

**A HISTORY OF THE PAPACY
DURING THE PERIOD OF THE
REFORMATION. VOL. III: THE
ITALIAN PRINCES 1464-1518; PP.
1-288**

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A History of the Papacy During the Period of the Reformation. Vol. III: The Italian Princes
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Geo. W. Kimball.
April '87.

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BY
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VOL. III.
THE ITALIAN PRINCES
1464—1518

BOSTON
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PREFACE.

THE period of history with which these volumes are concerned has called forth in late years a great amount of literature. The Italian Renaissance has been dealt with in its literary, artistic, social, and religious aspects by specialists of great merit; and its leading personages have been made the subjects of many excellent biographies. Perhaps one result of this special treatment has been to unduly isolate this period and exaggerate some of its characteristics; it has been regarded as entirely abnormal, its large historic features have been blurred by the mass of details, and its place in the development of human affairs has been somewhat obscured. I have striven to treat it with the same sobriety as any other period, and, while endeavouring to estimate the temper of the times, I have not forgotten that that temper affected chroniclers as much as it affected those who were the subjects of their chronicles. If the writers of the Middle Ages are to be reduced to the scientific view of historical progress which we now adopt, the same treatment ought in all fairness to be applied to the literary men of the Renaissance. The credulity displayed in the gossip of the one has to be appraised as carefully as the credulity of the miraculous records of the other. I have attempted to found a sober view of the time on a sober criticism of its authorities.

Amongst these authorities there has been opened up in late years a great number of the records of contemporary diplomacy, especially that of Venice, of which we have a consecutive abstract in the diary of Marin Sanuto. There are no questions which

require more consideration in the present condition of historical studies than the use to be made of, and the weight to be attached to, the letters of ambassadors. Really an ambassador requires as much criticism as a chronicler. The political intelligence of the man himself, the source of his information in each case, the object which he and his government had in view, and the interest which others had in deceiving him—these and other considerations have to be carefully weighed. I have endeavoured to do this to the best of my power, and have selected the negotiations which I thought it best to emphasise. Diplomatic dealings need not always be recorded simply because we know that they took place; but the ideas of diplomatic possibility give us an insight into the politics of the times, which cannot be disregarded. I have, however, tried to reduce diplomatic history to its due proportion in my pages.

The epoch traversed in these volumes is one of the most ignoble, if not the most disastrous, in the history not only of the Papacy, but of Europe. It is scarcely fair to isolate the Popes from their surroundings and hold them up to exceptional ignominy; yet it is impossible to forget their high office and their lofty claims. I have tried to deal fairly with the moral delinquencies of the Popes, without, I trust, running the risk of lowering the standard of moral judgment. But it seems to me neither necessary to moralise at every turn in historical writing, nor becoming to adopt an attitude of lofty superiority over anyone who ever played a prominent part in European affairs, nor charitable to lavish indiscriminating censure on any man. All I can claim is that I have not allowed my judgment to be warped by a desire to be picturesque or telling.

There are many important subjects which I have only slightly touched, and many interesting men who are little more than names in my pages. My book, as it is, threatens to become unduly long, and I have felt myself bound to exercise self-restraint at every turn. I am not writing a history of Italy, or of the Renaissance, or of the Reformation, but of the Papacy;

and I think it best to pass by important questions till such times as their importance in reference to my main subject becomes apparent.

I owe an apology on one point to my readers. My final revision of the sheets was unfortunately hurried owing to unexpected engagements, and I notice with regret that I have not been sufficiently careful in securing uniformity in the spelling of proper names and in the use of titles, especially as regards Cardinals. Though this may cause annoyance to fastidious readers, I think it will not be a source of confusion to any.

I have to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Dr. Richard Garnett, of the British Museum, who, when I was far from libraries during the greater part of the time in which these volumes were written, was of great service to me by bringing to my notice sources of information which I might otherwise have overlooked.

CAMBRIDGE : *Jan.* 1887.

BOOK V.

THE ITALIAN PRINCES.

1464-1518.

CHAPTER I.

PAUL II.

1464-1471.

So long as the struggle against the conciliar movement continued, the objects of the papal policy were determined; it was only when the papal restoration had been practically achieved that the difficulties of the Papal position became apparent. Nearly a hundred years had passed since there was an undoubted Pope who had his hands free for action of his own; and in those hundred years the central idea on which the Papacy rested—the idea of a Christian Commonwealth of Europe—had crumbled silently away. A dim consciousness of decay urged Pius II. to attempt to give fresh life to the idea before it was too late. The expulsion of the Turks from Europe was clearly an object worthy of united effort, and the old associations of a Crusade would set up the Papacy once more as supreme over the international relations of Europe. But Pius II.'s well-meant effort for a Crusade was a total failure, and only his death prevented the failure from being ludicrous. He left unsolved the difficult problem, In what shape was the Papacy to enter into the new political system which was slowly replacing that of the Middle Ages? A still more difficult problem, as yet scarcely suspected, lay behind, How was the ecclesiastical system which the Middle Ages had forged to meet the spirit of criticism which the New Learning had already called into vigorous life.

Some sense of these problems was present to Pius II. as he lay upon his deathbed; but few of the Cardinals were so farseeing. Pius II.'s corpse was brought to Rome, and his obsequies were performed with befitting splendour. Then on August 24 the

CHAP.
I.

Conclave
of Paul II.
August
24-30,
1464.