their fiscal exemptions, and you cannot go on to demand the sheer abdication of their feudal rights [without compensation]. . . ."

M. de la Paule [aristocratic landowner] spoke of "the horrible right, doubtless relegated ages ago to the dusty monuments of the barbarism of our fathers, by which the lord was authorized in certain cantons to have two of his vassals eviscerated when he returned from the hunt so that he might refresh himself by putting his feet in the bloody bodies of the wretches." In the end several foreign gentlemen who were in favour at the Court seemed to regret that they were not in a position to follow so noble an example. The Comte de Guise demanded that the price of redeeming the feudal rights should be put lower than the Duc d'Aiguillon asked. The Duc de Châtelet regretted that the previous speaker had forestalled him in regard to the redemption of rights. . . . Following up a hint of the Comte de Montmorency the President said that as none of the clergy had been heard this interesting discussion ought not to be closed without hearing their sentiments. The Bishop of Nancy [a minor prelate] took up the invitation and said . . . "the honourable member who had spoken had demanded redemption only for the landowners. In the name of the clergy I demand that if the feudal rights are redeemed it shall not be for the profit of the higher ecclesiastics but of the priests." The Bishop of Chartres approved all the measures that had been proposed. . . . All the clergy rose in support, and there was such a roar of applause that the sitting had to be suspended. . . . Every proposal of sacrifice was speedily followed by another, all the members of the Assembly vieing with each other in patriotic generosity. . . . The Archbishop of Aix energetically denounced the evils of feudalism. . . . The Duc de Liancourt proposed that a medal should be struck to commemorate this patriotic scene, and the Archbishop of Paris proposed to have a Te Deum sung in thanksgiving for the sacrifices. . . . The Assembly decided to send a deputy to the king to do homage and give him the title of "The Restorer of French Liberty" [which was done].

Other fallacies about the Revolution have been sufficiently discredited in modern history. It is agreed that the legend that a prostitute represented the goddess of Reason at a Feast of Liberty and Reason in the cathedral of Notre Dame, mounted the altar and sang a ribald song, is false in every word, but many may care to have a literal translation of the "Ode to Liberty,"

by M. J. Chénier, which was actually recited at the celebration. The cathedral had been handed by the bishop and chapter to the Council of Paris, and the authorities decided to hold in it—draping and *not* using the altars—a Feast of Liberty [Paris alone added " and Reason "] which had long been held in other parts of France. To be literal I translate the ode in prose:—

Come down, Freedom, thou daughter of Nature! The people have won back their immortal power. Over the pompous remains of the ancient impostures it raises an altar to thee.

Come, ye conquerors of kings, Europe beholds you. Come and repeat your success over false gods. Do thou, Holy Liberty, come and dwell in this temple. Be thou the goddess of the French.

One look from thee makes the wildest mountain rejoice. Bring forth the harvests amid the rocks. With thy hands adorn the ugliest field. Live girt about with icicles.

Thou dost give double measure to pleasure, virtue, genius. Man is always victorious under thy holy standard. He knows not what life is until he knows thee. He is created for thy regard.

All the kings make war upon the sovereign people. May they fall at thy feet, O Goddess. Soon over the bier of the tyrants of the earth shall the nations vow eternal peace.

Warriors of Freedom, brave and puissant race, armed with a human sword, sanctify fear. Let your blows see that the last slave follows the last king to the tomb.

More zeal than art, perhaps—it was Chénier's brother who was the real poet—but this, recited by one of the leading actresses of the Opera, is what sectarian history calls " the obscene screech of a prostitute."

There is no dispute in serious history about what followed as clerical civil war and invasion threatened France. It is agreed that the September Massacres, half the victims of which were criminals and prostitutes, were the work of a few hundred apparently religious men who wanted to " purify Paris." It is agreed that, of the victims of the Terror, 67 per cent. were working-men revolutionaries, and only 14 per cent. nobles, priests, or nuns. But there is almost a conspiracy, outside French literature, to conceal the fact that an appalling White Terror followed the Congress of Vienna and lasted half a century—longer in Spain and Portugal—in Catholic countries. There was a premature outbreak of it at the fall of Robespierre in 1793, and Frèron was sent from Paris to investigate. To his official report (*Mémoire historique sur la réaction royale*) he appends reports by local

authorities, like this referring to the massacre of republican prisoners in the Marseilles jail (No. 4):—

We went to the precincts of the jail and found there a number of corpses of men who seem to have been killed with cutting weapons. They—about thirty in number—were all mutilated and unrecognizable. . . . We then went on and found an infinity of dead bodies in the same condition lying in the vaults. . . . Their cells seem to have been set on fire. We saw some bodies half burned and almost all unrecognizable. There were thirty-eight of these. We found also fifteen men who were still alive but unable to speak.

The Catholic authorities at Marseilles made 3,000 arrests, but the republican authorities at Paris soon regained control and released the men. The Public Prosecutor for the southern Department reported:—

Every day there were murders in my unhappy Department. It is certain that emissaries went from town to town and excited the people.

At Lyons ninety-seven prisoners were butchered; at Tarascon forty-seven (and the bodies thrown into the Rhone). There were massacres all over the south, women sometimes being stripped and scourged to death. But the new republican authorities at Paris crushed out the disorders in a few weeks, and the Catholic Royalists had no chance of renewing them until the fall of Napoleon in 1815. A moderate Catholic writer, E. Daudet, includes a number of police reports such as the following in his study of the outbreak (*La terreur blanche*, 1878, p. 385):—

The people gathered together in a great fury. They met two Bonapartist women and riddled them with bullets. During the night they entered eighteen houses and broke or stole all the contents. The house of W. Roux was partly burned down, the rest being saved by the National Guard, who tried in vain to stem the disorder. At four in the morning the people attacked the house of L. Meynier. They found him in his barn with his younger boy and shot both at once. From there they went to the prisons and brought out and shot six Bonapartist prisoners.

