

century taking up the contest upon these very prerogatives, which was again on foot, carried it on with so much success, that all circumstances considered, by what he effected, and by what he put in the power of his successors to effect, he may be esteemed a worse man and a greater conqueror than Alexander or Cæsar. In this contest, he had the address to gain to his side the mother and aunt of the emperor, Henry the Fourth, and to debauch, in every sense of the word, perhaps, his cousin-german, the Countess Matilda. At least, the manner in which she lived with this dirty monk, and which was not at all necessary to the support of a cause she might and did affect to favor on a religious principle, justifies the accusation sufficiently." Elsewhere the same able writer declares :—" Gregory the Seventh carried these usurpations and this tyranny to the utmost height by a more impudent as well as a more successful prostitution of the doctrine of a future state than any of his predecessors. From him his successors learned to distribute plenary indulgences with profusion, and to extend particular excommunications into general interdicts. By the first, they sold heaven to the best bidders, and sent men in shoals to eternal happiness. By the second, they condemned whole nations at once, deprived them of the means of salvation, and subjected them in a collective body to eternal misery. The first was a never-failing source of wealth, the second of power." Hume, speaking of the temporal power of the popes, says :—" All this immense store of spiritual and civil authority was now devolved on Gregory VII., of the name of Hildebrand, the most enterprising pontiff that had ever filled that chair, and the least restrained by fear, decency or moderation."

That Hildebrand was a very able man, no one will deny ; that he was an equally bad man few will question who abhor tyranny, and look with loathing

upon superstition. He grasped at power for the sake of power, and to obtain it did not hesitate to prostitute his priestly character and debase his sacred office. He traded upon the superstitions of mankind, and succeeded so long as the inclinations of his hearers went with his instructions, and their desires coincided with his orders. When the time came that the mask of religion no longer was necessary to cover the face of rebellion, he found his exhortations and admonitions unlistened to and unavailing. Then he took upon himself the high office of soothsayer, and turned his papal pulpit into a mountebank's stage. Such conduct could not but prove, as it did, extremely hurtful to the cause of religion. He was an able man ; but when his calculations went amiss, he was not above trying to redeem his fortunes by the dodges of a trickster. In vain do we look in him for the single-mindedness and honesty of purpose which supported such reformers as Luther or Knox, the straightforward policy of Cromwell, the fervor and deep religious feeling of Xavier. He did harm in his day, and sowed the seed of more to be reaped after his death. He may be said to be the father of the Guelph and Ghibeline factions, and the original cause of the assassinations, tumults and convulsions which characterized their struggles. In his own person he suffered, it is true, punishment for his insatiable ambition. A death in exile to a man of his temperament must indeed have been a very sore blow. The Church however, to a certain extent, revenged his miseries. Quite prepared when it suits her purpose to advocate and countenance filial disobedience, disloyalty, ingratitude, or any other vice or crime, thirty years after, when Henry had grown old, Rome stirred up against him his eldest son. The revolution proved successful, and the old man, whom in days gone by no misfortune could completely overcome, was at last