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LECTURE

ON THE

TEMPORAL SOVEREIGNTY

OF THE

HOLY SEE.

BY

REV. PATRICK F. MORAN, D.D.

(31st August, 1868).

R

DUBLIN:

JOHN F. FOWLER, 3 CROW STREET, DAME STREET,
1868.



“O Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee”.

How many glories of the past rush to mind, how many endearing memories are awakened in the soul by the magic name of Rome! Pagan orators and poets saluted her as the Eternal City, Queen of the universe, whose origin is divine, whose laws are everlasting, whose power embraces a world-wide range.

“*Omnia Romanæ cedant miracula terræ*”.

This was an empty dream in the city of the Caesars; but how is it realized in Christian Rome! The home of the Vicar of Christ, the throne of the fisherman of Galilee, its spiritual rule extends from shore to shore; the See of Peter—its line of sainted pontiffs, as if by a golden chain, binds the faithful of to-day with the Redeemer's cross on Calvary; it has become indeed the centre of civilization, the mother of arts, the fountain source whence flow the streams of science and salvation to distant lands. Yes, it is not its palace of the Caesars, its forum, its triumphal arches, its capitol, its amphitheatre, that I would seek in Rome: it is the hallowed sanctuaries of the saints, the trophies of the martyrs' triumphs, the city of God, the new Jerusalem of Christ:

“Peter's see, the source of pastoral power,
The world's capital:
What realms she does not hold by arms
She rules by religion”.

For three hundred years Rome was the battle-field of Christian faith; it was purpled with the blood of martyrs from every distant land; and yet even then a pagan emperor declared that he was ready to exchange the imperial diadem for the sceptre of the pope of Rome. But, from the day when the heralds of Constantine proclaimed the triumph of the Cross, the imperial rulers ceased to make Rome their capital: “It is not meet”, says an ancient writer, “that the emperor of the earth should hold his sway in that city which heaven's eternal emperor has made the capital of the Christian religion”. The city of the Caesars became henceforth the inheritance of Christ, the common country of all the faithful, and that mysterious course of Provi-

dence began, which after three centuries forced the successors of St. Peter to assume the temporal sovereignty of Rome.

It is true, indeed, that it was only in the eighth century that the successors of Constantine finally surrendered the dominion of Rome; but long before that period the sovereign pontiffs had been its only protectors and fathers; they were, so to say, its uncrowned monarchs, and their rule, almost in spite of themselves, was supreme in the territory of the Seven Hills.

When, in the fifth century, barbarian hordes, like surge after surge in the storm, rushed over Italy, laying waste its fertile plains, it was the popes that preserved a remnant of its people for Rome. In the year 409 Alaric led on his two hundred thousand Goths against the devoted city. To a holy monk, who on the way sought to appease his fury, Alaric replied: "It is not of myself that I advance towards Rome, there is one who urges me on, and daily torments me, saying: 'Go, plunder Rome'". The wealth and opulence of the world's capital were soon the prey of the barbarian hordes. For three days the city was one continued scene of massacre and plunder; those alone who took shelter in the churches of Saint Peter and St. Paul were saved; the rest of the inhabitants, hitherto the masters of nations, were now led away to slavery.

For forty years the pontiffs laboured to heal the wounds thus made by the sword of Alaric. Then Attila, *the scourge of God*, crossed the Jura mountains, and, with his countless Huns, rushed down as an avalanche upon Milan, Aquileia, Pavia, and Verona. It was his boast that the grass should cease to grow where his legions passed. No power could resist his fury, and destruction everywhere marked his onward course. The emperor Valentinian the Third, with his court, fled in terror from Ravenna. One man alone was found not disheartened amid the terrors of this dread crisis. He had grown old in the service of the poor and guardianship of the flock of Christ. He had already crushed the Eutychian heresy, and restored peace to the Church by the council of Chalcedon; now he fearlessly goes forth to confront the advancing foe. On the 11th of June, 452, Pope Leo the Great, robed in the sacred vestments, and accompanied by his deacons, presented himself before Attila on the banks of the Mincio, where now stands the little town Governolo. At his words the surging torrent was rolled back, and Attila declared to his angry chiefs that as the pontiff prayed him to desist from his enterprise, one venerable in mien, appearing in the heavens, commanded him to obey. Thus Rome was saved.

Scarce have the citizens ceased their grateful acclamations to their deliverer, when another storm from the south bursts upon the seven hills. Genseric, with his Vandal fleet, setting sail

from Africa, poured his well trained troops upon the plains of Italy. At the city walls Pope Leo met the barbaric devastator, and though for fourteen days all that Vandal rage could reach was devoted to destruction, yet, at his prayers, the chief basilicas at least were saved, and from their walls, when Genseric retired, eighty thousand citizens came forth, the sole remnant of a population which, a century before, was reckoned at three millions.

Another while, and Totila advanced to enrich his followers with the spoils of their former masters; and now the anathema of Babylon is repeated by the finger of God in the dust of Rome. *Urbem reliquit vacuum*, is the concise narrative of Procopius; whilst another contemporary annalist assures us that "for sixty days Rome was so desolate that no human being could be found there, and no living thing but the wild beasts that flocked to it from the surrounding country".

