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IKE thunder out of a clear sky the Encyclical letter and syllabus which denounced all that modern thought had been accustomed to regard as enlightened progress, fell upon the civilized world. It seemed so like a burlesque on priestly assumption, so much like an over charged caricature of pretensions supposed to have long since been abandoned, that it was difficult to believe the documents had really issued from the Romish Church. The claims were so preposterous, the attempt to repress free thought so extravagant, and the denunciations of opinions and facts so long regarded as settled rules of life and motives of action, public and private, so sweeping and general that men might well hesitate to give credence to the possibility of the Romish See having in the midst of the civilization of the nineteenth century claimed a supremacy over the minds and consciences of men, which even in the darkest ages of the world's history she could scarcely have put forward unchallenged. Yet these pretensions are but steps in the ascending scale of which the claims which it is understood are to be asserted at the approaching Œcumenical Council will for the present form the topmost round.

At the beginning of this century the Papacy appeared to have received its death blow. The giant Pope, as represented by Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, had apparently waxed more and more feeble. Towards the end of the last century, the Jesuits, the right arm of the Church of Rome as they were styled, had been expelled from nearly every European state, and in 1773, the order was declared suppressed by the famous brief: *Dominus ac Redemptor noster*. In 1798, Pius VI, was taken prisoner, and removed to France where he died in exile in 1799. His successor Pius VII elected at Venice, Rome being then in

a state of anarchy, favoured the order and in 1804 confirmed its introduction into the kingdom of the two Sicilies. But his reign was troubled, and a great part of the time he was a prisoner, the Roman States were incorporated with the French Empire, and a concordat was signed with France which tacitly gave up to the Emperor the whole Ecclesiastical States and decided in favour of the civil power the long disputed question as to the papal veto on the appointment of bishops by the temporal authority. It was not till 1814 that he entered Rome, where one of his first acts was to restore the order of the Jesuits with all its privileges. Shortly after he had again to take flight, but on the expulsion of Napoleon all the States of the Church were restored to him. A shuttlecock for Kings and Congresses to sport with, the Papal power was made the subject of ridicule, and any allusion to the influence it might exercise was treated with contempt. Yet during this period it was growing in strength, the order of the Jesuits was extending, and presuming upon the supposed number of converts in Great Britain the Pope by a brief restored the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England in 1850, a measure which called forth general indignation and led to an act of Parliament being passed to prohibit the use of territorial titles in England by the Roman Catholic Bishops, an act treated with the most sovereign contempt and never attempted to be enforced.

The seat of the infallibility claimed by the Church of Rome has been a question long in dispute. By some the infallible power was held to reside in Œcumenical Councils; by others that the sanction of the Pope was required to make their decisions valid, while a third party regarded infallibility as being the personal attribute of the Pope in his official capacity. On this point a Roman Catholic writer says: "Infallibility of judgment is claimed for the body of bishops with their head, the