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AN APOCALYPTIC CRISIS IN PAPAL HISTORY.

BY THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

The most careful students of the history of that mysterious politico-ecclesiastical power, the papacy, have been compelled to identify it with the apocalyptic mystery of the woman whom John saw sitting upon a scarlet beast, and borne by it—the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus, and declared to be identical with a certain great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth, and which is somehow connected with seven mountains or hills (Rev. 17 : 18).

One may well hesitate to interpret symbols found in the Apocalypse, that most brilliantly Oriental of all the poems of the Scriptures, save where, as in this case, God has hung a key close by the lock. We know from the Word itself that the woman is supported by the beast—the world power—and that she is the same as a great city which is identified with rule over earthly kings, and has seven hills within its compass. If that woman be not the papal church, supported by the temporal sovereignty, so long controlling even earthly empires, and finding its seat and centre in Rome, the seven-hilled city, then we may as well give up all attempts to read history in the light of prophecy. There is so remarkable a *consensus* of the most devout commentators and students of God's word that it becomes almost a safe guide to interpretation : that the harlot, as in at least fifty cases elsewhere in the Word of God, describes an apostate or unfaithful body of professed believers, whose doctrine is corrupted and whose practice is perverted. Again, Rome, the new Babyion, is on a river, as were Nineveh and Babyion ; and rivers are symbols of commerce, and so of temporal prosperity and a flood of affluence. Again, there is agreement that this harlot is a world city, distinguished from the beast or world power. The beast is clad with scarlet-colored trappings, which appear to have embroidered upon them certain names full of blasphemy or irreverent assumption, as when men claim Divine honors. The woman's methods are seductive ; with an artful policy she seduces nations into obedience, and political deformities and enormities result. The abominations of the