That is a sample from the local official reports (of a small town) of what happened over one-fourth of France, and the barbarity was revolting. The weighty and temperate French historian Martin says that "many thousands" were murdered and that "the Counter Revolution had a mixture of cold cruelty and depravity, which was more hideous than the brutal ferocity of the Jacobin terrorists." But I must be content to translate the summary account given in the most authoritative history of

France, Lavisse's *Histoire de la France contemporaine* (11 vols., 1921). It runs (IV, 77):—

> The vengeance of the royalists was bloody in the south. At Marseilles . . . the Bonapartists and soldiers were butchered in the streets. Marshal Brune . . . was pursued after surrendering Toulon and discovered and murdered at Avignon. In the whole of Provence houses were burned out of political hatred. In Languedoc the royalist volunteers [of the pre-revolutionary royal army] were organized under the Duc d'Angoulême and perpetrated reprisals and private vengeance. At Nimes some of the soldiers were murdered after laying down their arms. In Le Gard the fury of the people turned against the Protestants and many were killed. The officials [except the royalist prince, the Duc d'Angoulême] did not order this violence but they allowed it to take its course. General Ramel attempted to check the outrages and was murdered. Murders, massacres, revenge, fury of the people of the south, and crimes of common bandits—that was the White Terror. The Government dare not oppose those [aristocrats and clergy] who supported it, and the royalist papers and pamphleteers fired the people against what they called the conspirators. The Allies [the English and Prussians at Paris] urged the Government to be rigorous. . . .

So Marshal Ney was executed and eighteen other of Napoleon's generals brought to trial. Aristocratic ladies crowded the courts and demanded vengeance. "The embroiderers," French historians say, "replaced the knitters"; but while in our time everyone hears, on casual evidence, of revolutionary women knitting by the guillotine, not one in a million hears about the "embroideresses" of Paris, Madrid, Lisbon, and Naples. Some French historians hold that the victims of the few months of the White Terror were more numerous than during the two years of the Red Terror. That is doubtful; but it is a grave social evil that historians should, by completely suppressing the facts on one side, encourage the popular delusion that outrages are peculiar to rebels, and that religion restrains the reactionaries when they recover power. Their brutality was repeatedly revived during the next forty years, but I have not space for further translations. It must suffice to say that, while 10,000 radicals laid down their lives in the revolution of 1848, within three years thousands of others were in jail, exile, or deadly penal colonies; and when Louis Napoleon restored the Empire, with the help of the clergy, in 1852, the number rose to 100,000.

This White Terror was even worse in Italy, Spain, and Portugal; but as our leading historians of the last century were candid

about these—see the *Cambridge Modern History* (Vol. X) for all three, Martin Hume's *Modern Spain*, and Morse Stephen's *Portugal*—short excerpts from contemporaries will suffice. The murders and massacres were worst and lasted longest (with interruptions, from 1790 to 1860) in the Kingdom of Naples (South Italy). The authoritative account of the first half of the period is given by the Catholic royalist General Colletta, then in the service of the King of Naples. His book has been translated (*History of the Kingdom of Naples*, 2 vols., 1858), but as it is now rare I make one quotation from the first chapter of Book IV, which is one long narrative of horrors. It refers to the end of the Republic set up by the French and the restoration of the throne:—

The conquerors eagerly pursued the conquered, and all who were not soldiers of the Holy Faith or who did not belong to the lower populace were murdered wherever they were found. Lazzaroni, servants, enemies, or treacherous friends pointed out to the people the houses which, they said, belonged to rebels, and immediately there followed a scene of violence, robbery, or murder, as chance directed. Dragging their prisoners naked and bound through the streets they stabbed them with their weapons and insulted them by throwing filth in their faces. Persons of every age and of both sexes, venerable magistrates and noble-minded women, were thus tortured. . . . More criminal than any were Cardinal Ruffi and the English Admiral Lord Nelson. . . . Ruffians went from house to house, looted and burned the houses, and murdered the inmates. . . . Nothing was safe or sacred. Old age, childhood and the weakness of women, the sanctity of churches and altars, afforded no protection from men who thirsted for blood and loot. . . . Forty thousand Neapolitans [at the most moderate estimate] were threatened with death by it [the clerical-royalist Junta] and a still greater number with exile. . . . His [the King's] tyrannical laws and the atrocious acts that followed roused once more the passions of the lower orders, and on July 8th they lit a fire in front of the palace, threw five men into the flames, roasted them, and ate their bodies [Colletta was then in Naples]. This enormity struck all with horror and was the last crime perpetrated by the people, but worse was in store, though it was done in the name of the law. . . . Thirty thousand Neapolitans were imprisoned, and as the old prisons were not large enough,* the underground vaults of

* It may be well to remind the reader that at this time the jails of France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal were so foul that only the robust could survive a few years in them; torture was freely used, and the penal colonies were like Devil's Island to-day. It is again a grave social disservice for historians to suppress this destruction, during two or three decades, of the finest middle-class stocks in the south European countries, since it explains their lowered character. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century Naples (including all south Italy and Sicily) had been the most advanced small Kingdom in Europe.

the castles and other dungeons were used, and the prisoners were denied the usual conveniences. Prince Torella, an aged invalid, the Marquis Corleto, the lawyer Poerio, and the banker Abbamonte were in the subterranean dungeons of Sta. Caterina [one of the foulest jails in Europe] where the rays of the sun never penetrate and the cold is piercing. . . . About three hundred of the leading men of the country perished without counting those who were slain in battle or the riots. . . . No other kingdom or city in the world so rich in genius had been impoverished by the loss of so many of the highest [he gives a list of beautiful young women, aged princesses, nobles, scholars, priests, etc.].

Yet the Neapolitans (who never made bloody reprisals) repeatedly rebelled, and the monarchs got back only by the most solemn perjury at the altar, surrounded by their prelates, that they would observe the Constitution. Colletta assures us that under Ferdinand IV " in the course of thirty years 100,000 Neapolitans have perished by every kind of death in the cause of political freedom." The continuer of Colletta claims that 150,000 died in the next thirty years under Ferdinand's son, Francis I. The victims were not republicans or anti-Catholic. All that they wanted was constitutional government. And it is not disputed that Ferdinand IV and Francis I were (with Ferdinand of Spain) the most debauched monarchs in Europe.

The Papal Kingdom of Central Italy—the Papal States—was almost as brutally ruled. Since for the last fifty years the Popes have posed as the earth's supreme moral and social guides it is advisable to know what their own kingdom was like until, seventy-three years ago, its inhabitants voted by five to one for inclusion in the Kingdom of Italy. Lord Clarendon, the British Ambassador, declared it " the opprobrium of Europe "; and in 1831 Britain, Prussia, Russia, Austria, and France took the unprecedented step of addressing to the Pope, and publishing, a letter demanding that he carry out elementary reforms in his dominion. As this letter has never been translated I give part of it:—

It seems to the representatives of the five Powers that for the welfare of Europe generally two fundamental principles must be established in the States:—

1. That the Government of the States should be put upon a solid basis by carrying out opportune reforms, as His Holiness himself thought and said at the commencement of his reign.
2. That the said reforms, which in the words of the Edict of His

Eminence Cardinal Bernetti [Secretary of State] will open a new era for the subjects of His Holiness, be effected by means of an internal guarantee that there will be such changes as are inherent in the nature of an elective government. . . . Laymen to be admitted to the administrative and judiciary functions generally. . . .