Yet did not the pontiffs cease to watch over the deserted walls, and for two hundred years they continued to be the temporal fathers, as they were the spiritual pastors of Rome. The Greek emperors had still their ministers there, yet, as Muratori remarks, "the chief authority was vested in the pontiffs, who, by the force and majesty of their station, and by that escort of virtues which surrounded them, wielded a placid sway over the city and its territory". Indeed, had it not been for the wonderful vigilance of the popes, Rome would soon have ceased to exist. As Pestum, with its noble temples; as Pompeii, arising from the ashes of Vesuvius; as Memphis, amidst the sands of Africa, so now Rome would have nothing but its marble wilderness to attract the gaze of the distant traveller.

As years went on the Greek emperors scarce deigned a commiserating look towards the ruined city. To use the words of Gibbon, "the lofty tree was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground Like Thebes or Babylon or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honour and dominion". Saint Gregory the Great, in his letter to the emperor, complained that everything was given up to the mercy of the barbarians: "the cities are destroyed", he says, "the fortresses dismantled, the open country, stripped of its inhabitants, is become a wilderness for want of cultivation, and the servants of Christ are as daily victims immolated by the sanguinary superstition of these idolaters". Elsewhere he laments that the provisioning of the city, the appointment of consuls and officers, the enrolling of troops, the defence of the walls, the maintenance of public order, all devolved upon the shoulders of the Vicar of Christ. Well indeed does the infidel historian add: "Gregory might justly be styled the father of his country".

It cannot surprise us that Rome should be thus abandoned by the Greek emperors. It had no longer aught to attract their avarice or repay their guardianship. There were other cares moreover to engross their thoughts. Hordes of Tartars precipitated themselves in quick succession on the defenceless frontiers of the east. The cloud-like cavalry bands of these barbarians, clothed in the skins of wild beasts and armed with rude ances, could not be checked by courtier soldiers, brilliant in their armour but cowards in their hearts, and it was necessary to summon away the veteran troops of the west to defend the imperilled throne of their master. Then it was that the Lombards descended into Italy, no longer as a passing wave of barbarians, but settling down on the deserted lands, and snatching city after city from the enfeebled grasp of the imperial deputies. Pope Stephen the Second, in the name of the Roman people, wrote to the emperor, earnestly imploring aid against the destruction that menaced them. But as the Romans of old had abandoned Britain, so now the Greek emperors abandon Rome, a prey to the storm that encompassed it. Then it was that through the necessity of self-preservation, and to save the city and its people from utter destruction, began the temporal sovereignty of the Pope in Rome.

The Britains in their distress invoked Saxon aid, and in their allies soon found new masters. The Sovereign Pontiffs were happier in their choice. Abandoned by the imperial power, the first thought of Pope Stephen was to seek to avert by treaty the menacing invasion. A treaty indeed was made, but only to be violated by the perfidious Lombards. The pontiff exhorted the people to appease the anger of God by public prayers and penitential deeds. In one of the penitential processions the Pope himself was seen moving barefooted around the walls and bearing upon his shoulders a large wooden cross to which was attached the violated treaty of the Lombards. The next day the aged pontiff, despite the Alpine storms of mid-winter, set out in disguise through the enemy's territory to supplicate the assistance of the French king. Soon the troops of Pepin restore peace to the beleaguered city, and thenceforward the sword of the chivalrous Franks guarded the gates of Rome. Pepin and Charlemagne made it their boast to avenge every insult offered to the Vicar of Christ; and whilst they repelled invasion from the approach of Rome, they proclaimed to the world in their capitulars that that city should remain for ever inviolable as the home of the spiritual ruler of the Christian Church and the patrimony of the successors of Saint Peter.

How glorious was the Christmas Day of the year 800, when Charlemagne, having come for the fourth time to Rome as defender of its freedom, knelt at the threshold of Saint Peter! The

barons, clergy, and people, were assembled there to pay him honour, and whilst with universal acclaim they hailed him as champion of the Holy See and deliverer of Rome, the pontiff poured the sacred chrism upon his brow, and crowned him with the imperial diadem of the West.

I have thus endeavoured to briefly sketch for you the origin of the temporal sovereignty of the popes. It arose from the necessities of society and the free choice of a grateful people; and the rights of the pontiffs, confirmed from age to age by the sanction of Christian nations, now stand before us with a prescription of eleven centuries. Assailed solely by the reckless theories of communism and revolution, these rights are confirmed by every principle of social justice and morality. Let the government of Europe be produced that can boast of like titles in its dynasty; but till then may the agents of socialism rage in vain around the time-honoured throne of the successors of Saint Peter.

It would be tedious to mention in detail the many benefits which, in the exercise of their temporal sovereignty, were conferred by the popes on the territory of Rome, on Italy, on all Europe. I can only refer briefly to a few of them, and yet they should be treated of in full, to do justice to the claims of the papal sovereignty.

