HISTORY OF GREECE
FROM ITS
CONQUEST BY THE ROMANS TO THE PRESENT TIME
B.C. 146 TO A.D. 1864

BY

GEORGE FINLAY

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

VOLUME I
GREECE UNDER THE ROMANS.
B.C. 146 — A.D. 716

INTRODUCTION

"George Finlay" said the late Dr. Richard Garnett, "was a great historian, of the type of Polybius, Procopius, and Macchiavelli". He was a man-of-affairs before he was a man-of-letters: he qualified himself for writing history by helping to make it. He had fought for Greece, hoping, as he said, to aid in putting her on the high road "that leads to a rapid increase of production, population, and material improvement". He sacrificed his worldly chances to the cause of Greece in fact, with an enthusiasm not less than that of Lord Byron, whom he had met at Cephalonia in 1823. "I lost my money and my labour, but I learned how the system of tenths has produced a state of society and habits of cultivation, against which one man can do nothing. When I had wasted as much money as I possessed, I turned my attention to study". The first notable result of this intellectual step which was given to the world was the present volume, originally published in 1844. To resume his own account of his historical work: "I had planned", he says, "writing a true history of the Greek revolution in such a way as to exhibit the condition of the people. I wished to make it useful to those who come after us. It grew gradually into the *History of Greece under Foreign Domination* and the History of the *Greek Revolution*, I have hardly been more successful in my writings than in my farming. I fear I may say —

I am one the more

To baffled millions who have gone before."

There is no doubt that towards the end of his career Finlay was inclined to depreciate the value of his contribution both to the history and the cause of Greece. However, exception has been taken by some of those who knew him intimately, to the idea that this was produced by anything like settled melancholy or lasting disappointment: if the graver feeling was latterly to be traced in him, it was due to failing health and to the loss of a favourite daughter.

George Finlay came of good Scottish stock, was the grandson of a Glasgow merchant, and the son of Captain John Finlay, R.E., F.R.S. He was born at Faversham, Kent, 21 December, 1799, and educated under private tutors at home before going to the University of Gottingen. His uncle, Kirkman Finlay, was Lord Provost of Glasgow; and his brother of the same name went, like him, to Greece, fought under her flag, and was shot, fighting before the fortress of Scio, 29 January, 1828. George Finlay died at Athens 26 January, 1875.

The following is his list of published works: —

The Hellenic Kingdom and the Greek Nation. 1836.

Remarks on the Topography of Oropia and Diacria. 1838.

Greece under the Romans. 1844.

On the Site of the Holy Sepulchre. 1847.

Greece, to its Conquest by the Turks . 1851.

Greece under Ottoman and Venetian Dominion. 1856.

The Greek Revolution. 1861.

Objects found in Greece in the collection of G. F. 1869.

The French Narrative of Benjamin Brue.1870.

A History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time. B.C 146-A.D. 1864 ; 1877

Finlay also contributed to the *Times* (1864-70), *Athenaeum*, and *Saturday Review.*

TO JAMES MACGREGOR, ESQ., M.P.

My dear James,

I dedicate to you this History of Greece under Foreign Domination.

Your encouragement often cheered me to prosecute the work when my literary deficiencies suggested doubts whether, in my hands, it could be of any use.

Had the hopes with which I joined the cause of Greece in 1823 been fulfilled, it is not probable that I should have abandoned the active duties of life, and the noble task of labouring to improve the land, for the sterile occupation of recording its misfortunes. But the demerits of my literary efforts, in the cause of civil liberty and national institutions, will not, I am sure, diminish your affection for the Author; and though this page is a trifling proof of gratitude, you will receive it with pleasure, as a testimony of the sincere friendship of

Your affectionate Brother,

GEORGE FINLAY.

Athens, 12th November,1856.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST FIVE VOLUMES:

OR,

'HISTORY OF GREECE UNDER FOREIGN DOMINATION'

The history of Greece under foreign domination records the degradation and the calamities of the nation which attained the highest degree of civilization in the ancient world. Two thousand years of suffering have not obliterated the national character, nor extinguished the national ambition. In order to compress an account of the vicissitudes in the condition of Greece, during this long period, within the space of five volumes, it has been necessary to confine the attention of the reader to the political state of the nation, without entering into details concerning the general history of the foreign conquerors. This plan has perhaps circumscribed the interest of the work. The history of enslaved Greece has hitherto been neglected, because it was supposed to offer little instruction to the patriot and the scholar; but it deserves to be attentively studied by the statesman and the political economist, for under the government of the Byzantine emperors it affords an instructive example of the great power that scientific administrative arrangements exert on the political existence and material prosperity of a nation, even when the government is neither supported by popular sympathies, nor invigorated by the impulse of national progress. At the present time, more especially, when the European monarchies are centralizing all the powers of government, and separating the feelings and interests of the administration from the sympathies and prosperity of the people, the history of the Byzantine empire offers a solemn warning to sovereigns, and the national degradation of the Greek people presents an instructive picture to their subjects. Despotism has a powerful agent in administrative centralization, and two strong camps in political servility and popular anarchy.

The records of enslaved Greece are as much a portion of her national existence as her heroic poetry and her classic history. The people who sent out a hundred colonies, and who fought at Salamis and Plataea, were the ancestors of the men who fled before the Romans, and who yielded up their own land to be peopled by Sclavonians and Albanians. The ancient Greeks purchased foreign slaves to labour in their fields, the modern Greeks delivered up their own children to form the janissaries, who held them in a state of slavery. The modem Greeks turn with aversion from the study of their own history. They take no interest in the fortunes of their ancestors, but they claim an imaginary genealogy to connect their national existence with the extinct races of privileged aristocratic tribes, whose existence ceased as Paganism expired. Indeed, the lineal descendants of the Spartans, and of the original citizens of Solon's Athens, did not survive the Roman conquest. The rich inheritance of the intellectual wealth of

Greece was divided with Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, while Greece still retained its independence. In order to acquire political knowledge, the present race of Greeks must study their history as a subject people. More practical information is to be gained by an examination of the effects of their communal institutions under the Ottomans, than by unravelling the signification of impure fables and obscure myths. They can only trace their connection with the Hellenes through the records of twenty centuries of national or political slavery. If they emulate the patriotism of the ancient Greeks, and rival their eminence in literature and art, all Europe will readily admit their claims to the purest Hellenic genealogy. National vanity has for the present so completely vitiated public opinion at Athens, that an English writer on the history of Greece under foreign domination may expect more readers than a Greek. To those who are familiar with the works of Grote, it may not be uninteresting to know something of the political changes which degraded the social civilization of Greece. The history of a people which preserved its language and its nationality through centuries of misfortune, and whose energy has so far revived as to form an independent State, ought not to be utterly neglected.

The condition of Greece during its long period of servitude was not one of uniform degeneracy. Under the Romans, and subsequently under the Ottomans, the Greeks formed only an insignificant portion of a vast empire. Their unwarlike character rendered them of little political importance, and many of the great changes and revolutions which occurred in the dominions of the emperors and of the sultans, exerted no direct influence on Greece. Consequently, neither the general history of the Roman nor of the Ottoman Empire forms a portion of Greek history. Under the Byzantine emperors the case was different; the Greeks became then identified with the imperial administration. The dissimilarity in the political position of the nation during these periods requires a different treatment from the historian to explain the characteristics of the times.

The changes which affected the political and social condition of the Greeks divide their history as a subject people, into six distinct periods.

1. The first of these periods comprises the history of Greece under the Roman government. The physical and moral degradation of the people deprived them of all political influence, until Greek society was at length regenerated by the Christian religion. After Christianity became the religion of the Roman emperors, the predominant power of the Greek clergy, in the ecclesiastical establishment of the Eastern Empire, restored to the Greeks some degree of influence in the government, and gave them a degree of social authority over human civilization in the East, which rivalled that which they had formerly obtained by the Macedonian conquests. In the portion of this work devoted to the condition of Greece under the Romans, the Author has confined his attention exclusively to the condition of the people, and to those branches of the Roman administration which affected their condition. The predominant influence of Roman feelings and prejudices in the Eastern Empire terminates with the accession of Leo the Isaurian, who gave the administration at Constantinople a new character.

2. The second period embraces the history of the Eastern Roman Empire in its new form, under its conventional title of the Byzantine Empire. The records of this despotism, modified, renovated, and reinvigorated by the Iconoclast emperors, constitute one of the most remarkable and instructive lessons in the history of monarchical institutions. They teach us that a well-organized central government can with ease hold many subject nations in a state of political nullity. During this period, the history of the Greeks is closely interwoven with the annals of the Imperial government, so that the history of the Byzantine Empire forms a portion of the history of the Greek nation. Byzantine history extends from the accession of Leo the Isaurian, in the year 716, to the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204.

3. After the destruction of the Eastern Roman Empire, Greek history diverges into many channels. The exiled Roman-Greeks of Constantinople fled to Asia, and established their capital at Nicaea; they prolonged the Imperial administration in some provinces on the old model and with the old names. After the lapse of less than sixty years, they recovered possession of Constantinople; but though the government they exercised retained the proud title of the Roman Empire, it was only a degenerate representative even of the Byzantine state. This third period is characterized as the Greek Empire of Constantinople. Its feeble existence was terminated by the Ottoman Turks at the taking of Constantinople in 1453.

4. When the Crusaders conquered the greater part of the Byzantine Empire, they divided their conquests with the Venetians, and founded the Latin Empire of Romania, with its feudal principalities in Greece. The domination of the Latins is important, as marking the decline of Greek influence in the East, and as causing a rapid diminution in the wealth and numbers of the Greek nation. This period extends from the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, until the conquest of Naxos by the Ottoman Turks in 1566.

5. The conquest of Constantinople in 1204 caused the foundation of a new Greek state in the eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire, called the Empire of Trebizond. Its existence is a curious episode in Greek history, though the government was characterised by peculiarities which indicated the influence of Asiatic rather than of European manners. It bore a strong resemblance to the Iberian and Armenian monarchies. During two centuries and a half, it maintained a considerable degree of influence, based, however, rather on its commercial position and resources than on its political strength or its Greek civilization. Its existence exerted little influence on the fate or fortunes of Greece, and its conquest, in the year 1461, excited little sympathy.

6. The sixth and last period of the history of Greece under foreign domination extends from 1453 to 1821, and embraces the records both of the Ottoman rule and of the temporary occupation of the Peloponnesus by the Venetian Republic, from 1685 to 1715. Nations have, perhaps, perpetuated their existence in an equally degraded position; but history offers no other example of a nation which had sunk to such a state of debasement making a successful effort to recover its independence.

The object of this work is to lay before the reader those leading facts that are required to enable him to estimate correctly the political condition of the Greek nation under its different masters; not to collect all the materials necessary to form a complete history of Greece under foreign domination. The ecclesiastical and literary records are

consequently only noticed with reference to political history. A complete history of the modem Greeks might, perhaps, be rendered both instructive and interesting to Greeks, but it would be difficult to render it attractive to foreigners.

Athens, 21st December, 1855.

PREFACE
TO
GREECE UNDER THE ROMANS

The social and political organization of life among the Greeks and Romans was essentially different, even during the period when they were subject to the same government; and this difference must be impressed on the mind, before the relative state of civilization in the Eastern and Western Empires can be thoroughly understood.

The Romans were a tribe of warriors. All their institutions, even those relating to property and agriculture, were formed with reference to war. The people of the Western Empire, including the greater part of Italy, consisted of a variety of races, who were either in a low state of civilization at the time of their conquest by the Romans, or else had been already subjected to foreigners. They were generally treated as inferior beings, and the framework of their national institutions was everywhere destroyed. The provincials of the West, when thus left destitute of every bond of national union, were exposed to the invasions of warlike tribes, which, under the first impulses of civilization, were driven on to seek the means of supplying new wants. The moment, therefore, that the military forces of the Roman government were unable to repulse these strangers, the population of the provinces was exposed to subjection, slavery, or extermination, according as the interests or the policy of the invading barbarians might determine.

In that portion of the Eastern Empire peopled by the Greeks, the case was totally different. There the executive power of the Roman government was modified by a system of national institutions, which conferred, even on the rural population, some control over their local affairs. The sovereign authority was relieved from that petty sphere of administration and police, which meddles with the daily occupations of the people. The Romans found this branch of government completely organized, in a manner not closely connected with the political sovereignty; and though the local institutions of the Greeks proved less powerful than the central despotism of their conquerors, they possessed greater vitality. Their nationality continued to exist even

after their conquest; and this nationality was again called into activity when the Roman government, from increasing weakness, gradually began to neglect the duties of administration.

But while the conquest of Greece by the Romans had indeed left the national existence nearly unaltered, time, as it changed the government of Rome, modified likewise the institutions of the Greeks. Still, neither the Roman Caesars, nor the Byzantine emperors, any more than the Frank princes and Turkish sultans, were able to interrupt the continual transmission of a political inheritance by each generation of the Greek race to its successors; though it is too true that, from age to age, the value of that inheritance was gradually diminished, until in our own times a noble impulse and a desperate struggle restored to the people its political existence.

The history of the Greek nation, even as a subject people, cannot be destitute of interest and instruction. The Greeks are the only existing representatives of the ancient world. They have maintained possession of their country, their language, and their social organization, against physical and moral forces, which have swept from the face of the earth all their early contemporaries, friends, and enemies. It can hardly be disputed that the preservation of their national existence is to be partly attributed to the institutions which they have received from their ancestors. The work now offered to the public attempts to trace the effects of the ancient institutions on the fortunes of the people under the Roman government, and endeavours to show in what manner those institutions were modified or supported by other circumstances.

It was impossible, in the following pages, to omit treating of events already illustrated by the genius of Gibbon. But these events must be viewed by the historian of the Roman Empire, and of the Greek people, under very different aspects. The observations of both may be equally true, though inferior skill and judgment may render the views, in the present work, less correct as a picture, and less impressive as a history. The same facts afford innumerable conclusions to different individuals, and in different ages. History will ever remain inexhaustible; and much as we have read of the Greeks and Romans, and deeply as we appear to have studied their records, there is much still to be learned from the same sources.

In the references to the authorities followed in this work, a preference will often be shown to those modern treatises, which ought to be in the hands of the general reader. It has often required profound investigation and long discussion to elicit a fact now generally known, or to settle an opinion now universally adopted, and in such cases it would be useless to collect a long array of ancient passages.

1st May, 1843.

CHRONOLOGY.

B.C.

323. Death of Alexander. Lamian war

32 a. Antipater disfranchised 12,000 Athenian citizens

321. Ptolemy founds a monarchy in Egypt.

312. Era of Seleucidae.

310. Agathocles invades Carthaginian possessions in Africa.

303. Demetrius Poliorcetes raises siege of Rhodes.

300. Mithridates Ariobarzanes founds kingdom of Pontus.

280. Achaian league commenced.

Pyrrhus landed in Italy to defend the Greeks against the Romans.

279. Gauls invade Greece, and are repulsed at Delphi.

278. Nicomedes brings the Gauls into Asia.

271. Romans complete the conquest of Magna Graecia.

260. Romans prepare their first fleet to contend with Carthage.

250. Parthian monarchy founded by Arsaces.

241. Attains, king of Pergamus.

228. First Roman embassy to Greece

218. Hannibal invades Italy.

212. Syracuse taken by Romans. Sicily conquered.

210. Sicily reduced to the condition of a Roman province.

202. Battle of Zama.

197. Battle of Cynoscephalae.

196. The Greeks declared free by Flamininus at the Isthmian games.

192. Antiochus the Great invades Greece.

188. The laws of Lycurgus abrogated by Philopoemen.

181. Death of Hannibal.

168. Battle of Pydna. End of Macedonian monarchy.

167. One thousand Achaian citizens sent as hostages to Rome.

155. The fine of 500 talents imposed on Athens for plundering the Oropians remitted by the Romans.

147. Macedonia reduced to the condition of a Roman province.

146. Corinth taken by Mummius. Greece reduced to the condition of a Roman province.

133. Rebellion of slaves in the Attic silver mines.

130. Asia, embracing great part of the country between the Halys and Mount Taurus, constituted a Roman province.

96. Cyrenaica becomes a Roman possession by the will of Ptolemy Apion.

86. Athens taken by Sulla.

77. Depredations of the pirates on the coasts of Greece and Asia Minor at their acme.

75. Bithynia and Pontus constituted a Roman province.

67. Crete conquered by Metellus after a war of two years and a-half, and shortly after reduced to the condition of a Roman province. It was subsequently united with Cyrenaica.

66. Monarchy of the Seleucidae conquered by Pompey.

65. Cilicia reduced to the condition of a Roman province.

48. Caesar destroys Megara.

44. Caesar founds a Roman colony at Corinth.

30. Augustus founds Nicopolis.

Egypt reduced to the condition of a Roman province.

25. Galatia and Lycaonia constituted a Roman province.

24. Pamphylia and Lycia constituted a Roman province.

21. Cyprus reduced to the condition of a Roman province. Athens deprived of its jurisdiction over Eretria and Aegina, and the confederacy of the free Laconian cities formed by Augustus.

A.D

14. Augustus establishes a Roman colony at Patrae.

18. Cappadocia reduced to the condition of a Roman province.

22. The Roman senate restricts the right of asylum claimed by the Greek temples and sanctuaries.

66. Nero in Greece.

67. Nero celebrates the Olympic Games.

72. Commagene reduced to a Roman province.

73. Thrace reduced to a Roman province by Vespasian. Rhodes, Samos, and other islands on the coast of Asia deprived of their privileges as free states, and reduced to the condition of a Roman province called the Islands.

74. Vespasian expels the philosophers from Rome.

90. Domitian expels the philosophers from Rome.

96. Apollonius of Tyana at Ephesus at the time of Domitian's death

98. Plutarch flourishes

103. Epictetus teaches at Nicopolis

112. Hadrian, archon of Athens

1 15. Martyrdom of Ignatius

122. Hadrian visits Athens

125. Hadrian again at Athens

129. Hadrian passes the winter at Athens.

132. Jewish war.

135. Hadrian is at Athens towards the close of the Jewish war.

143. Herodes Atticus consul.

162. Galen at Rome. Pausanias, Polyaenus, Lucian, and Ptolemy flourish.

168. Disgrace of Herodes Atticus at Sirmium.

176. Marcus Aurelius visits Athens and establishes scholarchs of the four great philosophic sects.

180. Dio Cassius, Herodian, Athenaeus flourish.

212. Edict of Caracalla, conferring the Roman citizenship on all the free inhabitants of the empire.

226. Artaxerxes overthrows the Parthian empire of the Arsacidae, and founds the Persian monarchy of the Sassanidae.

238. Herodian, Aelian, Philostratus

251. The emperor Decius defeated and slain by the Goths

267. Athens taken by the Goths.

284. Era of Diocletian, called Era of the Martyrs

312. 1st September. Cycle of Indictions of Constantine

325. Council of Nicaea.

330. Dedication of Constantinople.

332. Cherson assists Constantine against the Goths.
337. Constantine II, Constantius, Constans, emperors.
355. Julian appointed Caesar.
361. Julian.
363. Jovian.
364. Valentinian I. Valens.
365. Earthquake in Greece, Asia Minor, and Sicily.
375. Earthquake felt especially in Peloponnesus.
Gratian emperor.
378. Defeat and death of Valens.
379. Theodosius the Great
381. Second oecumenical council, at Constantinople.
394. Olympic Games abolished.
395. Arcadius and Honorius. Huns ravage Asia Minor. Alaric invades Greece.
398. Alaric governor of Eastern Illyricum.
408. Theodosius II.
425. University of Constantinople organized.
428. Genseric invades Africa.
431. Third oecumenical council, at Ephesus.
438. Publication of the Theodosian Code.
439. Genseric takes Carthage.
441. Theodosius II sends a fleet against Genseric.
442. Attila invades Thrace and Macedonia.
447. Attila ravages the country of Thermopylae.
Walls of Constantinople repaired by Theodosius II
449. Council of Ephesus, called the Council of Brigands.
450. Marcian.
451. Fourth oecumenical council, at Chalcedon.
457. Leo I, called the Great, and the Butcher.
458. Great earthquake felt from Antioch to Thrace.
460. Earthquake at Cyzicus.
465. Fire which destroyed parts of eight of the sixteen quarters of Constantinople.

468. Leo I sends a great expedition against Genseric.

473. Leo II crowned.

474. Leo II. Zeno the Isaurian.

476. End of the Western Roman Empire.

477. Return of Zeno, twenty months after he had been driven from Constantinople by Basiliscus.

480. Earthquakes at Constantinople during forty days.

Statue of Theodosius the Great thrown from its column.

491. Anastasius I, called Dicorus.

499. Bulgarians invade the empire.

507. Anastasius constructs the long wall of Thrace.

514. Revolt of Vitalianus.

518. Justin I.

526. Death of Theodoric.

527. Justinian I.

Gretes, king of the Huns, receives baptism at Constantinople.

The Tzans submit to the Roman Empire.

528. Gordas, king of the Huns, on the Cimmerian Bosphorus, receives baptism at Constantinople, and is murdered by his subjects on his return.

Justinian commences his lavish expenditure on fortifications and public buildings.

529. First edition of the Code of Justinian.

Schools of philosophy at Athens closed.

531. Battle of Callinicum. Death of Kobad, king of Persia.

Plague commenced which ravaged the Roman Empire for fifty years.

532. Sedition of Nika.

Peace concluded with Chosroes.

533- Conquest of the Vandal kingdom in Africa.

Institutions and Pandects published.

534. Belisarius returns to Constantinople.

Second edition of the Code.

536. Belisarius takes Rome.

537. Siege of Rome by Goths under Witiges.

Dedication of St. Sophia

538. Bulgarians invade the empire.

Famine in Italy

539. Witiges besieged in Ravenna.

Huns plunder Greece to the Isthmus of Corinth.

540. Surrender of Ravenna.

541. Totila king of the Goths.

Consulate abolished by Justinian.

542. Great pestilence at Constantinople

546. Rome taken by Totila

547. Rome taken by Belisarius.

548. Belisarius quits Italy

Death of Theodora

549. Rome again taken by Totila

Justinian's armies occupy the country of the Lazi

550. Sclavonians and Huns invade the empire,

551. Silkworm introduced into the Roman Empire.

552. Totila defeated. Rome retaken by Narses.

553. Fifth oecumenical council at Constantinople.

554. Earthquakes at Constantinople, Nicomedia, Berytus, and Cos.

Church of Cyzicus fell during divine service.

557. Terrible earthquake at Constantinople. Justinian did not wear his crown for forty days.

558. Zabergan, king of the Huns, defeated near Constantinople by Belisarius.

562. Treaty of peace with Persia. Belisarius accused of treason.

563. Belisarius restored to his rank.

565. March — death of Belisarius.

13th Nov.— death of Justinian in the thirty-ninth year of his reign. Justin II.

567. Kingdom of Gepids destroyed by Lombards.

568. Lombards invade Italy.

569. Justin sends the embassy of Zemarchos to the Turks.

571. Mahomet born. Weil says he died in 632, at the age of 63 lunar years, which places his birth in April 571.

572. War between the Roman Empire and Persia.

574. Tiberius defeated by the Avars.

Tiberius proclaimed Caesar by Justin.

576. Battle of Melitene. Romans penetrate to Caspian Sea.

578. Death of Justin II. Tiberius II.

579. Death of Chosroes.

581. Persian army defeated by Maurice in his fourth campaign.

582. 14th Aug. — death of Tiberius. Maurice.

John the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople, uses the title Ecumenic, granted to the patriarch by Justinian.

589. Incursions of the Avars and Sclavonians into Greece. From this time Sclavonian colonies were settled in the Peloponnesus.

590. Maurice crowns his son Theodosius at Easter. Hormisdas, king of Persia, dethroned and murdered.

591. Chosroes II restored to the Persian throne by the assistance of Maurice.

Maurice marches out of Constantinople against the Avars.

600. Maurice fails to ransom the Roman prisoners.

602. Rebellion of the army. Phocas proclaimed emperor.

603. Persian war commences.

608. Priscus, the son-in-law of Phocas, invites Heraclius.

609. Persians lay waste Asia Minor, and reach Chalcedon.

610. Phocas slain. Heraclius.

613. Heraclius Constantine, or Constantine III., crowned 22nd Jan.; he was born 3rd May 612.

614. Jerusalem taken by the Persians, and Church of the Holy Sepulchre burned.

615. Heraclius sends the patrician Nicetas to seize the wealth of John the Charitable, patriarch of Alexandria.

616. Persians invade Egypt

617. Persians occupy Chalcedon with a garrison.

618. Public distribution of bread at Constantinople commuted for a payment in money preparatory to its abolition.

619. Avars attempt to seize Heraclius at a conference for peace.

620. Peace concluded with the Avars.

621. Great preparations for carrying on the Persian war.

622. Monday, 5th April — Heraclius left Constantinople and proceeded by sea to Pylae. He collected troops from the provinces, and exercised his army. He advanced to the frontiers of Armenia, and made dispositions to winter in Pontus, but suddenly advanced through Armenia into Persia. The Persians made a diversion against Cilicia, but, on Heraclius continuing his advance, turned and pursued him. Heraclius gained a battle, and placed his army in winter quarters in Armenia.

16th July — Era of the Hegira of Mahomet.

623. 25th March — Heraclius left Constantinople, joined the army in Armenia, and was in the Persian territory by the 20th April. Chosroes rejects terms of peace, and Heraclius takes Ganzaca and Thebarmes. Chosroes fled by the passes into Media, and Heraclius retired to winter in Albania.

Death of Sisebut, king of the Visigoths, who had conquered the Roman possessions in Spain.

624. Chosroes sends an army, under Sarablagas and Perozites, to guard the passes by which Heraclius was likely to invade Persia; but the emperor, making a long circuit by the plains, engaged Sarablagas before he was joined by Sarbaraza, and gained the battle. Sarbaraza, and then Saen, are also defeated.

The Lazes and Abasges abandoned Heraclius in this campaign. Heraclius wintered in the Persian territory. This was a campaign of marches and counter-marches in a mountainous country, and Heraclius was opposed by greatly superior forces, who succeeded in preventing his advance into Persia.

625. Heraclius resolves to return into the south-eastern part of Asia Minor. From his winter quarters there were two roads — a short mountain-road by Taranton, where nothing could be found for the troops; a longer road, by the passes of Mount Taurus, where supplies could be obtained. After a difficult march of seven days over Taurus, Heraclius crossed the Tigris, marched by Martyropolis to Amida, where he rested, and despatched a courier to Constantinople. As the Persians were following, Heraclius placed guards in the passes, crossed the Nymphius, and reached the Euphrates, where he found the bridge of boats withdrawn. He crossed by a ford, and passed by Samosata over Mount Taurus to Germanicia and Adana, where he encamped between the city and the bridge over the Saros. Sarbaraza advances to the Saros, and, after a battle, retires. Heraclius advances to Sebaste, crosses the Halys, and puts his army into winter quarters. Chosroes plunders the Christian churches in Persia, and compels all Christians in his dominions to profess themselves Nestorians.

626. The scholarians make a tumult at Constantinople because they are deprived of the bread which had previously been distributed. John Seismos attempts to raise the price of bread from three to eight *pholles*.

Constantinople besieged by the Avars from 29th July to 8th August.

A Persian army under Sarbaraza occupies Chalcedon. Another under Saen is defeated by Theodore, the emperor's brother. Heraclius stations himself in Lazica, and waits until he is assured of the defeat of the Avars before Constantinople, and the passage of the Caspian gates by an army of Khazars under Ziebel. Meeting of Heraclius

and Ziebel took place near Tiflis, which was occupied by a Persian garrison. The Khazars furnish Heraclius with 40,000 troops.

The church of Blachernae is enclosed within the fortifications of the city by a new wall.

627. Heraclius appears to have derived little advantage from the assistance of the 40,000 Khazars, unless we suppose that by their assistance he was able to render himself master of Persarmenia and Atropatene. They quitted him during the year 627.

9th October — Heraclius entered the district of Chamaetha, where he remained seven days, 1st December — Heraclius reached the greater Zab, crossed and encamped near Nineveh.

Rhazetas quitted his station at Ganzaca, and pursued Heraclius — crossed the greater Zab by a ford three miles lower down than Heraclius passed it. Battle in which Rhazetes was defeated on Saturday, 12th December. Sarbaraza recalled from Chalcedon to oppose the advance of Heraclius, who occupied Nineveh, and passed the greater Zab again.

23rd December — Heraclius passed the lesser Zab, and rested several days in the palace of Jesdem, where he celebrated Christmas.

628. 1st January — Heraclius passed the river Toma, took the palace of Beglali with its parks, and Dastagerd, where Chosroes had resided for twenty-four years and accumulated great treasures.

Heraclius recovered three hundred standards taken by the Persians from the Romans at different times, and passed the feast of Epiphany (6th January) at Dastagerd. He quitted Dastagerd on the 7th, and in three days reached the neighbourhood of Ctesiphon, and encamped twelve miles from the Arba, which he found was not fordable. He then ascended the Arba to Siazouron, and spent the month of February in that country. In March he spent seven days at Varzan, where he received news of the revolution which had taken place, and that Siroes had dethroned his father. Heraclius then retired from the neighbourhood of Ctesiphon by Siarzoura, Chalchas, Jesdem. He passed mount Zara (Zagros), where there was a great fall of snow during the month of March, and encamped near Ganzaca, which had then three thousand houses.

3rd April — An ambassador of Siroes arrived at the camp of Heraclius. Peace concluded. 8th April — Heraclius quitted his camp at Ganzaca.

15th May — His letters announcing peace were read in the church of St. Sophia at Constantinople.

629. Death of Siroes, or Kabad, succeeded by his son Ardeshir.

Heraclius visits Jerusalem, and restores the Holy Cross to the keeping of the patriarch.

630. Heraclius at Hierapolis occupied with ecclesiastical reforms.

632. Death of Mahomet, 7th or 8th June.

Era of Yesdedjerd, 15th August

633. The chronology of the Saracen campaigns in Syria is extremely uncertain. The accounts of the Greek and Arabian writers require to be adjusted by the sequence of a few events which can be fixed with accuracy.

Bosra besieged, and perhaps it was taken early in the following year.

Abubekr was occupied, for some time after the death of Mahomet, in reducing the rebellious Arabs to submission, and in subduing several false prophets.

634. 30th July— Battle of Adjnadin.

22nd August — Death of Abubekr.

September — Battle of Yermuk (Hieromax). Omar was already proclaimed caliph in the Syrian army.

635. Damascus taken after a siege of several months. The siege commenced after the battle of Yermuk.

Heraclius, taking the Holy Cross with him, quitted Syria, and retired to Constantinople.

636. Various towns on the sea-coast taken by the Saracens, and another battle fought

Vahan, the commander of the Roman army, appears to have been proclaimed emperor in this or the preceding year.

637. Capitulation of Jerusalem. The date of Omar's entry into Jerusalem and of the duration of the siege are both uncertain

638. Invasion of Syria by a Roman army from Diarbekr, which besieges Emesa, but is defeated.

Antioch taken.

639. Jasdos takes Edessa and conquers Mesopotamia.

December — Amrou invades Egypt.

640. The 19th Hegira began 2nd January 640.

The Caliph Omar orders a census of his dominions.

Cairo taken. Capitulation of Mokaukas for the Copts.

641. February or March — Death of Heraclius. His reign of 30 years, 4 months, 6 days, would terminate 10th February.

Heraclius Constantine reigned 103 days, to 24th May.

Heracleonas sole emperor less than five months.

October — Constans II.

December — Alexandria taken by Saracens, retaken by Romans, and recovered by Saracens

643. Omar rebuilds or repairs the temple of Jerusalem.

Canal of Suez restored by Amrou.

644. Death of Omar.

647. Saracens drive Romans out of Africa, and impose tribute on the province.

Moawyah invades Cyprus.

648. Moawyah besieges Aradus, and takes it by capitulation.

Constans II publishes the Type.

653. Moawyah takes Rhodes, and destroys the Colossus.

654. Pope Martin banished to Cherson.

655. Constans II defeated by the Saracens in a great naval battle off Mount Phoenix in Lycia.

656. Othman assassinated, 17th June.

658. Expedition of Constans II against the Sclavonians.

Peace concluded with Moawyah.

659. Constans II puts his brother Theodosius to death.

661. Murder of Ali, 22nd January.

Constans II quits Constantinople, and passes the winter at Athens.

662. Saracens ravage Romania (Asia Minor), and carry off many prisoners.

663. Constans II visits Rome.

668. The Saracens advance to Chalcedon, and take Amorium, where they leave a garrison; but it is soon retaken.

Constans II assassinated at Syracuse,

Constantine IV (Pogonatus).

669. The Saracens carry off 180,000 prisoners from Africa.

The troops of the Orient theme demand that the brothers of Constantine IV should receive the imperial crown, in order that three emperors might reign on earth to represent the Trinity in heaven.

670. Saracens pass the winter at Cyzicus.

671. Saracens pass the winter at Smyrna and in Cilicia.

672. Constantine IV prepares ships to throw Greek fire on the Saracens, who besiege Constantinople.

673. Saracens, who have wintered at Cyzicus, penetrate into the port of Constantinople, and attack Magnaura and Cyclobium, the two forts at the continental angles of the city.

Saracens again pass the winter at Cyzicus

674. Third year of the siege of Constantinople.

Saracen troops pass the winter in Crete.

677. Sixth year of the siege of Constantinople.

The Mardaites alarm the Caliph Moawyah by their conquests on Mount Lebanon.

Thessalonica besieged by the Avars and Sclavonians.

678. Seventh year of the siege of Constantinople.

The Saracen fleet destroyed by Greek fire invented by Callinicus.

Bulgarians found a monarchy south of the Danube, in the country still called Bulgaria.

Peace concluded with the Caliph Moawyah.

679. War with the Bulgarians.

680. Death of the Caliph Moawyah.

Sixth general council of the church.

681. Heraclius and Tiberius, the brothers of Constantine IV, are deprived of the imperial title.

684. The Caliph Abdalmelik offers to purchase peace by the payment of an annual tribute of 365,000 pieces of gold, 365 slaves, and 365 horses.

685. September — Death of Constantine IV (Pogonatus).

Justinian II ascends the throne, aged sixteen.

686. Treaty of peace between the emperor and the caliph.

687. Emigration of Mardaites.

The Sclavonians of Strymon carry their piratical expeditions into the Propontis.

689. Justinian II forces the Greeks to emigrate from Cyprus.

691. Defeat of Justinian II, and desertion of the Sclavonian colonists.

692. General council of the church *in Trullo*,

The haratch established by the caliph.

695. Justinian II deposed and his nose cut off, and he is banished to Cherson.

Leontius emperor.

697. Saracens carry off great numbers of prisoners from Romania (Asia Minor).

First doge of Venice elected.

Carthage taken by the Romans, and garrisoned.

698. Carthage retaken by the Saracens.

Leontius dethroned and his nose cut off.

Tiberius III (Apsimar), emperor.

703. Saracens defeated in Cilicia by Heraclius, the brother of Tiberius III.

705- Justinian II (Rhinotmetus) recovers possession of the empire.

708. The Saracens push their ravages to the Bosphorus.

709. Moslemah transports 80,000 Saracens from Lampsacus into Thrace.

710. Ravenna and Cherson treated with inhuman cruelty by Justinian II.

711. Justinian II dethroned and murdered.

Philippicus emperor.

713. Philippicus dethroned, and his eyes put out.

Anastasius II emperor

716. Anastasius II dethroned

Theodosius III emperor

Leo the Isaurian relieves Amorium, concludes a truce with Moslemah, and is proclaimed emperor by the army.

CHAPTER 1

FROM THE CONQUEST OF GREECE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSTANTINOPLE AS CAPITAL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE B.C. 146-A.D. 330

The conquests of Alexander the Great effected a permanent change in the political condition of the Greek nation, and this change powerfully influenced its moral and social state during the whole period of its subjection to the Roman Empire. The international system of policy by which Alexander connected Greece with Western Asia and Egypt, was only effaced by the religion of Mahomet and the conquests of the Arabs. Though Alexander was himself a Greek, both from education, and the prejudices cherished by the pride of ancestry, still neither the people of Macedonia, nor the chief part of the army, whose discipline and valour had secured his victories, was Greek, either in language or feelings. Had Alexander, therefore, determined on organizing his empire with the view of uniting the Macedonians and Persians in common feelings of opposition to the Greek nation, there can be no doubt that he could easily have accomplished the design. The Greeks might then have found themselves enabled to adopt a very different course in their national career from that which they were compelled to follow by the powerful influence exercised over them by Alexander's conduct. Alexander himself, undoubtedly, perceived that the greater numbers of the Persians, and their equality, if not superiority, in civilization to the Macedonians, rendered it necessary for him to seek some powerful ally to prevent the absorption of the Macedonians in the Persian population, the loss of their language, manners, and nationality, and the speedy change of his empire into the sovereignty of a mere Graeco-Persian dynasty. It did not escape his discernment, that the political institutions of the Greeks created a principle of nationality capable of combating the unalterable laws of the Medes and Persians.

Alexander was the noblest model of a conqueror; his ambition aspired at eclipsing the glory of his unparalleled victories by the universal prosperity which was to flow from his civil government. New cities and extended commerce were to found an era in the world's history. Even the strength of his empire was to be based on a political principle which he has the merit of discovering, and of which he proved the efficacy; this principle was the amalgamation of his subjects into one people by permanent institutions. All other conquerors have endeavoured to augment their power by the subjection of one race to another. The merit of Alexander is very much increased by the nature of his position with regard to the Greek nation. The Greeks were not favourably disposed either towards his empire or his person; they would willingly have destroyed both as the surest way of securing their own liberty. But the moral energy of the Greek national character did not escape the observation of Alexander, and he resolved to render this quality available for the preservation of his empire, by introducing into the East those municipal institutions which gave it vigour, and thus facilitate the infusion of some portion of the Hellenic character into the hearts of his conquered subjects.

The moderation of Alexander in the execution of his plans of reform and change is as remarkable as the wisdom of his extensive projects. In order to mould the Asiatics to his wishes, he did not attempt to enforce laws and constitutions similar to those of Greece. He profited too well by the lessons of Aristotle to think of treating man as a machine. But he introduced Greek civilization as an important element in his civil government, and established Greek colonies with political rights throughout his conquests. It is true that he seized all the unlimited power of the Persian monarchs, but, at the same time, he strove to secure administrative responsibility, and to establish free institutions in municipal government. Any laws or constitution which Alexander could have promulgated to enforce his system of consolidating the population of his empire into one body, would most probably have been immediately repealed by his successors, in consequence of the hostile feelings of the Macedonian army. But it was more difficult to escape from the tendency imprinted on the administration by the systematic arrangements which Alexander had introduced. He seems to have been fully aware of this fact, though it is impossible to trace the whole series of measures he adopted to accelerate the completion of his great project of creating a new state of society, and a new nation, as well as a new empire, in the imperfect records of his civil administration which have survived. His death left his own scheme incomplete, yet his success was wonderful; for though his empire was immediately dismembered, its numerous portions long retained a deep imprint of that Greek civilization which he had introduced. The influence of his philanthropic policy survived the kingdoms which his arms had founded, and tempered the despotic sway of the Romans by its superior power over society; nor was the influence of Alexander's government utterly effaced in Asia until Mahomet changed the government, the religion, and the frame of society in the East.

The monarchs of Egypt, Syria, Pergamus, and Bactriana, who were either Macedonians or Greeks, respected the civil institutions, the language, and the religion of their native subjects, however adverse they might be to Greek usages; and the sovereigns of Bithynia, Pontus, Cappadocia, and Parthia, though native princes, retained a deep tincture of Greek civilization after they had thrown off the Macedonian yoke. They not only encouraged the arts, sciences, and literature of Greece, but they even protected the peculiar political constitutions of the Greek colonies settled in their dominions, though at variance with the Asiatic views of monarchical government.

The Greeks and Macedonians long continued separate nations, though a number of the causes which ultimately produced their fusion began to exert some influence shortly after the death of Alexander. The moral and social causes which enabled the Greeks to acquire a complete superiority over the Macedonian race, and ultimately to absorb it as a component element of their own nation, were the same which afterwards enabled them to destroy the Roman influence in the East. For several generations, the Greeks appeared the feebler party in their struggle with the Macedonians. The new kingdoms, into which Alexander's empire was divided, were placed in very different circumstances from the older Greek states. Two separate divisions were created in the Hellenic world, and the Macedonian monarchies on the one hand, and the free Greeks on the other, formed two distinct international systems of policy. The Macedonian sovereigns had a balance of power to maintain, in which the free states of Europe could only be directly interested when the overwhelming influence of a conqueror placed their

independence in jeopardy. The multifarious diplomatic relations of the free states among themselves required constant attention, not only to maintain their political independence, but even to protect their property and civil rights. These two great divisions of Hellenic society were often governed by opposite views and feelings in morals and politics, though their various members were continually placed in alliance as well as collision by their struggles to preserve the balance of power of their respective systems.

The immense power and wealth of the Seleucidae and Ptolemies rendered vain all the efforts of the small European states to maintain the high military, civil, and literary rank they had previously occupied. Their best soldiers, their wisest statesmen, and their ablest authors, were induced to emigrate to a more profitable and extensive scene of action. Alexandria became the capital of the Hellenic world. Yet the history of the European states still continued to maintain its predominant interest, and as a political lesson, the struggles of the Achaean League to defend the independence of Greece against Macedonia and Rome, are not less instructive than the annals of Athens and Sparta. The European Greeks at this period perceived all the danger to which their liberties were exposed from the wealth, and power of the Asiatic monarchies, and they vainly endeavoured to effect a combination of all the free states into one federal body. Whatever might have been the success of such a combination, it certainly offered the only hope of preserving the liberty of Greece against the powerful states with which the altered condition of the civilized world had brought her into contact.

At the very time when the Macedonian kings were attacking the independence of Greece, and the Asiatic courts undermining the morals of the Greek nation, the Greek colonies, whose independence, from their remote situation, was secured against the attacks of the Eastern monarchs, were conquered by the Romans. Many circumstances tending to weaken the Greeks, and over which they had no control, followed one another with fatal celerity. The invasion of the Gauls, though bravely repulsed, inflicted great losses on Greece. Shortly after, the Romans completed the conquest of the Greek states in Italy. From that time the Sicilian Greeks were too feeble to be anything but spectators of the fierce struggle of the Romans and Carthaginians for the sovereignty of their island, and though the city of Syracuse courageously defended its independence, the struggle was a hopeless tribute to national glory. The cities of Cyrenaica had been long subject to the Ptolemies, and the republics on the shores of the Black Sea had been unable to maintain their liberties against the repeated attacks of the sovereigns of Pontus and Bithynia.

Though the Macedonians and Greeks were separated into two divisions by the opposite interests of the Asiatic monarchies and the European republics, still they were united by a powerful bond of national feelings. There was a strong similarity in the education, religion, and social position of the individual citizen in every state, whether Greek or Macedonian. Wherever Hellenic civilization was received, the free citizens formed only one part of the population, whether the other was composed of slaves or subjects; and this peculiarity placed their civil interests as Greeks in a more important light than their political differences as subjects of various states. The Macedonian Greeks of Asia and Egypt were a ruling class, governed, it is true, by an absolute sovereign, but having their interest so identified with his, in the vital question of

retaining the administration of the country, that the Greeks, even in the absolute monarchies, formed a favoured and privileged class. In the Greek republics, the case was not very dissimilar; there, too, a small body of free citizens ruled a large slave or subject population, whose numbers required not only constant attention on the part of the rulers, but likewise a deep conviction of an ineffaceable separation in interests and character, to preserve the ascendency. This peculiarity in the position of the Greeks cherished their exclusive nationality, and created a feeling that the laws of honour and of nations forbade free men ever to make common cause with slaves. The influence of this feeling was visible for centuries on the laws and education of the free citizens of Greece, and it was equally powerful wherever Hellenic civilization spread.

Alexander's conquests soon exercised a widely extended influence on the commerce, literature, morals, and religion of the Greeks. A direct communication was opened with India, with the centre of Asia, and with the southern coast of Africa. This immense extension of the commercial transactions of the Asiatic and Egyptian Greeks diminished the relative wealth and importance of the European states, while, at the same time, their stationary position assumed the aspect of decline from the rapidly increasing power and civilization of Western Europe. A considerable trade began to be carried on directly with the great commercial depots of the East which had formerly afforded large profits to the Greeks of Europe by passing through their hands. As soon as Rome rose to some degree of power, its inhabitants, if not its franchised citizens, traded with the East, as is proved by the existence of political relations between Rome and Rhodes, more than three centuries before the Christian era. There can be no doubt that the connection between the two states had its origin in the interests of trade. New channels were opened for mercantile enterprise as direct communications diminished the expense of transport. The increase of trade rendered piracy a profitable occupation. Both the sovereigns of Egypt and the merchants of Rhodes favoured the pirates who plundered the Syrians and Phoenicians, so that trading vessels could only navigate with safety under the protection of powerful states, in order to secure their property from extortion and plunder, These alterations in commercial affairs proved every way disadvantageous to the small republics of European Greece; and Alexandria and Rhodes soon occupied the position once held by Corinth and Athens.

The literature of a people is so intimately connected with the local circumstances which influence education, taste, and morals, that it can never be transplanted without undergoing a great alteration. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the literature of the Greeks, after the extension of their dominion in the East, should have undergone a great change; but it seems remarkable that this change should have proved invariably injurious to all its peculiar excellencies. It is singular, at the same time, to find how little the Greeks occupied themselves in the examination of the stores of knowledge possessed by the Eastern nations. The situation and interests of the Asiatic and Egyptian Greeks must have compelled many to learn the languages of the countries which they inhabited, and the literature of the East was laid open to their investigation. They appear to have availed themselves very sparingly of these advantages. Even in history and geography, they made but small additions to the information already collected by Herodotus, Ctesias, and Xenophon; and this supercilious neglect of foreign literature has been the cause of depriving modern times of all records of the powerful and

civilized nations which flourished while Greece was in a state of barbarism. Had the Macedonians or Romans treated the history and literature of Greece with the contempt which the Greeks showed to the records of the Phoenicians, Persians, and Egyptians, it is not probable that any very extensive remains of later Greek literature would have reached us. At a subsequent period, when the Arabs had conquered the Syrian and Egyptian Greeks, their neglect of the language and literature of Greece was severely felt.

The munificence of the Ptolemies, the Seleucidae, and the kings of Pergamus, enabled their capitals to eclipse the literary glory of the cities of Greece. The eminent men of Europe sought their fortunes abroad; but when genius emigrated it could not transplant those circumstances which created and sustained it. In Egypt and in Syria, Greek literature lost its national character; and that divine instinct in the portraiture of nature, which had been the charm of its earlier age, never emigrated. This deficiency forms, indeed, the marked distinction between the literature of the Grecian and Macedonian periods; and it was a natural consequence of the different situations held by literary men. Among the Asiatic and Alexandrine population, literature was a trade, knowledge was confined to the higher classes, and literary productions were addressed to a public widely dispersed and dissimilar in many tastes and habits. The authors who addressed themselves to such a public could not escape a vagueness of expression on some subjects, and an affectation of occult profundity on others. Learning and science, in so far as they could be rendered available for upholding literary renown, were most studiously cultivated, and most successfully employed; but deep feeling, warm enthusiasm, and simple truth were, from the very nature of the case, impossible.

The frame of society in earlier times had been very different in the free states of Greece. Literature and the fine arts then formed a portion of the usual education and ordinary life of every citizen in the State; they were consequently completely under the influence of public opinion, and received the impress of the national mind which they reflected from the mirror of genius. The effects of this popular character in Greek literature and art are evident, in the total freedom of all the productions of Greece, in her best days, from anything that partakes of mannerism or exaggeration. The truer to nature any production could be rendered, which was to be offered to the attention of the people, the abler would they be to appreciate its merits, and their applause would be obtained with greater certainty; yet, at the same time, the farther the expression of nature could be removed from vulgarity, the higher would be the degree of general admiration. The sentiment necessary for the realization of ideal perfection, which modern civilization vainly requires from those who labour only for the polished and artificial classes of a society broken into sections, arose in profusion, under the free instinct of the popular mind to reverence simplicity and nature, when combined with beauty and dignity.

The connection of the Greeks with Assyria and Egypt, nevertheless, aided their progress in mathematics and scientific knowledge; yet astrology was the only new object of science which their Eastern studies added to the domain of the human intellect. From the time Berosus introduced astrology into Cos, it spread with inconceivable rapidity in Europe. It soon exercised a powerful influence over the religious opinions of the higher classes, naturally inclined to fatalism, and assisted in demoralizing the

private and public character of the Greeks. From the Greeks it spread with additional empiricism among the Romans: it even maintained its ground against Christianity, with which it long strove to form an alliance, and it has only been extirpated in modern times. The Romans, as long as they clung to their national usages and religious feelings, endeavoured to resist the progress of a study so destructive to private and public virtue; but it embodied opinions which were rapidly gaining ground. In the time of the Caesars, astrology was generally believed, and extensively practised.

The general corruption of morals which followed from the Macedonian conquests, was the inevitable effect of the position in which mankind were everywhere placed. The accumulated treasures of the Persian Empire, which must have amounted to between seventy and eighty millions sterling, were suddenly thrown into general circulation, and the large sums which passed into the hands of the soldiery enriched the very worst classes of society. The Greeks profited greatly by the expenditure of these treasures, and their social position became soon so completely changed by the facilities afforded them of gaining high pay, and of enjoying luxury in the service of foreign princes, that public opinion ceased to exercise a direct influence on private character . The mixture of Macedonians, Greeks, and natives, in the conquered countries of the East, was very incomplete, and they generally formed distinct classes of society: this circumstance alone contributed to weaken the feelings of moral responsibility, which are the most powerful preservatives of virtue. It is difficult to imagine a state of society more completely destitute of moral restraint than that in which the Asiatic Greeks lived. Public opinion was powerless to enforce even an outward respect for virtue; military accomplishments, talents for civil administration, literary eminence, and devotion to the power of an arbitrary sovereign, were the direct roads to distinction and wealth; honesty and virtue were very secondary qualities. In all countries or societies where a class becomes predominant, a conventional character is formed, according to the exigencies of the case, as the standard of an honourable man; and it is usually very different indeed from what is really necessary to constitute a virtuous, or even an honest citizen.

With regard to the European Greeks, high rank at the Asiatic courts was often suddenly, and indeed accidentally, placed within their reach by qualities that had in general only been cultivated as a means of obtaining a livelihood. It is not, therefore, wonderful that wealth and power, obtained under such circumstances, should have been wasted in luxury, and squandered in the gratification of lawless passions. Yet, in spite of the complaints most justly recorded in history against the luxury, idleness, avarice, and debauchery of the Greeks, it seems surprising that the people resisted, so effectually as it did, the powerful means at work to accomplish the national ruin. There never existed a people more perfectly at liberty to gratify every passion. During two hundred and fifty years, the Greeks were the dominant class in Asia; and the corrupting influence of this predominance was extended to the whole frame of society, in their European as well as their Asiatic possessions. The history of the Achaean League, and the endeavours of Agis and Cleomenes, to restore the ancient institutions of Sparta, prove that public and private virtue were still admired and appreciated by the native Greeks. The Romans, who were the loudest in condemning and satirizing the vices of the nation, proved far less able to resist the allurements of wealth and power; and in the course of one century, their demoralization far exceeded the corruption of the Greeks. The severe tone in

which Polybius animadverts on the vices of his countrymen, must always be contrasted with the picture of Roman depravity in the pages of Suetonius and Tacitus, in order to form a correct estimate of the moral position of the two nations. The Greeks afford a sad spectacle of the debasing influence of wealth and power on the higher classes; but the Romans, after their Asiatic conquests, present the loathsome picture of a whole people throwing aside all moral restraint, and openly wallowing in those vices which the higher classes elsewhere have generally striven to conceal.

The religion of the Greeks was little more than a section of the political constitution of the State. The power of religion depended on custom. Strictly speaking, therefore, the Greeks never possessed anything more than a national form of worship, and their religious feelings produced no very important influence on their moral conduct. The conquests of Alexander effected as great a change in religion as in manners. The Greeks willingly adopted the superstitious practices of the conquered nations, and, without hesitation, paid their devotions at the shrines of foreign divinities; but, strange to say, they never appear to have profoundly investigated either the metaphysical opinions or the religious doctrines of the Eastern nations. They treated with neglect the pure theism of Moses, and the sublime religious system of Zoroaster, while they cultivated a knowledge of the astrology, necromancy, and sorcery of the Chaldeans, Syrians, and Egyptians.

The separation of the higher and lower ranks of society, which only commenced among the Greeks after their Asiatic conquests, produced a marked effect on the religious ideas of the nation. Among the wealthy and the learned, indifference to all religions rapidly gained ground. The philosophical speculations of Alexander's age tended towards scepticism; and the state of mankind, in the following century, afforded practical proofs to the ancients of the insufficiency of virtue and reason to insure happiness and success either in public or private life. The consequence was, that the greater number embraced the belief in a blind overruling destiny,—while a few became atheists. The absurdities of popular paganism had been exposed and ridiculed, while its mythology had not yet been explained by philosophical allegories. No system of philosophy, on the other hand, had sought to enforce its moral truths among the people, by declaring the principle of man's responsibility. The lower orders were without philosophy, the higher without religion.

This separation in the feelings and opinions of the different ranks of society, rendered the value of public opinion comparatively insignificant to the philosophers; and consequently, their doctrines were no longer addressed to the popular mind. The education of the lower orders, which had always depended on the public lessons they had received from voluntary teachers in the public places of resort, was henceforward neglected; and the priests of the temples, the diviners and soothsayers, became their instructors and guides. Under such guidance, the old mythological fables, and the new wonders of the Eastern magicians, were employed as the surest means of rendering the superstitious feelings of the people, and the popular dread of supernatural influences, a source of profit to the priesthood. While the educated became the votaries of Chaldeans and astrologers, the ignorant were the admirers of Egyptians and conjurors.

The Greek nation, immediately before the conquest of the Romans, was rich both in wealth and numbers. Alexander had thrown the accumulated treasures of centuries into circulation; the dismemberment of his empire prevented his successors from draining the various countries of the world, to expend their resources on a single city. The number of capitals and independent cities in the Grecian world kept money in circulation, enabled trade to flourish, and caused the Greek population to increase. The elements of national prosperity are so various and complex, that a knowledge of the numbers of a people affords no certain criterion for estimating their wealth and happiness; still, if it were possible to obtain accurate accounts of the population of all the countries inhabited by the Greeks after the death of Alexander, such knowledge would afford better means of estimating the real progress or decline of social civilization, than either the records which history has preserved of the results of wars and negotiations, or than the memorials of art and literature. The population of Greece, as of every other country, must have varied very much at different periods; even the proportion of the slave to the free inhabitants can never have long remained exactly the same. We are, unfortunately, so completely ignorant of the relative density of the Greek population at different periods, and so well assured that its absolute numbers depended on many causes which it is now impossible to appreciate fully, that it would be a vain endeavour to attempt to fix the period when the Greek race was most numerous. The empire of the Greeks was most extensive during the century which elapsed immediately after the death of Alexander; but it would be unsafe to draw, from that single fact, any certain conclusion concerning the numbers of the Greek race at that period, as compared with the following century.

The fallacy of any inferences concerning the population of ancient times, which are drawn from the numbers of the inhabitants in modern times, is apparent, when we reflect on the rapid increase of mankind, in the greater part of Europe, in late years. Gibbon estimates the population of the Roman Empire, in the time of Claudius, at one hundred and twenty millions, and he supposed modern Europe to contain, at the time he wrote, one hundred and seven millions. Seventy years have not elapsed, and yet the countries which he enumerated now contain upwards of two hundred and ten millions. The variations which have taken place in the numbers of the Jews at different periods, illustrate the vicissitudes to which an expatriated population, like a large portion of the Greek nation, is always liable. The Jews have often been far less—perhaps they have been frequently more numerous—than they are at present, yet their numbers now seem to equal what they were at the era of the greatest wealth, power, and glory of their nation under Solomon. A very judicious writer has estimated the population of continental Greece, Peloponnesus, and the Ionian Islands, at three millions and a half, during the period which elapsed from the Persian wars to the death of Alexander. Now, if we admit a similar density of population in Crete, Cyprus, the islands of the Archipelago, and the colonies on the coasts of Thrace and Asia Minor, this number would require to be more than doubled. The population of European Greece declined after the time of Alexander. Money became more abundant; it was easy for a Greek to make his fortune abroad; increased wealth augmented the wants of the free citizens, and the smaller states became incapable of supporting as large a free population as in earlier times, when wants were fewer, and emigration difficult. The size of properties and the number of slaves, therefore, increased. The diminution which had taken place in the

population of Greece must, however, have been trifling, when compared with the immense increase in the Greek population of Asia and Egypt; in Magna Graecia, Sicily, and Cyrene, the number of the Greeks had not decreased. Greek civilization had extended itself from the banks of the Indus to the Pillars of Hercules, and from the shores of the Palus Maeotis to the island of Dioscorides. It may therefore be admitted, that the Greeks were, at no earlier period of their history, more numerous than at the time the Romans commenced the subjugation of the countries which they inhabited.

The history of the Greeks under the Roman domination tends to correct the opinion that national changes are to be solely attributed to those remarkable occurrences which occupy the most prominent place in the annals of states. It not unfrequently happened that those events which produced the greatest change on the fortunes of the Romans, exerted no very important or permanent influence on the fate of the Greeks ; while, on the other hand, some change in the state of India, Bactria, Ethiopia, or Arabia, by altering the direction of commerce, powerfully influenced their prosperity and future destinies. A revolution in the commercial intercourse between Europe and eastern Asia, which threw ancient Greece out of the direct line of trade, assisted in producing the great changes which took place in the Greek nation, from the period of the subjection of Greece by the Romans, to that of the conquest of the semi-Greek provinces which had belonged to the Macedonian empire, by the Saracens. The history of mankind requires a more accurate illustration than has yet been undertaken, of the causes of the depopulation and impoverishment of the people, as well as of the general degradation of all the political governments with which we are acquainted, during the period embraced in this volume; but the task belongs to universal history. To obtain a correct view of the social condition of the European nations in the darkest periods of the middle ages, it is necessary to examine society through a Greek as well as a Roman medium, and to weigh the experience and the passions of the East against the force and the prejudices of the West. It will then be found, that many germs of that civilization which seemed to have arisen in the dark ages as a natural development of society, were really borrowed from the Greek people and the Byzantine empire, in which a Graeco-Macedonian civilization long pervaded society.

Sect. I.

Immediate causes of the Conquest of Greece by the Romans

The great difference which existed in the social condition of the Greeks and Romans during the whole of their national existence, must be kept in view, in order to form a just idea of their relative position when ruled by the same government. The Romans formed a nation with the organization of a single city; their political government, always partaking of its municipal origin, was a type of concentration in administrative power, and was enabled to pursue its objects with undeviating steadiness of purpose. The Greeks were a people composed of a number of rival states, whose attention was incessantly diverted to various objects. The great end of existence among

the Romans was war; they were the children of Mars, and they reverenced their progenitor with the most fervent enthusiasm. Agriculture itself was only honoured from necessity. Among the Greeks, civil virtues were called into action by the multifarious exigencies of society, and were honoured and deified by the nation. Linked together by an international system of independent states, the Greeks regarded war as a means of obtaining some definite object, in accordance with the established balance of power. A state of peace was, in their view, the natural state of mankind. The Romans regarded war as their permanent occupation; their national and individual ambition was exclusively directed to conquest. The subjection of their enemies, or a perpetual struggle for supremacy, was the only alternative that war presented to their minds.

The success of the Roman arms and the conquest of Greece were the natural results of concentrated national feelings, and superior military organization, contending with an ill-cemented political league, and an inferior military system. The Roman was instructed to regard himself merely as a component part of the republic, and to view Rome as placed in opposition to the rest of mankind. The Greek, though he possessed the moral feeling of nationality quite as powerfully as the Roman, could not concentrate equal political energy. The Greeks after the period of the Macedonian conquests, occupied the double position of members of a widely-spread and dominant people, and of citizens of independent states. Their minds were enlarged by this extension of their sphere of civilization; but what they gained in general feelings of philanthropy, they appear to have lost in patriotic attachment to the interest of their native states.

It would be a vain exercise of ingenuity to speculate on the course of events, and on the progress of the ancient world, had the national spirit of Greece been awakened in her struggle with Rome, and the war between the two peoples involved the question of Greek nationality, as well as political independence. On the one hand, Greece and Rome might be supposed existing as rival states, mutually aiding the progress of mankind by their emulation; on the other, the extinction of the Greek people, as well as the destruction of their political government, might be regarded as a not improbable event. No strong national feeling was, however, raised in Greece by the wars with Rome, and the contest remained only a political one in the eyes of the people; consequently, even if the military power of the belligerents had been more nearly balanced than it really was, the struggle could hardly have terminated in any other way than by the subjugation of the Greeks.

It seems at first sight more difficult to explain the facility with which the Greeks accommodated themselves to the Roman sway, and the rapidity with which they sank into political insignificancy, than the ease with which they were vanquished in the field. The fact, however, is undeniable, that the conquest was generally viewed with satisfaction by the great body of the inhabitants of Greece, who considered the destruction of the numerous small independent governments in the country as a necessary step towards improving their own condition. The political constitutions even of the most democratic states of Greece excluded so large a portion of the inhabitants from all share in the public administration, and after the introduction of large mercenary armies, military service became so severe a burden on the free citizens, that the majority looked with indifference on the loss of their independence, when that loss appeared to insure a permanent state of peace. The selfishness of the Greek aristocracy, which was

prominently displayed at every period of history, proved peculiarly injurious in the latter days of Greek independence. The aristocracy of the Greek cities and states indulged their ambition and cupidity to the ruin of their country. The selfishness of the Roman aristocracy was possibly as great, but it was very different. It found gratification in increasing the power and glory of Rome, and it identified itself with pride and patriotism; Greek selfishness, on the contrary, submitted to every meanness from which an aristocracy usually recoils; and to gratify its passions, it sacrificed its country. Greece had arrived at that period of civilization, when political questions were determined by financial reasons, and the hope of a diminution of the public burdens was a powerful argument in favour of submission to Rome. When the Romans conquered Macedonia, they fixed the tribute at one half the amount which had been paid to the Macedonian kings.

At the period of the Roman conquest, public opinion had been vitiated, as well as weakened, by the corrupt influence of the Asiatic monarchies. Many of the Greek princes employed large sums in purchasing the military services and civic flatteries of the free states. The political and military leaders throughout Greece were thus, by means of foreign alliances, rendered masters of resources far beyond what the unassisted revenues of the free states could have placed at their disposal. It soon became evident that the fate of many of the free states depended on their alliances with the kings of Macedonia, Egypt, Syria, and Pergamus; and the citizens could not avoid the despairing conclusion that no exertion on their part could produce any decisive effect in securing the tranquillity of Greece. They could only increase their own taxes, and bring to their own homes all the miseries of a most inhuman system of warfare. This state of public affairs caused the despair which induced the Acarnanians and the citizens of Abydos to adopt the heroic resolution not to survive the loss of their independence; but its more general effect was to spread public and private demoralization through all ranks of society. Peace alone, to the reflecting Greeks, seemed capable of restoring security of property, and of re-establishing due respect for the principles of justice; and peace seemed only attainable by submission to the Romans. The continuation of a state of war, which was rapidly laying the fortified towns in ruin, and consuming the resources of the land, was regarded by the independent Greeks as a far greater evil than Roman supremacy. So ardently was the termination of the contest desired, that a common proverb, expressive of a wish that the Romans might speedily prevail, was everywhere current. This saying, which was common after the conquest, has been preserved by Polybius: “If we had not been quickly ruined, we should not have been saved”.

It was some time before the Greeks had great reason to regret their fortune. A combination of causes, which could hardly have entered into the calculations of any politician, enabled them to preserve their national institutions, and to exercise all their former social influence, even after the annihilation of their political existence. Their vanity was flattered by their admitted superiority in arts and literature, and by the respect paid to their usages and prejudices by the Romans. Their political subjection was at first not very burdensome; and a considerable portion of the nation was allowed to retain the appearance of independence. Athens and Sparta were honoured with the title of allies of Rome. The nationality of the Greeks was so interwoven with their municipal institutions, that the Romans found it impossible to abolish the local

administration; and an imperfect attempt, made at the time of the conquest of Achaia, was soon abandoned. These local institutions ultimately modified the Roman administration itself, long before the Roman Empire ceased to exist; and, even though the Greeks were compelled to adopt the civil law and judicial forms of Rome, its political authority in the East was guided by the feelings of the Greeks, and moulded according to Greek customs.

The social rank which the Greeks held in the eyes of their conquerors, at the time of their subjection, is not to be overlooked. The bulk of the Greek population in Europe consisted of landed proprietors, occupying a position which would have given some rank in Roman society. No class precisely similar existed at Rome, where a citizen that did not belong to the senate, the aristocracy, or the administration, was of very little account, for the people always remained in an inferior social rank. The higher classes at Rome always felt either contempt or hostility towards the populace of the city; and even when the emperors were induced to favour the people, from a wish to depress the great families of the aristocracy, they were unable to efface the general feeling of contempt with which the people was regarded. To the Greeks,—who had always maintained a higher social position, not only in Europe, but also in the kingdoms of the Seleucidae and the Ptolemies,—a high position was conceded by the Roman aristocracy, as it awakened no feelings either of hostility or jealousy. Polybius was an example.

Sect. II.

Treatment of Greece after its Conquest

The Romans generally commenced by treating their provinces with mildness. The government of Sicily was arranged on a basis which certainly did not augment the burdens of the inhabitants. The tribute imposed on Macedonia was less than the amount of taxation which had been previously paid to the native kings; and there is no reason for supposing that the burdens of the Greeks, whose country was embraced in the province of Achaia, were increased by the conquest. The local municipal administration of the separate cities was allowed to exist, but, in order to enforce submission more readily, their constitutions were modified by fixing a census, which restricted the franchise in the democratic commonwealths. Some states were long allowed to retain their own political government, and were ranked as allies of the republic. It is impossible to trace the changes which the Romans gradually effected in the financial and administrative condition of Greece with chronological precision. Facts, often separated by a long series of years, require to be gleaned; and caution must be used in attributing to them a precise influence on the state of society at other periods. The Roman senate was evidently not without great jealousy and some fear of the Greeks; and great prudence was displayed in adopting a number of measures by which they were gradually weakened, and cautiously broken to the yoke of their conquerors. This caution proves that the despair of the Achaeans had produced a considerable effect on the Romans, who perceived that the Greek nation, if roused to a general combination,

possessed the means of offering a determined and dangerous resistance. Crete was not reduced into the form of a Roman province until about eight years after the subjection of Achaia, and its conquest was not effected without difficulty by a consular army during a war which lasted three years. The resistance offered by the Cretans was so determined that the island was almost depopulated before it could be conquered. It was not until after the time of Augustus, when the conquest of every portion of the Greek nation had been completed, that the Romans began to view the Greeks in the contemptible light in which they are represented by later writers.

No attempt was made to introduce uniformity into the general government of the Grecian states; any such plan, indeed, would have been contrary to the principles of the Roman government, which had never aspired at establishing unity even in the administration of Italy. The attention of the Romans was directed to the means of ruling their various conquests in the most efficient manner, of concentrating all the military power in their own hands, and of levying the greatest amount of tribute which circumstances would permit. Thus, numerous cities in Greece, possessing but a very small territory, as Delphi, Thespiae, Tanagra, and Elatea, were allowed to retain that degree of independence, which secured to them the privilege of being governed by their own laws and usages, so late even as the times of the emperors. Rhodes also long preserved its own government as a free state, though it was completely dependent on Rome. The Romans adopted no theoretical principles which required them to enforce uniformity in the geographical divisions, or in the administrative arrangements of the provinces of their empire, particularly where local habits or laws opposed a barrier to any practical union.

The Roman government, however, early adopted measures tending to diminish the resources of the Greek allies, and the condition of the servile population which formed the bulk of the labouring classes was everywhere rendered very hard to be endured. Two insurrections of slaves occurred in Sicily, and contemporary with one of these there was a great rebellion of the slaves employed in the silver mines of Attica, and tumults among the slaves at Delos and in other parts of Greece. The Attic slaves seized the fortified town of Sunium, and committed extensive ravages before the government of Athens was able to overpower them. It is so natural for slaves to rebel when a favourable occasion presents itself, that it is hazardous to look beyond ordinary causes for any explanation of this insurrection, particularly as the declining state of the silver mines of Laurium, at this period, rendered the slaves less valuable, and would cause them to be worse treated, and more negligently guarded. Still the simultaneous rebellion of slaves, in these distant countries, seems not unconnected with the measures of the Roman government towards its subjects. For we learn from Diodorus that the fiscal oppression of the collectors of the tribute in Sicily was so great that free citizens were reduced to slavery and sold in the slave markets as far as Bithynia.

If we could place implicit faith in the testimony of so firm and partial an adherent of the Romans as Polybius, we must believe, that the Roman administration was at first characterized by a love of justice, and that the Roman magistrates were far less venal than the Greeks. If the Greeks, he says, are intrusted with a single talent of public money, though they give written security, and though legal witnesses be present, they will never act honestly; but if the largest sums be confided to the Romans engaged in

the public service, their honourable conduct is secured simply by an oath. Under such circumstances, the people must have appreciated highly the advantages of the Roman domination, and contrasted the last years of their troubled and doubtful independence with the just and peaceful government of Rome, in a manner extremely favourable to their new masters. Less than a century of irresponsible power effected a wonderful change in the conduct of the Roman magistrates. Cicero declares, that the senate made a traffic of justice to the provincials. There is nothing so holy, that it cannot be violated, nothing so strong, that it cannot be destroyed by money, are his words. But as the government of Rome grew more oppressive, and the amount of the taxes levied on the provinces was more severely exacted, the increased power of the republic rendered any rebellion of the Greeks utterly hopeless. The complete separation in the administration of the various provinces, which were governed like so many separate kingdoms, viceroyalties, or pashalics, and the preservation of a distinct local government in each of the allied kingdoms and free states, rendered their management capable of modification, without any compromise of the general system of the republic; and this admirable fitness of its administration to the exigencies of the times, remained an attribute of the Roman state for many centuries. Each state in Greece, continuing in possession of as much of its peculiar political constitution as was compatible with the supremacy and fiscal views of a foreign conqueror, retained all its former jealousies towards its neighbours, and its interests were likely to be as often compromised by disputes with the surrounding Greek states as with the Roman government. Prudence and local interests would everywhere favour submission to Rome; national vanity alone would whisper incitements to venture on a struggle for independence.

Sect. III.

Effects of the Mithridatic War on the State of Greece

For sixty years after the conquest of Achaia, the Greeks remained docile subjects of Rome. During that period, the policy of the government aided the tendencies of society towards the accumulation of property in the hands of few individuals. The number of Roman usurers increased, and the exactions of Roman publicans became more oppressive, but the rich were the principal sufferers; so that when the army of Mithridates invaded Greece, B. C. 86, while Rome appeared plunged in anarchy by the civil broils of the partisans of Marius and Sulla, the Greek aristocracy conceived the vain hope of recovering their independence. When they saw the king drive the Romans out of Asia and transport a large army into Europe, they expected him to rival the exploits of Hannibal, and to carry the war into Italy. But the people in general did not take much interest in the contest; they viewed it as a struggle for supremacy between the Romans and the King of Pontus; and public opinion favoured the former, as likely to prove the milder and more equitable masters. Many of the leading men in Greece, and the governments of most of those states and cities which retained their independence, declared in favour of Mithridates. Some Lacedaemonian and Achaean troops joined his army, and Athens engaged heartily in his party. As soon, however, as Sulla appeared in

Greece with his army, every state hastened to submit to Rome, with the exception of the Athenians, who probably had some particular cause of dissatisfaction at this time. The vanity of the Athenians, puffed up by constant allusions to their ancient power, induced them to engage in a direct contest with the whole force of Rome. They were commanded by a demagogue and philosopher named Aristion, whom they had elected Strategos and intrusted with absolute power. The Roman legions were led by Sulla. The exclusive vanity of the Athenians, while it cherished in their hearts a more ardent love of liberty than had survived in the rest of Greece, blinded them to their own insignificancy when compared with the belligerents into whose quarrel they rashly thrust themselves. But though they rushed precipitately into the war, they conducted themselves in it with great constancy. Sulla was compelled to besiege Athens in person; and the defence of the city was conducted with such courage and obstinacy, that the task of subduing it proved one of great difficulty to a Roman army commanded by that celebrated warrior. When the defence grew hopeless, the Athenians sent a deputation to Sulla to open negotiations; but the orator beginning to recount the glories of their ancestors at Marathon, as an argument for mercy, the proud Roman cut short the discussion with the remark, that his country had sent him to Athens to punish rebels, not to study history. Athens was at last taken by assault, and it was treated by Sulla with unnecessary cruelty; the rapine of the troops was encouraged, instead of being checked, by their general. The majority of the citizens were slain; the carnage was so fearfully great, as to become memorable even in that age of bloodshed; the private movable property was seized by the soldiery, and Sulla assumed some merit to himself for not committing the rifled houses to the flames. He declared that he saved the city from destruction, and allowed Athens to continue to exist, only on account of its ancient glory. He carried off some of the columns of the temple of Jupiter Olympius, to ornament Rome; but as that temple was in an unfinished state, and he inflicted no injury on any public building, it seems probable that he only removed materials which were ready for transport, without pulling down any part of the edifice. From the treasury of the Parthenon, however, he carried off 40 talents of gold and 600 of silver. The fate of the Piraeus, which he utterly destroyed, was more severe than that of Athens. From Sulla's campaign in Greece, the commencement of the ruin and depopulation of the country is to be dated. The destruction of property caused by his ravages in Attica was so great, that Athens from that time lost its commercial as well as its political importance. The race of Athenian citizens was almost extirpated, and a new population, composed of a heterogeneous mass of settlers, received the right of citizenships. Still as Sulla left Athens in possession of freedom and autonomy, with the rank of an allied city, the vitality of Greek institutions inspired the altered body; the ancient forms and laws continued to exist in their former purity, and the Areopagus is mentioned by Tacitus, in the reign of Tiberius, as nobly disregarding the powerful protection of Piso, who strove to influence its decisions and corrupt the administration of justice.

