

tion of the subject from all points of view. But as inquiry and consideration must of necessity occupy some time, they cannot too soon begin. It is not a subject which can be left merely to the energetic support of the Church's volunteer advisers. It is one of these cases in which Convocation, if it were so minded, could be of real service. I say "if it were so minded," for it must be confessed that the high hopes expressed at the revival of Convocation have hardly been borne out. If the two Lower Houses had, for example, to show cause why they should not again be relegated to silence, and to prove by actual work done a right to continue in active existence, they would not find the task an easy one. Now here is a new opportunity for them—a possibility of rendering very real service to the Church, and through the Church to the nation. Let the two Lower Houses—and the two Lay Houses also, if they will—examine fully the propriety and wisdom of lowering the age for the Diaconate, and let them do it as speedily as possible.

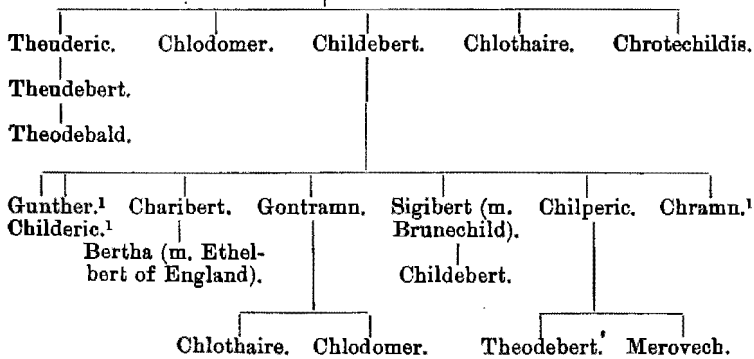
In truth, the whole question of the supply of candidates for Orders is so urgent, and present methods offer so little hope of effectively changing the situation, that any reasonable project calls for attentive and respectful treatment.

L. C. H. STOWELL.

ART. V.—THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GREGORY OF TOURS.

I.

Chlovis (died 511).



GUIZOT, writing on the "Civilization of France" in the sixth century, describes Gregory of Tours as being "always, without his knowing it, the truest painter of the manners and

¹ Died during the lifetime of their father.

events of this epoch." Perhaps it would be more correct to say that Gregory supplies us with the requisite colours, but that they have to be mixed with our own brains in order to produce a lifelike portrait of the period. He is our chief, almost our sole, authority for constructing a history of the Franks, but his history has no chronological order. He sat down, indeed, with the intention of recording events in the order in which they happened, but the resolution soon failed him, and his history quickly becomes a mere collection of records without any system or proportion. His is a *national* history written from a *personal* standpoint. Things which interested and concerned the author are assumed to be those which were of the most importance to his nation and of the greatest interest to posterity. Moreover, if at times the colours are crude, we must console ourselves with the reflection that we are dealing, not with Roman or Byzantine civilization, but with Frankish, not with the nineteenth but the sixth century. For instance, there may be *otium*, but certainly not combined *cum dignitate*, in Gregory's story of the Bishops being invited to dinner by the Frankish King, Gontramn, and after dinner being requested to sing a song. To save appearances, their lordships demurred, but when they saw the King was firm and even threatening, each Bishop sang his song, as Gregory says, *ut potuit*. Christianity amongst the Franks was "a rough diamond." Its manners, its literature, its doctrines, do not present us with that purity and refinement which we associate with the religion of the Son of God. Society was a loose confederation of Gaulish, Roman, Gothic, Frankish, Jewish, Christian elements, out of which emerged the French nation, and Gregory of Tours supplies us in his writings with the constituents of the subsequent amalgamation.

Gregory was born¹ after 539 and before 544 in Auvergne. His full name was Georgius (after his grandfather), Florentius (after his father), Gregorius (after his great-grandfather, Bishop of Langres). His mother, Armentaria, was granddaughter of this Bishop. By birth he had connection with municipal and ecclesiastical life. His father and grandfather were of senatorial rank. His uncle Gallus was Bishop of Auvergne, and through his grandmother, Leocadia, he traced his descent back to Vectius Epagas, the first of the martyrs in Gaul, described by his neighbours² as *παράκλητος*

¹ Odo, his biographer, places his consecration in 573, and he was nearly thirty years old then. But in "De Mir. S. Mart.," iii. 10, he writes: "Tempore quo (mater) edidit me, dolorem in uno tibi musculo incurrit. Post ordinationem meam advenit Turonis, . . . discessit dolor . . . qui per triginta quatuor annos feminam fatigaverat."

² Eus., "Hist. Eccles.," v. 1.