From the first moment that this charge devolved upon the popes they laboured incessantly to restore society in Italy, to reorganize its scattered members, to consolidate its strength. As an instance, I may name Leo the Fourth, of whom Voltaire thus writes: "Leo the Fourth, in his defence of Rome, proved himself worthy of its principedom; he fortified the city, armed the militia, and guarded against every attack; he was a native of Rome, and like some stately column that stands erect though encompassed on every side by ruins, he alone, in that vile age of barbarism, seemed to retain the full genius and ardour of the early republican age" (*Essai sur les Moeurs*, ii. 28).

Will I speak of the pontiffs as men of learning and science? Suffice it to mention Pope Sylvester the Second. Gioberti was no friend of the Holy See; still, writing of this great pope, he is forced to cry out: "The primacy in science is a characteristic glory of Rome and its pontiffs. The most surprising man that stands before us in the varied range of human science throughout the middle ages belongs to that illustrious see; and as individual genius is placed in bolder relief by the disproportion of its age, I know of no one to be compared in point of science with Gerbert, Pope Sylvester the Second". It is not without some national pride that I have chosen the name of this great pontiff, for he came forth from the Irish school of Bobbio, where in the

tenth century still lived the traditions and the science of Saints Virgilius and Columbanus. And allow me to add that no century in the annals of Christendom presents more cheering scenes than the age that bears the name of Pope Sylvester. Saint Henry the Second ruled in Germany, and with his holy spouse, Saint Cunegunda, diffused amongst his people the blessings of peace and piety. The Hungarians, with their king Saint Stephen, renounced their paganism and assumed the banner of the Cross. In Denmark another sainted monarch died martyr to his zeal. Norway was governed by Saint Olaus; Scotland by the good Saint Margaret. We had at home the bright example of the bishop-king, Saint Cormac. England enjoyed the laws of Edward the Confessor; whilst in France the pious son of Hugh Capet strenuously laboured to lessen the evils of feudal anarchy. What a blessing it had been for mankind if some century of modern times had reckoned so many saints among its sovereigns!

I would also wish to speak of the patronage of literature for which the world is indebted to the popes. Suffice it to name Nicholas the Fifth, who prepared a home for the Grecian muses exiled from the East. He loved to be styled the friend of Poggio, Marsilio Ficino, and Bessarion, and by the encouragement which he gave to the blessed Angelico da Fiesole he laid the foundations of that school of painting which has ever since held the post of honour and preëminence in Europe.

Will I refer to their efforts to maintain the liberty of the Church during feudal times, and to preserve a spotless ministry within the sanctuary of God? In the iron age of feudal despotism ecclesiastical functions and benefices became the spoil and traffic of princes. Bishops were chosen, not called by God, but forced by the secular power upon the Church: they were selected, not for their virtues and spirit of religion, but for the attainment of worldly ends. Holy men had to blush for the desolation of the sanctuary, and it seemed as if the ark of salvation was about to be submerged amid the surging vices of a wicked world.

It is thus the divine Redeemer permits at intervals His holy Church to be imperilled. At one time it is corruption that assails it; at another it is heresy or schism. Sometimes the smile of the powers that be, sometimes open persecution, promises to achieve the work of Satan. But the Redeemer's words are our guarantee that *His* presence cannot fail in holy Church. He may slumber for awhile, as in the storm of Genesareth, to teach His apostles not to place too much reliance on human power or human genius; for, the salvation of His earthly spouse must come from His divine hand alone; but in His own good time He shall hush the winds and waves, and calm and sunshine shall once more shine on His mystic bark.

It was Hildebrand, Pope Gregory the Seventh, that was raised up by God to break the shackles that bound the milk-white hind, and restore to her her freedom. In the silence of the cloister he had wept over the evils of the Church, and when raised to the chair of Peter it was his first resolve to remedy them. Henry the Fourth, with all the power of Germany and all that was wicked in Italy and France, was leagued against him; yet the genius of Hildebrand triumphed over them all. He died indeed in exile, a victim of persecution, but even then his victory was secure, and his name is embalmed in the memory of holy Church as the faithful guardian of her sanctuary. One of the greatest men of modern times was heard to exclaim: "Were I not Napoleon, I would wish to be Hildebrand"; and historical research in our own days has proved that whilst Henry the Fourth was the Nero of Germany, Gregory the Seventh was the unflinching defender of social order and religion in Europe, thus verifying the dying words of the great pontiff: "I have loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore is it that I die in exile".

Need I do more than mention the efforts of the popes to preserve inviolable the sanctity of Christian marriage? Yes, they braved every peril in enforcing it, and often too it was their glory to suffer in that holy cause. The names of Lothaire, king of Lorraine, and Philip Augustus of France, at once recur to mind; and yet there is another monarch nearer home to whom I will rather refer. When Henry the Eighth in shameless passion would divorce his lawful queen, he wrote to the pontiff: "Grant the favour which I ask, and England shall be with you; if you refuse it you shall feel my wrath". Clement the Seventh well knew the stubborn heart of Henry, but above all the law of God should be maintained, and sooner than favour the passion of the monarch, he allowed the fair jewel of England's kingdom to be snatched from his tiara, or rather from the crown of Christ.