Athens was not the only city in Greece which suffered severely from the cruelty and rapacity of Sulla. He plundered Delos, Delphi, Olympia, and the sacred enclosure of Aesculapius, near Epidaurus; and he razed Anthedon, Larymna, and Halae to the ground. After he had defeated Archelaus, the general of Mithridates, at Chaeronea, he deprived Thebes of half its territory, which he consecrated to Apollo and Jupiter. The administration of the temporal affairs of the pagan deities was not so wisely conducted

as the civil business of the municipalities. The Theban territory declined in wealth and population under the care of the two gods, and in the time of Pausanias the Cadmea or citadel was the only inhabited portion of ancient Thebes. Both parties, during the Mithridatic war, inflicted severe injuries on Greece, plundered the country, and destroyed property most wantonly. Many of the losses were never repaired. The foundations of national prosperity were undermined; and it henceforward became impossible to save from the annual consumption of the inhabitants the sums necessary to replace the accumulated capital of ages, which this short war had annihilated. In some cases the wealth of the communities became insufficient to keep the existing public works in repair.

Sect. IV.

Ruin of the Country by the Pirates of Cilicia

The Greeks, far from continuing to enjoy permanent tranquillity under the powerful protection of Rome, found themselves exposed to the attacks of every enemy, against whom the policy of their masters did not require the employment of a regular army. The conquest of the eastern shores of the Mediterranean by the Romans destroyed the maritime police which had been enforced by the Greek states as long as they possessed an independent navy. Even Rhodes, after its services ceased to be indispensable, was watched with jealousy, though it had remained firmly attached to Rome and given asylum to numbers of Roman citizens who fled from Asia Minor to escape death at the hands of the partisans of Mithridates. The caution of the senate did not allow the provinces to maintain any considerable armed force, either by land or sea; and the guards whom the free cities were permitted to keep, were barely sufficient to protect the walls of their citadels. Armies of robbers and fleets of pirates, remains of the mercenary forces of the Asiatic monarchs, disbanded in consequence of the Roman victories, began to infest the coasts of Greece. As long as the provinces continued able to pay their taxes with regularity, and the trade of Rome did not suffer directly, little attention was paid to the sufferings of the Greeks.

The geographical configuration of European Greece, intersected, in every direction, by high and rugged mountains, and separated by deep gulfs and bays into a number of promontories and peninsulas, renders communication between the thickly peopled and fertile districts more difficult than in most other regions. The country opposes barriers to internal trade, and presents difficulties to the formation of plans of mutual defence between the different districts, which it requires care and judgment, on the part of the general government, to remove. The armed force that can instantly be collected at one point, must often be small; and this circumstance has marked out Greece as a suitable field where piratical bands may plunder, as they have it in their power to remove their forces to distant spots with great celerity. From the earliest ages of history to the present day, these circumstances, combined with the extensive trade which has always been carried on in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, have rendered the Grecian seas the scene of constant piracies. At many periods, the pirates have been able to assemble forces sufficient to give their expeditions the character of

regular war; and their pursuits have been so lucrative, and their success so great, that their profession has ceased to be viewed as a dishonourable occupation.

A system of piracy, which was carried on by considerable armies and large fleets, began to be formed soon after the conclusion of the Mithridatic war. The indefinite nature of the Roman power in the East, the weakness of the Asiatic monarchs and of the sovereigns of Egypt, the questionable nature of the protection which Rome accorded to her allies, and the general disarming of the European Greeks, all encouraged and facilitated the enterprises of these pirates. A political, as well as a military organization, was given to their forces by the seizure of several strong positions on the coast of Cilicia. From these stations they directed their expeditions over the greater part of the Mediterranean. The wealth which ages of prosperity had accumulated in the many towns and temples of Greece was now defenceless; the country was exposed to daily incursions, and a long list of the devastations of the Cilician pirates is recorded in history. Many even of the largest and wealthiest cities in Europe and Asia were successfully attacked and plundered, and the greater number of the celebrated temples of antiquity were robbed of their immense treasures. Samos, Clazomene, and Samothrace, the great temples at Hermione, Epidaurus, Taenarus, Calauria, Actium, Argos, and the Isthmus of Corinth, were all pillaged. To such an extent was this system of robbery carried, and so powerful and well-disciplined were the forces of the pirates, that it was at last necessary for Rome either to share with them the dominion of the sea, or to devote all her military energies to their destruction. In order to destroy these last remains of the mercenaries who had upheld the Macedonian empire in the East, Pompey was invested with extraordinary powers as commander-in-chief over the whole Mediterranean. An immense force was placed at his absolute disposal, and he was charged with a degree of authority over the officers of the republic, and the allies of the State, which had never before been intrusted to one individual. His success in the execution of this commission was considered one of his most brilliant military achievements; he captured ninety ships with brazen beaks, and took twenty thousand prisoners. Some of these prisoners were established in towns on the coast of Cilicia; and Soli, which he rebuilt, and peopled with these pirates, was honoured with the name of Pompeiopolis. The Romans, consequently, do not seem to have regarded them as having engaged in a disgraceful warfare, otherwise Pompey would hardly have ventured to make them his clients.

The proceedings of the senate during the piratical war revealed to the Greeks the full extent of the disorganization which already prevailed in the Roman government. A few families who considered themselves above the law, and who submitted to no moral restraint, ruled both the senate and the people, so that the policy of the republic changed and vacillated according to the interests and passions of a small number of leading men in Rome. Some events during the conquest of Crete afford a remarkable instance of the incredible disorder in the republic, which foreshadowed the necessity of a single despot as the only escape from anarchy. While Pompey, with unlimited power over the shores and islands of the Mediterranean, was exterminating piracy and converting pirates into citizens, Metellus, under the authority of the senate, was engaged in conquering the island of Crete, in order to add it to the list of Roman provinces of which the senate alone named the governors. A conflict of authority arose between Pompey and

Metellus. The latter was cruel and firm; the former mild but ambitious, and eager to render the whole maritime population of the East his dependents. He became jealous of the success of Metellus, and sent one of his lieutenants to stop the siege of the Cretan towns invested by the Roman army. But Metellus was not deterred by seeing the ensigns of Pompey's authority displayed from the walls. He pursued his conquests, and neither Pompey nor the times were yet prepared for an open civil war between consular armies.

Crete had been filled with the strongholds of the pirates as well as Cilicia, and there is no doubt that their ranks were filled with Greeks who could find no other means of subsistence. Despair is said to have driven many of the citizens of the states conquered by the Romans to suicide; it must have forced a far greater number to embrace a life of piracy and robbery. The government of Rome was at this time subject to continual revolutions; and the Romans lost all respect for the rights of property either at home or abroad. Wealth and power were the only objects of pursuit, and the force of all moral ties was broken. Justice ceased to be administered, and men, in such cases, always assume the right of revenging their own wrongs. Those who considered themselves aggrieved by any act of oppression, or fancied they had received some severe injury, sought revenge in the way which presented itself most readily; and when the oppressor was secure against their attacks, they made society responsible. The state of public affairs was considered an apology for the ravages of the pirates even in those districts of Greece which suffered most severely from their lawless conduct. They probably spent liberally among the poor the treasures which they wrested from the rich; and so little, indeed, were they placed beyond the pale of society, that Pompey himself settled a colony of them at Dyme, in Achaia, where they seem to have prospered. Though piracy was not subsequently carried on so extensively as to merit a place in history, it was not entirely extirpated even by the fleet which the Roman emperors maintained in the East; and that cases still continued to occur in the Grecian seas is proved by public inscriptions. The carelessness of the senate in superintending the administration of the distant provinces caused a great increase of social corruption, and left crimes against the property and persons of the provincials often unpunished. Kidnapping by land and sea became a regular profession. The great slave-mart of Delos enabled the man-stealers to sell thousands in a single day. Even open brigandage was allowed to exist in the heart of the eastern provinces at the time of Rome's greatest power. Strabo mentions several robber chiefs who maintained themselves in their fastnesses like independent princes.

Sect. V.

Nature of the Roman Provincial Administration in Greece

The Romans reduced those countries where they met with resistance into the form of provinces, a procedure which was generally equivalent to abrogating the existing laws, and imposing on the vanquished a new system of civil as well as political

administration. In the countries inhabited by the Greeks this policy underwent considerable modification. The Greeks, indeed, were so much farther advanced in civilization than the Romans, that it was no easy task for a Roman proconsul to effect any great change in the civil administration. He could not organize his government, without borrowing largely from the existing laws of the province. The constitution of Sicily, which was the first Greek province of the Roman dominions, presents a number of anomalies in the administration of its different districts. That portion of the island which had composed the kingdom of Hiero was allowed to retain its own laws, and paid the Romans the same amount of taxation which had been formerly levied by its own monarchs. The other portions of the island were subjected to various regulations concerning the amount of their taxes and the administration of justice. The province contained three allied cities, five colonies, five free and seventeen tributary cities. Macedonia, Epirus, and Achaia, when conquered, were treated very much in the same way, if we make due allowance for the increasing severity of the fiscal government of the Roman magistrates. Macedonia, before it was reduced to the condition of a province, was divided into four districts, each of which was governed by its own magistrates elected by the people. When Achaia was conquered, the walls of the towns were thrown down, the aristocracy was ruined, and the country impoverished by fines. But as soon as the Romans were convinced that Greece was too weak to be dangerous, the Achaeans were allowed to revive some of their old civic usages and federal institutions. As the province of Achaia embraced the Peloponnesus, northern Greece, and southern Epirus, the revival of local confederacies, and the privileges accorded to free cities and particular districts, really tended to disunite the Greeks, without affording them the means of increasing their national strength. Crete, Cyprus, Cyrene, and Asia Minor were subsequently reduced to provinces, and were allowed to retain much of their laws and usages. Thrace, even so late as the time of Tiberius, was governed by its own sovereign, as an ally of the Romans. Many cities within the bounds of the provinces retained their own peculiar laws, and, as far as their own citizens were concerned, they continued to possess the legislative as well as the executive power, by administering their own affairs, and executing justice within their limits, without being liable to the control of the proconsul.

As long as the republic continued to exist, the provinces were administered by proconsuls or praetors, chosen from among the members of the senate, and responsible to that body for their administration. The authority of these provincial governors was immense; they had the power of life and death over the Greeks, and the supreme control over all judicial, financial, and administrative business was vested in their hands. They had the right of naming and removing most of the judges and magistrates under their orders, and most of the fiscal arrangements regarding the provincials depended on their will. No power ever existed more liable to be abused; for while the representatives of the most absolute sovereigns have seldom been intrusted with more extensive authority, they have never incurred so little danger of being punished for its abuse. The only tribunal before which the proconsuls could be cited for any acts of injustice which they might commit was that very senate which had sent them out as its deputies, and received them back into its body as members.

When the imperial government was consolidated by Augustus, the command of the whole military force of the republic devolved on the emperor; but his constitutional position was not that of sovereign. The early emperors concentrated in their persons the offices of commander-in-chief of the military and naval forces of Rome, of minister of war and of finance, and of Pontifex Maximus, which gave them a sacred character, as head of the religion of the State, and their persons were inviolable, as they were invested with the tribunician power; but the senate and people were still possessed of the supreme legislative authority, and the senate continued to direct the civil branches of the executive ad-ministration. In consequence of this relation between the jurisdiction of the senate and the emperors, the provinces were divided into two classes: Those in which the military forces were stationed were placed under the direct orders of the emperor, and were governed by his lieutenants or legates; the other provinces, which did not require to be constantly occupied by the legions, remained dependent on the senate, as the chief civil authority in the State, and were governed by proconsuls or propraetors. Most of the countries inhabited by the Greeks were in that peaceable condition which placed them in the rank of senatorial provinces. Sicily, Macedonia, Epirus, Achaia, Crete, Cyrene, Bithynia, and Asia Minor remained under the control of the senate. Cyprus, from its situation as affording a convenient post for a military force to watch Cilicia, Syria, and Egypt, was at first classed among the imperial provinces; but Augustus subsequently exchanged it for the more important position of Dalmatia, where an army could be stationed to watch Rome, and separate Italy and the proconsular provinces of Greece.

The proconsuls and propraetors occupied a higher rank in the State than the imperial legates; but their situation deprived them of all hope of military distinction, the highest object of Roman ambition. This exclusion of the aristocracy from military pursuits, by the emperors, is not to be lost sight of in observing the change which took place in the Roman character. Avarice was the vice which succeeded in stifling feelings of self-abasement and disappointed ambition; and as the proconsuls were not objects of jealousy to the emperors, they were enabled to gratify their ruling passion without danger. They surrounded themselves with a splendid court; and a numerous train of followers, officials, and guards, who were at their orders, was maintained at the expense of their province. As they were themselves senators, they felt assured of finding favourable judges in the senate under any circumstances. Irresponsible government soon degenerates into tyranny, and the administration of the Roman proconsuls became as oppressive as that of the worst despots, and was loudly complained of by the provincials. The provinces under the government of the emperor were better administered. The imperial lieutenants, though inferior in rank to proconsuls, possessed a more extensive command, as they united in their persons the chief civil and military authority. The effect of their possessing more power was, that the limits of their authority, and the forms of their proceedings, were determined with greater precision—were more closely watched, and more strictly controlled by the military discipline to which they were subjected; while, at the same time, the constant dependence of all their actions on the immediate orders of the emperor and the various departments of which he was the head opposed more obstacles to arbitrary proceedings.

The expenses of the proconsular administration being paid by the provinces, it was chiefly by abuses augmenting their amount that the proconsuls were enabled to accumulate enormous fortunes during their short tenure of government. The burden was so heavily felt by Macedonia and Achaia, even as early as the reign of Tiberius, that the complaints of these two provinces induced that emperor to unite their administration with that of the imperial province of Moesia; but Claudius restored them to the senate. Thrace, when it was reduced to a Roman province by Vespasian, was also added to the imperial list. As the power of the emperors rose into absolute authority over the Roman world and the pageant of the republic faded away, all distinction between the different classes of provinces disappeared. They were distributed according to the wish of the reigning emperor, and their administration arbitrarily transferred to officers of whatever rank he thought fit to select. The Romans, indeed, had never affected much system in this, any more than in any other branch of their government. Pontius Pilate, when he condemned our Saviour, governed Judaea with the rank of procurator of Caesar; he was vested with the whole administrative, judicial, fiscal, and military authority, almost as completely as it could have been exercised by a proconsul, yet his title was only that of a finance officer, charged with the administration of those revenues which belonged to the imperial treasury.

The provincial governors usually named three or four deputies to carry on the business of the districts into which the province was divided, and each of these deputies was controlled and assisted by a local council. It may be remarked, that the condition of the inhabitants of the western portion of the Roman Empire was different from that of the eastern; in the west the people were generally treated as little better than serfs; they were not considered the absolute proprietors of the lands they cultivated. Hadrian first gave them a full right of property in their lands, and secured to them a regular system of law. In Greece, on the other hand, the people retained all their property and private rights. Some rare exceptions indeed occurred, as in the case of the Corinthian territory, which was confiscated for the benefit of the Roman state, and declared *ager publicus* after the destruction of the city by Mummius. Throughout all the countries inhabited by the Greeks, the provincial administration was necessarily modified by the circumstance of the conquered being much farther advanced in social civilization than their conquerors. To facilitate the task of governing and taxing the Greeks, the Romans found themselves compelled to retain much of the civil government, and many of the financial arrangements, which they found existing; and hence arose the marked difference which is observed in the administration of the eastern and western portions of the empire. When the great jurist Scaevola was proconsul of Asia, he published an edict for the administration of his province, by which he allowed the Greeks to have judges of their own nation, and to decide their suits according to their own laws; a concession equivalent to the restoration of their civil liberties in public opinion, according to Cicero, who copied it when he was proconsul of Cilicia. The existence of the free cities, of the local tribunals and provincial assemblies, and the respect paid to their laws, gave the Greek language an official character, and enabled the Greeks to acquire so great an influence in the administration of their country, as either to limit the despotic power of their Roman masters, or, when that proved impossible, to share its profits. But though the arbitrary decisions of the proconsuls received some check from the existence of fixed rules and permanent usages, still these barriers were insufficient to prevent the

abuse of irresponsible authority. Those laws and customs which a proconsul dared not openly violate, he could generally nullify by some concealed measure of oppression. The avidity displayed by Brutus in endeavouring to make Cicero enforce payment of forty-eight per cent, interest when his debtors, the Salaminians of Cyprus, offered to pay the capital with twelve per cent, interest, proves with what injustice and oppression the Greeks were treated even by the mildest of the Roman aristocracy. The fact that throughout the Grecian provinces, as well as in the rest of the empire, the governors superintended the financial administration, and exercised the judicial power, is sufficient to explain the ruin and poverty which the Roman government produced. Before the wealth of the people had been utterly consumed, an equitable proconsul had it in his power to confer happiness on his provinces, and Cicero draws a very favourable picture of his own administration in Cilicia: but a few governors like Verres and Caius Antonius soon reduced a province to a state of poverty, from which it would have required ages of good government to enable it to recover. The private letters of Cicero afford repeated proofs that the majority of the officers employed by the Roman government openly violated every principle of justice to gratify their passions and their avarice. Many of them even condescended to engage in trade, and, like Brutus, became usurers.

The early years of the empire were certainly more popular than the latter years of the republic in the provinces. The emperors were anxious to strengthen themselves against the senate by securing the goodwill of the provincials, and they consequently exerted their authority to check the oppressive conduct of the senatorial officers, and to lighten the fiscal burdens of the people by a stricter administration of justice. Tiberius, Claudius, and Domitian, though Rome groaned under their tyranny, were remarkable for their zeal in correcting abuses in the administration of justice, and Hadrian established a council of jurisconsults and senators to assist him in reviewing the judicial business of the provinces as well as of the capital.

Sect. VI.

Fiscal Administration of the Romans

The legal amount of the taxes, direct and indirect, levied by the Romans on the Greeks, was probably not greater than the sum paid to their national governments in the days of their independence. But a small amount of taxation arbitrarily imposed, unjustly collected, and injudiciously spent, weighs more heavily on the resources of the people, than immense burdens properly distributed and wisely employed. The wealth and resources of Greece had been greatest at the time when each city formed a separate state, and the inhabitants of each valley possessed the power of employing the taxes which they paid, for objects which ameliorated their own condition. The moment the centralization of political power enabled one city to appropriate the revenues of another to its wants, whether for its architectural embellishment or for its public games, theatrical representations, and religious ceremonies, the decline of the country

commenced: but all the evil effects of centralization were not felt until the taxes were paid to foreigners. When the tributes were remitted to Rome, it was difficult to persuade absent administrators of the necessity of expending money on a road, a port, or an aqueduct, which had no direct connection with Roman interests. Had the Roman government acted according to the strictest principles of justice, Greece must have suffered from its dominion; but its avarice and corruption, after the commencement of the civil wars, knew no bounds. The extraordinary payments levied on the provinces soon equalled, and sometimes exceeded, the regular and legal taxes. Sparta and Athens, as allied states, were exempt from direct taxation; but, in order to preserve their liberty, they were compelled to make voluntary offerings to the Roman generals, who held the fate of the East in their hands, and these sometimes equalled the amount of any ordinary tribute. Cicero supplies ample proof of the extortions committed by the proconsuls, and no arrangements were adopted to restrain their avarice until the time of Augustus. It is, therefore, only under the empire that any accurate picture of the fiscal administration of the Romans in Greece can be attempted.

Until the time of Augustus, the Romans had maintained their armies by seizing and squandering the accumulated capital hoarded by all the nations of the world. They emptied the treasuries of all the kings and states they conquered; and when Julius Caesar marched to Rome, he dissipated that portion of the plunder of the world which had been laid up in the coffers of the republic. When that source of riches was exhausted, Augustus found himself compelled to seek for regular funds for maintaining the army: “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed”. A regular survey of the whole empire was made, and the land-tax was assessed according to a valuation taken of the annual income of every species of property. A capitation-tax was also imposed on all the provincials whom the land-tax did not affect.

The ordinary provincial taxes in the East were this land-tax, which generally amounted to a tenth of the produce, though, in some cases, it constituted a fifth, and in others fell to a twentieth. The land-tax was rendered uniform in all the provinces and converted at last into a money payment, by Marcus Aurelius. It was not assessed annually: but a valuation was made at stated periods for a determinate number of years, and the annual amount was called the *Indictio* before the time of Constantine, when the importance of this fiscal measure to the well-being of the inhabitants of the Roman empire is attested by the cycle of indictions becoming the ordinary chronological record of time. Italy itself was subjected to the land-tax and capitation by Galerius, A.D. 306, but the first indiction of the cycle of fifteen years used for chronological notation commenced on the 1st of September 312. The subjects of the empire paid also a tax on cattle, and a variety of duties on importation and exportation, which were levied even on the conveyance of goods from one province to another. In Greece, the free cities also retained the right of levying local duties on their citizens. Contributions of provisions and manufactures were likewise exacted for feeding and clothing the troops stationed in the provinces. Even under Augustus, who devoted his personal attention to reforming the financial administration of the empire, the proconsuls and provincial governors continued to avail themselves of their position, as a means of gratifying their avarice. Licinius accumulated immense riches in Gaul. Tiberius perceived that the weight of the

Roman fiscal system was pressing too severely on the provinces, and he rebuked the prefect of Egypt for remitting too large a sum to Rome, as the amount proved he had overtaxed his province. The mere fact of a prefect's possessing the power of increasing or diminishing the amount of his remittances to the treasury, is enough to condemn the arbitrary nature of the Roman fiscal administration. The prefect was told by the emperor that a good shepherd should shear, not flay, his sheep. But no rulers ever estimated correctly the amount of taxes that their subjects could advantageously pay; and Tiberius received a lesson on the financial system of his empire from Baton, King of Dalmatia, who, on being asked the cause of a rebellion, replied, that it arose from the emperor's sending wolves to guard his flocks instead of shepherds.

The financial policy of the Roman republic was to transfer as much of the money circulating in the provinces, and of the precious metals in the hands of private individuals, as it was possible, into the coffers of the State. The city of Rome formed a drain for the wealth of all the provinces, and the whole empire was impoverished for its support. When Caligula expressed the wish that the Roman people had only one neck, in order that he might destroy them all at a single blow, the idea found a responsive echo in many a breast. There was a wise moral in the sentiment uttered in his frenzy; and many felt that the dispersion of the immense pauper population of Rome, which was nourished in idleness by the public revenues, would have been a great benefit to the rest of the empire. The desire of seizing wealth wherever it could be found continued to be long the dominant feeling in the personal policy of the emperors, as well as the proconsuls. The provincial governors enriched themselves by plundering their subjects, and the emperors filled their treasuries by accusing the senators of those crimes which entailed confiscation of their fortunes. From the earliest periods of Roman history, down to the time of Justinian, confiscation of private property was considered an ordinary and important branch of the imperial revenue. When Alexander the Great conquered Asia, the treasures which he dispersed increased the commerce of the world, created new cities, and augmented the general wealth of mankind. The Romans collected far greater riches from their conquests than Alexander had done, as they pushed their exactions much farther; but the rude state of society, in which they lived at the time of their first great successes, prevented their perceiving, that by carrying off or destroying all the movable capital in their conquests, they must ultimately diminish the amount of their own revenues. The wealth brought away from the countries inhabited by the Greeks was incredible; for the Romans pillaged the conquered, as the Spaniards plundered Mexico and Peru, and ruled them as the Turks subsequently governed Greece. The riches which centuries of industry had accumulated in Syracuse, Tarentum, Epirus, Macedonia, and Greece, and the immense sums seized in the treasuries of the kings of Cyprus, Pergamus, Syria, and Egypt, were removed to Rome, and consumed in a way which virtually converted them into premiums for neglecting agriculture. They were dispersed in paying an immense army, in feeding an idle populace, which was thus withdrawn from all productive occupations, and in maintaining the household of the emperor, the senators, and the imperial freedmen. The consequence of the arrangements adopted for provisioning Rome was felt over the whole empire, and seriously affected the prosperity of the most distant provinces. It is necessary to notice them, in order to understand perfectly the financial system of the empire during three centuries.

The citizens of Rome were considered entitled to a share of the revenues of the provinces which they had conquered, and which were long regarded in the light of a landed estate of the republic. The Roman State was held to be under an obligation of supporting all who were liable to military service, if they were poor and without profitable employment. The history of the public distributions of grain, and of the measures adopted for securing ample supplies to the market, at low prices, forms an important chapter in the social and political records of the Roman people. An immense quantity of grain was distributed in this way, which was received as tribute from the provinces. Caesar found three hundred and twenty thousand persons receiving this gratuity. It is true he reduced the number one half. The grain was drawn from Sicily, Africa, and Egypt, and its distribution enabled the poor to live in idleness, while the arrangements adopted by the Roman government, for selling grain at a low price, rendered the cultivation of land around Rome unprofitable to its proprietors. A large sum was annually employed by the State in purchasing grain in the provinces, and in transporting it to Rome, where it was sold to the bakers at a fixed price. A premium was also paid to the private importers of grain, in order to insure an abundant supply. In this manner a very large sum was expended to keep bread cheap in a city where a variety of circumstances tended to make it dear. This singular system of annihilating capital, and ruining agriculture and industry, was so deeply rooted in the Roman administration, that similar gratuitous distributions of grain were established at Antioch and Alexandria, and other cities, and they were introduced at Constantinople when that city became the capital of the empire.

It is not surprising that Greece suffered severely under a government equally tyrannical in its conduct and unjust in its legislation. In almost every department of public business the interests of the State were placed in opposition to those of the people, and even when the letter of the law was mild, its administration was burdensome. The customs of Rome were moderate, and consisted of a duty of five per cent, on exports and imports. Where the customs were so reasonable, commerce ought to have flourished; but the real amount levied under an unjust government bears no relation to the nominal payment. The government of Turkey has ruined the commerce of its subjects, with duties equally moderate. The Romans despised commerce; they considered merchants as little better than cheats, and concluded that they were always in the wrong when they sought to avoid making any payment to government. The provinces in the eastern part of the Mediterranean are inhabited by a mercantile population. The wants of many parts can only be supplied by sea; and as the various provinces and small independent states were often separated by double lines of custom-houses, the subsistence of the population was frequently at the mercy of the revenue officers. The customs payable to Rome were let to farmers, who possessed extensive powers for their collection, and a special tribunal existed for the enforcement of their claims; these farmers of the customs were consequently powerful tyrants in all the countries round the Aegean Sea.

The ordinary duty on the transport of goods from one province to another amounted to two and a half per cent.; but some kinds of merchandise were subjected to a tax of an eighth, which appears to have been levied when the article first entered the Roman Empire.

The provincial contributions pressed as heavily on the Greeks as the general taxes. The expense of the household of the proconsuls was very great; they had also the right of placing the troops in winter quarters, in whatever towns they thought fit. This power was rendered a profitable means of extorting money from the wealthy districts. Cicero mentions that the island of Cyprus paid two hundred talents—about forty-five thousand pounds annually—in order to purchase exemption from this burden. The power of the fiscal agents, charged to collect the extraordinary contributions in the provinces, was unlimited. One of the ordinary punishments for infringing the revenue laws was confiscation,—a punishment which was converted by the collectors of the revenue into a systematic means of extortion. A regular trade in usury was established, in order to force proprietors to sell their property; and accusations were brought forward in the fiscal courts, merely to levy fines, or compel the accused to incur debts. Free Greeks were constantly sold as slaves because they were unable to pay the amount of taxation to which they were liable. The establishment of posts, which Augustus instituted for the transmission of military orders, was soon converted into a burden on the provinces, instead of being rendered a public benefit, by allowing private individuals to make use of its services. The enlisting of recruits was another source of abuse. Privileges and monopolies were granted to merchants and manufacturers; the industry of a province was ruined, to raise a sum of money for an emperor or a favourite.

The free cities and allied states were treated with as much injustice as the provinces, though their position enabled them to escape many of the public burdens. The crowns of gold, which had once been given by cities and provinces as a testimony of gratitude, were converted into a forced gift, and at last extorted as a tax of a fixed amount.

In addition to the direct weight of the public burdens, their severity was increased by the exemption which Roman citizens enjoyed from the land-tax, the customs, and the municipal burdens, in the provinces, the free cities, and the allied states. This exemption filled Greece with traders and usurers, who obtained the right of citizenship as a speculation, merely to evade the payment of the local taxes. The Roman magistrates had the power of granting this immunity; and as they were in the habit of participating in the profits even of their enfranchised slaves, there can be no doubt that a regular traffic in citizenship was established, and this cause exercised considerable influence in accelerating the ruin of the allied states and free cities, by defrauding them of their local privileges and revenues. When Nero wished to render himself popular in Greece, he extended the immunity from tribute to all the Greeks; but Vespasian found the financial affairs of the empire in such disorder that he was compelled to revoke all grants of exemption to the provinces. Virtue, in the old times of Rome, meant valour; liberty, in the time of Nero, signified freedom from taxation. Of this liberty Vespasian deprived Greece, Byzantium, Samos, Rhodes, and Lycia.

The financial administration of the Romans inflicted, if possible, a severer blow on the moral constitution of society than on the material prosperity of the country. It divided the population of Greece into two classes, one possessing the title of Roman citizens,—a title often purchased by their wealth, and which implied freedom from taxation;—the other consisting of the Greeks who, from poverty, were unable to purchase the envied privilege, and thus by their very poverty were compelled to bear the

whole weight of the public burdens laid on the province. The rich and poor were thus ranged in two separate castes of society.

By the Roman constitution, the knights were intrusted with the management of the finances of the State. They were a body in whose eyes wealth, on which their rank substantially depended, possessed an undue value. The prominent feature of their character was avarice, notwithstanding the praises of their justice which Cicero has left us. The knights acted as collectors of the revenues, but they also frequently farmed the taxes of a province for a term of years, subletting portions, and they formed companies for farming the customs besides employing capital in public or private loans. They were favoured by the policy of Rome; while their own riches, and their secondary position in political affairs, served to screen them from attacks in the forum. For a long period, too, all the judges were selected from their order, and consequently knights alone decided those commercial questions which most seriously affected their individual profits.

The heads of the financial administration in Greece were thus placed in a moral position unfavourable to an equitable collection of the revenues. The case of Brutus, who attempted to oblige the Salaminians of Cyprus to pay him compound interest, at the rate of four per cent, a month, shows that avarice and extortion were not generally considered dishonourable in the eyes of the Roman aristocracy. The practices of selling the right of citizenship, of raising unjust fiscal prosecutions to extort fines, and enforce confiscation to increase landed estates, have been already mentioned. They produced effects which have found a place in history. The existence of all these crimes is well known; their effects may be observed in the fact that a single citizen, Julius Eurycles, had in the time of Augustus rendered himself proprietor of the whole island of Cythera, and caused a rebellion in Laconia by the severity of his extortions. During the republic the authority of Romans of high rank was so great in the provinces that no Greek ventured to dispute their commands. Caius Antonius, the colleague of Cicero in the consulship, resided at Cephalonia when he was banished for extortion, and Strabo informs us that this criminal treated the inhabitants as if the island had been his private property.

Roman citizens in Greece escaped the oppressive powers of the fiscal agents, not only in those cases wherein they were by law exempt from provincial taxes, but also because they possessed the means of defending themselves against injustice by the right of carrying their causes to Rome for judgment by appeal. These privileges rendered the number of Roman citizens engaged in mercantile speculation and trade very great. A considerable multitude of the inhabitants of Rome had, from the earliest times, been employed in trade and commerce, without obtaining the right of citizenship at home. They did not fail to settle in numbers in all the Roman conquests, and, in the provinces, they were correctly called Romans. They always enjoyed from the republic the fullest protection, and soon acquired the rights of citizenship. Even Roman citizens were sometimes so numerous in the provinces that they could furnish not a few recruits to the legions. Their numbers were so great at the commencement of the Mithridatic war (B. C. 88) that eighty thousand were put to death in Asia when the king took up arms against the Romans. The greater part undoubtedly consisted of merchants, traders, and money-dealers. The Greeks at last obtained the right of Roman citizenship in such

multitudes, that Nero may have made no very enormous sacrifice of public revenue when he conferred liberty, or freedom from tribute, on all the Greeks.

It is unnecessary to dwell at any length on the effects of the system of general oppression and partial privileges which has been described. Honest industry was useless in trade, and political intrigue was the easiest mode of obtaining some privilege or monopoly which ensured the speedy accumulation of a large fortuned

In enumerating the causes of the impoverishment and depopulation of the Roman Empire, the depreciation of the coinage must not be overlooked. Considerable changes were made in the Roman mint by Augustus, but the great depreciation which destroyed capital, diminished the demand for labour, and accelerated the depopulation of the provinces, dates from the reign of Caracalla.

Augustus fixed the standard at 40 gold pieces (*aurei*) to a pound of pure gold and he coined 84 denarii from a pound of silver, but he did not always observe strictly the standard which he had established. And in the interval between his reign and that of Nero coins of less than the legal standard were frequently minted. Nero reduced the standard to 45 *aurei* to a pound of gold and coined 96 *denarii* from a pound of silver, retaining the proportion of 25 *denarii* to an *aureus*. Caracalla again reduced the standard, coining 50 *aurei* from a pound of gold and making a great addition of alloy in the silver coinage. Great irregularities were not uncommon in the Roman mint at every period under the republic and the empire. Indeed, order and system appear to have been introduced very slowly into some branches of the Roman administration, and great irregularities were of constant recurrence in the mint. Temporary necessities caused the legal standard to be at times lowered and at others violated even in the best days of the republic, and the arbitrary power of the emperors is more completely exhibited in the coinage than in the historical records of the empire. Before the time of Nero *aurei* were coined of 45 to a pound, and before the time of Caracalla of 50 to a pound.

In the time of Diocletian a great change was made in the coinage when every other branch of the administration was reformed. The standard was fixed at 60 *aurei* to a pound of pure gold, but this rate was not preserved for any length of time, and in the reign of Constantine the Great 72 gold pieces were coined from a pound of metal. Order and unity were at last introduced into the fabric of the Roman government, but, as too often happens in the history of human institutions, we find these benefits obtained by the loss of local rights and personal liberty. The gold standard adopted by Constantine became one of the immutable institutions of the Roman Empire, and it was retained until the eastern empire was extinguished by the conquest of Constantinople in 1204. These pieces, called at first *solidi*, and known afterwards to the western nations by the name of byzants, were minted without change in the weight and purity of the metal for a period of nearly 900 years.

The public taxes and the tribute of the provinces were generally exacted in gold. It was therefore the interest of the emperors to maintain the purity of the gold coinage. But as large payments were made by weight, a profit could often be made by issuing from the mint coins of less than the standard weight, and that this fraud was often perpetrated by the emperors is attested by the existence of innumerable well- preserved gold coins.

The silver coinage was in a different condition from the gold. From the time of Augustus to that of Caracalla it formed the ordinary circulating medium in the eastern part of the empire, and several cities possessed the right of coining silver in their local mints. Both the imperial and the local mints often derived an illicit gain by diminishing the weight or debasing the purity of the silver coins. Augustus, as has been already mentioned, coined 84 *denarii* from a pound of silver and Nero 96. Hadrian, though he made no change in the legal standard, permitted the mint to issue silver coins of less than the standard purity, and many of his successors imitated his bad example. The relative value of the *aureus* and the *denarius* underwent a change as soon as a considerable quantity of the silver coinage, whether issued by the imperial or local mints, was of debased metal, and *aurei* of standard weight were sold by the money-changers at an *agio*. The emperors appear to have defrauded those they paid in silver by issuing base denarii as well as cheated those they paid in gold by counting out light *aurei*.

When Caracalla coined fifty *aurei* to the pound, he seems to have proposed restoring the relative value of the gold and silver money. To do this it was necessary to issue a new silver coin of which twenty-five should be equal to the new *aureus*. Instead of restoring the denarius to its true proportion in weight and purity, he issued the larger piece, in which the emperor is represented with a radiated crown, called *argenteus*. These contain a considerable portion of alloy, and were minted at the rate of sixty to a pound of the new silver standard. The proportion adopted by Caracalla for the silver coinage was not observed. A deterioration is apparent even during the reigns of Alexander Severus, Maximinus, and Gordianus Pius, though these emperors evidently made some efforts to arrest the depreciation of the ordinary circulating medium by large issues of copper *sestertii* of full weight. They appear to have hoped to sustain the value of the silver currency by keeping up the value of the copper coin which circulated as its fractions.

The proportion of alloy in the silver coinage was rapidly increased after the time of Gordianus Pius, and at last Gallienus put an end to the silver coinage by issuing plated money and copper pieces washed with tin as a substitute for silver. Thus a base denarius of his latter years was of less value than an as of the former part of his reign, which ought to have been its sixteenth part.

Gallienus threw the whole coinage of the empire into confusion. He repeatedly reduced the size of the *aureus* according to his temporary exigencies, but he preserved the standard purity of the metal, for while he paid his own debts by tale he exacted payment of the tribute of the provinces by weight. The intolerable oppression of his monetary frauds and exactions, added to the disorder that prevailed in every branch of the imperial government, goaded the provinces into rebellion. The rise of the thirty tyrants, as the rebel emperors were called, must in some degree be connected with the depreciation of the coinage, for the troops as well as the provincials were sufferers by the frauds of his mint. The troops were ready to support any emperor who would pay them a donative in coin of full weight, and the provincials were ready to support any rebel who could resist the transmission of the gold in the province to Rome.

The depreciation of the ordinary currency during the reign of Gallienus has no parallel in history unless it be found in the recent depreciations of the Othoman currency. Five hundred of the washed denarii or *argentei* of his latter coinage were required to purchase an *aureus*, while government compelled its subjects to receive these base coins at the rate of twenty-five to an *aureus*.

The emperors defrauded their subjects, but the masters of the mint and the corporation of moneyers shared the profits of these frauds, and rendered the debasement of the coinage and the *agio* on gold a source of gain independent of the government. When Aurelian endeavoured to restore the unity of the empire it was necessary for him to re-establish uniformity in the currency. But when he attempted to reform the abuses in the imperial mint, the masters of the mint and the corporation of moneyers openly rebelled, and their power and numbers were so great that he is said to have lost seven thousand men in suppressing their revolt.

The depreciation in the value of the circulating medium during the fifty years between the reign of Caracalla and the death of Gallienus annihilated a great part of the trading capital in the Roman Empire, and rendered it impossible to carry on commercial transactions not only with foreign countries but even with distant provinces. Every payment was liable to be greatly diminished in real value, even when it was nominally the same. This state of things at last induced capitalists to hoard their coins of pure gold and silver for better days; and as these better days did not occur, all memory of many hoards was lost, and the buried treasures, consisting of select coins, have often remained concealed until the present time. Thus the frauds of the Roman emperors have filled the cabinets of collectors and the national museums of modem Europe with well-preserved coins.

The special effects of the depreciation of the Roman coinage on the wealth of Greece cannot be traced in detail, for no facts are recorded by historians which connect it prominently with any private or public event. The local mints ceased to exist, when even their copper coins became of greater intrinsic value than the money of the imperial mint of which they were nominally fractions. The *as* of the provincial city was more valuable than the *denarius* of the capital. Zosimus informs us that this monetary confusion produced commercial anarchy, and it requires no historian to tell us that political anarchy is a natural consequence of national bankruptcy. The laws which regulate the distribution, the accumulation and the destruction of wealth, the demand for labour and the gains of industry, attest that the depreciation of the currency was one of the most powerful causes of the impoverishment and depopulation of the Roman empire in the third century, and there can be no doubt that Greece suffered severely from its operation.

Sect. VII.

Depopulation of Greece caused by the Roman Government

Experience proves that the same law of the progress of society which gives to an increasing population a tendency to outgrow the means of subsistence, compels a

declining one to press on the limits of taxation. A government may push taxation up to that point when it arrests all increase in the means of subsistence; but the moment this stationary condition of society is produced, the people will begin to consume a portion of the wealth previously absorbed by the public taxes, and the revenues of the country will have a tendency to decrease; or, what is the same thing, in so far as the political law is concerned, the government will find greater difficulty in collecting the same amount of revenue, and, if it succeed, will cause a diminution in the population.

The depopulation of the Roman provinces was, however, not caused entirely by the financial oppression of the government. In order to secure new conquests against rebellion, the armed population was generally exterminated, or reduced to slavery. If the people displayed a spirit of independence, they were regarded as robbers, and destroyed without mercy; and this cruelty was so engrafted into the system of the Roman administration that Augustus treated the Salassi in this manner, when their disorders could easily have been effectually prevented by milder measures. At the time the Romans first engaged in war with the Macedonians and Greeks, the contest was of so doubtful a nature that the Romans were not likely to relax the usual policy which they adopted for weakening their foes; Macedonia, Epirus, Aetolia, and Achaia, were therefore treated with the greatest severity at the time of their conquest. Aemilius Paulus, in order to secure the submission of Epirus, destroyed seventy cities, and sold one hundred and fifty thousand of the inhabitants as slaves. The policy which considered a reduction of the population necessary for securing obedience, would not fail to adopt efficient measures to prevent its again becoming either numerous or wealthy. The utter destruction of Carthage, and the extermination of the Carthaginians, is a fact which has no parallel in the history of any other civilized stated Mummius razed Corinth to the ground, and sold its whole population as slaves. Delos was the great emporium of the trade of the East about the time of the conquest of Greece; it was plundered by the troops of Mithridates, and again by the orders of Sulla. It only recovered its former state of prosperity under the Romans as a slave-market. Sulla utterly destroyed several cities of Boeotia, and depopulated Athens, the Piraeus, and Thebes. The inhabitants of Megara were nearly exterminated by Julius Caesar; and a considerable number of cities in Achaia, Aetolia, and Acarnania, were laid waste by order of Augustus, and their inhabitants were settled in the newly established Roman colonies of Nicopolis and Patrae. Brutus levied five years' tribute in advance from the inhabitants of Asia Minor. His severity made the people of Xanthus prefer extermination to submission. Cassius, after he had taken Rhodes, treated it in the most tyrannical manner, and displayed a truly Roman spirit of fiscal rapacity. The celebrated letter of Sulpicius to Cicero, so familiar to the lovers of poetry from the paraphrase of Lord Byron, affords irrefragable testimony to the rapid decline of Greece under the Roman government.

During the civil wars, the troops which Greece still possessed were compelled to range themselves on one side or the other. The Aetolians and Acarnanians joined Caesar; the Athenians, Lacedaemonians, and Boeotians, ranged themselves as partisans of Pompey. The Athenians, and most of the other Greeks, afterwards espoused the cause of Brutus and Cassius; but the Lacedaemonians sent a body of two thousand men to serve as auxiliaries of Octavius. The destruction of property caused by the progress

through Greece of the various bodies of troops, whose passions were inflamed by the disorders of the civil war, was not compensated by the favours conferred on a few cities by Caesar, Antony, and Augustus. The remission of a few taxes, or the present of additional revenues to an oligarchical magistracy, could exercise no influence on the general prosperity of the country.

The depopulation caused by war alone might have been very soon repaired, had the government of Greece been wisely administered. But there are conditions of society which render it difficult to replace capital or recruit population when either of them has undergone any considerable diminution. Attica appears never to have recovered from the ravages committed by Philip V of Macedon as early as the year B.C. 200, when he burned down the buildings and groves of Cynosarges and the Lyceum in the immediate vicinity of Athens, and the temples, olive-trees, and vineyards over the whole country. The Athenians had even then lost the social and moral energy necessary for repairing the damage produced by a great national calamity. They could no longer pursue a life of agricultural employment: their condition had degenerated into that of a mere city population, and the thoughts and feelings of Greek freemen were those of a town mob. In such circumstances the ravages of an enemy permanently diminished the resources of the country, for in a land like Greece, ages of labour and the accumulated savings of generations are required to cover the arid limestone mountains with olive and fig trees, and to construct the cisterns and canals of irrigation which are necessary to render a dry soil capable of yielding abundant supplies of food. In Athens bad government, social corruption, literary presumption, and national conceit, were nourished by liberal donations from foreign princes, who repaid flattery by feeding a worthless city population. Servility became more productive than honest industry, and the depopulation which resulted from wars and revolutions continued when Greece enjoyed peace under the domination of Rome. The statues of the gods erected in temples which had fallen into ruins, sculptured dedications and marble tombs, monuments of a wealthy and dense rural population of free citizens in the agricultural demes of Attica, were seen in the times of Hadrian, as the turbaned tombstone may now be seen in Turkey near the solitary desolation of the ruined mosque, testifying the rapid depopulation and destruction of vested capital which is now going on in the Othoman empire. A Roman writer says, that in Attica there were more gods and heroes than living men. It is impossible to point out, in precise detail, all the various measures by which the Roman administration undermined the physical and moral strength of the Greek nation; it is sufficient to establish the fact, that too much was exacted from the body of the people in the shape of public burdens, and that the neglect of all its duties on the part of the government gradually diminished the productive resources of the country. Works of utility were neglected; bands of robbers were allowed to infest the provinces for long periods without molestation. The extortions of the Roman magistrates, however, were more injurious, and rendered property more insecure, than the violence of the banditti. The public acts of robbery are those only which have been preserved by history; but for each open attack on public property, hundreds of private families were reduced to poverty, and thousands of free Greeks sold as slaves. Fulvius despoiled the temples of Ambracia of their most valuable ornaments, and even carried away the statues of the gods. Verres, on his passage through Greece to his post in Cilicia, carried off a quantity of gold from the temple of Minerva at Athens. Piso, while proconsul of Macedonia,

plundered both Macedonia and Greece, and allowed them to be ravaged by Thracian banditti. Even under the cautious and conciliatory administration of Augustus, the oppressive conduct of the Romans caused seditions, both in Laconia—which was a favoured district, from its having taken part with the emperor against Antony—and in Attica, where the weakness to which the city was reduced seemed to render any expression of discontent impossible. The Greeks had not, in the time of Augustus, entirely lost their ancient spirit and valour, and though comparatively feeble, their conduct was an object of some solicitude to the Roman government.

The moral causes of depopulation were perhaps even more powerful than the political. They had been long in operation, and had produced great changes in the Greek character before the Roman conquest; and as some similar social evils were acting on the Romans themselves, the moral condition of Greece was not improved by the Roman government. The most prevalent evil was a spirit of self-indulgence and utter indifference to the duty of man in private life, which made every rank averse to marriage, and unwilling to assume the responsibility of educating a family. The Greeks never adorned the vestibules of their houses with the statues and busts of their ancestors; their inordinate self-conceit taught them to concentrate their admiration on themselves. And the Romans, even with the family pride which led to this noble practice, were constantly losing the glories of their race by conferring their name on adopted scions of other houses. The religion, and often the philosophy, of the ancients encouraged vicious indulgence, and the general rule of society in the first century of the Roman Empire was to live with concubines selected from a class of female slaves educated for this station. The land, which had formerly maintained a thousand free citizens capable of marching to defend their country as hoplites, was now regarded as affording a scanty provision for the household of a single proprietor who considered himself too poor to marry. His estate was cultivated by a tribe of slaves, while he amused himself with the music of the theatre, or the equally idle sounds of the philosophic schools. The desire to occupy larger properties than their ancestors had cultivated, has already been noticed as an effect of the riches obtained by the Macedonian conquests; and its influence as a moral check on the population of Greece has been adverted to. This cause of depopulation increased under the Roman government. The love of immense parks, splendid villas and luxurious living, fostered vice and celibacy to such an extent in the higher ranks, that the wealthy families became gradually extinct. The line of distinction between the rich and the poor was constantly becoming more marked. The rich formed an aristocratic class, the poor were sinking into a dependent grade in society; they were fast approaching the state of *coloni* or serfs. In this state of society, neither class shows a tendency to in- crease. It appears indeed to be a law of human society, that all classes of mankind which are separated, by superior wealth and privileges, from the body of the people, and by their oligarchical constitution, liable to a rapid decline. As the privileges which they enjoy have created an unnatural position in life, vice is increased beyond that limit which is consistent with the duration of society. The fact has been long observed with regard to the oligarchies of Sparta and Rome. It had its effect even on the more extended citizenship of Athens, and it even affected, in our times, the two hundred thousand electors who formed the oligarchy of France during the reign of Louis Philippe.

Sect. VIII.

Roman Colonies established in Greece

Two Roman colonies, Corinth and Patrae, were established in Greece. They soon became the principal cities, and were for ages the centres of the political administration. Their influence on Greek society was very great, yet Latin continued to be the spoken language of the inhabitants, and their institutions and local government remained exclusively Roman until the decree of Caracalla extended the Roman franchise to all Greece.

The site of Corinth was devoted to the gods when Mummius destroyed the city and exterminated its inhabitants. From that time it remained desolate until, after an interval of more than a hundred years, Julius Caesar repeopled it with a colony of Romans. The advantages of its position, its rich territory, its impregnable citadel, its narrow isthmus, and its ports on two seas, made it equally valuable as a military and naval station, and as a commercial mart. Caesar refortified the Acro-Corinth, repaired the temples, rebuilt the city, restored the ports, and established a numerous population of veteran legionaries and industrious freedmen in the new city. Corinth became once more flourishing and populous. Its colonial coinage from the time of Julius to that of Gordian III is abundant, and often beautiful. It attests the extent of its trade and the taste of its inhabitants. But the new Corinth was not a Greek city. The mother of so many Hellenic colonies was now a foreign colony in Hellas. Her institutions were Roman, her language was Latin, her manners were tinctured with the lupine ferocity of the race of Romulus. Shows of gladiators were the delight of her amphitheatre; and though she shed a strong light over fallen Greece, it was only a lurid reflection of the splendour of Rome.

The position of Corinth was admirably suited for a military station to overlook the proceedings of the Greeks who were opposed to Caesar's government. The measure was evidently one of precaution, and very little was done to give it the show of having originated in a wish to revive the prosperity of Greece. The population of the new Corinth was allowed to collect building materials, and search for wealth, in any way, how offensive soever it might be to the feelings of the Greeks. The tombs, which had alone escaped the fury of Mummius, were destroyed to construct the new buildings, and excavated for the rich ornaments and valuable sepulchral vases which they often contained. So systematically did the Romans pursue this profession of violating the tombs, that it became a source of very considerable wealth to the colony, and Rome was filled with works of archaic art. The facilities which the position of Corinth afforded for maritime communications, not only with every part of Greece, but also with Italy and Asia Minor, rendered it the seat of the Roman provincial administration, and the usual residence of the proconsul of Achaia.

The policy of Augustus towards Greece was openly one of precaution. The Greeks still continued to occupy the attention of the ruling class at Rome, more perhaps

than their declining power warranted; they had not yet sunk into the political insignificancy which they were destined to reach in the days of Juvenal and Tacitus. Augustus reduced the power of all those Greek states that retained any influence, whether they had joined his own party or favoured Antony. Athens was deprived of its authority over Eretria and Aegina, and forbidden to increase its local revenues by selling the right of citizenship. Lacedaemon was also weakened by the establishment of the independent community of the free Laconians, a confederation of twenty-four maritime cities, whose population, consisting chiefly of *perioikoi*, had hitherto paid taxes to Sparta. Augustus, it is true, assigned the island of Cythera, and a few places on the Messenian frontier, to the Lacedaemonian state; but the gift was a very slight compensation for the loss sustained in a political point of view, whatever it might have been in a financial.

Augustus established a Roman colony at Patrae to extinguish the smouldering nationality of Achaia and to keep open a gate through which a Roman force might at any time pour into Greece. Patrae then lay in ruins, and the proprietors of its territory dwelt in the villages around. Augustus repaired the city, and re-peopled it with Roman citizens, freedmen, and the veterans of the twenty-second legion. To fill up the void in the numbers of the middle and lower orders of the free population, necessary for the immediate formation of a large city, the inhabitants of some neighbouring Greek towns were compelled to abandon their dwellings and reside in Patrae. The local government of the colony was endowed with municipal revenues taken from several Achaean and Locrian cities which were deprived of their civic existence. Patrae was often the residence of the proconsul of Achaia, and it flourished for ages both as a Roman administrative station and as a port possessing great commercial resources. Its colonial coinage, though neither so abundant nor so elegant in its fabric as that of Corinth, extends from the time of Augustus to that of Gordian III. As in all Roman colonies, the political institutions of Rome were closely imitated at Corinth and Patrae. Their highest magistrates were duumviri, who represented the consulate, and who were annually elected; or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say, were selected for a nominal election by the imperial authorities. Other magistrates were elected, and some were appointed to perform those duties in the colonies which were similar to the functions of the great office-bearers in Rome. And as the model of the Roman government was originally that of a single city, the resemblance was easily maintained. Under the emperors, however, the colonies gradually sank into ordinary corporations for the transaction of administrative and fiscal business, under the immediate control of the Roman proconsuls and provincial governors.

Augustus also founded a new city called Nicopolis, to commemorate the victory of Actium, but it was as much a triumphal monument as a political establishment. Its organization was that of a Greek city, not of a Roman colony; and its quinquennial festival of the Actia was instituted on the model of the great games of Greece, and placed under the superintendence of the Lacedaemonians. Its population consisted of Greeks who were compelled to desert their native cities in Epirus, Acarnania, and Aetolia. Its territory was extensive, and it was admitted into the Amphictyonic council as a Greek state. The manner in which Augustus peopled Nicopolis proves his indifference to the feelings of humanity, and the imperfection of his knowledge in that

political science which enables a statesman to convert a small territory into a flourishing State.

The principles of his colonization contributed as directly to the decline and depopulation of Italy and Greece, as the accidental tyranny or folly of any of his successors. The inhabitants of a great part of Aetolia were torn from their abodes, where they were residing on their own property, surrounded by their cattle, their olive-trees and vineyards, and compelled to construct such dwellings as they were able, and find such means of livelihood as presented themselves, at Nicopolis. The destruction of an immense amount of vested capital in provincial buildings was the consequence; the agriculture of a whole province was ruined, and a considerable agricultural population must have pined in poverty or perished from want in the changed circumstances of a city life. Nicopolis long continued to be the principal city in Epirus. Its local coinage extends from Augustus down to the reign of Gallienus. The legends are Greek, and the fabric rude. The peculiar privileges conferred on the three colonies of Corinth, Patrae, and Nicopolis, and the close connection in which they were placed with the imperial government, enabled them to flourish for centuries amidst the general poverty which the despotic system of the Roman provincial administration spread over the rest of Greece.

Sect. IX.

Political Condition of Greece from the time of Augustus to that of Caracalla

Two descriptions of Greece have been preserved, which afford vivid pictures of the impoverished condition of the country during two centuries of the Roman government. Strabo has left us an account of the aspect of Greece, shortly after the foundation of the colonies of Patrae and Nicopolis. Pausanias has described, with melancholy exactness, the desolate appearance of many celebrated cities, during the time of the Antonines. Governors and proconsuls were sent to administer the government who were ignorant of the Greek language. The taxes imposed on the country, and the expenses of the provincial administration, drained off all the wealth of the people; and those necessary public works, which required a large expenditure for their maintenance and preservation, were allowed to fall gradually into ruin. The emperors, at times, indeed, attempted, by a few isolated acts of mercy, to alleviate the sufferings of the Greeks. Tiberius, as we have already mentioned, united the provinces of Achaia and Macedonia to the imperial government of Moesia, in order to deliver them from the weight of the proconsular administration. His successor restored them to the senate. When Nero visited Greece to receive a crown at the Olympic Games, he recompensed the Greeks for their flatteries by declaring them free from tribute. The immunities which he conferred produced some serious disputes be- tween the various states, concerning the collection of their municipal taxes; and Vespasian rendered these disputes a pretext for annulling the freedom conferred by Nero. The free cities of Greece still possessed not only the administration of considerable revenues, but also the power of raising money, by local taxes, for the maintenance of their temples, schools,

universities, aqueducts, roads, ports, and public buildings. Trajan carefully avoided destroying any of the municipal privileges of the Greeks, and he endeavoured to improve their condition by his just and equitable administration; yet his policy was adverse to the increase of local institutions.

Hadrian opened a new line of policy to the sovereigns of Rome, and avowed the determination of reforming the institutions of the Romans, and adapting his government to the altered state of society in the empire. He perceived that the central government was weakening its power, and diminishing its resources, by acts of injustice, which rendered property everywhere insecure. He remedied the evils which resulted from the irregular dispensation of the laws by the provincial governors, and effected reforms which certainly exercised a favourable influence on the condition of the inhabitants of the provinces. His reign laid the foundation of that regular and systematic administration of justice in the Roman empire, which gradually absorbed all the local judicatures of the Greeks, and, by forming a numerous and well-educated society of lawyers, guided by uniform rules, raised up a partial barrier against arbitrary power. In order to lighten the weight of taxation, Hadrian abandoned all the arrears of taxes accumulated in preceding years. His general system of administrative reforms was pursued by the Antonines, and perfected by the edict of Caracalla, which conferred the rank of Roman citizens on all the free inhabitants of the empire. Hadrian certainly deserves the merit of having first seen the necessity of securing the imperial government, by effacing all badges of servitude from the provincials, and connecting the interests of the landed proprietors throughout the Roman empire with the existence of the imperial administration. He secured to the provincials that legal rank in the constitution of the empire which placed their rights on a level with those of Roman citizens, and for this he was hated by the senate.

Hadrian, from personal taste, cultivated Greek literature, and admired Grecian art. He left traces of his love of improvement in every portion of the empire, through which he kept constantly travelling; but Greece, and especially Attica, received an extraordinary share of the imperial favour. It is difficult to estimate how far his conduct immediately affected the general well-being of the population, or to point out the precise manner of its operation on society; but it is evident that the impulse given to improvement by his example and his administration, produced some tendency to ameliorate the condition of the Greeks. Greece had, perhaps, sunk to its lowest state of poverty and depopulation under the financial administration of the Flavian family, and it displayed many signs of reviving prosperity, while it enjoyed the advantage of good government under Hadrian. The extraordinary improvements which the Roman emperors might have effected, by a judicious employment of the public revenues, may be estimated from the immense public works executed by Hadrian. At Athens he completed the temple of Jupiter Olympius, which had been commenced by Pisistratus, and of which sixteen columns still exist to astonish the spectator by their size and beauty. He built temples to Juno and to Jupiter Panhellenius, and ornamented the city with a magnificent pantheon, a library, and a gymnasium. He commenced an aqueduct to convey an abundant stream of water from Cephisia, which was completed by Antoninus. At Megara, he rebuilt the temple of Apollo. He constructed an aqueduct which conveyed the waters of the lake Stymphalus to Corinth, and he erected new baths

in that city. But the surest proof that his improvements were directed by a judicious spirit is to be found in his attention to the roads. Nothing could tend more to advance the prosperity of this, mountainous country than removing the difficulties of intercourse between its various provinces; for there is no country where the expense of transport presents a greater barrier to trade, or where the obstacles to internal communication form a more serious impediment to improvement in the social condition of the agricultural population. He rendered the road from Northern Greece to the Peloponnesus, by the Scironian rocks, easy and commodious for wheeled carriages. Great, however, as these improvements were, he conferred one still greater on the Greeks, as a nation, by commencing the task of moulding their various local customs and laws into one general system, founded on the basis of Roman jurisprudence; and while he engrafted the law of the Romans on the stock of society in Greece, he did not seek to destroy the municipal institutions of the people. The policy of Hadrian, in raising the Greeks to an equality of civil rights with the Romans, sanctioned whatever remained of the Macedonian institutions throughout the East; and as soon as the edict of Caracalla had conferred on all the subjects of the empire the rights of Roman citizenship, the Greeks became, in reality, the dominant people in the Eastern portion of the empire, and Greek institutions ultimately ruled society under the supremacy of Roman law.

It is curious that Antoninus, who adopted all the views of Hadrian with regard to the annihilation of the exclusive supremacy of the Roman citizens, should have thought it worth his attention to point out the supposed ancient connection between Rome and Arcadia. He was the first Roman who commemorated this fanciful relationship between Greece and Rome by any public act. He conferred on Pallantium, the Arcadian city from which Evander was supposed to have led a Greek colony to the banks of the Tiber, all the privileges ever granted to the most favoured municipalities in the Roman Empire. The habits and character of Marcus Aurelius led him to regard the Greeks with the greatest favour; and had his reign been more peaceful, and left his time more at his own disposal, the sophists and philosophers of Greece would, in all probability, have profited by his leisure. He rebuilt the temple of Eleusis, which had been burnt to the ground; he improved the schools of Athens, and increased the salaries of the professors, who then rendered that city the most celebrated university in the civilized world. Herodes Atticus, whose splendid public edifices in Greece rivalled the works of Hadrian, gained great influence by his eminence in literature and taste, as well as by his enormous wealth. It was the golden age of rhetoricians, whose services were rewarded not only with liberal salaries and donations in money, but even with such magisterial authority and honour as the Greek cities could confer. Herodes Atticus had been selected by Antoninus Pius to give lessons in eloquence to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and he was treated with distinction by Marcus Aurelius, until it was necessary to reprove his oppressive and tyrannical conduct to the Athenians. The friendship of the emperor did not save him from disgrace, though his freedmen alone were punished.

Little can be collected concerning the condition of Greece under the successors of Marcus Aurelius. The Roman government was occupied with wars, which seldom directly affected the provinces occupied by the Greeks. Literature and science were little regarded by the soldiers of fortune who mounted the imperial throne; and Greece,

forgotten and neglected, appears to have enjoyed a degree of tranquillity and repose, which enabled her to profit by the improvements in the imperial government which Hadrian had introduced and the decree of Caracalla had ratified.

The institutions of the Greeks, which were unconnected with the exercise of the supreme executive power, were generally allowed to exist, even by the most jealous of the emperors. When these institutions disappeared, their destruction was effected by the progressive change which time gradually introduced into Greek society, and not by any violence on the part of the Roman government. It is difficult, indeed, to trace the limits of the state and city administration in matters of taxation, or the exact extent of their control over their local funds. Some cities possessed independence, and others were free from tribute; and these privileges gave the Greek nation a political position in the empire, which prevented their being confounded with the other provincials in the East, until the reign of Justinian. As the Greek cities in Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt preserved these important privileges, it is not wonderful that, in Greece, the whole frame of the ancient social institutions was preserved.

Pausanias found the Amphictyonic council still holding its meetings, three centuries after the Roman conquest. The deputies of the Achaean, Boeotian, and Phocic commonwealths continued to meet for the purpose of transacting the business of their confederacies. The Athenians were allowed to maintain an armed guard in the island of Delos. The Olympic, Pythic, and Isthmian games were regularly celebrated. The Areopagus at Athens, and the Gerontia at Sparta, still exercised their functions. The different cities and provinces affected the use of their peculiar dialects, and the inhabitants of Sparta continued to imitate the Laconism of antiquity in their public despatches, though their altered manners rendered it ridiculous. The mountaineers of Attica, in the time of Antoninus, spoke a purer language than the populace of the city of Athens, which still bore evidence of its heterogeneous origin after the massacre of Sulla. Had the financial burdens of the Roman government not weighed too heavily on the population, the rivalry of the Greeks, actively directed to local improvements and to commerce, instead of being too exclusively and ostentatiously devoted to philosophy, literature, and the arts, might have proved more useful and honourable to their country. But the moral supports of the old framework of society were destroyed before the edict of Caracalla had emancipated Greece; and when tranquillity arrived, they were only capable of enjoying the felicity of having been forgotten by their tyrants.

Sect. X.

The Greeks and Romans never showed any disposition to unite and form one people

The habits and tastes of the Greeks and Romans were so different, that their familiar intercourse produced a feeling of antipathy in the two nations. The Roman

writers, from prejudice and jealousy, of which they were themselves, perhaps, unconscious, have transmitted to us a very incorrect picture of the state of the Greeks during the first centuries of the empire. They did not observe, with attention, the marked distinction between the Asiatic and Alexandrine Greeks and the natives of Hellas. The European population, pursuing the quiet life of landed proprietors, or engaged in the pursuits of commerce and agriculture, was considered, by Roman prejudice, as unworthy of notice. Lucian, himself a Greek, indeed contrasts the tranquil and respectable manner of life at Athens with the folly and luxury of Rome; but the Romans looked on provincials as little better than serfs (*coloni*) and merchants were, in their eyes, only tolerated cheats. The Greek character was estimated from the conduct of the adventurers, who thronged from the wealthy and corrupted cities of the East to seek their fortunes at Rome, and who, from motives of fashion and taste, were unduly favoured by the wealthy aristocracy. The most distinguished of these Greeks were literary men, professors of philosophy, rhetoric, grammar, mathematics, and music. Great numbers were engaged as private teachers; and this class was regarded with some respect by the Roman nobility, from its intimate connection with their families. The great mass of the Greeks residing at Rome were, however, employed in connection with the public and private amusements of the capital, and were found engaged in every profession, from the directors of the theatres and opera-houses, down to the swindlers who frequented the haunts of vice. The testimony of the Latin authors may be received as sufficiently accurate concerning the light in which the Greeks were regarded at Rome, and as a not incorrect portraiture of the Greek population of the capital.

The expressions of the Romans, when speaking of the Greeks, often display nothing more than the manner in which the proud aristocracy of the empire regarded all foreigners, those even whom they admitted to their personal intimacy. The Greeks were confounded with the great body of strangers from the Eastern nations, in one general sentence of condemnation; and not unnaturally, for the Greek language served as the ordinary means of communication with all foreigners from the East. The magicians, conjurers, and astrologers of Syria, Egypt, and Chaldea, were naturally mixed up, both in society and public opinion, with the adventurers of Greece, and contributed to form the despicable type which was unjustly enough transferred from the fortune-hunters at Rome to the whole Greek nation. It is hardly necessary to observe that Greek literature, as cultivated at Rome during this period, had no connection with the national feelings of the Greek people. As far as the Greeks themselves were concerned, learning was an honourable and lucrative occupation to its successful professors; but in the estimation of the higher classes at Rome, Greek literature was merely an ornamental exercise of the mind,—a fashion of the wealthy. This ignorance of Greece and the Greeks induced Juvenal to draw his conclusive proof of the utter falsity of the Greek character, and of the fabulous nature of all Greek history, from his own doubts concerning a fact which is avouched by the testimony of Herodotus and Thucydides; but as a retort to the *Graecia mendax* of the Roman satirist, the observation of Lucian may be cited—that the Romans spoke truth only once in their lives, and that was when they made their wills.

The Greeks repaid the scorn of the Romans with greater and not more reasonable contempt. When the two nations first came into collision, the Romans were certainly far less polished than the Greeks, though they were much superior to them in virtue and

courage. They acknowledged their inferiority, and readily derived lessons of instruction from a people unable to resist their arms. The obligation was always recognised. And Roman gratitude inflated Greek vanity to such a degree, that the conquered never perceived that their masters became at last as much their superiors in literary genius as in political and military science. The Greeks seem always to have remained ignorant that there were Roman writers whose works would, by successive generations and distant nations, be placed almost in the same rank as their own classic authors. The rhetorical contemporaries of Tacitus and of Juvenal never suspected that the original genius of those writers had extended the domain of literature, nor could any critic have persuaded them that Horace had already surpassed the popularity of their own poets by a graceful union of social elegance with calm sagacity.

A single example of the supercilious egoism of the Greeks will be sufficient to show the extent of their presumption during their political degradation as Roman provincials. When Apollonius of Tyana, the pythagorean philosopher, who excited the admiration of the Hellenic world during the first century, visited Smyrna, he was invited to attend the Panionian Assembly. On reading the decree of the council, he observed that it was signed by men who had adopted Roman names, and he immediately addressed a letter to the Panionians blaming their barbarism. He reproached them for laying aside the names of their ancestors, for quitting the names of heroes and legislators to assume such names as Lucullus and Fabricius. Now, when we remember that this rebuke was gravely uttered by a native of the Cappadocian city of Tyana, to a corporation of degenerate Asiatic Greeks, it forms a curious monument of the delusions of national vanity.

The Romans were never very deeply imbued with a passionate admiration for Grecian art, with which every rank in Greece was animated. The national pride and personal vanity of the conquerors, it is true, often coveted the possession of the most celebrated works of art, which were transported to Rome as much on account of their celebrity as their merit, for the painting and sculpture which they could procure as articles of commercial industry were sufficient to gratify Roman taste. This was peculiarly fortunate for Greece, since there can be no doubt that, if the Romans had been as enthusiastic lovers of art as they were indefatigable hunters after riches, they would not have hesitated to regard all those works of art, which were the public property of the Grecian states, as belonging to the Roman commonwealth by the right of conquest. It was only because the avarice of the people would have received little gratification from the seizure, that Greece was allowed to retain her statues and paintings when she was plundered of her gold and silver. The great dissimilarity of manners between the two nations appears in the aversion with which many distinguished senators viewed the introduction of the works of Grecian art by Marcellus and Mummius, after the conquests of Syracuse and Corinth. This aversion unquestionably contributed much to save Greece from the general confiscation of her treasures of art, to which her people clung with the most passionate attachment. Cicero says that no Greek city would consent to sell a painting, a statue, or a work of art, but that, on the contrary, all were ready to become purchasers. The inhabitants of Pergamus resisted the attempt of Acratus, a commissioner sent by Nero, to carry off the most celebrated works of art from the cities of Asia. The feeling of art, in the two peoples, is

not inaptly illustrated, by comparing the conduct of the Rhodian republic with that of the Emperor Augustus. When the Rhodians were besieged by Demetrius Poliorcetes, they refused to destroy his statues, and those of his father, which had been erected in their agora. But when Augustus conquered Egypt he ordered all the statues of Antony to be destroyed, and, with a meanness somewhat at variance with patrician dignity, he accepted a bribe of one thousand talents from the Alexandrines to spare the statues of Cleopatra. The Greeks honoured art even more than the Romans loved vengeance. Works of art were carried away by those Roman governors who spared nothing they could pillage in their provinces; but these spoliations were always regarded in the light of direct robberies; and Fulvius Nobilior, Verres, and Piso, who distinguished themselves in this species of violence, were considered as the most infamous of the Roman magistrates.

It is true that Sulla carried off the ivory statue of Minerva from the temple of Alalcomenae, and that Augustus removed that of the great temple of Tegea, as a punishment because that city espoused the party of Antony. But these very exceptions prove how sparingly the Romans availed themselves of their rights of conquest; or history would have recorded the remarkable statues which they had allowed to remain in Greece, rather than signalized as exceptions the few which they transported to Rome. When Caligula and Nero were permitted to govern the world according to the impulses of insanity, they ordered many celebrated works of art to be conveyed to Rome — among these, the celebrated Cupid of Praxiteles was twice removed. It was restored to Thespiae by Claudius; but, on being again taken away by Nero, it perished in a conflagration. After the great conflagration at Rome, in which innumerable works of art perished, Nero transported five hundred brazen statues from Delphi, to adorn the capital and replace the loss it had suffered, and he ordered all the cities of Greece and Asia Minor to be systematically plundered. Very little is subsequently recorded concerning this species of plunder, which Hadrian and his two immediate successors would hardly have permitted. From the great number of the most celebrated works of ancient art which Pausanias enumerates in his tour through Greece, it is evident that no extensive injury had then occurred, even to the oldest buildings. After the reign of Commodus, the Roman emperors paid but little attention to art; and unless the value of the materials caused the destruction of ancient works, they were allowed to stand undisturbed until the buildings around them crumbled into dust. During the period of nearly a century which elapsed from the time of Pausanias until the first irruption of the Goths into Greece, it is certain that the temples and public buildings of the inhabited cities were very little changed in their general aspect, from the appearance which they had presented when the Roman legions first entered Hellas.

Sect. XI.

State of Society among the Greeks,

To give a complete account of the state of society among the Greeks under the Roman Empire, it would be necessary to enter into many details concerning the social and political institutions of the Romans, for both exercised great influence in Greece. To avoid so extensive a field, it will be necessary to give only a cursory sketch of those social peculiarities whose influence, though apparent in the annals of the Roman Empire, did not permanently affect the political history of the empire. The state of civilization, the popular objects of pursuit, even the views of national advancement, continued, under the imperial government, to be very different, and often opposite, in different divisions of the Greek nation.

The inhabitants of Hellas had sunk into a quiet and secluded population. The schools of Athens were still famous, and Greece was visited by numbers of fashionable and learned travellers from other countries, as Italy now is; but the citizens dwelt in their own little world, clinging to antiquated forms and usages, and to old superstitions, —holding little intercourse, and having little community of feeling, either with the rest of the empire or with the other divisions of the Hellenic race.

The maritime cities of Europe, Asia Minor, and the Archipelago contained a considerable population, chiefly occupied in commerce and manufactures, and taking little interest in the politics of Rome, or in the literature of Greece. Though the Greeks looked on trade with more favour than the Romans, declining wealth and unjust laws were rapidly tending to depreciate the mercantile character, and to render the occupation less respectable, even in the commercial cities. It is not inappropriate to notice one instance of Roman commercial legislation. Julius Caesar, among his projects of reform, thought fit to revive an old Roman law, which prohibited any citizen from having in his possession a larger sum than sixty thousand sesterces in the precious metals. This law was, of course, neglected; but under Tiberius it was made a pretext by informers to levy various fines and confiscations in Greece and Syria. The commerce of the eastern part of the Mediterranean which had once consisted of commodities of general consumption, declined, under the fiscal avarice of the Romans, into an export trade of some articles of luxury to the larger cities of the west of Europe. The wines of the Archipelago, the carpets of Pergamus, the cambric of Cos, and the dyed woollens of Laconia, are particularly mentioned. The decrease of trade is not to be overlooked as one of the causes of the decline and depopulation of the Roman Empire; for wealth depended even more on commerce in ancient times, than it does in modern, on account of the imperfect means of transport, and the impolitic laws relating to the exportation of grain from many provinces to Rome, where its gratuitous distribution to a large part of the population, and its frequent sale below the cost of production in Italy deranged all commercial operations.