This admonitory letter, the most humiliating document addressed to the Papacy in modern times, is given in full in Farini's *Stato Romano* (2 vols., 1850), Vol. I, p. 38. In the following year the Pope, Gregory XVI, issued to the whole world the Encyclical *Mirari vos*, which rejected as spawn of the devil all modern aspirations for freedom and democracy and represented the countries of the five Powers as utterly depraved in comparison with the Papal States. I translate a little from the Latin original:—

You know well what a storm of evil and grief [a democratic rising] broke upon us in the first days of our pontificate, and that had not the right hand of God [the Austrian army] sustained us we should have been submerged. . . . Vice rejoices insolently, science is shameless, licence unbounded. The sanctity of sacred things is despised, and the majesty of the worship of God is assailed, polluted, ridiculed . . . [there are several pages of this stuff]. From the contaminated source, indifferentism, flows that absurd and erroneous theory, or rather lunacy, that everybody ought to have liberty of conscience. . . . With this is associated that most foul and never sufficiently execrated and detestable idea of freedom to publish any kind of books. We shudder, Venerable Brethren, when we see what monstrous doctrines, nay portentous errors, are poured out. Some indeed go so far in their shamelessness as to assert stoutly that all this profusion of errors is compensated for by books in defence of religion. . . .

The condition of the Papal States, which Gregory here presents as an oasis of light and virtue in a debased world, has been described so often and so uniformly by both contemporary and recent authorities (Cantrù, Farini, D'Azeglio, Nielson, Nippold, King, Okey, etc.) that many will read the above with a smile. The Liberal Catholic statesman, Farini, gives a very temperate account of its corruption and inefficiency in his *Stato Romano* (*The Papal States*, I, 139–64), and from this I may translate a few sentences. After a long account of the gross and clumsy financial system and the shocking condition of trade and industry he goes on:—

Contraband had become more than an adventure. It was a genuine business, justified even in the eyes of casuistry. The numerous com-

panies of contrabandists had their officials and administrative banks, their troops with captains and guides. There were many excise officers, but they were badly paid and they were more helpful to the smugglers than to the treasury. Public morals and security suffered severely . . . it led to greed, laziness, and every vice. The whole trade system was rotten with corruption. The government had not a single steamship or warship. . . . The police are under the supreme administration of a prelate-governor at Rome and a cardinal. . . . Very few officials [all clerics] are good, and those who get the higher posts succeed by favour, protection, and servility. There are no codes [of law], no good regulations or disciplinary orders, no sense of honour in the body. The infantry are brutal and wicked; the cavalry a little less brutal and wicked . . . the name " soldier of the Pope " is a proverbial insult. . . . It is forbidden to teach in public or private without a licence from the Sacred Congregation and the permission of the bishop. . . . The latter presides at the examinations and appoints the teachers and professors, always preferring priests to laymen. In some places the Jesuits alone are allowed to teach youths, and the methods are very bad. There are no schools for the people [whose illiteracy was over 90 per cent.], no technical or military schools. The teaching of political economy is forbidden. The rich and numerous institutes of charity and philanthropy are controlled entirely by the clergy and badly managed. Homes for children are forbidden. The Press is subject to a triple censorship. The proceedings of the law courts are so complicated that it is difficult to give an idea of them. Open discussion is not allowed in civil but only in criminal cases. The litigant who wins a case makes a gift, proportionate to his rank, to the judge who gives the decision. No discussion of the case is permitted in court [in the Rota], the litigants and legal officials going to the judge's house to do this. The Rota has no code of law. . . . The case against the accused is communicated to the Advocate of the Poor or to a lawyer nominated by the accused if the head of the court allows this. The accused is not confronted with the witnesses [in regard to crimes against the State], and there is no appeal from the sentence. . . . There is little trade and no big industry. . . . There are no statistics and all officials are ill equipped. The taxes are very heavy and most unequally distributed. The public debt is 38,000,000 scudi and the annual deficit is about half a million. The profession of arms is not open to youths because it is dishonourable and is entrusted to foreign mercenaries, and other professions [law, diplomacy, politics, and administration] are restricted to the clergy.

In short, it was the most inept and one of the most corrupt kingdoms in Europe. That the morals both of clergy and laity were in accord with this is testified by all English travellers of the time (Dicey, etc.). Lady Blennerhassett, the Catholic historian, quotes the strict French priest la Mennais, who visited Rome at this time, saying that it is " the most hideous sewer

that was ever opened to the eye of man." * The Vicomte de Chateaubriand, the most distinguished French writer of the period and a fervent and conservative Catholic, was sent as ambassador to Rome in 1828. In his reminiscences (*Mémoires d'outre-tombe*) he has a good word for Pope Leo XII (whom he knew little, as that Pope died a few months after his arrival), but otherwise dismisses the whole Roman system with cold disdain, and he left Italy as soon as he could. Of Leo he says, Bk. V, ch. xii:—

> The cardinals had chosen him because they thought he was dying. He decided to live and they have cordially detested him ever since for deceiving them. He chose officials for their merits, and this again displeased the cardinals. On the other hand, he wanted a strict life in the convents and nobody thanked him for that. His arrest of vagabond hermits, his order that men must drink standing in the street instead of in the wineshops, in order to reduce the number of knife-fights, and even the fact that he died during the Carnival, thus closing the theatres and ruining the shopkeepers, brought curses upon his memory [as Baron Bunsen, the Prussian ambassador, confirms].

But even the good word for the Pope, who, though zealous in his age and infirmity, was believed to have had several children and now found his chief recreation in shooting birds in the Vatican garden, is not impressive. In any case he left the rule of the Church to his Secretary of State, Cardinal Bernetti, who also had a reputation for looseness and had refused to be ordained a priest so as to have greater liberty. Chateaubriand, who knew him well, says disdainfully that he was " a man of business and pleasure and had a liaison with Princess Doria." His chief rival and successor was Cardinal Albani, who was born poor and died a millionaire and was famous for his luxury and his cultivation of women. Chateaubriand says:—

> He is a violent, rude, rich, and very avaricious man, mixed up in all sorts of enterprises and speculations. He is profoundly indifferent in matters of religion. He is not a priest, and he has thought of giving up the purple and marrying . . . idle, a glutton, devoted to every sort of pleasure.