The popes never ceased to exercise their power for the suppression of slavery, and from the days of Gregory the Great, who so beautifully laid down the duties of Christian masters, to the encyclical of Pope Gregory the Sixteenth, in 1840, there was not one in the long line of pontiffs but laboured strenuously to promote emancipation and to lessen the evils of slavery. At the same time they have never been prevented by human regards from rebuking despotism and assisting those who were oppressed. During the long dreary period in which our own dear country suffered all the woes of irreligious persecution, the popes were the only friends of our fathers. A little later, when the hydra of revolution raged in France, towards the close of the last century,

and when it was the boast of England to welcome some of its victims to her shores, the sovereign pontiff, with the limited resources at his command, was able to support no fewer than twenty-four thousand refugees. In our own times, when each effort of Poland to regain her independence was crushed by brute force, and provoked the most vexatious enactments and the direst excesses of cruelty, the powers of Europe looked on in sullen silence. The voice of the pontiff alone was heard, and the encyclical in reproof of tyranny and in support of the just claims of that Catholic people, shall be cherished as one of the most glorious monuments of the reign of the present immortal pontiff.

I should also commemorate the untiring zeal of the popes in propagating the faith of Christ, and extending to the remotest regions the blessings of the Cross.

“How beauteous on the hills the feet of Him
 (“T is thus Isaias sings),
 Who preaches heavenly peace, and brings to man
 The tidings of good things !
 Christ first, His Vicar now to us fulfils
 This gracious work of God ;
 No land by seas or mountains so concealed,
 But Peter there hath trod”.

There is however one great benefit for which Rome and Italy and Europe are indebted to the sovereign pontiffs, and which merits more than a passing mention in the matter of which I treat: this is their preservation from Moslem barbarism. See the results of Mahomedan conquest in Africa and the East. The shores of Morocco were once renowned as the home of industry and science; now the wild beasts of the forest dispute there the mastery with pirates: Egypt, despite all its natural resources, is a wilderness: Arabia has relapsed into barbarism: Syria and Palestine present nothing but ruins and desolation: and the same ruin and barbarism would reign over all Europe at the present day, were it not for the influence and exertions of the sovereign pontiffs.

From the first moment that the Mussulman cloud began to gather on the horizon, the popes sounded the alarm, and never did they cease their vigilance till the half-moon set for ever in the reddening waters of Lepanto.

When all Spain had been well nigh subjugated by the Moors, and when the Saracen leaders looked down from the slopes of the Pyrenees upon the rich plains of central Europe, meditating new conquests and vowing to exterminate the Christian name, it was a Roman pontiff, Saint Gregory the Third,

that aroused the martial ardour of the Franks. Medals blessed by the pope on the altar of Saint Peter's were distributed to the army of Charles Martel, and on the plains of Poitiers the myriad Mahommedan hosts were humbled to the dust by the soldiers of religion. Europe was saved, and after God it owed its preservation to the vigilance of Pope Gregory.

I pass over the almost uninterrupted struggles of the ninth and tenth centuries. In the beginning of the eleventh, a Saracen fleet landed a large army in the north of Italy; they ravaged the coast of Tuscany, but were driven to their ships by the courageous troops of Pope Benedict the Eighth. Before setting sail, the emir sent to the pontiff a sack full of nuts, with the message that as many as were these nuts, so many legions would he bring back next year to raze the very foundations of Rome. Pope Benedict was not idle. The Normans who hitherto had vied with the Saracens in the plunder of North Italy, were invited to his standard. He even journeyed on to Germany, and at Bamberg prayed the emperor Henry the Second to defend the interests of Christian Europe. A powerful army soon crossed the Alps to aid the pontifical troops, and when the emir returned with a numberless fleet, he again was driven back with slaughter from the coast of Italy.

And as I have mentioned the Normans, allow me to refer to another incident which is characteristic of those times, and explains to us how it was that the popes were able to enlist peoples and armies, otherwise conflicting, in the one common cause of the defence of the Christian name. In the year 1049 Leo the Ninth ascended the throne of Saint Peter. The Normans renewed their irruptions into central Italy; at Dragonara the papal army was defeated and the victors rushed on to Civitella, where the pope then resided. There the Normans knelt before Leo, offering themselves to take the place of his valiant soldiers. The pope in tears returned with them to the battle field. For two days the Normans by fasting and prayer sought to expiate their fault, but Pope Leo felt that his end was at hand. Three days before his death, summoning his clergy to his bed-side, he said to them: "The time is come for me to leave this world. Last night I was shown the land of Heaven, and whilst I marvelled at what I beheld, all the brethren who died in Apuleia fighting for the Church, came before me. Their garments shone like gold; each held in his hand a palm of unfading beauty; they all called to me aloud: 'Come and dwell with us, for it is by thee that we have gained this glory': and I heard another voice which said: 'In three days thou shalt rejoin us; this is thy place; thy throne is prepared and awaits thee'". Thus eight hundred years ago was anticipated the glorious scene of Castelfidardo, when

once more the soldiers of Rome became martyrs of faith. There was this difference: the modern Saracens continued their career of reckless plunder, whilst the Norman troops became the champions of civilization and liege soldiers of the cross.

