

was elected in his stead, the French cardinals objected and proceeded to create an antipope, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Poland, England, Flanders yielding obedience to Rome, and France, Savoy, Scotland, with (later) Spain to Avignon. This—the great schism—lasted till 1417, when it was healed at the Council of Constance, and Martin V became the universally recognized Pope. Thus during the first fifty years of the Turkish intrusion into Europe the Popes were in no position to command the allegiance which would have been required to organize unity of resistance.

Under Eugenius IV (1431–46) a great attempt at the restoration of unity of Faith was made at the Council of Florence, and for a time augured well; but the fall of Constantinople in 1453 served only to accentuate the breach that reopened. Almost the whole brunt of resistance to the Turks during the fifteenth century fell on the republic of Venice, save that offered by Balkan Slavs. Spain in the latter half of the fifteenth century was entirely given up to the task of ridding itself of the Moors, and accomplishing its own internal union and, when the sixteenth dawned, had become interested in the exploitation of the recently discovered continent of America.

For Portugal Affonso de Albuquerque, who had sailed as an officer with Tristan da Cunha for India in 1506, made a notable effort to obtain mastery of the Red Sea for his country, seizing the island of Socotra, and then occupying the island of Hurmuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, where he landed 10.10.1507 and proceeded to raise fortifications. The attack was repeated the next year: Cochin annexed in December: Goa taken in March 1510. To prevent or impede other nations from challenging a Portuguese monopoly of trade with India in March 1513 he garrisoned, and gained a strong position in Aden: the conquest by the Turks of Egypt from 1518 vitally changed, however, the situation for centuries to come by creating a barrier to transit and intercourse for Christian nations between the Mediterranean–Red Sea–Indian Ocean, and Far East.

The early years of the sixteenth century saw the Christian states more occupied than ever with internecine rivalries, and their attention distracted from any common military action for the Cross against the Turks: it was the era of constantly changing political combinations, centring largely round Spain and France respectively, and of trials of strength, into which various Popes were drawn by a desire to hold a balance of power between the two influences, and so themselves maintain an ascendancy in the councils of Europe. A few instances will suffice:

‘On 4.10.1511 the so-called Holy League was formed for the purpose of delivering Italy from French rule. In the beginning it included only the Pope (Julius II), the Venetians and Spain; but England joined it on 17.11.1511 and was soon followed by the Emperor and by Switzerland. When Julius II died, 21.2.1513, Venice formed an alliance with France for mutual assistance against the Emperor or against the Turks or for reconquest of the duchy of Milan.’

‘Again in 1521 and 1525 Venice was the ally of France against Spain: subsequently that League was dissolved.’¹

It was not that, in the midst of trying to keep that balance, successive Sovereign Pontiffs were unmindful of those Christian peoples, the Faith and its shrines and fanes in the hands of the followers of Muhammad and suffering greatly, or that they neglected to warn and exhort the warring princes of Christendom. On the contrary their alliances began to take a crusading colour, and opportunities were not lost to encourage individual sovereigns to stem the Muslim advance.

Sixtus IV (1471–84) wrote “a letter of expostulation, in which mention was made of the peace concluded by Venice with the Turks at the very time that a league against the Turks was being negotiated.”

Innocent VIII (1484–92) addressed a letter to the Christian Princes stimulating them to

¹ *Vide Catholic Encyclopaedia*, VIII, 563 c., XIV, 264 c., XV, 338 c.: and Vat. Lat. 12205. Misc. Arm. XI, 149.