

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

bus that accompanied it he enumerated and anathematized all the rational theses and philosophical principles which are regarded by modern science as lucid truths. (3) Finally, six years afterwards—on July 13, 1870—the militant head of the Church crowned his folly by claiming *infallibility* for himself and all his predecessors in the papal chair. This triumph of the Roman *curia* was communicated to the astonished world five days afterwards, on the very day on which France declared war with Prussia. Two months later the temporal power of the pope was taken from him in consequence of the war.

These three stupendous acts of the papacy were such obvious assaults on the reason of the nineteenth century that they gave rise, from the very beginning, to a most heated discussion even within orthodox Catholic circles. When the Vatican Council proceeded to define the dogma of infallibility on July 13, 1870, only three-fourths of the bishops declared in its favor, 451 out of 601 assenting; many other bishops, who wished to keep clear of the perilous definition, were absent from the council. But the shrewd pontiff had calculated better than the timid "discreet Catholics": even this extraordinary dogma was blindly accepted by the credulous and uneducated masses of the faithful.

The whole history of the papacy, as it is substantiated by a thousand reliable sources and accessible documents, appears to the impartial student as an unscrupulous tissue of lying and deceit, a reckless pursuit of absolute mental despotism and secular power, a frivolous contradiction of all the high moral precepts which true Christianity enunciates—charity and toleration, truth and chastity, poverty and self-denial. When we judge the long series of popes and of the Ro-