It was to defend Europe against the tide of Saracenic barbarism that the crusaders marched to the Holy Land. The master minds of Sylvester the Second and Gregory the Seventh had already resolved on this line of warfare, but it was reserved for Urban the Second and the Council of Clermont to carry it into effect. The great Carthaginian leader immortalized his name by transferring the seat of war into the rich territories of his assailants. Such was the course which the pontiffs now judged to be the only defence of Europe against the Saracens. After the fall of the Carlovingian dynasty, Europe was split up into innumerable independent princedoms, rivals in their aspirations and their interests. Too weak to resist separately the Saracen assault, and too jealous to combine against the common foe, they must inevitably have fallen one by one before the ever increasing power of the crescent, were it not that the common father of all combined their energies under the banner of faith, and moulded them into one compact whole. Abelard, indeed, like the modern rationalists, derided the crusades, but the *folly of the cross* ever triumphs over the vain wisdom of false philosophy; by the crusades Europe was saved, society was reconstructed, and the feudal dissensions, and jealousies, and rival ambitions of petty princes were forgotten amid the cries of "Dieu le veut", as the crusaders bearing the banner of the cross marched to the rescue of the sepulchre of Christ.

The exertions of the pontiffs against the Mahommedan foe were not confined to exhortations. They themselves were foremost in every enterprise in defence of Christian Europe. In the celebrated defence of Belgrade, sixty thousand men, equipped by Pope Callixtus the Third, fought under the renowned Hunyad, and the Papal legates, John de Carvayal and St. John Capistran, were there to encourage the troops. The Turkish camp soon became a prey to the Christian army, and forty thousand of the Saracen slain attested the fury of the combat.

Seven years later, Pius the Second, though well nigh weighed down by years and infirmities, when he saw the Turkish armies again mustering all their strength on the banks of the Danube, thus addressed the assembled cardinals:

"Let our words to the princes of Europe no longer be: *Ite*, go to the combat against the enemy of Christianity; but let us say: *Venite*, come with us to combat your own foe: when they see the Vicar of Christ, aged and infirm, assuming the crusader's staff and sailing for the Holy Land, they will be ashamed not to share his perils.

As for me", he added, "I will take my place in the foremost ship, and from its prow I will raise my hands in prayer to implore on their arms the blessing of the God of victories".

And again he said:

"No doubt war is unsuitable to the weakness of old men and to the character of pontiffs, but when religion is ready to succumb, what can detain us? We shall march with our standard of the cross unfolded, we shall bear with us the relics of the saints, we shall have with us Jesus Christ himself in the holy Eucharist".

Grand indeed would have been the spectacle of the venerable pontiff thus appearing before the walls of Constantinople; but God had not willed it so. At the appointed day the Pope arrived at Ancona, where thirty thousand crusaders were assembled, but as the Venetian galleys entered the port to receive his army, the Pontiff expired, turning a last fond look towards the land of his desires.

His successor, Paul the Second, continued his efforts to combine the powers of Europe against the Saracens. It was at the shrine of the apostles, and under the protection of the Pontiff, that the Albanian hero, Scanderbeg, derived the resistless ardour which achieved for him twenty-two victories over the armies of the Sultan. When Mahomet the Second heard of this hero's death, he is said to have danced with joy, and exclaimed: "Now that the Albanian lion is no more, I shall exterminate the Christians". Albania indeed was soon overrun with Turkish troops, and the inhabitants were everywhere put to the most cruel torture and death. The letters, however, and prayers of the Pope aroused Europe from its lethargy. Once more an army of two hundred thousand men was mustered from France, Germany, and Italy; and though the Pontiff, like his predecessor, expired at the moment that success seemed to smile upon his enterprise, the terror alone of such an armament checked the victorious Moslem in his career. Moreover, the enthusiasm which it awakened in Europe produced another happy fruit: it led to the conjunction of the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain, which was the signal of triumph of the Christian cause, and soon banished for ever the Mahommedan rule from the peninsula.

For St. Pius the Fifth, however, was reserved the crowning glory of that great work which had so long engaged the thoughts of the sovereign pontiffs. The Sultan Soliman was accustomed to say of this great Pope: "I fear the tears of the old man more than all the arms of Europe": he might have added that he feared his prayers. St. Pius, under the tiara wore the humble habit and loved the religious cloister of St. Dominic, and the pilgrim may still visit the silent cell at St. Sabina's on the Aven-

tine, where, shedding tears and with arms extended, he stood entranced for hours in prayer, looking towards the East on the memorable day of Lepanto. At length he exclaimed: "Thy cause, O Lord, has triumphed", and hastening to the altar, he there with joy invited his astonished companions to entone with him in thanksgiving, "*Te Deum laudamus*". That joyous hymn was soon re-echoed throughout Europe: the efforts of the holy pontiff to combine all the energies of Christian princes, and still more his tears and prayers, had merited at length the blessing for which all Christendom had so long sighed—the Saracen power was for ever discomfited, and Europe was again saved from the horrors of barbarism. Well may we apply to this great Pontiff the words used by a Protestant historian in regard to an earlier pope:

"He might now give his blessing to all the emperors, kings, princes, and lords of Christendom, and say: Without me you would not be what you are. The popes have saved antiquity and civilization, and Rome is worthy of remaining as a sanctuary in which to shelter all the precious treasures of the past".