He made a heavy bid for the prize at the death of the Pope, but had to be content to buy the Secretaryship of State. Of the four Secretaries who virtually ruled the Church in the first half of the

* She gives no reference, but as she quotes this (in French) in the *Cambridge Modern History*, it is entirely reliable.

nineteenth century, three refused to be ordained priest so as to keep a greater liberty or not to do too much violence to such conscience as they had. The fourth, Antonelli, is picturesquely described as " born in a den of thieves " (of a brigand family) and dying a millionaire (through twenty-seven years of graft and corruption at the Vatican). In his *Corte e Società Romana* (p. 723), Silvagni, a temperate writer, says of him, after giving a list of the aristocratic ladies whose salons he haunted:—

> But it was not amongst these that the cardinal sought and found the ladies to whom he paid his court. These were less known ladies, but that did not lessen his devotion to them. His parents and friends made the excuse for him that he suffered from satyriasis, but that did not lessen the guilt of his conduct. To-day, eight years after his death, there is a scandalous lawsuit going on in Bologna, brought by a certain lady named [Countess] Lambertini, who boasts that she is the daughter of the cardinal and demands part of the money he left (20,000,000 lire), though she admits that he gave her more than 2,000,000 during his life.

This cleric—gross, ugly, and very sensual—was Secretary of State (Premier) to the saintly Pius IX; who, however, said when Antonelli died, " Don't mention his name again." This mediaeval gaiety did not die even in 1870. In 1904 an American consul pointed out to me in Rome the house in which Cardinal Vannutelli, a candidate for the Papacy, kept his mistress and children.

For this miserable kingdom, the most corrupt and inefficient in Europe, the grafters of the Vatican fought as the feudal monarchs did. The tyranny was worse under Pope Gregory XVI, who was the most scandalous pontiff in two centuries in spite of the unction of the Encyclical I have quoted. While Albani ruled the Church, and Gregory heavily indulged his taste for strong wine, sweetmeats, and prurient gossip in the palace—he was very fond of the novels of Paul de Kock—his valet, G. Moroni, virtually managed clerical Rome. The man became so rich and powerful that Rome, always ready to slander its Popes, imputed indelicate relations to them or with the man's wife. And these were the men whom Lord Acton, in his famous letter to Lady Blennerhassett, warmly denounced as " worse than the accomplices of the Old Man of the Mountains," who were the classic murderers of history. Gregory XVI was, with the luxurious Cardinal Albani, the arch-assassin (1831–46), and it will be most convenient to illustrate the savagery of his system

by a passage from F. Orsini's *Austrian Dungeons in Italy* (1856), as, though the translation was published in England, it is now very rare; but I happen to have a copy. In 1844 Orsini, then a youth of twenty-three, was arrested on suspicion and sent to the Papal jail at Pesaro:—

My cell was six feet by four in length . . . a sack of straw was the only furniture. So narrow was it that two sacks could not have remained side by side. . . . I could not breathe. I felt myself stifling and hammered at the door with my clenched fists. When at last the turnkey entered he found that I had swooned on my straw bed. . . . About ten days after my entrance into this den I heard a great noise near the prisons. I learned that seven of the prisoners out of the twenty-one sentenced to be shot had been executed about ten days previously and that, the sentence of the remaining fifteen having been commuted to transportation to the galleys for life, they had just passed through Pesaro. . . . We were transported to Urbino [fortress]. In the transit we were handcuffed, and a chain was fastened round us and under the horse's belly. . . . I was assigned one of the best cells, but my fellow-travellers did not fare so well; their cells were so narrow that they could not lie full length, and the windows were only six inches by six. . . . After eight months' residence in St. Leo [still no pretence of trial] I was, together with another prisoner, reconducted on horseback to Urbino and Pesaro. At Pesaro I was chained to eight thieves, who were all huddled with me in an open cart, and in this fashion we journeyed for seventeen days until we reached Rome [150 miles], where I was taken to the new prisons. . . . The treatment I received here was revolting. I was first put into a cell with nine companions, all on their trial, so narrow that we could hardly turn. Our sacks of straw were filled with vermin; the air was fetid and pestilential. For the first month our diet consisted of a water-soup and a very small portion of bread. . . . All my companions were mere boys, their ages ranging from seventeen to nineteen. They looked more like corpses than human beings. . . . The tribunal [State Council] is entirely composed of prelates. The president takes upon himself the office of inquisitor, and the examinations are made by him in secret [the Papal system is described in an earlier passage; and still no evidence was produced against Orsini]. A few days after this we were chained two and two and conducted in an open cart to Cività Castellana [the most desolate and pestilential district of the region]. The fortress in ancient times was the country residence of Pope Alexander VI . . . his bed-chamber is still preserved and the most hideous and obscene pictures line the walls [not now, of course]. One hundred and twenty prisoners were confined here when we entered. . . . We were fed on galley diet, the *cibò caldo* [tallow in warm water] and very little bread. One hundred of our number lay prostrate with fever. . . . Many of them had been in prison twenty years [all were political prisoners] . . . we were transported to Cività Vecchia. Those who are condemned to expiate their political offences in this city are crowded

forty or sixty together in one long dungeon; they are dressed as galley-slaves, with their hair cut short and the beard shaved; they are chained to the wall with a chain about two feet long and sleep on a flat hard bench, and this chain is never unfastened. The food is of the worst description and very scanty, consequently it is rare for a prisoner to survive until the expiration of his sentence. . . .

Tens of thousands—11,000 at one time—of the Pope's subjects were tortured in these jails and thousands were shot. Although Orsini, in the title of his pamphlet, speaks of "Austrian Dungeons," these were Papal jails and the courts were all under the clergy. It is now customary to say that they were reformed by Pius IX. That is entirely false. Orsini describes how he and thousands of others were back in the jails in 1853.

The Austrians held North Italy, and although they murdered far less rebels in proportion to population than the Papacy or Naples, a passage from the Marquis d'Azeglio's *Lutti di Lombardia* must be included to show the brutality of the regime:—

The 3rd January, 1848, arrived, and the government and police of Austria resolved to carry into effect Radetsky's theory that three days of bloodshed yield thirty years of peace. The police and the government and Marshal Radetsky did their troops the justice to believe them incapable of treacherously assaulting and murdering unarmed men, so provision was made to meet this difficulty.

They made the soldiers drunk at Milan and gave them cigars to blow smoke into the faces of the citizens during a tobacco-strike:—

When evening came the brandy and cigars had had the desired effect on the soldiers and, without being offended or attacked, they unsheathed their sabres and, throwing themselves indiscriminately upon all who crossed their paths, wounded and slew them as though they were dogs without owners. . . . Squadrons of cavalry trampled the people underfoot. [A delegation of citizens went to the authorities.] They found the Marshal in bed after a banquet given to his officers to celebrate their victory. He replied: It is impossible to restrain exasperated soldiers.

The classic work of Silvio Pellico on the Austrian prisons has so often been translated that I need not quote from it.