Χριστιανῶν. All but five Bishops of Tours were of his family, so that the position might be regarded almost as hereditary. Auvergne, the birthplace of Gregory, occupied so secluded a position among the mountains that it had been little influenced by the Roman occupation of the country, nor by those hordes which swept on from the East to the richer prizes in Spain and Italy. It seems, from the frequency with which the statement is made by ancient biographers of eminent men, that it was an established principle amongst them that there can be in childhood no spiritual piety unless it be accompanied by physical infirmity, and that this infirmity must be cured in a miraculous manner, thus furnishing testimony to the invalid's piety. Gregory, according to his biographer, was no exception to this auspicious conjunction. His health breaking down under his studies, he was carried to the tomb of St. Illidius, where he promises to take Orders if cured. Considering that all his education was conducted from the very beginning with a view to ordination, this narrative intended to bring out at once the piety of Gregory and the goodwill of the saint, may justify us in regarding with suspicion both the vows and the cure. His studies were entrusted to Gallus, and on his death to Avitus, and he describes them as follows: "Not the flight of Saturn, nor the rage of Juno, nor the lusts of Jupiter, and the other abominations do I remember. Despising all these things as those which quickly ruin, let me apply myself rather to things divine and evangelical, for I do not desire to be bound and entangled in my nets." Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that he was utterly ignorant of profane literature. At the time of his writing his history he had read the Epistle of Sidonius, the songs of Prudentius and Orosius, Virgil and Sallust in part, Pliny and Aulus Gellius. But we must postpone further observation on the literature of the age, sacred and profane.

In 573, when he was about thirty years old, Gregory was consecrated Bishop of Tours, in succession to Bishop Euphronius. Here we may conveniently pause to make one or two remarks upon the system of orders in the Frankish Church. According to strict rule, a man must have been a reader ten years, subdeacon five years, deacon fifteen years, and priest twenty years before he was qualified to become a Bishop. But these periods could be shortened in consequence of extraordinary sanctity or illustrious deeds, miracles, or the favour of the King. All these "exceptions to the rule" combined to bring about the rapid promotion of Gregory. Again, we may ask, How were Bishops elected amongst the Franks? In view of present controversies on Church reform, the in-

quiry is one of considerable interest. The election was made by the clergy and people of the city. The Bishop-elect or a deputation of the electors took the instruments of election to the King, who, if he approved, signified his assent by letter to the Metropolitan. He was then consecrated by the Metropolitan (or his commissary) and the Bishops of the province.¹ But it would be too much to expect that in those disturbed times the rules would be scrupulously observed by all parties. When the electors were not unanimous, or when the Bishop-elect was displeasing to the King, the latter would send his own nominee to the Metropolitan with a certificate of his fitness, and the consent of the citizens would be obtained as a mere matter of form, *after* the consecration, upon the Bishop's first entrance into the city. This uncertain exercise of their respective functions led to constant friction between Church and State; even an appeal to the Bishop of Rome as arbiter gave the King the pull over the Church, inasmuch as it could only be made *licentia regis*. The power of the Metropolitans declined, councils were less frequent under the Franks, and Bishops applied direct to the King for the settlement of their disputes. For instance, Leontius, Metropolitan of Bordeaux, convened and presided over a council at Saintes (A.D. 563). This council deposed Emerius, Bishop of Saintes, because he had entered upon his see on the appointment of King Chlothaire, and without the Metropolitan's benediction (Chlothaire was now dead, being succeeded by his son Charibert). The Council had elected Heraclius in place of Emerius, but on Leontius approaching Charibert to confirm the deposition of the one and the appointment of the other, the King was furious, and replied: "Thinkest thou there remaineth none of the sons of Chlothaire to defend the actions of their father, because these Bishops have, without our assent, ejected him whom his will elected?" Leontius was fined a thousand gold pieces, and the other offending Bishops in proportion.

Where so many were allowed to have "a finger in the pie," it naturally offered a strong temptation for each party to get the largest share. Hence, intrigue and wire-pulling were frequently resorted to. For instance, upon the death of Gallus, Bishop of Auvergne, Cato was elected *by the people*,

¹ Council of Orleans (A.D. 549), Canon 10: "Cum voluntate regis, juxta electionem cleri et plebis, sicut in antiquis canonibus tenetur scriptum, a metropolitano, vel quem in vice suo præmiserit, cum comprovincialibus pontifex consecratur." Confirmed by Council of Paris (c. A.D. 558), Canon 8: "Nullus civibus invitis ordinetur episcopus, nisi quem *populi et clericorum* electio plenissima quæsierit voluntate; non principis imperio, neque per quamlibet conditionem contra metropolitani voluntatem vel episcoporum comprovincialium ingeratur."