But it is now time to devote a few words to the enemies of the temporal sovereignty of the Holy See, and their fate. The first great enemy was the court of Constantinople. Though unable to defend its own territories, yet it ceased not for centuries by secret intrigues and open assault, like Piedmont of the present day, to disturb the peace of Italy. One instance will suffice to show the enmity which the eastern heretics bore to the sovereign pontiffs. Pope Martin had renewed the anathemas of his predecessors and combated with zeal against the Monotholite heresy, of which the Greek emperor was the avowed patron. One day a hired band of assassins seized him at the very threshold of the Vatican, and hurried him away to the sea coast. For fifteen months he was dragged in chains from island to island, and at length was exposed as an enemy of the emperor to the fury and insults of the mob in Constantinople. The aged pontiff, barefooted, with tattered stole and tunic, and covered with filth and blood, yet praying aloud for his persecutors, was dragged through the streets and subjected to every insult. Soon after he expired in exile in the Chersonesus, but the miracles which were wrought at his tomb attested to the world how different was the judgment of God from that of man.

Had it not been for this false pride and hatred against Rome, ever inherent in heresy, the statues of Mahomet and Soliman and Amuret would not now wear their laurel wreaths in the eastern capital. The aegis of the popes, as it sheltered Europe, so also would it have guarded the east from the Saracen sword, and instead of the half-moon, symbol of barbarism, the banner of

the Cross would to-day be unfurled on the battlements of Saint Sophia.

The names of Arnold of Brescia and Cola di Rienzi have of late years become familiar in the Protestant literature of England, which extols them as champions of liberty against the tyrannical government of papal Rome. Their history, indeed, has much in common with the revolutionists of modern times, but it is far different from what our novelists and socialists pretend.

Saint Bernard wrote to Pope Innocent regarding Arnold of Brescia: "Beware of that youth from Brescia. His words are honey, but his tenets are poison: 't is the scorpion with a dove's head. Already Brescia has cast him forth; France banishes him; Germany rejects him; it remains for Rome to anathematize him". A little later, in 1139, anathema was indeed pronounced against his tenets in the general council of Lateran, yet Arnold would not submit. Many adventurers were attracted to his standard by his illusive cry of "Rome, the capital of the Italian republic". At the same time he solicited aid from the emperor of Germany, and, heedless of consistency, wrote to him: "Down with all who resist Caesar: behold our cry! we are resolved to make thy dominion universal and unrivalled". Many indeed were the tumults which the followers of Arnold excited in Rome; in one of them even a sovereign pontiff, Pope Lucius the Second, was killed. Still the Romans refused to be led away by the deceptive visions of revolution. One day whilst the pope was absent, the citizens assembled, and full of rage and disgust, caused Arnold to be summoned before them; a popular tribunal was extemporized: Arnold was declared to be a disturber of the public peace and an enemy to his country. In the popular frenzy he was beheaded; his body was burned, and its ashes were cast into the waters of the Tiber.

Cola di Rienzi, the last of the tribunes of Rome, walked in the steps of Arnold, and met with a similar fate. He was one of those who, during the papal residence in Avignon, proceeded thither with Petrarch and other deputies of the Roman people to pray Pope Clement the Sixth to return to Rome. The Pontiff, knowing his energy and the popularity which he enjoyed, conferred on him the dignity and name of Tribune, with full power for the suppression of crime and brigandage in the territory of Rome. Led away by ambition, Cola di Rienzi soon indulged in every excess. Fully equipped, he proceeded to the porch of the Lateran Basilica, and there striking with his sword towards the points of the compass, he proclaimed that the whole world should thenceforward obey his rule. Rome was amazed

at his folly, and the citizens, seizing on him, sent him in chains to the then reigning pope Innocent. The clemency of the pontiff after a while restored him to his liberty and his former dignity, taking care at the same time to appoint a cardinal legate to guide and control him in the government of Rome. The rage of the citizens was, however, soon again kindled against him: the popular voice accused him of heinous crimes, and at length he was murdered by an angry mob on the 8th of October, 1354.