The clerical-royalist Government in Spain was next in brutality to that of Naples, and Ferdinand VII was even more debauched than his namesake of Naples and equally fluent with perjured oaths (from which the Church relieved him) to observe the

Constitution. The *Cambridge Modern History* is admirably candid about Ferdinand's sordid reign, but for a concrete picture I translate, from the *Histoire Contemporaine de l'Espagne* (4 vols., 1869) of Gustave Hubbard, who spent many years in Spain, part of his account of the clerical-royalist reaction in 1823 (Book IV). A constitution had been set up before the fall of Napoleon and in the King's absence. He swore to observe it, then fell brutally upon the democrats, who rebelled and compelled him to fly again. But the French subdued his rebels and he returned in their wake:—

Roused by the Regents [before the King arrived] the Catholics hastened to carry out their plans. More than 1,500 were thrown into prison in Saragossa in a few days. . . . In Castile and La Mancha the murderers went from village to village looting the houses, killing the labourers and raping the women on the pretext that they were defending religion. At Manzanares and Cordoba all who, rightly or wrongly, were considered friendly to the Constitution were insulted and imprisoned. An official who opposed the mob was stabbed seventeen times in a disturbance that was incited by the bishop. . . . As soon as he [the King] settled in the palace he regularized the proscription of liberals and organized the work which had been begun by individual royalists. For the murderers who broke into the houses of Constitutionalists the Regents had substituted executive military commissions which arrested suspects at once when they were denounced. Already 112 had been arrested and shot by their orders. . . . A famous society, that of the Exterminating Angel, had spread to every part of the country under one of the Regents, the Bishop of Osuma [another was the King's confessor], and it infused the same spirit into all the Catholics of Spain. It was in communication with the leading bishops, several of whom owed their position to it. It had branches in all the monasteries and convents, and it preached the extermination of liberals even more violently than the French Catholics. . . . The King had promised an amnesty, but he excluded fifteen categories of men and women from it . . . and it was kept back for a fortnight by the Minister of Justice so as to give him time to imprison all who had so far escaped him. . . . Count Calomarde further declared that the amnesty applied only to members of secret societies who betrayed the society to which they belonged. . . . The military commissions set to work with a fresh activity. . . . They declared guilty of treason [and liable to capital punishment] every person who had a copy of the Constitution, a portrait of Riego, or any souvenirs of the distinguished exiles abroad, and all who, even in a state of intoxication, said a word against the tyranny. . . . Neither age, sex, virtue, nor poverty afforded any protection against these terrible commissions; wealth alone sometimes got a man's life spared. . . . Some were put to death for having in their possession a proclamation in favour of liberty. At Valencia Simon Alfara was garrotted for shouting " Long Live the Constitu-

tion " when he was drunk. . . . Antonio Erraya was hanged because he had been a Freemason. The Madrid commission under a ferocious beast named Chaperon [who was warmly welcomed at the palace of the very religious Don Carlos] surpassed all the others. It put to death all who were found with a portrait of Riego, and sent women and children to the galleys for failing to denounce their husbands or fathers. More than one lady died in despair when she found herself amongst the most vicious criminals in the sordid dungeons. Chaperon rejoiced in the terror he inspired. He attended executions in full uniform, and once, when a victim who was hanged died too slowly, he pulled him down by the legs. . . . The same system was carried out all over Spain.

Major Hume says, in his *Modern Spain* (Story of the Nations Series), that " modern civilization has seen no such instance of brutal, blind ferocity as that which followed the arrival of Ferdinand at Madrid." Hume had clearly not read the history of Naples. English papers (even *The Gentleman's Magazine*) and the House of Commons commented with horror on the events in Spain and reported that 44,000 were imprisoned, 20,000 exiled, and 100,000 ruined by dismissal in one year; and they were mostly of the middle class. Yet while Hume, a conservative writer, says that " not even the most bloodthirsty wretches of the French Reign of Terror " were as bad as these gentlemen and priests of Madrid, we now hear only of violence in connection with the French and the Russian revolutions. There were four years of this barbarism, and the wave of horrors was repeated in the Carlist War and occurred again (we shall see) under Alfonso XIII and under Franco. Yet, except for the local destruction of a few churches and the killing of a few priests, the people never retaliated when they recovered power; and all that they asked in the first half of the century was constitutional government and the suppression of the Inquisition.

In Portugal the clerical-royalist reaction was just as savage. In 1828 Dom Miguel (who was supposed to be Regent for a young niece) and his fanatical mother seized power. Like Ferdinand of Spain and Ferdinand of Naples, he was, as no historian questions, thoroughly corrupt and brutal; yet, like those monarchs, he was a chosen of the Lord to the bishops and the Vatican, who smiled at the shameless perjuries by means of which he approached power. I translate a few sentences from the immense work of the most distinguished Portuguese historian of the time, S. J. de Luz Soriano, *Historia da Guerra Civil* (15 vols., 1866,

etc.). The detailed description begins (Vol. III of Part III, p. 12):—

The Field of Santo Ovidio, or of the Restoration, which is now a large square in the city of Porto . . . presented to the eye of the spectator a profoundly distressing and moving spectacle. There was in it an immense gathering of people of every condition—men and women, young and old, rich and poor—all threatened with ruin and prepared to abandon their country rather than face the cruel and barbaric vengeance of the victorious party . . . to leave their homes, families, friends and all that was dear to them in order to escape the vindictive reprisals of the barbaric and inhuman Miguelists, to beg their bread in foreign lands as a result of the blunders of rulers who had sacrificed and compromised them . . . especially the cabinets of London and Vienna. . . . Meantime the immense crowd on the Field of Santo Ovidio, which some estimate at from 8,000 to 10,000 people [though that is an exaggeration], set out at 5 o'clock in the direction of Braga.

