

future day to break in pieces the fabric of her dominion. By-and-by she began to be uneasy, and to have a boding of calamity. The penetrating eye of Innocent III. detected the quarter whence danger was to arise. He saw in the labours of these humble men the beginning of a movement which, if permitted to go on and gather strength, would one day sweep away all that it had taken the toils and intrigues of centuries to achieve. He straightway commenced those terrible crusades which wasted the sowers but watered the seed, and helped to bring on, at its appointed hour, the catastrophe which he sought to avert. * * *

When we cast our eyes over Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, our attention is irresistibly riveted on the south of France. There a great movement is on the eve of breaking out. Cities and provinces are seen rising in revolt against the Church of Rome. Judging from the aspect of things on the surface, one would have inferred that all opposition to Rome had died out. Every succeeding century was deepening the foundations and widening the limits of the Romish Church, and it seemed now as if there awaited her ages of quiet and unchallenged dominion. It is at this moment that her power begins to totter; and though she will rise higher ere terminating her career, her decadence has already begun, and her fall may be postponed, but cannot be averted. But how do we account for the powerful movement that begins to show itself at the foot of the Alps, at a moment when, as it seems, every enemy has been vanquished, and Rome has won the battle? To attack her now, seated as we behold her amid vassal kings, obedient nations, and entrenched behind a triple rampart of darkness, is surely to invite destruction.

The causes of this movement had been long in silent operation. In fact, this was the very quarter of Christendom where opposition to the growing tyranny and superstitions of Rome might be expected first to show itself. Here it was that Polycarp and Irenæus had laboured. Over all those goodly plains which the Rhone waters, and in those numerous cities and villages over which the Alps stretch their shadows, these apostolic men had planted Christianity. Hundreds of thousands of martyrs had here watered it with their blood, and though a thousand years well-nigh had passed since that day, the story of their terrible torments and heroic deaths had not been altogether forgotten. In the Cottian Alps and the province of Languedoc Vigilantius had raised his powerful protest against the errors of his times. This region was included, as we have seen, in the diocese of Milan, and, as a consequence, it enjoyed the light which shone on the south of the Alps long after Churches not a few on the north of these mountains were plunged in darkness. In the ninth century Claude, of Turin had found in the Archbishop of Lyons, Agobardus, a man willing to entertain his views and to share his conflicts. Since that time the night had deepened here as everywhere else. But still, as may be conceived, there were memories of the past, there were seeds in the soil, which new forces might quicken and make to spring up. Such a force did now begin to act.

It was, moreover, on this spot, and among these peoples—the best prepared of all the nations of the West—that the Word of God was first published in the vernacular. When the Romance version of the New Testament was issued, the people that sat in darkness saw a great light. This was in fact a second giving of Divine Revelation to the nations of Europe; for the early Saxon renderings of *portions* of Holy Writ had fallen aside and gone utterly into disuse; and though Jerome's translation, the Vulgate, was still known, it was in Latin, now a dead language, and its use was confined to the priests, who, though they *possessed* it, cannot be said to have *known* it; for the reverence paid it lay in the rich illuminations of its writing, in the gold and gems of its binding, and the curiously-carved and costly cabinets in which it was locked up, and not in the earnestness with which its pages were studied. Now the nations of Southern Europe could read, each in "the tongue wherein he was born," the wonderful works of God.