The division of the Greek nation which occupied the most important social position in the empire, consisted of the remains of the Macedonian and Greek colonies in Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria. These countries were filled with Greeks; and the cities of Alexandria and Antioch, the second and third in the empire in size, population, and wealth, were chiefly peopled by Greeks. The influence of Alexandria alone on the Roman Empire, and on European civilization, would require a treatise, in order to do justice to the subject. Its schools of philosophy produced modifications of Christianity in the East, and attempted to infuse a new life into the torpid members of paganism by

means of gnosticism and neoplatonism. The feuds between the Jews and Christians, which arose out of its local quarrels, were bequeathed to following centuries; and in Western Europe, we still debase Christianity by the admixture of those prejudices which had their rise in the amphitheatre of Alexandria. Its wealth and population excited the jealousy of Augustus, who deprived it of its municipal institutions, and rendered it a prey to the factions of the amphitheatre, the curse of Roman civic anarchy. The populace, unrestrained by any system of order founded on corporate institutions, and without any social guidance derived from any acknowledged municipal authority, was abandoned to the passions of the wildest democracy, whenever they were crowded together. Hadrian was struck with the activity and industry of the Alexandrines; and though he does not appear to have admired their character, he saw that the increase of privileges to some organized classes of the population was the true way to lessen the influence of the mob.

Antioch and the other Greek cities of the East preserved their municipal privileges; and the Greek population in Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria, remained everywhere completely separated from the original inhabitants. Their corporate organization often afforded them an opportunity of interfering with the details of the public administration, and their intriguing and seditious spirit enabled them to defend their rights and interests. When the free population of the provinces acquired the rights of Roman citizenship, the Greeks of these countries, who formed the majority of the privileged classes, and were already in possession of the principal share of the local administration, became soon possessed of the whole authority of the Roman government. They appeared as the real representatives of the State, excluded the native population from power, and, consequently, rendered it more dissatisfied than formerly. In the East, therefore, after the publication of Caracalla's edict, the Greeks became again the dominant people, as they had been before the Roman conquest. In spite of the equality of all the provincials in the eye of the law, a violent opposition was created between them and the native population in Syria, Egypt, and a large part of Asia Minor, where various nations still retained their own customs and languages. The Greeks, in a large portion of the eastern half of the empire, occupied a position nearly similar to that of the Romans in the western. The same causes produced similar effects, and from the period when the Greeks became a privileged and dominant class, administering the severe fiscal supremacy of the Roman government, instead of ruling with the more tolerant habits of their Macedonian predecessors, their numbers and influence began to decline. Like the Romans of Italy, Gaul, and Spain, the Greeks of Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia destroyed themselves, perishing from the corruption which they engendered by the abuse of their power.

The secluded position of the inhabitants of ancient Hellas almost conceals their social condition from the view of the political historian. The principal causes of the decline of Greece have been already explained; but the tone of society, and the manner of living adopted by the upper and middle ranks, accelerated the progress of national decay. It has been already remarked, that the increase of wealth consequent on the Macedonian conquests had tended to augment the size of private properties, and to add to the numbers of slaves in Greece. Under the Romans, the general riches of the country were indeed very much diminished; but individuals were enabled to acquire fortunes

greater than had been possessed by the ancient monarchs, and to possess estates larger than the territories of many celebrated republics. Julius Eurycles owned a province, and Herodes Atticus could have purchased a kingdom. While a few individuals could amass unbounded wealth, the bulk of the people were prevented from acquiring even a moderate independency; and when Plutarch says that Greece, in his time, could not arm more than three thousand *hoplitae*, though the small states of Sicyon and Megara each furnished that number at the battle of Plataea, it is necessary to remember the change which had taken place in the size of private properties, as well as the altered state of society, for both tended to diminish the numbers of the free population. The taxes of Greece were remitted to Rome, and expended beyond the limits of the province. The most useful public works were neglected, except when a benevolent emperor like Hadrian, or a wealthy individual like Herodes Atticus, thought fit to direct some portion of their expenditure to what was useful as well as ornamental. Under a continuance of such circumstances, Greece was drained of money and capital.

The poverty of Greece was farther increased by the gradual rise in the value of the precious metals, — an evil which began to be generally felt about the time of Nero, and which affected Greece with great severity, from the altered distribution of wealth in the country, and the loss of its foreign commerce, Greece had once been rich in mines, which had been a source of wealth and prosperity to Siphnos and Athens, and had laid the foundation of the power of Philip of Macedon. Gold and silver mines, when their produce is regarded as articles of commerce, are a surer basis of wealth than mines of lead and copper. The evils which have arisen in countries where gold and silver have been produced, have proceeded from the fiscal regulations of the government. The fiscal measures of the Romans soon rendered it a ruinous speculation for private individuals to attempt working mines of the precious metals, and, in the hands of the State, they soon proved unprofitable. Many mines were exhausted; and even though the value of the precious metals was enhanced, some, beyond the influence of the Roman power, were abandoned from those causes which, after the second century of the Christian era, produced a sensible diminution in the commercial transactions of the old hemisphere.

Greece suffered in the general decay; her commerce and manufactures, being confined to supplying the consumption of a diminished and impoverished population, sank into insignificancy. In a declining state of society, where political, financial, and commercial causes combine to diminish the wealth of a nation, it is difficult for individuals to alter their manner of life, and to restrict their expenditure, with the promptitude necessary to escape impoverishment. It is indeed seldom in their power to estimate the progress of the decay; and a reasonable jointure, or a necessary mortgage, may ruin a family.

In this declining state of society, complaints of excessive luxury are generally prevalent, and the Greek writers of the second century are filled with lamentations on this subject. Such complaints alone do not prove that the majority of the higher classes were living in a manner injurious to society, either from their effeminacy or vicious expenditure. They only show that the greater part of the incomes of private persons was consumed by their personal expenditure; and that a due proportion was not set apart for creating new productive property, in order to replace the deterioration, which time is ever causing in that which already exists. People of property, when their annual incomes

proved insufficient for their personal expenditure, began to borrow money, instead of trying to diminish their expenses. An accumulation of debts became general throughout the country, and formed a great evil in the time of Plutarch. These debts were partly caused by the oppression of the Roman government, and by the chicanery of the fiscal officers, always pressing for ready money, and were generally contracted to Roman money-lenders. It was in this way that the Roman administration produced its most injurious effects in the provinces, by affording to capitalists the means of accumulating enormous wealth, and by forcing the proprietors of land into abject poverty. The property of Greek debtors was at last transferred, to a very great extent, to their Roman creditors. This transference, which, in a homogeneous society, might have invigorated the upper classes, by substituting an industrious timocracy for an idle aristocracy, had a very different effect. It introduced new feelings of rivalry and extravagance, by filling the country with foreign landlords. The Greeks could not long' maintain the struggle, and they sank gradually lower and lower in wealth, until their poverty introduced an altered state of society, and taught them the prudential and industrious habits of farmers, in which tranquil position they escape, not only from the eye of history, but even from antiquarian research.

It is difficult to convey a correct notion of the evils and demoralization produced by private debts in the ancient world, though they often appear as one of the most powerful agents in political revolutions, and were a constant subject of attention to the statesman, the lawgiver, and the political philosopher. Modern society has completely annihilated their political effects. The greater facilities afforded to the transference of landed property, and the ease with which capital now circulates, have given an extension to the operations of banking which has remedied this peculiar defect in society. It must be noticed, too, that the ancients regarded landed property as the accessory of the citizen, even when its amount determined his rank in the commonwealth: but the moderns view the proprietor as the accessory of the landed property; and the political franchise, being inherent in the estate, is lost by the citizen who alienates his property.

In closing this view of the state of the Greek people under the imperial government, if is impossible not to feel that Greece cannot be included in the general assertion of Gibbon, that if a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. It may be doubted whether the Roman government ever relaxed the systematic oppression under which the agricultural and commercial population of its provinces groaned; and even Hadrian himself can hardly claim greater merit than that of having humanely administered a system radically bad, and endeavoured to correct its most prominent features of injustice. Greece, indeed, reached its lowest degree of misery and depopulation about the time of Vespasian; but still there is ample testimony in the pages of contemporary writers, to prove that the desolate state of the country was not materially improved for a long period, and that only partial signs of amelioration were apparent in the period so much vaunted by Gibbon. The liberality of Hadrian, and the munificence of Herodes Atticus, were isolated examples, and could not change the constitution of Rome. Many splendid edifices of antiquity were repaired

by these two benefactors of Greece, but many works of public utility remained neglected on account of the poverty of the diminished population of the country; and most of the works of Hadrian and Herodes Atticus contributed little more to the well-being of the people than the wages of the labour expended on their construction. The roads and aqueducts of Hadrian are wise exceptions, —as they diminished the expenses of transport, and afforded increased facilities for production. Still the sumptuous edifices, of which remains still exist, indicate that the object of building was the erection of magnificent monuments of art—to commemorate the taste and splendour of the founder, not to increase the resources of the land or improve the condition of the industrious classes.

The condition of a declining population by no means implies that any portion of the people is actually suffering from want of the necessaries of life. A sudden change in the direction of commerce, and a considerable decrease in the demand for the productions of manufacturing industry, must indeed, at the time when such events occur, deprive numbers of their usual means of subsistence, and create great misery, before the population suffers the ultimate diminution which these causes necessitate. Such events may occur in an improving as well as in a declining society. But, when the bulk of a country's productions is drawn from its own soil, and consumed by its own inhabitants, the population may be in a declining condition, without the circumstance being suspected for some time, either at home or abroad. The chief cause of the deterioration of the national resources will then arise from the members of society consuming too great a proportion of their annual income, without dedicating a due portion of their revenues to reproduction; in short, from expending their incomes, without creating new sources of wealth, or taking any measures to prevent the diminution of the old. Greece suffered from all the causes alluded to; her commerce and manufactures were transferred to other lands; and, when the change was completed, her inhabitants resolved to enjoy life, instead of labouring to replace the wealth which their country had lost. This diminution in the wealth of the people ultimately produced changes in society, which laid the foundation for a great step in the improvement of the human species. Poverty rendered slavery less frequent, and destroyed many of the channels by which the slave trade had flourished. The condition of the slaves also underwent several modifications, as the barrier between the slave and the citizen was broken down by the necessity in which the poor classes of freemen were placed of working at the same employments as slaves in order to obtain the means of subsistence. At this favourable conjuncture Christianity stepped in, to prevent avarice from ever recovering the ground which humanity had gained.

Under oppressive governments, the person sometimes becomes more insecure than property. This appears to have been the case under the Roman, as it has since been under the Turkish government; and the population, in such case, decreases much more rapidly than property is destroyed. The inhabitants of Greece under the Roman Empire found themselves possessed of buildings, gardens, vineyards, olive plantations, and all the agricultural produce which the accumulated capital of former ages had created, to an extent capable of maintaining a far more numerous population. The want of commerce, neglected roads, the rarity of the precious metals in circulation, and the difficulties thrown in the way of petty traffic by injudicious legislation, rendered the surplus

produce of each separate district of little value. The inhabitants enjoyed the mere necessaries of life, and some of the luxuries of their climate, in great abundance; but when they sought to purchase the productions of art and foreign commerce, they felt themselves to be poor. Such a state of society inevitably introduces a system of wasting what is superfluous, and of neglecting to prepare new means of future production. In this condition of indifference and ease the population of Greece remained, until the weakness of the Roman government, the disorders of the army, and the diminution and disarming of the free population, opened a way for the northern nations into the heart of the empire.

Sect. XII.

Influence of Religion and Philosophy on Society,

The earliest records of the Greeks represent them as living completely free from the despotic authority of a priestly class. The natural consequence of this freedom was an indefinite latitude in the dogmas of the national faith: and the priesthood, as it existed, became a very incorrect interpreter of public opinion in religious questions. The belief in the gods of Olympus had been shaken as early as the age of Pericles, and underwent many modifications after the Macedonian conquests. From the time the Romans became masters of Greece, the majority of the educated were votaries of the different philosophical sects, —every one of which viewed the established religion as a mere popular delusion. But the Roman government, and the municipal authorities, continued to support the various religions of the different provinces in their legal rights, though the priesthood generally enjoyed this support rather in their character of constituted corporations than because they were regarded as spiritual guides. The amount of their revenues, and the extent of their civic rights and privileges, were the chief objects which engaged the attention of the magistrate.

The wealth and number of the religious establishments in Greece, and the large funds possessed by corporations, which were appropriated to public festivals, contributed in no small degree to encourage idleness among the people, and perpetuate a taste for extravagance. The great festivals of the Olympic, Pythic, and Isthmian games, in so far as they served to unite the whole Greek nation in a common place of assembly for national objects, were, indeed, productive of many advantages. They contributed to maintain a general standard of public opinion throughout the Hellenic race, and they kept up a feeling of nationality. But the dissipation occasioned by the multitude of local religious feasts and public amusements, produced the most injurious effects on society.

The privilege called the right of asylum, by which some ancient temples became sanctuaries where fugitive slaves were protected against the vengeance of their masters, where debtors could escape the pursuit of their creditors, and where the worst criminals defied the justice of the law, tended to encourage the open violation of every principle of justice. The fear of punishment, the strength of moral obligations, and the respect due to religion, were destroyed by the impunity thus openly granted to the most heinous

crimes. This abuse had extended to such a degree under the Roman government, that the senate found it necessary, in the reign of Tiberius, to mitigate the evil; but superstition was too powerful to allow a complete reform, and many shrines were allowed to retain the right of asylum to a much later period.

Though ancient superstitions were still practised, old religious feelings were extinct. The oracles, which had once formed the most remarkable of the sacred institutions of the Greeks, had fallen into decay. It is, however, incorrect to suppose that the Pythoness ceased to deliver her responses from the time of our Saviour's birth, for she was consulted by the emperors long after. Many oracles continued to be in considerable repute, even after the introduction of Christianity into Greece. Pausanias mentions the oracle of Mallos, in Cilicia, as the most veracious in his time. Claros and Didymi were famous, and much consulted in the time of Lucian; and even new oracles were commenced as a profitable speculation. The oracles continued to give their responses to fervent votaries, long after they had fallen into general neglect Julian endeavoured to revive their influence, and he consulted those of Delphi, Delos, and Dodona, concerning the result of his Persian expedition. He vainly attempted to restore Delphi, and Daphne, near Antioch, to their ancient splendour. Even so late as the reign of Theodosius the Great, those of Delphi, Didymi, and Jupiter Ammon, were in existence, but from that period they became utterly silent. The reverence which had formerly been paid to them was transferred to astrologers, who were consulted by all ranks and on all occasions. Tiberius, Otho, Hadrian, and Severus, are all mentioned as votaries of this mode of searching into the secrets of futurity. Yet hidden divination, to which astrology belonged, had been prohibited by the laws of the twelve tables, and was condemned both by express law and by the spirit of the Roman state religion. It was regarded, even by the Greeks, as an illicit and disgraceful practice.

During the first century of the Christian era, the worship of Serapis made great progress in every part of the Roman Empire. This worship inculcated the existence of another world, and of a future judgment. The fact deserves notice, as it indicates the annihilation of all reverence for the old system of paganism, and marks a desire in the public mind to search after those truths which the Christian dispensation soon after revealed. A moral rule of life with a religious sanction was a want which society began to feel when Christianity appeared to supply it.

The religion of the Greeks was so worthless as a guide in morals, that the destruction of priestly influence by the speculations of the philosophers produced no worse effect than completing a separation in the intellectual education of the higher and lower classes, which other causes had already produced. The systems of the priests and the philosophers were in direct opposition to one another, and philosophical enquiry undoubtedly did more for intellectual improvement than could have been effected by the authority of a religion so utterly destitute of intellectual power, and so compliant in its form, as that of Greece. The attention which the Greeks always paid to philosophy and metaphysical speculation, is a curious feature in their mental character, and owes its origin, in part, to the happy logical analogies of their native language; but, in the days of Grecian independence, this was only a distinctive characteristic of a small portion of the cultivated minds in the nation. From that peculiar condition of society which resulted from the existence of a number of small independent states, a larger portion of the

nation was occupied with the higher branches of political business than has ever been the case in any other equally numerous body of mankind. Every city in Greece held the rank of a capital, and possessed its own statesmen and lawyers. The sense of this importance, and the weight of this responsibility, stimulated the Greeks to the extraordinary exertions of intellect with which their history is filled; for the strongest spur to exertion among men is the existence of a duty imposed as a voluntary obligation.

The habits of social intercourse, and the simple manner of life, which prevailed in the Greek republics, rendered the private conduct of every distinguished citizen as well known, and as constantly a subject of scrutiny to his fellow-citizens, as his public career. This powerful agency of public opinion served to enforce a conventional morality which, though lax in its ethics, was at least imperative in its demands. But when the international system of the Hellenic states was destroyed, when an altered condition of society had introduced greater privacy into the habits of social life, and put a stop to public intercourse among the citizens of the same region, by giving a marked prominence to the distinctions of rank and wealth, the private conduct of those who were engaged in public life was, in a great degree, withdrawn from the examination of the people; and the effect of public opinion was gradually weakened, as the grounds on which it was formed became less personal and characteristic.

Political circumstances began, about the same time, to weaken the efficacy of public opinion in affairs of government and administration. The want of some substitute, to replace its powerful influence on the everyday conduct of man, was so imperiously felt that one was eagerly sought for. Religion had long ceased to be a guide in morality; and men strove to find some feeling which would replace the forgotten fear of the gods, and that public opinion which could once inspire self-respect. It was hoped that philosophy could supply the want; and it was cultivated not only by the studious and the learned, but by the world at large, in the belief that the self-respect of the philosopher would prove a sure guide to pure morality, and inspire a deep sense of justice. The necessity of obtaining some permanent power over the moral conduct of mankind was naturally suggested to the Greeks by the political injustice under which they suffered; and the hope that philosophical studies would temper the minds of their masters to equity, and awaken feelings of humanity in their hearts, could not fail to exert considerable influence. When the Romans themselves had fallen into a state of moral and political degradation, lower even than that of the Greeks, it is not surprising that the educated classes should have cultivated philosophy with great eagerness, and with nearly similar views. The universal craving after justice and truth affords a key to the profound respect with which teachers of philosophy were regarded. Their authority and their character were so high that they mixed with all ranks, and preserved their power, in spite of all the ridicule of the satirists. The general purity of their lives, and the justice of their conduct, were acknowledged, though a few may have been corrupted by court favour; and pretenders may often have assumed a long beard and dirty garments, to act the ascetic or the jester with greater effect in the houses of the wealthy Romans. The inadequacy of any philosophical opinions to produce the results required of them was, at last, apparent in the changes and modifications which the various sects were constantly making in the tenets of their founders, and the vain attempts that were

undertaken to graft the paganism of the past on the modern systems of philosophy. The great principle of truth, which all were eagerly searching after, seemed to elude their grasp; yet these investigations were not without great use in improving the intellectual and moral condition of the higher orders, and rendering life tolerable, when the tyranny and anarchy of the imperial government threatened the destruction of society. They prepared the minds of men for listening candidly to a purer religion, and rendered many of the votaries of philosophy ready converts to the doctrines of Christianity.

Philosophy lent a splendour to the Greek name; yet, with the exception of Athens, learning and philosophy were but little cultivated in European Greece. The poverty of the inhabitants, and the secluded position of the country, permitted few to dedicate their time to literary pursuits; and after the time of the Antonines, the wealthy cities of Asia, Syria, and Egypt, contained the real representatives of the intellectual supremacy of the Hellenic race. The Greeks of Europe, unnoticed by history, were carefully cherishing their national institutions; while, in the eyes of foreigners the Greek character and fame depended on the civilization of an expatriated population, already declining in number, and hastening to extinction. The social institutions of the Greeks have, therefore, been even more useful to them in a national point of view than their literature.

Sect. XIII.

The Social Condition of the Greeks affected by the want of Colonies of Emigration

The want of foreign colonies, which admitted of a constant influx of new emigrants, must have exercised a powerful influence in arresting the progress of society in the Roman world. Rome never, like Phoenicia and Greece, permitted numerous bands of her citizens to depart from poverty in their own country, in order to better their fortunes and enjoy the benefits of self-government as independent communities in other lands. Her oligarchical constitution regarded the people as the property of the State. Roman civilization moved only in the train of the armies of Rome, and its progress was arrested when the career of conquest stopped. For several ages war operated as a stimulant to population at Rome, as colonization has served in modem times. It increased the general wealth by an influx of slave labour, and excited the active energies of the people, by opening a career of advancement. But the gains derived from an evil source cannot be productive of permanent good. Even before the policy of Augustus had established universal peace, and reduced the Roman army into a corps of gendarmerie or armed police for guarding the internal tranquillity of the provinces, or watching the frontiers, a combination of inherent defects in the constitution of the Roman state had begun to destroy the lower order of Roman citizens. The people required a new field of action when the old career of conquest was closed for ever, in order to engage their energies in active pursuits, and prevent them from pining away in poverty and idleness. The want of colonies of emigration, at this conjuncture, kept all the evil elements of the population fermenting within the State. The want of some

distant spot connected with the past history of their race, but freed from the existing social restrictions which weighed heavily on the industrious, the ambitious, and the proud, was required by the Romans to relieve society and render political reforms possible. Various attempts were made to counteract the poverty and the want of occupation among the free labourers which was produced at Rome by every long cessation of war. C. Gracchus introduced the annual distributions of grain, which became one of the principal causes of the ruin of the republic; and Augustus established his colonies of legionaries over Italy in a manner that accelerated its depopulation.

Military colonies, colonial municipalities, and the practice adopted by the Roman citizens of seeking their fortunes in Spain, Gaul, and Britain, were an imperfect substitute for modern emigration, though they long tended to preserve an impulse towards improvement in the western portion of the Roman Empire. The policy of the emperors was directed to render society stationary; and it escaped the observation of profound statesmen, like Augustus and Tiberius, that the most efficient means of securing it from decline consisted in the formation of a regular demand on the population, by means of emigration. Foreign colonization was, however, adverse to all the prejudices of a Roman. The policy and religion of the State were equally opposed to the residence of any citizen beyond the bounds of the empire; and the constant diminution of the inhabitants of Italy, which accompanied the extended conquests of the republic, seemed to indicate that the first duty of the masters of Italy was to encourage an influx of population.

The decline in the population of Italy proceeded from evils inherent in the political system of the Roman government. They exercised their influence in the Grecian provinces of the empire, but they can only be traced with historical accuracy, in their details, close to the centre of the executive power. The system of administration in the republic had always tended to aggrandize the aristocracy, who talked much of glory, but thought constantly of wealth. When the conquests of Rome were extended over all the richest countries of the ancient world, the leading families accumulated incredible riches,—riches, indeed, far exceeding the wealth of modern sovereigns. Villas and parks were formed over all Italy on a scale of the most sumptuous grandeur, and land became more valuable as hunting-grounds than as productive farms. The same habits were introduced into the provinces. In the neighbourhood of Rome, agriculture was ruined by the public distributions of grain which was received as tribute from the provinces, and by the bounty granted to importing merchants in order to secure a low maximum price of bread. The public distributions at Alexandria and Antioch must have proved equally injurious. Another cause of the decline in the population of the empire was the great increase of the slaves which took place on the rapid conquests of the Romans, and the diffusion of the immense treasures suddenly acquired by their victories. There is always a considerable waste of productive industry among a slave population; and free labourers cease to exist, rather than perpetuate their race, if their labour be degraded to the same level in society as that of slaves. When the insecurity of property and person under the Roman government after the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and the corrupt state of society, are added to these various causes of decay, the decline and depopulation of the empire does not require farther explanation.

Yet society would not, probably, have declined as it did, under the weight of the Roman power, had the active, intelligent, and virtuous members of the middle classes possessed the means of escaping from a social position so calculated to excite feelings of despair. It is in vain to offer conjectures on the subject; for the vice in the Roman constitution which rendered all their military and state colonies merely sources of aggrandizement to the aristocracy, may have proceeded from some inherent defect in the social organization of the people, and, consequently, might have entailed ruin on any Roman society established beyond the authority of the senate or the emperors. The social organization of nations affects their vitality as much as their political constitution affects their power and fortunes.

The exclusively Roman feeling, which was adverse to all foreign colonization, was first attacked when Christianity spread itself beyond the limits of the empire. The fact that Christianity was not identical with citizenship, or, at least, with subjection to Rome, was a powerful cause of creating that adverse feeling towards the Christians which branded them as enemies of the human race; for, in the mouth of a Roman, the human race was a phrase for the empire of Rome, and the Christians were really persecuted by emperors like Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, because they were regarded as having no attachment to the Roman government, because their humanity was stronger than their citizenship.

Sect. XIV.

Effects produced in Greece by the Inroads of the Goths

After the reign of Alexander Severus, the whole attention of the Roman government was absorbed by the necessity of defending the empire against the invasions of the northern nations. Two centuries of communication with the Roman world had extended the effects of incipient civilization throughout all the north of Europe. Trade had created new wants, and given a new impulse to society. This state of improvement always causes a rapid increase of population, and awakens a spirit of enterprise, which makes the apparent increase even greater than the real. The history of every people which has attained any eminence in the annals of mankind, has been marked by a similar period of activity. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Arabs, poured out a succession of armies, which must have astonished the nations which they attacked, quite as much as the apparently inexhaustible armies of the Goths amazed the degenerate Romans. Yet few events, in the whole course of history, seem more extraordinary than the success of the uncivilized Goths against the well-disciplined legions of imperial Rome, and their successful inroads into the thickly-peopled provinces of the Roman Empire. The causes of this success are evidently to be sought within the empire: the defenceless state of the population, which was everywhere carefully disarmed, the oppression of the provincials, the disorder in the finances, and the relaxation in the discipline of the troops, contributed more to the victories of the Goths than their own strength or military skill. If any national feeling, or common

political interest, had connected the people, the army, and the sovereign, the Roman empire would have easily repulsed the attacks of all its enemies; nay, had the government not placed itself in direct opposition to the interests of its subjects, and arrested their natural progress by vicious legislation and corrupt administration, the barbarous inhabitants of Germany, Poland, and Russia, could have offered no more effective resistance to the advance of Roman colonization than those of Spain, Gaul, and Britain. But the task of extending the domain of civilization required to be supported by the energy of national feelings; it was far beyond the strength of the imperial or any other central government. The ablest of the despots who styled themselves the world's masters, did not dare, though nourished in camps, to attempt a career of foreign conquest; these imperial soldiers were satisfied with the inglorious task of preserving the limits of the empire without diminution. Even Severus, after he had consolidated a systematic despotism, based on military power, did not succeed in extending the empire. This avowed inability of the Roman armies to make any further progress, invited the barbarians to attack the provinces. If a body of assailants proved successful in breaking through the Roman lines, they were sure of considerable plunder. If they were repulsed, they could generally evade pursuit. These incursions were at first the enterprises of armed bands and small tribes, but they became afterwards the employment of armies and nations. To the timid eye of the unwarlike and unarmed citizens of the empire, the whole population of the north appeared to be constantly on its march, to plunder and enslave the wealthy and peaceable inhabitants of the south.

Various means of defence were employed by the reigning sovereigns. Alexander Severus secured the tranquillity of the frontiers by paying subsidies to the barbarians: Decius fell, defending the provinces against an immense army of Goths which had penetrated into the heart of Moesia; and Trebonianus Gallus purchased the retreat of the victors by engaging to pay them an annual tribute. The disorder in the Roman government increased, the succession of emperors became more rapid, and the numbers of the invaders augmented. Various tribes and nations, called, by the Greeks and Romans, Scythians and Goths, and belonging to the great families of the Sclavonic and Germanic stock, under the names of East and West Goths, Vandals, Heruls, Borans, Karps, Peuks, and Urugunds, crossed the Danube. Their incursions were pushed through Moesia into Thrace and Macedonia; an immense booty was carried away, and a still greater amount of property was destroyed; thousands of the industrious inhabitants were reduced to slavery, and a far greater number massacred by the cruelty of the invaders.

The Greeks were awakened by these invasions from the state of lethargy in which they had reposed for three centuries. They began to repair the long neglected fortifications of their towns, and muster their city guards and rural police, for a conflict in defence of their property. Cowardice had long been supposed, by the Romans, to be an incurable vice of the Greeks, who had been compelled to appear before the Romans with an obsequious and humble mien, and every worthless Roman had thence arrogated to himself a fancied superiority. But the truth is, that all the middle classes in the Roman world had, from the time of Augustus, become averse to sacrificing their ease for the doubtful glory to be gained in the imperial service. No patriotic feeling drew men to the camp; and the allurements of ambition were stifled by obscurity of station and hopelessness of promotion. The young nobility of Rome, when called upon to serve in

the legions, after the defeat of Varus, displayed signs of cowardice unparalleled in the history of Greece. Like the Fellahs of modern Egypt, they cut off their thumbs in order to escape military serviced Greece could contribute but little to the defence of the empire; but Caracalla had drawn from Sparta some recruits whom he formed into a Lacedaemonian phalanx. Decius, before his defeat, intrusted the defence of Thermopylae to Claudius, who was afterwards emperor, but who had only fifteen hundred regular troops, in addition to the ordinary Greek militia of the cities. The smallness of the number is curious; it indicates the tranquil condition of the Hellenic population before the northern nations penetrated into the heart of the empire.

The preparations for defending the country were actively carried on, both in northern Greece and at the Isthmus of Corinth. In the reign of Valerian the walls of Athens, which had not been put in a proper state of defence from the time of Sulla, were repaired, and the fortifications across the isthmus were restored and garrisoned by Peloponnesian troops. It was not long before the Greeks were called upon to prove the efficiency of their warlike arrangements. A body of Goths, having established themselves along the northern shores of the Black Sea, commenced a series of naval expeditions. They soon penetrated through the Thracian Bosphorus, and, aided by additional bands who had proceeded from the banks of the Danube by land, they marched into Asia Minor, and plundered Chalcedon, Nicomedia, Nicaea, and Prusa, A.D. 259. This successful enterprise was soon followed by still more daring expeditions.

In the year 267, another fleet, consisting of five hundred vessels, manned chiefly by the Goths and Heruls, passed the Bosphorus and the Hellespont They seized Byzantium and Chrysopolis, and advanced, plundering the islands and coasts of the Aegean Sea, and laying waste many of the principal cities of the Peloponnesus. Cyzicus, Lemnos, Skyros, Corinth, Sparta, and Argos, are named as having suffered by their ravages. From the time of Sulla's conquest of Athens, a period of nearly three hundred and fifty years had elapsed, during which Attica had escaped the evils of war; yet when the Athenians were called upon to defend their homes, they displayed a spirit worthy of their ancient fame. An officer, named Cleodemus, had been sent by the government from Byzantium to Athens, in order to repair the fortifications, but a division of these Goths landed at the Piraeus, and succeeded in carrying Athens by storm, before any means were taken for its defence. Dexippus, an Athenian of rank in the Roman service, soon contrived to reassemble the garrison of the Acropolis; and by joining to it such of the citizens as possessed some knowledge of military discipline, or some spirit for warlike enterprise, he formed a little army of two thousand men. Choosing a strong position in the Olive Grove, he circumscribed the movements of the Goths, and so harassed them by a close blockade that they were compelled to abandon Athens. Cleodemus, who was not at Athens when it was surprised, had in the meantime assembled a fleet and gained a naval victory over a division of the barbarian fleet. These reverses were a prelude to the ruin of the Goths. A Roman fleet entered the Archipelago, and a Roman army, under the emperor Gallienus, marched into Illyricum; the separate divisions of the Gothic expedition were everywhere overtaken by these forces, and destroyed in detail. During this invasion of the empire, one of the divisions

of the Gothic army crossed the Hellespont into Asia, and succeeded in plundering the cities of the Troad, and in destroying the celebrated temple of Diana of Ephesus.

Dexippus was himself the historian of the Gothic invasion of Attica, but, unfortunately, little information on the subject can be collected from the fragments of his works which now exist. There is a celebrated anecdote connected with this incursion which throws some light on the state of the Athenian population, and on the conduct of the Gothic invaders of the empire. The fact of its currency is a proof of the easy circumstances in which the Athenians lived, of the literary idleness in which they indulged, and the general mildness of the assailants, whose sole object was plunder. It is said that the Goths, when they had captured Athens, were preparing to burn the splendid libraries which adorned the city; but that a Gothic soldier dissuaded them, by telling his countrymen that it was better that the Athenians should continue to waste their time in their halls and porticos over their books, than that they should begin to occupy themselves with warlike exercises. Gibbon, indeed, thinks the anecdote may be suspected as the fanciful conceit of a recent sophist; and he adds, that the sagacious counsellor reasoned like an ignorant barbarian. But the national degradation of the Greeks has co-existed with their pre-eminence in learning during many centuries, so that it appears that this ignorant barbarian reasoned like an able politician. Even the Greeks, who repeated the anecdote, seem to have thought that there was more sound sense in the arguments of the Goth than the great historian is willing to admit. Something more than mere reading and study is required to form the judgment. The cultivation of learning does not always bring with it the development of good sense. It does not always render men wiser, and it generally proves injurious to their bodily activity. When literary pursuits, therefore, become the exclusive object of national ambition, and distinction in the cultivation of literature and abstract science is more esteemed than sagacity and prudence in the everyday duties of life, effeminacy is undoubtedly more likely to prevail, than when literature is used as an instrument for advancing practical acquirements and embellishing active occupations. The rude Goths themselves would probably have admired the poetry of Homer and of Pindar, though they despised the metaphysical learning of the schools of Athens.

The celebrity of Athens, and the presence of the historian Dexippus, have given to this incursion of the barbarians a prominent place in history; but many expeditions are casually mentioned, which must have inflicted greater losses on the Greeks, and spread devastation more widely over the country. These inroads must have produced important changes in the condition of the Greek population, and given a new impulse to society. The passions of men were called into action, and the protection of their property often depended on their own exertions. Public spirit was again awakened, and many cities of Greece successfully defended their walls against the armies of barbarians who broke into the empire in the reign of Claudius. Thessalonica and Cassandra were attacked by land and sea. Thessaly and Greece were invaded; but the walls of the towns were generally found in a state of repair, and the inhabitants ready to defend them. The great victory obtained by the emperor Claudius II, at Naissus, broke the power of the Goths: and a Roman fleet in the Archipelago destroyed the remains of their naval forces. The extermination of these invaders was completed by a great plague which ravaged the East for fifteen years.

During the repeated invasions of the barbarians, an immense number of slaves were either destroyed or carried away beyond the Danube. Great facilities were likewise afforded for the escape of dissatisfied slaves. The numbers of the slave population in Greece must, therefore, have undergone a reduction, which could not prove otherwise than beneficial to those who remained, and which must also have produced a very considerable change on the condition of the poorer freemen, the value of whose labour must have been considerably increased. The danger in which men of wealth lived, necessitated an alteration in their mode of life; every one was compelled to think of defending his person, as well as his property; new activity was infused into society; and thus it seems that the losses caused by the ravages of the Goths, and the mortality produced by the plague, caused a general improvement in the circumstances of the inhabitants of Greece.

It must here be observed, that the first great inroads of the northern nations, who succeeded in penetrating into the heart of the Roman empire, were directed against the eastern provinces, and that Greece suffered severely by the earliest invasions; yet the eastern portion of the empire alone succeeded in driving back the barbarians, and preserving its population free from any admixture of the Gothic race. This successful resistance was chiefly owing to the national feelings and political organization of the Greek people. The institutions which the Greeks retained prevented them from remaining utterly helpless in the moment of danger; the magistrates possessed a legitimate authority to take measures for any extraordinary crisis, and citizens of wealth and talent could render their services useful, without any violent departure from the usual forms of the local administration. The evil of anarchy was not, in Greece, added to the misfortune of invasion. Fortunately for the Greeks, the insignificancy of their military forces prevented the national feelings, which these measures aroused, from giving umbrage either to the Roman emperors or to their military officers in the provinces.

From the various accounts of the Gothic wars of this period which exist, it is evident that the expeditions of the barbarians were, as yet, only undertaken for the purpose of plundering the provinces. The invaders entertained no idea of being able to establish themselves permanently within the bounds of the empire. The celerity of their movements generally made their numbers appear greater than they really were; while the inferiority of their arms and discipline rendered them an unequal match for a much smaller body of the heavy-armed Romans. When the invaders met with a steady and well-combined resistance, they were defeated without much difficulty; but whenever a moment of neglect presented itself, their attacks were repeated with undiminished courage. The victorious reigns of Claudius II, Aurelian, and Probus, prove the immense superiority of the Roman armies when properly commanded; but the custom, which was constantly gaining ground, of recruiting the legions from among the barbarians, reveals the deplorable state of depopulation and weakness to which three centuries of despotism and bad administration had reduced the empire. On the one hand, the government feared the spirit of its subjects, if intrusted with arms, far more than it dreaded the ravages of the barbarians; and on the other, it was unwilling to reduce the number of the citizens paying taxes, by draughting too large a proportion of the industrious classes into the army. The imperial fiscal system rendered it necessary to keep all the provincial landed

proprietors carefully disarmed, lest they should revolt, and perhaps make an attempt to revive republican institutions; and the defence of the empire seemed, to the Roman emperors, to demand the maintenance of a larger army than the population of their own dominions, from which recruits were drawn, could supply.

Sect. XV.

Changes which preceded the Establishment of Constantinople as the Capital of the Roman Empire

The Romans had long been sensible that their social vices threatened their empire with ruin, though they never contemplated the possibility of their cowardice delivering it up a prey to barbarous conquerors. Augustus made a vain attempt to stem the torrent of corruption, by punishing immorality in the higher orders. But a privileged class is generally sufficiently powerful to be able to form its own social code of morality, and protect its own vices as long as it can maintain its existence. The immorality of the Romans at last undermined the political fabric of the empire. Two centuries and a half after the failure of Augustus, the emperor Decius endeavoured with as little effect to reform society. Neither of these sovereigns understood how to cure the malady which was destroying the State. They attempted to improve society by punishing individual nobles for general vices. They ought to have annihilated the privileges which raised senators and nobles above the influence of law and public opinion, and subjected them to nothing but the despotic power of the emperor. St. Paul, however, informs us that the whole frame of society was so utterly corrupted that even this measure would have proved ineffectual. The people were as vicious as the senate; all ranks were suffering from a moral gangrene, which no human art could heal. The dangerous abyss to which society was hastening did not escape observation. The alarm gradually spread through every class in the wide extent of the Roman world. A secret terror was felt by the emperors, the senators, and even by the armies. Men's minds were changed, and a divine influence produced a reform of which man's wisdom and strength had proved incapable. From the death of Alexander Severus to the accession of Diocletian, a great social alteration is visible in paganism; the aspect of the human mind seemed to have undergone a complete metamorphosis. The spirit of Christianity was floating in the atmosphere, and to its influence we must attribute that moral change in the pagan world, during the latter half of the third century, which tended to prolong the existence of the Western Roman Empire.

Foreign invasions, the disorderly state of the army, the weight of the taxes, and the irregular constitution of the imperial government, produced at this time a general feeling that the army and the State required a new organization, in order to adapt both to the exigencies of altered circumstances, and save the empire from impending ruin. Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian, and Constantine, appeared as reformers of the Roman Empire. The history of their reforms belongs to the records of the Roman constitution, as they were conceived with very little reference to the institutions of the provinces; and

only some portion of the modifications then made in the form of the imperial administration will fall within the scope of this work. But though the administrative reforms produced little change in the condition of the Greek population, the Greeks themselves actively contributed to effect a mighty revolution in the whole frame of social life, by the organization which they gave to the church from the moment they began to embrace the Christian religion. It must not be overlooked, that the Greeks organized a Christian church before Christianity became the established religion of the empire.

Diocletian found that the Roman Empire had lost much of its internal cohesion, and that it could no longer be conveniently governed from one administrative centre. He attempted to remedy the increasing weakness of the coercive principle, by creating four centres of executive authority, controlled by a single imperial legislative emperor. But no human skill could long preserve harmony between four executive despots. Constantine restored the unity of the Roman Empire. His reign marks the period in which old Roman political feelings lost their power, and the superstitious veneration for Rome herself ceased. The liberty afforded for new political ideas by the new social organization was not overlooked by the Greeks. The transference of the seat of government to Byzantium weakened the Roman spirit in the public administration. The Romans, indeed, from the establishment of the imperial government, had ceased to form a homogeneous people, or to be connected by feelings of attachment and interest to one common country; and as soon as the rights of Roman citizenship had been conferred on the provincials, Rome became a mere ideal country to the majority of Romans. The Roman citizens, however, in many provinces, formed a civilized caste of society, dwelling among a number of ruder natives and slaves; they were not melted into the mass of the population. In the Grecian provinces, no such distinction prevailed. The Greeks, who had taken on themselves the name and the position of Roman citizens, retained their own language, manners, and institutions; and as soon as Constantinople was founded and became the capital of the empire, a struggle arose whether it was to become a Greek or a Latin city.

Constantine himself does not appear to have perceived this tendency of the Greek population to acquire a predominant influence in the East by supplanting the language and manners of Rome, and he modelled his new capital entirely after Roman ideas and prejudices. Constantinople was, at its foundation, a Roman city, and Latin was the language of the higher ranks of its inhabitants. This fact must not be lost sight of; for it affords an explanation of the opposition which is for ages apparent in the feelings, as well as the interests, of the capital and of the Greek nation. Constantinople was a creation of imperial favour; a regard to its own advantage rendered it subservient to despotism, and, for a long period, impervious to any national feeling. The inhabitants enjoyed exemptions from taxation, and received distributions of grain and provisions, so that the misery of the empire, and the desolation of the provinces, hardly affected them. Left at leisure to enjoy the games of the circus, they were bribed by government to pay little attention to the affairs of the empire. Such was the position of the people of Constantinople at the time of its foundation, and such it continued for many centuries.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE ESTABLISMENT OF CONSTANTINOPLE AS CAPITAL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE ACCESSION OF JUSTINIAN. A.D. 330-527

Sect. I.

Constantine, in reforming the Government of the Roman Empire, placed the administration in direct hostility to the people.

The warlike frenzy of the Romans rendered the emperors, from commanders of the army, masters of the State. But the soldiers, as soon as they fully comprehended the extent of their power in conferring the imperial dignity, strove to make the emperors their agents in the management of the empire, of which they considered themselves the real proprietors. The army was consequently the branch of the government to which all the others were considered subordinate. The disorders committed, and the defeats experienced, by the troops, at last weakened their influence, and enabled the emperors to reduce the army into a mere instrument of the imperial authority. Two great measures of reform had been contemplated by several of the predecessors of Constantine. Severus had sought to put an end to the civil authority of the senate in the administration of the empire, and to efface the remains of the ancient political constitution. Diocletian had endeavoured to deprive the army of the power of choosing and of dethroning the sovereign; but until the reign of Constantine, the empire was entirely a military State, and the chief characteristic of the imperial dignity was the military command. Constantine first moulded the measures of reform of preceding emperors into a new system of government. He completed the political edifice on the foundations which Diocletian had laid, by remodelling the army, reconstituting the executive power, creating a new capital, and adopting a new religion. Unfortunately for the bulk of mankind, Constantine, when he commenced his plan of reform, was, from his situation, unconnected with the popular or national sympathies of any class of his subjects, and he considered this state of isolation to be the surest basis of the imperial power, and the best guarantee for the impartial administration of justice.

The emperors had long ceased to regard themselves as belonging to any particular country, and the imperial government was no longer influenced by any attachment to the feelings or institutions of ancient Rome. The glories of the republic were forgotten in the constant and laborious duty of administering and defending the empire. New maxims of policy had been formed, and, in cases where the earlier emperors would have

felt as Romans, the wisest counsellors of Constantine would have calmly appealed to the dictates of general expediency. In the eyes of the later emperors, that which their subjects considered as national was only provincial; the history, language, and religion of Greece, Rome, Egypt, and Syria, were merely distinctive characteristics of these different portions of the empire. The emperor, the government, and the army, stood apart, completely separated from the hopes, fears, and interests of the body of the people. Constantine centralized every branch of the executive power in the person of the emperor, and, at the same time, framed a bureaucracy in the administration of each department of public business, in order to guard against the effects of the incapacity or folly of any future sovereign. No more perfect machine of government appears ever to have been established; and, had it combined some principle of reviviscence, to counteract the deteriorating influence of time, with some political combinations capable of enforcing responsibility without revolution, it might have proved perpetual. It is true that, according to the moral laws of the universe, a government ought to be so constituted as to conform to the principles of truth and justice; but, practically, it is sufficient for the internal security of a State that the government da not act in such a manner as to make the people believe that it is perversely unjust. No foreign enemy ever assailed the Roman Empire that could not have been repulsed with ease, had the government and the people formed a united body acting for the general interest. Constantine, unfortunately, organized the government of the Roman Empire as if it were the household of the emperor, and constituted the imperial officials as a caste separate from the people; thus placing it, from its very nature, in opposition to the mass of his subjects. In his desire to save the world from anarchy, he created that struggle between the administration and the governed which has ever since existed, either actively or passively, in every country which has inherited the monarchical principle and the laws of imperial Rome. The problem of combining efficient administration with constant responsibility seems, in these states, still unsolved.

A series of changes in the Roman government had been commenced before the time of Constantine; yet the extent and durability of his reforms, and the distinctness of purpose with which they were conceived, entitle him to rank as one of the greatest legislators of mankind. His defects during his declining years, when his mind and body no longer possessed the activity necessary to inspect and control every detail of a despotic administration which centred in the sovereign's person, ought not to alter our judgment of his numerous wise laws and judicious reforms. Few legislators have effected greater revolutions than Constantine. He transferred the despotic power of the emperor as commander- in-chief of the army, to the emperor as political head of the government; thus rendering the military power subservient to the civil, in the whole range of the administration. He consolidated the dispensation of justice over the whole empire, by universal and systematic laws, which he deemed strong enough to form a bulwark for the people against oppression on the part of the government. Feeble as this theoretic bulwark of law was found to be on great emergencies, it must be owned that, in the ordinary course of public affairs, it was not ineffectual, and that it mainly contributed to prevent the decline of the Roman Empire from proceeding with that rapidity which has marked the decay of most other despotic monarchies. Constantine gave the empire a new capital; and he adopted a new religion, which, with unrivalled prudence, he rendered predominant under circumstances of great difficulty. His reforms

have been supposed to have hastened the decline of the empire which they were intended to save; but the contrary was really the case. He found the empire on the eve of being broken up into a number of smaller states, in consequence of the measures which Diocletian had adopted in order to secure it against anarchy and civil wan He reunited its provinces by a succession of brilliant military achievements; and the object of his legislation appeared to be the maintenance of perfect uniformity in the civil administration by the strictest centralization in what he termed the divine hierarchy of the imperial government. But his conduct was at variance with his policy, for he divided the executive power among his three sons and two nephews; and the empire was only saved from dismemberment or civil war by the murder of the greatest part of his family. Perhaps the empire was really too extensive, and the dissimilarity of its provinces too great, for executive unity, considering the imperfect means of communication which then existed, in a society which neither admitted the principle of hereditary succession nor of primogeniture, in the transmission of the imperial dignity.

The permanent success of Constantine's reforms depended on his financial arrangements supplying ample funds for all the demands of the administration. This fact indicates some similarity between the political condition of his government and the present state of most European monarchies, and may render a close study of the errors of his financial arrangements not without profit to modem statesmen. The sums required for the annual service of the imperial government were immense; and in order to levy as great an amount of revenue from his subjects as possible, Constantine revised the census of all the taxes, and carried their amount as high as he possibly could. Every measure was adopted to transfer the whole circulating medium of the empire annually into the coffers of the State. No economy or industry could enable his subjects to accumulate wealth; while any accident, a fire, an inundation, an earthquake, or a hostile incursion of the barbarians, might leave a whole province incapable of paying its taxes, and plunge it in hopeless debt and ruin.

In general the outward forms of taxation were very little altered by Constantine, but he rendered the whole fiscal system more regular and more stringent; and during no period was the maxim of the Roman government, that the cultivators of the soil were nothing but the instruments for feeding and clothing the imperial court and the army, more steadily kept in view. All privileges were abolished; the tribute, or land-tax, was levied on the estates of all Roman subjects; and in the concessions made to the church, measures were usually adopted to preserve the rights of the fisc. A partial exemption of the property of the clergy was conceded by Constantine, in order to confer on the Christian priesthood a rank equal to that of the ancient senators; but this was so contrary to the principles of his legislation that it was withdrawn in the reign of Constantius. A great change in the revision of the general register of taxation must have taken place in the year 312, throughout the whole Roman Empire; and as Constantine was not then sole emperor, it is evident that the financial policy of his reign, with which it appears to be closely connected, was the continuation of a system already completely organized. The absorbing interest of taxation to the subjects of the Roman Empire rendered the revision of the census from this time the ordinary method of chronological notation. Time was reckoned from the first year, or Indictio, of the new assessment, and when the cycle of fifteen years was completed, a new revision took place, and a new cycle was

commenced; the people thus taking no heed of the lapse of time except by noting the years of similar taxation. Constantine, it is true, passed many laws to protect his subjects from the oppression of the tax-gatherers; but the number and nature of these laws afford the strongest proof that the officers of the court, and the administration, were vested with powers too extensive to be used with moderation, and that all the vigilance of the emperor was required to prevent their destroying the source of the public revenues by utterly ruining the tax-payers. Instead of reducing the numbers of the imperial household, and reforming the expenses of the court, in order to increase the fund available for the civil and military service of the State, Constantine added to the burden of an establishment which already included a large and useless population, by indulging in the most lavish ornament and sumptuous ceremonial. It is evident that he regarded the well-paid offices of his court as baits to allure and attach the civil and military leaders to his service. His measures were successful; and from this time rebellions became less frequent, for the majority of public officials considered it more advantageous to intrigue for advancement than to risk their lives and fortunes in civil war. Nothing reveals more fully the state of barbarism and ignorance to which the Roman world had fallen; the sovereign sought to secure the admiration of his people by outward show; he held them incapable of judging of his conduct, which was guided by the emergencies of his position. The people, no longer connected with the government, and knowing only what passed in their own province, were terrified by the magnificence and wealth which the court displayed; and, hopeless of any change for the better, they regarded the emperor as an instrument of divine power.

The reforms of Constantine required additional revenues. Two new taxes were imposed, which were regarded as the greatest grievances of his reign, and frequently selected for invective, as characteristic of his internal policy. These taxes were termed the Senatorial tax, and the Chrysargyron. The first alienated the aristocracy, and the second excited the complaints of every class of society, for it was a tax levied in the severest manner on every species of receipts. All the existing constitutions, ordinary and extraordinary, and all the monopolies and restrictions affecting the sale of grain, were retained. The exactions of prior governments were rigorously enforced. The presents and gifts which had usually been made to former sovereigns were exacted by Constantine as a matter of right, and regarded as ordinary sources of revenue.

The subjection of Greece to the Roman municipal system forms an epoch in Hellenic history of great social importance; but it was effected so silently that the facts and dates which mark the progress of this political revolution cannot be traced with accuracy. The law of Caracalla, which conferred the rights of citizenship on all the provincials, annihilated the distinctive privileges of the Roman colonies, the old municipia, and the Greek free cities. A new municipal organization, more conformable to a central despotism, was gradually introduced over the whole empire, by which the national ideas and character of the Greeks were ultimately much modified. The legislation of Constantine stamped the municipal institutions of the empire with the fiscal character, which they retained as long as the empire existed; and his laws inform the historian that the influence of the city republic of ancient Hellas had already ceased. Popular opinion had disappeared from Greek society as completely as political liberty from Greece. The change which transformed the ancient language into its Romaic

representative had commenced, and a modern Greek nation was consolidating its existence; disciplined to despotism, and boasting that it was composed of Romans and not of Greeks. The inhabitants of Athens and Sparta, the Achaeans, Aetolians, Dorians, and Ionians, lost their distinctive characteristics, and were blended into one dull mass of uniformity as citizens of the fiscal municipalities of the empire, and as Romaic Greeks.

It is only necessary in this work to describe the general type of the municipal organization which existed in the provinces of the Roman Empire after the time of Constantine, without entering on the many doubtful questions that arise in examining the subject in detail. The proprietors of land in the Roman provinces generally dwelt in towns and cities. Every town had an agricultural district which formed its territory, and the landed proprietors who possessed twenty-five jugera constituted the body from which the municipal magistrates were selected and by which they were in some cases elected. The whole administrative authority was vested in an oligarchical senate called the *Curia*, consisting probably of one hundred of the wealthiest landed proprietors in the city or township. This body elected the municipal officers, and filled up vacancies in its own body. It was therefore independent of the proprietors from among whom it was taken, and whose interests it ought to have represented. The curia—not the body of landed proprietors — formed therefore the real Roman municipality, and it was used by the imperial government as an instrument of fiscal extortion, and a means of preventing a concentrated opposition against the central administration in the collection of taxes. The curia was intrusted with the collection of the land-tax, and its members were rendered responsible for the amount. As they were the wealthiest men of the place, their guarantee for the regular payment of the public revenue was of so much importance, that no curial was allowed to change his condition or quit the place of his residence. Even for a temporary absence from Greece it was necessary for a curial to obtain a permission from the proconsul.

The other free inhabitants of the municipal district, who were not liable to the land-tax, but only paid the capitation—merchants, tradesmen, artists, and labourers—formed a separate and inferior class, and were called tributaries, as distinguished from proprietors. They had no connection with the curia, but were formed into corporations and trade-guilds.

As the wealth and population of the Roman Empire declined, the operation of the municipal system became more oppressive. The chief attention of the imperial governors in the provinces was directed to preventing any diminution in the revenue, and the Roman legislation attempted to enforce the payment of the ancient amount of land-tax and capitation from a declining and impoverished population. Laws were enacted to fix every class of society in its condition with regard to the revenue. The son of a member of the curia was bound to take his father’s place; the son of a landed proprietor could neither become a tradesman nor a soldier, unless he had a brother who could replace his father as a payer of the land-tax. The son of an artisan was bound to follow his father's profession, that the amount of the capitation might not be diminished. Every corporation or guild had the power of compelling the children of its members to complete its numbers. Fiscal conservatism became the spirit of Roman legislation. To prevent the land beyond the limits of a municipality from falling out of cultivation, by the free inhabitants of the rural districts quitting their lands in order to better their

condition in the towns, the laws gradually attached them to the soil, and converted them into agricultural serfs.

In this state of society the emperors were well aware that the people were generally discontented, and to prevent rebellion both the tributaries and the landed proprietors were carefully disarmed. The military class was separated from the landed proprietors by an inseparable barrier. No landed proprietor could become a soldier, and no soldier could become a member of a curia. When the free population of the empire was so much diminished that it became difficult to find recruits, the son of a soldier was bound to follow the profession of arms, but the Roman armies were generally recruited from among the barbarians who lived beyond the bounds of the empire.

In order to defend the tax-payers against the exactions of the imperial governors, fiscal agents and military officers, it became necessary that every municipality should have an official protector, whose duty it was to watch the conduct of the civil and judicial authorities and of the fiscal officers. He was called a *defensor*, and was elected by the free citizens of the township, both tributaries and proprietors. No municipal senator or curial could hold the office of *defensor*, as it might be his duty to appeal to the emperor against the exactions of the *curia*, as well as against the oppressive conduct of a provincial governor or judge.

Such was the municipal organization which supplanted the city communities of ancient Greece, and extinguished the spirit of Hellenic life. The free action, both of the physical and intellectual powers, of the Greeks was fettered by these new social bonds. We can read many curious details relating to the system in the Theodosian code, and in the legislation of Justinian; and we can trace its effects in the ruin of the Western Empire, and in the torpidity of society in the Eastern.

Municipalities henceforward began to be regarded as a burden rather than a privilege. Their magistrates formed an aristocratic class in accordance with the whole fabric of the Roman constitution. These magistrates had willingly borne all the burdens imposed on them by the State as long as they could throw the heaviest portion of the load on the people over whom they presided. But the people at last became too poor to lighten the burden of the rich, and the government found it necessary to force every wealthy citizen to enter the curia, and make good any deficiency in the taxes of the district from his own private revenues. As the Roman Empire declined, the members of one curia after another sank to the same level of general poverty. It required little more than a century from the reign of Constantine to effect the ruin of the western provinces; but the social condition of the eastern, and the natural energy of the Greek character, saved them from the same fate.

The principle adopted by the Roman government in all its relations with the people and with the municipalities, was in every contested case to assume that the citizens were endeavouring to evade burdens which they were well able to bear. This feeling sowed the seeds of hatred to the imperial administration in the hearts of its subjects, who, seeing that they were excluded from every hope of justice in fiscal questions, became often eager to welcome the barbarians.

In Greece the old system of local governments was not entirely eradicated, though it was modified on the imperial model; but every fiscal burden was rigorously enforced

by the imperial government, whenever it tended to relieve the treasury from any expense. At the same time, all those privileges which had once alleviated the pressure of the revenue law, in particular districts, were abolished. The destruction of the great oligarchs, who had rendered themselves proprietors of whole provinces in the earlier days of the Roman domination, was effected. A number of small properties were created at the same time that a moral improvement took place in Greek society by the influence of Christianity. The higher classes became less corrupt, and the lower more industrious. This change enabled the eastern provinces to bear their fiscal burdens with mare ease than the western.

The military organization of the Roman armies was greatly changed by Constantine; and the change is remarkable, as the barbarians were adopting the very principles of tactics which the emperors found it necessary to abandon. The system of the Roman armies, in ancient times, was devised to make them efficient on the field of battle. As the Romans were always invaders, they knew well that they could at last force their enemies to decide their differences in a pitched battle. The frontiers of the empire required a very different method for their defence. The chief duty of the army was to occupy an extended line against an active enemy, far inferior in the field. The necessity of effecting rapid movements of the troops, in bodies varying continually in number, became a primary object in the new tactics. Constantine remodelled the legions, by reducing the number of men to fifteen hundred; and he separated the cavalry entirely from the infantry, and placed them under a different command. He increased the number of the light troops, instituted new divisions in the forces, and made considerable modifications in the armour and weapons of the Romans. This change in the army was in some degree rendered necessary by the difficulty which the government experienced, in raising a sufficient number of men of the class and strength necessary to fill the ranks of the legions, according to the old system. It became necessary to choose between diminishing the number of the troops, or admitting an inferior class of soldiers into the army. Motives of economy, and the fear of the seditious spirit of the legions, also dictated several changes in the constitution of the forces. From this time the Roman armies were composed of inferior materials, and the northern nations began to prepare themselves for meeting them in the field of battle.

The opposition which always existed between the fiscal interest of the Roman government and of the provincials, rendered any intimate connection or community of feeling between the soldiers and the people a thing to be cautiously guarded against by the emperor. The interests of the army required to be kept carefully separated from those of the citizens; and when Constantine, from motives of economy, withdrew a large number of the troops from the camps on the frontiers, and placed them in garrison in the towns, their discipline was relaxed, and their license overlooked, in order to prevent them from acquiring the feelings of citizens. As the barbarians were beyond the influence of any provincial or political sympathies, and were sure to be regarded as enemies by every class in the empire, they became the chosen troops of the emperors. These favourites soon discovered their own importance, and behaved with as great insolence as the praetorian bands had ever displayed.

The necessity of preventing the possibility of a falling off in the revenue, was, in the eyes of the imperial court, of as much consequence as the maintenance of the

efficiency of the army. Proprietors of land, and citizens of wealth, were not allowed to enrol themselves as soldiers, lest they should escape from paying their taxes; and only those plebeians and peasants who were not liable to the land-tax were taken as recruits. When Rome conquered the Greeks the armies of the republic consisted of Romans, and the conquered provinces supplied the republic with tribute to maintain these armies; but when the rights of citizenship were extended to the provincials, it became the duty of the poor to serve in person, and of the rich to supply the revenues of the State. The effect of this was, that the Roman forces were often recruited with slaves, in spite of the laws frequently passed to prohibit this abuse; and, not long after the time of Constantine, slaves were often admitted to enter the army on receiving their freedom. The subjects of the emperors had therefore little to attach them to their government, which was supported by mercenary troops composed of barbarians and slaves, but in all the provinces the inhabitants could do nothing to defend their rights, for they were carefully disarmed.

Sect. II.

The condition of the Greeks was not improved by Constantine's reforms

The general system of Constantine's government was by no means favourable to the advancement of the Greeks as a nation. His new division of the empire into four prefectures neutralized, by administrative arrangements, any influence that the Greeks might have acquired from the prevalence of their language in the countries on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The four prefectures of the empire were the Orient, Illyricum, Italy, and Gaul, and a praetorian prefect directed the civil administration of each of these great divisions of the empire. The prefectures were divided into governments, and these governments were again subdivided into provinces. The prefecture of the Orient embraced five governments: the first was called by the name of the prefecture, the Orient; the others were Egypt, Asia, Pontus, and Thrace, In all these, the Greeks formed only a section of the population, and their influence was controlled by the adverse prejudices and interests of the natives. The prefecture of Illyricum consisted of three governments, Achaia, Macedonia, and Dacia. Achaia retained the honour of being governed by a proconsul. This distinction was only shared with the government called Asia, for there were now only two proconsular provinces; but Achaia was poor, and it was not of sufficient extent and importance to be subdivided. It embraced the Peloponnesus and the continent south of Thessaly and Epirus, occupying nearly the limits of the present kingdom of Greece. Macedonia included six provinces, —two Macedonias, Crete, Thessaly, Old Epirus, and New Epirus. In these two governments of Achaia and Macedonia, the population was almost entirely Greek. In Dacia or the provinces between the Danube and Mount Haemus, the Adriatic and the Black Sea, the civilized portion of the inhabitants was more imbued with the language and prejudices of Rome than of Greece. The proconsular government of Asia was separated from the praetorian prefectures, and placed under the immediate authority of

the emperor. It included two provinces, the Hellespont and the islands between Greece and Asia Minor. Its native population was entirely Greek.

The Greek population had been losing ground in the east since the reign of Hadrian. Pescennius Niger had shown that national feelings might be roused against the oppression of Rome, without adopting Hellenic prejudices. The establishment of the kingdom of Palmyra by Odenathus, and the conquest of Syria and Egypt, gave a severe blow to the influence of the Greeks in these countries. Zenobia, it is true, cultivated Greek literature, but she spoke Syriac and Coptic with equal fluency; and when her power was overthrown, she appears to have regretted that the advice of Longinus and her other Greek councillors had induced her to adopt ambitious projects unconnected with the immediate interests of her native subjects, and she abandoned them to the vengeance of the Romans. Her armies were composed of Syrians and Saracens; and in the civil ad- ministration, the natives of each province claimed an equal rank with the Greeks. The cause of the Greek population, especially in Syria and Egypt, became from this time more closely connected with the declining power of Rome; and even as early as the reign of Aurelian, the antagonism of the native population displayed itself in an Egyptian rebellion which was an effort to throw off Greek domination as well as to escape from the yoke of Rome. The rebellion of Firmus is almost neglected in the history of the numerous rival emperors who were subdued by Aurelian; but the very fact that he was styled by his conqueror a robber, and not a rival, shows that his cause made him a more deadly enemy than the usurpers who were merely military chiefs.

These signs of nationality could not be overlooked by Constantine, and he rendered the political organization of the empire more efficient than it had formerly been to crush the smallest manifestations of national feeling among anybody of its subjects. On the other hand, nothing was done by Constantine with the direct view of improving the condition of the Greeks. Two of his laws have been much praised for their humanity; but they really afford the strongest proofs of the miserable condition to which the inhumanity of the government had reduced the people; and though these laws, doubtless, granted some relief to Greece, they originated in views of general policy. By the one, the collectors of the revenue were prohibited, under pain of death, from seizing the slaves, cattle, and instruments of agriculture of the farmer, for the payment of taxes; and, by the other, all forced labour at public works was ordered to be suspended during seed-time and harvest. Agriculture derived some advantage from the tranquillity which Greece enjoyed during the widespread civil wars that preceded the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine. But as far as the imperial government was concerned, commerce still suffered from the old spirit of neglect, and was circumscribed by monopoly. The officers of the palace, and even the Christian clergy, were allowed to carry merchandise from one province to another, free from the duties which fell heavily on the regular trader. It was not until the reign of Valentinian III that the clergy were finally prohibited from engaging in commerce. The emperor was himself both a merchant and manufacturer; and his commercial operations contributed materially to impoverish his subjects, and to diminish the internal trade of his dominions. The imperial household formed a numerous population, separated from the other subjects of the empire; and the imperial officers endeavoured to maintain this host, and the immense military establishment, with the smallest possible outlay of public money. The

public posts furnished the means of transporting merchandise free of expense, and the officers charged with its conveyance availed themselves of this opportunity to enrich themselves, by importing whatever they could sell with profit. Imperial manufactories supplied those goods which could be produced in the empire; and private manufacturers would seldom venture to furnish the same articles, lest their trade should interfere with the secret sources of profit of some powerful officer. These facts sufficiently explain the rapid decline in the trade, manufactures, and general wealth of the population of the Roman Empire which followed the transference of the capital to Constantinople. Yet, while commerce was thus ruined, the humble and honest occupation of the shopkeeper was treated as a dishonourable profession, and his condition was rendered doubly contemptible. He was made the serf of the corporation in which he was inscribed, and his industry was fettered by restrictions which compelled him to remain in poverty. The merchant was not allowed to travel with more than a limited sum of money, under pain of exile. This singular law must have been adopted, partly to secure the monopolies of the importing merchants, and partly to serve some interest of the officers of government, without any reference to the general good of the empire.

Though the change of the capital from Rome to Constantinople produced many modifications in the government, its influence on the Greek population was much less than one might have expected. The new city was an exact copy of old Rome. Its institutions, manners, interests, and language, were Roman; and it inherited all the isolation of the old capital, and stood in direct opposition to the Greeks, and all the provincials. It was inhabited by senators from Rome. Wealthy individuals from the provinces were likewise compelled to keep up houses at Constantinople, pensions were conferred upon them, and a right to a certain amount of provisions from the public stores was annexed to these dwellings. The tribute of grain from Egypt was appropriated to supply Constantinople with bread; the wheat of Africa was left for the consumption of Rome. Eighty thousand loaves were distributed daily to the inhabitants of the new capital. The claim to a share in this distribution, though granted as a reward for merit, in some cases was rendered hereditary, but at the same time made alienable by the receiver, and was always strictly attached to the possession of property in the city. This distribution consequently differed in its nature from the distributions bestowed at Rome on poor citizens who had no other means of livelihood. We here discover the tie which bound the new capital to the cause of the emperors, and an explanation of the toleration shown by the emperors to the factions of the circus and the disorders of the populace. The emperor and the inhabitants of the capital felt that they had a common interest in supporting the despotic power by which the provinces were drained of money to supply the luxurious expenditure of the court, and to furnish provisions and amusements for the people; and, consequently, the tumults of the populace never induced the emperors to weaken the influence of the capital; nor did the tyranny of the emperors ever induce the citizens of the capital to demand the systematic circumscription of the imperial authority.

Even the change of religion produced very little improvement in the imperial government. The old evils of Roman tyranny were perpetrated under a more regular and legal despotism and a purer religion, but they were not less generally oppressive. The government grew daily weaker as the people grew poorer; the population rapidly

diminished, and the framework of society became gradually disorganized. The regularity of the details of the administration rendered it more burdensome; the obedience enforced in the army had only been obtained by the deterioration of its discipline. The barrier which the empire opposed to the ravages of the barbarians became, consequently, weaker under each succeeding emperor.

Sect. III

Changes produced in the Social Condition of the Greeks by the Alliance of Christianity with their National Manners.

The decline of Roman influence, and of the power of the Roman government, afforded the Greeks some favourable conjunctures for improving their condition. Christianity connected itself with the social organization of the people, without directly attempting to change their political condition; and by awakening sentiments of philanthropy which created a new social impulse, it soon produced a marked improvement in the social as well as in the moral and religious position of the Greeks. Though Christianity failed to arrest the decline of the Roman Empire, it reinvigorated the popular mind, and reorganized the people, by giving them a powerful and permanent object on which to concentrate their attention, and an invariable guide for their conduct in every relation of life. As it was long confined chiefly to the middle and lower classes of society, it was compelled, in every different province of the empire, to assume the language and usages of the locality, and thus it combined individual attachments with universal power. But it must be observed that a great change took place in the feelings and conduct of the Christians from the period that Constantine formed a political alliance with the church, and constituted the clergy into a corporate body. The great benefits which the inhabitants of the Roman Empire had previously derived from the connection of their bishops and presbyters with local national feelings, was then neutralized. The church became a political institution, dependent, like every other department of the public administration, on the emperor's authority; and henceforward, whenever the ministers and teachers of the Christian religion became closely connected with national feelings, they were accused of heresy.

Paganism had undergone a great change about the time of the establishment of the Roman Empire. A belief in the resurrection of the body began to spread, both among the Romans and the Greeks; and it is to the prevalence of this belief that the great success of the worship of Serapis, and the general adoption of the practice of burying the dead instead of burning it on a funeral pile, are to be attributed. The decline of paganism had proceeded far before Christianity was preached to the Greeks. The ignorance of the people on the one hand, and the speculations of the philosophers on the other, had already almost succeeded in destroying all reverence for the ancient gods of Greece, which rested more oil mythological and historical recollections, and on associations derived from and connected with art, than on moral principles or mental conviction. The paganism of the Greeks was a worship identified with particular tribes, and with precise

localities; and the want of this local and material union had been constantly felt by the Greeks of Asia and Alexandria, and had tended much to introduce those modifications by which the Alexandrine philosophers attempted to unite Hellenic superstitions with their metaphysical views. Many Greeks and Romans had learned just ideas of religion from the Jews. They had acquired true notions of the divine nature, and of the duties which God requires of man. While, on the other hand, a religion which could deify Commodus and some of the worst emperors, must have fallen into contempt with all reflecting men; and even those who believed in its claims to superhuman authority must have regarded it with some aversion, as having formed an unjust alliance with their tyrants. It is not, therefore, surprising that a disbelief in the gods of the empire was general among the people throughout the East. But it is impossible for man to exist in society without some religious feeling. The worship of the gods was therefore immediately replaced by a number of superstitious practices, borrowed from foreign nations, or by the revival of the traditions of a ruder period, relating to an inferior class of spirits.

The wealth of the temples in Greece, and the large funds appropriated to public feasts and religious ceremonies, kept up an appearance of devotion; but a considerable portion of these funds began to be enjoyed as the private fortunes of the hereditary priests, or was diverted, by the corporations charged with their administration, to other purposes than the service of the temples, without these changes exciting any complaints. The progressive decline of the ancient religion is marked by the numerous laws which the emperors enacted against secret divination, and the rites of magicians, diviners, and astrologers. Though these modes of prying into futurity had always been regarded by the Romans and the Greeks as impious, and hostile to the religion of the State, and been strictly forbidden by public laws, they continued to gain ground under the empire. The contempt of the people for the ancient religion as early as the time of Trajan was shown by their general indifference to the rites of sacrifice, and to the ceremonials of their festivals. While the great struggle with Christianity was openly carried on, this was peculiarly remarkable. The emperor Julian often complains, in his works, of this indifference, and gives rather a ludicrous instance of its extent in an anecdote which happened to himself. As emperor and Pontifex Maximus, he repaired to the temple of Apollo at Daphne, near Antioch, on the day of the great feast. He declares that he expected to see the temple filled with sacrifices, but he found not even a cake, nor a grain of incense; and the god would have been without an offering had the priest himself not brought a goose, the only victim which Apollo received on the day of his festival. Julian proves, by this anecdote, that all the population of Antioch was Christian, otherwise curiosity would have induced a few to visit the temple.

The laws of the moral world prevent any great reformation in society from being effected, without the production of some positive evil. The best feelings of humanity are often awakened in support of very questionable institutions; and all opinions hallowed by the lapse of time become so endeared by old recollections, that the most self-evident truths are frequently overlooked, and the greatest benefits to the mass of mankind are peremptorily rejected, when their first announcement attacks an existing prejudice. No principles of political wisdom, and no regulations of human prudence, could therefore

have averted the many evils which attended the change of religion in the Roman Empire, even though that change was from fable to truth, from paganism to Christianity.

The steady progress which Christianity made against paganism, and the deep impression it produced on the middle classes of society, and on the votaries of philosophy, are certainly wonderful, when the weight of prejudice, the wealth of the temples, the pride of the schoolmen, and the influence of college endowments, are taken into consideration. Throughout the East, the educated Greeks, from the peculiar disposition of their minds, were easily led to grant an attentive hearing to the promulgators of new doctrines and systems. Even at Athens, Paul was listened to with great respect by many of the philosophers; and after his public oration to the Athenians at the Areopagus, some said, "We will hear thee again of this matter". A belief that the principle of unity, both in politics and religion, must, from its simplicity and truth, lead to perfection, was an error of the human mind extremely prevalent at the time that Christianity was first preached. That one according spirit might be traced in the universe, and that there was one God, the Father of all, was a very prevalent doctrine. This tendency towards despotism in politics, and deism in religion, is a feature of the human mind which continually reappears in certain conditions of society and corruptions of civilization. At the same time a very general dissatisfaction was felt at these conclusions; and the desire of establishing the principle of man's responsibility, and his connection with another state of existence, seemed hardly compatible with the unity of the divine essence adored by the philosophers. Deism was indeed the prevailing opinion in religion, yet it was generally felt that it did not supply the void created by the absence of belief in the power of the ancient pagan divinities, who had been supposed to pervade all nature, to be ever present on the earth or in the air, that they might watch the actions of men with sympathies almost human. The influence of deism was cold and inanimate, while an affectation of superior wisdom almost invariably induced the philosophers to introduce some maxim into their tenets adverse to the plain common-sense of mankind, which abhors paradox. The people felt that the moral corruption of which the pagan Juvenal, in his intense indignation, has given us so many vivid descriptions, must eventually destroy all social order. A reformation was anxiously desired, but no power existed capable of undertaking the work. At this crisis Christianity presented itself, and offered men the precise picture of the attributes of God of which they were in search; it imposed on them obligations of which they acknowledged the necessity, and it required from them a faith, of which they gradually recognised the power.

