

General Intelligence.

TEMPORAL POWER OF THE POPES--ITS ORIGIN.

Now that public attention is fixed on the recent election of the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IX., many of our readers will, we have no doubt, be gratified by the following historical summary of the origin of the temporal power of the Popes, taken from Doctor Donovan's interesting and learned work entitled 'Rome, Ancient and Modern, and its Environs,' a work which we cannot too strongly recommend to every reader of education :

"After the fall of the western empire, Italy remained a prey to the Northern barbarians; but the evil effects of their domination were experienced by Rome more than any other Italian city, which attracted the rapacity of those ferocious and greedy herds. Accordingly she fell successively under the dominion of Heruli and the Goths; and if, after the cruel laceration, she returned for a time to the empire of the east, it was only to augment her suffering by subjecting her to the arbitrary misrule of the imperial minister. Even the Exarch resided not within her walls; and the Queen of cities saw her senators reduced to vassalage, and her people to vicarious despotism, whilst internal dissension was suffered to gnaw her vitals. In this deplorable state recourse was frequently had to the paternal intervention of the Supreme Pastor, who proved himself, on all occasions, the strenuous defender of the oppressed, protecting the citizens against the power of the Praticians, the misrule of the Imperial Exarchs, the exactions of the rapacious ministers, and the tyranny of the Emperor himself. That, under such circumstances, the people, experiencing the parental solicitude of the bishop, should have recognised in him the strongest claim to their confidence, and even preferred his mild, domestic rule to a foreign and oppressed yoke, cannot be a matter of surprise. Accordingly an occasion presented itself, which ripened into maturity this feeling and conviction. In the pontificate of Gregory II. (715—731,) the Emperor, Leo Isauricus, patronising the seat of the Iconoclasts, inflamed their sacrilegious violence against sacred images, and against the Catholics, who paid them an inferior respect, given to the sign for sake of *the thing signified*. The imperial reformer claimed supreme authority in spirituals as well as in temporals, and sought to enforce the novel claim, not by argument but by arms. He ordered by public edict that all representations of holy persons or things should be defaced or destroyed; the most admired and revered productions of the chisel and pencil were accordingly demolished by the hand of violence under the sanction of law: and resistance was punished by confiscation and

death. In vain did the Pontiff admonish the fanatical Isaurian to pause in his career of sacrilege and blood; 'Abandon your rash project,' writes Gregory II.; 'if you persist, we are innocent of the blood that will be spilt in the contest.' The proscriptive edict was enforced with increased rigour, and Rome itself was repeatedly assaulted by the armies of the Greek tyrant, who however, were successfully repelled. Every attempt, says Gibbon, 'was made by fraud or force to seize the persons of the second and third Gregory, and to strike at their lives.' A bloody battle at Ravenna terminated in the defeat of the Iconoclast army; but 'no sooner had the Popes confirmed their own safety,' continues Gibbon, 'than they appear to have spared the relics of the Byzantine dominion. They exhorted the Indians not to separate from the body of the Roman monarchy;' but the indignant senate and people resolved on asserting their independence by placing themselves under a resident sovereign, from whom they might hope for protection not persecution; and accordingly they spontaneously transferred the supreme magistracy from the sacrilegious usurper, who oppressed them to the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory II, who had risked his life for their defence—an event which occurred A.D. 730, the year before the decease of that Pope. The liberties of Rome were thus rescued from Leo the Isaurian, and re-established after a servitude of 750 years; her bishop became the temporal as well as the spiritual father of a free people; and after the loss of her legions and her provinces, Rome was again restored to honor and dominion. The chair of Peter replaced the throne of the Cæsars; the seat of empire became the sanctuary of religion; and, had it not been for this new vital principle, which renovated her decayed energies, Rome, like other cities of antiquity, like Thebes or Babylon, or Carthage, might have been blotted from the map of the earth, verifying the awful foreboding of Lucan, 'fabula nomen erit.' To the mild sway of the Roman Pontiffs she owes her independence, probably her existence; and, as the seat and centre of Catholic unity, she now enjoys a supremacy of spiritual dominion, a voluntary sway, over regions far beyond the loftiest and boldest flight of the Roman Eagle. 'The temporal power of the Popes,' says the unsuspected authority already cited, 'is now confirmed by the reverence of a thousand years; and their noblest title is the free choice of a people, whom they had redeemed from slavery.'

THE NEW POPE.

The manner in which Pius IX., has accepted the Pontificate, is extremely affecting. He was filled with tears: at one time his emotion was so great that he relapsed into his seat, and the Cardinal