The period of the residence of the popes in Avignon has been well styled the seventy years' captivity of the people of Rome. Many times the pontiffs were asked by their subjects to return amongst them. On one occasion Petrarch thus addressed the pontiff: "Do you choose to arise on the last day with the Avignonese, or with the holy apostles Saints Peter and Paul, with the martyrs Laurence and Stephen, with the confessors Gregory and Sylvester? And what can you answer, O holy Father, when, on the last day, Saint Peter shall say to you, what reverence did you show my tomb? what love did you show my people?" The popes, indeed, were more than desirous of returning to the holy city. Of one of them (Pope Benedict the Twelfth) it is told that night after night he would mount the watch tower of his palace in Avignon, and there sighing and praying, would stretch forth his arms towards his widowed church. The intrigues of princes, however, and the tumultuous scenes in Italy, prevented the popes from realizing their desire. It seemed as if Providence had decreed to make known to the world the necessity for the free exercise of the pontifical rule in Rome. Long had holy Church to weep for the schisms and other evils that sprung from this period of captivity. Rome itself well nigh became a desert; its population was one hundred and fifty thousand when the popes set out for Avignon; it numbered only seventeen thousand when they returned to the Vatican. At length an humble virgin, renowned for her sanctity, set out on foot across the Alps, and presented herself before Gregory the Eleventh. She spoke to him in the name of God: "It is the wish of heaven that you fulfil your secret vow to return to Rome". The pontiff stood amazed; he had indeed, in the secret of his heart, vowed to return to Rome; but he had feared to make it known to any one, so many were the difficulties that seemed every day to render its realization more and more impossible. It was Saint Catherine of Sienna that thus spoke to the pontiff in the name of God. He obeyed, and on the 17th of January, 1377, Rome rejoiced once more in the presence of its chief pastor and its sovereign.

I will not speak of the many attacks which in succeeding times were made against the papal rule in Rome. The sack of

the city by the Lutheran army of de Bourbon for awhile menaced it with utter destruction. The affrescoes of Michael Angelo in the Pauline still present the traces of their fires; the sacred ceremonies of religion were travestied in the public streets by a drunken soldiery, and outrages to humanity and religion were perpetrated which awakened an outcry of indignation throughout all Europe.

At the close of the last century these scenes were again renewed in Rome in the name of the directory of France. The venerable pontiff Pius the Sixth, who for twenty-three years had ruled the Church of God, was commanded to leave the holy city for a distant prison. To a priest whom he asked to accompany him, his words were: "Have you courage enough to accompany us to Calvary?" As he hastened to prison he exclaimed: "How vividly do the early ages of the Church now recur to my mind—the ages of her triumphs": and well indeed, for in his sufferings and his sorrows were once more sown the seeds of the Church's victory. His successor Pius the Seventh was also destined to taste the bitter cup of persecution. Napoleon at the zenith of his power, said to his ministers: "Can the sentence of the old man cause the muskets to drop from my soldiers' hands?" Yet so it was: the snows of Russia caused that very calamity to befall his hitherto victorious troops. Under the blighting sentence of excommunication the faded laurels fell from Napoleon's brow: and whilst the pinioned eagle was sent to pine away its days of misery on a dreary rock, the holy father returned to his capital amidst the joyous acclaims of a grateful people:—

"The Arabs have a fable that the great pyramid was built by the antediluvian kings, and alone, of the works of men, bore the weight of the flood. Such as this was the fate of the popedom. It had been buried under the great inundation, but its foundations had remained unshaken, and when the waters abated it appeared alone amid the ruins of a world which had passed away" (*Macaulay's Essays*).

And now we should turn our thoughts to the immortal pontiff who so happily reigns. But his sorrows and his triumphs are household words in every home of Christendom, and hence they require no more than a passing reference. When in 1848 revolution held out its promises, its friendship, and its richest boons, Pius the Ninth, by his golden words, "*Non devo, non voglio, non posso*", laid down the basis of Christian freedom, and drew the line of eternal separation between true liberty and communism. From that day all the storms of infidelity and socialism have raged around the throne of Pius the Ninth, but thanks to Providence they have raged in vain. Castelfidardo presented a glorious spectacle to the world. It was indeed the combat of the

two standards: on one side revolution, brute force, and injustice, personified in Victor Emmanuel and Cialdini, and exulting in a momentary triumph; on the other, religion, honour, and justice, with Pius the Ninth and Lamoriciere. Never, in the verdict of Europe, had the temporal power of the popes so great a triumph, never did Christian chivalry present more glorious champions. The martyrs of Castelfidardo, combating for Pio Nono's throne, became sponsors for all that is good and honourable and just in society; they died in its defence, and by their death they secured its triumph.

Before concluding, I would wish to tell you who are the present enemies of the temporal sovereignty of the popes. They are the socialists of Italy, combined with adventurers from every part, from Hungary and Poland, from France and Russia, and I must add from England too,—men fanatical in their hatred of the Catholic Church, or revolutionist in their principles, who rush with frenzy against the popedom, which they instinctively recognize to be the mainstay of morality and social order. They are aided by all who wish to undermine society, or who under the name of liberty seek loose reins for libertinism and brigandage throughout Europe. They are aided by the anti-Catholic press of England: they are aided still more by England's funds. Even in Ireland collections have been made in Protestant churches which I could name, in aid of the attacks on Rome, and these collections have been enforced by some orange landlords on their tenantry. St. Bernard, describing the Italian revolutionists of his day, says:

“Odious to earth and heaven, they have assailed both the one and the other; impious towards God, reckless towards things sacred, factious among themselves, envious of their neighbours, inhuman towards foreigners, . . . they love none and by none are loved. Too impatient for submission, too helpless for rule; . . . importunate to gain an end, restless till they gain it, ungrateful when they have gained it. They have taught their tongue to speak big words, while their performances are scanty indeed” (*De Considerat.* iv. 2.)