Under these circumstances, Christianity could not fail of making numerous converts. It boldly announced the full bearing of truths, of which the Greek philosophers had only afforded a dim glimpse; and it distinctly contradicted many of the favourite dreams of the national but falling faith of Greece. It required either to be rejected or adopted. Among the Greeks, therefore, Christianity met everywhere with a curious and attentive audience. The feelings of the public mind were dormant; Christianity opened the sources of eloquence, and revived the influence of popular opinion. From the moment a people, in the state of intellectual civilization in which the Greeks were, could listen to the preachers, it was certain they would adopt the religion. They might alter, modify, or corrupt it, but it was impossible that they should reject it. The existence of an

assembly, in which the dearest interests of all human beings were expounded and discussed in the language of truth, and with the most earnest expressions of persuasion, must have lent an irresistible charm to the investigation of the new doctrine among a people possessing the institutions and feelings of the Greeks. Sincerity, truth, and a desire to persuade others, will soon create eloquence where numbers are gathered together. Christianity revived oratory, and with oratory it awakened many of the national characteristics which had slept for ages. The discussions of Christianity gave also new vigour to the communal and municipal institutions, as it improved the intellectual qualities of the people.

The injurious effect of the demoralization of society prevalent throughout the world on the position of the females, must have been seriously felt by every Grecian mother. The educated females in Greece, therefore, naturally welcomed the pure morality of the Gospel with the warmest feelings of gratitude and enthusiasm; and to their exertions the rapid conversion of the middle orders must in some degree be attributed. Female influence must not be overlooked, if we would form a just estimate of the change produced in society by the conversion of the Greeks to Christianity.

The effect of Christianity extended to political society, by the manner in which it enforced the observance of the moral duties on every rank of men without distinction, and the way in which it called in the aid of public opinion to enforce that self-respect which a sense of responsibility is sure to nourish. This political influence of Christianity soon displayed itself among the Greeks. They had always been deeply imbued with a feeling of equality, and their condition, after their conquest by the Romans, had impressed on them the necessity of a moral code, to which superiors and inferiors, rulers and subjects, were equally amenable. The very circumstances, however, which gave Christianity peculiar attractions for the Greeks, excited a feeling of suspicion among the Roman official authorities. Considering, indeed, the manner in which the Christians formed themselves into separate congregations in all the cities and towns of the East, the constituted form which they gave to their own society, entirely independent of the civil authority in the State, the high moral character and the popular talents of many of their leaders, it is not wonderful that the Roman emperors should have conceived some alarm at the increase of the new sect, and deemed it necessary to exterminate it by persecution. Until the government of the empire was prepared to adopt the tenets of Christianity, and identify itself with the Christian population, it was not unnatural that the Christians should be regarded as a separate, and consequently inimical class; for it must be confessed that the bonds of their political society were too powerful to allow any government to remain at ease. Let us, for a moment, form a picture of the events which must have been of daily occurrence in the cities of Greece. A Christian merchant arriving at Argos or Sparta would soon excite attention in the *agora* and the *lesche*. His opinions would be examined and controverted. Eloquence and knowledge were by no means rare gifts among the traders of Greece, from the time of Solon the oil-merchant. The discussions which had been commenced in the markets would penetrate into the municipal councils. Cities which enjoyed local privileges and which like Athens and Sparta called themselves free cities would be roused to an unwonted energy, and the Roman governors might well be astonished and feel alarmed.

It was, undoubtedly, the power of the Christians as a political body which excited several of the persecutions against them; and the accusation to which they were subjected, of being the enemies of the human race, was caused by their enforcing general principles of humanity at variance with the despotic maxims of the Roman government. The emperor Decius, the first great persecutor of Christianity, is reported to have declared that he would rather divide his throne with another emperor than have it shared by the bishop of Rome. When the cry of popular hatred was once excited, accusations of promiscuous profligacy, and of devouring human sacrifices, were the calumnious additions, in accordance with the credulity of the age. The first act of legal toleration which the Christians met with from the Roman government was conceded to their power as a political party by Maxentius. They were persecuted and tolerated by Maximin, according to what he conceived to be the dictates of his interest for the time. Constantine, who had long acted as the leader of their political party, at last seated Christianity on the throne, and, by his prudence, the world for many years enjoyed the happiness of religious toleration.

From the moment Christianity was adopted by the Hellenic race, it was so identified with the habits of the people as to become essentially incorporated with the subsequent history of the nation. The earliest corporations of Greek Christians were united in distinct bodies by civil as well as by religious ties. The members of each congregation assembled not only for divine worship, but also when any subject of general interest required their opinion or decision; and the everyday business of the community was intrusted to their spiritual teachers, and to the most influential individuals in the society. It is impossible to determine exactly the limits of the authority of the clergy and the elders in the various Christian communities during the first century. As there was usually a perfect concord on every subject, precise regulations, either to settle the bounds of clerical authority, or the form of administering the business of the society, could not be considered necessary. It cannot, indeed, be supposed that one uniform course of proceeding was adopted for the internal government of all the Christian communities throughout the world. Such a thing would have been too much at variance with the habits of the Greeks and the nature of the Roman Empire. Circumstances must have rendered the government of the Christian churches, in some parts of the East, strictly monarchical; while, in the municipalities of Greece, it would certainly appear more for the spiritual interests of religion, that even the doctrines of the society should be discussed according to the forms used in transacting the public business of these little autonomous cities. Such differences would excite no attention among the cotemporary members of the respective churches, for both would be regarded as equally conformable to the spirit of Christianity. Precise laws and regulations usually originate in the necessity of preventing definite evils, so that principles of action operate as guides to conduct, and exert a practical influence on the lives of thousands, for years before they become embodied in public enactments.

The most distant communities of Christian Greeks in the East were connected by the closest bonds of union, not only for spiritual purposes, but also on account of the mutual protection and assistance which they were called upon to afford one another in the days of persecution. The progress of Christianity among the Greeks was so rapid, that they soon surpassed in numbers, wealth, and influence any other body separated by

peculiar usages from the mass of the population of the Roman Empire. The Greek language became the ordinary medium of communication on ecclesiastical affairs in the East; and the Christian communities of Greeks were gradually melted into one nation, having a common legislation and a common civil administration in many things, as well as a common religion. Their ecclesiastical government thus acquired a moral force which rendered it superior to the local authorities, and which at last rivalled the influence of the political administration of the empire. The Greek Church had grown up to be almost equal in power to the Roman state before Constantine determined to unite the two in strict alliance.

The Christian hierarchy received a regular organization as early as the second century. Christianity then formed a confederation of communities in the heart of the empire, which the imperial government very naturally regarded with jealousy, for the principles of Christianity were a direct negation of, if not a decided opposition to, many of the most cherished maxims of the Roman State. Deputies from the different congregations in Greece met together at stated intervals and places, and formed provincial synods, which replaced the Achaean, Phocic, Boeotic, and Amphictyonic assemblies of former days. How these assemblies were composed, what part the people took in the election of the clerical deputies, and what rights the laity possessed in the provincial councils, are points which have been much disputed, and do not seem to be very accurately determined. The people, the lay elders, and the clergy or spiritual teachers, were the component parts of each separate community in the earliest periods. The numbers of the Christians soon required that several congregations should be formed in a single city; these congregations sought to maintain a constant communication in order to secure perfect unanimity. Deputies were appointed to meet for this purpose; and the most distinguished and ablest member of the clergy naturally became the president of this assembly. He was the bishop, and soon became charged with the conduct of public business during the intervals between the meetings of the deputies. The superior education and character of the bishops placed the direction of the greater part of the civil affairs of the community in their hands; ecclesiastical business was their peculiar province by right; they possessed the fullest confidence of their flocks; and, as no fear was then entertained that the power intrusted to these disinterested and pious men could ever be abused, their authority was never called in question. The charity of the Christians was a virtue which separated them in a striking manner from the rest of society, bound them closely together, and increased their social influence by creating a strong feeling in their favour. The emperor Julian complains that it rendered them independent of the emperor's power, for they were never forced to solicit the imperial bounty. And he owns that they not only maintained all the poor of their own community, but also gave liberally to poor pagans.

When Christianity became the religion of the emperor, the political organization and influence of the Christian communities could not fail to arrest the attention of the Roman authorities. The provincial synods replaced, in the popular mind, the older national institutions; and, in a short time, the power of the Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria excited the jealousy of the emperors themselves. The monarchical ideas of the eastern Greeks vested extensive authority in the hands of their bishops and patriarchs; and their power excited more alarm in the Roman government than the

municipal forms of conducting ecclesiastical business which were adopted by the natives of Greece, in accordance with the civil constitutions of the Greek cities and states. This fact is evident from an examination of the list of the martyrs who perished in the persecutions of the third century, when political alarm, rather than religious zeal, moved the government to acts of cruelty. While numbers were murdered in Antioch, Alexandria, Caesarea, Smyrna, and Thessalonica, very few were sacrificed at Corinth, Athens, Patrae, and Nicopolis.

The power which Christianity had acquired, evidently exercised some influence in determining Constantine to transfer his capital into that part of his dominions where so numerous and powerful a body of his subjects were attached to his person and his cause. Both Constantine and the Christians had their own grounds of hostility to Rome and the Romans. The senate and the Roman nobility remained firmly attached to paganism, which was converted into the bond of union of the conservative party in the western portion of the empire, and thus the Greeks were enabled to secure a predominancy in the Christian church. The imperial prejudices of Constantine appear to have concealed from him this fact; and he seems never to have perceived that the cause of the Christian church and the Greek nation were already closely interwoven, unless his inclination to Arianism, in his latter days, is to be attributed to a wish to suppress the national spirit, which began to display itself in the Eastern Church. The policy of circumscribing the power of orthodoxy, as too closely connected with national feelings, was more openly followed by Constantius.

A knowledge of the numbers of the Christians in the Roman empire at the time of the first general council of the Christian church at Nice, is of great importance towards affording a just estimation of many historical facts. If the conjecture be correct, that the Christians, at the time of Constantine's conversion, hardly amounted to a twelfth, and perhaps did not exceed a twentieth part of the population of the empire, this would certainly afford the strongest proof of the admirable civil organization by which they were united. But this can hardly be considered possible, when applied to the eastern provinces of the empire, and is certainly incorrect with regard to the Greek cities. It seems established by the rescript of Maximin, and by the testimony of the martyr Lucianus—supported as these are by a mass of collateral evidence—that the Christians formed, throughout the East, the majority of the middle classes of Greek society. Still history affords few facts which supply a fair criterion to estimate the numbers or strength of either the Christian or pagan population generally throughout the empire. The imperial authority, supported by the army, which was equally destitute of religion and nationality, was powerful enough to oppress or persecute either party, according to the personal disposition of the emperor. There were Christians who endeavoured to excite Constantius to persecute the pagans, and to seize the wealth which their temples contained. Constantine had found himself strong enough to carry off the gold and silver statues and ornaments from many temples; but, as this was done with the sanction and assistance of the Christian population where it occurred, it seems probable that it only happened in those places where the whole community, or at least the corporation possessing the legal control over the temporal concerns of these, had embraced Christianity. An arbitrary exercise of the emperor's authority as Pontifex Maximus, for

the purpose of plundering the temples he was bound to protect, cannot be suspected; it would be too strongly at variance with the systematic toleration of Constantine's reign.

The pagan Julian was strongly incited to persecute the Christians by the more fanatical of the pagans; nor did he himself ever appear to doubt that his power was sufficient to have commenced a persecution; and, consequently, he takes credit to himself, in his writings, for the principles of toleration which he adopted. The attempt of Julian to re-establish paganism was, however, a very unstatesmanlike proceeding, and exhibited the strongest proof that the rapidly decreasing numbers of the pagans proclaimed the approaching dissolution of the old religion. Julian was an enthusiast; and he was so far carried away by his ardour as to desire the restoration of ceremonies and usages long consigned to oblivion, and ridiculous in the eyes of his pagan contemporaries. In the East he accelerated the ruin of the cause which he espoused. His own acquaintance with paganism had been gained chiefly from books, and from the lessons of philosophers; for he had long been compelled to conform to Christianity, and to acquire his knowledge of paganism only by stealth. When he acted the Pontifex Maximus, according to the written instructions of the old ceremonial, he was looked upon as the pedantic reviver of an antiquated ceremony. The religion, too, which he had studied, was that of the ancient Greeks,—a system of belief which had irrevocably passed away. With the conservative pagan party of Rome he never formed any alliance. The fancy of Julian to restore Hellenism, and to call himself a Greek, was therefore regarded by all parties in the empire as an imperial folly. Nothing but princely ignorance of the state of opinion in his age could have induced Julian to endeavour to awaken the national feelings of the Greeks in favour of paganism, in order to oppose them to Christianity, for their nationality was already engaged in the Christian cause. This mistaken notion of the emperor was seen by the Romans, and made a strong impression on the historians of Julian's reign. They have all condemned his superstition; for such, in their eyes, his fanatic imitation of antiquated Hellenic usages appeared to be.

We must not overlook the important fact that the Christian religion was long viewed with general aversion, from being regarded by all classes as a dangerous as well as secret political association. The best informed heathens appear to have believed that hostility to the established order of society, *odium humani generis,* as this was called by the Romans, was a characteristic of the new religion. The Roman aristocracy and populace, with all those who identified themselves with Roman prejudices, adopted the opinion that Christianity was one of the causes of the decline of the Roman Empire. Rome was a military state; Christianity was a religion of peace. The opposition of their principles was felt by the Christians themselves, who seem to have considered that the success of Christianity implied the fall of the empire; and as the duration of the empire and the existence of civilized society appeared inseparable, they inferred that the end of the world was near at hand. Nor is this surprising. The invasion of the barbarians threatened society with ruin; no political regeneracy seemed practicable by means of any internal reforms; the empire of Christ was surely approaching, and that empire was not of this world.

But these opinions and reasonings were not so prevalent in the East as in the West, for the Greeks especially were not under the influence of the same political

feelings as the Romans. They were farther removed from the scenes of war, and they suffered less from the invasions of the barbarians. They were occupied with the daily business of life, and their attention was not so frequently diverted to the crimes of the emperors and the misfortunes of the State. They felt no sympathy, and little regret, when they perceived that the power of Rome was on the decline, for they deemed it probable that they should prove gainers by the change.

One feature of Christian society which excited general disapprobation about the time of the accession of Julian, was the great number of men who became monks and hermits. These enemies of social life proclaimed that it was better to prepare for heaven in seclusion, than to perform man's active duties, and to defend the cause of civilization against the barbarians. Millions of Christians who did not imitate their example openly approved of their conduct; so that it is not wonderful that all who were not Christians regarded Christianity with aversion, as a political institution hostile to the existing government of the Roman Empire. The corruptions of Christianity, and the dissensions of the Christians, had also caused a reaction against the religion towards the latter part of the reign of Constantius II. Julian profited by this feeling, but he had not the talent to render it subservient to his views. The circumstance which rendered Christianity most hateful to him, as an emperor and a philosopher, was the liberty of private judgment assumed as one of the rights of man by monks and theologians. To combat Christianity with any chance of success, Julian must have connected the theoretic paganism of the schools with moral principles and strong faith. To succeed in such a task, he must have preached a new religion, and assumed the character of a prophet. He was unequal to the enterprise, for he was destitute of the popular sympathies, firm convictions, fiery enthusiasm, and profound genius of Mahomet.

Sect. IV.

The Orthodox Church became identified with the Greek Nation

When Constantine embraced Christianity, he allowed paganism to remain the established religion of the State, and left the pagans in the possession of all their privileges. The principle of toleration was received as a political maxim of the Roman government; and it continued, with little interruption, to be so, until the reign of Theodosius the Great, who undertook to abolish paganism by legislative enactments. The Christian emperors continued, until the reign of Gratian, to bear the title of Pontifex Maximus, and to act as the political head of the pagan religion. This political supremacy of the emperor over the pagan priesthood was applied also to the Christian church; and, in the reign of Constantine, the imperial power over the external and civil affairs of the church was fully admitted by the whole Christian clergy. The respect which Constantine showed to the ministers of Christianity never induced him to overlook this supremacy.

Even in the general council of Nice, the assembled clergy would not transact any business until the emperor had taken his seat, and authorized them to proceed. All Constantine's grants to the church were regarded as marks of imperial favour; and he considered himself entitled to resume them, and transfer them to the Arians. During the Arian reigns of Constantius and Valens, the power of the State over the church was still more manifest.

From the death of Constantine until the accession of Theodosius the Great, a period of thirty years elapsed, during which Christianity, though the religion of the emperors and of a numerous body of their subjects, was not the religion of the State. In the western provinces, paganism was still predominant; and even in the eastern provinces, which had embraced Christianity, the Christian party was weakened by rival sects. The Arians and orthodox regarded one another with as much hostility as they did the pagans. During this period, the orthodox clergy were placed in a state of probation, which powerfully contributed towards connecting their interests and feelings with those of the Greek population. Constantine had determined to organize the Christian church precisely in the same manner as the civil government. The object of this arrangement was to render the church completely subservient to the imperial administration, and to break, as much as possible, its connection with the people. For this purpose, the higher ecclesiastical charges were rendered independent of public opinion. The wealth and temporal power which the clergy suddenly attained by the favour of Constantine, soon produced the usual effects of sudden riches and irresponsible authority in corrupting the minds of men. The disputes relating to the Arian heresy were embittered by the eagerness of the clergy to possess the richest episcopal sees, and their conflicts became so scandalous, that they were rendered a subject of popular satire in places of public amusement. The favour shown by the Arian emperors to their own party, proved ultimately beneficial to the orthodox clergy. The Roman empire was still nominally pagan, the Roman emperors were avowedly Arian, and the Greeks felt little disposed to sympathize with the traditional superstitions of their conquerors, or the personal opinions of their masters. During this period, therefore, they listened with redoubled attention to the doctrines of the orthodox clergy, and from this time the Greek nation and the Orthodox Church became closely identified.

The orthodox teachers of the Gospel, driven from the ecclesiastical preferments which depended on court favour, and deserted by the ambitious and worldly-minded clergy, cultivated those virtues, and pursued that line of conduct, which had endeared the earlier preachers of Christianity to their flocks. The old popular organization of the church was preserved, and more completely amalgamated with the social institutions of the Greek nation. The people took part in the election of their spiritual pastors, and influenced the choice of their bishops. The national as well as the religious sentiments of the Greeks were called into action, and provincial synods were held for the purpose of defending the orthodox priesthood against the imperial and Arian administration. The majority of the orthodox congregations were Greek, and Greek was the language of the orthodox clergy. Latin was the language of the court and of the heretics. Many circumstances, therefore, combined to consolidate the connection formed at this time between the Orthodox Church and the Greek population throughout the eastern provinces of the empire; while some of these circumstances tended more particularly to

connect the clergy with the educated Greeks, and to lay the foundation of the Orthodox Church becoming a national institution.

In ancient Hellas and the Peloponnesus, paganism was still far from being extinct, or, at least, as was not unfrequently the case, the people, without caring much about the ancient religion, persisted in celebrating the rites and festivals consecrated by antiquity. Valentinian and Valens renewed the laws which had been often passed against various pagan rites; and both these emperors encouraged the persecution of those who were accused of this imaginary crime. It must be observed, however, that these accusations were generally directed against wealthy individuals; and, on the whole, they appear to have been dictated by the old imperial maxim of filling the treasury by confiscations in order to avoid the dangers likely to arise from the imposition of new taxes. In Greece the ordinary ceremonies of paganism often bore a close resemblance to the prohibited rites; and the new laws could not have been enforced without causing a general persecution of paganism, which does not appear to have been the object of the emperors. The proconsul of Greece, himself a pagan, solicited the emperor Valens to exempt his province from the operation of the law; and so tolerant was the Roman administration to districts which were too poor to offer a rich harvest for the fisc, that Greece was allowed to continue to celebrate its pagan festivals.

Until this period, the temples had generally preserved that portion of their property and revenues which was administered by private individuals, or drawn from sources unconnected with the public treasury. The rapid destruction of the temples, which took place after the reign of Valens, must have been caused, in a great measure, by the conversion of those intrusted with their care to Christianity. When the hereditary priests seized the revenues of the heathen god as a private estate, they would rejoice in seeing the temple fall rapidly to ruin, if they did not dare to destroy it openly. Towards the end of his reign the Emperor Gratian laid aside the title of Pontifex Maximus, and removed the altar of Victory from the senate-house of Rome. These acts were equivalent to a declaration that paganism was no longer the acknowledged religion of the senate and the Roman people. It was Theodosius the Great, however, who finally established Christianity as the religion of the empire; and in the East he succeeded completely in uniting the Orthodox Church with the imperial administration; but in the West, the power and prejudices of the Roman aristocracy prevented his measures from attaining full success.

Theodosius, in rendering orthodox Christianity the established religion of the empire, increased the administrative and judicial authority of the bishops; and the Greeks, being in possession of a predominant influence in the Orthodox Church, were thus raised to the highest social position which subjects were capable of attaining. The Greek bishop, who preserved his national language and customs, was now the equal of the governor of a province, who assumed the name and language of a Roman. The court, as well as the civil administration of Theodosius the Great, continued Roman; and the Latin clergy, aided by the great power and high character of St. Ambrose, prevented the Greek clergy from appropriating to themselves an undue share of ecclesiastical authority and preferment in the West. The power conferred on the clergy, supported as it was by the popular origin of the priesthood, by the feelings of brotherhood which pervaded the Greek Church, and by the strong attachment of their flocks, was generally

employed to serve and protect the people, and often succeeded in tempering the despotism of the imperial authority. The clergy began to form a part of the State. A popular bishop could hardly be removed from his diocese, without the government's incurring as much danger as it formerly encountered in separating a successful general from his army. The difficulties which the emperor Constantine met with, in removing St. Athanasius from the See of Alexandria, and the necessity he was under of obtaining his condemnation in a general council, show that the church, even at that early period, already possessed the power of defending its members: and that a new power had arisen which imposed legal restraints on the arbitrary will of the emperor. Still, it must not be supposed that bishops had yet acquired the privilege of being tried only by their peers. The emperor was considered the supreme judge in ecclesiastical as well as in civil matters, and the council of Sardica was satisfied with petitioning for liberty of conscience, and freedom from the oppression of the civil magistrate.

Though the good effects of Christianity on the moral and political condition of the ancient world have never been called in question, historians have, nevertheless, more than once reproached the Christian religion with accelerating the decline of the Roman Empire. A careful comparison of the progress of society in the eastern and western provinces must lead to a different conclusion. It appears certain that the Latin provinces were ruined by the strong conservative attachment of the aristocracy of Rome to the forgotten forms and forsaken superstitions of paganism after they had lost all practical influence on the minds of the people; while there can be very little doubt that the eastern provinces were saved by the unity with which all ranks embraced Christianity. In the Western Empire, the people, the Roman aristocracy, and the imperial administration, formed three separate sections of society, unconnected either by religious opinion or national feelings; and each was ready to enter into alliances with armed bands of foreigners in the empire, in order to serve their respective interests, or gratify their prejudices or passions. The consequence of this state of things was, that Rome and the Western Empire, in spite of their wealth and population, were easily conquered by comparatively feeble enemies; while Constantinople, with all its original weakness, beat back both the Goths and the Huns, in the plenitude of their power, in consequence of the union which Christianity inspired. Rome fell because the senate and the Roman people clung too long to ancient institutions, forsaken by the great body of the population; while Greece escaped destruction because she modified her political and religious institutions in conformity with the opinions of her inhabitants, and with the policy of her government. The popular element in the social organization of the Greek people, by its alliance with Christianity, infused into society the energy which saved the Eastern Empire; the disunion of the pagans and Christians, and the disorder in the administration flowing from this disunion, ruined the Western.

Sect. V.

Condition of the Greek Population of the Empire from the reign of Constantine to that of Theodosius the Great

The establishment of a second capital at Constantinople has generally been considered a severe blow to the Roman Empire; but, from the time of Diocletian, Rome had ceased to be the residence of the emperors. Various motives induced the emperors to avoid Rome; the wealth and influence of the Roman senators circumscribed their authority; the turbulence and numbers of the people rendered even their government insecure; while the immense revenues required for donatives, for distributions of provisions, for pompous ceremonies, and for public games, formed a heavy burden on the imperial treasury, and the insubordination of the praetorian guards continually threatened their persons. When the emperor, therefore, by becoming a Christian, was placed in personal opposition to the Roman senate, there could be no longer any doubt that Rome became a very unsuitable residence for the Christian court. Constantine was compelled to choose a new capital; and in doing so he chose wisely. His selection of Byzantium was, it is true, determined by reasons connected with the imperial administration, without any reference to the influence which his choice might have on the prosperity of his subjects. Its first effect was to preserve the unity of the Eastern Empire. The Roman Empire had, for some time previous to the reign of Constantine, given strong proofs of a tendency to separate into a number of small states. The necessity of the personal control of the sovereign over the executive power in the provinces was so great, that Constantine himself, who had done all he could to complete the concentration of the general government, thought it necessary to divide the executive administration of the empire among his family before his death. The union effected by centralizing the management of the army and the civil and judicial authority, prevented the division of the executive power from immediately partitioning the empire. It was not until the increased difficulties of intercommunication had created two distinct centres of administration that the separation of the Eastern and Western empires was completed.

The foundation of Constantinople was the particular act which secured the integrity of the eastern provinces, and prevented their separating into a number of independent states. It is true, that by transferring the administration of the East more completely into the hands of the Greeks, it roused the nationality of the Syrians and Egyptians into activity,—an activity, however, which seemed to present no danger to the empire, as both these provinces were peopled almost exclusively by a tax-paying population, and contributed proportionally few recruits to the army. The establishment of the seat of government at Constantinople enabled the emperors to destroy many abuses, and effect numerous reforms, which recruited the resources and revived the strength of the eastern portion of the empire. The energy thus developed gave to the empire of the East the strength which enabled it ultimately to repulse all those hordes of barbarians who subdued the West.

Both the imperial power and the condition of society assumed more settled forms after the change of the capital. Before the reign of Constantine, ambition had been the leading feature of the Roman state. Everybody was striving for official rank; and the

facilities of ascending the throne, or arriving at the highest dignities, were indefinitely multiplied by the rapid succession of emperors, by the repeated proscriptions of senators, and by the incessant confiscations of the property of the wealthiest Romans. Constantine, in giving to the government the form of a regular monarchy, introduced greater stability into society; and as ambition could no longer be gratified with the same ease as formerly, avarice, or rather rapacity, became the characteristic feature of the ruling classes. This love of riches soon caused the venality of justice. The middle classes, already sinking under the general anarchy and fiscal oppression of the empire, were now exposed to the extortions of the aristocracy, and property became almost as insecure among the smaller proprietors as it had formerly been among those who held great estates.

The condition of Greece, nevertheless, improved considerably in the interval which elapsed between the invasion of the Goths in the reign of Gallienus and the time of Constantine. History, it is true, supplies only a few scattered incidents from which the fact of this improvement can be inferred; but the gradual progress of the amelioration is satisfactorily established. When Constantine and Licinius prepared to dispute the sole possession of the empire, they assembled two powerful fleets, both of which were composed chiefly of Greek vessels. The armament of Constantine consisted of two hundred light galleys of war, and two thousand transports, and these immense naval forces were assembled at the Piraeus. This selection of the Piraeus as a naval station indicates that it was no longer in the desolate condition in which it had been seen by Pausanias in the second century, and it shows that Athens itself had recovered from whatever injury it had sustained during the Gothic expedition. To these frequent reconstructions of the buildings and walls of Greek cities, caused by the vicissitudes which frequently occurred in the numbers and wealth of their inhabitants during the period of eight centuries and a half which is reviewed in this volume, we are to attribute the disappearance of the immense remains of ancient constructions which once covered the soil, and of which no traces now exist, as they have been broken up on these occasions to serve as materials for new structures.

The fleet of Constantine was collected among the Europeans; that of Licinius, which consisted of triremes, was furnished chiefly by the Asiatic and Libyan Greeks. The number of the Syrian and Egyptian vessels was comparatively smaller than would have been the case two centuries earlier. It appears, therefore, that the commerce of the Mediterranean had returned into the hands of the Greeks. The trade of central Asia, which took the route of the Black Sea, increased in consequence of the insecure state of the Red Sea, Egypt, and Syria, and gave a new impulse to Greek industry.

The carrying trade of Western Europe was again falling into Greek hands. Athens, as the capital of the old Hellenic population, from its municipal liberty and flourishing schools of learning, was rising into importance. Constantine honoured this city with marks of peculiar favour, which were conferred certainly from a regard to its political importance, and not from any admiration of the studies of its pagan philosophers. He not only ordered an annual distribution of grain to be made to the citizens of Athens, from the imperial revenues, but he accepted the title of Strategos when offered by its inhabitants.

As soon as Julian had assumed the purple in Gaul, and marched against Constantius, he endeavoured to gain the Greek population to his party, by flattering their national feelings; and he strove to induce them to connect their cause with his own, in opposition to the Roman government of Constantius. He seems, in general, to have been received with favour by the Greeks, though his aversion to Christianity must have excited some distrust. Unless the Greek population in Europe had greatly increased in wealth and influence, during the preceding century, or Roman influence had suffered a considerable diminution in the East, it could hardly have entered into the plans of Julian to take the prominent measures which he adopted to secure their support. He addressed letters to the municipalities of Athens, Corinth, and Lacedaemon, in order to persuade these cities to join his cause. The letter to the Athenians is a carefully prepared political manifesto, explaining the reasons which compelled him to assume the purple. Athens, Corinth, and Lacedaemon, must have possessed some acknowledged political and social influence in the empire, otherwise Julian would only have rendered his cause ridiculous by addressing them at such a critical moment; and, though he was possibly ignorant of the state of religious feeling in the popular mind, he must have been too well acquainted with the statistics of the empire to commit any error of this kind in public business. It may also be observed, that the care with which history has recorded the ravages caused in Greece by earthquakes, during the reigns of Valentinian and Valens, affords conclusive testimony of the importance then attached to the well-being of the Greek population.

The ravages committed by the Goths in the provinces immediately to the south of the Danube must have turned for a time to the profit of Greece. Though some bands of the barbarians pushed their incursions into Macedonia and Thessaly, still Greece generally served as a place of retreat for the wealthy inhabitants of the invaded districts. When Theodosius, therefore, subdued the Goths, the Greek provinces, both in Europe and Asia, were among the most flourishing portions of the empire; and the Greek population, as a body, was, without question, the most numerous and best organized part of the emperor's subjects; property, in short, was nowhere more secure than among the Greeks.

The rapacity of the imperial government had, however, undergone no diminution; and the weight of taxation was still compelling the people everywhere to encroach on the capital accumulated by former ages, and to abstain from all investments which only promised a distant remuneration. The influx of wealth from the ruined provinces of the North, and the profits of a change in the direction of trade, were temporary causes of prosperity, and could only render the burden of the public taxes lighter for one or two generations. The imperial treasury was sure ultimately to absorb the whole of these accidental supplies. It was, indeed, only in the ancient seats of the Hellenic race that any signs of returning prosperity were visible; for in Syria, Egypt, and Cyrene, the Greek population displayed evident proofs that they were suffering in the general decline of the empire. Their number was gradually diminishing in comparison with that of the native inhabitants of these countries. Civilization was sinking to the level of the lower grades of society. In the year A. D. 363, the Asiatic Greeks received a blow from which they never recovered. Jovian, by his treaty with Sapor II, ceded to Persia the five provinces of Arzanene, Moxoene, Zabdicene, Rehimene, and Corduene, and the Roman

colonies of Nisibis and Singara in Mesopotamia. As Sapor was a fierce persecutor of the Christians, the whole Greek population of these districts was obliged to emigrate. The bigoted attachment of the Persians to the Magian worship never allowed the Greeks to regain a footing in these countries, or to obtain again any considerable share in their trade. From this time the natives acquired the complete ascendancy in all the country beyond the Euphrates. The bigotry of the Persian government is not to be overlooked in estimating the various causes which drove the trade of India through the northern regions of Asia to the shores of the Black Sea,

Sect. VI.

Communications of the Greeks with countries beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire

It would be a depressing idea were it to be admitted that the general degradation of mankind after the time of the Antonines was the effect of some inherent principle of decay, proceeding from an inevitable state of exhaustion in the condition of a highly civilized society; that a moral deficiency produced incurable corruption, and rendered good government impracticable; that these evils were irremediable, even by the influence of Christianity; and, in short, that the destruction of all the elements of civilization was necessary for the regeneration of the social as well as the political system. But there is happily no ground for any such opinion. The evils of society were produced by the injustice and oppression of the Roman government, and that government was so powerful that the nations it ruled were unable to force it to reform its conduct. The middle classes were almost excluded from all influence in their own municipal affairs by the oligarchical constitution of the curia, so that public opinion was powerless. After the Roman central authority was destroyed, similar causes produced the same effects in the barbarian monarchies of the West; and the revival of civilization commenced only when the people acquired power sufficient to enforce some respect for their feelings and rights. History has fortunately preserved some scanty memorials of a Greek population living beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire, which afford the means of estimating the effects of political causes in modifying the character and destroying the activity of the Greek nation. The flourishing condition of the independent Greek city of Cherson, in Tauris, furnishes ample testimony that the state of society among the Greeks admitted of the existence of those virtues, and of the exercise of that energy, which are necessary to support independence; but without institutions which confer on the people some control over their government, and some direct interest in public affairs, nations soon sink into lethargy, from which they can only be roused by war.

The Greek city of Chersonesos, a colony of Heraclea in Pontus, was situated on a small bay to the south-west of the entrance into the great harbour of Sebastopol, a name now memorable in European history. The defeat of Mithridates, to whom it had been subject, did not re-establish its independence. But in the time of Augustus it possessed the privileges of freedom and self-government under the protection of Rome. Its distant and isolated situation protected it from the arbitrary exactions of Roman magistrates, and rendered its municipal rights equivalent to political independence. In the reign of Hadrian, this independence was officially recognised, and Chersonesos received the rank of an allied city. In the third century we find the name abbreviated into Cherson, and the city removed somewhat to the eastward of the old site. Its extent was diminished, and the fortifications of Cherson only embraced a circumference of about two miles, on the promontory to the west of the present quarantine harbour of Sebastopol. It preserved the republican form of government, and contrived to defend its freedom for centuries against the ambition of the kings of Bosporus, and the attacks of the neighbouring Goths, who had rendered themselves masters of the open country. The wealth and power of Cherson depended on its commerce, and this commerce flourished under institutions which guaranteed the rights of property. The Emperor Constantine, in his Gothic wars, did not disdain to demand the aid of this little State; and he acknowledged with gratitude the great assistance which the Roman Empire had derived from the military forces of the Chersonites. No history could present more instructive lessons to centralized despotisms than the records of the administration and taxation of these Greeks, in the Tauric Chersonesus, during the decline of the empire, and it is deeply to be regretted that none exist. About three hundred and fifty years before the Christian era, the kingdom of the Cimmerian Bosporus, one of these Greek colonies, was in a flourishing agricultural condition; and its monarch had been able to prevent a famine at Athens, by supplying that city with two million bushels of wheat in a single season. Three hundred and fifty years after the birth of Christ all was changed in ancient Greece, and Cherson alone of all the cities inhabited by Greeks enjoyed the blessing of freedom. The fertile fields which had fed the Athenians were converted into pasturage for the cattle of the Goths; but the commerce of the Chersonites enabled them to import com, oil, and wine from the richest provinces of the Roman Empire.

The commercial Greeks of the empire began to feel that there were countries in which men could live and prosper beyond the power of the Roman administration. Christianity had penetrated far into the East, and Christians were every- where united by the closest ties. The speculations of trade occupied an important place in society. Trade carried many Greeks of education among foreign nations little inferior to the Romans in civilization, and surpassing them in wealth. It was impossible for these travellers to avoid examining the conduct of the imperial administration with the critical eye of men who viewed various countries and weighed the merits of different systems of fiscal government. For them, therefore, oppression had certain limits from which, when transgressed, they would have escaped by transporting themselves and their fortunes beyond the reach of the imperial tax-gatherers. The inhabitants of the Western Empire could entertain no similar hope of avoiding oppression.

About the time of Constantine, the Greeks carried on an extensive commerce with the northern shores of the Black Sea, Armenia, India, Arabia, and Ethiopia, and some

merchants carried their adventures as far as Ceylon. A Greek colony had been established in the island of Socotra (Dioscorides), in the time of the Ptolemies, as a station for the Indian trade; and this colony, mixed with a number of Syrians, still continued to exist, in spite of the troubles raised by the Saracens on the northern shores of the Red Sea, and their wars with the emperors, particularly with Valens. The travels of the philosopher Metrodorus, and the missionary labours of the Indian bishop Theophilus, prove the existence of a regular intercourse between the empire, India, and Ethiopia, by the waters of the Red Sea. The curiosity of the philosopher and the enthusiasm of the missionary were excited by the reports of the ordinary traders; while their enterprises were everywhere facilitated by the mercantile speculations of a regular traffic. Feelings of religion at this time extended the efforts of the Christians, and opened up new channels for commerce. The kingdom of Ethiopia was converted to Christianity by two Greek slaves, who rose to the highest dignities in the State, whose influence must have originated in their connection with the Roman Empire, and whose power must have opened new means of communication with the heathens in the south of Africa, and assisted Greek traders, as well as Christian missionaries, in penetrating into countries whither no Roman had ever ventured.

Sect. VII.

Effect of the separation of the Eastern and Western Empires on the Greek nation.

A.D. 395

The separation of the eastern and western portions of the Roman Empire into two independent states, under Arcadius and Honorius, was the last step, in a long series of events, which seemed tending to restore the independence of the Greek nation. The interest of the sovereigns of the Eastern Empire became intimately connected with the fortunes of their Greek subjects. The Greek language began to be generally spoken at the court of the eastern emperors, and Greek feelings of nationality gradually made their way, not only into the administration and the army, but even into the family of the emperors. The numbers of the Greek population in the Eastern Empire gave a unity of feeling to the inhabitants, a nationality of character to the government, and a degree of power to the Christian church, which were completely wanting in the ill-cemented structure of the West. New vigour seemed on the point of being infused into the imperial government, as circumstances strongly impelled the emperors to participate in the feelings and national interests of their subjects. Nor were these hopes entirely delusive. The slow and majestic decline of the Roman Empire was arrested under a singular combination of events, as if expressly to teach the historical lesson that the Roman government had fallen through its own faults, by consuming the capital from which its resources were derived, by fettering the industry of the people, and thus

causing a decline in the numbers of the population; for even in the West the strength of the barbarians was only sufficient to occupy provinces already depopulated by the policy of the government.

As soon as the Eastern Empire was definitely separated from the Western, the spirit of the Greek municipalities, and the direct connection of the body of the people with the clergy, began to exercise a marked influence on the general government. The increasing authority of the *defensor* in the municipalities modified, in some degree, the oligarchy of the Roman curia. Though the imperial administration continued, in fiscal matters, to maintain the old axiom that the people were the serfs of the State, yet the emperors, from the want of an aristocracy whom they could plunder, were thrown back on the immediate support of the people, whose goodwill could no longer be neglected. It is not to be supposed that, in the general decline of the empire, any disorganization of the frame of civil society was manifest in the various nations which lived under the Roman government. The numbers of the population had, indeed, everywhere diminished, but no convulsions had yet shaken the frame of society. Property was as secure as it had ever been, and the courts of law were gaining additional authority and a better organization. Domestic virtue was by no means rarer than it had been in brighter periods of history. The even tenor of life flowed calmly on, in a great portion of the Eastern Empire, from generation to generation. Philosophical and metaphysical speculations had, in the absence of the more active pursuits of political life, been the chief occupation of the higher orders; and when the Christian religion became universal, it gradually directed the whole attention of the educated to theological questions. These studies certainly exercised a favourable influence on the general morality, if not on the temper of mankind, and the tone of society was characterised by a purity of manners, and a degree of charitable feeling to inferiors, which have probably never been surpassed. Nothing can more remarkably display the extent to which the principles of humanity had penetrated, than the writings of the Emperor Julian. In the fervour of his pagan enthusiasm, he continually borrows Christian sentiments and inculcates Christian philanthropy.

Public opinion, which in the preceding century had attributed the decline of the empire to the progress of Christianity, now, with more justice, fixed on the fiscal system as the principal cause of its decay. The complaints of the oppression of the public administration were, by the common consent of the prince and people, directed against the abuses of the revenue-officers. The historians of this period, and the decrees of the emperors themselves, charge these officers with producing the general misery by the peculations which they committed; but no emperor yet thought of devoting his attention to a careful reformation of the system which allowed such disorders. The venality of the Roman officials excited the indignation of Constantine, who publicly threatened them with death if they continued their extortions, and the existence of a law inveighing against corruption speaks indirectly in favour of the state of society in which the vices of the administration were so severely reprehended.

An anecdote often illustrates the condition of society more correctly than a dissertation, though there is always some danger that an anecdote has found its place in history from the singularity of the picture which it presents. There is nevertheless one anecdote which is interesting, as affording a faithful picture of general manners, and as

giving an accurate view of the most prominent defects in the Roman administration. Acindynus, the prefect of the Orient, enjoyed the reputation of an able, just, and severe governor. He collected the public revenues with inflexible justice. In the course of his ordinary administration, he threatened one of the inhabitants of Antioch, already in prison, with death, in case he should fail to discharge, within a fixed term, a debt due to the imperial treasury. His power was admitted, and his habitual attention to the claims of the fisc gave public defaulters at Antioch no hope of escaping with any punishment short of slavery, which was civil death. The prisoner was married to a beautiful woman, and the parties were united by the warmest affection. The circumstances of their case, and their situation in life, excited some attention. A man of great wealth offered to pay the husband's debt, on condition that he should obtain the favours of his beautiful wife. The proposal excited the indignation of the lady, but when it was communicated to her imprisoned husband, he thought life too valuable not to be preserved by such a sacrifice; and his prayers had more effect with his wife than the wealth or the solicitations of her admirer. The libertine, though wealthy, proved to be mean and avaricious, and contrived to cheat the lady with a bag filled with sand instead of gold. The unfortunate wife, baffled in her hopes of saving her husband, threw herself at the feet of the prefect Acindynus, to whom she revealed the whole of the disgraceful transaction. The prefect was deeply moved by the evil effects of his severity. Astonished at the variety of crimes which he had caused, he attempted to render justice, by apportioning a punishment to each of the culprits, suitable to the nature of his offence. As the penalty of his own severity, he condemned himself to pay the debt due to the imperial treasury. He sentenced the fraudulent seducer to transfer to the injured lady the estate which had supplied him with the wealth which he had so infamously employed. The debtor was immediately released— he appeared to be sufficiently punished by his imprisonment and shame.

The severity of the revenue laws, and the arbitrary power of the prefects in matters of finance, are well represented in this anecdote. The injury inflicted on society by a provincial administration so constituted must have been incalculable. Even the justice and disinterestedness of such a prefect as Acindynus required to be called into action by extraordinary crimes, and, after all, virtues such as his could afford no very sure guarantee against oppression.

In spite of the great progress which Christianity had made, there still existed a numerous body of pagans among the higher ranks of the old aristocracy, who maintained schools of philosophy, in which a species of allegorical pantheism was taught. The pure morality inculcated, and the honourable lives of the teachers in these schools, enabled these philosophers to find votaries long after paganism might be considered virtually extinct as a national religion. While the pagans still possessed a succession of distinguished literary characters, a considerable body of the Christians were beginning to proclaim an open contempt of all learning which was not contained in the Scriptures. This fact is connected with the increased power of national feelings in the provinces, and with the aversion of the natives to the oppression of the Roman government and the insolence of Greek officials. Literature was identified with Roman supremacy and Greek arrogance. The Greeks, having long been in possession of the

privileges of Roman citizens, and calling themselves Romans, now filled the greater part of the civil employments in the East.

From the time of Constantine, the two great principles of law and religion began to exert a favourable influence on Greek society, by their effect in moderating the despotic power of the imperial administration in its ordinary communications with the people. They created new institutions in the State, having a sphere of action independent of the arbitrary power of the emperor. The lawyers and the clergy acquired a fixed position as political bodies; and thus the branches of government with which they were connected were, in some degree, emancipated from arbitrary changes, and obtained a systematic or constitutional form. The dispensation of justice, though it remained dependent on the executive government, was placed in the hands of a distinct class; and as the law required a long and laborious study, its administration followed a steady and invariable course, which it was difficult for any other branch of the executive to interrupt. The lawyers and judges, formed in the same school and guided by the same written rules, were placed under the influence of a limited public opinion, which at least insured a certain degree of self-respect, supported by professional interests, but founded on general principles of equity. The body of lawyers not only obtained a complete control over the judicial proceedings of the tribunals, and restrained the injustice of proconsuls and prefects, but they even assigned limits to the wild despotism exercised by the earlier emperors. The department of general legislation was likewise intrusted to lawyers; and the good effects of this arrangement are apparent, from the conformity of the decrees of the worst emperors, after this period, with the principles of justice.

The power of the clergy, originally resting on a more popular and purer basis than that of the law, became at last so great, that it suffered the inevitable corruption of all irresponsible authority intrusted to humanity. The power of the bishops almost equalled that of the provincial governors, and was not under the constant control of the imperial administration. To gain such a position, intrigue, simony, and popular sedition were often employed. Supported by the people, a bishop ventured to resist the emperor himself; supported by the emperor and the people, he ventured even to neglect the principles of Christianity. Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria, ordained the Platonic philosopher Synesius, bishop of Ptolemais, in Cyrenaica, when he was a recent and not an orthodox Christian; for, as a bishop, he refused to put away his wife, and he declared that he neither believed in the resurrection of the body nor in the eternity of punishments.

In estimating the relative extent of the influence exercised by law and religion on the social condition of the Greeks, it must be remarked that Greek was the language of the Eastern Church from the time of its connection with the imperial administration; while, unfortunately for the law, Latin continued to be the language of legal business in the East, until after the time of Justinian. This fact explains the comparatively trifling influence exercised by the legal class, in establishing the supremacy of the Greek nation in the Eastern Empire, and accounts also for the undue influence which the clergy were enabled to acquire in civil affairs. Had the language of the law been that of the people, the Eastern lawyers, supported by the municipal institutions and democratic feelings of the Greeks, could hardly have failed, by combining with the church, to form a systematic and constitutional barrier against the arbitrary exercise of the imperial

authority. The want of national institutions forming a portion of their system of law, was a defect in the social condition of the Greeks which they never supplied.

Slavery continued to exist in the same manner as in earlier times; and the slave-trade formed the most important branch of the commerce of the Roman Empire. It is true that the humanity of a philosophical age, and the precepts of the Gospel, introduced some restraints on the most barbarous features of the power possessed by the Romans over the lives and persons of their slaves; still, freemen were sold as slaves if they failed to pay their taxes, and parents were allowed to sell their own children. A new and more systematic slavery than the old personal service grew up in the rural districts, in consequence of the fiscal arrangements of the empire. The public registers showed the number of slaves employed in the cultivation of every farm; and the proprietor was bound to pay a certain tax for these slaves according to their employment. Even when the land was cultivated by free peasants, the proprietor was responsible to the fisc for their capitation-tax. As the interest of the government and of the proprietor, therefore, coincided to restrain the free labourer employed in agriculture from abandoning the cultivation of the land, he was attached to the soil, and gradually sank into the condition of a serf; while, on the other hand, in the case of slaves employed in farming, the government had an interest in preventing the proprietor from withdrawing their labour from the cultivation of the soil : these slaves, therefore, rose to the rank of serfs. The cultivators of the soil became, for this reason, attached to it, and their slavery ceased to be personal; they acquired rights, and possessed a definite station in society. This was the first step made by mankind towards the abolition of slavery.

The double origin of serfs must be carefully observed, in order to explain some apparently contradictory expressions of the Roman law. There is a law of Constantius preserved in Justinian's code, which shows that slaves were then attached to the soil, and could not be separated from it. There is a law, also, of the Emperor Anastasius, which proves that a freeman, who had cultivated the property of another for thirty years, was prohibited from quitting that property; but he remained in other respects a freeman. The cultivator was called by the Romans *colonus*, and might, consequently, be either a slave or a freeman. His condition, however, was soon so completely determined by special laws, that its original constitution was lost.

Sect. VIII.

Attempts of the Goths to establish themselves in Greece

The first great immigration of the Goths to the south of the Danube took place with the permission of the Emperor Valens; but as the Roman government adopted no

measures for insuring their tranquil settlement in the country, these troublesome colonists were soon converted into dangerous enemies. Being ill supplied with provisions, finding the country unprotected, and having been allowed to retain possession of their arms, they began to plunder Moesia, Thrace, and Macedonia, for subsistence. At last, emboldened by success, they extended their incursions over the whole country, from the walls of Constantinople to the borders of Illyricum. The Roman troops were defeated. The emperor Valens, advancing inconsiderately in the confidence of victory, was vanquished in the battle of Adrianople, and perished A.D. 378. The massacre of a considerable number of Goths, retained in Asia as hostages and mercenaries, roused the fury of their victorious countrymen, and gave an unusual degree of cruelty to the war of devastation which they carried on for three years. Theodosius the Great put an end to these disorders. The Goths were still unable to resist the Roman troops when properly conducted. Theodosius induced their finest bodies of warriors to enter the imperial service, and either destroyed the remaining bands, or compelled them to escape beyond the Danube.

The depopulated state of the empire induced Theodosius to establish colonies of Goths, whom he had forced to submit, in Phrygia and Lydia. Thus the Roman government began to replace the ancient population of its provinces, by introducing new races of inhabitants into its dominions. Theodosius granted many privileges to these dangerous colonists, who were allowed to remain in possession of much of the wild liberty secured to them by their national institutions, merely on condition that they should furnish a certain number of recruits for the military service of the State. When the native population of the empire was gradually diminishing, some suspicion must surely have been entertained that this diminution was principally caused by the conduct of the government; yet so deeply rooted was the opposition of interests between the government and the governed, and so distrustful were the emperors of their subjects, that they preferred confiding in foreign mercenaries, to reducing the amount, and changing the nature, of the fiscal contributions, though by doing this they might have secured the support, and awakened the energy of their native subjects.

The Roman despotism had left the people almost without any political rights to defend, and with but few public duties to perform; while the free inhabitants deplored the decline of the agricultural population, and lamented their own degeneracy, which induced them to crowd into the towns. They either did not perceive, or did not dare to proclaim, that these evils were caused by the imperial administration, and could only be remedied by a milder and more equitable system of government. In order to possess the combination of moral and physical courage necessary to defend their property and rights against foreign invasion, civilized nations must feel convinced that they have the power of securing that property and those rights against all domestic injustice and arbitrary oppression on the part of the sovereign.

The Goths commenced their relations with the Roman Empire before the middle of the third century; and during the period they dwelt in the countries adjoining the Roman provinces, they made great progress in civilization, and in military and political knowledge. From the time Aurelian abandoned to them the province of Dacia, they became the lords of a fertile, cultivated, and well-peopled country. As the great body of the agricultural population was left behind by the Romans when they vacated the

province, the Goths found themselves the proprietors of lands, from which they appear to have drawn a fixed revenue, leaving the old inhabitants in the enjoyment of their estates. To warriors of their simple habits of life, these revenues were amply sufficient to enable them to spend their time in hunting, to purchase arms and horses, and to maintain a band of retainers trained to war. The personal independence enjoyed by every Gothic warrior who possessed a landed revenue, created a degree of anarchy in the territories they subdued which was everywhere more ruinous than the systematic oppression of Rome. Still in Dacia the Goths were enabled to improve their arms and discipline, and to assume the ideas and manners of a military and territorial aristocracy. Though they remained always inferior to the Romans in military science and civil arts, they were their equals in bravery, and their superiors in honesty and truth; so that the Goths were always received with favour in the imperial service. It must not be forgotten, that no comparison ought to be established between the Gothic contingents and the provincial conscripts. The Gothic warriors were selected from a race of landed gentry devoted exclusively to arms, and which looked with contempt on all industrious occupations; while the native troops of the empire were taken from the poorest peasantry, torn from their cottages, and mingled with slaves and the dissolute classes of the cities, who were induced to enlist from hunger or a love of idleness. The number and importance of the Gothic forces in the Roman armies during the reign of Theodosius, enabled several of their commanders to attain the highest rank; and among these officers, Alaric was the most distinguished by his future greatness.

The death of Theodosius threw the administration of the Eastern Empire into the hands of Rufinus, the minister of Arcadius; and that of the Western, into those of Stilicho, the guardian of Honorius. The discordant elements which composed the Roman Empire began to reveal all their incongruities under these two ministers. Rufinus was a civilian from Gaul; and from his Roman habits and feelings, and western prejudices, disagreeable to the Greeks. Stilicho was of barbarian descent, and consequently equally unacceptable to the aristocracy of Rome; but he was an able and popular soldier, and had served with distinction both in the East and in the West. As Stilicho was the husband of Serena, the niece and adopted daughter of Theodosius the Great, his alliance with the imperial family gave him an unusual influence in the administration. The two ministers hated one another with all the violence of aspiring ambition; and, unrestrained by any feeling of patriotism, each was more intent on ruining his rival than on serving the State. The greater number of the officers in the Roman service, both civil and military, were equally inclined to sacrifice every public duty for the gratification of their avarice or ambition.

At this time Alaric, partly from disgust at not receiving all the preferment which he expected, and partly in the hope of compelling the government of the Eastern Empire to agree to his terms, quitted the imperial service and retired towards the frontiers, where he assembled a force sufficiently large to enable him to act independently of all authority. Availing himself of the disputes between the ministers of the two emperors, and perhaps instigated by Rufinus or Stilicho to aid their intrigues, he established himself in the provinces to the south of the Danube. In the year 395 he advanced to the walls of Constantinople; but the movement was evidently a feint, as he must have known his inability to attack a large and populous city defended by a powerful garrison,

and which even in ordinary times received the greater part of its supplies by sea. After this demonstration, Alaric marched into Thrace and Macedonia, and extended his ravages into Thessaly. Rufinus has been accused of assisting Alaric's invasion, and his negotiations with him while in the vicinity of Constantinople countenance the suspicion. When the Goth found the northern provinces exhausted, he resolved to invade Greece and Peloponnesus, which had long enjoyed profound tranquillity. The cowardly behaviour of Antiochus the proconsul of Achaia, and of Gerontius the commander of the Roman troops, both friends of Rufinus, was considered a confirmation of his treachery. Thermopylae was left unguarded, and Alaric entered Greece without encountering any resistance.

The ravages committed by Alaric's army have been described in fearful terms; villages and towns were burnt, the men were murdered, and the women and children carried away to be sold as slaves by the Goths. But even this invasion affords proofs that Greece had recovered from the desolate condition in which it had been seen by Pausanias. The walls of Thebes had been rebuilt, and it was in such a state of defence that Alaric could not venture to besiege it, but hurried forward to Athens, where he concluded a treaty with the civil and military authorities, which enabled him to enter the city without opposition. His success may have been assisted by treacherous arrangements with Rufinus, for he appears to have really occupied Athens rather as a federate leader than as a foreign conqueror. The tale recorded by Zosimus of the Christian Alaric having been induced by the apparition of the goddess Minerva to spare Athens, is refuted by the direct testimony of other writers, who mention the capitulation of the city. The fact that the depredations of Alaric hardly exceeded the ordinary license of a rebellious general is, at the same time, perfectly established. The public buildings and monuments of ancient splendour suffered no wanton destruction from his visit; but there can be no doubt that Alaric and his troops levied heavy contributions on the city and its inhabitants. Athens evidently owed its good treatment to the condition of its population, and perhaps to the strength of its walls, which imposed some respect on the Goths; for the rest of Attica did not escape the usual fate of the districts through which the barbarians marched. The town of Eleusis, and the great temple of Ceres, were plundered and then destroyed. Whether this work of devastation was caused by the Christian monks who attended the Gothic host, and excited their bigoted Arian votaries to avenge the cause of religion on the temples of the pagans at Eleusis, because they had been compelled to spare the shrines at Athens, or whether it was the accidental effect of the eager desire of plunder, or of the wanton love of destruction, among a disorderly body of troops, is not very material. Bigoted monks, avaricious officers, and disorderly soldiers, were probably all numerous in Alaric's band.

Gerontius, who had abandoned the pass of Thermopylae, took no measures to defend the Isthmus of Corinth and the difficult passes of Mount Geranea, so that Alaric marched unopposed into the Peloponnesus, and, in a short time, captured almost every city in it without meeting with any resistance. Corinth, Argos, and Sparta, were all plundered. The security in which Greece had long remained, and the policy of the government, which discouraged their independent institutions, had conspired to leave the province without protection, and the people without arms. The facility which Alaric met with in effecting his conquest, and his views, which were directed to obtain an

establishment in the empire as an imperial officer or feudatory governor, rendered the conduct of his army not that of avowed enemies. Yet it often happened that they laid waste everything in the line of their march, burnt villages, and massacred the inhabitants.

Alaric passed the winter in the Peloponnesus without encountering any opposition from the people; yet many of the Greek cities still kept a body of municipal police, which might surely have taken the field, had the imperial officers endeavoured to organize a regular resistance in the country districts. The moderation of the Goth, and the treason of the Roman governor, seem both attested by this circumstance. The government of the Eastern Empire had fallen into such disorder at the commencement of the reign of Arcadius, that even after Rufinus had been assassinated by the army, the new ministers of the empire gave themselves very little concern about the fate of Greece. Honorius had a more able, active, and ambitious minister in Stilicho, and he determined to punish the Goths for their audacity in daring to establish themselves in the empire without the imperial authority. Stilicho had attempted to save Thessaly in the preceding year, but had been compelled to return to Italy, after he had reached Thessalonica, by an express order of the emperor Arcadius, or rather of his minister Rufinus. In the spring of the year 396, he assembled a fleet at Ravenna, and transported his army directly to Corinth, which the Goths do not appear to have garrisoned, and where, probably, the Roman governor still resided. Stilicho's army, aided by the inhabitants, soon cleared the open country of the Gothic bands; and Alaric drew together the remains of his diminished army in the elevated plain of Mount Pholoe, which has since served as a point of retreat for other northern invaders of Greece. Stilicho contented himself with occupying the passes; but his carelessness, or the relaxed discipline of his troops, afforded the watchful Alaric an opportunity of escaping with his army, of carrying off all the plunder which he had collected, and of gaining the Isthmus of Corinth.

Alaric succeeded in conducting his army into Epirus, which he treated, as he had expected to treat the Peloponnesus. Stilicho was supposed to have winked at his proceedings, in order to render his own services indispensable by leaving a dangerous enemy in the heart of the Eastern Empire; but the truth appears to be, that Alaric availed himself so ably of the jealousy with which the court of Constantinople viewed the proceedings of Stilicho, as to negotiate a treaty, by which he was received into the Roman service, and that he really entered Epirus as a general of Arcadius. Stilicho was again ordered to retire from the Eastern Empire, and he obeyed rather than commence a civil war by pursuing Alaric. The conduct of the Gothic troops in Epirus was, perhaps, quite as orderly as that of the Roman legionaries; so that Alaric was probably welcomed as a protector when he obtained the appointment of Commander-in-chief of the imperial forces in Eastern Illyricum, which he held for four years. During this time he prepared his troops to seek his fortune in the Western Empire. The military commanders, whether Roman or barbarian, were equally indifferent to the fate of the people whom they were employed to defend; and the Greeks appear to have suffered equal oppression from the armies of Stilicho and Alaric.

The condition of the European Greeks underwent a great change for the worse, in consequence of this unfortunate plundering expedition of the Goths. The destruction of

their property, and the loss of their slaves, were so great, that the evil could only have been slowly repaired under the best government, and with perfect security of their possessions. In the miserable condition to which the Eastern Empire was reduced, this was hopeless; and a long period elapsed before the mass of the population of Greece again attained the prosperous condition in which Alaric had found it; nor were some of the cities which he destroyed ever rebuilt. The ruin of roads, aqueducts, cisterns, and public buildings, erected by the accumulation of capital in prosperous and enterprising ages, was a loss which could never be repaired by a diminished and impoverished population. History generally preserves but few traces of the devastations which affect only the people; but the sudden misery inflicted on Greece was so great, when contrasted with her previous tranquillity, that testimonies of her sufferings are to be found in the laws of the empire. Her condition excited the compassion of the government during the reign of Theodosius II. There exists a law which exempts the cities of Illyricum from the charge of contributing towards the expenses of the public spectacles at Constantinople, in consequence of the sufferings which the ravages of the Goths, and the oppressive administration of Alaric, had inflicted on the inhabitants. There is another law which proves that many estates were without owners, in consequence of the depopulation caused by the Gothic invasions; and a third law relieves Greece from two-thirds of the ordinary contributions to government, in consequence of the poverty to which the inhabitants were reduced.

This unfortunate period is as remarkable for the devastations committed by the Huns in Asia, as for those of the Goths in Europe, and marks the commencement of the rapid decrease of the Greek race, and of the decline of Greek civilization throughout the empire. While Alaric was laying waste the provinces of European Greece, an army of Huns from the banks of the Tanais penetrated through Armenia into Cappadocia, and extended their ravages over Syria, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia. Antioch, at last, resisted their assaults, and arrested their progress; but they took many Greek cities of importance, and inflicted an incalculable injury on the population of the provinces which they entered. In a few months they retreated to their seats on the Palus Maeotis, having contributed much to accelerate the ruin of the richest and most populous portion of the civilized world.

Sect. IX.

The Greeks arrested the conquests of the Northern barbarians

From the time of Alaric's ravages in the Grecian provinces, until the accession of Justinian, the government of the Eastern Empire assumed more and more that administrative character which it retained until the united forces of the Crusaders and Venetians destroyed it in the year 1204. A feeling that the interests of the emperor and his subjects were identical, began to become prevalent throughout the Greek population. This feeling was greatly strengthened by the attention which the government paid to improving the civil condition of its subjects. The judicial and financial administration

received, during this period, a greater degree of power, as well as a more bureaucratic organization; and the whole strength of the government no longer reposed on the military establishments. Rebellions of the army became of rarer occurrence, and usually originated in civil intrigues, or the discontent of unrewarded mercenaries. A slight glance at the history of the Eastern Empire is sufficient to show that the court of Constantinople possessed a degree of authority over its most powerful officers, and a direct connection with its distant provinces, which had not previously existed in the Roman Empire.

Still the successful resistance which the Eastern Empire offered to the establishment of the northern nations within its limits, must be attributed to the density of the native population, to the number of the walled towns, and to its geographical configuration, rather than to the spirit of the Greeks, to the military force of the legions, or to any general measures of improvement adopted by the imperial government. Even where most successful, it was a passive rather than an active resistance. The sea which separated the European and Asiatic provinces opposed physical difficulties to invaders, while it afforded great facilities for defence, retreat, and renewed attack to the Roman forces, as long as they could maintain a naval superiority. These circumstances unfortunately increased the power of the central administration to oppress the people, as well as to defend them against foreign invaders, and allowed the emperors to persist in the system of fiscal rapacity which constantly threatened to annihilate a large portion of the wealth from which a considerable mass of the citizens derived their subsistence. At the very moment when the evils of the system became so apparent as to hold out some hope of reform, the fiscal exigencies of the government were increased by money becoming an important element in war, since it was necessary to hire armies as well as to provide facilities of transport, and means of concentration, in cases of danger, defeat, or victory; so that it began to be a financial calculation in many cases, whether it was more prudent to defend or to ransom a province. The great distance of the various frontiers, though it increased the difficulty of preventing every hostile incursion, hindered any rebellious general from uniting under his command the whole forces of the empire. The control which the government was thus enabled to exercise over all its military officers, secured a regular system of discipline, by centralizing the services of equipping, provisioning, and paying the soldiers; and the direct connection between the troops and the government could no longer be counteracted by the personal influence which a general might acquire, in consequence of a victorious campaign. The power of the emperors over the army, and the complete separation which existed in the social condition of the citizen and the soldier, rendered any popular movement in favour of reform hopeless. A successful rebellion could only have created a new military power; it could not have united the interests of the military with those of the people, unless changes had been effected which were too great to be attempted by any individual legislator, and too extensive to be accomplished during one generation. The subjects of the empire were also composed of so many nations, differing in language, usages, and civilization, that unity of measures on the part of the people was impossible, while no single province could expect to obtain redress of its own grievances by an appeal to arms.

The age was one of war and conquest; yet, with all the aspirations and passions of a despotic and military State, the Eastern Empire was, by its financial position, compelled to act on the defensive, and to devote all its attention to rendering the military subordinate to the civil power, in order to save the empire from being eaten up by its own defenders. Its measures were at last successful; the northern invaders were repulsed, the army was rendered obedient, and the Greek nation was saved from the fate of the Romans. The army became gradually attached to the source of pay and honour; and it was rather from a general feature of all despotic governments, than from any peculiarity in the Eastern Empire, that the soldiery frequently appear devoted to the imperial power, but perfectly indifferent to the person of the emperor. The condition of the Western Empire requires to be contrasted with that of the Eastern, in order to appreciate the danger of the crisis through which favourable circumstances, and some prudence, carried the government of Constantinople. Yet, even in the West, in spite of all the disorganization of the government, the empire suffered more from the misconduct of the Roman officers than from the strength of its assailants. Even Genseric could hardly have penetrated into Africa unless he had been invited by Boniface, and assisted by his rebellion; while the imperial officers in Britain, Gaul, and Spain, who, towards the end of the reign of Honorius, assumed the imperial title, laid those provinces open to the incursions of the barbarians. The government of the Western Empire was really destroyed, the frame of political society was broken in pieces, and the provinces depopulated, some time before its final conquest had been achieved by foreigners. The Roman principle of aristocratic rule was unable to supply that bond of union which the national organization of the Greeks, aided by the influence of the established church, furnished in the East.

It has been already observed that the geographical features of the Eastern Empire exercised an important influence on its fate. Both in Europe and Asia extensive provinces are bounded or divided by chains of mountains which terminate on the shores of the Adriatic, the Black Sea, or the Mediterranean. These mountain-ranges compel all invaders to advance by certain well-known roads and passes, along which the means of subsistence for large armies can only be collected by foresight and prudent arrangements. The ordinary communication by land between neighbouring provinces is frequently tedious and difficult; and the inhabitants of many mountain districts retained their national character, institutions, and language, almost unaltered during the whole period of the Roman sway. In these provinces the population was active in resisting every foreign invader; and the conviction that their mountains afforded them an impregnable fortress insured the success of their efforts. Thus the feelings and prejudices of the portion of the inhabitants of the empire which had been long opposed to the Roman government, now operated powerfully to support the imperial administration. These circumstances and some others which acquired strength as the general civilization of the empire declined, concurred to augment the importance of the native population existing in the different provinces of the Eastern Empire, and prevented the Greeks from acquiring a moral, as well as a political, ascendancy in the distant provinces. In Europe, the Thracians distinguished themselves by their hardihood and military propensities. In Asia, the Pamphylians, having obtained arms to defend themselves against the brigands who began to infest the provinces in large bands, employed them with success in opposing the Goths. The Isaurians, who had always

retained possession of their arms, began to occupy a place in the history of the empire, which they acquired by their independent spirit and warlike character. The Armenians, the Syrians, and the Egyptians, all engaged in a rivalry with the Greeks, and even contested their superiority in literary and ecclesiastical knowledge. These circumstances exercised considerable influence in preventing the court of Constantinople from identifying itself completely with the Greek people, and enabled the Eastern emperors to cling to the maxims and pride of ancient Rome as the ground of their sovereignty over so many various races of mankind.

The wealth of the Eastern Empire was a principal means of its defence against the barbarians. While it invited their invasions, it furnished the means of repulsing their attacks or of bribing their forbearance. It was usefully employed in securing the retreat of those bodies who, after having broken through the Roman lines of defence, found themselves unable to seize any fortified post, or to extend the circle of their ravages. Rather than run the risk of engaging with the Roman troops, by delaying their march for the purpose of plundering the open country, they were often content to retire without ravaging the district, on receiving a sum of money and a supply of provisions. These sums were generally so inconsiderable, that it would have been the height of folly in the government to refuse to pay them, and thus expose its subjects to ruin and slavery; but as it was evident that the success of the barbarians would invite new invasions, it is surprising that the imperial administration should not have taken better measures to place the inhabitants of the exposed districts in a condition to defend themselves, and thus secure the treasury against a repetition of this ignominious expenditure. But the jealousy with which the Roman government regarded its own subjects was the natural consequence of the oppression with which it ruled them. No danger seemed so great as that of intrusting the population with arms.

The commerce of the Eastern Empire, and the gold and silver mines of Thrace and Pontus, still furnished abundant supplies of the precious metals. We know that the mint of Constantinople was always rich in gold, for its gold coinage circulated through western and northern Europe, for several centuries after the destruction of the Western Empire. The proportion in the value of gold to silver, which in the time of Herodotus was as one to thirteen, was, after a lapse of eight centuries, in the time of Arcadius and Honorius, as one to fourteen and two-fifths. The commerce of Constantinople embraced, at this time, almost the trade of the world. The manufactories of the East supplied Western Europe with many articles of daily use, and the merchants carried on an extensive transport trade with Central Asia. By means of the Red Sea, the productions of southern Africa and India were collected and distributed among numerous nations who inhabited the shores within and without the Straits of Babelmandeb —countries which were then far richer, more populous, and in a much higher state of civilization than at present. The precious metals, which were becoming rare in Europe, from the stagnation of trade, and the circumscribed exchanges which take place in a rude society, were still kept in active circulation by the various wants of the population of the Eastern Empire. Commodities from far distant lands were still consumed in large quantities. The island of Jotaba, which was a free city in the Red Sea, became a mercantile position of great importance; and from the title of the col- lectors of the imperial customs which were exacted in its port, the Eastern emperors must have

levied a duty of ten per cent, on all the merchandise destined for the Roman Empire. This island was occupied by the Arabs for some time, but returned under the power of the Eastern Empire during the reign of Anastasius.

As the Eastern Empire generally maintained a decided naval superiority over its enemies, commerce seldom suffered any serious interruption. The pirates who infested the Hellespont about the year 438, and the Vandals under Genseric who ravaged the coasts of Greece in 466 and 475, were more dreaded by the people on account of their cruelty than by the government or the merchants in consequence of their success, which was never great. In the general disorder which reigned over the whole of Western Europe, the only secure depots for merchandise were in the Eastern Empire. The emperors saw the importance of their commercial influence, and made considerable exertions to support their naval superiority. Theodosius II assembled a fleet of eleven hundred transports when he proposed to attack the Vandals in Africa. The armament of Leo the Great, for the same purpose, was on a still larger scale, and formed one of the greatest naval forces ever assembled by the Roman power.

Sect. X.

Declining condition of the Greek population in the European provinces of the Eastern Empire

The ravages inflicted by the northern nations on the frontier provinces, during the century which elapsed from the defeat of Valens to the immigration of the Ostrogoths into Italy, were so continual that the agricultural population was almost destroyed in the countries immediately to the south of the Danube, and the inhabitants of Thrace and Macedonia were greatly diminished in number, and began to lose the use of their ancient languages. The declining trade caused by decreased consumption, poverty, and insecurity of property, also lowered the scale of civilization among the whole Greek people. One tribe of barbarians followed another, as long as anything was left to plunder. The Huns, under Attila, laid waste the provinces to the south of the Danube for about five years, and were only induced to retreat on receiving from the emperor six thousand pounds of gold, and the promise of an annual payment of two thousand. The Ostrogoths, after obtaining an establishment to the south of the Danube, as allies of the empire, and receiving an annual subsidy from the Emperor Marcian to guard the frontiers, availed themselves of pretexts to plunder Moesia, Macedonia, Thrace, and Thessaly. Their king, Theodoric, proved by far the most dangerous enemy that the Eastern Empire had yet encountered. Educated as a hostage at the court of Constantinople, a residence of ten years enabled him to acquire a complete knowledge of the languages, the politics, and the administration of the imperial government. Though he inherited an independent sovereignty in Pannonia, he found that country so

exhausted by the oppression of his countrymen, and by the ravages of other barbarians, that the whole nation of the Ostrogoths was compelled to emigrate, and Theodoric became a military adventurer in the Roman service, and acted as an ally, a mercenary, or an enemy, according as circumstances appeared to render the assumption of these different characters most conducive to his own aggrandisement.

It would throw little additional light on the state of the Greeks, to trace minutely the records of Theodoric's quarrels with the imperial court, or to narrate, in detail, the ravages committed by him, or by another Gothic mercenary of the same name, in the provinces, from the shores of the Black Sea to those of the Adriatic. These plundering expeditions were not finally terminated until Theodoric quitted the Eastern Empire to conquer Italy, and found the Ostrogothic monarchy, by which he obtained the title of the Great.

