

sooner or later, with an empty exchequer. Henry resorted to the sale of church livings as a means of replenishing his purse. Such a course is not to be excused ; but it was the custom of the day, and continued so for centuries after. In fact, to this day there are other churches besides that of Rome in which something very like simony still prevails. And it is well to observe that the sale of sees themselves was not so much what the Church then objected to, and continued arduously to struggle against ; but the sale of sees by princes, the pope considering them a little perquisite of his own. Gregory notified Henry not to sell any more sees. The King paid no attention to the notification and continued doing as he hitherto had done. The pontiff then summoned Henry before him, "to answer for his sins towards his subjects." This was something new and unexpected. The pope was taking upon himself neither more nor less than the right of passing judgment upon the conduct of princes as princes ; or, in other words, the authority to depose any sovereign in Europe,—for the power to judge must carry with it necessarily that of condemning and punishing, and the only possible punishment of a bad and obdurate prince is deposition. Henry's answer to this arrogant pretension was one of the same high handed kind : he called a diet at Worms and proceeded to depose the pope. Gregory answered by excommunication ; it was his favorite reply to anyone who refused immediate submission to his will, and we presume was not tried on William the Conqueror only from the conviction that such a step would assuredly be answered by the stoppage of Peter's pence, or perhaps because his experience of Robert Guiscard had taught the pontiff that Norman filibusters were excommunication-proof. The papal ban carried with it the freeing of all the king's subjects from their allegiance. Gregory knew far better than Henry the general

spread of dissatisfaction throughout the kingdom. The constant calls for money had begun to tell heavily upon the people, and all that was required was to give shape and color to the general feeling of discontent. It is probable that even without the excommunication the thoughtless and oppressive conduct of Henry would before long have provoked a revolt. The wily pontiff, by his denunciation and the reason assigned for calling the King to account, fanned the flame which somewhat sooner burst forth in open rebellion.

The arrogance of the priest has ever found ready and powerful support in the credulity and subservience of woman ; it is therefore without much surprise that we find from the outset arrayed against the unfortunate monarch those who should have been the most attached to him, his mother the Empress Agnes, his aunt the Duchess Beatrice, and his cousin the famous Countess Matilda. The latter left by will to the pope all her possessions, which were considerable, and in the future were doomed to prove a very troublesome legacy. If olden chronicles are to be believed, her intimacy with the saintly Hildebrand was not of a kind to reflect much credit upon the character of either. The contest between a very young, inexperienced and somewhat hasty man, and one old and astute, thoroughly trained in dark ways of mediæval politics, and the more tortuous and hidden paths for which the court of Rome had even then acquired an unenviable notoriety, was not likely long to be a dubious one. Strengthened by the firmness which twenty years' management at the helm of State had given, and thoroughly confident of the accuracy of the knowledge he held, and on which he had relied before taking the final step, Gregory calmly awaited the result, contenting himself with sedulously fostering the already wide-spread dissatisfaction among his adversary's