



**THE POPES OF THE GREGORIAN
RENAISSANCE. ST LEO IX TO HONORIUS
II.A.D. 1049-1130 (THE LIVES OF THE POPES
IN THE MIDDLE AGES Book 7)**

Horace K. Mann

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The century of papal history which it is hoped will be illustrated by the following pages was the age dominated by the great name of Hildebrand, and hence is often described as the *saeculum Hildebrandicum*. It was the age in which that high-minded and pure-souled monk strove, either by his own exertions or by those which he inspired, to promote that reform in the Church which had been inaugurated by St. Leo IX. The efforts at reform took the shape of a determined struggle against the triple scourge of simony, clerical incontinence, and the tyrannical interference of the powerful in the domain of the Church, and were at length focussed in the fight against lay investiture. But the attempt to stifle this abuse which was begun under the saintly Pontiff from Lorraine, was not destined to be concluded either in his reign, during which Hildebrand was trained, or in those of his immediate successors who were under the influence of Hildebrand, or in that of Hildebrand himself. It was not to be terminated till the pontificate of Calixtus II; while the general contest between the Papacy and the Empire which took its rise in this attempt at reform was to last till the fifteenth century, and was, in the temporal order, to exhaust both.

The reforming zeal of the Popes of the school of Hildebrand almost everywhere encountered the most stubborn opposition; so deep-rooted were the evils they strove to eradicate, so dear were they to the passions of the clergy, or to the interests of the great. And nowhere did they meet with greater opposition than in Italy. If simony was rife in France, it was worse in Germany, and worst of all in Italy; and if the spectacle of married priests and bishops was not uncommon in other countries of Europe, it was nowhere more obvious than in Italy, and especially in Milan and in Lombardy generally. The reason of this is not far to seek. Though the Church OF Italy, especially in its northern portion, had, owing to the power of its bishops, and to the comparatively rare interfering visits of the German emperors, been free to a very large extent from the royal oppression under which it groaned in other countries, it had become thoroughly demoralized by the terrible anarchy of the tenth century, and its bishops were, for the most part, as loose in their morals as their secular compeers.

Though, then, the fight for independence and reform upon which the Popes had entered was to be long and bitter, and was to bring upon them a very large share of suffering from the Franconian emperors and their

con-temptible antipopes, they were not to stand alone in the combat. The words of such fiery champions of reform as St. Peter Damian must never be taken too literally. There were always good priests and even good bishops, and that too even in Italy, who were longing for a reformation in manners, and who were only waiting for an opportunity to help to promote it. Especially were the Popes supported by the religious orders, by the Camaldolese, founded by St. Romuald (1009), by the Premonstratensians (1125), and especially by the Benedictines, revived by the reforms of Cluny and by those of the Carthusians (1084), and of the Cistercians (1098), and producing from such centres as Bec and Clairvaux men like Lanfranc and SS. Anselm and Bernard. They were sustained also in their conflict against the powers of evil by men deservedly conspicuous for their sanctity, by St. Peter Damian, by St. Bruno of Segni, by St. John Gualbert, with his order of Vallombrosa, and by St. Bruno with his Carthusians, who by their silence and penitential life protested loudly against the disorders of the age.....

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