It was certainly no imaginary feeling of respect which prevented Alaric, Genseric, Attila, and Theodoric, from attempting the conquest of Constantinople. If they had thought the task as easy as the subjugation of Rome, there can be no doubt that the Eastern Empire would have been as fiercely assailed as the Western, and new Rome would have shared the fate of the world's ancient mistress. These warriors were only restrained by the difficulties which the undertaking presented, and by the conviction that they would meet with a far more determined resistance on the part of the inhabitants, than the corrupt condition of the imperial court and of the public administration appeared at first sight to promise. Their experience in civil and military affairs revealed to them the existence of an inherent strength in the population of the Eastern Empire, and a multiplicity of resources which their attacks might call into action but could not overcome. Casual encounters often showed that the people were neither destitute of courage nor military spirit, when circumstances favoured their display. Attila himself, the terror both of Goths and Romans—the Scourge of God—was defeated before the town of Asemous, a frontier fortress of Illyricum. Though he regarded its conquest as a matter of the greatest importance to his plans, the inhabitants baffled all his attempts, and set his power at defiance. Genseric was defeated by the inhabitants of the little town of Taenarus in Laconia. Theodoric did not venture to attack Thessalonica, even at a time when the inhabitants enraged at the neglect of the imperial government drove out the officers of the emperor Zeno, overthrew his statues, and prepared to defend themselves against the barbarians with their own unassisted resources. There is another remarkable example of the independent spirit of the Greek people, which saved their property from ruin, in the case of Heraclea, a city of Macedonia. The inhabitants, in the moment of danger, placed their bishop at the head of the civil government, and intrusted him with power to treat with Theodoric, who, on observing their preparations for defence, felt satisfied that it would be wiser to retire on receiving a supply of provisions for his army, than venture on plundering the country. Many other instances might be adduced to prove that the hordes of the northern barbarians were in reality not sufficiently numerous to overcome a determined resistance on the part of the Greek nation, and that the principal cause of their success within the Roman territories was the vicious nature of the Roman government.

Theodoric succeeded, during the year 479, in surprising Dyrrhachium by treachery; and the alarm which this conquest caused at the court of Constantinople

shows that the government was not blind to the importance of preventing any foreign power from acquiring a permanent dominion over a Greek city. The emperor Zeno offered to cede to the Goths the extensive province of Dardania, which was then almost destitute of inhabitants, in order to induce Theodoric to quit Dyrrhachium. That city, the emperor declared, constituted a part of the well-peopled provinces of the empire, and it was therefore in vain for Theodoric to expect that he could keep possession of it. This remarkable observation shows that the desolation of the northern provinces was now beginning to compel the government of the Eastern Empire to regard the countries inhabited by the Greeks, which were still comparatively populous, as forming the national territory of the Roman Empire in Europe.

Sect. XI

Improvement in the Eastern Empire from the death of Arcadius to the accession of Justinian

From the death of Arcadius to the accession of Justinian, during a period of one hundred and twenty years, the empire of the East was governed by six sovereigns of very different characters, whose reigns have been generally viewed through the medium of religious prejudices; yet, in spite of the dissimilarity of their personal conduct, the general policy of their government is characterized by similar features. The power of the emperor was never more unlimited, but it was never more systematically exercised. The administration of the empire, and of the imperial household, were equally regarded as forming a part of the sovereign's private estate, while the lives and fortunes of his subjects were considered as a portion of the property of which he was the master. The power of the emperor was now controlled by the danger of foreign invasions, and by the power of the church. The oppressed could seek refuge with the barbarians, and the persecuted might find the means of opposing the government by the power of the orthodox clergy, who were strong in the support of a great part of the population. The fear of divisions in the Church itself, which was now intimately connected with the State, served also in some degree as a restraint on the arbitrary conduct of the emperor. The interest of the sovereign became thus identified with the sympathies of the majority of his subjects; yet the difficulty of deciding what policy the emperor ought to follow in the ecclesiastical disputes of the heretics and the orthodox was so great, as at times to give an appearance of doubt and indecision to the religious opinions of several emperors.

The decline of the Roman power had created an eager desire to remedy the disorders which had brought the empire to the brink of destruction. Most of the provinces of the West were inhabited by mixed races without union; the power of the military commanders was beyond the control of public opinion; and neither the

emperor, the senate, nor the higher clergy, were directly connected with the body of the people. In the East, the opinion of the people possessed some authority, and it was consequently studied and treated with greater deference. The importance of enforcing the impartial administration of justice was so deeply felt by the government, that the emperors themselves attempted to restrict the application of their legislative power in individual and isolated cases. The Emperor Anastasius ordered the judges to pay no attention to any private rescript, if it should be found contrary to the received laws of the empire, or to the public good; in such cases, he commanded the judges to follow the established laws. The senate of Constantinople possessed great authority in controlling the general administration, and the dependent position of its members prevented that authority from being regarded with jealousy. The permanent existence of this body enabled it to establish fixed maxims of policy, and to render these maxims the grounds of the ordinary decisions of government. By this means a systematic administration was firmly consolidated, over which public opinion exerted some direct influence, and by its systematic operation and fixed rules of procedure it became in some degree a check on the temporary and fluctuating views of the sovereign.

Theodosius II succeeded his father Arcadius at the age of eight; and he governed the Empire for forty-two years, during which he left the care of the public administration very much in the hands of others. His sister Pulcheria, though only two years older than her brother, exercised great influence over his education; and she seems, in all her actions, to have been guided by sentiments of philanthropy as well as piety. She taught him to perform the ceremonial portion of his imperial duties with grace and dignity, but she could not teach him, perhaps he was incapable of learning, how to act and think as became a Roman emperor. At the age of fifteen Pulcheria received the rank of Augusta, and assumed the direction of public affairs for her brother. Theodosius was naturally mild, humane, and devout. Though he possessed some manly personal accomplishments, his mind and character were deficient in strength. He cultivated the arts of writing and painting with such success as to render his skill in the illumination of manuscripts his most remarkable personal distinction. His Greek subjects, mingling kindness with contempt, bestowed on him the name of Kalligraphos. His incapacity for business was so great, that he is hardly accused of having augmented the misfortunes of his reign by his own acts. A spirit of reform, and a desire of improvement, had penetrated into the imperial administration; and his reign was distinguished by many internal changes for the better. Among these, the publication of the Theodosian code, and the establishment of the university of Constantinople, were the most important. The Theodosian code afforded the people the means of arraigning the conduct of their rulers before fixed principles of law, and the university of Constantinople established the influence of Greek literature, and gave the Greek language an official position in the Eastern Empire. The reign of Theodosius was also distinguished by two great remissions of arrears of taxation. By these concessions the greatest possible boon was conferred on the people, for they extinguished all claim for unpaid taxation over a period of sixty years. The weakness of the emperor, by throwing the direction of public business into the hands of the senate and the ministers, for a long period consolidated that systematic administration which characterizes the government of his successors. He was the first of the emperors who was more a Greek than a Roman

in his feelings and tastes; but his inactivity prevented his private character from exercising much influence on his public administration.

In the long series of eight centuries which elapsed from the final establishment of the Eastern Empire, at the accession of Arcadius, to its destruction by the Crusaders, no Athenian citizen gained a place of honour in the annals of the empire. The schools of Athens were fruitful in pedants, but they failed to produce true men. In ancient times, it was observed that those who were trained as athletes were not distinguished as soldiers; and modern times confirm the testimony afforded by the history of the Eastern Empire, that professors of universities, and even teachers of political philosophy, make bad statesmen. But though the men of Athens had degenerated into literary triflers, the women upheld the fame of the city of Minerva. Two Athenian beauties, Eudocia and Irene, are among the most celebrated empresses who occupied the throne of Constantinople. The eventful life of Eudocia, the wife of Theodosius II, does not require to borrow romantic incidents from Eastern tales; it only asks for genius in the narrator to unfold a rich web of romance. Some circumstances in her history deserve notice, even in this volume, as they throw light incidentally on the state of society among the Greeks.

The beautiful Eudocia was the daughter of an Athenian philosopher, Leontios, who still sacrificed to the heathen divinities. Her heathen name was Athenais. She received a classical education, while she acquired the elegant accomplishments of that aristocratic society which had cultivated the amenities of life from the time of Plato, who made use of carpets in his rooms, and allowed ladies to attend his lectures. Her extraordinary talents induced her father to give her a careful literary and philosophical education. All her teachers were gratified with her progress. Her native accent charmed the inhabitants of Constantinople, accustomed to pure Attic Greek by the eloquence of Chrysostom; and she also spoke Latin with the graceful dignity of a Roman lady. The only proof of rustic simplicity which her biography enables us to trace in Athenian manners, is the fact that her father, who was a man of wealth as well as a philosopher, believed that her beauty, virtue, and accomplishments, would obtain her a suitable marriage without any dowry. He left his whole fortune to his son, and the consequence was that the beautiful Athenais, unable to find a husband among the provincial nobles who visited Athens, was compelled to try her fortune at the court of Constantinople, under the patronage of Pulcheria, in the semi-menial position which we now term a maid of honour. Pulcheria was then only fifteen years old, and Eudocia was probably twenty. The young Augusta was soon gratified by the conversion of her beautiful heathen protégée to Christianity; but time passed on, and the courtiers of Constantinople showed no better taste in matrimony than the provincial decurions. The dowerless Eudocia remained unmarried, until Pulcheria persuaded her docile brother to fall in love with the fair Athenian. At the ripe age of twenty-seven, she became the wife of Theodosius II, who was twenty, and the pagans might then boast that Leontios had acted as a seer, not as a pedant, in leaving her without a dowry.

Twenty years after her marriage, Eudocia was accused of a criminal passion for Paulinus, a handsome officer of the court. At the age of fifty the blood is usually tame, and waits upon the judgment. We are also led to suppose that Paulinus, whom one of the chroniclers tells us Eudocia loved because he was very learned and very handsome, had also fallen into the sere and yellow leaf, for the unlawful attachment of the empress

was revealed by his being laid up with the gout. The story runs thus. As the emperor Theodosius was going to church on the feast of Epiphany, a poor man presented him with a Phrygian apple of extraordinary size. The emperor and all the senate stopped and admired the monstrous apple, and Theodosius made his treasurer pay the poor man 150 gold byzants. The apple was sent immediately to Eudocia, who lost no time in forwarding it to the constant object of her thoughts, the gouty Paulinus. He, with less of devoted affection than might have been expected considering the rank and circumstances of the donor, despatched it as a present to the emperor, who, on his return from church, found his costly Phrygian apple ready to welcome him a second time. Theodosius not being satisfied with the manner in which his wife had treated his present, asked her what she had done with it; and Eudocia, whose fifty years had not diminished her appetite for fruit in a forenoon, replied with delightful simplicity, that she had eaten the monster. This falsehood awakened green-eyed jealousy in the heart of Theodosius. Perhaps the Kalligraphos, on his way home from church, had contemplated adorning the initial letter of a manuscript with a miniature of Eudocia holding the enormous apple in her hand. A scene of course followed; the apple was produced; the emperor was eloquent in his reproaches, the empress equally eloquent in her tears, as may be found better expressed in similar cases in modern novels than in ancient histories. The result was that the handsome man with the gout was banished, and shortly after put to death. The empress was sent into exile with becoming pomp, under the pretext of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where she displayed her learning by paraphrasing several portions of Scripture in heroic verses. Gibbon very justly observes that this celebrated story of the apple is fit only for the Arabian Nights, where something not very unlike it may be found. His opinion is doubly valuable, from the disposition he generally shows to credit similar tales of scandal, as in the case of the secret history of Procopius, to which he ascribes more authority than it deserves. Eudocia on her deathbed declared that the reports of her criminal attachment to Paulinus were false. They must have been very prevalent, or she would not have considered it necessary to give them this solemn denial. Her death is placed in the year 460.

Marcian, a Thracian of humble birth, who had risen from a common soldier to the rank of senator, and had already attained the age of fifty-eight, was selected by Pulcheria as the man most worthy to fill the imperial throne on the death of her brother. He received the rank of her husband merely to secure his title to the empire. She had taken monastic vows at an early age, though she continued to bear, during her brother's reign, a considerable part in the conduct of public business, having generally acted as his counsellor. The conduct of Marcian, after he became emperor, justified Pulcheria's choice; and it is probable that he was one of the senators who had supported the systematic policy by which Pulcheria endeavoured to restore the strength of the empire; a policy which sought to limit the arbitrary exercise of the despotic power of the emperor by fixed institutions, well-regulated forms of procedure, and an educated and organized body of civil officials. Marcian was a soldier who loved peace without fearing war. One of his first acts was to refuse payment of the tribute which Attila had exacted from Theodosius. His reign lasted six years and a half, and was chiefly employed in restoring the resources of the empire, and alleviating its burdens. In the theological disputes which divided his subjects, Marcian attempted to act with impartiality; and he assembled the council of Chalcedon in the vain hope of establishing

a system of ecclesiastical doctrine common to the whole empire. His attempt to identify the Christian church with the Roman Empire only widened the separation of the different sects of Christians; and the opinions of the dissenters, while they were regarded as heretical, began to be adopted as national. Religious communities everywhere assumed a national character. The Eutychian heresy became the religion of Egypt; Nestorianism was that of Mesopotamia. In such a state of things Marcian sought to temporize from feelings of humanity, and bigots made this spirit of toleration a reproach.

Leo the Elder, another Thracian, was elected emperor, on the death of Marcian, by the influence of Aspar, a general of barbarian descent, who had acquired an authority similar to that which Stilicho and Aetius had possessed in the West. Aspar being a foreigner and an Arian, durst not himself, notwithstanding his influence and favour with the army, aspire to the imperial throne; a fact which proves that the political constitution of the government, and the fear of public opinion, exercised some control over the despotic power of the court of Constantinople. The insolence of Aspar and his family determined Leo to diminish the authority of the barbarian leaders in the imperial service; and he adopted measures for recruiting the army from his native subjects. The system of his predecessors had been to place more reliance on foreigners than on natives; to employ mercenary strangers as their guards, and to form the best armed and highest paid corps entirely of barbarians. In consequence of the neglect with which the native recruits had been treated, they had fallen into such contempt that they were ranked in the legislation of the empire as an inferior class of military. Leo could not reform the army without removing Aspar; and, despairing of success by any other means, he employed assassination; thus casting, by the murder of his benefactor, so deep a stain on his own character that he received the surname of the Butcher. During his reign, the arms of the empire were generally unsuccessful; and his great expedition against Genseric, the most powerful and expensive naval enterprise which the Romans had ever prepared, was completely defeated. As it was dangerous to confide so mighty a force to any general of talent, Basiliscus, the brother of the empress, was intrusted with the chief command. His incapacity assisted the Vandals in defeating the expedition quite as much as the prudence and talents of Genseric. The Ostrogoths, in the meantime, extended their ravages from the Danube as far as Thessaly, and there appeared some probability that they would succeed in establishing a kingdom in Illyricum and Macedonia, completely independent of the imperial power. The civil administration of Leo was conducted with great prudence. He followed in the steps of his predecessor in all his attempts to lighten the burdens of his subjects, and to improve their condition. When Antioch suffered severely from an earthquake, he remitted the public taxes to the amount of one thousand pounds of gold, and granted freedom from all imposts to those who rebuilt their ruined houses. In the disputes which still divided the church, he adopted the orthodox or Greek party, in opposition to the Eutychians and Nestorians. The epithet of Great has been bestowed on him by the Greeks—a title, it should seem, conferred upon him rather with reference to his being the first of his name, and on account of his orthodoxy, than from the pre-eminence of his personal actions. He died at the age of sixty-three, and was succeeded by his grandson, Leo II, an infant, who survived his elevation only a few months, A.D. 474.

Zeno mounted the throne on the death of his son, Leo II. He was an Isaurian, whom Leo the Great had selected as the husband of his daughter Ariadne, when he was engaged in rousing the military spirit of his own subjects against the barbarian mercenaries. In the eyes of the Greeks, the Isaurians were little better than barbarians; but their valour had obtained for them a high reputation among the troops in the capital. The origin of Zeno rendered him unpopular with the Greeks; and as he did not participate in their nationality in religion, any more than in descent, he was accused of cherishing heretical opinions. He appears to have been unsteady in his views, and vicious in his conduct; yet the difficulties of his position were so great, and the prejudices against him so strong, that, in spite of all the misfortunes of his reign, the fact of his having maintained the integrity of the Eastern Empire attests that he could not have been totally deficient in courage and talent. The year after he ascended the throne, he was driven from Constantinople by Basiliscus, the brother of Leo's widow Verina; but Basiliscus could only keep possession of the capital for about twenty months, and Zeno recovered his authority. The great work of his reign, which lasted seventeen years and a half, was the formation of an army of native troops to serve as a counterpoise to the barbarian mercenaries who threatened the Eastern Empire with the same fate as the Western. About the commencement of his reign he witnessed the final extinction of the Western Empire, and, for many years, the Theodorics threatened him with the loss of the greater part of the European provinces of the Eastern. Surely the man who successfully resisted the schemes and the forces of the great Theodoric could not have been a contemptible emperor, even though his orthodoxy were questionable. When it is remembered, therefore, that Zeno was an Isaurian, and a peacemaker in theological quarrels, it will not be surprising that the Greeks, who regarded him as a heterodox barbarian, should have heaped many calumnies on his memory. From his laws which have been preserved in the code of Justinian, he seems to have adopted judicious measures for alleviating the fiscal obligations of the landed proprietors, and his prudence was shown by his not proposing to the senate the adoption of his brother as his successor. The times were difficult; his brother was worthless, and the support of the official aristocracy was necessary. The disposal of the imperial crown was again placed in the hands of Ariadne.

Anastasius secured his election by his marriage with Ariadne. He was a native of Dyrrhachium, and must have been near the age of sixty when he ascended the throne. In the year 514, Vitalian, general of the barbarian mercenaries, and a grandson of Aspar, assumed the title of emperor, and attempted to occupy Constantinople. His principal reliance was on the bigotry of the orthodox Greeks, for Anastasius showed a disposition to favour the Eutychians. But the military power of the mercenaries had been diminished by the policy of Leo and Zeno; and it now proved insufficient to dispose of the empire, as it could derive little support from the Greeks, who were more distinguished for ecclesiastical orthodox than for military courage. Vitalian was defeated in his attempt on Constantinople, and consented to resign the imperial title on receiving a large sum of money and the government of Thrace. The religious opinions of Anastasius unfortunately rendered him always unpopular, and he had to encounter some serious seditions while the empire was involved in wars with the Persians, Bulgarians, and Goths. Anastasius was more afraid of internal rebellions and seditions than of defeat by foreign armies; and he subdivided the command of his troops in such a

way, that success in the field of battle was almost impossible. In one important campaign against Persia, the intendant-general was the officer of highest rank in an army of fifty thousand men. Military subordination, and vigorous measures, under such an arrangement, were impossible; and it reflects some credit on the organization of the Roman troops, that they were enabled to keep the field without total ruin.

Anastasius devoted his anxious care to alleviate the misfortunes of his subjects, and to diminish the taxes which oppressed them. He reformed the oligarchical system of the Roman curia, which had already received some modifications tending to restrict the ruinous obligation of mutual responsibility imposed on all members of municipalities for the whole amount of the land-tax due to the imperial treasury. The immediate consequence of his reforms was to increase the revenue, a result which was probably effected by preventing the local aristocracy from combining with the officers of the fisc. Such changes, though they are extremely beneficial to the great body of the people, are rarely noticed with much praise by historians, who generally write under the influence of central prejudices. He constructed the great wall, to secure from destruction the rich villages and towns in the vicinity of Constantinople. This wall extended from the Sea of Marmora, near Selymbria, to the Black Sea, forming an arc of about forty-two miles, at a distance of twenty-eight miles from the capital. The rarest virtue of a sovereign is the sacrifice of his own revenues, and, consequently, the diminution of his own power, for the purpose of increasing the happiness of his people. The greatest action of Anastasius was this voluntary diminution of the revenues of the State. He abolished the Chrysargyron, a lucrative but oppressive tax which affected the industry of every subject. The increased prosperity which this concession infused into society soon displayed its effects; and the brilliant exploits of the reign of Justinian must be traced back to the reinvigoration of the body politic of the Roman Empire by Anastasius. He also expended large sums in repairing the damages caused by war and earthquakes. He constructed a canal from the lake Sophon to the Gulf of Astacus, near Nicomedia, a work which Pliny had proposed to Trajan, and which was restored by the Byzantine emperor Alexius I; yet so exact was his economy, and so great were the revenues of the Eastern Empire, that he was enabled to accumulate, during his reign, three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of gold in the public treasury. The people had prayed at his accession that he might reign as he had lived; and, even in the eyes of the Greeks, he would probably have been regarded as the model of a perfect monarch, had he not shown a disposition to favour heresy. Misled, either by his wish to comprehend all sects in the established church,—as all nations were included in the empire,—or by a too decided attachment to the doctrines of the Eutychians, he excited the opposition of the orthodox party, whose domineering spirit troubled his internal administration by several dangerous seditions, and induced the Greeks to overlook his humane and benevolent policy. He reigned more than twenty-seven years.

Justin, the successor of Anastasius, had the merit of being strictly orthodox. He was a Thracian peasant from Tauresium, in Dardania, who entered the imperial guard as a common soldier. At the age of sixty-eight, when Anastasius died, he had attained the rank of commander-in-chief of the imperial guards, and a seat in the senate. It is said that he was intrusted with a large sum of money to further a court intrigue for the purpose of placing the crown on the head of some worthless courtier. He appropriated

the money to secure his own election. His reign tended to unite more closely the church with the imperial authority, and to render the opposition of the heterodox more national in the various provinces where a national clergy and a national language existed. Justin was without education, but he possessed experience and talents. In his civil government he imitated the wise and economical policy of his predecessor, and his military experience enabled him to improve the condition of the army. He furnished large sums to alleviate the misery caused by a terrible earthquake at Antioch, and paid great attention to repairing the public buildings throughout the empire. His reign lasted nine years, A.D. 518-527.

It must be observed that the five emperors of whose character and policy the preceding sketch has described the prominent features, were men born in the middle or lower ranks of society; and all of them, with the exception of Zeno, had witnessed, as private individuals, the ravages of the barbarians in their native provinces, and suffered personally from the weak and disorganized state of the empire. They had all ascended the throne at a mature age, and these coincidences tended to imprint on their councils that uniformity of policy which marks their history. They had all more of the feelings of the people than of the dominant class, and were, consequently, more subjects than Romans. They appear to have participated in popular sympathies to a degree natural only to men who had long lived without courtly honours, and rare, indeed, even among those of the greatest genius, who are born or educated near the steps of a throne. That some part of the merit of these sovereigns was commonly ascribed to the experience which they had gained by a long life, is evident from the reply which, it is said, the Emperor Justin gave to the senators, who wished him to raise Justinian, at the age of forty, to the dignity of Augustus: “You should pray”, said the prudent monarch, “that a young man may never wear the imperial robes”.

During this eventful period, the Western Empire crumbled into ruins, while the Eastern was saved, in consequence of these emperors having organized the system of administration which has been most unjustly calumniated, under the name of Byzantine. The highest officers, and the proudest military commanders, were rendered completely dependent on ministerial departments, and were no longer able to conspire or rebel with impunity. The sovereign was no longer exposed to personal danger, nor the treasury to open peculation. But, unfortunately, the central executive power could not protect the people from fraud with the same ease as it guarded the treasury; and the emperors never perceived the necessity of intrusting the people with the power of defending themselves from the financial oppression of the subaltern administration.

The principles of political science and civil liberty were, indeed, very little understood by the people of the Roman Empire. The legislative, executive, and administrative powers of government were confounded, as well as concentrated, in the person of the sovereign. The emperor represented the sovereignty of Rome, which, even after the establishment of Christianity, was considered as something superhuman, if not precisely a divine institution. But, so ill can despotism balance the various powers of the State, and so incapable is it of studying the condition of the governed, that even under the best emperors, seditions and rebellions were not rare. They constituted the only means whereby the people could make their petitions heard; and the moment the populace ceased to be overawed by military force, every trifling discontent might, from

accident, break out into a rebellion. The continual abuse to which arbitrary power is liable was felt by the emperors; and several of them attempted to restrain its exercise, in order that the general principles of legislation might not be violated by the imperial ordinances. Such laws express the sentiments of justice which animate the administration, but they are always useless; for no law can be of any avail unless a right to enforce its observance exist in some tribunal, independent of the legislative and executive powers of the State; and the very existence of such a tribunal implies that the State possesses a constitution which renders the law more powerful than the prince. Much, however, as many of the Roman emperors may have loved justice, no one was ever found who felt inclined to diminish his own authority so far as to render the law permanently superior to his own will. Yet a strong impulse towards improvement was felt throughout the empire; and, if the middle and upper classes of society had not been already so far reduced in number as to make their influence almost nugatory in the scale of civilization, there might have been some hope of the political regeneration of the Roman state. Patriotism and political honesty can, however, only become national virtues when the people possess a control over the conduct of their rulers, and when the rulers themselves publicly announce their political principles.

Erroneous views also of political economy led many of the emperors to increase the evil which they were endeavouring to remedy. Had the Emperor Anastasius left the three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of gold which he accumulated in the treasury circulating among his subjects, or had he employed it in works extending the industry of his people and adding to the security of their property, it is probable that his reign would have very greatly augmented the population of the empire, and pressed back the barbarians on their own thinly peopled lands. If it had been in his power to have added to this boon some guarantee against arbitrary impositions on the part of his successors, and against the unjust exactions of the administration, there can be no doubt that his reign would have restored to the empire much of the pristine energy of the republic; and that, instead of giving a false brilliancy to the reign of Justinian, he would have increased the happiness of the most civilized portion of mankind, and given a new impulse to population.

Sect. XII.

State of civilization and influence of national feelings during this period

The ravages of the Goths and Huns in Europe and Asia assisted in producing a great change in the state of society in the Eastern Empire, even though their efforts at conquest were successfully repulsed. In many provinces the higher classes were completely exterminated. The loss of their slaves and serfs, who had been carried away by the invaders, either reduced them to the condition of humble cultivators, or forced

them to emigrate, and abandon their land, from which they were unable to obtain any revenue in the miserable state of cultivation to which the capture of their slaves, the destruction of their agricultural buildings, and the want of a market, had reduced the country. In many of the towns the diminished population was reduced to misery by the ruin of the district. The higher classes disappeared under the weight of the municipal duties which they were called upon to perform. Houses remained unlet; and even when let, the portion of rent which was not absorbed by the imperial taxes, was insufficient to supply the demands of the local expenditure. The labourer and the artisan alone could find bread; the walls of cities were allowed to fall into ruins; the streets were neglected; many public buildings had become useless; aqueducts remained unrepaired; internal communications ceased; and, with the extinction of the wealthy and educated classes, the local prejudices of the lower orders became the law of society. Yet, on the other hand, even amidst all the evidences of decline and misery in many parts of the empire, there were some favoured cities and districts which afforded evidence of progress. The lives and fortunes of the lower orders, and particularly of the slaves, were much better protected than in the most glorious periods of Greek and Roman history. The police was improved; and though luxury assisted the progress of effeminacy, it also aided the progress of civilization by giving stability to order. The streets of the great cities of the East were traversed with as much security during the night as by day.

The devastations of the northern invaders prepared the way for a great change in the races of mankind who dwelt in the regions between the Danube and the Mediterranean. New races were introduced from abroad and new races were formed by the admixture of native proprietors and colons with emigrants and domestic slaves. Colonies of agricultural emigrants were introduced into every province of the empire. Several of the languages still spoken in Eastern Europe bear evidence of changes which commenced at this period. Modern Greek, Albanian, and Vallachian may be considered more or less the representatives of the ancient languages of Greece, Epirus, and Thrace, though modified by the influence of foreign elements. In the provinces, the clergy alone were enabled to maintain a position which allowed them to devote some time to study. They accordingly became the principal depositaries of knowledge, and as their connection with the people was of the most intimate and friendly character, they employed the popular language to instruct their flocks, to preserve their attachment, and rouse their enthusiasm. In this way, ecclesiastical literature grew up in every province which possessed its own language and national character. The Scriptures were translated, read, and expounded to the people in their native dialect, in Armenian, in Syriac, in Coptic, and in Gothic, as well as in Latin and Greek. It was this connection between the people and their clergy which enabled the Orthodox Church, in the Eastern Empire, to preserve a popular character, in spite of the exertions of the emperors and the popes to give it a Roman or imperial, organization. Christianity, as a religion, was always universal in its character, but the Christian church long carried with it many national distinctions. The earliest church had been Jewish in its forms and opinions, and in the East it long retained a tincture of the oriental philosophy of its Alexandrine proselytes. After Christianity became the established religion of the empire, a struggle arose between the Latin and Greek clergy for supremacy. The greater learning and the more popular character of the Greek clergy, supported by the superior knowledge and higher political importance of the laity in the East, soon gave to the Greeks a

predominant influence. But this influence was still subordinate to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, who arrogated the rank of a spiritual emperor, and whose claims to represent the supremacy of Rome were admitted, though not without jealousy, by the Greeks. The authority of the Bishop of Rome and of the Latin element in the established church was so great in the reign of Marcian, that the legate of Pope Leo the Great, at the general council of Chalcedon, though a Greek bishop, made use of the Latin language when addressing an audience composed entirely of Eastern bishops, and for whom his discourse required to be translated into Greek. It was inconsistent with the dignity of the Roman pontiff to use any language but that of Rome, though doubtless St. Peter had made use of Greek, except when speaking with the gift of tongues. Latin, however, was the official language of the empire; and the Emperor Marcian, in addressing the same council of the church, spoke that language, though he knew that Greek alone could be intelligible to the greater number of the bishops whom he addressed. It was fortunate for the Greeks, perhaps also for the whole Christian world, that the popes did not, at this time, lay claim to the gift of tongues, and address every nation in its own language. If it had occurred to them that the head of the universal church ought to speak all languages, the bishops of Rome might perhaps have rendered themselves the political sovereigns of the Christian world.

The attempt of the popes to introduce the Latin language into the East roused the opposition of all the Greeks. The constitution of the Eastern Church still admitted the laity to a share in the election of their bishops, and obliged the members of the ecclesiastical profession to cultivate the goodwill of their flocks. In the East, the language of the people was the language of religion and of ecclesiastical literature, consequently the cause of the Greek clergy and people was united. This connection with the people gave a weight and authority to the Greek clergy, which proved extremely useful in checking the religious despotism of the popes, as well as in circumscribing the civil tyranny of the emperors.

Though the emperor still maintained his supremacy over the clergy, and regarded and treated the popes and patriarchs as his ministers, still the church as a body had already rendered itself superior to the person of the emperor, and had established the principle, that the orthodoxy of the emperor was a law of the empire. The Patriarch of Constantinople, suspecting the emperor Anastasius of attachment to the Eutychian heresy, refused to crown him until he gave a written declaration of his orthodoxy. Yet the ceremony of the emperor's receiving the imperial crown from the Patriarch was introduced, for the first time, on the accession of Leo the Great, sixty-six years before the election of Anastasius. It is true that the church was not always able to enforce the observance of the principle that the empire of the East could only be governed by an orthodox sovereign. The aristocracy and the army proved at times stronger than the orthodox clergy.

The state of literature and the fine arts always affords a correct representation of the condition of society among the Greeks, though the fine arts, during the existence of the Roman Empire, were more closely connected with the government and the aristocracy than with popular feelings. The assertion that Christianity tended to accelerate the decline of the Roman Empire has been already refuted; but although the Eastern Empire received immeasurable benefits from Christianity, both politically and

socially, still the literature and the fine arts of Greece received from it a mortal blow. The Christians soon declared themselves the enemies of all pagan literature. Homer, and the Attic tragedians, were prohibited books; and the fine arts were proscribed, if not persecuted. Many of the early fathers held opinions which were not uncongenial with the fierce contempt for letters and art entertained by the first Mohammedans. It is true that this anti-pagan spirit might have proved temporary, had it not occurred at a period when the decline of society had begun to render knowledge rarer, and learning of more difficult attainment than formerly.

Theodosius the Younger found the administration in danger of not procuring a regular supply of well-educated aspirants to civil offices; and in order to preserve the state from such a misfortune, he established a university at Constantinople, as has been already mentioned, and which was maintained at the public expense. The composition of this university demonstrates the important political position occupied by the Greek nation : fifteen professors were appointed to teach Greek literature; thirteen only were named to give instruction in Latin; two professors of law were added, and one of philosophy. Such was the imperial university of Theodosius, who did everything in his power to render the rank of professor highly honourable. The candidate who aspired to a chair in the university was obliged to undergo an examination before the senate, and it was necessary for him to possess an irreproachable moral character, as well as to prove that his learning was profound. The term of twenty years' service secured for the professors the title of count, and placed them among the nobility of the empire. Learning, it is evident, was still honoured and cultivated in the East; but the attention of the great body of society was directed to religious controversy, and the greatest talents were devoted to these contests. The few philosophers who kept aloof from the disputes of the Christian church, plunged into a mysticism more injurious to the human intellect, and less likely to be of any use to society, than the most furious controversy. Most of these speculators in metaphysical science abandoned all interest in the fate of their country, and in the affairs of this world, from an idle hope of being able to establish a personal intercourse with an imaginary world of spirits. With the exception of religious writings, and historical works, there was very little in the literature of this period which could be called popular. The people amused themselves with chariot races instead of the drama; and, among the higher orders, music had long taken the place of poetry. Yet the poets wanted genius, not encouragement; for John Lydus tells us that one of his poetical effusions was rewarded by the patron in whose praise it was written, with a gold byzant for each line. Pindar probably would not have expected so much.

The same genius which inspires poetry is necessary to excellence in the fine arts: yet, as these are more mechanical in their execution, good taste may be long retained, after inspiration has entirely ceased, merely by imitating good models. The very constitution of society in the fifth century seemed to forbid the existence of genius. In order to produce the highest degree of excellence in works of literature and art, it is absolutely necessary that the author and the public should participate in some common feelings of admiration for simplicity, beauty, and sublimity. When the condition of society places the patron of works of genius in a totally different rank of life from their authors, and renders the criticisms of a small and exclusive circle of individuals the law in literature and art, then an artificial taste must be cultivated, in order to secure the

applause of those who alone possess the means of rewarding the merit of which they approve. The very fact that this taste, which the author or the artist is called upon to gratify, is to him more a task of artificial study than an effusion of natural feeling, must of itself produce a tendency to exaggeration or mannerism. There is nothing in the range of human affairs so completely democratic as taste. Sophocles addressed himself alike to the educated and the uneducated; Demosthenes spoke to the crowd; Phidias worked for the people.

Christianity engaged in direct war with the arts. The Greeks had united painting, sculpture, and architecture, in such a way, that their temples formed a harmonious illustration of the beauties of the fine arts. The finest temples were museums of paganism, and, consequently, Christianity repudiated all connection with this class of buildings until it had disfigured and degraded them. The courts of judicature, the basilicas, not the temples, were chosen as the models of Christian churches, and the adoption of the ideal beauty of ancient sculpture was treated with contempt. The earlier Fathers of the church wished to represent our Saviour as unlike the types of the pagan divinities as possible.

Works of art gradually lost their value as creations of the mind; and their destruction commenced whenever the material of which they were composed was of great value, or happened to be wanted for some other purpose more useful in the opinion of the possessor. The Theodosian Code contains many laws against the destruction of works of ancient art and the plundering of tombs. The Christian religion, when it deprived the temples and the statues of a religious sanction, permitted the avaricious to destroy them in order to appropriate the materials; and, when all reverence for antiquity was effaced, it became a profitable, though disgraceful occupation, to ransack the pagan tombs for the ornaments which they contained. The clergy of the new religion demanded the construction of new churches; and the desecrated buildings falling into ruins, supplied materials at less expense than the quarries.

Many of the celebrated works of art which had been transported to Constantinople at its foundation, were destroyed in the numerous conflagrations to which that city was always liable. The celebrated statues of the Muses perished in the time of Arcadius. The fashion of erecting statues had not become obsolete, though statuary and sculpture had sunk in the general decline of taste; but the vanity of the ambitious was now more gratified by the costliness of the material than by the beauty of the workmanship. A silver statue of the empress Eudocia, placed on a column of porphyry, excited so greatly the indignation of John Chrysostom, that he indulged in the most violent invectives against the empress. His virulence caused the government to exile him from the patriarchal chair. Many valuable Grecian works of bronze were melted down, in order to form a colossal statue of the Emperor Anastasius, which was placed on a lofty column to adorn the capital; others, of gold and silver, were melted, and coined into money, and augmented the sums which he laid up in the public treasury. Still it is unquestionable that a taste for painting had not entirely ceased among the educated and wealthy classes. Mosaics and engraved gems were fashionable luxuries, but the general poverty had decreased the numbers of the patrons of art, and the prejudices of the Christians had greatly restricted its range.

CHAPTER III

CONDITION OF THE GREEKS UNDER THE REIGN OF JUSTINIAN. A.D. 527-565

Sect. I.

Influence of the Imperial Power on the condition of the Greek Nation during the reign of Justinian

It happens not unfrequently, that during long periods of time national feelings and popular institutions escape the attention of historians; their feeble traces are lost in the importance of events, apparently the effect of accident, destiny, or the special intervention of Providence. In such cases, history becomes a chronicle of facts, or a series of biographical sketches; and it ceases to yield the instructive lessons which it always affords, as long as it connects events with local habits, national customs, and the general ideas of a people. The history of the Eastern Empire often assumes this form, and is frequently little better than a mere chronicle. Its historians hardly display national character or popular feeling, and only participate in the superstition and party spirit of their situation in society. In spite of the brilliant events which have given the reign of Justinian a prominent place in the annals of mankind, it is presented to us in a series of isolated and incongruous facts. Its chief interest is derived from the biographical memorials of Belisarius, Theodora, and Justinian; and its most instructive lesson has been drawn from the influence which its legislation has exercised on foreign nations. The unerring instinct of mankind has, however, fixed on this period as one of the greatest eras in man's annals. The actors may have been men of ordinary merit, but the events of which they were the agents effected the mightiest revolutions in society. The frame of the ancient world was broken to pieces, and men long looked back with wonder and admiration at the fragments which remained, to prove the existence of a nobler race than their own. The Eastern Empire, though too powerful to fear any external enemy, was withering away from the rapidity with which the State devoured the resources of the people; and this malady or corruption of the Roman government appeared to the wisest men of the age so utterly incurable, that it was supposed to indicate the approaching dissolution of the globe. No dawn of a new social organization had yet manifested its advent in any part of the known world. A large portion, perhaps the majority of the human race, continued to live in a state of slavery; and slaves were still regarded as intelligent domestic animals, not as men. Society was destined to be regenerated by the destruction of predial slavery; but, to destroy predial slavery, the free inhabitants of the civilized world were compelled to descend to the state of poverty and ignorance in which they had, for ages, kept the servile population. The field for general improvement could only be opened, and the reorganization of society could only commence, when slaves and freemen were so closely intermingled in the cares and

duties of life as to destroy the prejudices of class; then, at last, feelings of philanthropy were called into action by the necessities of man's condition.

The reign of Justinian is more remarkable as a portion of the history of mankind, than as a chapter in the annals of the Roman Empire or of the Greek nation. The changes of centuries passed in rapid succession before the eyes of one generation. The life of Belisarius, either in its reality or its romantic form, has typified his age. In his early youth, the world was populous and wealthy, the empire rich and powerful. He conquered extensive realms and mighty nations, and led kings captive to the footstool of Justinian, the lawgiver of civilization. Old age arrived; Belisarius sank into the grave suspected and impoverished by his feeble and ungrateful master; and the world, from the banks of the Euphrates to those of the Tagus, presented the awful spectacle of famine and plague, of ruined cities, and of nations on the brink of extermination. The impression on the hearts of men was profound. Fragments of Gothic poetry, legends of Persian literature, and fables concerning the fate of Belisarius himself, still indicate the eager attention with which this period was long regarded.

The expectation that Justinian would be able to re-establish the Roman power was entertained by many, and not without reasonable grounds, at the time of his accession to the throne; but, before his death, the delusion was utterly dissipated. Anastasius, by filling the treasury, and remodelling the army, had prepared the way for reforming the financial administration and improving the condition of the people. Justinian unfortunately employed the immense wealth and effective army to which he succeeded, in such a manner as to increase the burden of the imperial government, and render hopeless the future reform of the system. Yet it must still be observed that the decay of the internal resources of the empire, which proceeded with such fearful rapidity in the latter days of Justinian's reign, was interwoven with the frame of society. For six centuries, the Roman government had ruled the East in a state of tranquillity, when compared with the ordinary fortunes of the human race; and during this long period, the people had been moulded into slaves of the imperial treasury. Justinian, by introducing measures of reform, tending to augment the powers and revenues of the State, only accelerated the inevitable catastrophe prepared by centuries of fiscal oppression.

It is impossible to form a correct idea of the position of the Greeks at this time without taking a general, though cursory view of the nature of the Roman administration, and observing the effect which it produced on the whole population of the empire. The contrast presented by the increasing efforts of the government to centralize every branch of the administration, and the additional strength which local feelings were gaining in the distant provinces, was a singular though natural consequence of the increasing wants of the sovereign, and of the declining civilization of the people. The civil organization of the empire attained its highest degree of perfection in the reign of Justinian; the imperial power secured a practical supremacy over the military officers and beneficed clergy, and placed them under the control of the civil departments of the state; the absolute authority of the emperor was fully established, and systematically exercised in the army, the church, and the state. A century of prudent administration had infused new vigour into the government, and Justinian succeeded to the means of rendering himself one of the greatest conquerors in the annals of the Roman Empire. The change which time had effected in the position of

the emperors, from the reign of Constantine to that of Justinian, was by no means inconsiderable. Two hundred years, in any government, must prove productive of great alterations.

It is true that in theory the power of the military emperor was as great as that of the civil monarch; and, according to the phrases in fashion with their contemporaries, both Constantine and Justinian were constitutional sovereigns, equally restrained, in the exercise of their power, by the laws and usages of the Roman Empire. But there is an essential difference between the position of a general and a king; and all the Roman emperors, until the accession of Arcadius, had been generals. The leader of an army must always, to a certain extent, be the comrade of his soldiers; he must often participate in their feelings, and make their interests and views coincide with his own. This community of sentiment generally creates so close a connection, that the wishes of the troops exercise great influence over the conduct of their leader, and moderate to them, at least, the arbitrary exercise of despotic power, by confining it within the usages of military discipline and the habits of military life. When the civil supremacy of the Roman emperors became firmly established by the changes which were introduced into the imperial armies after the time of Theodosius the Great, the emperor ceased to be personally connected with the army, and considered himself quite as much the master of the soldiers whom he paid, as of the subjects whom he taxed. The sovereign had no longer any notion of public opinion beyond its existence in the church, and its display in the factions of the court or the amphitheatre. The immediate effects of absolute power were not, however, fully revealed in the details of the administration, until the reign of Justinian. Various circumstances have been noticed in the preceding chapter, which tended to connect the policy of several of the emperors who reigned during the fifth century with the interests of their subjects. Justinian found order introduced into every branch of the public administration, immense wealth accumulated in the imperial treasury, discipline re-established in the army, and the church eager to support an orthodox emperor. Unfortunately for mankind, this increase in the power of the emperor rendered him independent of the good-will of his subjects, whose interests seemed to him subordinate to the exigencies of the public administration; and his reign proved one of the most injurious, in the history of the Roman Empire, to the moral and political condition of its subjects. In forming an opinion concerning the events of Justinian's reign, it must be borne in mind that the foundation of its power and glory was laid by Anastasius, while Justinian sowed the seeds of the misfortunes of Maurice; and, by persecuting the very nationality of his heterodox subjects, prepared the way for the conquests of the Mussulmans.

Justinian mounted the throne with the feelings, and in the position, of a hereditary sovereign, prepared, however, by every advantage of circumstance, to hold out the expectation of a wise and prudent reign. Born and educated in a private station, he had attained the mature age of forty-five before he ascended the throne. He had received an excellent education. He was a man of honourable intentions, and of a laborious disposition, attentive to business, and well versed in law and theology; but his abilities were moderate, his judgment was feeble, and he was deficient in decision of character. Simple in his own habits, he, nevertheless, added to the pomp and ceremonial of the imperial court, and strove to make the isolation of the emperor, as a superior being,

visible in the public pageantry of government. Though ambitious of glory, he was infinitely more attentive to the exhibition of his power than to the adoption of measures for securing the essentials of national strength.

The Eastern Empire was an absolute monarchy, of a regular and systematic form. The emperor was the head of the government, and the master of all those engaged in the public service; but the administration was an immense establishment, artfully and scientifically constructed in its details. The numerous individuals employed in each ministerial department of the State consisted of a body of men appropriated to that special service, which they were compelled to study attentively, to which they devoted their lives, and in which they were sure to rise by talents and industry. Each department of the State formed a separate profession, as completely distinct, and as perfectly organized in its internal arrangements, as the legal profession is in modem Europe. A Roman emperor would no more have thought of suddenly creating a financier, or an administrator, than a modem sovereign would think of making a lawyer. This circumstance explains at once how education and official knowledge were so long and so well preserved in the Roman administration, where, as in the law and the church, they flourished for ages after the extinction of literary acquirements in all other classes of the people; and it affords also an explanation of the singular duration of the Roman government, and of its inherent principle of vitality. If it wanted the energy necessary for its own regeneration, which could only have proceeded from the influence of a free people on the sovereign power, it at least escaped the evils of official anarchy and vacillating government. Nothing but this systematic composition of the multifarious branches of the Roman administration could have preserved the empire from dissolution during the period in which it was a prey to internal wars and foreign invasions; and this supremacy of the system over the will of individuals gave a character of immutability to administrative procedure, which warranted the boast of the subjects of Constantine and Justinian that they lived under the protection of the Roman constitution. The greatest imperfection of the government arose from the total want of any popular control over the moral conduct of the public servants. Political morality, like pure taste, cannot live without the atmosphere of public opinion.

The state of society in the Eastern Empire underwent far greater changes than the imperial administration. The race of wealthy nobles, whose princely fortunes and independent bearing had excited the fears and the avarice of the early Caesars, had been long extinct. The imperial court and household included all the higher classes in the capital. The senate was now only a corps of officials, and the people had no position in the State but that of tax-payers. While the officers of the civil, finance, and judicial departments, the clergy and the military, were the servants of the emperor, the people, the Roman people, were his slaves. No connecting link of common interest or national sympathy united the various classes as one body, and connected them with the emperor. The only bond of union was one of universal oppression, as everything in the imperial government had become subordinate to the necessity of supplying the treasury with money. The fiscal severity of the Roman government had for centuries been gradually absorbing all the accumulated wealth of society, as the possession of large fortunes was almost sure to entail their confiscation. Even if the wealth of the higher classes in the provinces escaped this fate, it was, by the constitution of the empire, rendered

responsible for the deficiencies which might occur in the taxes of the districts from which it was obtained; and thus the rich were everywhere rapidly sinking to the level of the general poverty. The destruction of the higher classes of society had swept away all the independent landed proprietors before Justinian commenced his series of reforms in the provinces.

The effect of these reforms extended to future times, and exercised an important influence on the internal composition of the Greek people. In ancient times, a very large portion of society consisted of slaves. They formed the great body of the rural population; and, as they received no moral training, they were inferior, in every mental quality, to the barbarians of the north: from this very cause they were utterly incapable of making any exertion to improve their condition; and whether the province which they inhabited belonged to the Romans or Greeks, the Goths or the Huns, they remained equally slaves. The Roman financial administration, by depressing the higher classes, and impoverishing the rich, at last burdened the small proprietors and the cultivators of the soil with the whole weight of the land-tax. The labourer of the soil then became an object of great interest to the treasury, and, as the chief instrument in furnishing the financial resources of the State, obtained almost as important a position in the eyes of the fisc as the landed proprietor himself. The first laws which conferred any rights on the slave, are those which the Roman government enacted to prevent the landed proprietors from transferring their slaves engaged in the cultivation of lands, assessed for the land-tax, to other employments which, though more profitable to the proprietor of the slave, would have yielded a smaller, or less permanent, return to the imperial treasury. The avarice of the imperial treasury, by reducing the mass of the free population to the same degree of poverty as the slaves, had removed one cause of the separation of the two classes. The position of the slave had lost most of its moral degradation, and occupied precisely the same political position in society as the poor labourer, from the moment that the Roman fiscal laws compelled any freeman who had cultivated lands for the space of thirty years to remain for ever attached, with his descendants, to the same estate. The lower orders were from that period blended into one class: the slave rose to be a member of this body; the freeman descended, but his descent was necessary for the improvement of the great bulk of the human race, and for the extinction of slavery. Such was the progress of civilization in the Eastern Empire. The measures of Justinian which, by their fiscal rapacity, tended to sink the free population to the same state of poverty as the slaves, really prepared the way for the rise of the slaves as soon as any general improvement took place in the condition of the human race.

Justinian found the central administration still aided and controlled by municipal institutions and corporate communities throughout the empire, as well as by the religious assemblies of the orthodox and heterodox congregations. Many of these bodies possessed large revenues. The fabric of the ancient world still existed. Consuls were still named. Rome, though subject to the Goths, preserved its senate. Constantinople enjoyed all the license of the hippodrome; Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and many other cities, received public distributions of grain. Athens and Sparta were still governed as little states, and a body of Greek provincial militia still guarded the pass of Thermopylae. The Greek cities possessed their own revenues, and maintained their

roads, schools, hospitals, police, public buildings, and aqueducts; they paid professors and public physicians, and kept their streets paved, cleaned, and lighted. The people enjoyed their local festivals and games; and though music had supplanted poetry, the theatres were still open for the public amusement.

Justinian defaced these traces of the ancient world far more rapidly in Greece than Theodoric in Italy. He was a merciless reformer, and his reforms were directed solely by fiscal calculations. The importance of the consulate was abolished, to save the expenses attendant on the installation of the consuls. The Roman senators were exterminated in the Italian wars, during which the ancient race of the inhabitants of Rome was nearly destroyed. Alexandria was deprived of its supplies of grain, and the Greeks in Egypt were reduced in number and consideration. Antioch was sacked by Chosroes, and the position of the Greek population of Syria permanently weakened.

But it was in Greece itself that the Hellenic race and institutions received the severest blow. Justinian seized the revenues of the free cities, and deprived them of their most valuable privileges, for the loss of their revenues compromised their political existence. Poverty produced barbarism. Roads, streets, and public buildings could no longer be repaired or constructed unless by the imperial treasury. That want of police which characterizes the middle ages, began to be felt in the East. Public instruction was neglected, but the public charities were liberally supported; the professors and the physicians were robbed of the funds destined for their maintenance. The municipalities themselves continued to exist in an enfeebled state, for Justinian affected to reform, but never attempted to destroy them; and even his libeller, Procopius, only accuses him of plundering, not of destroying them. The poverty of the Greeks rendered it impossible for them to supply their municipalities with new funds, or even to allow local taxes to be imposed, for maintaining the old establishments. At this crisis, the population was saved from utter barbarism by the close connection which existed between the clergy and the people, and the powerful influence of the church. The clergy and the people being united by a community of language, feelings, and prejudices, the clergy, as the most powerful class of the community, henceforth took the lead in all public business in the provinces. They lent their aid to support the charitable institutions, to replace the means of instruction, and to maintain the knowledge of the healing art; they supported the communal and municipal organization of the people; and by preserving the local feelings of the Greeks, they strengthened the foundations of a national organization. History supplies few materials to illustrate the precise period at which the clergy in Greece formed their alliance with the municipal organization of the people, independent of the central authority; but the alliance became of great national importance, and exercised permanent effects after the municipalities had been impoverished by Justinian's reforms.

Sect. II.

Military Forces of the Empire

The history of the wars and conquests of Justinian is narrated by Procopius, the secretary of Belisarius, who was often an eyewitness of the events which he records with a minuteness which supplies much valuable information on the military system of the age. The expeditions of the Roman armies were so widely extended, that most of the nations of the world were brought into direct communication with the empire. During the time Justinian's generals were changing the state of Europe, and destroying some of the nations which had dismembered the Western Empire, circumstances beyond the control of that international system of policy, of which the sovereigns of Constantinople and Persia were the arbiters, produced a general movement in the population of central Asia. The whole human race was thrown into a state of convulsive agitation, from the frontiers of China to the shores of the Atlantic. This agitation destroyed many of the existing governments, and exterminated several powerful nations, while, at the same time, it laid the foundation of the power of new states and nations, some of which have maintained their existence to the present time.

The Eastern Empire bore no inconsiderable part in raising this mighty storm in the West, and in quelling its violence in the East; in exterminating the Goths and Vandals, and in arresting the progress of the Avars and Turks. Yet the number and composition of the Roman armies have often been treated by historians as weak and contemptible. It is impossible, in this sketch, to attempt any examination of the whole military establishment of the Roman Empire during Justinian’s reign; but in noticing the influence exercised by the military system on the Greek population, it is necessary to make a few general observations. The army consisted of two distinct classes,—the regular troops, and the mercenaries. The regular troops were composed both of native subjects of the Roman empire, raised by conscription, and of barbarians, who had been allowed to occupy lands within the emperor's dominions, and to retain their own usages, on the condition of furnishing a fixed number of recruits for the army. The Roman government still clung to the great law of the empire, that the portion of its subjects which paid the land-tax could not be allowed to escape that burden by entering the army. The proprietors of the land were responsible for the tribute; the cultivators of the soil, both slaves and serfs, secured the amount of the public revenues; neither could be permitted to forego their fiscal obligations to perform military duties. For some centuries it had been more economical to purchase the service of barbarians than to employ native troops; and perhaps, if the oppressive system of the imperial administration had not impaired the resources of the State, and diminished the population by consuming the capital of the people, this might have long continued to be the case. Native troops were always drawn from the mountainous districts, which paid a scanty tribute, and in which the population found difficulty in procuring subsistence. The invasions of the barbarians, likewise, threw numbers of the peasantry of the provinces to the south of the Danube out of employment, and many of these entered the army. A supply of recruits was likewise obtained from the idle and needy population of

the towns. The most active and intelligent soldiers were placed in the cavalry,—a force that was drilled with the greatest care, subjected to the most exact discipline, and sustained the glory of the Roman arms in the field of battle. As the higher and middle classes in the provinces had, for ages, been excluded from the military profession, and the army had been at last composed chiefly of the rudest and most ignorant peasants, of enfranchised slaves, and naturalized barbarians, military service was viewed with aversion; and the greatest repugnance arose among the civilians to become soldiers. In the meantime, the depopulation of the empire daily increased the difficulty of raising the number of recruits required for a service which embraced an immense extent of territory, and entailed a great destruction of human life.

The troops of the line, particularly the infantry, had deteriorated considerably in Justinian's time; but the artillery and engineer departments were not much inferior, in science and efficiency, to what they had been in the best days of the empire. Military resources, not military knowledge, had diminished. The same arsenals continued to exist; mere mechanical skill had been uninterruptedly exercised; and the constant demand which had existed for military mechanicians, armourers, and engineers, had never allowed the theoretical instruction of this class to be neglected, nor their practical skill to decline from want of employment. This fact requires to be borne in mind.

The mercenaries formed the most valued and brilliant portion of the army; and it was the fashion of the day to copy and admire the dress and manners of the barbarian cavalry. The empire was now surrounded by numbers of petty princes, who, though they had seized possession of provinces once belonging to the Romans, by force, and had often engaged in war with the emperor, still acknowledged a certain degree of dependence on the Roman power. Some of them, as the kings of the Heruls and the Gepids, and the king of Colchis, held their regal rank, by a regular investiture, from Justinian. These princes, and the kings of the Lombards, Huns, Saracens, and Moors, all received regular subsidies. Their best warriors entered the Roman service, and served in separate bands, under their own leaders, and with their national weapons, but subjected to the regular organization and discipline of the Roman armies, though not to the Roman system of military exercises and manoeuvres. Some of these corps of barbarians were also formed of volunteers, who were attracted by the high pay which they received, and the license with which they were allowed to behave.

The superiority of these troops arose from natural causes. The northern nations who invaded the empire consisted of a population trained from infancy to warlike exercises, and following no profession but that of arms. Their lands were cultivated by the labour of their slaves, or by that of the Roman subjects who still survived in the provinces they had occupied; but their only pecuniary resources arose from the plunder of their neighbours, or the subsidies of the Roman emperors. Their habits of life, the celerity of their movements, and the excellence of their armour, rendered them the choicest troops of the age. The emperors preferred armies composed of a number of small bands of mercenary foreigners, attached to their own persons by high pay, and commanded by chiefs who could never pretend to political rank, and who had much to lose and little to gain by rebellion; for experience proved that they periled their throne by intrusting the command of a national army to a native general, who, from a popular soldier, might become a dangerous rival. Though the barbarian mercenaries in the

service of Rome generally proved far more efficient troops than their free countrymen, yet they were on the whole unequal to the native Roman cavalry of Justinian's army, the Cataphracti, sheathed in complete steel on the Persian model, and armed with the Grecian spear, who were still the best troops in a field of battle, and were the real type of the chivalry of the middle ages.

Justinian weakened the Roman army in several ways by his measures of reform. His anxiety to reduce its expenditure induced him to diminish the establishment of camels, horses, and chariots, which attended the troops for transporting the military machines and baggage. This train had been previously very large, as it was calculated to save the peasantry from any danger of having their labours interrupted, or their cattle seized, under the pretext of being required for transport. Numerous abuses were introduced by diminishing the pay of the troops, and by neglecting to pay them with regularity and to furnish them with proper food and clothing. At the same time the efficiency of the army in the field was more seriously injured, by continuing the policy adopted by Anastasius, of restricting the power of the generals; a policy, however, which, it must be confessed, was not unnecessary in order to avoid greater evils. This is evident from the numerous rebellions in Justinian's reign, and the absolute want of any national or patriotic feeling in the majority of the Roman officers. Large armies were at times composed of a number of corps, each commanded by its own officer, over whom the nominal commander-in-chief had little or no authority; and it is to this circumstance that the unfortunate results of some of the Gothic and Persian campaigns are to be attributed, and not to any inferiority of the Roman troops. Even Belisarius himself, though he gave many proofs of attachment to Justinian’s throne, was watched with the greatest jealousy. He was treated with constant distrust, and his officers were at times encouraged to dispute his measures, and never punished for disobeying his orders. The fact is, that Belisarius might, if so disposed, have assumed the purple, and perhaps dethroned his master. Narses was the only general who was implicitly trusted and steadily supported; but Narses was an aged eunuch, and could never have become emperor.

The imperial military forces consisted of one hundred and fifty thousand men; and though the extent of the frontier which these troops were compelled to guard was very great, and lay open to the incursions of many active hostile tribes, still Justinian was able to assemble some admirably appointed armies for his foreign expeditions. The armament which accompanied Belisarius to Africa consisted of ten thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and twenty thousand sailors. Belisarius must have had about thirty thousand troops under his command in Italy before the taking of Ravenna. Germanus, when he arrived in Africa, found that only one-third of the Roman troops about Carthage had remained faithful, and the rebels under Stozas amounted to eight thousand men. As there were still troops in Numidia which had not joined the deserters, the whole Roman force in Africa cannot have been less than fifteen thousand. Narses, in the year 551, when the empire began to show evident proofs of the bad effects of Justinian’s government, could assemble thirty thousand chosen troops, an army which defeated the veterans of Totila, and destroyed the fierce bands of Franks and Alemanns which hoped to wrest Italy from the Romans. The character of the Roman troops, in spite of all that modern writers have said to depreciate them, still stood so high that

Totila, the warlike monarch of the Goths, strove to induce them to join his standard by offers of high pay. No army had yet proved itself equal to the Roman troops on the field of battle; and their exploits in Spain, Africa, Colchis, and Mesopotamia, prove their excellence; though the defeats which they sustained, both from the Persians and on the Danube, reveal the fact that their enemies were improving in military science, and ready to avail themselves of the slightest neglect on the part of the Roman government.

Numerous examples could be cited of almost incredible disorder in the armies,—originating generally in the misconduct of the imperial government. Belisarius attempted, but found it impossible, to enforce strict discipline, for his soldiers were often left unpaid and his officers were at times encouraged to act independently of his orders. Two thousand Heruls ventured to quit his standard in Italy, and, after marching round the Adriatic, were pardoned by Justinian, and again engaged in the imperial service. Procopius mentions repeatedly that the disorders of the unpaid troops ruined the provinces; and in Africa, no less than three Roman officers, Stozas, Maximin, and Gontharis, attempted to render themselves independent, and were supported by large bodies of troops. The Greeks were the only portion of the population who were considered as sincerely attached to the imperial government, or, at least, who would readily defend it against every enemy; and accordingly, Gontharis, when he wished to secure Carthage, ordered all the Greeks to be murdered without distinction. The Greeks were, however, from their position and rank in society as burgesses or tax-payers, almost entirely excluded from the army, and, though they furnished the greater part of the sailors for the fleet, they were generally an unwarlike population. Witiges, the Gothic king, calls the Roman army of Belisarius an army of Greeks, a band of pirates, actors, and mountebanks.

One of the most unfortunate measures of Justinian was his disbanding all the provincial militia. This is incidentally mentioned in the Secret History of Procopius, who informs us that Thermopylae had been previously guarded by two thousand of these troops; but that this corps was dissolved, and a garrison of regular troops placed in Greece. As a general measure it was probably dictated by a plan of financial reform, and not by any fear of popular insurrection; but its effects were extremely injurious to the empire in the declining state of society, and in the increasing disorganization of the central power; and though it may possibly have prevented some provinces from recovering their independence by their own arms, it prepared the way for the easy conquests of the Avars and Arabs. Justinian was intent on centralizing all power, and rendering all public burdens uniform and systematic; and had adopted the opinion that it was cheaper to defend the empire by walls and fortresses than by a moveable army. The necessity of frequently moving troops with great celerity to defend the frontiers, had induced the officers to abandon the ancient practice of fortifying a regular camp; and at last, even the art of encamping was neglected. The barbarians, however, could always move with greater rapidity than the regular troops of the empire.

To secure the frontiers, Justinian adopted a new system of defence. He constructed extensive lines supported by innumerable forts and castles, in which he placed garrisons, in order that they might be ready to sally out on the invading bands. These lines extended from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, and were farther strengthened by the long wall of Anastasius, which covered Constantinople, by walls protecting the

Thracian Chersonesus and the peninsula of Pallene, and by the fortifications at Thermopylae, and at the Isthmus of Corinth, which were carefully repaired. At all these posts permanent garrisons were maintained. The eulogy of Procopius on the public edifices of Justinian seems almost irreconcilable with the events of the latter years of his reign; for Zabergan, king of the Huns, penetrated through breaches he found unrepaired in the long wall, and advanced almost to the very suburbs of Constantinople.

Another instance of the declining state of military tactics may be mentioned, as it must have originated in the army itself, and not in consequence of any arrangements of the government. The combined manoeuvres of the divisions of the regiments had been so neglected that the bugle-calls once used had fallen into desuetude, and were unknown to the soldiers. The motley recruits, of dissimilar habits, could not acquire, with the requisite rapidity, a perception of the delicacy of the ancient music, and the Roman infantry no longer moved

> In perfect phalanx, to the Dorian mood.
>
> Of flutes and soft recorders.

It happened, during the siege of Auximum in Italy, that Belisarius was placed in difficulty from the want of an instantaneous means of communicating orders to the troops engaged in skirmishing with the Goths. On this occasion it was suggested to him by Procopius, his secretary and the historian of his wars, to replace the forgotten bugle-calls by making use of the brazen trumpet of the cavalry to sound a charge, and of the infantry bugle to summon a retreat.

Foreigners were preferred by the emperors as the occupants of the highest military commands; and the confidence with which the barbarian chiefs were honoured by the court enabled many to reach the highest rank in the army. Narses, the most distinguished military leader after Belisarius, was a Pers-Armenian captive. Peter, who commanded against the Persians in the campaign of 528, was also a Pers-Armenian. Pharas, who besieged Gelimer in Mount Pappua, was a Herul. Mundus, who commanded in Illyria and Dalmatia, was a Gepid prince. Chilbud, who, after several victories, perished with his army in defending the frontiers against the Sclavonians, was of northern descent, as may be inferred from his name. Salomon, who governed Africa with great courage and ability, was a eunuch from Dara. Artaban was an Armenian prince. John Troglita, the patrician, the hero of the poem of Corippus, called the Johannid, is also supposed to have been an Armenian. Yet the empire might still have furnished excellent officers, as well as valiant troops; for the Isaurians and Thracians continued to distinguish themselves in every field of battle, and were equal in courage to the fiercest of the barbarians.

It became the fashion in the army to imitate the manners and habits of the barbarians; their headlong personal courage became the most admired quality, even in the highest rank; and nothing tended more to hasten the decay of the military art. The officers in the Roman armies became more intent on distinguishing themselves for personal exploits than for exact order and strict discipline in their corps. Even Belisarius

himself appears at times to have forgotten the duties of a general in his eagerness to exhibit his personal valour on his bay charter; though he may, on such occasions, have considered that the necessity of keeping up the spirits of his army was a sufficient apology for his rashness. Unquestionably the army, as a military establishment, had declined in excellence ere Justinian ascended the throne, and his reign tended to sink it much lower; yet it is probable that it was never more remarkable for the enterprising valour of its officers, or for their personal skill in the use of their weapons. The death of numbers of the highest rank in battles and skirmishes in which they rashly engaged, proves this fact. There was, however, one important feature of ancient tactics still preserved in the Roman armies, which gave them a decided superiority over their enemies. They had still the confidence in their discipline and skill to form their ranks, and encounter their opponents in line; the bravest of their enemies, whether on the banks of the Danube or the Tigris, only ventured to charge them, or receive their attack, in close masses.

Sect. III.

Influence of Justinian's legislation on the Greek population

The Greeks long remained strangers to the Roman law. The free cities continued to be governed by their own legal systems and local usages, and the Greek lawyers did not consider it necessary to study the civil law of their masters. But this state of things underwent a great modification, after Constantine transformed the Greek town of Byzantium into the Roman city of Constantinople. The imperial administration after that period, came into more immediate connection with its eastern subjects; the legislative power of the emperors was more frequently exercised in the regulation of provincial business; and the Christian church, by uniting the whole Greek population into one body, often called forth general measures of legislation. While the confusion arising from the incongruity of old laws to the new exigencies of society was generally felt, the increasing poverty, depopulation, and want of education in the Greek cities, rendered it difficult to maintain the ancient tribunals. The Greeks were often compelled to study at the universities where Roman jurisprudence alone was cultivated, and thus the municipal law-courts were at last guided in their decisions by the rules of Roman law. As the number of the native tribunals decreased, their duties were performed by judges named by the imperial administration; and thus Roman law, silently, and without any violent change or direct legislative enactment, was generally introduced into Greece.

Justinian, from the moment of his accession to the throne, carried his favourite plan, of centralizing the direction of the complicated machine of the Roman administration in his own person, as far as possible. The necessity of condensing the

various authorities of Roman jurisprudence, and of reducing the mass of legal opinions into a system of legislative enactments, possessing unity of form and facility of reference, was deeply felt. Such a system of legislation is useful in every country; but it becomes peculiarly necessary, after a long period of civilization, in an absolute monarchy, in order to restrain the decisions of legal tribunals by published law, and prevent the judges from assuming arbitrary power, under the pretext of interpreting obsolete edicts and conflicting decisions. A code of laws, to a certain degree, serves as a barrier against despotism, for it supplies the people with the means of calmly confuting the acts of their government and the decisions of their judges by recognised principles of justice; and at the same time it is a useful ally to the absolute sovereign, as it supplies him with increased facilities for detecting injustice committed by his official agents.

The faults or merits of Justinian's system of laws belong to the lawyers intrusted with the execution of his project, but the honour of having commanded this work may be ascribed to the emperor alone. It is to be regretted that the position of an absolute sovereign is so liable to temptation from passing events, that Justinian himself could not refrain from injuring the surest monument of his fame, by later enactments, which mark too clearly that they emanated either from his own increasing avarice, or from weakness in yielding to the passions of his wife or courtiers. It could not be expected that his political sagacity should have devised the means of securing the rights of his subjects against the arbitrary exercise of his own power; but he might have consecrated the great principle of equity, that legislation can never act as a retrospective decision; and he might have ordered his magistrates to adopt the oath of the Egyptian judges, who swore, when they entered an office, that they would never depart from the principles of equity (law), and that if the sovereign ordered them to do wrong, they would not obey. Justinian, however, was too much of a despot, and too little of a statesman, to proclaim the law, even while retaining the legislative power in his person, to be superior to the executive branch of the government. But in maintaining that the laws of Justinian might have been rendered more perfect, and have been framed to confer greater benefits on mankind, it is not to be denied that the work is one of the most remarkable monuments of human wisdom; and we should remember with gratitude, that for thirteen hundred years the Pandects served as the magazine of legal lore to the Christian world, both in the East and in the West; and if it has now become an instrument of administrative tyranny in the continental monarchies of Europe, the fault is in the nations who refuse to follow out the principles of equity logically in regulating the dispensation of justice, and do not raise the law above the sovereign, nor render every minister and public servant amenable to the regular tribunals for every act he may commit in the exercise of his official duty, like the humblest citizen.

The government of Justinian's empire was Roman, its official language was Latin, Oriental habits and usages, as well as time and despotic power, had indeed introduced modifications in the old forms; but it would be an error to consider the imperial administration as having assumed a Greek character. The accident of the Greek language having become the ordinary dialect in use at court, and of the church in the East being deeply tinctured with Greek feelings, is apt to create an impression that the Eastern Empire had lost something of its Roman pride, in order to adopt a Greek character. The circumstance that its enemies often reproached it with being Greek, is a

proof that the imputation was viewed as an insult. As the administration was entirely Roman, the laws of Justinian—the Code, the Pandects, and the Institutions—were published in Latin, though many of the latter edicts (*novells*) were published in Greek. Nothing can illustrate in a stronger manner the artificial and antinational position of the eastern Roman Empire than this fact, that Latin was the language of the laws of an empire, of which Greek was the language of the church and the people. Latin was preserved in official business, and in public ceremonials, from feelings of pride connected with the ancient renown of the Romans, and the dignity of the Roman Empire. So strong is the hold which antiquated custom maintains over the minds of men, that even a professed reformer, like Justinian, could not break through so irrational an usage as the publication of his laws in a language incomprehensible to most of those for whose use they were framed.

The laws and legislation of Justinian throw only an indistinct and vague light on the state of the Greek population. They were drawn entirely from Roman sources, calculated for a Roman state of society, and occupied with Roman forms and institutions. Justinian was so anxious to preserve them in all their purity, that he adopted two measures to secure them from alteration. The copyists were commanded to refrain from any abridgment, and the commentators were ordered to follow the literal sense of the laws. All schools of law were likewise forbidden, except those of Constantinople, Rome, and Berytus, a regulation which must have been adopted to guard the Roman law from being corrupted, by falling into the hands of Greek teachers, and becoming confounded with the customary law of the various Greek provinces. This restriction, and the importance attached to it by the emperor, prove that the Roman law was now the universal rule of conduct in the empire. Justinian took every measure which prudence could dictate to secure the best and purest legal instruction and administration for the Roman tribunals; but only a small number of students could study in the licensed schools, and Rome, one of these schools, was, at the time of the publication of the law, in the hands of the Goths. It is therefore not surprising that a rapid decline in the knowledge of Roman law commenced very shortly after the promulgation of Justinian's legislation.

Justinian’s laws were soon translated into Greek without the emperor’s requiring that these paraphrases should be literal; and Greek commentaries of an explanatory nature were published. His *novells* were subsequently published in Greek when the case required it; but it is evident that any remains of Greek laws and customs were rapidly yielding to the superior system of Roman legislation, perfected as this was by the judicious labours of Justinian’s councillors. Some modifications were made in the jurisdiction of the judges and municipal magistrates at this time; and we must admit the testimony of Procopius as a proof that Justinian sold judicial offices, though the vagueness of the accusation does not afford us the means of ascertaining under what pretext the change in the earlier system was adopted. It is perhaps impossible to determine what share of authority the Greek municipal magistrates retained in the administration of justice and police, after the reforms effected by Justinian in their financial affairs, and the seizure of a large part of their local revenues. The existence of Greek corporations in Italy shows that they retained an acknowledged existence in the Roman Empire.

Sect. IV

Internal Administration as it affected the Greeks

The religious intolerance and financial rapacity of Justinian's internal administration increased the deep-rooted hatred of the imperial power throughout the provinces, and his successors soon experienced the bitter effects of his policy. Even the commencement of his own reign gave some alarming manifestations of the general feeling. The celebrated sedition of the Nika, though it broke out among the factions of the amphitheatre, acquired its importance in consequence of popular dissatisfaction with the fiscal measures of the emperor. This sedition possesses an unfortunate celebrity in the annals of the empire, from the destruction of many public buildings and numerous works of ancient art, occasioned by the conflagrations raised by the rebels. Belisarius succeeded in suppressing it with considerable difficulty after much bloodshed, and not until Justinian had felt his throne in imminent danger. The alarm produced a lasting impression on his mind; and more than one instance occurred during his reign to remind him that popular sedition puts a limit to despotic power. At a subsequent period, an insurrection of the people compelled him to abandon a project for recruiting the imperial finances, according to a common resource of arbitrary sovereigns, by debasing the value of the coin.

We possess only scanty materials for describing the condition of the Greek population during the reign of Justinian. The relations of the Greek provinces and cities with the central administration had endured for ages, slowly undergoing the changes produced by time, but without the occurrence of any general measure of reform, until the decree of Caracalla conferred on all the Greeks the rights and privileges of Roman citizens. That decree, by converting all Greeks into Romans, must have greatly modified the constitution of the free and autonomous cities; but history furnishes no means of determining with precision its effect on the inhabitants of Greece. Justinian made another great change by confiscating the local revenues of the municipalities; but in the six centuries which had elapsed from the fall of the Roman republic to the extinction of municipal freedom in the Greek cities, the prominent feature of the Roman administration had been invariably the same—fiscal rapacity, which gradually depopulated the country, and prepared the way for its colonization by foreign races.