Harassed by royal troops and suffering severely, 2,300 reached France and England. As to those who remained in Portugal:—

The record of what the Miguelist government did from the moment of its installation is full of the horrors one expects from a despot. It breathes blood, vengeance, and ferocity. Dom Miguel, in spite of all his declarations and oaths, acted from the start on his long-standing hatred of the Liberals and stirred up the dregs of the population to attack with impunity in the streets and squares of Lisbon all who were under the slightest suspicion of loyalty to Don Pedro [the legitimate monarch] or the Constitution. They found themselves repeatedly attacked by an unbridled mob armed with clubs. . . . The clergy, secular and regular, thundered from their pulpits against the Liberals. [Criminal commissions were set up as in Spain and imposed sentences of death, imprisonment, very heavy fines, torture and exile.] Luiz Luzano was condemned to be dragged through the streets of Porto with a rope round his neck, to be hanged on a gibbet set up in the Praca Nova and to have his head exposed for three days on the site of his crime. The Marquis de Palmella was condemned to be dragged through the streets with a rope round his neck and garrotted on the gibbet in the Praca Nova. His head must then be cut off and set on a pole in the public street, to remain there until his body was burned and the ashes thrown away at sea . . . [he gives 20 pages of such sentences. In one case the head of a young man was impaled opposite his mother's house]. Aged men, women, children, and entire families were arrested and dragged through the streets. The documentary evidence [he refers particularly to the English *Annual Register*] shows that after July 1828 at least 15,000 were arrested on political grounds and the same number or more sent into exile. . . . By the middle of March 1829 the number of arrests, including women and children, rose to 23,190 and of those who fled abroad to 40,790; and 1,122 were

murdered in the streets or on the scaffold, while 17,316 were condemned to lose their property.

Suppressed (untranslated) historical material for the last hundred years continues for the most part to relate to the struggle for democracy and freedom which began in 1789 (if not at the American Revolution), rages in a new form to-day, and threatens to be prolonged for some years if certain ideas of the settlement are admitted. Liberalism triumphed in Spain, Portugal, and Italy in the second half of the century, but it itself contracted a good deal of political corruption, and the state of Spain became again foul. A Spanish philosopher, a very strict Catholic, Ramon de Torre-Isunza, wrote a small work on it in 1902 which he called *The Truth, to His Majesty the King* (*La Verdad, a S.M. El Rey*), from which a passage may be translated (p. 7 and later):—

The causes of our disasters [in Cuba and Morocco] are the disorganization of our official State through the ignorance and immorality of the directive classes, the lack of ideals, enthusiasm, and civic virtue in the citizens, and the universal egoism, which unfits us to exercise any kind of social functions. Not only our political organization in foreign affairs but our social constitution at home is doomed to die and has lost the reason for its existence. . . . The whole is corrupt and vicious. The Spanish nation, Sire, owing to the reciprocal action and reaction of a corrupt society and a corrupting authority, is dying without remedy, unless God comes to its aid, from a complete disintegration of its elements. Never before has history presented so clear and comprehensive a picture of the extinction of a nation and the death-agony of a race. . . .

Our country is the most indifferent to religion and practically atheistic of all nations of Europe. Religion controls the consciences of very few of our people. Catholicism has no real influence on their morals though they are most assiduous in religious practices. . . . The tree is known by its fruit; and if there is any truth in what we have said about the influence of religious ideas, it is easy to see that our decadence, the perversion of our morals, and the corruption which the official state betrays in all its operations, involving the upper classes and the clergy themselves, are due to the lack of them. We have learned that just where Catholicism seems to rule the conduct of all men it would be difficult to name, even in the directive class and the higher clergy, a single person who is guided by genuine Christian motives. Our religiosity is a fraud, the more immoral because it is hypocritical. . . . Our general decadence extends even to religious sentiments and the condition of the clergy. This triumphant and desolating pharisaism is a result of ignorance, and we may safely say that the clergy are responsible in great part for this ignorance, as the

priests as a whole cannot escape the influence of the general demoralization that saps the energy of the entire nation. . . . That is what characterizes the profound immorality and congenital debility of our country.

Spain, in short, had returned to the vicious condition to which the successors of Ferdinand and Isabella had dragged it, and the royalist-clerical attempt to maintain the system, which was represented in England as a humane attempt to repress anarchy, was as sordid as ever. In his *Inquisiteurs d'Espagne* (1897) Professor Tarrida del Marmol tells of his experiences after his arrest at Barcelona and gives one or two letters from other prisoners whom he knew.* Del Marmol says (p. 22):—

When I reached the barracks of Atarazanas I was not examined or interrogated. Two soldiers seized me and pushed me into a filthy cell with six other men. . . . This prison, which a few days later was to receive seventeen republican leaders (including three ex-deputies and one ex-minister) was repulsively dirty. There was not even a small bench, and we were not allowed newspaper to cover the floor to sit on, and it was in a disgusting condition. We were not permitted to leave the cell for sanitary purposes and we had to relieve ourselves in one corner of it so that the air was poisonous. . . . There were three hundred arrests and, to make room, we were taken, about midnight, our arms bound and chains on our wrists, to the National Prison. I and twenty-eight others were put in a cell that had been built for ten. There was no chair or table, no bed, and only one window; and we had to eat, sleep, and everything else in it. To eat they gave us each day one small roll and two plates of a soup that was so greasy that a dog would have refused it. . . . [He was then put in the fortress of Montjuich.] Of the many dungeons in this the zero, double zero, and counter zero were the most dreaded. It is in these that gendarmes disguised as butchers do their terrible work. The methods have been in use [active use—they are the old methods] for two years. They are described in parts of a letter sent to one of my friends by Joseph Bernat, one of the men who were shot in 1894 on the strength of statements he made under torture. . . .

" They first flogged me for an hour, and I was then ordered to walk about without stopping a moment. That night I asked for food and drink as I had a fever which made me terribly thirsty. They gave me a large piece of dried (salt) cod which I ate eagerly, but they refused

* The author, the very cultivated Director of the Barcelona Polytechnic Academy and cousin of the Catholic Senator, the Marquis of Mont-Roig, was a personal friend of mine and a gentleman of the highest integrity. He had taken no part in Spanish politics, but was an outspoken anti-clerical. He was arrested at his college, but even the corrupt police and judges were compelled to acquit him, though he was put under standing sentence of death when he fled to England. For further information at this point see my *Martyrdom of Ferrer* (1909).

to give me any water. I had to keep on walking all night, as they beat me with sticks when I stopped. Next day they still refused me water and rest. My shoulders were all bloody, and I fainted. . . ."

In the end he wearily admitted the false charge, and he was shot. A letter of Joseph Codina to Marmol says:—

"I was tortured by being forced to walk continuously, without sleep or drink, for eight days. I was loaded with chains and had nothing to eat but dried cod. The next day I was thrown into the sea three times and was pulled out just on the point of death. On other nights they tortured my genital organs [with cords] for four or five hours each time until I said that I was guilty of the bomb-outrage."

The real author of this bomb outrage was discovered soon afterwards and, being a militant anarchist, confessed without torture. There is very good evidence that in other cases agents of the police threw the bombs. Del Marmol goes on to tell how he verified the worst stories of torture. A man who had had to be acquitted came to his office at the Academy:—

When I saw this man, who was little better than a corpse, and heard the astonishing account of his long calvary [he was tortured for thirteen months], when I saw that he told the truth because his body still bore the traces of atrocious tortures . . . I gave the man, who was dying of hunger, some money and a letter of introduction to the French deputy. But he returned to Spain and was with me in Montjuich. He was re-arrested on the sole ground that he had been arrested before, yet he was so ignorant of politics and social questions that the Council of War, which was condemning men to twenty years' hard labour merely for attending public meetings, had to acquit him again.