Who would not say that these words described the revolutionists of our own day? The oppression of the poor, the bankruptcy of the state, the plunder of monasteries, the insecurity of life and property throughout the whole peninsula, public insults to religion, war against the helpless virgins of Christ, these be thy triumphs, O Italian revolutionists! So dreadful are the abuses, so horrible the crimes of these enemies of God and man, that the present meek Pontiff was forced thus to describe them in his Encyclical of 17th of October, 1867:

“Cast your eyes around you, venerable brethren, and you will see

and deeply deplore with us the detestable abominations which now chiefly desolate unhappy Italy. . . . The venerable commandments of God and the laws of holy Church are utterly despised, and impiety uplifts its head unpunished, and triumphs. Hence all the iniquities, all the evils and the injuries we behold with the utmost grief of our soul. Hence these numerous arrays of men who walk in iniquity, serving under the banner of Satan, upon whose forehead is written 'Falsehood', and who, called [by the name of rebels, and turning their mouths against heaven, blaspheme God, sully and condemn every thing sacred, and treading under foot all rights, divine and human, breathe only carnage like rapacious wolves. These are they who shed blood, lose their souls by most serious scandals, and seek most unjustly to profit by their own malice, carrying off by violence other men's goods, afflicting the weak and the poor, increasing the number of widows and orphans, showing favour for reward to the impious, while they refuse justice to the poor, plundering, and, in the corruption of their hearts, shamefully glutting themselves with all evil passions, to the very ruin of civil society itself".

Were we to listen to the infidel press of Europe, the Roman people should also have joined in the revolutionary war against the temporal sovereignty of the Holy See. But it is not so: the Romans have learned too well the fate of the usurped provinces and the sad tale of the adjoining kingdom, to seek to substitute a military despotism for their present mild rule. No; the Roman people love to prove on every occasion their devoted loyalty to the Sovereign Pontiffs. They proved it when with universal acclaim they welcomed Pio Nono returning from his exile. They proved it year after year, refusing to afford a plea to Piedmontese intervention, which was ever ready at the frontiers. They proved it when the French army was withdrawn, and when they formed special troops for the defence of the Patrimony of St. Peter, and swelled the Zouave battalions to repel the Garibaldian bands. They proved it in the towns of the Sabina, which were entered by surprise by the invading revolutionists; but the inhabitants soon chased the freebooters from their walls with the rallying cry of *Viva Pio Nono*. They proved it, in fine, when unsolicited they formed volunteer corps of guards to maintain order in the city of Rome, whilst the gallant army of the pope went forth in the name and with the blessing of the whole Christian world, to humble to the dust the Garibaldian pride on the plains of Mentana.

Yes, the Romans know too well the privileges they enjoy under the mildest and most beneficent rule of Christendom to associate themselves with the revolutionists of other kingdoms. No deaths from starvation are heard of in Rome; no emigration is forced upon its people to secure the means of subsistence; ruin is not brought upon its families by a sudden monetary crisis;

for centuries the small holders are protected by an admirable tenant-right: its capital, the great centre of attraction for the *elite* of Europe, is enriched by an ever increasing train of wealthy visitors: there is no form of human misery but has the noblest institutions for its relief: everything is done by the government to alleviate the condition of the poor: the whole revenue of the Pope is devoted to public works for the good of the country; the schools and universities present a gratuitous education even in its highest branches to all: there is no monopoly in its offices, and the highest post is open alike to the sons of the humblest artizan as to the scions of its noblest houses. Such are but a few of the special features of that Rule which the Roman people refuse to exchange for the disgrace and misery and oppression and bankruptcy of their neighbours.

But let us suppose that the Roman people were at length to be seduced from their allegiance to the Sovereign Pontiffs, should this suffice to justify the powers of Europe in acquiescing in such a revolutionary course? I unhesitatingly reply that it should not. It is not for itself alone that the patrimony of St. Peter enjoys the Papal government, but it is moreover for the common good of all Christendom. An American statesman has well illustrated this point. The district of Columbia, as the seat of government, enjoys a special independence. Now, were this state, he says, to proclaim itself desirous of being annexed to an adjoining state, surely no man of common sense in Congress would by his vote sanction their desire, for the plain reason that its exceptional government is given to it, not for itself alone, but for the benefit of all the United States. Even so, no change can be justified in the form of government of Rome without the approval and sanction of all Christendom. That sanction Christendom shall never grant, and never shall the powers of Europe permit the Holy See to be deprived of its principality, which is necessary for the due exercise of its sacred mission, and which is the sure guarantee of its freedom in its spiritual sovereignty. No! Europe cannot be deprived of the patrimony of Saint Peter, which, hallowed by the memories of a thousand years, and sanctioned by all that is venerable in society and religion, is the sanctuary and home of art and piety, the source of every blessing to mankind, the only check against irreligion, communism, and tyranny, the only hope for social order, civilization, and true Christian liberty. The Christian pilgrims from afar shall not cease to fondly turn to that kingdom of the heart as to their home, and all Christendom, in the outpouring of its affections, shall from age to age greet the Pontiff-city as we to-night salute her: *Esto perpetua.*