The colossal fabric of the Roman government embraced not only a numerous imperial court and household, a host of administrators, finance agents, and judges, a powerful army and navy, and a splendid church establishment; it also conferred the privilege of titular nobility on a large portion of the higher classes, both on those who were selected to fill local offices in connection with the public administration, and on those who had held public employments during some period of their lives. The titles of this nobility were official; its members were the creatures of government, attached to the imperial throne by ties of interest; they were exempted from particular taxes, separated from the body of the people by various privileges, and formed, from their

great numbers, rather a distinct nation than a privileged class. They were scattered over all the provinces of Justinian's empire, from the Atlantic to the Euphrates, and constituted, at this period, the real nucleus of civil society in the Roman world. Of their influence, many distinct traces may be found, even after the extinction of the Roman power, both in the East and in the West.

The population of the provinces, and more especially the proprietors and cultivators of the soil, stood completely apart from these representatives of the Roman supremacy, and almost in a state of direct opposition to the government. The weight of the Roman yoke had now pressed down all the provincials to nearly the same level. As a general rule, they were excluded from the profession of arms; their poverty caused them to neglect the cultivation of arts, sciences, and literature, and their whole attention was absorbed in watching the increasing rapacity of the imperial treasury, and in finding means to evade the oppression which they saw no possibility of resisting. The land and capitation taxes formed the source of this oppression. No taxes were, perhaps, more equitable in their general principle, and few appear ever to have been administered, for so long a period, with such unfeeling prudence. Their severity had been so gradually increased, that but a very small annual encroachment had been made on the savings of the people, and centuries elapsed before the whole accumulated capital of the empire was consumed; but at last the whole wealth of its subjects was drawn into the imperial treasury; free men were sold to pay taxes; vineyards were rooted out, and buildings were destroyed to escape taxation.

The manner of collecting the land and capitation taxes displays singular ingenuity in the mode of estimating the value of the property to be taxed, and an inhuman sagacity in framing a system capable of extracting the last farthing which that property could yield. The registers underwent a public revision every fifteenth year, but the *indictio*, or amount of taxation to be paid, was annually fixed by an imperial ordinance. The whole empire was divided into *capita*, or hides of land. The proprietors of these *capita* were grouped together in communities, the wealthier members of which were formed into a permanent magistracy, and rendered liable for the amount of the taxes due by their community. The same law of responsibility was applied to the senates and magistrates of cities and free states. Confiscation of private property had, from the earliest days of the empire, been regarded as an important financial resource. In the days of Tiberius, the nobles of Rome, whose power, influence, and character alarmed the jealous tyrant, were swept away. Nero attacked the wealthy to fill his exhausted treasury; and from that time to the days of Justinian, the richest individuals in the capital and the provinces had been systematically punished for every offence by the confiscation of their fortunes. The pages of Suetonius and Tacitus, of Zosimus and Procopius, attest the extent and duration of this war against private wealth. Now, in the eyes of the Roman government, the greatest political offence was the failure to perform a public duty; and the most important duty of a Roman subject had long been to furnish the amount of taxes required by the State. The increase of the public burdens at last proceeded so far, that every year brought with it a failure in the taxes of some province, and consequently the confiscation of the private property of the wealthiest citizens of the insolvent district, until at last all the rich proprietors were ruined, and the law became nugatory. The poor and ignorant inhabitants of the rural districts in Greece forgot the literature and arts of

their ancestors; and as they had no longer anything to sell, nor the means of purchasing foreign commodities, money ceased to circulate.

But though the proud aristocracy and the wealthy votaries of art, literature, and philosophy, disappeared, and though independent citizens and proprietors now stood scattered over the provinces as isolated individuals, without exercising any direct influence on the character of the age, still the external framework of ancient society displayed something of its pomp and greatness. The decay of its majesty and strength was felt; mankind perceived the approach of a mighty change, but the revolution had not yet arrived; the past glory of Greece shed its colouring on the unknown future, and the dark shadow which that future now throws back, when we contemplate Justinian's reign, was then imperceptible.

Many of the habits, and some of the institutions of ancient civilization, still continued to exist among the Greek population. Property, though crumbling away under a system of slow corrosion, was regarded by public opinion as secure against lawless violence or indiscriminate confiscation; and it really was so, when a comparison is made between the condition of a subject of the Roman empire and a proprietor of the soil in any Other country of the then known world. If there was much evil in the state of society, there was also some good; and, when contemplating it from our modern social position, we must never forget that the same causes which destroyed the wealth, arts, literature, and civilization of the Romans and Greeks, began to eradicate from among mankind the greatest degradation of our species—the existence of slavery.

In the reign of Justinian, the Greeks as a people had lost much of their superiority over the other subjects of the empire. The schools of philosophy, which had afforded the last refuge for the ancient literature of the country, had long fallen into neglect, and were on the very eve of extinction, when Justinian closed them by a public edict. The poverty and ignorance of the inhabitants of Greece had totally separated the philosophers from the people. The town population had everywhere embraced Christianity. The country population, composed in great part of the offspring of freedmen and slaves, was removed from all instruction, and paganism continued to exist in the retired mountains of the Peloponnesus, Those principles of separation which originated in non-communication of ideas and interests, and which began to give the Roman empire the aspect of an agglomeration of nations, rather than the appearance of a single State, operated as powerfully on the Greek people as on the Egyptian, Syrian, and Armenian population. The needy cultivators of the soil—the artisans in the towns —and the servile dependents on the imperial administration,—formed three distinct classes of society. A strong line of distinction was created between the Greeks in the service of the empire and the body of the people, both in the towns and country. The mass of the Greeks naturally participated in the general hostility to the Roman administration; yet the immense numbers who were employed in the State, and in the highest dignities of the Church, neutralized the popular opposition, and deprived Greece of intellectual leaders, who might have taught it to aspire to national independence.

It has been already observed that Justinian restricted the powers and diminished the revenues of the Greek municipalities, but that these corporations continued to exist, though shorn of their former power and influence. Splendid monuments of Grecian

architecture, and beautiful works of Grecian art, still adorned the Agora and the Acropolis in many Greek cities. Where the ancient walls were falling into decay, and the untenanted buildings presented an aspect of ruin, they were cleared away to construct new fortifications, churches, and monasteries, which Justinian was constantly building in every province of the empire. The hasty construction of these buildings, rapidly erected from the materials furnished by the ancient structures around, accounts both for their number and for the facility with which time has effaced almost every trace of their existence. Still, even in architecture, the Roman Empire displayed some traces of its greatness; the church of St Sophia, and the aqueduct of Constantinople, attest the superiority of Justinian's age over subsequent periods, both in the East and in the West.

The superiority of the Greek population must at this time have been most remarkable in their regulations of internal government and police administration. Public roads were still maintained in a serviceable state, though not equal in appearance or solidity of construction to the Appian Way in Italy, which excited the admiration of Procopius. Streets were kept in repair by the proprietors of houses. The *astynomoi* and the *agoranomoi* were still elected, but their number often indicated the former greatness of a diminished population. The post-houses, post-mansions, and every means of transport, were maintained in good order, but they had long been rendered a means of oppressing the people; and, though laws had often been passed to prevent the provincials from suffering from the exactions of imperial officers when travelling, the extent of the abuse was beginning to ruin the establishment. The Roman Empire, to the latest period of its existence, paid considerable attention to the police of the public roads, and it was indebted to this care for the preservation of its military superiority over its enemies, and of its lucrative commerce.

The activity of the government in clearing the country of robbers and banditti, and the singular severity of the laws on this subject, show that the slightest danger of a diminution of the imperial revenues inspired the Roman government with energy and vigour. Nor were other means of advancing the commercial interests of the people neglected. The ports were carefully cleaned, and their entry indicated by lighthouses, as in earlier times; and, in short, only that portion of ancient civilization which was too expensive for the diminished resources of the age had fallen into neglect. Utility and convenience were universally sought, both in private and public life; but solidity, taste, and the durability which aspires at immortality, were no longer regarded as objects of attainable ambition. The basilica, or the monastery, constructed by breaking to pieces the solid blocks of a neglected temple, and cemented together by lime burnt from the marble of the desecrated shrine, or from some heathen tomb, was intended to contain a certain number of persons; and the cost of the building, and its temporary sufficiency for the required purpose, were just as much the general object of the architect's attention in the time of Justinian as in our own.

The worst feature of Justinian's administration was its venality. This vice, it is true, generally prevails in every administration uninfluenced by public opinion and based on an organized bureaucracy; for whenever the corps of administrators becomes too numerous for the moral character of individuals to be under the direct control of their superiors, usage secures to them a permanent official position, unless they grossly neglect their duties. Justinian, however, countenanced the venality of his subordinates

by an open sale of offices; and the violent complaints of Procopius are confirmed by the legislative measures of the emperor. When shame prevented the emperor himself from selling an official appointment, he did not blush to order the payment of a stated sum to be made to the empress Theodora. This conduct opened a door to abuses on the part of the imperial ministers and provincial governors, and contributed, in no small degree, to the misfortunes of Justin II. It diminished the influence of the Roman administration in the distant provinces, and neutralized the benefits which Justinian had conferred on the empire by his legislative compilations. A strong proof of the declining condition of the Greek nation is to be found in the care with which every misfortune of this period is recorded in history. It is only when little hope is felt of repairing the ravages of disease, fire, and earthquakes, that these evils permanently affect the prosperity of nations. In an improving state of society, great as their ravages may prove, they are only personal misfortunes and temporary evils; the void which they create in the population is quickly replaced, and the property which they destroy rises from its ruins with increased solidity and beauty. When it happens that a pestilence leaves a country depopulated for many generations, and that conflagrations and earthquakes ruin cities, which are never again reconstructed of their former size—these evils are apt to be mistaken by the people as the primary cause of the national decline, and acquire an undue historical importance in the popular mind. The age of Justinian was remarkable for a terrible pestilence which ravaged every province of the empire in succession, for many famines which swept away no inconsiderable portion of the population, and for earthquakes which laid waste no small number of the most flourishing and populous cities of the empire.

Greece had suffered very little from hostile attacks after the departure of Alaric; for the piratical incursions of Genseric were neither very extensive nor very successful; and after the time of these barbarians, the ravages of earthquakes begin to figure in history, as an important cause of the impoverished and declining condition of the country. The Huns, it is true, extended their plundering expeditions, in the year 540, as far as the Isthmus of Corinth, but they do not appear to have succeeded in capturing a single town of any note. The fleet of Totila plundered Corcyra, and the coast of Epirus, from Nicopolis up to Dodona; but these misfortunes were temporary and partial, and could have caused no irreparable loss, either of life or property. The fact appears to be, that Greece was in a declining condition; but that the means of subsistence were abundant, and the population had but an incorrect and vague conception of the means by which the government was consuming their substance and depopulating their country. In this state of things, several earthquakes, of singular violence, and attended by unusual phenomena, made a deep impression on men's minds, by producing a degree of desolation which a declining state of society rendered irreparable. Corinth, which was still a populous city, Patrae, Naupactus, and Coronea, were all laid in ruins. An immense assembly of Greeks was collected at the time to celebrate a public festival; the whole population was swallowed up in the midst of their ceremonies. The waters of the Maliac Gulf retired suddenly, and left the shores of Thermopylae dry; but the sea, suddenly returning with violence, swept up the valley of the Spercheius, and carried away the inhabitants. In an age of ignorance and superstition, when the prospects of mankind were despondent, and at the moment when the emperor was effacing the last relics of the religion of their ancestors—a religion which had filled the sea and the land with guardian deities—these awful occurrences could not fail to produce an alarming

effect on men's minds, and were not unnaturally regarded as a supernatural confirmation of the despair which led many to imagine that the ruin of our globe was approaching. It is not wonderful that many pagans believed with Procopius that Justinian was the demon destined to complete the catastrophe of the human race.

The condition of the Greek population in Achaia seems to have been as little understood by the courtiers of Justinian as that of the newly-established Greek kingdom by its Bavarian masters and the protecting Powers. The splendid appearance which the ancient monuments, shining in the clear sky with the freshness of recent constructions, gave to the Greek cities, induced the Constantinopolitans and other strangers who visited the country, to suppose that the aspect of elegance and delicacy of finish, everywhere apparent, was the result of constant municipal expenditure. The buildings of Constantine and Theodosius in the capital were probably begrimed with dust and smoke, so that it was natural to conceive that those of Pericles and Epaminondas could retain a perpetual youth only by a liberal expenditure for their preservation. The celebrity of the city of Athens, the privileges which it still enjoyed, the society by which it was frequented, as an agreeable residence, as a school for study, or as a place of retirement for the wealthy literary men of the age, gave the people of the capital a far too exalted idea of the well-being of Greece. The contemporaries of Justinian judged the Greeks of their age by placing them in too close a relation with the inhabitants of the free states of antiquity; we, on the contrary, are too apt to confound them with the rude inhabitants who dwelt in the Peloponnesus after it was filled with Sclavonian and Albanian colonies. Had Procopius rightly estimated the condition of the rural population, and reflected on the extreme difficulty which the agriculturist always encounters in quitting his actual employment in order to seek any distant occupation, and the impossibility of finding money in a country where there are no purchasers for extra produce, he would not have signalized a penurious disposition as the national characteristic of the Greeks. The population which spoke the Greek language in the capital and in the Roman administration was now influenced by a very different spirit from that of the inhabitants of the true Hellenic lands; and this separation of feeling became more and more conspicuous as the empire declined in power. The central administration soon ceased to pay any particular attention to Greece, which was sure to furnish its tribute, as it hated the Romans less than it feared the barbarians. From henceforward, therefore, the inhabitants of Hellas become almost lost to the historians of the empire; and the motley and expatriated population of Constantinople, Asia Minor, Syria, and Alexandria, is represented to the literary world as forming the real body of the Greek nation—an error which has concealed the history of a nation from our study, and replaced it by the annals of a court and the records of a government.

Sect. V.

Influence of Justinian's Conquests on the Greek Population and the change effected by the Conquest of the Vandal Kingdom of Africa

The attention of Justinian's immediate predecessors had been devoted to improving the internal condition of the empire, and that portion of the population which spoke Greek, forming the most important body of the emperor's subjects, had participated in the greatest degree in this improvement. The Greeks were, apparently, on the eve of securing a national preponderance in the Roman state, when Justinian forced them back into their former secondary condition, by directing the influence of the public administration to arms and law, the two departments of the Roman government from which they were in a great measure excluded. The conquests of Justinian, however, tended to improve the condition of the mercantile and manufacturing portion of the Greek population, by extending its commercial relations with the West; and this extended commerce tended to support the central government at Constantinople, when the framework of the Roman imperial administration began to give way in the provinces. With the exception of Sicily, and the southern portion of Italy, the whole of Justinian's conquests in the West were peopled by the Latin race; and the inhabitants, though attached to the emperor of Constantinople as the political head of the Orthodox Church, were already opposed to the Greek nation.

When the Goths, Sueves, and Vandals had completed their establishment in Spain, Africa, and Italy, and were spread over these countries as landed proprietors, the smallness of their number became apparent to the mass of the conquered population; and the barbarians soon lost in individual intercourse as citizens the superiority which they had enjoyed while united in armed bands. The Romans, in spite of the confiscation of a portion of their estates to enrich their conquerors, and in spite of the oppression with which they were treated, still formed the majority of the middle classes; the administration of the greater part of the landed property, the commerce of the country, the municipal and judicial organization, all centred in their hands. In addition to this, they were separated from their conquerors by religion. The northern invaders of the Western Empire were Arians, the Roman population was orthodox. This religious feeling was so strong, that the Catholic king of the Franks, Clovis, was often able to avail himself of the assistance of the orthodox subjects of the Arian Goths, in his wars with the Gothic kings. As soon, however, as Justinian proved that the Eastern Empire had recovered some portion of the ancient Roman vigour, the eyes of all the Roman population in Spain, Gaul, Africa, and Italy, were directed to the imperial court; and there can be no doubt that the government of Justinian maintained extensive relations with the Roman population and the orthodox clergy over all Europe, who did much to assist his military operations.

Justinian succeeded to the empire while it was embroiled in war with Persia, but he was fortunate enough to conclude a peace with Chosroes the Great, who ascended the Persian throne in the fourth year of his reign. In the East the emperor could never expect to make any permanent conquests; while in the West a large portion of the population was ready to receive his troops with open arms; and, in case of success, formed submissive and probably attached subjects. Both policy and religion induced Justinian to commence his attacks on the invaders of the Roman Empire in Africa. The conquest of the northern coast of Africa by the Vandals, like the conquest of the other great provinces of the Western Empire by the Goths, the Burgundians, and the Franks,

was gradually effected, in a series of consecutive campaigns, for the Vandals who first entered the country with Genseric were not sufficiently numerous to subdue and garrison the whole province. The Vandals, who quitted Spain in 428, could not arm more than 80,000 men. In the year 431, Genseric having defeated Boniface, took Hippo; but it was not until 439 that he gained possession of Carthage; and the conquest of the whole African coast to the frontier of the Greek settlements in Cyrenaica was not completed until after the death of Valentinian III, and the sack of Rome in 455. The Vandals were bigoted Arians, and their government was peculiarly tyrannical; they treated the Roman inhabitants of Africa as political enemies, and persecuted them as religious opponents. The Visigoths in Spain seized two-thirds of the subjugated lands, the Ostrogoths in Italy were satisfied with one-third; and both these people acknowledged the civil rights of the Romans as citizens and Christians. The Vandals adopted a different policy. They exterminated the Roman landlords and seized all the richest lands. Genseric reserved immense domains to himself and to his sons. He divided the densely peopled and rich district of Africa proper among the Vandal warriors, exempting them from taxation, and binding them to military service. Eighty thousand lots were apportioned, clustered round the large possessions of the highest officers. Only the poorer proprietors were permitted to preserve the arid and distant parts of the country. Still the number of Romans excited the fears of the Vandals, who destroyed the walls of the provincial towns in order to deprive the inhabitants of all means of defence in case of their venturing to rebel. The Roman population was enfeebled by these measures, but its hatred of the Vandal government was increased; and when Gelimer assumed the royal authority in the year 531, the people of Tripolis rebelled, and solicited assistance from Justinian.

Justinian could not forget the great wealth of Africa at the time of its conquest by Genseric; the distributions of grain which it had furnished for Rome, and the immense tribute which it had once paid. He could hardly have imagined that the government of the Vandal kings could have depopulated the country and annihilated the greater part of its wealth in the space of a single century. The conquest of a civilized population by rude warriors must always be attended by the ruin, and often by the extermination, of the numerous classes which are supported by those manufactures which are destined for the consumption of the refined. The first conquerors despise the manners of the conquered, and never adopt immediately their costly dress, which is naturally considered as a sign of effeminacy and cowardice, nor do they adorn their dwellings with the same taste and refinement. The vanquished being deprived of the wealth necessary to procure these luxuries, the ruin of a numerous class of manufacturers, and of a great portion of the industrious population, is an inevitable consequence of this cessation of demand. Thousands of artisans, tradesmen, and labourers, must either emigrate or perish by starvation; and the annihilation of a large commercial capital employed in supporting human life takes place with wonderful rapidity. Yet the conquerors may long live in what to them is wealth and luxury; the accumulated riches of the country will for many years be found amply sufficient to gratify all their desires, and the whole of this wealth will generally be consumed, and even the power of reproducing it be greatly diminished, before any signs of poverty are perceived. These facts are illustrated in the clearest manner by the history of the Vandal domination in Africa. The emigration of Vandal families from Spain did not consist of more than

eighty thousand males of warlike age; and when Genseric conquered Carthage, his whole army amounted only to fifty thousand warriors; yet this small horde devoured all the wealth of Africa in the course of a single century, and, from an army of hardy soldiers, it was converted into a caste of luxurious nobles living in splendid villas round Carthage. In order fully to understand the influence of the Vandals on the state of the country which they occupied, it must be observed that their oppressive government had already so far lowered the condition and reduced the numbers of the Roman provincials, that the native Moors began to reoccupy the country from which Roman industry and Roman capital had previously excluded them. The Moorish population being in a lower state of civilization than the lowest grade of the Romans, could exist in districts abandoned as uninhabitable after the destruction of buildings and plantations which the oppressed farmer had no means of replacing; and thus, from the time of the Vandal invasion, we find the Moors continually gaining ground on the Latin colonists, gradually covering an increased extent of country, and augmenting in numbers and power.

The Vandals had become one of the most luxurious nations in the world, when they were attacked by Belisarius, but as they continued to affect the character of soldiers, they were admirably armed, and ready to take the field with their whole male population. Their equipments were splendid, but the neglect of military discipline and science rendered their armies very inefficient. A revolution had lately occurred. Hilderic, the fifth monarch of the Vandal kingdom, the grandson of Genseric, and son of Eudocia, the daughter of the Emperor Valentinian III, showed himself inclined to protect his orthodox and Roman subjects. This disposition, and his Roman descent, excited the suspicion of his Vandal and Arian countrymen, without attaching the orthodox provincials to his hated race. Gelimer, the great-grandson of Genseric, availed himself of the general discontent to dethrone Hilderic, but the revolution was not effected without manifestations of dissatisfaction. The Roman inhabitants of the province of Tripolis availed themselves of the opportunity to throw off the Vandal yoke, and solicit assistance from Justinian; and a Gothic officer who commanded in Sardinia, then a dependency of the Vandal kingdom, rebelled against the usurper.

The succession of the Vandal monarchs was as follows:

They invaded Africa, A.D. 428

Genseric ascended the throne. 429

Hunneric, 477

Gundamund, 484

Thorismund, 496

Hilderic, 523

Gelimer seized the crown, 531

The treason of Gelimer afforded Justinian an excellent pretext for invading the Vandal kingdom. Belisarius, a general already distinguished by his conduct in the Persian war, was selected to command an expedition of considerable magnitude, though by no means equal to the great expedition which Leo I had sent to attack Genseric. Ten thousand infantry, and five thousand cavalry, were embarked in a fleet of five hundred transports, which was protected and escorted by ninety-two light galleys of war. The troops were all veterans, inured to discipline, and the cavalry was composed of the choicest soldiers in the imperial service. After a long navigation, and some delay at Methone and in Sicily, they reached Africa. The Vandals, who, in the time of Genseric, had been redoubted pirates, and as such were national enemies of the commercial Greeks, were now too wealthy to court danger, and were ignorant of the approach of the Roman armament, until they received the news that Belisarius was marching towards Carthage. They were numerous, and doubtless brave, but they were no longer trained to war, or accustomed to regular discipline, and their behaviour in the field of battle was contemptible. Two engagements of cavalry, in the bloodiest of which the Vandals lost only eight hundred men, decided the fate of Africa, and enabled Belisarius to subjugate the Vandal kingdom. The brothers of Gelimer fell gallantly in the field. His own behaviour renders even his personal courage doubtful,—he fled to the Moors of the mountainous districts; but the misery of barbarous warfare, and the privations of a besieged camp, soon extinguished his feelings of pride, and his love of independence. He surrendered, and Belisarius led him prisoner to Constantinople, where he appeared in the pageantry of a triumphal procession. A conquering general, a captive monarch, and a Roman triumph, offered strong temptations to romantic fancies; but the age was a time of great events and common-place men. Gelimer received from Justinian large estates in Galatia, to which he retired with his relations. Justinian offered him the rank of patrician, and a seat in the senate; but he was attached to his Arian principles, or he thought that his personal dignity would be best maintained by avoiding to appear in a crowd of servile senators. He refused to join the Orthodox Church, and evaded accepting the proffered honour.

The Vandals displayed as little patriotism and fortitude as their king. Some were slain in the war, the rest were incorporated in the Roman armies, or escaped to the Moors. The provincials were allowed to reclaim the lands from which they had been expelled at the conquest; the Arian heresy was proscribed, and the race of these remarkable conquerors was in a short time exterminated. A single generation sufficed to confound their women and children in the mass of the Roman inhabitants of the province, and their very name was soon totally forgotten. There are few instances in history of a nation disappearing so rapidly and so completely as the Vandals of Africa. After their conquest by Belisarius, they vanish from the face of the earth as completely as the Carthaginians after the taking of Carthage by Scipio. Their first monarch, Genseric, had been powerful enough to plunder both Rome and Greece, yet his army hardly exceeded fifty thousand men. His successors, who held the absolute sovereignty of Africa for one hundred and seven years, do not appear to have commanded a larger force. The Vandals seem never to have multiplied so much that the individuals lost the oligarchical position in which their sudden acquisition of immense wealth had placed them.

Belisarius soon established the Roman authority so firmly round Carthage, that he was able to despatch troops in every direction, in order to secure and extend his conquests. The western coast was subjected as far as the Straits of Hercules: a garrison was placed in Septum, and a body of troops stationed in Tripolis, to secure the eastern part of this extensive province from the incursions of the Moors. Sardinia, Corsica, Majorca, Minorca, and Ibiza, were added to the empire, merely by sending officers to take the command of these islands, and troops to form the garrisons. The commercial relations of the Greeks, and the civil institutions of the Romans, still exercised a very powerful influence over the population of these islands.

Justinian determined to re-establish the Roman government on precisely the same basis as it existed before the Vandal invasion; but as the registers of the land-tax and capitation, and the official admeasurement of the estates, no longer existed, officers were sent from Constantinople for the assessment of the taxes; and the old principle of extorting as much of the surplus produce of the land as possible, was adopted as the rule for apportioning the tribute. Yet, in the opinion of the provincials, the financial rapacity of the imperial government was a more tolerable evil than the tyranny of the Vandals, and they remained long sincerely attached to the Roman power. Unfortunately, the rebellion of the barbarian mercenaries, who formed the flower of Justinian's army in Africa, the despair of the persecuted Arians, the seductions of the Vandal women, and the hostile incursions of the Moorish tribes, aided the severity of the taxes in desolating this flourishing province. The exclusion of the Roman population from the right of bearing arms, and forming themselves into a local militia, even for the protection of their property against the plundering expeditions of the neighbouring barbarians, prevented the African provincials from aspiring at independence, and rendered them incapable of defending their property without the aid of the experienced though disorderly soldiery of the imperial armies. Religious persecution, financial oppression, the seditions of unpaid troops, and the incursions of barbarous tribes, though they failed to cause a general insurrection of the inhabitants, ruined their wealth, and lessened their numbers. Procopius records the commencement of the desolation of Africa in his time; and subsequently, as the imperial government grew weaker, more negligent, and more corrupt, it pressed more heavily on the industry and well-being of the provincials, and enabled the barbarous Moors to extend their encroachments on Roman civilization.

The glory of Belisarius deserves to be contrasted with the oblivion which has covered the exploits of John the Patrician, one of the ablest generals of Justinian. This experienced general assumed the command in Africa when the province had fallen into a state of great disorder; the inhabitants were exposed to a dangerous coalition of the Moors, and the Roman army was in such a state of destitution that their leader was compelled to import the necessary provisions for his troops. Though John defeated the Moors, and restored prosperity to the province, his name is almost forgotten. His actions and talents only affected the interests of the Byzantine Empire, and prolonged the existence of the Roman province of Africa; they exerted no influence on the fate of any of the European nations whose history has been the object of study in modern times, so that they were utterly forgotten, when the recently discovered poetry of Corippus, one of the last and worst of the Roman poets, rescued them from complete oblivion.

Sect. VI.

Causes of the easy Conquest of the Ostrogothic Kingdom of Italy by Belisarius

The government of the Ostrogoths, though established on just principles by the wisdom of the great Theodoric, soon fell into the same state of disorder as that of the Vandals, though the Goths themselves, from being more civilized, and living more directly under the restraint of the laws which protected the property of their Roman subjects, had not become individually so corrupted by the possession of wealth. The conquest of Italy had not produced any very great revolution in the state of the country. The Romans had long been accustomed to be nominally defended, but, in fact, to be ruled, by the commanders of the mercenary troops in the emperor's service. They were as completely excluded from military service under their own emperors for a long period, as they were by the Gothic kings. And though the conquest deprived them of one-third of their landed property, it secured to them the enjoyment of the remaining two-thirds under a stronger, and more regular administration than that of the later emperors. They retained their moveable wealth, and as they were relieved from extraordinary military contributions, it is probable that their incomes were not greatly diminished, and that their social position underwent very little change. Policy induced Theodoric to treat the inhabitants of Italy with mildness. The permanent maintenance of his conquests required a considerable revenue, and that revenue could only be supplied by the industry and civilization of his Italian subjects. His sagacity told him, that it was wiser to tax the Romans than to plunder them, and that it was necessary, in order to secure the fruits of a regular system of taxation, to leave them in the possession of those laws and privileges which enabled them to defend their civilization. It is singular that the empire of Theodoric, the most extensive and most celebrated of those which were formed by the conquerors of the Roman provinces, should have proved the least durable. The justice of Theodoric and the barbarity of Genseric were equally ineffectual in consolidating a permanent dominion. The civilization of the Romans was more powerful than the mightiest of the barbarian monarchs; and until that civilization had sunk nearly to the level of their conquerors, the institutions of the Romans were always victorious over the national strength of the barbarians. Under Theodoric, Italy was still Roman. The senate of Rome, the municipal councils of the other cities, the old courts of law, the parties of the circus, the factions in the Church, and even the titles and the pensions attached to nominal offices in the State, all existed unchanged; men still fought with wild beasts in the Coliseum. The orthodox Roman lived under his own law, with his own clergy, and the Arian Goth only enjoyed equal liberty. The powerful and the wealthy, whether they were Romans or Goths, were equally sure of obtaining justice; the poor, whether Goths or Romans, were in equal danger of being oppressed.

The kingdom which the great Theodoric left to his grand-son Athalaric, under the guardianship of his daughter Amalasunta, embraced not only Italy, Sicily, and a portion of the south of France; it also included Dalmatia, a part of Illyricum, Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhaetia. In these extensive dominions, the Gothic race formed but a small part of the population; and yet the Goths, from the privileges which they enjoyed, were

everywhere regarded with jealousy by the bulk of the inhabitants. Dissensions arose in the royal family; Athalaric died young; Amalasunta was murdered by Theodatus, his successor; and as she had been in constant communication with the court of Constantinople, this crime afforded Justinian a decent pretext for interfering in the affairs of the Goths. To prepare the way for the reconquest of Italy, Belisarius was sent to attack Sicily, which he invaded with an army of seven thousand five hundred men, in the year 535, and subjected without difficulty. During the same campaign, Dalmatia was conquered by the imperial arms, recovered by the Goths, but again reconquered by Justinian's troops. A rebellion of the troops in Africa arrested, for a while, the progress of Belisarius, and compelled him to visit Carthage; but he returned to Sicily in a short time, and crossing over to Rhegium, marched directly to Naples. As he proceeded, he was everywhere welcomed by the inhabitants, who were almost universally Greeks; even the Gothic commander in the south of Italy favoured the progress of the Roman general.

The city of Naples made a vigorous defence; but after a siege of three weeks it was taken by introducing into the place a body of troops through the passage of an ancient aqueduct. The conduct of Belisarius, after the capture of the city, was dictated by policy, and displayed very little humanity. As the inhabitants had shown some disposition to assist the Gothic garrison in defending the city, and as such conduct would have greatly increased the difficulty of his campaign in Italy, in order to intimidate the population of other cities he appears to have winked at the pillage of the town, to have tolerated the massacre of many of the citizens in the churches, where they had sought an asylum, and to have overlooked a sedition of the lowest populace, in which the leaders of the Gothic party were assassinated. From Naples, Belisarius marched forward to Rome.

Only sixty years had elapsed since Rome was conquered by Odoacer; and during this period its population, the ecclesiastical and civil authority of its bishop, who was the highest dignitary in the Christian world, and the influence of its senate, which still continued to be in the eyes of mankind the most honourable political body in existence, enabled it to preserve a species of independent civic constitution. Theodoric had availed himself of this municipal government to smooth away many of the difficulties which presented themselves in the administration of Italy. The Goths, however, in leaving the Romans in possession of their own civil laws and institutions, had not diminished their aversion to a foreign yoke; yet, as they possessed no distinct feelings of nationality apart from their connection with the imperial domination and their religious orthodoxy, they never aspired to independence, and were content to turn their eyes towards the emperor of the East as their legitimate sovereign. Belisarius, therefore, entered the 'Eternal City' rather as a, friend than as a conqueror; but he had hardly entered it before he perceived that it would be necessary to take every precaution to defend his conquest against the new Gothic king Witiges. He immediately repaired the walls, strengthened them with a breastwork, collected large stores of provisions, and prepared to sustain a siege.

The Gothic war forms an important epoch in the history of the city of Rome; for, within the space of sixteen years, it changed masters five times, and suffered three severe sieges.

Rome was taken by Belisarius A.D. 536

Besieged by Witiges, 537

Besieged and taken by Totila, 546

Retaken by Belisarius, 547

Again besieged and retaken by Totila, 549

Taken by Narses, 552

Its population was almost destroyed; its public buildings and its walls must have undergone many changes, according to the exigencies of its defence. It has, consequently, been too generally assumed that the existing walls indicate the exact position of those of Aurelian. This period is also memorable for the ruin of many monuments of ancient art, which the generals of Justinian destroyed without compunction. With the conquest of Rome by Belisarius the history of the ancient city may be considered as terminating; and with his defence against Witiges commences the history of the Middle Ages,—of the times of destruction and of change.

Witiges laid siege to Rome with an army which Procopius says amounted to 150,000 men, yet this army was insufficient to invest the whole circuit of the city. The Gothic king distributed his troops in seven fortified camps; six were formed to surround the city, and the seventh was placed to protect the Milvian Bridge. Five camps covered the space from the Praenestine to the Flaminian gates, and the remaining camp was formed beyond the Tiber, in the plain below the Vatican. By these arrangements the Goths only commanded about half the circuit of Rome, and the roads to Naples and to the ports at the mouth of the Tiber remained open. The Roman infantry was now the weakest part of a Roman army. Even in the defence of a fortified city it was subordinate to the cavalry, and the military superiority of the Roman arms was sustained by mercenary horsemen. It is strange to find the tactics of the middle ages described by Procopius in classic Greek. The Goths displayed an utter ignorance of the art of war; they had no skill in the use of military engines, and they were unable to render their numerical superiority available in assaults. The leading operations of the attack and defence consisted in a series of cavalry engagements fought under the walls; and in these the superior discipline and skill of the mercenaries of Belisarius generally secured them the victory. The Roman cavalry,—for so the mixture of Huns, Heruls, and Armenians which formed the elite of the army must be termed,—trusted chiefly to the bow; while the Goths placed their reliance on the lance and sword, which the able manoeuvres of their enemies seldom allowed them to use with effect. The infantry of both armies usually remained idle spectators of the combat. Belisarius himself considered it of little use in a field of battle; and when he once reluctantly admitted it, at the pressing solicitation of its commanders, to share in one of his engagements, its defeat, after the exhibition of great bravery on the part both of the officers and men, confirmed him in his preference of the cavalry. In spite of the prudent arrangements adopted by Belisarius to insure supplies of provisions from his recent conquests in

Sicily and Africa, Rome suffered severely from famine during the siege; but the Gothic army was compelled to undergo equal hardships, and suffered far greater losses from disease. The communications of the garrison with the coast were for a time interrupted, but at last a body of five thousand fresh troops, and an abundant supply of provisions, despatched by Justinian to the assistance of Belisarius, entered Rome. Shortly after the arrival of this reinforcement, the Goths found themselves constrained to abandon the siege, in which they had persevered for a year. Justinian again augmented his army in Italy, by sending over seven thousand troops under the command of the eunuch Narses, a man whose military talents were in no way inferior to those of Belisarius, and whose name occupies an equally important place in the history of Italy. The emperor, guided by the prudent jealousy which dictated the strictest control over all the powerful generals of the empire, had conferred on Narses an independent authority over his own division, and that general, presuming too far on his knowledge of Justinian's feelings, ventured to throw serious obstacles in the way of Belisarius. The dissensions of the two generals delayed the progress of the Roman arms. The Goths availed themselves of the opportunity to continue the war with vigour; they succeeded in reconquering Milan, which had admitted a Roman garrison, and sacked the city, which was second only to Rome in wealth and population. They massacred the whole male population, and behaved with such cruelty that three hundred thousand persons were said to have perished—a number which probably only indicates the whole population of Milan at this periods

A state of warfare soon disorganized the ill-cemented government of the Gothic kingdom; and the ravages caused by the wide-extended military operations of the armies, which degenerated into a succession of sieges and skirmishes, created a dreadful famine in the north of Italy. Whole provinces remained uncultivated; great numbers of the industrious natives perished by actual starvation, and the ranks of the Goths were thinned by misery and disease. Society receded a step towards barbarism. Procopius, who was himself in Italy at the time, records a horrible story of two women who lived on human flesh, and were discovered to have murdered seventeen persons, in order to devour their bodies. This famine assisted the progress of the Roman arms, as the imperial troops drew their supplies of provisions from the East, while the measures of their enemies were paralyzed by the general want.

Witiges, finding his resources inadequate to stop the conquests of Belisarius, solicited the aid of the Franks, and despatched an embassy to Chosroes to excite the jealousy of the Persian monarch. The Franks, under Theodebert, entered Italy, but they were soon compelled to retire; and Belisarius, being placed at the head of the whole army by the recall of Narses, quickly terminated the war. Ravenna, the Gothic capital, was invested; but the siege was more remarkable for the negotiations which were carried on during its progress than for the military operations. The Goths, with the consent of Witiges, made Belisarius the singular offer of acknowledging him as the Emperor of the West, on condition of his joining his forces to theirs, and permitting them to retain their position and property in Italy, thus insuring them the possession of their nationality and their peculiar laws. Perhaps neither the state of the mercenary army which he commanded, nor the condition of the Gothic nation, rendered the project very feasible. It is certain that Belisarius only listened to it, in order to hasten the surrender of

Ravenna, and secure the person of Witiges without farther bloodshed. Italy submitted to Justinian, and the few Goths who maintained their independence beyond the Po pressed Belisarius in vain to declare himself emperor. But even without these solicitations, his power had awakened the fears of his sovereign, and he was recalled, though with honour, from his command in Italy. He returned to Constantinople leading Witiges captive, as he had formerly appeared conducting Gelimer.

Belisarius had hardly quitted Italy when the Goths reassembled their forces. They were accustomed to rule, and nourished in the profession of arms. Justinian sent a civilian, Alexander the logothete, to govern Italy, hoping that his financial arrangements would render the new conquest a source of revenue to the imperial treasury. The fiscal administration of the new governor soon excited great discontent. He diminished the number of the Roman troops, and put a stop to those profits which a state of war usually affords the military; while, at the same time, he abolished the pensions and privileges which formed no. inconsiderable portion of the revenue of the higher classes, and which had never been entirely suppressed during the Gothic domination. Alexander may have acted in some cases with undue severity in enforcing these measures; but it is evident, from their nature, that he must have received express orders to put an end to what Justinian considered the lavish expenditure of Belisarius. A part of the Goths in the north of Italy retained their independence after the surrender of Witiges. They raised Hildibald to the throne, which he occupied about a year, when he was murdered by one of his own guards. The tribe of Rugians then raised Erarich their leader to the throne; but on his entering into negotiations with the Romans he was murdered, after a reign of only five months. Totila was then elected king of the Goths, and had he not been opposed to the greatest men whom the declining age of the Roman Empire produced, he would probably have succeeded in restoring the Gothic monarchy in Italy. His successes endeared him to his countrymen, while the justice of his administration, contrasted with the rapacity of Justinian's government, gained him the respect and submission of the Italians. He was on the point of commencing the siege of Rome, when Belisarius, who, after his departure from Ravenna, had been employed in the Persian war, was sent back to Italy to recover the ground already lost. The imperial forces were destitute of that unity and military organization which constitute a number of different corps into one army. The various bodies of troops were commanded by officers completely independent of one another, and obedient only to Belisarius as commander-in-chief. Justinian, acting on his usual maxims of jealousy, and distrusting Belisarius more than formerly, retained the greater part of that general's body-guard, and all his veteran followers, at Constantinople; so that he now appeared in Italy unaccompanied by a staff of scientific officers and a body of veteran troops on whose experience and discipline he could rely for implicit obedience to his orders. The heterogeneous elements of which his army was composed made all combined operations impracticable, and his position was rendered still more disadvantageous by the change that had taken place in that of his enemy. Totila was now able to command every sacrifice on the part of his followers, for the Goths, taught by their misfortunes and deprived of their wealth, felt the importance of union and discipline, and paid the strictest attention to the orders of their sovereign. The Gothic king laid siege to Rome, and Belisarius established himself in Porto, at the mouth of the Tiber; but all his endeavours to relieve the besieged city proved

unsuccessful, and Totila compelled it to surrender under his eye, and in spite of all his exertions.

The national and religious feelings of the orthodox Romans rendered them the irreconcilable enemies of the Arian Goths. Totila soon perceived that it would not be in his power to defend Rome against a scientific enemy and a hostile population, in consequence of the great extent of the fortifications, and the impossibility of dislodging the imperial troops from the forts at the mouth of the Tiber. But he also perceived that the Eastern emperors would be unable to maintain a footing in central Italy without the support of the Roman population, whose industrial, commercial, aristocratic, and ecclesiastical influence was concentrated in the city population of Rome. He therefore determined to destroy the Eternal City, and if policy authorizes kings on great occasions to trample on the precepts of humanity, the king of the Goths might claim a right to destroy the capital of the Romans. Even the statesman may still doubt whether the decision of Totila, if it had been carried into execution in the most merciless manner, would not have purified the moral atmosphere of Italian society. He commenced the destruction of the walls; but either the difficulty of completing his project, or the feelings of humanity which were inseparable from his enlightened ambition, induced him to listen to the representations of Belisarius, who conjured him to abandon his barbarous scheme of devastation. Totila, nevertheless, did everything in his power to depopulate Rome; he compelled the inhabitants to retire into the Campagna, and forced the senators to abandon their native city. It is to this emigration that the utter extinction of the old Roman race and civic government must be attributed; for when Belisarius, and, at a later period, when Totila himself, attempted to repeople Rome, they laid the foundations of a new society, which connects itself rather with the history of the middle ages than with that of preceding times.

Belisarius entered the city after the departure of the Goths; and as he found it deserted, he had the greatest difficulty in putting it in a state of defence. But though Belisarius was enabled, by his military skill, to defend Rome against the attacks of Totila, he was unable to make any head against the Gothic army in the open field; and after vainly endeavouring to bring back victory to the Roman standards in Italy, he received permission to resign his command and return to Constantinople. His want of success must be attributed solely to the inadequacy of the means placed at his disposal for encountering an active and able sovereign like Totila. The unpopularity of his second administration in Italy arose from the neglect of Justinian in paying the troops, and the necessity which that irregularity imposed on their commander, of levying heavy contributions on the Italians, while it rendered the task of enforcing strict discipline, and of protecting the property of the people from the ill-paid soldiery, quite impracticable. Justice, however, requires that we should not omit to mention that Belisarius, though he returned to Constantinople with diminished glory, did not neglect his pecuniary interests, and came back without any diminution of his own wealth.

Great as the talents of Belisarius really were, and sound as his judgment appears to have been, still it must be confessed that his name occupies a more prominent place in history than his merits are entitled to claim. The accident that his conquests put an end to two powerful monarchies, of his having led captive to Constantinople the representatives of the dreaded Genseric and the great Theodoric, joined with the

circumstance that he enjoyed the singular good fortune of having his exploits recorded in the classic language of Procopius, the last historian of the Greeks, have rendered a brilliant career more brilliant from the medium through which it is seen. At the same time the tale of his blindness and poverty has made his very name express heroism reduced to misery by royal ingratitude, and extended a sympathy with his misfortunes into circles which would have remained indifferent to the real events of his history. Belisarius, though he refused the Gothic throne and the empire of the West, did not despise nor neglect wealth; he accumulated riches which could not have been acquired by any commander-in-chief amidst the wars and famines of the period, without rendering the military and civil administration subservient to his pecuniary profit. On his return from Italy he lived at Constantinople in almost regal splendour, and maintained a body of seven thousand cavalry attached to his household. In an empire where confiscation was an ordinary financial resource, and under a sovereign whose situation rendered jealousy only common prudence, it is not surprising that the wealth of Belisarius excited the imperial cupidity, and induced Justinian to seize great part of it. His fortune was twice reduced by confiscations. The behaviour of the general under his misfortunes, and the lamentable picture of his depression which Procopius has drawn, when he was impoverished by his first disgrace, does not tend to elevate his character. At a later period, his wealth was again confiscated on an accusation of treason, and on this occasion it is said that he was deprived of his sight, and reduced to such a state of destitution that he begged his bread in a public square, soliciting charity with the exclamation, “Give Belisarius an obolus!” But ancient historians were ignorant of this fable, which has been rejected by every modern authority in Byzantine history. Justinian, on calm reflection, disbelieved the treason imputed to a man who, in his younger days, had refused to ascend a throne; or else he pardoned what he supposed to be the error of a general to whose services he was so deeply indebted; and Belisarius, reinstated in some part of his fortune, died in possession of wealth and honour.

As soon as Totila was freed from the restraint imposed on his movements by the fear of Belisarius, he quickly recovered possession of Rome; and the loss of Italy appeared inevitable, when Justinian decided on making a new effort to retain it. As it was necessary to send a large army against the Goths, and invest the commander-in-chief with great powers, it is not probable that Justinian would have trusted any other of his generals more than Belisarius had he not fortunately possessed an able officer, the eunuch Narses, who could never rebel with the hope of placing the imperial crown on his own head. This assurance of his fidelity gave Narses great influence in the interior of the palace, and secured him a support which no other general attained. His military talents, and his freedom from the reproach of avarice or peculation, augmented his personal influence, and his diligence and liberality soon assembled a powerful army. The choicest mercenary troops—Huns, Heruls, Armenians, and Lombards—marched under his standard with the veteran Roman soldiers. The first object of Narses after his arrival in Italy was to force the Goths to risk a general engagement, trusting to the excellence of his troops, and to his own skill in the employment of their superior discipline. The rival armies met at Tagina, near Nocera, and the victory of Narses was completed Totila and six thousand Goths perished, and Rome again fell under the dominion of Justinian. At the solicitation of the Goths an army of Franks and Germans was permitted by Theobald, king of Austrasia, to enter Italy for the purpose of making a

diversion in their favour. Bucelin, the leader of this army, was met by Narses on the banks of the Vulturnus, near Capua. The forces of the Franks consisted of thirty thousand men, those of the Romans did not exceed eighteen thousand, but the victory of Narses was so complete that but few of the invaders escaped. The Goths elected another king, Theias, who perished with his army near the banks of the Samo. His death put an end to the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, and allowed Narses to turn his whole attention to the civil government of his conquests, and to establish security of property and a strict administration of justice. He appears to have been a man singularly well adapted to his situation — possessing the highest military talents, combined with a perfect knowledge of the civil and financial administration, he was able to estimate with exactness the sum which he could remit to Constantinople, without arresting the gradual improvement of the country. His fiscal government was, nevertheless, regarded by the Italians as extremely severe, and he was unpopular with the inhabitants of Rome.

Chronology of the Kings of the Ostrogoths.

A. D.

Theodoric, 493-526

Athalaric, 526-534

Amalasunta.

Theodatus, 534-536

Witiges, 536-540

Hildibald, 540-541

Erarich, 541-541

Totila, 541-552

Theias, 552-653

The existence of a numerous Roman population in Spain, connected with the Eastern Empire by the memory of ancient ties, by active commercial relations, and by a strong orthodox feeling against the Arian Visigoths, enabled Justinian to avail himself of these advantages in the same manner as he had done in Africa and Italy. The king Theudes attempted to make a diversion in Africa by besieging Ceuta, in order to call off the attention of Justinian from Italy. His attack was unsuccessful, but the circumstances were not favourable at the time for Justinian's attempting to revenge the injury. Dissensions in the country soon after enabled the emperor to find a pretext for sending a fleet and troops to support the claims of a rebel chief, and in this way he gained possession of a large portion of the south of Spain. The rebel Athanagild having been elected king of the Visigoths, vainly endeavoured to drive the Romans out of the provinces which they had occupied. Subsequent victories extended the conquests of Justinian from the mouth of the Tagus, Ebora, and Corduba, along the coast of the ocean, and that of the Mediterranean almost as far as Valentia; and at times the relations

of the Romans with the Catholic population of the interior enabled them to carry their arms almost into the centre of Spain. The Eastern Empire retained possession of these distant conquests for about sixty years.

Sect. VII.

Relations of the Northern Nations with the Roman Empire and the Greek Nation

The reign of Justinian witnessed the total decline of the power of the Gothic race on the banks of the Danube, where a void was created in the population which neither the Huns nor the Sclavonians could fill. The consequence was that new races of barbarians from the East poured into the countries between the Black Sea and the Carinthian Alps; and the military aristocracy of the Goths, whose social arrangements conformed to the system of the ancient world, was succeeded by the ruder domination of nomad tribes. The causes of this change are to be found in the same great principle which was modifying the position of the various races of mankind in every region of the earth; and by the destruction of the elements of civilization in the country immediately to the south of the Danube, in consequence of the repeated ravages to which it had been exposed; and in the impossibility of any agricultural population, not sunk very low in the scale of civil society, finding the means of subsistence, where villages, farm-houses, and barns were in ruins; where the fruit-trees were cut down; where the vineyards were destroyed, and the cattle required for cultivating the land were carried off. The Goths, who had once ruled all the country from the Lake Maeotis to the Adriatic, and who were the most civilized of all the invaders of the Roman Empire, were the first to disappear. Only a single tribe, called the Tetraxits, continued to inhabit their old seats in the Tauric Chersonese, where some of their descendants survived until the sixteenth century. The Gepids, a kindred people, had defeated the Huns, and established their independence after the death of Attila. They obtained from Marcian the cession of a considerable district on the banks of the Danube, and an annual subsidy in order to secure their alliance in defending the frontier of the empire against other invaders. In the reign of Justinian their possessions were reduced to the territories lying between the Save and the Drave, but the alliance with the Roman Empire continued in force, and they still received their subsidy.

The Heruls, a people whose connection with Scandinavia is mentioned by Procopius, and who took part in some of the earliest incursions of the Gothic tribes into the empire, had, after many vicissitudes, obtained from the emperor Anastasius a fixed settlement; and in the time of Justinian they possessed the country to the south of the Save, and occupied the city of Singidunum (Belgrade). The Lombards, a Germanic people, who had once been subject to the Heruls, but who had subsequently defeated their masters, and driven them within the bounds of the empire for protection, were induced by Justinian to invade the Ostrogothic kingdom, and establish themselves in Pannonia, to the north of the Drave. They occupied the country between the Danube and

the Theiss, and, like their neighbours, received an annual subsidy from the Eastern Empire. These Gothic nations never formed the bulk of the population in the lands which they occupied; they were only the lords of the soil, who knew no occupations but those of war and hunting. But their successes in war, and the subsidies by which they had been enriched, had accustomed them to a degree of rude magnificence which became constantly of more difficult attainment, as their own oppressive government, and the ravages of their more barbarous neighbours, depopulated all the regions around their settlements. When they became, like the other northern conquerors, a territorial aristocracy, they suffered the fate of all privileged classes which are separated from the mass of the people. Their luxury increased, and their numbers diminished. At the same time, incessant wars and ravages of territory swept away the unarmed population, so that the conquerors were at last compelled to abandon these possessions to seek richer seats, as the Indians of the American continent quit the lands where they have destroyed the wild game, and plunge into new forests.

Beyond the territory of the Lombards, the country to the south and east was inhabited by various tribes of Sclavonians, who occupied the country between the Adriatic and the Danube, including a part of Hungary and Vallachia, where they mingled their settlements with the Dacian tribes who had dwelt in these regions from an earlier period. The independent Sclavonians were, at this time, a nation of savage robbers, in the lowest condition of social civilization, whose ravages and incursions were rapidly tending to reduce all their neighbours to the same state of barbarism. Their plundering expeditions were chiefly directed against the rural population of the empire, and were often pushed many days' journey to the south of the Danube. Their cruelty was dreadful; but neither their numbers nor their military power excited, at this time, any fear that they would be able to effect permanent conquests within the bounds of the empire.

The Bulgarians, a nation of Hunnish or Turkish race, occupied the eastern parts of ancient Dacia, from the Carpathian Mountains to the Dniester. Beyond them, as far as the plains to the east of the Tanais, the country was still ruled by the Huns, who had now separated into two independent kingdoms: that to the west was called the Kutigur; and the other, to the east, the Utugur. The Huns had conquered the whole Tauric Chersonese except the city of Cherson. The importance of the commercial relations which Cherson kept up between the northern and southern nations was so advantageous to all parties, that it enabled the Greek colonists in this distant spot to preserve their political independence.

In the early part of Justinian's reign (A.D, 528) the city of Bosporus was taken and plundered by the Huns. It was soon recovered by an expedition fitted out by the emperor at Odessus (Varna); but these repeated conquests of a mercantile emporium, and an agricultural colony, by pastoral nomads like the Huns, and by mercenary soldiers like the imperial army, must have had a very depressing effect on the remains of Greek civilization in the Tauric Chersonesus. The increasing barbarism of the inhabitants of these regions diminished the commerce which had once flourished in the neighbouring lands, and which was now almost entirely centred in Cherson. The hordes of plundering nomads, who never remained long in one spot, had little to sell, and did not possess the means of purchasing foreign luxuries; and the language and manners of the Greeks,

which had once been prevalent all around the shores of the Euxine, began to fall into neglect. The various Greek cities which still maintained some portion of their ancient social and municipal institutions received many severe blows during the reign of Justinian. The towns of Kepoi and Phanagoris, situated near the Cimmerian Bosphorus, were taken by the Huns. Sebastopolis, or Diospolis, and Pityous, distant two days' journey from one another, on the eastern shores of the Euxine, were abandoned by their garrisons during the Colchian war; and the conquests of the Avars at last confined the influence of the Roman Empire, and the trade and civilization of the Greeks, to the cities of Bosporus and Cherson.

It is necessary to record a few incidents which mark the progress of barbarism, poverty, and depopulation, in the lands to the south of the Danube, and explain the causes which compelled the Roman and Greek races to abandon their settlements in these countries. Though the commencement of Justinian's reign was illustrated by a signal defeat of the Antes, a powerful Sclavonian tribe, still the invasions of that people were soon renewed with all their former vigour. In the year 533 they defeated and slew Chilbudius, a Roman general of great reputation, whose name indicates his northern origin. In 538 a band of Bulgarians defeated the Roman army chained with the defence of the country, captured the general Constantiolus, and compelled him to purchase his liberty by the payment of one thousand pounds of gold,—a sum which was considered sufficient for the ransom of the flourishing city of Antioch by the Persian monarch Chosroes. In 539 the Gepids ravaged Illyricum, and the Huns laid waste the whole country from the Adriatic to the long wall which protected Constantinople. Cassandra was taken, and the peninsula of Pallene plundered; the fortifications of the Thracian Chersonese were forced, and a body of the Huns crossed over the Dardanelles into Asia, while another, after ravaging Thessaly, turned Thermopylae, and plundered Greece as far as the Isthmus of Corinth. In this expedition, the Huns are said to have collected and carried away one hundred and twenty thousand prisoners, chiefly belonging to the rural population of the Greek provinces. The fortifications erected by Justinian, and the attention which the misfortunes of his arms compelled him to pay to the efficiency of his troops on the northern frontier, restrained the incursions of the barbarians for some years after this fearful foray; but in 548, the Sclavonians again ravaged Illyricum to the very walls of Dyrrachium, murdering the inhabitants, and carrying them away as slaves in face of a Roman army of fifteen thousand men, which was unable to arrest their progress. In 550 fresh incursions desolated Illyricum and Thrace. Topirus, a flourishing city on the Aegean Sea, was taken by assault. Fifteen thousand of the inhabitants were massacred, while an immense number of women and children were carried away into captivity. In 551 an eunuch named Scholasticus, who was intrusted with the defence of Thrace, was defeated by the barbarians near Adrianople. Next year, the Sclavonians again entered Illyricum and Thrace, and these provinces were reduced to such a state of disorder, that an exiled Lombard prince, who was dissatisfied with the rank and treatment which he had received from Justinian, taking advantage of the confusion, fled from Constantinople with a company of the imperial guards and a few of his own countrymen, and, after traversing all Thrace and Illyricum, plundering the country as he passed, and evading the imperial troops, at last reached the country of the Gepids in safety. Even Greece, though usually secure from its distance and its mountain passes against the incursions of the northern nations, did not escape the general destruction. It

has been mentioned that Totila despatched a fleet of three hundred vessels from Italy to ravage Corcyra and the coast of Epirus, and this expedition plundered Nicopolis and Dodona. Repeated ravages at last reduced the great plains of Moesia to such a state of desolation that Justinian allowed even the savage Huns to form settlements to the south of the Danube.

Thus the Roman government began to replace the agricultural population by hordes of nomad herdsmen, and abandoned the defence of civilization as a vain struggle against the increasing strength of barbarism.

The most celebrated invasion of the empire at this period, though by no means the most destructive, was that of Zabergan, the king of the Kutigur Huns, who crossed the Danube in the year 559. Its historical fame is derived from its success in approaching the walls of Constantinople, and because its defeat was the last military exploit of Belisarius. Zabergan formed his army into three divisions, and finding the country everywhere destitute of defence, he ventured to advance on the capital with one division, amounting to only seven thousand men. After all the lavish expenditure of Justinian in building forts and erecting fortifications, he had allowed the long wall of Anastasius to fall into such a state of dilapidation, that Zabergan passed it without difficulty, and advanced to within seventeen miles of Constantinople, before he encountered any serious resistance. The modern historian must be afraid of conveying a false impression of the weakness of the empire, and of magnifying the neglect of the government, if he venture to transcribe the ancient accounts of this expedition. Yet the miserable picture which ancient writers have drawn of the close of Justinian's reign is authenticated by the calamities of his successors. As soon as the wars with the Persians and Goths ceased, Justinian dismissed the greater part of those chosen mercenaries who had proved themselves the best troops of the age, and he neglected to fill up the vacancies in the native legions of the empire by enrolling new recruits. His immense expenditure in fortifications, civil and religious buildings, and court pageants, forced him at times to be as economical as he was at others careless and lavish. The army which had achieved so many foreign conquests was reduced, and Constantinople, where Belisarius had lately appeared with seven thousand horsemen, was now so destitute of troops that the great wall was left unguarded. Zabergan established his camp at the village of Melantias, on the river Athyras, which flows into the lake now called Buyuk Tchekmedjee, or the great bridge.

At this crisis the fate of the Roman Empire depended on the ill-paid and neglected troops of the line, who formed the ordinary garrison of the capital, and on the veterans and pensioners who happened to reside there, and who immediately resumed their arms. The corps of imperial guards called Silentiarii, Protectores, and Domestici, shared with the chosen mercenaries the duty of mounting guard on the fortifications of the imperial palace, and of protecting the person of Justinian, not only against the barbarian enemy, but also against any attempt which a rebellious general or a seditious subject might make, to profit by the general confusion. After the walls of Constantinople were properly manned, Belisarius marched out of the city with his army. The legion of scholarians formed the principal body of his troops, and it was distinguished by the regularity of its organization and the splendour of its equipments. This privileged corps consisted of 3500 men, and its ordinary duty was to guard the outer court and the

avenues of the emperor's residence. They may be considered as the representatives of the praetorian guards of an earlier period of Roman history, and the manner in which their discipline was ruined by Justinian affords a curious parallel to many similar bodies in other despotic states. The scholarians received higher pay than the troops of the line. Previous to the reign of Zeno, they had been composed of veteran soldiers, who were appointed to vacancies in the corps as a reward for good service. Armenians were generally preferred by Zeno's immediate predecessors, because the volunteers of this warlike nation were considered more likely to remain firmly attached to the emperor's person in case of any rebellious movement in the empire, than native subjects who might participate in the exasperation caused by the measures of the government. The instability of Zeno's throne induced him to change the organization of the scholarians. His object was to form a body of troops whose interests secured their fidelity to his person. Instead of veteran soldiers who brought their military habits and prejudices into the corps, he filled its ranks with his own countrymen, from the mountains of Isauria. These men were valiant, and accustomed to the use of arms. Though they were ignorant of tactics and impatient of discipline, their obedience to their officers was secured by their attachment to Zeno as their countryman and benefactor, and by their absolute dependence on his power as emperor for the enjoyment of their enviable position. The jealousy with which these rude mountaineers were regarded by the whole army, and the hatred felt to them by the people of Constantinople, kept them separate from the rest of the world, secluded in their barracks and steady to their duty in the palace. Anastasius and Justin I introduced the practice of appointing the scholarians by favour, without reference to their military services; and Justinian is accused of establishing the abuse of selling places in their ranks to wealthy citizens, and householders of the capital who had no intention of following a military life, but who purchased their enrolment in the scholarians to enjoy the privilege of the military class in the Roman empire. It is remarkable that absolute princes, whose power is so seriously endangered by the inefficiency of their army, should be so often themselves the corrupters of its discipline. The abuses which render chosen troops useless as soldiers are generally introduced by the sovereign, as in this example of the scholarians of Justinian, but they are sometimes caused by the power of the soldiers, who convert their corps into a hereditary corporation, as in the case of the janissaries of the Ottoman Empire.

On such troops Belisarius was forced to depend for the defence of the country round Constantinople, and for the more difficult task of conserving his own military reputation unsullied in his declining years. While the federates remained to guard Justinian, his general marched to encounter the Huns at the head of a motley army, composed of the neglected troops of the line, and of the sleek scholarians, who, though they formed the most imposing and brilliant portion of his force in appearance, were in reality the worst-trained and least courageous troops under his orders. A crowd of volunteers also joined his standard, and from these he was able to select upwards of 300 of those veteran horseguards who had been so often victorious over the Goths and the Persians. Belisarius established his camp at Chettoukome, a position which enabled him to circumscribe the ravages of the Huns, and stop their advance to the villages and country houses in the immediate vicinity of Constantinople. The peasants who had fled from the enemy assembled round his army, and their labour enabled him to cover his position with strong works and a deep ditch, before the Huns could attack his troops.

There can be doubt that the historians of this campaign misrepresent the facts when they state that the Roman army was inferior in number to the division of the Huns which Zabergan led against Constantinople. This inferiority could only exist in the cavalry; but we know that Belisarius had no confidence in the Roman infantry, and the ill-disciplined troops then under his orders must have excited his contempt. They, on the other hand, were confident in their numbers, and their general was fearful lest their rashness should compromise his plan of operations. He therefore addressed them in a speech, which modified their precipitation by assuring them of success after a little delay. A cavalry engagement, in which Zabergan led 2000 Huns in person to beat up the quarters of the Romans, was completely defeated. Belisarius allowed the enemy to approach without opposition, but before they could extend their line to charge, they were assailed in flank by the unexpected attack of a body of two hundred chosen cavalry, which issued suddenly from a woody glen, and at the same moment Belisarius charged them in front. The shock was irresistible. The Huns fled instantly, but their retreat was embarrassed by their position, and they left four hundred men dead on the field. This trifling affair finished the campaign. The Huns, finding that they could no longer collect supplies, were anxious to save the booty in their possession. They broke up their camp at Melantias, retired to St. Stratonikos, and hastened to escape beyond the long wall. Belisarius had no body of cavalry with which he could venture to pursue an active and experienced enemy. An unsuccessful skirmish might still compromise the safety of many districts, and the jealousy of Justinian was perhaps as dangerous as the army of Zabergan. The victor returned to Constantinople, and there heard himself reproached by courtiers and sycophants for not bringing back the king of the Kutigurs a prisoner, as in other days he had presented the kings of the Vandals and of the Ostrogoths captives before Justinian's throne. Belisarius was ungratefully treated by Justinian, suspected of resenting the imperial ingratitude, accused of treason, plundered, and pardoned.

The division of the Huns sent against the Thracian Chersonese was as unsuccessful as the main body of the army. But while the Huns were incapable of forcing the wall which defended the isthmus, they so utterly despised the Roman garrison, that six hundred embarked on rafts, in order to paddle round the fortifications. The Byzantine general possessed twenty galleys, and with this naval force he easily destroyed all who had ventured to sea. A well-timed sally on the barbarians who had witnessed the destruction of their comrades, routed the remainder, and showed them that their contempt of the Roman soldiery had been carried too far. The third division of the Huns had been ordered to advance through Macedonia and Thessaly. It penetrated as far as Thermopylae, but was not very successful in collecting plunder, and retreated with as little glory as the other two.

Justinian, who had seen a barbarian at the head of an army of twenty thousand men ravage a considerable portion of his empire, instead of pursuing and crushing the invader, engaged the king of the Utugur Huns, by promises and money, to attack Zabergan. These intrigues were successful and the dissensions of the two monarchs prevented the Huns from again attacking the empire. A few years after this incursion the Avars invaded Europe, and, by subduing both the Hunnish kingdoms, gave the Roman

emperor a far more dangerous and powerful neighbour than had lately threatened his northern frontier.

The Turks and the Avars become politically known to the Greeks, for the first time, towards the end of Justinian's reign. Since that period the Turks have always continued to occupy a memorable place in the history of mankind, as the destroyers of ancient civilization. In their progress towards the West, they were preceded by the Avars, a people whose arrival in Europe produced the greatest alarm, whose dominion was soon widely extended, but whose complete extermination, or amalgamation with their subjects, leaves the history of their race a problem never likely to receive a very satisfactory solution. The Avars are supposed to have been a portion of the inhabitants of a powerful Asiatic empire which figures in the annals of China as ruling a great part of the centre of Asia, and extending to the Gulf of Corea. The great empire of the Avars was overthrown by a rebellion of their Turkish subjects, and the noblest caste soon became lost to history amidst the revolutions of the Chinese empire.

The original seats of the Turks were in the country round the great chain of Mount Altai. As subjects of the Avars, they had been distinguished by their skill in working and tempering iron; their industry had procured them wealth, and wealth had inspired them with the desire for independence. After throwing off the yoke of the Avars, they waged war with that people, and compelled the military strength of the nation to fly before them in two separate bodies. One of these divisions fell back on China; the other advanced into western Asia, and at last entered Europe. The Turks engaged in a career of conquest, and in a few years their dominions extended from the Volga and the Caspian Sea to the shores of the ocean, or the Sea of Japan, and from the banks of the Oxus (Gihoun) to the deserts of Siberia. The western army of the Avars, increased by many tribes who feared the Turkish government, advanced into Europe as a nation of conquerors, and not as a band of fugitives. The mass of this army is supposed to have been composed of people of the Turkish race, because those who afterwards bore the Avar name in Europe seem to have belonged to that family. It must not, however, be forgotten, that the mighty army of Avar emigrants might easily, in a few generations, lose all national peculiarities, and forget its native language, amidst the greater number of its Hunnish subjects, even if we should suppose the two races to have been originally derived from different stocks. The Avars, however, are sometimes styled Turks, even by the earliest historians. The use of the appellation Turk, in an extended sense, including the Mongol race, is found in Theophylactus Simocatta, a writer possessing considerable knowledge of the affairs of eastern Asia, and who speaks of the inhabitants of the flourishing kingdom of Taugast as Turks. This application of the term appears to have arisen from the circumstance, that the part of China to which he alluded was subject at the time to a foreign, or, in his phrase, a Turkish dynasty.

The Avars soon conquered all the countries as far as the banks of the Danube, and before Justinian's death they were firmly established on the borders of Pannonia. Their pursuers, the Turks, did not visit Europe until a later period; but they extended their conquests in central Asia, where they destroyed the kingdom of the Ephthalite Huns to the east of Persia, a part of which Chosroes had already subdued. They engaged in long wars with the Persians; but it is sufficient to pass over the history of the first Turkish Empire with this slight notice, as it exercised but a very trifling direct influence on the

fortunes of the Greek nation. The wars of the Turks and Persians tended, however, greatly to weaken the Persian Empire, to reduce its resources, and increase the oppression of the internal administration, by the call for extraordinary exertions, and thus prepared the way for the easier conquest of the country by the followers of Mahomet.

The sudden appearance of the Avars and Turks in history, marks the singular void which a long period of vicious government and successive conquests had created in the population of regions which were once flourishing. Both these nations took a prominent part in the destruction of the frame of ancient society in Europe and Asia; but neither of them contributed anything to the reorganization of the political, social, or religious condition of the modem world. Their empires soon fell to decay, and the very nations were again almost lost to history. The Avars, after having attempted the conquest of Constantinople, became at last extinct; and the Turks, after having been long forgotten, slowly rose to a high degree of power, and at length achieved the conquest of Constantinople, which their ancient rivals had vainly attempted.

Sect. VIII

Relations of the Roman Empire with Persia

The Asiatic frontier of the Roman Empire was less favourable for attack than defence. The range of the Caucasus was occupied, as it still is, by a cluster of small nations of various languages, strongly attached to their independence, which the nature of their country enabled them to maintain amidst the wars and conflicting negotiations of the Romans, Persians, and Huns, by whom they were surrounded. The kingdom of Colchis (Mingrelia) was in permanent alliance with the Romans, and the sovereign received a regular investiture from the emperor. The Tzans, who inhabited the mountains about the sources of the Phasis, enjoyed a subsidiary alliance with Justinian until their plundering expeditions within the precincts of the empire induced him to garrison their country. Iberia, to the east of Colchis, the modern Georgia, formed an independent kingdom under the protection of Persia.

Armenia, as an independent kingdom, had long formed a slight counterpoise between the Roman and Persian empires. In the reign of Theodosius II it had been partitioned by its powerful neighbours; and about the year 429, it had lost the shadow of independence which it had been allowed to retain. The greater part of Armenia had fallen to the share of the Persians; but as the people were Christians, and possessed their own church and literature, they had maintained their nationality uninjured after the loss of their political government. The western, or Roman part of Armenia, was bounded by the mountains in which the Araxes, the Boas, and the Euphrates take their rise; and it was defended against Persia by the fortress of Theodosiopolis (Erzurum), situated on the very frontier of Pers-Armenia. From Theodosiopolis the empire was bounded by

ranges of mountains which cross the Euphrates and extend to the river Nymphaeus, and here the city of Martyropolis, the capital of Roman Armenia, east of the Euphrates, was situated. From the junction of the Nymphaeus with the Tigris the frontier again followed the mountains to Dara, and from thence it proceeded to the Chaboras and the fortress of Circesium.

The Arabs or Saracens who inhabited the district between Circesium and Idumaea, were divided into two kingdoms: that of Ghassan, towards Syria, maintained an alliance with the Romans; and that of Hira, to the east, enjoyed the protection of Persia. Palmyra, which had fallen into ruins after the time of Theodosius II, was repaired and garrisoned; and the country between the Gulfs of Ailath and Suez, forming a province called the Third Palestine, was protected by a fortress constructed at the foot of Mount Sinai, and occupied by a strong body of troops.

Such a frontier, though it presented great difficulties in the way of invading Persia, afforded admirable means for protecting the empire; and, accordingly, it had very rarely indeed happened that a Persian army had ever penetrated into a Roman province. It was reserved for Justinian's reign to behold the Persians break through the defensive line, and contribute to the ruin of the wealth, and the destruction of the civilization, of some of the most flourishing and enlightened portions of the Eastern Empire. The wars which Justinian carried on with Persia reflect little glory on his reign; but the celebrated name of his rival, the great Chosroes Nushirvan, has rendered his political and military mismanagement venial in the eyes of historians. The Persian and Roman empires were at this time nearly equal in power and civilization: both were ruled by princes whose reigns form national epochs; yet history affords ample evidence that the brilliant exploits of both these sovereigns were effected by a wasteful expenditure of the national resources, and by a consumption of the lives and capital of their subjects which proved irreparable. Neither empire was ever able to regain its former state of prosperity, nor could society recover the shock which it had received. The governments were too demoralized to venture on political reforms, and the people too ignorant and too feeble to attempt national revolutions.

The government of declining countries often gives slight signs of weakness and approaching dissolution as long as the ordinary relations of war and peace require to be maintained only with habitual friends or enemies, though the slightest exertion, created by extraordinary circumstances, may cause the political fabric to fall to pieces. The armies of the Eastern Empire and of Persia had, by long acquaintance, found the means of balancing any peculiar advantage of their enemy, by some modification of tactics, or some improvement in military discipline, which neutralized its effect. War between the two states was consequently carried on according to a regular routine of service, and was continued during a succession of campaigns in which much blood and treasure were expended, and much glory gained, with very little change in the relative military power, and none in the frontiers, of the two empires.

The avarice of Justinian, and his inconstancy in pursuing his political and military projects, often induced him to leave the eastern frontier of the empire very inadequately garrisoned; and this frontier presented an extent of country against which a Persian army, concentrated behind the Tigris, could choose its point of attack. The option of

carrying the war into Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, or Colchis generally lay with the Persians; and Chosroes attempted to penetrate into the empire by every portion of this frontier during his long wars. The Roman army, in spite of the change which had taken place in its arms and organization, still retained its superiority.

The war with Persia in which Justinian found the empire engaged on his succession, was terminated by a peace which the Romans purchased by the payment of eleven thousand pounds of gold to Chosroes. The Persian monarch required peace to regulate the affairs of his own kingdom; and the calculation of Justinian, that the sum which he paid to Persia was much less than the expense of continuing the war, though it may have been correct, did not render the payment less impolitic, as it really conveyed an admission of inferiority and weakness. Justinian's object had been to place the great body of his military forces at liberty, in order to direct his exclusive attention to recovering the lost provinces of the Western Empire. Had he availed himself of peace with Persia to diminish the burdens on his subjects, and consolidate the defence of the empire instead of extending its frontiers, he might perhaps have re-established the Roman power. As soon as Chosroes heard of the conquests of Justinian in Africa, Sicily, and Italy, his jealousy induced him to renew the war. The solicitations of an embassy sent by Witiges are said to have had some effect in determining him to take up arms.