That Franco restored this regime and maintains it to-day, as Salazar does in Portugal—see G. Seldes's *Catholic Crisis*—has been sufficiently exposed, and, naturally, there is as yet no Spanish literature on the subject to translate. A point that puzzles some—how these things are so persistently connected with Catholicism—may be cleared up by the translation of a relevant passage in the manual of Canon or Church Law, of which there is no version in the English language. The code, published in Rome in 1918, and translated in America, is only the domestic part of Church Law. The most authoritative manual of the public law is the *Institutionos Juris Ecclesiastici Publici* (*The Institutions of Public Church Law*, 2 vols., 1901) of the Jesuit Fr. Marianus de Luca, a professor in the Papal University. The

book was issued by the Vatican Press. It has a lengthy discussion (I, 142–9) of the question entitled, " The Church has the right to inflict corporal punishment, even death," and makes it plain that it is stating Catholic doctrine, not the author's opinion. The chief part runs:—

As to the Regalists and their modern followers we affirm that the Church has a coercive power that includes even the right of the sword. We make it our first point to vindicate this right of the Church on account of critics who, because the Church once put heretics and especially leaders of heretics and apostates to death, loudly declare that Our Holy Mother the Church acted unjustly and wickedly, and because once the right to inflict capital punishment is proved the right to inflict lesser punishments follows. . . . Any society has a right to look after its own security and to defend itself effectively against everything that disturbs public order, and therefore the executive power is bound to inflict all the punishment it can on those who have the depraved impulse to commit a crime. But it can assuredly happen that no other punishment than death will suffice to prevent the contagion of crime from spreading and so preserve the social order. . . . The right of the sword is the necessary and effective means to attain its [the Church's] end when rebels in the Church and disturbers of the ecclesiastical peace and unity, especially obstinate heretics and their leaders, cannot be prevented in any other way from continuing to disturb the ecclesiastical order, and leading others to crime, particularly against the Church. . . . It is not against natural law, because the same reason—the maintenance and tranquillity of society—which is the sole ground in natural law on which civil society claims the power, holds good in a higher degree for the Church, because the preservation of the Church is far more important than the preservation of civil society. . . . It therefore follows that if the Church has the power to impose a capital sentence it has the power to inflict other bodily punishments [he quotes the Council of Trent]. And on the other hand we have the record of the Church condemning men to slavery, exile to a foreign land, or a distant province, imprisonment for life, incarceration in a monastery, and flogging.

This is the emphatic law of the Church to-day, and it explains why in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and South America, bishops cooperate with the Fascist State in its brutal measures. The basis of it, and of all the Church's most offensive claims, is that the Church is " the most perfect society on earth " and has therefore not only the powers of a State, but authority over all other States. This principle and its implications were so boldly reaffirmed by Pope Pius XI in the heat of his quarrel with Mussolini, in 1929, that his important pronouncement was completely ignored in the Catholic-censored British and American Press. It

appeared in the Jesuit-Papal organ the *Osservatore* (May 30, 1929) as an open letter to Cardinal Gasparri and contained such passages as these, which I translate from the *Osservatore*:—

> If it is meant that conscience is not subject to the power of the State, if we are asked to recognize, as we do recognize, that in matters of conscience the Church, and the Church alone, has paramount authority, in virtue of a divine command, it follows that we recognize that in a Catholic State liberty of conscience and of discussion must be understood and carried out in accordance with Catholic teaching and law. It must also of logical necessity be recognized that the full and perfect right to educate does not belong to the State but to the Church, and that the State cannot impede or restrict it in the exercise and fulfilment of this right or confine it to the subsidized teaching of religious truths. . . .
>
> It is and remains clearly and loyally understood that the Catholic religion and it alone, is, according to the Statute and the Treaty, the religion of the State, with the logical and juridical consequences of such a situation according to constitutional law, especially in the matter of propaganda [all criticism of the Church to be legally suppressed and rival sects only " permitted " if policy advises this]; and it remains not less clearly and loyally understood that the Catholic cult is not purely and simply a permitted and admitted cult [he repudiates the word " toleration "], but it is such as the spirit of the Treaty and the Concordat define it. . . .

With reference to Mussolini's assurance to his angry followers that the Church's claim to monopolize marriage will not be enforced he says:—

> The Church, being a perfect society in its order, can and must enforce it [the Canon Law about marriage] with the means at its disposal, and will do so.*

A year after this full-blooded assertion of all the claims of the mediaeval Papacy the present Pope, then Cardinal Pacelli, became Secretary of State and virtual ruler of the Church. Within a year, on May 15, 1931, he issued, in the name of the aged and rather muddle-headed Pontiff, an Encyclical (*Quadragesimo anno*), or letter to the whole world, which imposes Mussolini's Corporative State on the whole Catholic world. It purports to be a commentary on or a complement of Leo XIII's Encyclical on social questions (*Rerum novarum*) of forty years earlier and

* Since the American translation of the domestic part of the Canon Law (much obscured by the sophistical comments of the translator) is available in England I need not translate the section on marriage. The reader will find it very gravely opposed to the civil law at many points.

amazingly claims that the " revolutionary " concessions to labour in that document " astounded the world " and inspired all later legislation. The only " concessions " were that the worker had a right to form unions and to get " a living wage " (which Leo XIII later, on being pressed, refused to define). These were recognized practically everywhere, especially by Liberals, in 1891; and Pius XI does not add that Leo, in later life, withdrew all his concessions to the workers. Pius, or his Secretary of State, now derides Liberalism (echoing Mussolini's attacks on it), anathematizes Socialism and Communism, and for trade unions substitutes the " corporations " of the Fascist-State:—

> In recent years, as everybody knows, a new kind of syndicate [union] has been introduced, and it will be consonant with the aim of this letter to describe it and make certain reflections on it. The civil power recognizes the syndicate as a juridical person in such wise as to give it a monopoly, since it alone can vindicate the rights of workers or masters [according to the form of the syndicate], and it alone can make contracts for enterprises or labour. Any man may join the syndicate [it is the only way to get a labour ticket] and within these limits it may be called a free association. . . . Colleges or corporations are formed of delegates of both, workers and masters [who have the deciding vote] of the same trade or profession. . . . Strikes are forbidden; and if the parties cannot come to an agreement the law steps in.