and at once entered upon his duties. But the Bishops, who had come to the funeral of Gallus, felt their authority had been slighted, and offered to uphold Cato only on condition that he would accept consecration at their hands. They pointed out that the King (Theodobald), being a minor, the nobles might elect a rival to the see. Cato coldly replied: "I have ascended the clerical ladder according to canonical law. I was ten years a reader, five years I ministered in the subdiaconate, fifteen years I served as a deacon, and twenty years I have enjoyed the honour of the priesthood (*presbyterii*)." Thus rebuffed, the Bishops departed *in eum vanam gloriam execrantes*. However, the Archdeacon Cautinus secretly went to the King, announced the death of Gallus, and persuaded the King to appoint him to the vacancy. In the struggle for possession which ensued Cato eventually emerged the victor; but we can well imagine that the defeated party, especially in those undisciplined times, would not receive their "father in God" with becoming cordiality, nor that the plotting and scheming, charges and counter-charges, would conduce either to the dignity of the office or the loyalty of the people.

Gregory, however, entered upon his episcopate in peace. He found plenty of work demanding his attention. A great fire had devastated Tours, and many churches, baptisteries, and basilicas were destroyed. Euphronius, the predecessor of Gregory, began the work of restoration, and Gregory carried it on with great energy. He devoted special attention to the Church of St. Martin, built by the saint himself. It was 160 feet long, 60 broad, and 45 high, having 120 columns and 52 windows. His energy was not satisfied with rebuilding. He adorned it with gold and silver, and decorated the walls with pictures illustrative of the saint's life; he enriched it with relics which were indispensable. These relics were put into jars and placed in the very structure of the "altar." It was forbidden to place the relics *on* the "altar." The tomb of St. Martin, like other tombs of saints, was covered with a pall. Drinking cups and *fredæ* were arranged upon it in the form of a pyramid. Usually this was surmounted with a cross, a dove being an additional embellishment. St. Martin's, however, was distinguished with a crown. The Church of St. Martin was the most celebrated "sanctuary" for criminals, sharing the privilege with St. Hilary's of Poitiers and St. Remigius' of Rheims.

But the times were too disturbed to favour the arts of peace. A Bishop of Tours could not, even if he would, stand apart from secular affairs. When Charibert died in 567, his three brothers divided the kingdom between them, Gontramm, the eldest, fixing his capital at Orleans, Sigibert, the second

brother, at Rheims, and Chilperic, the youngest, at Sens. Chilperic became dissatisfied with his share, and attacked Sigibert by laying siege to Tours and Poitiers in his brother's kingdom while Sigibert was engaged on an expedition against the Gauls. "He burnt the churches, destroyed monasteries, killed the clergy. . . . There was greater lamentation in the churches at that time than in the persecution of Diocletian." In this feud Gregory sided with Sigibert, and for this Chilperic never forgave him. During the lifetime of Sigibert, Chilperic could make no headway, but on his brother's death by assassination in 575 Chilperic became master of Tours, and from that time till the King's death at the Battle of Cala in 584 quarrels between them never ceased. This cordial hatred is very strongly marked in Gregory's summary of his enemy's reign and character, and proportionately discounts its accuracy and worth. He describes him as "the Nero and Herod of our time." He laid waste large tracts of land with fire and sword, and the sight filled him with delight, just as Nero sang tragedies when his palace was burning. He unjustly punished men in order to seize their estates. Very few of the clergy he promoted deserved the episcopate. He composed some weak verses "with no feet to stand upon," and with the "quantities" all wrong. He had also compiled other little works, such as hymns and masses, with no sense in them whatever. He assiduously blasphemed the priests of the Lord, and held up the Bishops to ridicule and jest. He declared his own power in the State was gone, and had passed into the hands of the Bishops. The vows which he had taken in church he broke, and transgressed the precepts of his father. No one could conceive anything in lust or luxury which he did not put into practice. He racked his fertile brain for new ways and means to injure the people. If he found anyone at fault he ordered his eyes to be torn out, and added: "*Si quis præcepta nostra contempserit, oculorum avulsione mulctetur.*" Gregory displays very little of that love for your enemy which Christianity demands. Happily, Chilperic's character does not depend solely upon this estimate. Doubtless his bad points were more numerous than his good ones, but something may be said for a man who releases his enemy (Brunechild, widow of Sigibert), and bestows upon her gold and silver; who endows the Church with large gifts; holds friendly intercourse with those who successfully withstood his attack, viz., the citizens of Poitiers; is lenient towards his great enemy (Gregory), and does not avenge slanders against himself, viz., those of Bishop Charterius. Time only widened a breach which Gregory took no pains to reduce. Gontramn, having slain Theodebert, the son of Chilperic, fled in fear of his