In 540 Chosroes invaded Syria with a powerful army, and laid siege to Antioch, the second city of the empire in population and wealth. He offered to raise the siege on receiving payment of one thousand pounds' weight of gold, but this small sum was refused. Antioch was taken by storm, its buildings were committed to the flames, and its inhabitants were carried away captive, and settled as colonists in Persia. Hierapolis, Berrhoea (Aleppo), Apamea, and Chalcis, escaped this fate by paying the ransom demanded from each. To save Syria from utter destruction, Belisarius was sent to take the command of an army assembled for its defence, but he was ill supported, and his success was by no means brilliant. The fact that he saved Syria from utter devastation, nevertheless, rendered his campaign of 543 by no means unimportant for the empire. The war was carried on for twenty years, but during the latter period of its duration, military operations were confined to Colchis. It was terminated in 562 by a truce for fifty years, which effected little change in the frontiers of the empire. The most remarkable clause of this treaty of peace imposed on Justinian the disgraceful obligation of paying Chosroes an annual subsidy of thirty thousand pieces of gold; and he was compelled immediately to advance the sum of two hundred and ten thousand, for seven years. The sum, it is true, was not very great, but the condition of the Roman empire was sadly changed, when it became necessary to purchase peace from all its neighbours with gold, and with gold to find mercenary troops to carry on its wars. The moment, therefore, a supply of gold failed in the imperial treasury, the safety of the Roman power was compromised.

The weakness of the Roman Empire, and the necessity of finding allies in the East, in order to secure a share of the lucrative commerce of which Persia had long possessed a monopoly, induced Justinian to keep up friendly communications with the king of Ethiopia (Abyssinia). Elesboas, who then occupied the Ethiopian throne, was a prince of great power, and a steady ally of the Romans. The wars of this Christian

monarch in Arabia are related by the historians of the empire; and Justinian endeavoured, by his means, to transfer the silk trade with India from Persia to the route by the Red Sea. The attempt failed from the great length of the sea voyage, and the difficulties of adjusting the intermediate commerce of the countries on this line of communication; but still the trade of the Red Sea was so great, that the king of Ethiopia, in the reign of Justin, was able to collect a fleet of seven hundred native vessels, and six hundred Roman and Persian merchantmen, which he employed to transport his troops into Arabia. The diplomatic relations of Justinian with the Avars and Turks, and particularly with the latter nation, were influenced by the position of the Roman Empire with regard to Persia, both in a commercial and political point of view.

Sect. IX.

Commercial position of the Greeks and comparison with the other Nations living under the Roman Government

Until the northern nations conquered the southern provinces of the Western Empire, the commerce of Europe was in the hands of the subjects of the Roman emperors: and the monopoly of the Indian trade, its most lucrative branch, was almost exclusively possessed by the Greeks. But the invasions of the barbarians, by diminishing the wealth of the countries which they subdued, greatly diminished the demand for the valuable merchandise imported from the East; and the financial extortions of the imperial government gradually impoverished the Greek population of Syria, Egypt, and Cyrenaica, the greater portion of which had derived its prosperity from this now declining trade. In order to comprehend fully the change which must have taken place in the commercial relations of the Greeks with the western portion of Europe, it is necessary to compare the situation of each province, in the reign of Justinian, with its condition in the time of Hadrian. Many countries which had once supported an extensive trade in articles of luxury imported from the East, became incapable of purchasing any foreign production, and could hardly supply a diminished and impoverished population with the mere necessaries of life. The wines of Lesbos, Rhodes, Cnidos, Thasos, Chios, Samos, and Cyprus, the woollen cloths of Miletus and Laodicea, the purple dresses of Tyre, Gaetulia, and Laconia, the cambric of Cos, the manuscripts of Egypt and Pergamus, the perfumes, spices, pearls, and jewels of India, the ivory, the slaves, and tortoise-shell of Africa, and the silks of China, were once abundant on the banks of the Rhine and in the north of Britain. Treves and York were long wealthy and flourishing cities, where every foreign luxury could be obtained. Incredible quantities of the precious metals in coined money then circulated freely, and trade was carried on with activity far beyond the limits of the empire. The Greeks who traded in amber and fur, though they may have rarely visited the northern countries in person, maintained constant communications with these distant lands, and paid for the

commodities which they imported in gold and silver coin, in ornaments, and by inducing the barbarians to consume the luxuries, the spices, and the incense of the East. Nor was the trade in statues, pictures, vases, and objects of art in marble, metals, earthenware, ivory, and painting, a trifling branch of commerce, as it may be conjectured from the relics which are now so frequently found, after having remained concealed for ages beneath the soil.

In the time of Justinian, Britain, Gaul, Rhaetia, Pannonia, Noricum, and Vindelicia, were reduced to such a state of poverty and desolation, that their foreign commerce was almost annihilated, and their internal trade reduced to a trifling exchange of the rudest commodities. Even the south of Gaul, Spain, Italy, Africa, and Sicily, had suffered a great decrease of population and wealth under the government of the Goths and Vandals; and though their cities still carried on a considerable commerce with the East, that commerce was very much less than it had been in the times of the empire. As the greater part of the trade of the Mediterranean was in the hands of the Greeks, this trading population was often regarded in the West as the type of the inhabitants of the eastern Roman Empire. The mercantile class was generally regarded by the barbarians as favouring the Roman cause; and probably not without reason, for its interests must have required it to keep up constant communications with the empire. When Belisarius touched at Sicily, on his way to attack the Vandals, Procopius found a friend at Syracuse, who was a merchant, carrying on extensive dealings in Africa, as well as with the East. The Vandals, when they were threatened by Justinian's expedition, threw many of the merchants of Carthage into prison, as they suspected them of favouring Belisarius. The laws adopted by the barbarians for regulating the trade of their native subjects, and the dislike with which most of the Gothic nations viewed trade, manufactures, and commerce, naturally placed all commercial and money transactions in the hands of strangers. When it happened that war or policy excluded the Greeks from participating in these transactions, they were generally conducted by the Jews. We find, indeed, after the fall of the Western Empire, that the Jews, availing themselves of their commercial knowledge and neutral political character, began to be very numerous in all the countries gained by conquest from the Romans, and particularly so in those situated on the Mediterranean, which maintained constant communications with the East.

Several circumstances, however, during the reign of Justinian contributed to augment the commercial transactions of the Greeks, and to give them a decided preponderance in the Eastern trade. The long war with Persia cut off all those routes by which the Syrian and Egyptian population had maintained their ordinary communications with Persia; and it was from Persia that they had always drawn their silk, and great part of their Indian commodities, such as muslins and jewels. This trade now began to seek two different channels, by both of which it avoided the dominions of Chosroes; the one was to the north of the Caspian Sea, and the other by the Red Sea. This ancient route through Egypt still continued to be that of the ordinary trade. But the importance of the northern route, and the extent of the trade carried on by it through different ports on the Black Sea, are authenticated by the numerous colony of the inhabitants of central Asia established at Constantinople in the reign of Justin II. Six hundred Turks availed themselves, at one time, of the security offered by the journey of

a Roman ambassador to the Great Khan of the Turks, and joined his train. This fact affords the strongest evidence of the great importance of this route, as there can be no question that the great number of the inhabitants of central Asia, who visited Constantinople, were attracted to it by their commercial occupations. The Indian commerce through Arabia and by the Red Sea was still more important; much more so, indeed, than the mere mention of Justinian's failure to establish a regular importation of silk by this route might lead us to suppose. The immense number of trading vessels which habitually frequented the Red Sea shows that it was very great.

It is true that the population of Arabia now first began to share the profits and feel the influence of this trade. The spirit of improvement and inquiry roused by the excitement of this new field of enterprise, and the new subjects for thought which it opened, prepared the children of the desert for national union, and awakened the social and political impulse which gave birth to the character of Mahomet.

As the whole trade of Western Europe, in Chinese and Indian productions, passed through the hands of the Greeks, its amount, though small in any one district, yet as a whole must have been large. The Greek mercantile population of the Eastern Empire had declined, though perhaps not yet in the same proportion as the other classes, so that the relative importance of the trade remained as great as ever with regard to the general wealth of the empire; and its profits were probably greater than formerly, since the restricted nature of the transactions in the various localities must have discouraged competitors and produced the effects of a monopoly, even in those countries where no recognised privileges were granted, to the merchants. Justinian was also fortunate enough to secure to the Greeks the complete control of the silk trade, by enabling them to share in the production and manufacture of this precious commodity. This trade had excited the attention of the Romans at an early period. One of the emperors, probably Marcus Aurelius, had sent an ambassador to the East, with the view of establishing commercial relations with the country where silk was produced, and this ambassador succeeded in reaching China. Justinian long attempted in vain to open direct communications with China; but all his efforts to obtain a direct supply of silk either proved unavailing or were attended with very partial success. The Persians alone were able to supply the Chinese and Indian trade with the commodities suitable for that distant market. They were, however, unable to retain the monopoly of this profitable commerce; for the high price of silk in the West during the Persian wars induced the nations of central Asia to open direct communications by land with China, and convey it, by caravans to the frontiers of the Roman Empire. This trade followed various channels, according to the security which political circumstances afforded to the traders. At times it was directed towards the frontiers of Armenia, while at others it proceeded as far north as the Sea of Azov. Jordanes, in speaking of Cherson at this time, calls it a city whence the merchant imports the produce of Asia.

At a moment when Justinian must almost have abandoned the hope of participating in the direct trade with China, he was fortunate enough to be put in possession of the means of cultivating silk in his own dominions. Christian missions have been the means of extending very widely the benefits of civilization. Christian missionaries first established regular communications between Ethiopia and the Roman Empire, and they frequently visited China. In the year 551 two monks, who had studied

the method of rearing silkworms and winding silk in China, succeeded in conveying the eggs of the moth to Constantinople, enclosed in a cane. The emperor, delighted with the acquisition, granted them every assistance which they required, and zealously encouraged their under- taking. It would not, therefore, be just to deny to Justinian some share in the merit of having founded a flourishing branch of trade, which tended very materially to support the resources of the Eastern Empire, and to enrich the Greek nation for several centuries.

The Greeks, at this time, maintained their superiority over the other people in the empire only by their commercial enterprise, which preserved that civilization in the trading cities which was rapidly disappearing among the agricultural population. In general they were reduced almost to the same level with the Syrians, Egyptians, Armenians, and Jews. In Cyrenaica and Alexandria they suffered from the same government, and declined in the same proportion, as the native population. Of the decline of Egypt we possess exact information, which it may not be unprofitable to pass in review. In the reign of Augustus, Egypt furnished Rome with a tribute of twenty millions of *modii* of grain annually, and it was garrisoned by a force rather exceeding twelve thousand regular troops. Under Justinian the tribute in grain was reduced to about five millions and a half *modii*, that is 800,000 *artabas*; and the Roman troops, to a cohort of six hundred men. Egypt was prevented from sinking still lower by the exportation of its grain to supply the trading population on the shores of the Red Sea. The canal connecting the Nile with the Red Sea afforded the means of exporting an immense quantity of inferior grain to the arid coasts of Arabia, and formed a great artery for civilization and commerce.

About this period the Jewish nation attained a degree of importance which is worthy of attention, as explaining many circumstances connected with the history of the human race. The Jews either by natural multiplication or by proselytism appear to have increased very much in the age immediately preceding Justinian's reign. This increase is to be accounted for by the decline of the rest of the population in the countries round the Mediterranean, and by the general decay of civilization, in consequence of the severity of the Roman fiscal system, which trammelled every class of society with regulations restricting the industry of the people. These circumstances afforded an opening for the Jews, whose social position had been previously so bad, that the decline of their neighbours, at least, afforded them some relative improvement. The Jews, too, at this period, were the only neutral nation who could carry on their trade equally with the Persians, Ethiopians, Arabs, and Goths; for, though they were hated everywhere, the universal dislike was a reason for tolerating a people never likely to form common cause with any other. In Gaul and Italy they had risen to considerable importance; and in Spain they carried on an extensive trade in slaves, which excited the indignation of the Christian church, and which kings and ecclesiastical councils vainly endeavoured to destroy. The Jews generally found support from the barbarian monarchs; and Theodoric the Great granted them every species of protection. Their alliance was often necessary to render the country independent of the wealth and commerce of the Greeks.

To commercial jealousy, therefore, as well as religious zeal, we must attribute some of the persecutions which the Jews sustained in the Eastern Empire. The cruelty of the Roman government nourished that bitter nationality and revengeful hatred of their

enemies, which have always marked the energetic character of the Israelites; but the history of the injustice of one party, and of the crimes of the other, does not fall within the scope of this inquiry, though the position of the Jews and Greeks in modem times offers many points of similarity and comparison.

The Armenians, who have at different times taken a large share in the trade of the East, were then entirely occupied with war and religion, and appeared in Europe only as mercenary soldiers in the pay of Justinian, in whose service many attained the highest military rank. In civilization and literary attainments, the Armenians held, however, as high a rank as any of their contemporaries. In the year 552 their patriarch, Moses II, assembled their learned men, in order to reform their calendar; and they then fixed on the era which the Armenians have since continued to use. It is true that the numerous translations of Greek books which distinguished the literature of Armenia were chiefly made during the preceding century, for the sixth only produced a few ecclesiastical works. The literary energy of Armenia is remarkable, inasmuch as it excited the fears of the Persian monarch, who ordered that no Armenian should visit the Eastern Empire to study at the Greek universities of Constantinople, Athens, or Alexandria.

The literature of the Greek language ceased, from this time, to possess a national character, and became more identified with the government, the governing classes of the Eastern Empire, and the Orthodox Church, than with the inhabitants of Greece. The fact is easily explained by the poverty of the native Hellenes, and by the position of the ruling caste in the Roman Empire. The highest offices in the court, in the civil administration, and in the Orthodox Church, were filled with a Graeco-Roman caste, sprung originally from the Macedonian conquerors of Asia, and now proud of the Roman name which repudiated all idea of Greek nationality, and affected to treat Greek national distinctions as mere provincialism, at the very time it was acting under the impulse of Greek prejudices, both in the State and the Church. The long existence of the new Platonic school of philosophy at Athens, seems to have connected paganism with Hellenic national feelings and Justinian was doubtless induced to put an end to it, and drive its last teachers into banishment from his hostility to all independent institutions.

The universities of the other cities of the empire were intended for the education of the higher classes destined for the public administration, or for the church. That of Constantinople possessed a philosophical, philological, legal, and theological faculty. Alexandria added to these a celebrated medical school. Berytus was distinguished for its school of jurisprudence, and Edessa was remarkable for its Syriac, as well as its Greek faculties. The university of Antioch suffered a severe blow in the destruction of the city by Chosroes, but it again rose from its ruin. The Greek poetical literature of this age is utterly destitute of popular interest, and shows that it formed only the amusement of a class of society, not the portrait of a nation's feelings. Paul the *Silentiary* and Agathias the historian, wrote many epigrams, which exist in the Anthology. The poem of 'Hero and Leander', by Musaeus, is generally supposed to have been composed about the year 450, but it may be mentioned as one of the last Greek poems which displays a true Greek character; and it is peculiarly valuable, as affording us a testimony of the late period to which the Hellenic people preserved their correct taste. The poems of Coluthus and Tryphiodorus, which are almost of the same period, are very far inferior in merit; but as both were Egyptian Greeks, it is not surprising that their poetical

productions display the frigid character of the artificial school. After this period, the verses of the Greeks are entirely destitute of the spirit of poetry, and even the curious scholar finds their perusal a wearisome task.

The prose literature of the sixth century can boast of some distinguished names. The commentary of Simplicius on the manual of Epictetus has been frequently printed, and the work has even been translated into German. Simplicius was a pupil of Damascius, and one of the philosophers who, with that celebrated teacher, fled to Persia on the dispersion of the Athenian schools. The collection of Stobaeus, even in the mutilated form in which we possess it, contains much curious information; the medical works of Aetius and Alexander of Tralles have been printed several times, and the geographical writings of Hierocles and Cosmas Indicopleustes possess considerable interest. In history, the writings of Procopius and Agathias are of great merit, and have been translated into several modern languages. Many other names of authors, whose works have been preserved in part and published in modern times, might be cited; but they possess little interest for the general reader, and it does not belong to our inquiry to enter into details, which can be found in the history of Greek literature, nor does it fill within our province to enumerate the legal and ecclesiastical writers of the age.

Sect. X.

Influence of the Orthodox Church on the national feelings of the Greeks

It is necessary here to advert to the effect which the existence of the established Church, as a constituted body, and forming a part of the State, produced both on the government and on the people; though it will only be to notice its connection with the Greeks as a nation. The political connection of the Church with the State displayed its evil effects by the active part which the clergy took in exciting the numerous persecutions which distinguish this period. The alliance of Justinian and the Roman government of his time with the orthodox Christians was forced on the parties by their political position. Their interests in Africa, Italy, and Spain, identified the imperial party and the orthodox believers, and invited them to appeal to arms as the arbiter of opinions. It became, or was thought necessary, at times, even within the limits of the empire, to unite political and ecclesiastical power in the same hands; and the union of the office of prefect and patriarch of Egypt, in the person of Apollinarius, is a memorable instance. To the combination, therefore, of Roman policy with orthodox bigotry, we must attribute the religious persecutions of the Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians, and other heretics; as well as of Platonic philosophers, Manichaeans, Samaritans, and Jews. The various laws which Justinian enacted to enforce unity of opinion in religion, and to punish any difference of belief from that of the established church, occupy a considerable space in his legislation; yet as if to show the impossibility of fixing

opinions, it appeared at the end of his reign that this most orthodox of Roman emperors and munificent patron of the church, held that the body of Jesus was incorruptible, and adopted a heterodox interpretation of the Nicene creed, in denying the two natures of Christ.

The religious persecutions of Justinian tended to ripen the general dissatisfaction with the Roman government into feelings of permanent hostility in all those portions of the empire in which the heretics formed the majority of the population. The Orthodox Church, unfortunately, rather exceeded the common measure of bigotry in this age; and it was too closely connected with the Greek nation for the spirit of persecution not to acquire a national as well as a religious character. As Greek was the language of the civil and ecclesiastical administration, those acquainted with the Greek language could alone attain the highest ecclesiastical preferments. The jealousy of the Greeks generally endeavoured to raise a suspicion of the orthodoxy of their rivals, in order to exclude them from promotion; and, consequently, the Syrians, Egyptians, and Armenians found themselves placed in opposition to the Greeks by their national language and literature.

The Scriptures had, at a very early period, been translated into all the spoken languages of the East; and the Syrians, Egyptians, and Armenians, not only made use of their own language in the service of the church, but also possessed at this time a provincial clergy in no ways inferior to the Greek provincial clergy in learning and piety, and their ecclesiastical literature was fully equal to the portion of the Greek ecclesiastical literature which was accessible to the mass of the people. This use of the national language gave the church of each province a national character; the ecclesiastical opposition which political circumstances created in these national churches against the established church of the emperors, furnished a pretext for the imputation of heresy, and, probably, at times gave a heretical impulse to the opinions of the provincials. But a large body of the Armenians and the Chaldeans had never submitted to the supremacy of the Greek Church in ecclesiastical matters, and a strong disposition to quarrel with the Greeks had always displayed itself among the natives of Egypt. Justinian carried his persecutions so far that in several provinces the natives separated from the established church and elected their own bishops, an act which, in the society of the time, was a near approach to open rebellion. Indeed, the hostility to the Roman government throughout the East was everywhere connected with an opposition to the Greek clergy. The Jews revived an old saying indicating a national as well as political and religious animosity,—"Cursed is he who eateth swine's flesh, or teacheth his child Greek"

Power, whether ecclesiastical or civil, is so liable to abuse, that it is not surprising that the Greeks, as soon as they had succeeded in transforming the established church of the Roman Empire into the Greek church, should have acted unfairly to the provincial clergy of the eastern provinces in which the Greek liturgy was not used; nor is it surprising that national differences should have soon been identified with points of doctrine. As soon as any question arose, the Greek clergy, from their alliance with the State, and their possession of the ecclesiastical revenues of the Church, were sure of being orthodox; and the provincial clergy were in constant danger of being regarded as heterodox, merely because they were not Greeks. There can be no doubt that several of the national churches of the East owed some increase of their hostility to the Roman

government to the circumstances adverted to. The sixth century gave strong proofs that every nation which possesses a language and literature of its own ought, if it be practicable, to possess its own national church; and the struggle of the Roman Empire and the Greek ecclesiastical establishment against this attempt at national independence on the part of the Armenians, Syrians, Egyptians, and Africans, involved the empire in many difficulties, and opened a way, first for the Persians to push their invasions into the heart of the empire, and afterwards for the Mohammedans to conquer the eastern provinces, and virtually to put an end to the Roman power.

Sect. XI.

State of Athens during the Decline of Paganism and until the Extinction of its Schools by Justinian

Ancient Greek literature and Hellenic traditions expired at Athens in the sixth century. In the year 529 Justinian closed the schools of rhetoric and philosophy, and confiscated the property devoted to their support. The measure was probably dictated by his determination to centralize all power and patronage at Constantinople in his own person; for the municipal funds appropriated annually by the Athenian magistrates to pay the salaries of public teachers could not have excited the cupidity of the emperor during the early part of his reign, while the imperial treasury was still overflowing with the savings of Anastasius and Justin. The conduct of the great lawgiver must have been the result of policy rather than of rapacity.

It seems to be generally supposed that Athens had dwindled into a small town; that its schools were frequented only by a few lazy pedants, and that the office of professor had become a sinecure before Justinian closed for ever the gates of the Academy, the Lyceum, and the Stoa, and exiled the last Athenian philosophers to Persia, where, though they enjoyed the protection of the great Chosroes, they sought in vain for votaries to supply the places of those whom they had lost in the Roman Empire. A passage of Synesius, who was compelled to touch at the port of the Piraeus without having any desire to visit Athens, has been cited to prove the decay of learning, and the decline of population. The African philosopher says that the deserted aspect of the city of Minerva reminded him of the skin of an animal which had been sacrificed, and whose body had been consumed as an offering. Athens had nothing to boast of but great names. The Academy, the Lyceum, and the Stoa, were indeed still shown to travellers, but learning had forsaken these ancient retreats, and, instead of philosophers in the agora, you met only dealers in honey. The Dorian prejudices of the Cyrenian, who boasted of his descent from Spartan kings, evidently overpowered the candour of the visitor. His spleen may have been caused by some neglect on the part of the Athenian

literary aristocracy to welcome their distinguished guest, but it does little honour to the taste of Synesius that he could see the glorious spectacle of the Acropolis in the rich hue of its original splendour, and walk along surrounded by the many noble monuments of architecture, sculpture, and painting, which then adorned the city, without one expression of admiration. The time of his visit was not the most favourable for one who sought Athenian society, for it was only two years after the invasion of Alaric; but, after every allowance has been made for the peevishness of the writer, and for the deserted state of the city in consequence of the Gothic invasion, there exists ample proof that this description is a mere flourish of rhetorical exaggeration. History tells us that Athens prospered, and that her schools were frequented by many eminent men long after the ravages of Alaric and the visit of Synesius. The empress Eudocia (Athenais) was a year old, and Synesius might have seen in a nurse's arms the infant who received at Athens the education which made her one of the most accomplished ladies of a brilliant and luxurious court, as well as a person of learning, even without reference to her sex and rank.

Athens was not then a rude provincial town. It was still a literary capital frequented by the aristocratic portion of society in the Eastern Empire, where Hellenic literature was cultivated and the doctrines of Plato were taught; and it is not impossible that in elegance it rivalled Constantinople, however inferior it may have been in luxury. St. John Chrysostom informs us that, in the court of the first Eudocia, the mother of Pulcheria, a knowledge of dress, embroidery, and music, were considered the most important objects on which taste could be displayed; but that to converse with elegance, and to compose pretty verses, were regarded as necessary proofs of intellectual superiority. Pulcheria, though born in this court, against which Chrysostom declaimed with eloquent but sometimes unseemly violence, lived the life of a saint. Yet she adopted the beautiful heathen maiden Athenais as a protégé, and, when she had succeeded in converting her to Christianity, bestowed on her the name of her own mother Eudocia. Though history tells us nothing of the fashionable society of Athens at this time, it supplies us with some interesting information concerning the social position of her learned men, and we know that they were generally gentlemen whose chief pride was that they were also scholars.

When the members of the native aristocracy in Greece found that they were excluded by the Romans from the civil and military service of the State, they devoted themselves to literature and philosophy. It became the tone of good society to be pedantic. The wealth and fame of Herodes Atticus have rendered him the type of the Greek aristocratic philosophers. The Emperor Hadrian revived the importance and augmented the prosperity of Athens by his visits, and gave additional consequence to its schools by appointing an official professor of the branch of learning called sophistics. Lollianus, who first occupied this chair, was a native of Ephesus; but he was welcomed by the Athenians, as if he had been a native citizen, for the strong remedies the Romans had applied to diminish their pride had at least cured them of the absurd vanity of autochthonism. Lollianus not only received the rights of citizenship; he was elected strategos, then the highest office in the local magistracy. During his term of service he employed his own wealth and his personal credit to alleviate the sufferings caused by a severe famine. He discharged all the debts contracted by the city in collecting and

distributing provisions from his private fortune. The Athenians rewarded him for his generosity by erecting two statues to his memory.

Antoninus Pius increased the public importance of the schools of Athens, and gave them an official character, by allowing the professors named by the emperor an annual salary of ten thousand drachmas. Marcus Aurelius, who visited Athens on his return from the East after the rebellion of Avidius Cassius, established official teachers of every kind of learning then publicly taught, and organized the philosophers into an university. Scholarchs were appointed for the four great philosophical sects of the stoics, platonists, peripatetics, and epicureans, who received fixed salaries from the government. The wealth and avarice of the Athenian philosophers became after this common subjects of envy and reproach. Many names of some eminence in literature might be cited as connected with the Athenian schools during the second and third centuries; but to show the universal character of the studies pursued, and the freedom of inquiry that was allowed, it is only necessary to mention the Christian writers Quadratus, Aristeides, and Athenagoras, who shared with their heathen contemporaries the fame and patronage of which Athens could dispose.

It appears that even before the end of the second century the population of the city had undergone a great change, in consequence of the constant immigration of Asiatic and Alexandrian Greeks who visited it in order to frequent its schools and make use of its libraries. The attendants and followers of these wealthy strangers settled at Athens in such numbers as to modify the spoken dialect, which then lost its classic purity; and it was only in the depopulated *demoi*, and among the impoverished landed proprietors of Attica, who were too poor to purchase foreign slaves or to associate with wealthy sophists, that pure Attic Greek was any longer heard. Strangers filled the chairs of eloquence and philosophy, and rhetoricians were elected to be the chief magistrates. In the third century, however, we find the Athenian Dexippus, a rhetorician, a patriot, and a historian, holding the highest offices in the local administration with honour to himself and to his country.

Both Athens and the Piraeus had completely recovered from the ravages committed by the Goths before the time of Constantine. The large crews which were embarked in ancient galleys, and the small space which they contained for the stowage of provisions, rendered it necessary to select a port, which could furnish large supplies of provisions either from its own resources or from its being a centre of commercial communication, as a station for a great naval force. The fact that Constantine selected the Piraeus as the harbour at which his son Crispus concentrated the large force with which he defeated Licinius at the Hellespont, proves at least that the Athenian markets afforded abundant supplies of provisions.

The heathen city of Minerva continued to enjoy the favour and protection of the Christian emperors. Constantine enlarged the privileges of the scholarchs and professors, and exempted them from many onerous taxes and public burdens. He furnished the city with an annual supply of grain for distribution, and he accepted the title of strategos, as Hadrian had accepted that of archon, to show that he deemed it an honour to belong to its local magistrature. Constantius granted a donative of grain to the city as a special mark of favour to Proaeresius; and during his reign we find its schools

extremely popular, crowded with wealthy students from every province of the empire, and attended by all the great men of the time. Four celebrated men resided there nearly at the same period—the future Emperor Julian, the sophist Libanius, St. Basil, and St. Gregory Nazianzenus. Athens then enjoyed the inestimable blessing of toleration. Heathens and Christians both frequented her schools unmolested, in spite of the laws already promulgated against some pagan rites, for the regulations against soothsayers and diviners were not supposed to be applicable to gentlemen and philosophers. Athenian society consequently suffered for some time very little from the changes which took place in the religious opinions of the emperors. It gained nothing from the heathenism of Julian, and lost nothing by the Arianism of Valens.

Julian, it is true, ordered all the temples to be repaired and regular sacrifices to be performed with order and pomp; but his reign was too short to effect any considerable change, and his orders met with little attention in Greece, for Christianity had already made numerous converts among the priests of the temples, who, strange to say, appear to have embraced the doctrines of Christianity much more readily and promptly than the philosophers. Many priests had already been converted to Christianity with their whole families, and in many temples it was difficult to procure the celebration of the heathen ceremonies. Julian attempted to inflict one serious wound on Christianity at Athens, by issuing an unjust and arbitrary edict forbidding Christians from giving instruction publicly in rhetoric and literature. His respect for the character of Proaeresius, an Armenian, who was then a professor at Athens, induced him to exempt that teacher from his ordinance; but Proaeresius refused to avail himself of the emperor's permission, for, as new ceremonies were prescribed in the resorts of public teaching, he considered it his duty to cease lecturing rather than appear tacitly to conform to heathen usages.

The supremacy of paganism was of short duration. About two years after Julian had proclaimed it again the established religion of the Roman Empire, Valentinian and Valens published an edict forbidding incantations, magical ceremonies, and offerings by night, under pain of death. The application of this law, according to the letter, would have prevented the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries, and rendered life intolerable to many fervid votaries of Hellenic superstition, and of the Neo-platonic philosophy. The suppression of the great heathen festivals, of which some of the rites were celebrated during the night, would have seriously injured the prosperity of Athens, and some other cities in Greece. The celebrated Praetextatus, a heathen highly esteemed for his integrity and administrative talents, was then proconsul of Achaia. His representations induced the emperors to make some modifications in the application of the edict, and the Eleusinian mysteries continued to be celebrated until Alaric destroyed the temple.

Paganism rapidly declined, but the heathen philosophers at Athens continued to live as a separate class of society, refusing to embrace Christianity, though without offering any opposition to its progress. They considered their own religious opinions as too elevated for the vulgar, so that there existed no community of feeling between the aristocratic Neo-platonists of the schools, the burgesses of the towns, whether they were heathens or Christians, and the agriculturists in the country, who were generally pagans. Hence the emperors entertained no political dislike to the philosophers, and continued to

employ them in the public service. Neither Christian emperors nor Christian bishops felt any rancour against the amiable scholars who cherished the exclusive prejudices of Hellenic civilization, and who considered the philanthropic spirit of Christianity as an idle dream. The Neo-platonists viewed man as by nature a brutal creature, and they deemed slavery to be the proper condition of the labouring classes. They scorned equally the rude idolatry of corrupted paganism, and the simple doctrines of pure Christianity. They were deeply imbued with those social prejudices which have for centuries separated the rural and urban population in the East; prejudices which were first created by the prevalence of predial slavery, but which were greatly increased by the fiscal system of the Romans, which enthralled men to degraded employment in hereditary castes. Libanius, Themistius, and Symmachus, were favoured even by the orthodox emperor Theodosius the Great. St. Basil corresponded with Libanius. Musonius, who had taught rhetoric at Athens, was imperial governor of Asia in the year 367; but, as it is possible that he had then embraced Christianity, this circumstance can only be cited to prove the social rank still maintained by the teachers of the Athenian schools.

The last breath of Hellenic life was now rapidly passing away, and its dissolution confined no glory on Greece. The Olympic Games were celebrated until the reign of Theodosius I, and they ceased in the first year of the 293rd Olympiad, A.D. 393. The last recorded victor was an Armenian, named Varastad, of the race of the Arsacidae. Alexander, son of Amyntas, king of Macedon, had not been allowed to become a competitor for a prize until he had proved his Hellenic descent; but the Hellenes were at this time prouder of being Romaioi than of being Greeks, and the Armenian Varastad, whose name closes the long list which commences with demi-gods, and is filled with heroes, was a Romaios. Hellenic art also fled from the soil of Hellas. The chryselephantine statue of the Olympian Jupiter was transported to Constantinople, where it was destroyed in the year 476 by one of the great fires which so often laid waste that city. The statue of Minerva, which the pagans believed had protected her favourite city against Alaric, was carried off about the same time, and thus the two great works of Phidias were exiled from Greece. The destruction of the great temple of Olympia followed soon after, but the exact date is unknown. Some have supposed that it was burned by the Gothic troops of Alaric; others think that it was destroyed by Christian bigotry in the reign of Theodosius II. The Olympiads, which for generation after generation had served to record the noble emulation of the Greeks, were now supplanted by the notation of the indiction. Glory resigned her influence over society to taxation.

The restrictions which Julian had placed on public instruction in order to injure Christianity, had not been productive of permanent effects. Theodosius II was the first emperor who interfered with public instruction for the direct object of controlling and circumscribing public opinion. While he honoured those professors who were appointed by his own authority, and propagated the principles of submission, or rather of servility, to the imperial commands, he struck a mortal blow at the spirit of free inquiry by forbidding private teachers to give public lectures under pain of infamy and banishment. Private teachers of philosophy had hitherto enjoyed great freedom in teaching throughout Greece; but henceforth thought was enslaved even at Athens, and no

opinions were allowed to be taught except such as could; obtain a license from the imperial authorities. Emulation was destroyed, and genius, which is always regarded with suspicion by men of routine, for it sheds new light even on the oldest subject, was now officially suppressed. Men not having the liberty of uttering their thoughts soon ceased to think.

Though we are acquainted with very few precise facts relating to the state of society in Athens from the time of Theodosius II to the suppression of the schools of philosophy by Justinian, we are, nevertheless, able to form some idea of the peculiarities which distinguished it from the other provincial cities of the empire. The privileges transmitted from the time when Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius treated Athens as a free city, were long respected by the Christian emperors. Some Hellenic pride was still nourished at Athens, from the tradition of its having been long an ally and not a subject of Rome. A trace of this memory of the past seems discernible in the speech of the Empress Eudocia to the people of Antioch, as she was on her pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It closed with a boast of their common Hellenic origin. The spirit of emulation between the votaries of the Gospel and the schools undoubtedly tended to improve the morality of Athens. Paganism, after it had been driven from the mind, survived in the manners, of the people in most of the great cities of the empire. But at Athens the philosophers distinguished themselves by purity of morals; and the Christians would have been ashamed in their presence of the exhibitions of tumult and simony which disgraced the ecclesiastical elections at Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople. In the meantime, the civilization of the ancient world was not extinct, though many of its vices were banished. Public hotels for strangers existed on the model which the Mohammedans have gained so much honour by imitating; alms-houses for the destitute, and hospitals for the sick, were to be found in due proportion to the population, or the want would have been justly recorded to the disgrace of the wealthy pagans. The truth is, that the spirit of Christianity had penetrated into heathenism, which had become virtuous and unobtrusive, as well as mild and timid. The habits of Athenian society were soft and humane; the wealthy lived in palaces, and purchased libraries. Many philosophers, like Proclus, enjoyed ample revenues, and perhaps, like him, received rich legacies. Ladies wore dresses of silk embroidered with gold. Both sexes delighted in boots of thick silk ornamented with tassels of gold fringe. The luxurious drank wine of Rhodes, Cnidos and Thasos, as we find attested by the inscribed handles of broken amphorae still scattered in the fields round the modern city. The luxury and folly against which Chrysostom declaimed at Constantinople were perhaps not unknown at Athens, but, as there was less wealth, they could not exhibit themselves so shamelessly in the philosophic as in the orthodox city. It is not probable that the Bishop of Athens found it necessary to preach against ladies swimming in public cisterns, which excited the indignation of the saint at Constantinople, and which continued to be a favourite amusement of the fair sex for several generations, until Justinian suppressed it by admitting it as a ground of divorce.

Theodosius I, Arcadius, and Theodosius II passed many laws prohibiting the ceremonies of paganism, and ordering the persecution of its votaries. It appears that many of the aristocracy, and even some men in high official employment, long adhered to its delusions. Optatus, the prefect of Constantinople in 404, was a heathen. Isokasios,

quaestor of Antioch, was accused of the same crime in 467; and Tribonian, the celebrated jurist of Justinian, who died in 545, was supposed to be attached to philosophic opinions hostile to Christianity, though he made no scruple in conforming outwardly to the established religion. His want of religious principle caused him to be called an atheist. The philosophers were at last persecuted with great cruelty, and anecdotes are related of their martyrdom in the reign of Zeno. Phocas, a patrician, poisoned himself in the reign of Justinian to avoid being compelled to embrace Christianity, or suffer death as a criminal. Yet the most celebrated historians of this period were heathens. Of Eunapius and Zosimus there is no doubt, and the general opinion refuses to regard Procopius as a Christian.

At last, in the year 529, Justinian confiscated all the funds devoted to philosophic instructions at Athens, closed the schools, and seized the endowments of the academy of Plato, which had maintained an uninterrupted succession of teachers for nearly nine hundred years. The last teacher enjoyed an annual revenue of one thousand gold solidi, but it is probable that he wandered in a deserted grove, and lectured in an empty hall. Seven Athenian philosophers are celebrated for exiling themselves to Persia, where they were sure of escaping the persecutions of Justinian, and where they perhaps hoped to find disciples. But they met with no sympathy among the followers of Zoroaster, and they were soon happy to avail themselves of the favour of Chosroes, who obtained for them permission to return and spend their lives in peace in the Roman Empire. Toleration rendered their declining influence utterly insignificant, and the last heathen fancies of the philosophic schools disappeared from the conservative aristocracy, where they had found their last asylum.

CHAPTER IV

CONDITION OF THE GREEKS FROM THE DEATH OF JUSTINIAN TO THE RESTORATION OF ROMAN POWER IN THE EAST BY HERACLIUS.

A.D. 565-633

Sect. I.

The Reign of Justin II

The history of the Roman Empire assumes a new aspect during the period which elapsed between the deaths of Justinian and Heraclius. The mighty nation, which the union of the Macedonians and Greeks had formed in the greater part of the East, was rapidly declining, and in many provinces hastening to extinction. Even the Hellenic race in Europe, which had for many centuries displayed the appearance of a people closely united by feelings, language, and religion, was in many districts driven from its ancient seats by the emigration of a rude Sclavonian population. Hellenic civilization, and all the fruits of the policy of Alexander the Great, at last succumbed to Roman oppression. The people of Hellas directed their exclusive attention to their own local institutions. They expected no benefits from the imperial government; and the emperor and the administration of the empire could now give but little attention to any provincial business, not directly connected with the all-absorbing topic of the fiscal exigencies of the State.

The inhabitants of the various provinces of the Roman Empire were everywhere forming associations, independent of the general government, and striving to recur as rarely as possible to the central administration at Constantinople. National feelings daily exerted additional force in separating the subjects of the empire into communities, where language and religious opinions operated with more power on society than the political allegiance enforced by the emperor. This separation of the interests and feelings soon put an end to every prospect of regenerating the empire, and even presented momentary views of new political, religious, and national combinations, which seemed to threaten the immediate dissolution of the Eastern Empire. The history of the West offered the counterpart of the fate which threatened the East; and, according to all human calculations, Armenia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Hellas, were on the point of becoming independent states. But the inexorable principle of Roman centralization possessed an inherent energy of existence very different from the unsettled republicanism of Greece, or the personality of the Macedonian monarchies. The Roman Empire never relaxed its authority over its own subjects, nor did it ever cease to dispense to them an equal administration of justice, in every case in which its own fiscal demands were not directly concerned, and even then it invoked laws to authorize its acts of injustice. It never permitted its subjects to bear arms, unless those arms were received from the State, and directed by the emperor’s officers; and when the imperial forces

were defeated by the Avars and the Persians, its policy was unaltered. The emperors displayed the same spirit when the enemy was encamped before Constantinople as the senate had shown when Hannibal marched from the field of Cannae to the walls of Rome.

Events which no human sagacity could foresee, against which no political wisdom could contend, and which the philosopher can only explain by attributing them to the dispensation of that Providence who exhibits, in the history of the world, the education of the whole human species, at last put an end to the existence of the Roman domination in a large part of its dominions in the East. Yet the inhabitants of the countries freed from the Roman yoke, instead of finding a freer range for the improvement of their individual and national advantages, found that the religion of Mahomet, and the victories of his followers, strengthened the power of despotism and bigotry; and several of the nations which had been enslaved by the Macedonians, and oppressed by the Romans, were exterminated by the Saracens.

The Roman emperors of the East appear to have believed that the strict administration of justice in civil and criminal affairs superseded the necessity of carefully watching the ordinary proceedings of the administrative department, forgetting that the legal establishment could only take cognizance of the exceptional cases, and that the well-being of the people depended on the daily conduct of their civil governors. It soon became apparent that Justinian's reforms in the legislation of the empire had produced no improvement in the civil administration. That portion of the population of the capital, and of the empire, which arrogated to itself the title of Romans, turned the privileges conferred by their rank in the imperial service into a means of living at the expense of the people. The central administration lost some of its former control over the people; and Justin II showed some desire to make concessions tending to revive the feeling that civil order, and security of property, flowed, as a natural result, from the mere existence of the imperial government,—a feeling which had long contributed powerfully to support the throne of the emperors.

The want of a fixed order of succession in the Roman Empire was an evil severely felt, and the enactment of precise rules for the hereditary transmission of the imperial dignity would have been a wise and useful addition to the *lex regia* or constitution of the State. This constitution was supposed to have delegated the legislative power to the emperor; for the theory, that the Roman people was the legitimate source of all authority, still floated in public opinion. Justinian, however, was sufficiently versed both in the laws and constitutional forms of the empire, to dread any precise qualification of this vague and perhaps imaginary law; though the interests of the empire imperiously required that measures should be adopted to prevent the throne from becoming an object of civil war. A successor is apt to be a rival, and a regency in the Roman Empire would have revived the power of the senate, and might have converted the government into an oligarchical aristocracy. Justinian, as he was childless, naturally felt unwilling to circumscribe his own power by any positive law, lest he should create a claim which the authority of the senate and people of Constantinople might have found the means of enforcing, and thus a legal control over the arbitrary exercise of the imperial power would have been established. A doubtful succession was also an event viewed with satisfaction by most of the leading men of the senate, the palace, and the

army, as they might expect to advance their private fortunes, during the period of intrigue and uncertainty inseparable from such a contingency. The partisans of a fixed succession would only be found among the lawyers of the capital, the clergy, and the civil and financial administrators in the provinces; for the Roman citizens and nobility, forming a privileged class, were generally averse to the project, as tending to diminish their importance. The abolition of the ceremony attending the sanction of the emperor's election by the senate and the people, would have been viewed as an arbitrary change in the constitution, and as an attempt to rob the inhabitants of the Eastern Empire of the boast that they lived under a legal monarch, and not under a hereditary despot like the Persians,—a boast which they still uttered with pride.

The death of Justinian so long threatened the empire with civil war, that all parties were anxious to avert the catastrophe; and Justin, one of his nephews, who held the office of master of the palace, was peaceably installed as his uncle's successor. The energy of his personal character enabled him to turn to his advantage the traces of ancient forms that still survived in the Roman state; and the momentary political importance thus given to these forms, proves that the Roman government was even then very far from a pure despotism. The phrase, 'the senate and the Roman people', still exerted so much influence over public opinion, that Justin considered their formal election as constituting his legal title to the throne. The senate was instructed by his partisans to solicit him to accept the imperial dignity, though he had already secured both the troops and the treasury; and the people were assembled in the hippodrome, in order to enable the new emperor to deliver an oration, in which he assured them that their happiness, and not his own repose, should always be the chief object of his government. The character of Justin II was honourable, but it is said to have been capricious; he was, however, neither destitute of personal abilities nor energy. Disease, and temporary fits of insanity, compelled him at last to resign the direction of public business to others, and in this critical conjuncture his choice displayed both judgment and patriotism. He passed over his own brothers and his son-in-law, in order to select the man who appeared alone capable of re-establishing the fortunes of the Roman Empire by his talents. This man was Tiberius II.

The commencement of Justin's reign was marked by vigour, perhaps even by rashness. He considered the annual subsidies paid by Justinian to the Persians and the Avars in the light of a disgraceful tribute, and, as he refused to make any farther payments, he was involved in war with both these powerful enemies at the same time. Yet, so inconsistent was the Roman administration that the Lombards, by no means a powerful or numerous people, were allowed to conquer the greater part of Italy almost unopposed. As this conquest was the first military transaction that occurred during his reign, and as the Lombards occupy an important place in the history of European civilization, the loss of Italy has been usually selected as a convincing proof of the weakness and incapacity of Justin.

The country occupied by the Lombards on the Danube was exhausted by their oppressive rule; and they found great difficulty in maintaining their position, in consequence of the neighbourhood of the Avars, the growing strength of the Sclavonians, and the perpetual hostility of the Gepids. The diminished population and increasing poverty of the surrounding countries no longer supplied the means of

supporting a numerous body of warriors in that contempt for every useful occupation which was essential to the preservation of the national superiority of the Gothic race. The Sclavonic neighbours and subjects of the Gothic tribes were gradually becoming as well armed as their masters; and as many of those neighbours combined the pursuits of agriculture with their pastoral and predatory habits, they were slowly rising to a national equality. Pressed by these circumstances, Alboin, king of the Lombards, resolved to emigrate, and to effect a settlement in Italy, the richest and most populous country in his neighbourhood. To secure himself during the expedition, he proposed to the Avars to unite their forces and destroy the kingdom of the Gepids, agreeing to abandon all claims to the conquered country, and to remain satisfied with half the movable spoil.

This singular alliance was successful: the united forces of the Lombards and Avars overpowered the Gepids, and destroyed their kingdom in Pannonia, which had existed for one hundred and fifty years. The Lombards immediately commenced their emigration. The Heruls had already quitted this desolated country, and thus the last remains of the Gothic race, which had lingered on the confines of the Eastern Empire, abandoned their possessions to the Hunnic tribes, which they had long successfully opposed, and to the Sclavonians, whom they had for ages ruled.

The historians of this period, on the authority of Paul the Deacon, a Lombard chronicler, have asserted that Narses invited the Lombards into Italy in order to avenge an insulting message with which the empress Sophia had accompanied an order of her husband Justin for the recall of the old eunuch to Constantinople. The court was dissatisfied with the expense of Narses in the administration of Italy, and required that a larger sum should be annually remitted to the imperial treasury. The Italians, on the other hand, complained of the military severity and fiscal oppression of his government. The last acts of the life of Narses are, however, quite incompatible with treasonable designs; and probably the knowledge which the emperor Justin and his cabinet must have possessed of the impossibility of deriving any surplus revenue from the agricultural districts of Italy, offers the simplest explanation of the indifference manifested at Constantinople to the Lombard invasion. It would be apparently nearer the truth to affirm that the Lombards entered Italy with the tacit sanction of the empire, than that Narses acted as a traitor.

As soon as Narses received the order of recall, he proceeded to Naples, on his way to Constantinople; but the advance of the Lombards alarmed the Italians to such a degree, that they despatched a deputation to beg him to resume the government. The Bishop of Rome repaired to Naples, to persuade Narses of the sincere repentance of the provincials, who perceived the danger of losing a ruler of talent at such a crisis. No suspicion, therefore, could have then prevailed amongst the Italians of any communications between Narses and the Lombards, nor could they have suspected that an experienced courtier, a wise statesman, and an able general, would, in his extreme old age, allow revenge to get the better of his reason, else they would have trembled at his return to power, and dreaded his vengeance instead of confiding in his talents. And even in examining history at this distance of time, we ought to weigh the conduct and character of a long public life against a dramatic tale, even when it is repeated by a great historian. The story that the empress Sophia sent a distaff and spindle to the ablest soldier in the empire, and that the veteran should have declared in his passion that he

would spin her a thread which she should not easily unravel, seems a fable, which bears a character of fancy and of simplicity of ideas, marking its origin in a ruder state of society than that which reigned at the court of Justin II. A Gothic or Lombard origin of the fable is farther supported by the fact, that it must have produced no ordinary sensation among the Germanic nations, to see an eunuch invested with the highest commands in the army and the State, and the sensation could not fail to give rise to many idle tales. The story of Narses's treason may have arisen at the time of his death; but it is remarkable that no Greek author mentions it before the tenth century; and this fact countenances the inference that the Lombard conquest received at least a tacit approval on the part of the emperor. Narses really accepted the invitation of the Italians to return to Rome, where he commenced the necessary preparations for resisting the Lombards, but his death occurred before their arrival in Italy.

The historians of Justin's reign are full of complaints of the abuses which had infected the administration of justice, yet the facts which they record tend distinctly to exculpate the emperor from any fault, and prove incontestably that the corruption had its seat in the vices of the whole system of the civil government of the empire. The most remarkable anecdote selected to illustrate the corruption of the judicial department, indicates that the real cause of the disorder lay in the increasing power of the official aristocracy connected with the civil administration. A man of rank, on being cited before the prefect of the city for an act of injustice, ridiculed the summons, and excused himself from appearing to answer it, as he was engaged to attend an entertainment given by the emperor. In consideration of this circumstance, the prefect did not venture to arrest him; but he proceeded immediately to the palace, entered the state apartments, and addressing Justin, declared that, as a judge, he was ready to execute every law for the strict administration of justice, but since the emperor honoured criminals, by admitting them to the imperial table, where his authority was of no avail, he begged to be allowed to resign his office. Justin, without hesitation, asserted that he would never defend any act of injustice, and that even should he himself be the person accused, he would submit to be punished. The prefect, thus authorized, seized the accused, and carried him to his court for trial. The emperor applauded the conduct of his judge; but this act of energy is said to have so stupefied the inhabitants of Constantinople, that, for thirty days, no accusation was brought before the prefect. This effect of the impartial administration of justice on the people seems strange, if the historians of the period are correct in their complaints of the general injustice. The anecdote is, however, valuable, as it reveals the real cause of the duration of the Eastern Empire, and shows that the crumbling political edifice was sustained by the judicial administration. Justin also relieved his subjects from the burden which the arrears of the public taxes were always accumulating, without enriching the treasury.

If Justin engaged rashly in a quarrel with Persia, he omitted no means of strengthening himself during the contest. He formed alliances with the Turks of central Asia, and with the Ethiopians who occupied a part of Arabia; but, in spite of his allies, the arms of the empire were unsuccessful in the East. A long series of predatory excursions were carried on by the Romans and the Persians, and many provinces of both empires were reduced to a state of desolation by this barbarous species of warfare. Chosroes succeeded in capturing Dara, the bulwark of Mesopotamia, and in devastating

Syria in the most terrible manner; half a million of the inhabitants of this flourishing province were carried away as slaves into Persia. In the meantime the Avars consolidated their empire on the Danube, by compelling the Huns, Bulgarians, Sclavonians, and the remains of the Goths, to submit to their authority. Justin vainly attempted to arrest their career, by encouraging the Franks of Austrasia to attack them. The Avars continued their war with the empire, and defeated the Roman army under Tiberius the future emperor.

The misfortunes which assailed the empire on every side, and the increasing difficulties of the internal administration, demanded exertions, of which the health of Justin rendered him incapable. Tiberius seemed the only man competent to guide the vessel of the State through the storm, and Justin had the magnanimity to name him his successor, with the dignity of Caesar, and the sense to commit to him the entire control over the public administration. The conduct of the Caesar soon changed the fortune of war in the East, though the European provinces were still abandoned to the ravages of the Sclavonians. Chosroes was defeated in Melitene, though he commanded his army in person, and the Romans, pursuing their success, penetrated into Babylonia, and plundered all the provinces of Persia to the very shores of the Caspian Sea.

It is surprising that we find no mention of the Greek people, nor of Greece itself, in the memorials of the reign of Justin. Justinian plundered Greece of as large a portion of her revenues as he could; Justin and his successors utterly neglected her defence against the Sclavonian incursions, yet it appears that the Greeks contrived still to retain so much of their ancient spirit of independence and their exclusive nationality, as to awaken a feeling of jealousy amongst that more aristocratic portion of their nation which assumed the Roman name. That the imperial government overlooked no trace of nationality among any section of its subjects, is evident from a law which Justin passed to enforce the conversion of the Samaritans to Christianity, and which apparently was successful in exterminating that people, as, though they previously occupied almost as important a place in the history of the Eastern Empire as the Jews, they cease to be mentioned from the time of Justin's law.

Sect. II.

Disorganization of all Political and National Influence during the Reigns of Tiberius II and Maurice

A vague feeling of terror pervaded society throughout the Roman Empire after the death of Justinian. The cement of the imperial edifice was crumbling into sand and the whole fabric threatened to fall in shapeless fragments. Nor was the alarm unwarranted,

though it arose from popular instinct lather than political foresight. There is perhaps no period of history in which society was so universally in a state of demoralization, nor in which all the nations known to the Greeks and Romans were so utterly destitute of energy and virtue, as during the period which elapsed from the death of Justinian to the appearance of Mahomet. Theophylactus Simocatta, the contemporary historian of the reign of Maurice, mentions a curious proof of the general conviction that a great revolution was impending in the Roman Empire. He recounts that an angel appeared to the emperor Tiberius II in a dream, and announced to him that on account of his virtues the days of anarchy should not commence during his reign.

The reigns of Tiberius and Maurice present the remarkable spectacle of two princes, of no ordinary talents, devoting all their energies to improve the condition of their country, without being able to arrest its decline, though that decline evidently proceeded from internal causes. Great evils arose in the Roman Empire from the discord existing between the government and almost every class of its subjects. A powerful army still kept the field, the administration was perfectly arranged, the finances were not in a state of disorder, and every exertion was made to enforce the strictest administration of justice; yet, with so many elements of good government, the government was bad, unpopular, and oppressive. No feeling of patriotism existed in any class; no bond of union united the monarch and his subjects; and no ties of common interest rendered their public conduct amenable to the same laws. No fundamental institution of a national character enforced the duties of a citizen by the bonds of morality and religion; and thus the emperors could only apply administrative reforms as a cure for an universal political palsy. Great hopes of improvement were, however, entertained when Tiberius mounted the throne; for his prudence, justice, and talents were the theme of general admiration. He opposed the enemies of the empire with vigour, but as he saw that the internal ills of the State were infinitely more dangerous than the Persians and the Avars, he made peace the great object of his exertions, in order that he might devote his exclusive attention to the reform of the civil and military administration. But he solicited peace from Hormisdas, the son of Chosroes, in vain. When he found all reasonable terms of accommodation rejected by the Persian, he attempted, by a desperate effort, to terminate the war. The whole disposable military force of the empire was collected in Asia Minor, and an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men was, by this means, assembled. The Avars were allowed to seize Sirmium, and the emperor consented to conclude with them an inglorious and disadvantageous peace, so important did it appear to him to secure success in the struggle with Persia. The war commenced with some advantage, but the death of Tiberius interrupted all his plans. He died after a short reign of four years, with the reputation of being the best sovereign who had ever ruled the Eastern Empire, and he bequeathed to his son-in-law Maurice the difficult task of carrying into execution his extensive schemes of reform.

Maurice was personally acquainted with every branch of the public administration —he possessed all the qualities of an excellent minister—he was a humane and an honourable man,—but he wanted the great sagacity necessary to rule the Roman Empire in the difficult times in which he reigned. His private character merited all the eulogies of the Greek historians, for he was a good man and a true Christian. When the people of

Constantinople and their bigoted patriarch determined to burn an unfortunate individual as a magician, he made every effort, though in vain, to save the persecuted man. He gave a feeling proof of the sincerity of his faith after his dethronement; for when the child of another was offered to the executioners instead of his own, he himself revealed the error, lest an innocent person should perish by his act. He was orthodox in his religion, and economical in his expenditure, virtues which his subjects were well qualified to appreciate, and much inclined to admire. The one ought to have endeared him to the people, and the other to the clergy; but unfortunately, his want of success in war was connected with his parsimony, and his humanity was regarded as less orthodox than Christian. The impression of his virtues was thus neutralized, and he could never secure to his government the great political advantages which he might have derived from popularity. As soon as his reign proved unfortunate he was called a miser and a Marcionite. (The Marcionites held that an intermediate deity of a mixed nature, neither perfectly good nor perfectly evil, is the creator of the world).

By supporting the Bishop of Constantinople in his assumption of the title of oecumenical patriarch, Maurice excited the violent animosity of Pope Gregory I; and the great reputation of that sagacious pontiff has induced Western historians to examine all the actions of the Eastern emperor through a veil of ecclesiastical prejudice. Gregory, in his letters, accuses Maurice of supporting the venality of the public administration, and even of selling the high office of exarch. These accusations are doubtless correct enough when applied to the system of the Byzantine court; but no prince seems to have felt more deeply than Maurice the evil effects of that system, or made sincerer efforts to reform it. That personal avarice was not the cause of the financial errors of his administration, is attested by numerous instances of his liberality recorded in history, and by the fact that even during his turbulent reign he was intent on reducing the public burdens of his subjects, and actually succeeded in his plans to a considerable extent. The flatteries heaped by Gregory the Great on the worthless tyrant Phocas, show clearly enough that policy, not justice, regulated the measure of the pope's praise and censure.

Maurice had been selected by Tiberius as his confidential agent in the reform of the army; and much of the new emperor's misfortune originated from attempting to carry into execution plans which required the calm judgment and the elevation of character of their author, in order to create throughout the empire the feeling that their adoption was necessary for the salvation of the Roman power. The enormous expense of the army, and the independent existence which it maintained, now compromised the safety of the government, as much as it had done before the reforms of Constantine. Tiberius began cautiously to lay the foundation of a new system, by adding to his household troops a corps of fifteen thousand heathen slaves, whom he purchased and disciplined. He placed this little army under the immediate command of Maurice, who had already displayed an attachment to military reforms, by attempting to restore the ancient mode of encamping Roman armies. This revival of the old Roman castrametation caused great dissatisfaction in the army, and there seems every reason to ascribe the unsuccessful operations of Maurice on the Iberian frontier, in the year 580, to the discontent of the soldiers. That he was a military pedant, may be inferred from the fact that he found time to write a work on military tactics, without succeeding in acquiring a great military reputation; and it is certain that he was suspected by the

soldiers of being an enemy to the privileges and pretensions of the army, and that by them all his actions were scanned with a jealous eye. During the Persian war, he rashly attempted to diminish the pay and rations of the troops, and this ill-timed measure caused a sedition, which was suppressed with the greatest difficulty, but which left feelings of ill-will in the minds of the emperor and the army, and laid the foundation of the ruin of both.

Fortune, however, proved eminently favourable to Maurice in his contest with Persia, and he obtained that peace which neither the prudence nor the military exertions of Tiberius had succeeded in concluding. A civil war rendered Chosroes II, the son of Hormisdas, an exile, and compelled him to solicit the protection of the Romans. (Chosroes II succeeded Hormisdas III in A.D. 590, and reigned 37 years. Chosroes II was dethroned by his son Siroes in A.D. 628). Maurice received Chosroes II with humanity, and, acting according to the dictates of a just and generous policy, aided him to recover his paternal throne. When reinstated on the throne of Persia, Chosroes concluded a peace with the Roman Empire, which promised to prove lasting; for Maurice wisely sought to secure its stability, by demanding no concession injurious to the honour or political interests of Persia. Dara and Nisibis were restored to the Romans, and a strong and defensible frontier formed by the cession, on the part of Chosroes, of a portion of Pers-Armenia.

Sect. III.

Maurice causes a revolution by attempting to re-establish the ancient authority of the Imperial Administration

As soon as Maurice had established tranquillity in the Asiatic provinces, he directed his whole force against the Avars, in order to restrain the ravages which they were annually committing in the country between the Danube and the coast of the Mediterranean. The Avar kingdom now embraced all that portion of Europe which extends from the Carnian Alps to the Black Sea; and the Huns, Sclavonians, and Bulgarians, who had previously lived under independent governments, were either united with their conquerors, or submitted, if not as subjects, at least as vassals, to the Avar monarch. After the conclusion of peace with Persia, the sovereign of the Avars was the only dangerous enemy to the Roman power; but the Avars, in spite of their rapid and extensive conquests, were unable to assemble an army capable of encountering the regular forces of the empire in the open field. Maurice, confident in the superiority of Roman discipline, resolved to conduct a campaign against the barbarians in person; and there appeared no doubt of its proving successful. His conduct, on this important occasion, is marked by singular vacillation of purpose. He quitted Constantinople apparently with the firm determination to place himself at the head of

the army; yet, when a deputation from the court and senate followed him, and entreated that he would take care of his sacred person, he made this solicitation a pretext for an immediate return to his capital. His courage was very naturally called in question, and both his friends and enemies attributed his alarm to sinister omens. It seems, however, not improbable, that his firmness was really shaken by more alarming proofs of his unpopularity, and by the conviction that he would have to encounter far greater difficulties than he had previously expected, in enforcing his projects of reform among the troops. As very often happens to weak and obstinate men, he became distrustful of the success of his measures after he had committed himself to attempt their execution; and he shrank from attempting to perform the task in person, though he must have doubted whether an undertaking requiring so rare a combination of military skill and political sagacity could ever succeed, unless conducted under the eye, and supported by the personal influence and prompt authority, of the emperor. His conduct excited the contempt of the soldiers; and whether he trembled at omens, or shrank from responsibility, he was laughed at in the army for his timidity: so that even had nothing occurred to awaken the suspicion or rouse the hatred of the troops employed against the Avars, their scorn for their sovereign would have brought them to the very verge of rebellion.

Though the Roman army gained several battles, and displayed considerable skill, and much of the ancient military superiority in the campaigns against the Avars, still the inhabitants of Moesia, Illyria, Dardania, Thrace, Macedonia, and even Greece, were exposed to annual incursions of hostile hordes, who crossed the Danube to plunder the cultivators of the soil, so that, at last, whole provinces remained almost entirely depopulated. The imperial armies were generally ill commanded, for the generals were usually selected, either from among the relations of the emperor, or from among the court aristocracy. The spirit of opposition which had arisen between the camp and the court, made it unsafe to intrust the chief command of large bodies of troops to soldiers of fortune, and the most experienced of the Roman officers, who had been bred to the profession of arms, were only employed in secondary posts. (The court generals of the time were Maurice himself, his brother Peter, his son-in-law Philippicus, Heraclius, the father of the emperor of that name, Comentiolus, and probably Priscus, who appears to be the same person as Crispus. The professional soldiers who attained high commands were Droctulf, a Sueve, Apsich, a Hun, and Ilifred, whose name proves his Gothic or Germanic origin)

Priscus, one of the ablest and most influential of the Roman generals, carried on the war with some success, and invaded the country of the Avars and Sclavonians; but his successes appear to have excited the jealousy of the emperor, who, fearing his army more than the forces of his enemies, removed Priscus from the command, in order to intrust it to his own brother. The first duty of the new general was to remodel the organization of the army, to prepare for the reception of the emperor's ulterior measures of reform. The commencement of a campaign was most unwisely selected as the time for carrying this plan into execution, and a sedition among the soldiery was the consequence. The troops being now engaged in continual disputes with the emperor and the civil administration, selected from among their officers the leaders whom they considered most attached to their own views, and these leaders began to negotiate with

the government, and consequently all discipline was destroyed. The mutinous army was soon defeated by the Avars, and Maurice was constrained to conclude a treaty of peace. The provisions of this treaty were the immediate cause of the ruin of Maurice. The Avars who had taken prisoners about twelve thousand of the Roman soldiers, offered to ransom their captives for twelve thousand pieces of gold. Maurice refused to pay this sum, and it was said, that they reduced their demand, and asked only four pieces of silver for each captive; but the emperor, though he consented to add twenty thousand pieces of gold to the former subsidy, refused to pay anything in order to ransom the Roman prisoners.

By this treaty, the Danube was declared the frontier of the empire, and the Roman officers were allowed to cross the river, in order to punish any ravages which the Sclavonians might commit within the Roman territory — a fact which seems to indicate the declining power of the Avar monarch, and the virtual independence of the Sclavonic tribes, to whom this provision applied. It may be inferred also from these terms, that Maurice could easily have delivered the captive Roman soldiers had he wished to do so; and it is natural to conclude that he left them in captivity to punish them for their mutinous behaviour, to which he attributed both their captivity and the misfortunes of the empire. It was commonly reported, however, at the time, that the emperor's avarice induced him to refuse to ransom the soldiers, though it is impossible to suppose that Maurice would have committed an act of inhumanity for the paltry saving which thereby accrued to the imperial treasury. The Avars, with singular, and probably unexpected barbarity, put all their prisoners to death. Maurice certainly never contemplated the possibility of their acting with such cruelty, or he would have felt all the impolicy of his conduct, even if it be supposed that passion had, for a time, extinguished the usual humanity of his disposition. The murder of these soldiers was universally ascribed to the avarice of the emperor; and the aversion which the army had long entertained to his government was changed into a deep-rooted hatred of his person; while the people participated in the feeling from a natural dislike to an economical and unsuccessful reformer.

The peace with the Avars was of short duration. Priscus was again intrusted with the command of the army, and again restored the honour of the Roman arms. He carried hostilities beyond the Danube; and affairs were proceeding prosperously, when Maurice, with that perseverance in an unpopular course which weak princes generally consider a proof of strength of character, renewed his attempts to enforce his schemes for restoring the severest discipline. His brother was despatched to the army as commander-in-chief, with orders to place the troops in winter quarters in the enemy's country, and compel them to forage for their subsistence. A sedition was the consequence: and the soldiers, already supplied with leaders, broke out into rebellion, and raised Phocas, one of the officers who had risen to distinction in the previous seditions, to the chief command. Phocas led the army directly to Constantinople, where, having found a powerful party dissatisfied with Maurice, he lost no time in mounting the throne. The injudicious system of reform pursued by Maurice had rendered him not only hateful to the army, whose abuses he endeavoured to eradicate, but also unpopular among the people, whose burdens he wished to alleviate. Yet the emperor's confidence in the rectitude of his intentions supported him in the most desperate circumstances; and

when abandoned by all his subjects, and convinced that the termination both of his reign and his life was approaching, he showed no signs of cowardice. As his plan of reform had been directed to the increase of his own power as the centre of the whole administration, and as he had shown too clearly that his increased authority was to be directed against more than one section of the government agents, he lost all influence from the moment he lost his power; and when he found it necessary to abandon Constantinople, he was deserted by every follower. He was soon captured by the agents of Phocas, who ordered him to be immediately executed with his whole family. The conduct of Maurice at his death proves that his private virtues could not be too highly eulogized. He died with fortitude and resignation, after witnessing the execution of his children; and when an attempt, which has been already alluded to, was made to substitute the infant of a nurse instead of his youngest child, he himself revealed the deceit, in order to prevent the death of an innocent person.

The sedition which put an end to the reign of Maurice, though it originated in the camp, became, as the army advanced towards the capital, a popular as well as a military movement. Many causes had long threatened a conflict between official power and popular feeling, for the people hated the administration, and the discordant elements of society in the East had latterly been gaining strength. The central government had found great difficulty in repressing religious disputes and ecclesiastical party feuds. The factions of the amphitheatre, and the national hatred of various classes in the empire, frequently broke out in acts of bloodshed. Monks, charioteers, and usurers, could all raise themselves above the law; and the interests of particular bodies of men proved often more powerful to produce disorder than the provincial government to enforce tranquillity. The administrative institutions were everywhere too weak to replace the declining strength of the executive government. A persuasion arose that it was absolutely necessary to infuse new strength into the administration in order to escape from anarchy: but the power of a rapacious aristocracy, and the corruption of an idle populace in the capital, fed by the State, presented insuperable obstacles to the tranquil adoption of any reasonable plan of political reformation. The provincials were too poor and ignorant to originate any scheme of amelioration, and it was dangerous even for an emperor to attempt the task, as no national institutions enabled the sovereign to unite any powerful body of his subjects in a systematic opposition to the venality of the aristocracy, the corruption of the capital, and the license of the army. Those national feelings which began to acquire force in some provinces, and in a few municipalities where the attacks of Justinian had proved ineffectual, tended more to awaken a longing for independence than a wish for reform or a desire to support the emperor in any attempt to improve the administration.

The arbitrary and illegal conduct of the imperial officers, while it rendered sedition venial, very often insured its partial success and complete impunity. The measures of reform proposed by Maurice appear to have been directed, like the reforms of most absolute monarchs, rather to increase his own authority than to establish a system of administration on a legal basis, more powerful than the despotic will of the emperor himself. To confine the absolute power of the emperor to the executive administration, to make the law supreme, and to vest the legislative authority in some responsible body or senate, were not projects suitable to the age of Maurice, and

perhaps hardly possible in the state of society. Maurice resolved that his first step in the career of improvement should be to render the army, long a licentious and turbulent check on the imperial power, a well-disciplined and efficient instrument of his will; and he hoped in this manner to repress the tyranny of the official aristocracy, restrain the license of the military chiefs, prevent the sects of Nestorians and Eutychians from forming separate states, and render the authority of the central government supreme in all the distant provinces and isolated cities of the empire. In his struggle to obtain this result he was compelled to make use of the existing administration; and, consequently, he appears in the history of the empire as the supporter and protector of a detested aristocracy, equally unpopular with the army and the people; while his ulterior plans for the improvement of the civil condition of his subjects were never fully made known, and perhaps never clearly framed even by himself, though it is evident that many of them ought to have preceded his military changes. This view of the political position of Maurice, as it could not escape the observation of his contemporaries, is alluded to in the quaint expression of Evagrius, that Maurice expelled from his mind the democracy of the passions, and established the aristocracy of reason, though the ecclesiastical historian, a cautious courtier, either could not or would not express himself with a more precise application, or in a clearer manner.

Sect, IV

Phocas was the representative of a Revolution, not of a National Party

Though Phocas ascended the throne as leader of the rebellious army, he was universally regarded as the representative of the popular hostility to the existing order of administration, to the ruling Aristocracy, and to the government party in the church. A great portion of the Roman world expected improvement as a consequence of any change, but the change produced by the election of Phocas was followed by a series of misfortunes almost unparalleled in the history of revolutions. The ties which connected the social and political institutions of the Eastern Empire were severed, and circumstances which may have appeared to contemporaries only as the prelude of a passing storm tending to purify the moral horizon, soon created a whirlwind which tore up the very roots of the Roman power, and prepared the minds of men to receive new Impressions.

The government of Phocas convinced the majority of his subjects that the rebellion of a licentious army, and the sedition of a pampered populace, were not the proper instruments for ameliorating the Condition of the empire. In spite of the hopes of his followers, of the eulogium on the column which still exists in the Roman forum and of the praises of Pope Gregory the Great, it was quickly discovered that Phocas was a worse sovereign than his predecessor. Even as a soldier he was inferior to Maurice, and

the glory of the Roman arms was stained by his cowardice or incapacity. Chosroes, the king of Persia, moved, as he asserted, by gratitude, and the respect due to the memory of his benefactor Maurice, declared war against the murderer. A war commenced between the Persian and Roman empires, which proved the last and bloodiest of their numerous struggles; and its violence and strange vicissitudes contributed in a great degree to the dissolution of both these ancient monarchies. The empire of the Sassanides, after bringing the Roman Empire to the verge of ruin, received a mortal wound from Heraclius and was soon after destroyed by the followers of Mahomet. The Roman empire escaped destruction, after witnessing Persian armies encamped on the Bosphorus and Arabian armies besieging Constantinople, but it lost many of its richest provinces, and both its institutions and political character underwent a change. It is customary to call the Roman Empire, after this modification in its external and internal form was completed, the Byzantine Empire. The victories of Chosroes compelled Phocas to conclude an immediate peace with the Avars, in order to secure himself from being attacked in Constantinople. The treaty is of great importance in the history of the Greek population in Europe, but, unfortunately, we are ignorant of its tenor and can only trace it in its effects at a later period. The whole of the agricultural districts of the empire in Europe were virtually abandoned to the ravages of the northern nations, and, from the Danube to the Peloponnesus, the Sclavonian tribes ravaged the country with impunity, or settled in the depopulated provinces. Phocas availed himself of the treaty to transport into Asia the whole military force which he could collect, but the Roman armies, having lost their discipline, were everywhere defeated. Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Phoenicia, Cappadocia, Galatia, and Paphlagonia, were laid waste; and nothing appears to have saved the Roman Empire from complete conquest by the Persians, but the wars carried on at the time by Chosroes with the Armenians and the Turks, which prevented his concentrating his whole force against Constantinople. The tyranny and incapacity of Phocas rapidly increased the disorders in the civil and military administration; seditions broke out in the army, and rebellions in the provinces. The emperor, either because he partook of the bigotry of his age, or because he desired to secure the support of the clergy and the applause of the populace, determined to prove his orthodoxy by ordering all the Jews in the empire to be baptized. The Jews, who formed a wealthy and powerful class in many of the cities of the East, resisted this act of oppression, and caused bloody seditions which contributed much to the progress of the Persian arms.

Various districts and provinces in the distant parts of the empire, observing the confusion which reigned in the central administration, and the increasing weakness of the imperial power, availed themselves of the opportunity to extend the authority of their municipal institutions. The dawn of the temporal power of the Popes, and of the liberty of the Italian cities, may be traced to this period, though still hardly perceptible. Pope Gregory the Great only cavilled at the conduct of Maurice, who allowed the Bishop of Constantinople to assume the title of oecumenical patriarch, and he eulogized the virtues of Phocas, who compelled the patriarch to lay aside the irritating epithet. Phocas at last exhausted the patience even of the timid aristocracy of Constantinople, and all classes directed their attention to find a successor to the tyrant. Heraclius, the exarch of Africa, had long governed that province, in which his family possessed great influence, almost as an independent sovereign. He had distinguished himself in the

command of a Roman army during the Persian wars. To him the leading men at Constantinople addressed their complaints, inviting him to deliver the empire from ruin, and dethrone the reigning tyrant.