In short, he describes the Corporative State then established by Fascism:—

> It requires little reflection to see the great advantages of these institutions, yet . . . we find that there are some who fear that the State may suppress all free activity instead of confining itself to give assistance and guidance, and that this new corporative order smacks of bureaucracy and politics, or that (admitting its advantages) it may serve special political purposes instead of the common good.

He goes on to say that these possible evils will be fully met by restoring the Church to its mediaeval power, and his recommendation of the Fascist State is complete. He has already several times disdainfully condemned Liberalism, and he turns to the Socialist alternative:—

> We lay down this: whether Socialism is considered as a theory, an historical fact, or " action," if it remains real Socialism, and even if it admits truth and justice in what we have said, it cannot be reconciled with the dogmas of the Catholic Church. . . . Religious Socialism

and Christian Socialism are contradictions in terms. No man can be at once a good Catholic and a good Socialist.

Communism, of course, he condemns as diabolical.*

The most important untranslated documents of recent date are the reports in the German (non-Nazi) Press of the vice-trials of monks in Germany in 1936–9. Although the exposure was the greatest journalistic sensation of this century, no British or, as far as I can ascertain, American paper made any allusion to it after the first arrests in 1936, when the Catholic censorship closed down firmly on the Press. It may be necessary for some readers to understand that these were not in any sense "Nazi trials." Every witness was a Catholic, and in the trials of 1936, which I followed in the German Press, nine friars out of ten pleaded guilty (to sodomy or seduction of minors) and whined about the unnatural condition of their life or the amount of drink given to them. All the police officials were Catholics, and the faithful of the Catholic provinces involved and their daily papers accepted the findings of their courts (which were in Catholic cities). The sensation began in May, 1936, with the arrest of 276 Franciscan brothers of the Westphalian province on the above charges, while the remaining 50—the entire province was sodden with vice—fled abroad. I will, to avoid an appearance of selection, translate the first cutting I have, which is from the *Kölnische Zeitung*, a paper often compared to the *Manchester Guardian*, but with four Catholic readers to one Nazi. It fully endorsed the findings of the court, which was virtually Catholic. The condensed report (May 27) runs:—

In the further course of the trial of the Franciscan Father [Leovigill] Steinhoff [the father-confessor of the large monastery] at the criminal court the accused confessed his guilt and expressed repentance [he got no alleviation of the sentence]. The second accused was Schroeder, at one time a novice in the monastery of Waldbreitbach. He often received presents, sometimes of money, from Father Leovigill, even after he had left the Order. He had gone back twice to visit Father Leovigill. Schroeder confessed his crime and was penitent. The third accused, Fritz B., was the butcher's assistant and used to take the meat to the monastery. Father Leovigill often gave him presents of salted almonds, cigarettes, and money. He was fourteen years

* The dates are here important. When Leo XIII issued his "Charter of Labour," Socialism was making extraordinary progress. When Pacelli issued this Encyclical, Socialism was in ruins and he was convinced, and so remained until 1943, that the Axis would win. Yet English and American Catholics continue to flourish Leo's Encyclical in the eyes of the workers.

old. When he was sick in bed Father Leovigill visited and . . . him. He used also to drink with Father Leovigill in his cell. Father L. had had the same relations with the young accused Heinrich Brose. The Father had swept aside the scruples of the youth, saying that he could alter his ways when he was older. The accused were arrested in 1935 and held in police detention. Father Leovigill advised them not to admit anything but to swear on oath that they had done nothing.

The first witness was the 53-year-old friar Robert Ankerer, or Brother Erhard, from the mother-house of the Franciscan monks at Waldbreitbach, who had been General Secretary of the fraternity since 1929. He described the general condition of the Franciscan establishments. The priests took no notice of their vows of chastity and poverty. The witness had, in spite of the horrible vices of the friars, refused to report their conduct on the ground that it was the duty of the Bishop of Trier to get Rome to make an inquiry [later witnesses swore that the matter was repeatedly reported to the bishop and to Rome]. The last witness before the midday adjournment was an employer of the young accused Fritz B. . . ., a butcher of Warendorf. He said that Father Leovigill often came to the shop and asked for B., but neither he nor his wife had any suspicion what was going on. They had too much respect for the Order to think of such a thing [Catholic natives of the district told a friend of mine that they all suspected it].

After the adjournment an ex-member of the Order, Kilian Mathes or Brother Ladislaus, 27 years old, was summoned as witness. In 1926, when he was a novice, Father Leovigill taught him the catechism, heard his confessions, and had improper relations with him. He left in 1931. It was the same with the next witness, an ex-friar of 24. . . . His case was worse because Father Leovigill, his teacher and confessor, supplied him with drink and showed him obscene photographs. Karser, a 27-year-old witness, had had to enter the monastery hospital at the age of fourteen. . . . The witness, who showed great reluctance, said that he had been misused by several friars, including Brothers Emmeran, Expeditus, and Richard, and Father Leovigill. The General Secretary Ankerer was recalled, and he said that the General Superior of the province died in 1931 and the new General Superior, Brother Alfons, who had fled to Africa, forbade him to report the vices. His successor is Brother Placidus, who is wanted in Germany for perjury, and is now in Rome. Before he fled Brother Placidus made the round of the monasteries and privately warned those who had reason to fear most to fly to Holland.

The medical attendant of the Waldbreitbach monastery, Dr. Arthur Kost, said that he had known only two cases of vice, but the General Superior had not punished the offenders. The witness Brose testified that he had warned the Superior General in writing of the state of things but his letter was treated as a piece of insolence and nothing was done. The Provincial of the Province of Westphalia [mostly priests] was called and said that Father Leovigill would probably [after jail] be expelled from the Order. A medical expert testified that all the accused were responsible for their actions.

The Public Prosecutor said in his speech that one pupil had changed his monastery seven times in order to get away from the vicious conditions. The accused priest Steinhoff had seduced pupils, minors, and feeble-minded youths. Steinhoff was sentenced to eight years in prison for habitual unnatural vice and ten years loss of civic rights. Schroeder was sentenced to five months. Heinrich B. was sentenced to four months. Fritz B. to two months.

These lay and ex-friar witnesses are very exceptional in the long series of trials which stretched over 1936. The inquiry then extended to other religious orders and the secular clergy. The American *World-Almanac* for 1939, which is careful not to offend Catholics, says that by the beginning of that year " 8,000 Catholic monks and lay brothers " had been arrested, mainly on a vice-charge, and many secular priests and some nuns are in the number.*

* In Professor T. O'Conroy's *Menace of Japan* (1933) there is an even worse exposure (in 1928) of Japanese Buddhist monasteries which had a high repute for asceticism.

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