

of the right of a fief, yet it is my province to judge where a sin is committed, and my duty to prevent all public scandals."

Anything that he chose could be converted into a public scandal,—a contested succession, a difference between two Christian princes, likely to lead to war, a question of consanguinity between a king and his wife,—anything and everything, under this very convenient rule, was reason and authority sufficient for the Roman pontiff to intervene whenever and wherever his interest or his fancy pointed. He excommunicated Swero for usurping the throne of Norway. One of his legates having been detained on his way through Hungary, he wrote to the king informing him that he might perhaps find himself forced to prevent the accession of his son to the throne. He put the kingdom of Leon under an interdict, because the king had married his cousin, a princess of Castile; and, in spite of the entreaties of the clergy, who represented that not only could they collect no tithes, but that heretical preachers were fast gaining the confidence of the people, refused to remove it until at last the king gave way and sent back his wife. The same rule, however, was not doomed always to work in the same way. Philip Augustus of France, one of the proudest monarchs that country can boast of, a brave and successful general, a man of great firmness and ability, undertook to send back his wife, Ingelburge of Denmark, because she was connected with him within the prohibited degrees, and married Agnes de Méranie. The conduct of the king cannot of course be excused, any more than the conduct of the pope in forcing Alfonso of Leon to repudiate his wife; however, Innocent deemed that done without his sanction an outrage, which perpetrated by his orders would have been a virtue. France was placed under an interdict. For eight months the kingdom remained under the ban,

and at the end of that time, Philip submitted,—took back his first wife and sent away the second; then the interdict was raised. Within a year Agnes de Méranie died of a broken heart. These strict rules seem to have been somewhat relaxed since. *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*. The price for marrying one's aunt in Canada now, is only four hundred dollars, and doubtless by paying enough, a man might obtain a dispensation to marry his grandmother. The reason of the change probably is, that the pope is not so powerful now as he was, and—more in need of money.

Peter II. of Aragon had the glory of going further than any other sovereign in doing obeisance before the pride and ambition of the Roman pontiff. Of his own free will, without being forced to such a course in any apparent way, that prince transferred his kingdom to the pope, and received it again to be held under tribute, making himself a vassal of the Apostolic See. He also received both his crown and the order of knighthood from Innocent III.

One year before Innocent ascended the papal throne the emperor Henry VI. died, leaving his son, an infant, as his successor. Henry, foreseeing the trouble likely to arise from the rule of a regent, and the advantages offered by the sway of one so young to the schemes of the ambitious, the restless and the dissatisfied, had taken all the precautions he possibly could to secure a peaceful succession by having his son crowned one year before his own demise. His efforts, however, as he probably foresaw himself, were doomed to prove ineffectual. No sooner was he consigned to the grave, than two candidates sprang up for the imperial crown, his own brother, Philip of Swabia, and Otho of Brunswick. Philip was proclaimed emperor, and bore the title until his assassination in 1208; but civil war raged almost the whole time. Under the circumstances, the