father to the Church of St. Martin. Chilperic demanded his surrender; Gregory refused. Fresh fuel was added to the fire by Gregory supporting Merovech against his father in his designs upon Tours. After the death of Sigibert, Merovech married his widow Brunehild. Chilperic commanded his son to take orders, but Merovech refused, and, instead, raised the standard of revolt, and drove out Count Leudastes,¹ whom Chilperic had appointed as Governor of Tours. War was declared between father and son, in which Merovech, like another Absalom, was slain. In this family feud Gregory supported Merovech, and its disastrous issue (for Merovech was Chilperic's only son) would not dispose the King to regard in a friendly manner any who had upheld such unfilial conduct. But the matter did not stop here. Prætextatus, Bishop of Rouen, who had performed the marriage service over Merovech and Brunehild, was charged with having received money from Brunehild, and with having distributed it as bribes on behalf of Merovech, as well as with exacting oaths to support him. Terrified by the threats of the King, the Bishops of the province left him to his fate, and he would have been punished with loss of Orders and anathema had not Gregory interposed and obtained the milder sentence of penance and exile. This only exasperated his enemies, and they conspired to effect his overthrow. Count Leudastes and Subdeacon Riculph, who was aiming at a bishopric, accused Gregory to Chilperic of slandering his wife Fredegund; but the King was too astute not to see its hollowness, and a verdict of acquittal, resulting from an exposure in open court of their hatred and malice, would only strengthen the influence of Gregory with the people. However, Chilperic so far yielded to the entreaties of Fredegund as to submit the case to a Council of Bishops. It was unanimously agreed that the witness of an inferior person against a priest could not be accepted, but that for the sake of concluding the King's business, although contrary to the canons, Gregory, after the saying of Mass, should take an oath at three altars that he was innocent of the charge. Leudastes was banished and Riculph excommunicated. Chilperic and Gregory were so far reconciled that the King invited the Bishop to his palace to dinner, and showed him his wealth (A.D. 580).

We may be pardoned for dwelling longer upon this case of Prætextatus, as it affords a good insight into the manners and opinions of the times. It has been ungallantly said that wherever there is mischief, a woman will be found the cause. It must be confessed that it was so in this instance. Brune-

¹ He had risen from the position of stable-boy.

child, the widow of Sigibert, is described as "elegans opere, venusta aspectu, honesta moribus atque decora, prudens consilio et blanda colloquio." Before her marriage with Sigibert she was an Arian, but love or ambition was stronger than dogma, and she renounced her heresy in favour of the Frankish law, which required that all their princesses should confess the orthodox faith in the Trinity.¹ Of these charms and accomplishments Merovech, became enamoured and although "contra fas legemque canonicam," married her who was both his uncle's widow and his mother's sister.² Prætextatus was cited to appear, and justify himself in having officiated at an illegal marriage. "An ignarus eras, quæ pro hac causa Canonum statuta sanxissent." Other charges were preferred against him. "Hostem filium patri fecisti, seduxisti pecunia plebem, . . . voluisti regnum meum in manum alterius tradere." He was charged with using Brunehild's money to bribe men to assassinate the King. The Frankish nobles were so maddened against him that they wanted to stone him there and then. The trial was held before forty-five Bishops in the Basilica of St. Peter, and it was with difficulty that the sanctity of place and person was preserved. The real, almost the sole, bulwark against his condemnation was Gregory, and this, if possible, the party of Leudastes tried to break down. On the night of the first day of the trial, "when the nightly hymns had been sung," Fredegund sent a message to Gregory, offering him 200 pounds of silver if he would withdraw from defending Prætextatus. He spurned the bribe with the utmost disdain. "Not for 1,000 pounds of gold and silver will I change my mind or act contrary to the Canons." Next morning the Bishops, although the judges, repeated the offer, and it was again haughtily rejected. The trial proceeded. Prætextatus admitted distributing the money, but denied the motives attributed to him. But now a fresh crime was alleged against him. He was accused of pillaging Brunehild's wardrobe! The defendant confessed to having taken two out of the five parcels into which her "things" had been packed, but had had no time to restore them to her. A wordy warfare ensued, in which the King acknowledged himself beaten. The Bishops who were trying the case cut a sorry figure, being afraid either to acquit or condemn. At length it was agreed that Prætextatus should throw himself upon the King's mercy, and it was

¹ This law held true also of Frankish princesses who married foreigners. Bertha, Queen of Ethelbert, when Augustine landed in England, was a Frankish princess, daughter of Charibert, King of Paris, and retained her orthodox faith, though married to a heathen. Hence her favourable attitude to the Roman missionaries.

