

ticed, probably forgotten by Robert and his hardy soldiers, remained in force several years. At last, Gregory requiring the assistance of the Normans against Henry IV., who had taken possession of Rome, graciously removed the ban. Robert came to his relief and forced the Emperor to retire. From that time to the day of his death, the pontiff had no more valued and dearer friend than the godless Norman filibuster, who for ten years had laughed at his excommunication.

However, the numerous difficulties of Gregory VII. with other potentates, sink into insignificance when compared with his quarrel with the Emperor of Germany. And in reviewing the contest between the two, it is well constantly to keep in mind that all along the pope was acting upon a fixed plan and carrying out a deliberately formed determination. He doubtless availed himself of any advantages the course of events might offer, and was obliged to wait until Henry's conduct should give him some excuse for intervening; but from the moment the struggle began, the prelate saw distinctly laid out before him the course he would follow, and never swerved from it until he brought upon his adversary the bitter humiliation of Canossa. The lesson then administered, however, was not forgotten; and, when three years later, he found himself deposed and Guibert elected pope as Clement III., he doubtless wished that either the teaching had not been so complete or the emperor so apt a pupil. And he probably spent many an hour in no very agreeable meditation over this unpleasant conviction from 1080 until 1084, when he found himself driven at last from Rome, the anti-pope established in the Vatican, and himself obliged to beg for assistance from the excommunicated Robert Guiscard. To some men it doubtless is pleasant to oppress an adversary when you have him fairly at your mercy; but not unfrequently such a course is followed by

retribution, which is by no means so agreeable. Even the most powerful of popes have been able, from their own experience, to testify to the truth of Byron's well-known words:—

“For time at last sets all things even—
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.”

Gregory VII. had made all his preparations during the reigns of his predecessors, who, as we have said, were mere puppets in his hands. We have seen that he forced Victor II. upon the Emperor Henry II. He afterwards drew up himself the decree of Nicholas II., by which the right of confirmation to the See of Rome, by the King of Germany, was specially reserved. In the very face of this decree he secured the election and consecration of Alexander II. without waiting for the royal sanction. In his own election, for some reason known only to himself, he was more careful, and distinctly refused consecration until the royal sanction had been obtained. When Gregory ascended the papal throne, Henry IV., King of Germany, afterwards Emperor and known in history as the Great, was only twenty-three years of age. The young king had had the misfortune to lose his father when only six years of age, and had been brought up by the Empress Agnes, who acted as regent, Henry IV. having been proclaimed king on the death of Henry III., though still in his infancy. The training he received was certainly not as good as it might have been, and the temptations thrown in his way doubtless numerous. At all events he grew up vain, licentious and extravagant; though he early gave indications of some of the sterling qualities for which he afterwards became better known. A natural consequence of the young monarch's mode of life was a constant want of money; dissipated princes are sure to be afflicted,