² Chilperic married Galsuintha, sister of Brunehild. On her death he married Fredegund.

promised him on the part of the King that he should receive a merciful sentence. Throwing himself upon the ground, he cried : “ Peccavi in cœlum et coram te, O rex misericordissime : ego sum homicida nefandus : ego te interficere volui.” Then the King prostrated himself at the feet of the Bishops, saying : “ Audite, O piissimi sacerdotes, reum crimen execrabile confitentem !” Distressed to tears at the sight, the Bishops lifted the King up, who retired to his house, and sent them a book of the Canons, to which he had attached an appendix of his own,¹ “ habens canones quasi apostolicos.” Amongst these last-mentioned Canons it was laid down that “ a Bishop, being convicted of murder, adultery, or perjury, shall be expelled the priesthood.” The King demanded that the offending Bishop’s robe might be rent, and that Ps. cviii., “ qui maledictiones Ischariothicas continet,” might be recited over his head. This form of degradation Gregory opposed, as violating the King’s promise that nothing should be done contrary to the Canons, and consequently Prætextatus was condemned to imprisonment, to be followed by exile for a short period. This light sentence aroused all the malice of Fredegund’s nature, and she resolved to satiate it both upon Prætextatus and Brunechild. Her first plan, indeed, was a failure, but the failure of it in no way mitigates the fiendishness of its conception. Her scheme was to strike at Brunechild through the Order to which Prætextatus belonged. Revenge, moreover, must not only punish, and punish in the most stinging manner, it must bring the utmost possible recompense to the avenger. Now, Merovech had been slain in battle, and Merovech had been the only surviving son of her husband Chilperic. His other son had also fallen in battle. Childebert was the only son of Brunechild ; therefore “ eye for eye, tooth for tooth,” Childebert for Merovech. But who shall perpetrate the murder ? The assassins must be found amongst those in Holy Orders, because Prætextatus was a Bishop. Actually two clergy were found sufficiently corrupt to accept from the hands of Fredegund “ the price of blood ” and two poisoned daggers. The plot was happily discovered ; the Queen’s dastardly accomplices were tortured and executed. Vengeance, however, if frustrated, was not abandoned. One Sunday in 586 A.D., during the chanting of the Psalms, Prætextatus was stabbed, while sitting in his stall in the Church of Rouen. Some months later a council was summoned to investigate, amongst other crimes, this one in particular. A murder, equal in atrocity to that of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, or of Peter de Castelnau on the bank

¹ “ In quo quaternio novus annexus.”

of the Rhone at a later age, should have excited throughout Western Christendom the utmost horror and indignation. It is eloquent evidence of the punitive power of the Church at this time that no punishment whatever for this outrage was inflicted either upon Fredegund or her accomplices. Brunchild and Fredegund "are fit heroines for the most sanguinary of the Teutonic sagas, in which they appear much distorted and amidst different surroundings, but with a manifest parentage of fact and suggestion. They were mortal enemies, and it would be hard to say which was the more implacable, but perhaps Fredegund's crimes were the most fiendish and unprovoked. . . . We shall look in vain through history for a woman capable of more deliberate, sustained, and successful murders than those by which she carved her path to the throne, advanced the cause of her husband so long as it suited her that he should live, removed every possible rival to her son Chlothair, and transferred the crown from father to son, as soon as Chlothair had reached what in those days was regarded as the age of militant manhood."¹

H. J. WARNER.



ART. VI.—THE PLACE AND WORK OF EMANCIPATED
WOMANHOOD.

I REMEMBER proposing, as a member of the committee on a Diocesan Conference, certain subjects more or less suitable for discussion, of which one was, "The place of women in Church." A layman, also on the committee, at once thundered out, "Woman's place? In the *back seats!*" To which the reply was obvious: "But if they will not stay there?" And this declares just the state of things with regard to women in the present day. They will not take the back seats, either in Church or anywhere else; they *will* come to the front. We hear continually of woman's emancipation, of woman's claims, of the equality of the sexes. A woman's revolution menaces our ancient Universities, and women have already claimed their right to a share in that *one* only department of "wrangling" which, "before," man's exclusiveness had deemed peculiarly his own. As magistrates and guardians, and even as churchwardens, they "rise with twenty weighty reasons on their tongues, and push us from our stools." Into the domains of coarseness, and even into the Zola preserves of mere filth, the woman-novelist presses. We have lady doctors—in America, "Reverend" ladies—compilers even of a "Woman's Bible,"

¹ "The Franks," by Lewis Sergeant.