The exarch of Africa soon collected a considerable army and a numerous fleet. The command of this expedition was given to his son Heraclius; and as the possession of Egypt, which supplied Constantinople with provisions for its idle populace, was necessary to secure tranquillity after conquest, Nicetas, the nephew of the exarch, was sent with an army to support his cousin, and occupy both Egypt and Syria. Heraclius proceeded directly to Constantinople, and the fate of Phocas was decided in a single naval engagement, fought within sight of his palace. The disorder which reigned in every branch of the administration, in consequence of the folly and incapacity of the ignorant soldier who ruled the empire, was so great, that no measures had been adopted for offering a vigorous resistance to the African expedition. Phocas was taken prisoner, stripped of the imperial robes, covered with a black cloak, and carried on board the ship of Heraclius with his hands tied behind his back. The young conqueror indignantly addressed him: “Wretch! in what manner have you governed the empire?” The dethroned tyrant, roused by the tone which seemed to proclaim that his successor would prove as cruel as he had been himself, and perhaps feeling the difficulties of the task to be insurmountable, answered with a sneer, “You will govern it better!” Heraclius lost his temper at the advantage which his predecessor had gained in this verbal contest; and showed that it was very questionable whether he himself would prove either a wiser sovereign or a better man than Phocas, by striking the dethroned emperor and ordering his hands and feet to be cut off on the deck of the vessel before he was decapitated. His head and mutilated members were then sent on shore to be dragged through the streets by the populace of Constantinople. All the leading partisans of Phocas were executed, as if to afford evidence that the cruelty of that tyrant had been as much a national as a personal vice. Since his death, he has been fortunate enough to find defenders, who consider that his alliance with Pope Gregory, and his leaning towards the Latin party in the church, are signs of virtue, and proofs of a capacity for government.

Sect. V.

The Empire under Heraclius

The young Heraclius became Emperor of the East, and his father continued to rule Africa, which the family appear to have regarded as a hereditary domain. For several years the government of the new emperor was quite as unsuccessful as that of his predecessor, though it was more popular and less tyrannical. There are reasons, however, for believing that this period of apparent misgovernment and general misfortune was not one of complete neglect. Though defeats and disgraces followed one

another with rapidity, the causes of these disasters had grown up during the preceding reigns; and Heraclius was compelled to labour silently in clearing away many petty abuses, and in forming a new corps of civil and military officers, before he could venture on any important act. His chief attention was of necessity devoted to prepare for the great struggle of restoring the Roman empire to some portion of its ancient strength and power; and he had enough of the Roman spirit to resolve, that, if he could not succeed, he would risk his own life and fortune in the attempt, and perish amidst the ruins of civilized society. History has preserved few records of the measures adopted by Heraclius during the early years of his reign; but their effect in restoring the strength of the empire, and in reviving the energy of the imperial administration, is testified by the great changes which mark the subsequent period.

The reign of Heraclius is one of the most remarkable epochs both in the history of the empire and in the annals of mankind. It warded off the almost inevitable destruction of the Roman government; it laid the foundation of that policy which prolonged the existence of the imperial power at Constantinople under a new modification, as the Byzantine monarchy; and it was contemporary with the commencement of the great moral change in the condition of the people which transformed the language and manners of the ancient world into those of modem nations. The Eastern Empire was indebted to the talents of Heraclius for its escape from those ages of barbarism which, for many centuries, prevailed in all Western Europe. No period of society could offer a field for instructive study more likely to present practical results to the highly-civilized political communities of modern Europe; yet there is no time of which the existing memorials of the constitution and frame of society are so imperfect and unsatisfactory. A few important historical facts and single events can alone be gleaned, from which an outline of the administration of Heraclius may be drawn, and an attempt made to describe the situation of his Greek subjects.

The loss of many extensive provinces, and the destruction of numerous large armies since the death of Justinian, had given rise to a persuasion that the end of the Roman Empire was approaching; and the events of the earlier part of the reign of Heraclius were not calculated to remove this impression. Fanaticism and avidity were the prominent social features of the time. The civil government became more oppressive in the capital as the revenues of the provinces conquered by the Persians were lost. The military power of the empire declined to such a degree, from the poverty of the imperial government, and the aversion of the people to military service, that the Roman armies were nowhere able to keep the field. Heraclius found the treasury empty, the civil administration demoralized, the agricultural classes ruined, the army disorganized, the soldiers deserting their standards to become monks, and the richest provinces occupied by his enemies. A review of the position of the empire at his accession attests the extraordinary talents of the man who could emerge from the accumulated disadvantages of this situation, and achieve a career of glory and conquest almost unrivalled. It proves also the wonderful perfection of the system of administration which admitted of reconstructing the fabric of the civil government, when the very organization of civil society had been completely shattered. The ancient supremacy of the Roman empire could not be restored by human genius; the progress of mankind down the stream of time had rendered a return to the past condition of the world impracticable; but yet the

speed of the vessel of the State in descending the torrent was moderated, and it was saved from being dashed to pieces on the rocks. Heraclius delivered the empire and the imperial city of Constantinople from almost certain destruction by the Persians and the Avars; and though his fortune sank before the first fury of Mahomet's enthusiastic votaries, his sagacious administration prepared those powerful means of resistance which enabled the Greeks to check the Saracen armies almost at the threshold of their dominions; and the caliphs, while extending their successful conquests to the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic, were for centuries compelled to wage a doubtful war on the northern frontiers of Syria.

It was perhaps a misfortune for mankind that Heraclius was by birth a Roman rather than a Greek, as his views were from that accident directed to the maintenance of the imperial dominion, without any reference to the national organization of his people. His civilization, like that of the ruling class in the Eastern Empire, was too far removed from the state of ignorance into which the mass of the population had fallen, for the one to be influenced by the feelings of the other, or for both to act together with the energy conferred by unity of purpose. Heraclius, being by birth and family connections an African noble, regarded himself as of pure Roman blood, superior to all national prejudices, and bound by duty and policy to repress the domineering spirit of the Greek aristocracy in the State, and of the Greek hierarchy in the Church. Language and manners began to give to national feelings almost as much power in forming men into distinct societies as political arrangements. The influence of the clergy followed the divisions established by language, rather than the political organization adopted by the government: and as the clergy formed the most popular and the ablest portion of society, the church exerted more influence over the minds of the people than the civil administration and the imperial power, even though the emperor was the acknowledged sovereign and master of the patriarchs and the pope. It is necessary to observe here, that the established church of the empire had ceased to be the universal Christian church. The Greeks had rendered themselves the depositaries of its power and influence; they had already corrupted Christianity into the Greek Church; and other nations were rapidly forming separate ecclesiastical societies to supply their own spiritual wants. The Armenians, Syrians, and Egyptians, were induced by national aversion to the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Greeks, as well as by spiritual preference of the doctrines of Nestorius and Eutyches, to oppose the established church. At the time Heraclius ascended the throne, these national and religious feelings already exercised their power of modifying the operations of the Roman government, and of enabling mankind to advance one step towards the establishment of individual liberty and intellectual independence. Circumstances, which will be subsequently noticed, prevented society from making any progress in this career of improvement, and effectually arrested its advance for many centuries. In western Europe, this struggle never entirely lost its important characteristic of a moral contest for the enjoyment of personal rights and the exercise of individual opinion; and as no central government succeeded in maintaining itself permanently independent of all national feelings, a check on the formation of absolute authority always existed, both in the Church and State. Heraclius, in his desire to restore the power of the empire, strove to destroy these sentiments of religious liberty. He persecuted all who opposed his political power in ecclesiastical matters; he drove the Nestorians from the great church of Edessa, and gave it to the orthodox. He

banished the Jews from Jerusalem, and forbade them to approach within three thousand paces of the Holy City. His plans of coercion would evidently have failed as completely with the Nestorians, Eutychians, and Jacobites, as they did with the Jews; but the contest with Mohammedanism closed the struggle, and concentrated the whole strength of the unconquered population of the empire in support of the Greek Church and Constantinopolitan government.

In order fully to comprehend the lamentable state of weakness to which the empire was reduced, it is necessary to take a cursory view of the condition of the different provinces. The continual ravages of the barbarians who occupied the country beyond the Danube had extended as far as the southern shores of the Peloponnesus. The agricultural population was almost exterminated, except where it was protected by the immediate vicinity of fortified towns, or secured by the fastnesses of the mountains. The inhabitants of all the countries between the Archipelago and the Adriatic had been greatly diminished, and fertile provinces remained everywhere desolate, ready to receive new occupants. As great part of these countries yielded very little revenue to the government, they were considered by the court of Constantinople as of hardly any value, except in so far as they covered the capital from hostile attacks, or commanded the commercial routes to the west of Europe. At this time the Indian and Chinese trade had in part been forced round the north of the Caspian Sea, in consequence of the Persian conquests in Syria and Egypt, and the disturbed state of the country immediately to the east of Persia. The rich produce transported by the caravans, which reached the northern shores of the Black Sea, was then transported to Constantinople, and from thence distributed through western Europe. Under these circumstances, Thessalonica and Dyrrhachium became points of great consequence to the empire, and were successfully defended by the emperor amidst all his calamities. These two cities commanded the extremities of the usual road between Constantinople and Ravenna, and connected the towns on the Archipelago with the Adriatic and with Rome. The open country was abandoned to the Avars and Sclavonians, who were allowed to effect permanent settlements even to the south of the Via Egnatia; but none of these settlements were suffered to interfere with the lines of communication, without which the imperial influence in Italy would have been soon annihilated, and the trade of the West lost to the Greeks. The ambition of the barbarians prompted them to make daring attempts to share the wealth of the Eastern Empire, and they tried to establish a system of maritime depredations in the Archipelago; but Heraclius was able to frustrate their schemes, though it is probable that he owed his success more to the exertions of the mercantile population of the Greek cities, than to the exploits of his own troops.

When disorder reigned in the territory nearest to the seat of government, it cannot be supposed that the administration of the distant provinces was conducted with greater prudence or success. The Gothic kingdom of Spain was, at this time, ruled by Sisebut, an able and enlightened monarch, whose policy was directed to gain over the Roman provincials by peaceful measures, and whose arms were employed to conquer the territories of the empire in the Peninsula. He soon reduced the imperial possessions to a small extent of coast on the ocean, embracing the modern province of Algarve, and a few towns on the shores of the Mediterranean. He likewise interrupted the communications between the Roman troops and Spain and Africa, by building a fleet,

and conquering Tangiers and the neighbouring country. Heraclius concluded a treaty with Sisebut, in the year 614, and the Romans were thus enabled to retain their Spanish territories until the reign of Suintilla, who, while Heraclius was engaged in his Persian campaigns, finally expelled the Romans (or the Greeks, as they were generally termed in the West) from the Spanish continent. Seventy-nine years had elapsed since the Roman authority had been re-established in the south of Spain by the conquests of Justinian. Even under the disadvantages to which the imperial power was exposed, the commercial superiority of the Greeks still enabled them to retain possession of the Balearic Islands until a later period.

National distinctions and religious interests tended to divide the population, and to balance political power, much more in Italy than in the other countries of Europe. The influence of the church in protecting the people, the weakness of the Lombard sovereigns, from the small numerical strength of the Lombard population, and the oppressive fiscal government of the Roman exarchs, gave the Italians the means of creating a national existence, amidst the conflicts of their masters. Yet so imperfect was the unity of interests, or so great were the difficulties of communication between the people of various parts of Italy, that the imperial authority not only defended its own dominions with success against foreign enemies, but also repressed with ease the ambitious or patriotic attempts of the popes to acquire political power, and punished equally the seditions of the people and the rebellions of the chiefs, who, like John Compsa of Naples and the exarch Eleutherinus, aspired at independence.

Africa alone, of all the provinces of the empire, continued to use the Latin language in ordinary life; and its inhabitants regarded themselves, with some reason, as the purest descendants of the Romans. After the victories of John the Patrician, it had enjoyed a long period of tranquillity, and its prosperity was undisturbed by any spirit of nationality adverse to the supremacy of the empire, or by schismatic opinions hostile to the church. The barbarous tribes to the south were feeble enemies, and no foreign State possessed a naval force capable of troubling its repose or interrupting its commerce. Under the able and fortunate administration of Heraclius and Gregoras, the father and uncle of the emperor,

Africa formed the most flourishing portion of the empire. Its prosperous condition, and the wars raging in other countries, threw great part of the commerce of the Mediterranean into the hands of the Africans. Wealth and population increased to such a decree, that the naval expedition of the emperor Heraclius, and the army of his cousin Nicetas, were fitted out from the resources of Africa alone. Another strong proof of the prosperity of the province, of its importance to the empire, and of its attachment to the interests of the Heraclian family, is afforded by the resolution which the emperor adopted, in the ninth year of his reign, of transferring the imperial residence from Constantinople to Carthage.

The immense population of Constantinople gave great inquietude to the government. Constantine the Great, in order to favour the increase of his new capital, granted daily allowances of bread to the possessors of houses. Succeeding emperors, for the purpose of caressing the populace, had largely increased the numbers of those entitled to this gratuity. In 618, the Persians overran Egypt, and by their conquest

stopped the annual supplies of grain destined for these public distributions. Heraclius, ruined in his finances, but fearing to announce the discontinuance of allowances, so necessary to keep the population of Constantinople in good humour, engaged to continue the supply, on receiving a payment of three pieces of gold from each claimant. His necessities, however, very soon became so great, that he ceased to continue the distributions, and thus defrauded those citizens of their money whom the fortune of war had deprived of their bread. The danger of his position must have been greatly increased by this bankruptcy, and the dishonour must have rendered his residence among the people whom he had deceived galling to his mind. Shame, therefore, may possibly have suggested to Heraclius the idea of quitting Constantinople; but his selection of Carthage, as the city to which he wished to transfer the seat of government, must have been determined by the wealth, population, and security of the African province. Carthage offered military resources for recovering possession of Egypt and Syria, of which we can only now estimate the extent by taking into consideration the expedition that placed Heraclius himself on the throne. Many reasons connected with the constitution of the civil government of the empire, might likewise be adduced as tending to influence the preference.

In Constantinople, an immense body of idle inhabitants had been collected, a mass that had long formed a burden on the State, and acquired a right to a portion of its resources. A numerous nobility, and a permanent imperial household, conceived that they formed a portion of the Roman government, from the prominent part which they acted in the ceremonial that connected the emperor with the people. Thus, the great natural advantages of the geographical position of the capital were neutralized by moral and political causes; while the desolate state of the European provinces, and the vicinity of the northern frontier, began to expose it to frequent sieges. As a fortress and place of arms, it might have still formed the bulwark of the empire in Europe; but while it remained the capital, its immense unproductive population required that too large a part of the resources of the State should be devoted to supplying it with provisions, to guarding against the factions and the seditions of its populace, and to maintaining in it a powerful garrison. The luxury of the Roman court had, during ages of unbounded wealth and unlimited power, assembled round the emperor an infinity of courtly offices, and caused an enormous expenditure, which it was extremely dangerous to suppress and impossible to continue.

No national feelings or particular line of policy connected Heraclius with Constantinople, and his frequent absence during the active years of his life indicates that, as long as his personal energy and health allowed him to direct the public administration, he considered the constant residence of the emperor in that city injurious to the general interests of the State. On the other hand Carthage was, at this time, peculiarly a Roman city; and in actual wealth, in the numbers of its independent citizens, and in the activity of its whole population, was probably inferior to no city in the empire. It is not surprising, therefore, that Heraclius, when compelled to suppress the public distributions of bread in the capital, to retrench the expenditure of his court and make many reforms in his civil government, should have wished to place the imperial treasury and his own resources in a place of greater security, before he engaged in his desperate struggle with Persia. The wish, therefore, to make Carthage the capital

of the Roman Empire may, with far greater probability, be connected with the gallant project of his Eastern campaigns, than with the cowardly or selfish motives attributed to him by Byzantine writers.

When the project of Heraclius to remove to Carthage was generally known, the Greek patriarch, the Graeco-Roman aristocracy, and the Byzantine people became alarmed at the loss of power, wealth, public shows, and largesses consequent on the departure of the court, and were eager to change his resolution. As far as Heraclius was personally concerned, the anxiety displayed by every class to retain him, may have relieved his mind from the shame caused by his financial fraud; and as want of personal courage was certainly not one of his defects, he may have abandoned a wise resolution without much regret, if he had thought the enthusiasm which he witnessed likely to aid his military plans. The Patriarch and the people, hearing that he had shipped his treasures, and was prepared to follow with all the imperial family, assembled tumultuously, and induced the emperor to swear in the church of St Sophia, that he would defend the empire to his death, and regard the people of Constantinople as peculiarly the children of his throne.

Egypt, from its wonderful natural resources, and its numerous and industrious population, had long been the most valuable province of the empire. It poured a great portion of its produce into the imperial treasury; for its agricultural population, being destitute of all political power and influence, were compelled to pay, not only their regular taxes in money like other provincials, but also a tribute in grain, which was viewed as a rent for the soil. At this time, however, the wealth of Egypt was on the decline. The circumstances which had driven the trade of India to the north, had caused a great decrease in the demand for the grain of Egypt on the shores of the Red Sea, and for its manufactures in Arabia and Ethiopia. The canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, whose existence is intimately connected with the prosperity of these countries, had been neglected during the government of Phocas. A large portion of the Greek population of Alexandria had been ruined, because an end had been put to the public distributions of grain in that city. Poverty had invaded the fertile land of Egypt. John the Almsgiver, who was patriarch and imperial prefect in the reign of Heraclius, did everything in his power to alleviate this misery. He established hospitals, and devoted the revenues of his See to charity; but he was an enemy to heresy, and consequently he was hardly looked on as a friend by the native population. National feelings, religious opinions, and local interests, had always nourished, in the minds of the native Egyptians, a deep-rooted hatred of the Roman administration and of the Greek Church; and this feeling of hostility only became more concentrated after the union of the offices of prefect and patriarch by Justinian. A complete line of separation existed between the Greek colony of Alexandria and the native population, who during the decline of the Greeks and Jews of Alexandria intruded themselves into political business, and gained some degree of official importance. The cause of the emperor was now connected with the commercial interests of the Greek and Melchite parties, but these ruling classes were regarded by the agricultural population of the rest of the province as interlopers on their sacred Jacobite soil. John the Almsgiver, though a Greek patriarch, and an imperial prefect, was not perfectly free from the charge of heresy, nor, perhaps, of employing the revenues under his control with more attention to charity than to public policy. The

exigencies of Heraclius were so great that he sent his cousin, the patrician Nicetas, to Egypt, to seize the immense wealth which the patriarch John was said to possess. In the following year the Persians invaded the province; and the patrician and patriarch, unable to defend even the city of Alexandria, fled to Cyprus, while the enemy was allowed to subdue the valley of the Nile to the borders of Libya and Ethiopia, without meeting any opposition from the imperial forces, and apparently with the good wishes of the Egyptians. The plunder obtained from public property and slaves was immense; and as the power of the Greeks was annihilated, the native Egyptians availed themselves of the opportunity to acquire a dominant influence in the administration of their country.

(The Melchites were those Christians in Syria and Egypt who, though not Greeks, followed the doctrines of the Greek Church. They were called Melchites (royalists, from Melcha, Syriac, a king) by their adversaries, on account of their implicit obedience to the edict of Marcian in favour of the Council of Chalcedon. Jacob Baradaeus, or Zanzalus, bishop of Edessa, the great heterodox apostle of the East, blended the various sects of Eutychians and Monophysites into a powerful church, whose followers were generally called, after his death: Jacobites. He died A.D. 578).

For ten years the province owned allegiance to Persia, though it enjoyed a certain degree of doubtful independence under the immediate government of a native intendant-general of the land revenues, named Mokaukas, who subsequently, at the time of the Saracen conquest, acted a conspicuous part in the history of his county. During the Persian supremacy, he became so influential in the administration, that he is styled by several writers the Prince of Egypt, Mokaukas, under the Roman government, had conformed to the established church, in order to hold an official situation, but he was, like most of his countrymen, at heart a Monophysite, and consequently inclined to oppose the imperial administration, both from religious and political motives. Yet, it appears that a portion of the Monophysite clergy steadily refused to submit to the Persian government; and Benjamin, their patriarch, retired from his residence at Alexandria when that city fell into the hands of the Persians, and did not return until Heraclius recovered possession of Egypt. Mokaukas established himself in the city of Babylon, or Misr, which had grown up, on the decline of Memphis, to be the native capital of the province, and the chief city in the interior. The moment appears to have been extremely favourable for the establishment of an independent state by the Monophysite Egyptians, since, amidst the conflicts of the Persian and Roman empires, the immense revenues and supplies of grain formerly paid to the emperor might have been devoted to the defence of the country. But the native population appears, from the conduct of the patriarch Benjamin, not to have been united in its views; and probably the agricultural classes, though numerous, living in abundance, and firm in their Monophysite tenets, had not the knowledge necessary to aspire at national independence, the strength of character required to achieve it, or the command of the precious metals necessary to purchase the service of mercenary troops and provide the materials of war. They had been so long deprived of arms and of all political rights, that they had probably adopted the opinion prevalent among the subjects of despotic governments, that public functionaries are invariably knaves, and that the oppression of the native is more grievous than the yoke of a stranger. Moral defects therefore quite as

much as political obstacles, in all probability, prevented the establishment of an independent Egyptian and Jacobite state at this favourable conjuncture.

In Syria and Palestine, the different races who peopled the country were then, as in our own day, extremely divided; and their separation, by language, manners, interests, and religion, rendered it impossible for them to unite for the purpose of gaining any object opposed by the imperial government. The Persians penetrated into Palestine, plundered Jerusalem, burned the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and carried off the holy cross with the patriarch Zacharias into Persia in the year 614. The native Syrians, though they retained their language and literature, and showed the strength of their national character by their opposition to the Greek Church, seemed not to have constituted the majority of the inhabitants of the province. They were farther divided by their religious opinions; for, though generally Monophysites, a part was attached to the Nestorian church. The Greeks appear to have formed the most numerous class of the population, though they were almost entirely confined within the walls of the cities. Many were, doubtless, the direct descendants of the colonies which prospered under the domination of the Seleucidae. The protection and patronage of the civil and ecclesiastical administration of the Eastern Empire had preserved these Greek colonies separate from the natives, and supported them by a continual influx of Greeks engaged in the service of the Church and State. But though the Greeks probably formed the most numerous body of the population, yet the circumstance of their composing the ruling class, united all the other classes in opposition to their authority. Being, consequently, deprived of the support of the agricultural population, and unable to recruit their numbers by an influx from their rural neighbours, they became more and more aliens in the country, and were alone incapable of offering a long and steady resistance to any foreign enemy, without the constant support of the imperial treasury and armies.

The Jews, whose religion and nationality have always supported one another, had, for more than a century, been increasing very remarkably, both in numbers and wealth, in every part of the civilized world. The wars and rivalry of the various nations of conquerors, and of conquered people, in the south of Europe, had opened to the Jews a freedom of commercial intercourse with all parties, which each nation, moved by national jealousy, refused to its own neighbours, and only conceded to a foreign people, of whom no political jealousy could be entertained. This circumstance explains the extraordinary increase in the number of the Jews, which becomes apparent, in the seventh century, in Greece, Africa, Spain, and Arabia, by referring it to the ordinary laws of the multiplication of the human species, when facilities are found for acquiring augmented supplies of the means of subsistence, without inducing us to suppose that the Jews succeeded, during this period, in making more proselytes than they had done at other times. This increase of their numbers and wealth soon roused the bigotry and jealousy of the Christians; while the deplorable condition of the Roman Empire, and of the Christian population in the East, inspired the Jews with some expectations of soon re-establishing their national independence under the expected Messiah. It must be confessed that the desire of availing themselves of the misfortunes of the Roman Empire, and of the dissensions of the Christian church, was the natural consequence of the oppression to which they had long been subjected, but it not unnaturally tended to increase the hatred with which they were viewed, and added to their persecutions.

It is said that about this time a prophecy was current, which declared that the Roman Empire would be overthrown by a circumcised people. This report may have been spread by the Jews, in order to excite their own ardour, and assist their projects of rebellion; but the prophecy was saved from oblivion by the subsequent conquests of the Saracens, which could never have been foreseen by its authors. The conduct of the Jews excited the bigotry, as it may have awakened the fears, of the imperial government, and both Phocas and Heraclius attempted to exterminate the Jewish religion, and if possible to put an end to the national existence. Heraclius not only practised every species of cruelty himself to effect this object within the bounds of his own dominions, but he even made the forced conversion or banishment of the Jews a prominent feature in his diplomacy. He consoled himself for the loss of most of the Roman possessions in Spain, by inducing Sisebut to insert an article in the treaty of peace concluded in 614, engaging the Gothic monarch to force baptism on the Jews; and he considered, that even though he failed in persuading the Franks to cooperate with him against the Avars, in the year 620, he rendered the empire and Christianity some service by inducing Dagobert to join in the project of exterminating the unfortunate Jews.

The other portions of the Syrian population aspired at independence, though they did not openly venture to assert it; and during the Persian conquest, the coast of Phoenicia successfully defended itself under the command of its native chiefs. At a later period, when the Mohammedans invaded the province, many chiefs existed who had attained a considerable degree of local power, and exercised an almost independent authority in their districts.

As the Roman administration grew weaker in Syria, and the Persian invasions became more frequent, the Arabs gradually acquired many permanent settlements amidst the rest of the inhabitants; and from the commencement of the seventh century, they must be reckoned as an important class of the population. Their power within the Roman provinces was increased by the existence of the two independent Arab kingdoms of Ghassan and Hira, which had been formed in part from territories gained from the Roman and Persian empires. Of these kingdoms, Ghassan was the constant ally or vassal of the Romans; and Hira was equally attached to, or dependent on, Persia. Both were Christian states, though the conversion of Hira took place not very long before the reign of Heraclius, and the greater part of the inhabitants were Jacobites, mixed with some Nestorians. It may be remarked that the Arabs had been advancing in civilization during the sixth century, and that their religious ideas had undergone a very great change. The decline of their powerful neighbours allowed them to increase their commerce, and its extension gave them more enlarged views of their own importance, and suggested ideas of national unity which they had not previously entertained. These causes had produced powerful effects on the whole of the Arab population during the century which preceded the accession of Heraclius; and it must not be overlooked that Mahomet himself was born during the reign of Justin II, and that he was educated under the influence of this national excitement.

The country between Syria and Armenia, or that part of ancient Chaldea which was subject to the Romans, had been so repeatedly laid waste during the Persian wars, that the agricultural population was nearly exterminated, or had retired into the Persian provinces. The inhabitants of no portion of the empire were so eager to throw off their

allegiance as the Chaldaic Christians, called by the Greeks Nestorians, who formed the majority of the population of this country. They had clung firmly to the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, after its condemnation by the council of Ephesus (A.D. 449), and when they found themselves unable to contend against the temporal power and spiritual influence of the Greeks, they had established an independent church, which directed its attention, with great zeal, to the spiritual guidance of those Christians who dwelt beyond the limits of the Roman empire. The history of their missions, by which churches were established in India and China, is an extremely interesting portion of the annals of Christianity. Their zealous exertions, and their connection with the Christian inhabitants of Persia, induced the Roman emperors to persecute them with great cruelty, from political as well as religious motives; and this persecution often insured them the favour of the Persian monarchs. Though they did not always escape the bigotry and jealousy of the Persians, still they usually enjoyed equitable protection, and became active enemies both of the Greek church and the Roman empire, though the geographical position and physical configuration of their country afforded them little hope of being able to gain political independence.

(The Chaldaic Christians considered, and still consider, theirs the real apostolic church, though, like all other Christian churches, it partook largely of a national character. They used the Syriac language in public worship. Their patriarch resided at Seleucia, in Persia. He now resides at a monastery near Mosul. They had many bishops in Syria and Armenia, as well as in Mesopotamia. They were charged with confounding the divine and human natures of Christ, and they wished the Virgin Mary to be called the mother of Christ, not, as was then usual, the mother of God. They worshipped no images, and they venerated Nestorius. Whether Nestorius did or did not hold the views which his opponents ascribed to him, the doctrine for which he was condemned by the council of Ephesus was that of .the existence of two persons in Christ. The charge of confounding the divine and human natures in Christ was brought, not against the Nestorians, but against the Eutychians).

Armenia was favourably situated for maintaining its independence, as soon as the Persian and Roman empires began to decline. Though the country was divided by these rival governments, the people preserved their national character, manners, language, and literature, in as great a degree of purity as the Greeks themselves; and as their higher classes had retained more of wealth, military enterprise, and political independence, than the nobility of the other nations of the East, their services were very highly estimated by their neighbours. Their reputation for fidelity and military skill induced the Roman emperors, from the time of Justinian, to raise them to the highest offices in the empire. Though the Armenians were unable to defend their political independence against the Romans and Persians, they maintained their national existence unaltered; and, amidst all the convulsions which have swept over the face of Asia, they have continued to exist as a distinct people, and succeeded in preserving their language and literature. Their national spirit placed them in opposition to the Greek Church, and they adopted the opinions of the Monophysites, though under modifications which gave to their church a national character, and separated it from that of the Jacobites. Their history is worthy of a more attentive examination than it has yet met with in English literature. Armenia was the first country in which Christianity became the established

religion of the land; and the people, under the greatest difficulties, long maintained their independence with the most determined courage; and after the loss of their political power, they preserved their manners, language, religion, and national character alike under the government of the Persians, Greeks, Saracens, and Turks.

Asia Minor became the chief seat of the Roman power in the time of Heraclius, and it was the only portion in which the majority of the population was attached to the imperial government and to the Greek Church. Before the reign of Phocas, it had escaped any extensive devastation, so that it still retained much of its ancient wealth and splendour; and the social life of the people was still modelled on the institutions and usages of preceding ages. A considerable internal trade was carried on; and the great roads, being kept in a tolerable state of repair, served as arteries for the circulation of commerce and civilization. That it had, nevertheless, suffered very severely in the general decline caused by over-taxation, and by reduced commerce, neglected agriculture, and diminished population, is attested by the magnificent ruins of cities which had already fallen to decay, and which never again recovered their ancient prosperity.

The power of the central administration over its immediate officers was almost as completely destroyed in Asia Minor as in the more distant provinces of the empire. A remarkable proof of this general disorganization is found in the history of the early years of the reign of Heraclius; and one deserving particular attention from its illustrating both his personal character and the state of the empire. Crispus, the son-in-law of Phocas, had assisted Heraclius in obtaining the throne; and as a recompense, he was entrusted with the administration of Cappadocia, one of the richest provinces of the empire, along with the chief command of the troops in his government. Crispus, a man of influence, and of a daring, heedless character, soon ventured to act, not only with independence, but even with insolence, towards the emperor. He neglected the defence of his province; and when Heraclius visited Caesarea to examine into its state and prepare the means of carrying on the war against Persia in person, Crispus displayed a spirit of insubordination and an assumption of importance which amounted to treason. Heraclius, who was prudent enough to restrain his fiery temperament, visited the too powerful officer in his bed, which he kept under a slight or affected illness, and persuaded him to visit Constantinople'. On his appearance in the senate, he was arrested, and compelled to become a monk. His authority and position rendered it absolutely necessary for Heraclius to punish his presumption, before he could advance with safety against the Persians. Many less important personages, in various parts of the empire, acted with equal independence, without the emperor's considering that it was either necessary to observe, or prudent to punish, their ambition. The decline of the power of the central government, the increasing ignorance of the people, the augmented difficulties in the way of communication, and the general insecurity of property and life, effected extensive changes in the state of society, and threw political influence into the hands of the local governors, the municipal and provincial chiefs, and the whole body of the clergy.

Sect. VI.

Change in the position of the Greek populationwhich was produced by the Sclavonic establishments in Dalmatia

A.D. 565-633

Heraclius endeavoured to form a permanent barrier in Europe against the encroachments of the Avars and Sclavonians. For the furtherance of this project, it was evident that he could derive no assistance from the inhabitants of the provinces to the south of the Danube. The imperial armies, too, which, in the time of Maurice, had waged an active war in Illyricum and Thrace, and frequently invaded the territories of the Avars, had melted away during the reign of Phocas. The loss was irreparable: for, in Europe, no agricultural population remained to supply the recruits required to form a new army. The only feasible plan for circumscribing the ravages of the northern enemies of the empire which presented itself, was the establishment of powerful colonies of tribes hostile to the Avars and their Sclavonian allies, in the deserted provinces of Dalmatia and Illyricum. To accomplish this object, Heraclius induced the Serbs, or western Sclavonians, who occupied the country about the Carpathian Mountains, and who had successfully opposed the extension of the Avar empire in that direction, to abandon their ancient seats, and move down to the South into the provinces between the Adriatic and the Danube. The Roman and Greek population of these provinces had been driven towards the sea-coast by the continual incursions of the northern tribes, and the desolate plains of the interior had been occupied by a few Sclavonian subjects and vassals of the Avars. The most important of the western Sclavonian tribes who moved southward at the invitation of Heraclius were the Servians and Croatians, who settled in the countries still peopled by their descendants. Their original settlements were formed in consequence of friendly arrangements, and, doubtless, under the sanction of an express treaty; for the Sclavonian people of Illyricum and Dalmatia long regarded themselves as bound to pay a certain degree of territorial allegiance to the Eastern Empire.

The measures of Heraclius were carried into execution with skill and vigour. From the borders of Istria to the territory of Dyrrhachium, the whole country was occupied by a variety of tribes of Servian or western Sclavonic origin, hostile to the Avars. These colonies, unlike the earlier invaders of the empire, were composed of agricultural communities; and to the facility which this circumstance afforded them of adopting into their political system any remnant of the old Sclavonic population of their conquests, it seems just to attribute the permanency and prosperity of their settlements. Unlike the military races of Goths, Huns, and Avars, who had preceded them, the Servian nations increased and flourished in the lands which they had colonized; and by the absorption of every relic of the ancient population, they formed political communities and independent states, which offered a firm barrier to the Avars and other hostile nations.

It may here be observed, that if the original population of the countries colonized by the Servian nations had at an earlier period been relieved from the weight of the imperial taxes, which encroached on their capital, and from the jealous oppression of

the Roman government, which prevented their bearing arms; in short, if they had been allowed to enjoy all the advantages which Heraclius was compelled to concede to the Servians, we may reasonably suppose that they could have successfully defended their country. But after the most destructive ravages of the Goths, Huns, and Avars, the imperial tax-gatherers had never failed to enforce payment of the tribute as long as anything remained undestroyed, though, according to the rules of justice, the Roman government had really forfeited its right to levy the taxes, as soon as it failed to perform its duty in defending the population.

The modem history of the eastern shores of the Adriatic commences with the establishment of the Sclavonian colonies in Dalmatia. Though, in a territorial point of view, vassals of the court of Constantinople, these colonies always preserved the most complete national independence, and formed their own political governments, according to the exigencies of their situation. The states which they constituted were of considerable weight in the history of Europe; and the kingdoms or bannats of Croatia, Servia, Bosnia, Rascia, and Dalmatia, occupied for some centuries a political position very similar to that now held by the secondary monarchical states of the present day. The people of Narenta, who enjoyed a republican form of government, once disputed the sway of the Adriatic with the Venetians; and, for some time, it appeared probable that these Servian colonies established by Heraclius were likely to take a prominent part in advancing the progress of European civilization.

But, although the ancient provinces of Dalmatia, Illyricum, and Moesia, received a new race of inhabitants, and new geographical divisions and names, still several fortified towns on the Adriatic continued to maintain their immediate connection with the imperial government, and preserved their original population, augmented by numbers of Roman citizens whose wealth enabled them to escape from the Avar invasions and gain the coast. These towns long supported their municipal independence by means of the commerce which they carried on with Italy, and defended themselves against their Servian neighbours by the advantages which they derived from the vicinity of the numerous islands on the Dalmatian coast. For two centuries and a half they continued, though surrounded by Servian tribes, to preserve their direct allegiance to the throne of Constantinople, until at length, in the reign of the Emperor Basil I, they were compelled to become tributary to their Sclavonic neighbours. Ragusa alone ultimately obtained and secured its Independence, which it preserved amidst all the vicissitudes of the surrounding countries, until its liberty was finally destroyed by the French, when the conquests of Napoleon annihilated the existence of most of the smaller European republics.

It seems hardly possible that the western Sclavonians, who entered Dalmatia under the various names of Servians, Croatians, Narentins, Zachloumians, Terbounians, Diocleans, and Decatrians, constituted the whole stock of the population. Their numbers could hardly be sufficient to form more than the dominant race at the time of their arrival; and, depopulated as the country was, they probably found some remains of a primitive Sclavonian people who had inhabited the same countries from an earlier period. The remnant of these ancient inhabitants, even if reduced to the condition of agricultural-serfs or slaves, would survive the miseries which exterminated their masters; and doubtless mingled with the invaders of a kindred race from the northern

banks of the Danube, who, ever since the reign of Justinian, had pushed their incursions into the empire. With these people the ruling class of Servian Sclavonians would easily unite without violating any national prejudice. The consequence was natural; the various branches of the population were soon confounded, and their numbers rapidly increased as they melted into one people. The Romans, who at one period had formed a large portion of the inhabitants of these countries, gradually died out, while the Illyrians, who were the neighbours of these colonies to the south, were ultimately pushed down on that part of the continent occupied by the Greeks.

From the settlement of the Servian Sclavonians within the bounds of the empire, we may therefore venture to date the earliest encroachments of the Illyrian or Albanian race on the Hellenic population. The Albanians or Arnauts, who are called by themselves Shkipetars, are supposed to be a tribe of the great Thracian race which, under various names, and more particularly as Paeonians, Epirots, and Macedonians, take an important part in early Grecian history. No distinct trace of the period at which they began to be co-proprietors of Greece with the Hellenic race can be found in history; but it is evident that, at whatever time it occurred, the earliest Illyrian or Albanian colonists who settled among the Greeks did so as members of the same political state, and of the same church; that they were influenced by precisely the same feelings and interests, and, what is even more remarkable, that their intrusion occurred under such circumstances that no national prejudices or local jealousies were excited in the susceptible minds of the Greeks. A common calamity of no ordinary magnitude must have produced these wonderful effects; and it seems very difficult to trace back the history of the Greek nation, without suspecting that the germs of their modern condition, like those of their neighbours, are to be sought in the singular events which occurred in the reign of Heraclius.

The power of the Avar monarchy had already declined, but the prince or great chagan was still acknowledged as suzerain, from the frontiers of Bavaria to the Dacian Alps, which bound Transylvania and the Bannat, and as far as the shores of the Black Sea, about the mouth of the Danube. The Sclavonian, Bulgarian, and Hunnish tribes, which occupied the country between the Danube and the Volga, and who had been the earliest subjects of the Avars in Europe, had re-asserted their independence. The actual numerical strength of the Avar nation had never been very great, and their barbarous government everywhere thinned the original population of the lands which they conquered. The remnant of the old inhabitants, driven by poverty and desperation to abandon all industrious pursuits, soon formed bands of robbers, and quickly became as warlike and as numerous as the Avar troops stationed to awe their districts. In a succession of skirmishes and desultory engagements, the Avars soon ceased to maintain their superiority, and the Avar monarchy fell to pieces with nearly as great rapidity as it had arisen. Yet, in the reign of Heraclius, the chagan could still assemble a variety of tribes under his standard whenever he proposed to make a plundering expedition into the provinces of the empire.

It seems impossible to decide, from any historical evidence, whether the measures adopted by Heraclius to circumscribe the Avar power, by the settlement of the Servian Sclavonians in Illyricum, preceded or followed a remarkable act of treachery attempted by the Avar monarch against the emperor. If Heraclius had then succeeded in

terminating his arrangements with the Servians, the dread of having their power reduced may have appeared to the Avars some apology for an attempt at treachery, too base even for the ordinary latitude of savage revenge and avidity, but which we find repeated by a Byzantine emperor against a king of Bulgaria two centuries later. In the year 619, the Avars made a terrible incursion into the heart of the empire. They advanced so far into Thrace, that when Heraclius proposed a personal meeting with their sovereign, in order to arrange the terms of peace, Heraclea (Perinthus), on the Sea of Marmora, was selected as a convenient spot for the interview. The emperor advanced as far as Selymbria, accompanied by a brilliant train of attendants; and preparations were made to amuse the barbarians with a theatrical festival. The avarice of the Avars was excited, and their sovereign, thinking that any act by which so dangerous an enemy as Heraclius could be removed was pardonable, determined to seize the person of the emperor while his troops plundered the imperial escort. The great wall was so carelessly guarded, that large bodies of Avar soldiers passed it unnoticed or unheeded; but their movements at last awakened the suspicion of the court, and Heraclius was compelled to fly in disguise to Constantinople, leaving his tents, his theatre, and his household establishment, to be pillaged by his treacherous enemies. The followers of the emperor were pursued to the very walls of the capital, and the crowd assembled to grace the festival became the slaves of the Avars; who carried off an immense booty, and two hundred and seventy thousand prisoners. The weakness of the empire was such, that Heraclius considered it politic to overlook even this insult, and instead of attempting to efface the stain on his reputation, which his ridiculous flight could not fail to produce, he allowed the affair to pass unnoticed. He continued his preparations for attacking Persia, as it was evident that the fate of the Roman Empire depended on the success of the war in Asia. To secure himself as much as possible from any diversion in Europe, he condescended to renew his negotiations with the Avars, and by making many sacrifices, he succeeded in concluding a peace on what he vainly hoped might be a lasting basis.

Several years later, however, when Heraclius was absent on the frontiers of Persia, the Avars considered the moment favourable for renewing hostilities, and formed the project of attempting the conquest of Constantinople, in conjunction with a Persian army, which advanced to the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus. The chagan of the Avars, with a powerful army of his own subjects, aided by bands of Sclavonians, Bulgarians, and Huns, attacked the capital by land, while the Persian army afforded him every possible assistance by investing the Asiatic suburb and cutting off all supplies on that side. Their combined attacks were defeated by the garrison of Constantinople, without Heraclius considering it necessary to retrace his steps, or turn back from his career of conquest in the East. The naval superiority of the Roman government prevented the junction of its enemies, and the Avars were at last compelled to effect a precipitate retreat. This siege of Constantinople is the last memorable exploit of the Avar nation recorded by the Byzantine historians; their power rapidly declined, and the people soon became so completely lost amidst the Sclavonian and Bulgarian inhabitants of their dominions, that an impenetrable veil is now cast over the history of their race and language. The Bulgarians who had already acquired some degree of power, began to render themselves the ruling people among the nations between the Danube and the Don; and, from this time, they appear in history as the most dangerous enemies of the Roman Empire on its northern frontier.

Before Heraclius induced the western Sclavonians to settle in Illiyricum, numerous bodies of the Avars and their Sclavonic subjects had already penetrated into Greece, and established themselves even as far south as the Peloponnesus. No precise evidence of the extent to which the Avars succeeded in pushing their conquests in Greece can now be obtained; but there are testimonies which establish with certainty that their Sclavonic subjects retained possession of these conquests for many centuries. The political and social condition of these Sclavonic colonies on the Hellenic soil utterly escapes the research of the historian; but their power and influence was, for a long time, very great. The passages of the Greek writers which refer to these conquests are so scanty, and so vague in expression, that it becomes the duty of the modern historian to pass them in review, particularly since they have been employed with much ability by a German writer, to prove that the Hellenic race in Europe has been exterminated, and that the modern Greeks are a mixed race composed of the descendants of Roman slaves and Sclavonian colonists. This opinion, it is true, has been combated with great learning by one of his countrymen, who asserts that the ingenious dissertation of his predecessor is nothing more than a plausible theory. We must therefore examine for ourselves the scanty records of historical truth during this dark period.

The earliest mention of the Avar conquests in Greece occurs in the Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius of Epiphania, in Coele-Syria, who wrote at the end of the sixth century. He mentions that, while the forces of the Emperor Maurice were engaged in the East, the Avars advanced to the great wall before Constantinople, captured Singidon (Belgrade), Anchialus, and all Greece, and laid waste everything with fire and sword. These incursions took place in the years 588 and 589, but no inference could be drawn from this vague and incidental notice of an Avar plundering incursion, so casually mentioned, in favour of the permanent settlement of Sclavonian colonies in Greece, had this passage not received considerable importance from later authorities. The testimony of Evagrius is confirmed in a very remarkable manner by a letter of the patriarch of Constantinople, Nicolaus, to the emperor Alexius Comnenus in the year 1081. The patriarch mentions that the emperor Nicephorus (A.D. 802-811) granted various concessions to the episcopal see of Patrae, in consequence of the miraculous aid which St. Andrew afforded that city in destroying the Avars, who held possession of the greater part of the Peloponnesus for two hundred and eighteen years, and had so completely separated their conquests from the Roman empire that no Roman (that is to say Greek connected with the imperial administration) dared to enter the country. Now this siege of Patrae is mentioned by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and its date is fixed in the year 807; consequently, these Avars, who had conquered the Peloponnesus two hundred and eighteen years before that event, must have arrived precisely in the year 589, at the very period indicated by Evagrius. The emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus mentions the Sclavonian colonies in the Peloponnesus more than once, though he never affords any accurate information concerning the period at which they entered the country. In his work on the provinces of the empire—he informs us that the whole country was subdued and rendered barbarous after the great plague in the reign of Constantine Copronymus, an observation which implies that the complete extermination of the rural population of Hellenic race, and the establishment of the political power of the Sclavonic colonies, and their assumption of total independence in Greece, dated

from that period. It is evident that they acquired great power, and became an object of alarm to the emperors, a few years later. In the reign of Constantine VI, an expedition was sent against them at a time when they possessed great part of the country from the frontiers of Macedonia to the southern limits of the Peloponnesus. Indeed the fortified towns alone appear to have remained in the possession of the Greeks.

It seems surprising that no detailed account of the important change in the condition and fortunes of the Greek race, which these facts imply, is contained in the Byzantine historians. Yet, when we reflect that these Sclavonic colonies never united into one state, nor pursued any fixed line of policy in their attacks on the empire; and when we recall to mind also that the Byzantine historians occupied themselves so little with the real history of mankind as to pass over the Lombard invasion of Italy without notice, our wonder must cease. All the Greek writers who mention this period of history were men connected either with the Constantinopolitan government, or with the orthodox church; and they were consequently destitute of every feeling of Greek nationality, and viewed the agricultural population of ancient Hellas as a rude and degenerate race of semi-barbarians, little superior to the Sclavonians, with whom they were carrying on a desultory warfare. As comparatively little revenue could, in the time of Heraclius, be drawn from Greece, that emperor never seems to have occupied himself about its fate; and the Greeks escaped the extermination with which they were threatened by their Avar and Sclavonian invaders, through the neglect, and not in consequence of the assistance, of the imperial government. The Avars made considerable exertions to complete the conquest of Greece by carrying their predatory expeditions into the Archipelago. They attacked the eastern coast, which had hitherto been secure from their invasions, and, to execute this design, they obtained shipbuilders from the Lombards, and launched a fleet of plundering barks in the Aegean Sea. The general danger of the islands and commercial cities of Greece roused the spirit of the inhabitants, who united for the defence of their property, and the plans of the Avars proved unsuccessful. The Greeks, however, were long exposed to the plundering Sclavonians on one side, and to the rapacity of the imperial government on the other; and their success in preserving some portion of their commercial wealth and political influence is to be attributed to the efficacy of their municipal organization, and to the weakness of the central government, which could no longer prevent their bearing arms for their own defence.

Sect. VII.

The Campaigns of Heraclius in the East

The personal character of Heraclius exercised great influence on the events of his reign. Unfortunately, the historians of his age have not conveyed to posterity any very

accurate picture of the peculiar traits of his mind. His conduct shows that he possessed judgment, activity, and courage; and, though he was sometimes imprudent and rash, at others he displayed an equanimity and force of character in repressing his passion, which mark him as a really great man. (His cruelty to Phocas only proves that he partook of the barbarous feelings of his age. A religious strain runs through his letters, which are preserved in the Paschal Chronicle, and in the speeches reported by Theophanes, which have an air of authenticity. It is true that this style may have been the official language of an emperor, who felt himself so peculiarly the head of the Christian church, and the champion of the orthodox faith. Persia was his ecclesiastical as well as his political enemy). In the opinion of his contemporaries, his fame was sullied by two indelible stains. His marriage with his niece Martina was regarded as incestuous, and the religious edicts, by which he proposed to regulate the faith of his subjects, were branded as heretical. Both were serious errors of policy in a prince who was so dependent on public opinion for support in his great scheme of restoring the lost power of the Roman Empire; yet the constancy of his affection for his wife, and the immense importance of reconciling all the adverse sects of Christians within the empire in common measures of defence against external enemies, may form some apology for these errors. The patriarch of Constantinople remonstrated against his marriage with his niece; but the power of the emperor was still absolute over the persons of the ecclesiastical functionaries of the empire; and Heraclius, though he allowed the bishop to satisfy his conscience by stating his objections, commanded him to practise his civil duties, and celebrate the marriage of his sovereign. The pretensions of papal Rome had not yet arisen in the Christian church. (The power of Gregory the Great was so small that he durst not consecrate a bishop without the consent of his enemy the emperor Maurice; and he was forced to obey the edict forbidding all persons to quit public employments in order to become monks, and prohibiting soldiers during the period of their service from being received into monasteries). The Patriarch Sergius does not appear to have been deficient in zeal or courage, and Heraclius was not free from the religious bigotry of his age. Both knew that the established church was a part of the State, and that though in matters of doctrine the general councils put limits to the imperial authority, yet, in the executive direction of the clergy, the emperor was nearly absolute, and possessed full power to remove the patriarch had he ventured to disobey his orders. As the marriage of Heraclius with Martina was within the prohibited degrees, it was an act of unlawful compliance on the part of Sergius to celebrate the nuptials, for the duty of the Patriarch as a Christian priest was surely, in such a case, of more importance than his obedience as a Roman subject.

The early part of the reign of Heraclius was devoted to reforming the administration and recruiting the army. He tried every means of obtaining peace with Persia in vain, and even allowed the senate to make an independent attempt to enter into negotiations with Chosroes. For twelve years, the Persian armies ravaged the empire from the banks of the Nile to the shores of the Bosphorus almost without encountering any opposition. It is impossible to explain in what manner Heraclius employed his time during this interval, but it is evident that he was engaged by many cares besides those of preparing for his war with Persia. The independent negotiation which the senate attempted with Persia, seems to indicate that the Roman aristocracy had succeeded in encroaching on the emperor's authority during the general confusion which reigned in

the administration after the fall of Maurice, and that he may have been occupied with political contests at home, before he could attend to the exigencies of the Persian war. As no civil hostilities appear to have broken out, we possess no records of his difficulties in the meagre chronicles of his reign. Perhaps this random conjecture ought not to find a place in a historical work; but when the state of the Roman administration at the close of the reign of Heraclius is compared with the confusion in which he found it at his accession, it is evident, that he effected a great political change, and infused new vigour into the weakened fabric of the government.

When Heraclius had settled the internal affairs of his empire, filled his military chest, and re-established the discipline of the Roman armies, he commenced a series of campaigns, which entitle him to rank as one of the greatest military commanders whose deeds are recorded in history. The object of his first campaign was to render himself master of a line of communications extending from the shores of the Black Sea to those of the Mediterranean, and resting on positions in Pontus and Cilicia. The Persian armies, which had advanced into Asia Minor and occupied Ancyra, would, by this manoeuvre, be separated from the supplies and reinforcements on their own frontiers, and Heraclius would have it in his power to attack their troops in detail. He landed at a pass called ‘the gates’, from whence he advanced into the interior and reached the frontiers of Armenia. The rapidity of his movements rendered his plan successful; the Persians, compelled to fight in the positions chosen by Heraclius, were completely defeated, and at the commencement of winter the Roman army took up its quarters in the regions of Pontus. In the second campaign, the emperor pushed forward into the heart of Persia from his camp in Pontus. Ganzaca was captured; Thebarmes, the birthplace of Zoroaster, with its temple and fire-altars, was destroyed; and after laying waste the northern part of Media, Heraclius retired to Albania, where he placed his army in winter quarters. This campaign proved to the world that the Persian Empire was in the same state of internal weakness as the Roman, and equally incapable of offering any national resistance to an active and enterprising enemy. The third and fourth campaigns were occupied in laborious marches and severe battles, in which Heraclius proved himself both a brave soldier and an able general. Under his guidance, the Roman troops recovered their ancient superiority in war. At the end of the third campaign, he established his winter quarters in the Persian dominions, and at the conclusion of the fourth he led his army back into Asia Minor, to winter behind the Halys, that he might be able to watch the movements concerted between the Persians and the Avars, for the siege of Constantinople. The fifth campaign was at first suspended by the presence of the Persian army on the shores of the Bosphorus, where it endeavoured to assist the Avars in an attack on Constantinople. Heraclius, having divided his forces into three armies, sent one to the relief of Constantinople; the second, which he placed under the command of his brother Theodore, defeated the Persians in a great battle; and with the third he took up a position in Iberia, where he waited to hear that the Khazars had invaded Persia. As soon as he was informed that his Turkish allies had passed the Caspian gates, and was assured that the attempt on his capital had failed, he hastened forward into the very heart of the Persian Empire, and sought his rival in his palace. The sixth campaign opened with the Roman army in the plains of Assyria; and, after laying waste some of the richest provinces of the Persian Empire, Heraclius marched through the country to the east of the Tigris, and captured the palace of Dastagerd, where the

Persian monarchs had accumulated the greatest part of their enormous treasures, in a position always regarded as secure from any foreign enemy. Chosroes fled at the approach of the Roman army, and his flight became a signal for the rebellion of his generals. Heraclius pushed forward to within a few miles of Ctesiphon, but then found that his success would be more certain by watching the civil dissensions of the Persians, than by risking an attack on the populous capital of their empire with his diminished army. The emperor therefore led his army back to Ganzaca in the month of March, and the seventh spring terminated the war. Chosroes was seized and murdered by his rebellious son Siroes, and a treaty of peace was concluded with the Roman emperor. The ancient frontiers of the two empires were re-established, and the holy cross, which the Persians had carried off from Jerusalem, was restored to Heraclius, with the seals of the case which contained it unbroken.

Heraclius had repeatedly declared that he did not desire to make any conquest of Persian territory. His conduct when success had crowned his exertions, and when his enemy was ready to purchase his retreat at any price, proves the sincerity and justice of his policy. His empire required not only a lasting peace to recover from the miseries of the late war, but also many reforms in the civil and religious administration, which could only be completed during such a peace, in order to restore the vigour of the government. Twenty-four years of a war, which had proved, in turns, unsuccessful to every nation engaged in it, had impoverished and diminished the population of a great part of Europe and Asia. Public institutions, buildings, roads, ports, and commerce, had fallen into decay; the physical power of governments had declined; and the utility of a central political authority became less and less apparent to mankind. Even the religious opinions of the subjects of the Roman and Persian empires had been shaken by the misfortunes which had happened to what each sect regarded as the talisman of its faith. The ignorant Christians viewed the capture of Jerusalem, and the loss of the holy cross, as indicating the wrath of heaven and the downfall of religion; they remembered that in the last days perilous times shall come. The fire-worshippers considered the destruction of Thebarmes, and the extinction of the sacred fire, as ominous of the annihilation of every good principle on earth. Both the Persians and the Christians had so long regarded their faith as a portion of the State, and reckoned political and military power as the inseparable allies of their ecclesiastical establishments, that they considered their misfortunes a proof of divine reprobation. Both orthodox Magians and orthodox Christians saw the abomination of desolation in their holy places, and their traditions and their prophets told them that this was the sign which was to herald the approach of the last great and terrible day.

The fame of Heraclius would have rivalled that of Alexander, Hannibal, or Caesar, had he expired at Jerusalem, after the successful termination of the Persian war. He had established peace throughout the empire, restored the strength of the Roman government, revived the power of Christianity in the East, and replanted the holy cross on Mount Calvary. His glory admitted of no addition. Unfortunately, the succeeding years of his reign have, in the general opinion, tarnished his fame. Yet these years were devoted to many arduous labours; and it is to the wisdom with which he restored the strength of his government during this time of peace that we must attribute the energy of the Asiatic Greeks who arrested the great tide of Mohammedan conquest at the foot of

Mount Taurus. Though the military glory of Heraclius was obscured by the brilliant victories of the Saracens, still his civil administration ought to receive its meed of praise, when we compare the resistance made by the empire which he reorganized with the facility which the followers of Mahomet found in extending their conquests over every other land from India to Spain.

The policy of Heraclius was directed to the establishment of a bond of union, which should connect all the provinces of his empire into one body, and he hoped to replace the want of national unity by identity of religious belief. The church was closely connected with the people, and the emperor, as political head of the church, hoped to direct a well-organized body of churchmen. But Heraclius engaged in the impracticable task of imposing a rule of faith on all his subjects, without assuming the character of a saint or the authority of a prophet. His measures, consequently, like most religious reforms which are adopted solely from political motives, only produced additional discussions and difficulties. In the year 630, he propounded the doctrine that in Christ, after the union of the two natures, there was but one will and one operation. Without gaining over any great body of the schismatics whom he wished to restore to the communion of the established church, by his new rule of faith, he was himself generally stigmatized as a heretic. The epithet monothelite was applied to him and his doctrine, to show that neither was orthodox. In the hope of putting an end to the disputes which he had rashly awakened, he again, in 639, attempted to legislate for the church, and published his celebrated Ecthesis, which attempts to remedy the effects of his prior proceedings, by forbidding all controversy on the question of the single or double operation of the will in Christ, but which nevertheless includes a declaration in favour of unity. The bishop of Rome, who directed the proceedings of the Latin clergy, and who aspired at increasing his spiritual authority, though he did not contemplate assuming political independence, entered actively into the opposition excited by the publication of the Ecthesis, and was supported by a considerable party in the Extern church.

It cannot appear surprising that Heraclius should have endeavoured to reunite the Nestorians, Eutychians, and Jacobites, to the established church, when we remember how closely the influence of the church was connected with the administration of the State, and how completely religious passions replaced national feelings in these secondary ages of Christianity. The union was an indispensable step to the re-establishment of the imperial power in the provinces of Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Armenia; and it must not be overlooked that the theological speculations and ecclesiastical reforms of Heraclius were approved of by the wisest councillors whom he had been able to select to aid him in the government of the empire. The state of society required some strong remedy, and Heraclius only erred in adopting the plan which had always been pursued by absolute monarchs, namely, that of making the sovereign's opinion the rule of conduct for his subjects. We can hardly suppose that Heraclius would have succeeded better, had he assumed the character or deserved the veneration due to a saint. The marked difference which existed between the higher and educated classes in the East, and the ignorant and superstitious populace, rendered it next to impossible that any line of conduct could secure the judgment of the learned, and awaken the fanaticism of the people. As a farther apology for Heraclius, it may be

noticed that his acknowledged power over the orthodox clergy was much greater than that which was possessed by the Byzantine emperors at a later period, or that which was admitted by the Latin Church after its separation. In spite of all the advantages which he possessed, his attempt ended in a signal failure; yet no experience could ever induce his successors to avoid his error. His effort to strengthen his power, by establishing a principle of unity, aggravated all the evils which he intended to cure; for while the Monophysites and the Greeks were as little disposed to unite as ever, the authority of the Eastern Church, as a body, was weakened by the creation of a new schism, and the incipient divisions between the Greeks and the Latins, assuming a national character, began to prepare the way for the separation of the two churches.

The hope of attaining unity is one of the inveterate delusions of mankind. While Heraclius was endeavouring to restore the strength of the empire in the East, by enforcing unity of religious views, Mahomet, by a juster application of the aspirations of mankind after unity, succeeded in uniting Arabia into one state by persuading it to adopt one religion. The first attacks of the followers of Mahomet on the Christians were directed against those provinces of the Roman Empire which Heraclius had been anxiously endeavouring to reunite in spirit to his government. The difficulties of their administration had compelled the emperor to fix his residence for some years in Syria, and he was well aware of the uncertainty of their allegiance, before the Saracens commenced their invasion. The successes of the Mohammedan arms, and the retreat of the emperor, carrying off with him the holy cross from Jerusalem, have induced historians to suppose that his later years were spent in sloth, and marked by weakness. His health, however, was in so precarious a state, that he could no longer direct the operations of his army in person; at times, indeed, he was incapable of all bodily exertion. Yet the resistance which the Saracens encountered in Syria presents a strong contrast to the ease with which it had yielded to the Persians at the commencement of the emperor's reign, and attests that his administration had not been without fruit. Many of his reforms could only have been effected after the conclusion of the Persian war, when he recovered possession of Syria and Egypt. He seems, indeed, never to have omitted an opportunity of strengthening his position; and when a chief of the Huns or Bulgarians threw off his allegiance to the Avars, Heraclius is recorded to have immediately availed himself of the opportunity to form an alliance, in order to circumscribe the power of his dangerous northern enemy. Unfortunately, few traces can be gleaned from the Byzantine writers of the precise acts by which he effected his reforms; and the most remarkable facts, illustrating the political history of the time, must be collected from incidental notices, preserved in the treatise of the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, concerning the administration of the empire, written for the instruction of his son Romanus, in the middle of the tenth century.

Though Heraclius failed in gaining over the Syrians and Egyptians, yet he succeeded completely in reuniting the Greeks of Asia Minor to his government, and in attaching them to the empire. The moment the Mohammedan armies were compelled to rely solely on their military skill and religious enthusiasm, and ceased to derive any aid from the hostile feeling of the inhabitants to the imperial government, their career of conquest was checked; and almost a century before Charles Martel stopped their

progress in the west of Europe, the Greeks had arrested their conquests in the East, by the steady resistance which they offered in Asia Minor.

The difficulties of Heraclius were very great. The Roman armies were still composed of a rebellious soldiery collected from many discordant nations; and the only leaders whom the emperor could trust with important military commands were his immediate relations, like his brother Theodore, and his son Heraclius Constantine, or soldiers of fortune who could not aspire to the imperial dignity. The apostasy and treachery of a considerable number of Roman officers in Syria, warranted Heraclius in regarding the defence of that province as utterly hopeless; but the meagre historians of his reign can hardly be received as conclusive authorities, to prove that on his retreat he displayed an unseemly despair, or a criminal indifference. The fact that he carried the holy cross, which he had restored to Jerusalem, along with him to Constantinople, attests that he had lost all expectation of defending the Holy City; but his exclamation of 'Farewell, Syria!' was doubtless uttered in the bitterness of his heart, on seeing a great part of the labours of his life for the restoration of the Roman empire utterly vain. The disease which had long undermined his constitution, put an end to his life about five years after his return to Constantinople. He died in March 641, after one of the most remarkable reigns recorded in history; a reign chequered by the greatest successes and reverses, during which the social condition of mankind underwent a mighty revolution. Yet there is, unfortunately, no period of mans annals covered with greater obscurity.

CHAPTER V

CONDITION OF THE GREEKS FROM THE MOHAMMEDAN INVASION OF SYRIA TO THE EXTINCTION OF THE ROMAN POWER IN THE EAST.

A.D. 633-716

Sect. I.

The Roman Empire gradually changed into the Byzantine

The precise date at which the Eastern Empire lost its Roman character has been variously fixed. Gibbon remarks, that Tiberius by the Arabs, and Maurice by the Italians, are distinguished as the first of the Greek Caesars, as the founders of a new dynasty and empire. But if manners, language, and religion are to decide concerning the commencement of the Byzantine empire, the preceding pages have shown that its origin must be carried back to an earlier period; while, if the administrative peculiarities in the form of government be taken as the ground of decision, the Roman Empire may be considered as indefinitely prolonged with the existence of the title of emperor of the Romans, which the sovereigns of Constantinople continued to retain as long as Constantinople was ruled by Christian princes. The privileges and the prejudices of the governing classes, both in Church and State, kept them completely separated from every race of subjects, and rendered the imperial administration, and the people of the empire, two distinct bodies, with different, and frequently adverse views and interests. Even when the conquests of the Ottoman Turks had reduced the Greek empire to a narrow strip of territory in the vicinity of Constantinople, some traditions of the Roman Empire continued to animate the government, and guide the councils of the emperor. The period, therefore, at which the Roman empire of the East terminated, is decided by the events which confined the authority of the imperial government to those provinces where the Greeks formed the majority of the population; and it is marked by the adoption of Greek as the language of the government, by the prevalence of Greek civilization, and by the identification of the nationality of the people and the policy of the emperors with the Greek church. This occurred when the Saracen conquests severed from the empire all those provinces which possessed a native population distinct from the Greeks by language, literature, and religion. The central government of Constantinople was then compelled to fall back on the interests and passions of the remaining inhabitants, who were chiefly Greeks; and though Roman principles of administration continued to exercise a powerful influence in separating the aristocracy, both in Church and State, from the body of the people, still public opinion among the educated classes began to exert some influence on the administration, and that public opinion was in its character entirely Greek. Yet, as it was by no means identified with the interests and feelings of the native inhabitants of Hellas, it is correctly termed

Byzantine, and the empire is, consequently, justly called the Byzantine Empire. Alexander the Great, during his short and brilliant career, implanted some habits and institutions in the lands he subdued, which outlived the authority of the Romans, though they ruled many of his conquests for 700 years, and at last the Eastern Empire identified itself with the feelings and interests of that portion of the Greek nation which owed its political existence to the Macedonian conquests. On the numbers, wealth, and power of this class the emperor and the Orthodox Church were, after the commencement of the eighth century, compelled to depend for the defence of the government and the Christian religion.

The difficulty of fixing the precise moment which marks the end of the Roman empire, arises from the slow transformation it underwent in changing its Latin for its Greek character, and because the change resulted rather from the internal evils nourished in its political organization, than from the attacks of its external enemies. The termination of the Roman power was consequently nothing more than the reform of a corrupt and antiquated government, and its transformation into a new state by the power of time and circumstance was feebly aided by the intellects and acts of superstitious and servile statesmen. The Goths, Huns, Avars, Persians, and Saracens, all failed as completely in overthrowing the Roman Empire, as the Mohammedans did in destroying the Christian religion. Even the final loss of Egypt, Syria, and Africa only reveals the transformation of the Roman Empire, when the consequences resulting from their loss produced visible effects on the internal government The Roman Empire seems, therefore, really to have terminated with the anarchy which followed the murder of Justinian II, the last sovereign of the family of Heraclius; and Leo III, or the Isaurian, who identified the imperial administration with ecclesiastical forms and questions, must be ranked as the first of the Byzantine monarchs, though neither the emperor, the clergy, nor the people perceived the change in their position, which makes the establishment of this new era historically correct.

Under the sway of the Heraclian family, the extent of the empire was circumscribed nearly within the bounds which it continued to occupy during many subsequent centuries. As this diminution of territory was chiefly caused by the separation of provinces, inhabited by people of different races, manners, and opinions, and placed, by a concurrence of circumstances, in opposition to the central government, it is not improbable that the empire was strengthened by the loss. The connection between the court and the Greek nation became closer; and though this connection, in so far as it affected the people, was chiefly based on religious feelings, and operated with greater force on the inhabitants of the cities than on the whole body of the population, still its effect was extremely beneficial to the imperial government.

While the Roman and Persian empires, ruined by their devastating wars, rapidly declined in wealth, power, and population, two nations, which had previously exercised no influence on civilization, suddenly became so powerful as to become the arbiters of the fate of mankind. The Turks in the north of Asia, and the Arabs in the south, were now placed in immediate contact with the civilized portion of mankind. The Turkish power of this time, however, never came into direct military relations with the Roman Empire, nor did the conquests of this race immediately affect the political and social condition of the Greeks, until some centuries later. With the Arabs, or Saracens, the case

was very different. As they were placed on the confines of Syria, Egypt, and Persia, the wars of Heraclius and Chosroes threw a considerable portion of the rich trade with Ethiopia, Southern Africa, and India, into their hands. The long hostilities between the two empires gave a constant occupation to the warlike population of Arabia, and directed the attention of the Arabs to views of extended national policy. The natural advantages of their unrivalled cavalry were augmented by habits of order and discipline, which they could never have acquired in their native deserts, but which they learned as mercenaries in the Roman service. The Saracens in the service of the empire are spoken of with praise by Heraclius in his last campaign, when they accompanied him into the heart of Persia. The increase of their commercial and military enterprise doubtless caused an increase of population. The edict of Justinian, which prohibited the exportation of grain from every port of Egypt except Alexandria, closed the canal of Suez, and put an end to the trade on the Red Sea, or at least threw whatever trade remained into the hands of the Arabians. Their intimate connection with the Roman and Persian armies revealed to them the weakness of the two empires; yet the extraordinary power and conquests of the Arabs must be attributed rather to the moral strength which the nation acquired by the influence of their prophet Mahomet, than to the extent of their improvement in military or political knowledge. The difference in the social circumstances of a declining and an advancing population must not be lost sight of in weighing the relative strength of nations, which appear the most dissimilar in wealth and population, and even in the extent of their military establishments. Nations which, like the inhabitants of the Roman and Persian empires in the seventh century, expend their whole revenues, public and private, in the course of the year, though composed of numerous and wealthy subjects, may prove weak when a sudden emergency requires extraordinary exertion; while a people with scanty revenues and small resources may, from its frugal habits and constant activity, command a larger revenue for great public works or military enterprises. In one case it may be impossible to assemble more than one-twentieth of the population under arms; in the other, it may be possible to take the field with one-fifth.

Sect. II.

Conquest of the Southern Provinces of the Empire of which the majority of the population was not Greek nor orthodox

Strange as were the vicissitudes in the fortunes of the Persian and Roman empires during the reigns of Chosroes and Heraclius, every event in their records sinks into insignificance when compared with the mighty influence which Mahomet, the prophet of Arabia, exercised on the political, moral, and religious condition of the countries whose possession these sovereigns so eagerly disputed. Historians are apt to be enticed from their immediate subject, in order to contemplate the personal history of a man who obtained so marvellous a dominion over the minds and actions of his followers; and whose talents laid the foundations of a political and religious system, which has ever since continued to govern millions of mankind, of various races and dissimilar manners.

The success of Mahomet as a law-giver, among the most ancient nations of Asia, and the stability of his institutions during a long series of generations, and in every condition of social polity, proves that this extraordinary man was formed by a rare combination of the qualities both of a Lycurgus and an Alexander, But still, in order to appreciate with perfect justness the influence of Mahomet on his own times, it is safer to examine the history of his contemporaries with reference to his conduct, and to fix our attention exclusively on his actions and opinions, than to trace from them the exploits of his followers, and attribute to them the rapid propagation of his religion. Even though it be admitted that Mahomet laid the foundations of his laws in the strongest principles of human nature, and prepared the fabric of his empire with the profoundest wisdom, still there can be no doubt that no human intelligence could, during his lifetime, have foreseen, and no combinations on the part of one individual could have insured, the extraordinary success of his followers. The laws which govern the moral world insure permanent success, even to the greatest minds, only as long as they form types of the mental feelings of their fellow-creatures. The circumstances of the age in which Mahomet lived, were indeed favourable to his career; they formed the mind of this wonderful man, who has left their impress, as well as that of his own character, on succeeding generations. He was born at a period of visible intellectual decline amongst the aristocratic and governing classes throughout the civilized world. Aspirations after something better than the then social condition of the bulk of mankind, had rendered the inhabitants of almost every country dissatisfied with the existing order of things. A better religion than the paganism of the Arabs was felt to be necessary in Arabia; and, at the same time, even the people of Persia, Syria, and Egypt, required something more satisfactory to their religious feelings than the disputed doctrines which the Magi, Jews, and Christians inculcated as the most important features of their respective religions, merely because they presented the points of greatest dissimilarity. The great success of Mani in propagating a new religion (for Manichaeism cannot properly be called a heresy) is a strong testimony of this feeling. The fate, too, of the Manicheans would probably have foreshadowed that of the Mohammedans, had the religion of Mahomet not presented to foreign nations a national cause as well as an universal creed. Had Mahomet himself met with the fate of Mani, it is not probable that his religion would have been more successful than that of his predecessor. But he found a whole nation in the full tide of rapid improvement, eagerly in search of knowledge and power. The excitement in the public mind of Arabia, which produced the mission of Mahomet, induced many other prophets to make their appearance during his lifetime. His superior talents, and his clearer perception of justice, and we may say, truth, destroyed all their schemes.

The misfortunes of the times created in the East a belief that unity was the thing principally wanting to cure existing evils, and secure the permanent happiness of mankind. This vague desire of unity is indeed no uncommon delusion of the human intellect Mahomet seized the idea; his creed, ‘there is but one God’, was a truth that insured universal assent; the addition, ‘and Mahomet is the prophet of God’, was a simple fact, which, if doubted, admitted of an appeal to the sword, an argument that, even to the minds of the Christian world, was long considered as an appeal to God. The principle of unity was soon embodied in the frame of Arabic society; the unity of God, the national unity of the Arabs, and the unity of the religious, civil, judicial, and military

administration, in one organ on earth, entitled the Mohammedans to assume, with justice, the name of Unitarians, a title in which they particularly gloried. Such sentiments, joined to the declaration made and long kept by the Saracens, that liberty of conscience was granted to all who put themselves under the protection of Islam, were enough to secure the goodwill of that numerous body of the population of both the Persian and the Roman empires which was opposed to the state religion, and which was continually exposed to persecution by these two bigoted governments. In Persia, Chosroes persecuted orthodox Christians with as much cruelty as Heraclius tormented Jews and heretics within the bounds of the empire. The ability with which Mahomet put forward his creed removed it entirely from the schools of theology, and secured among the people a secret feeling in favour of its justice, particularly when its votaries appeared as offering a refuge to the oppressed, and a protection against religious persecution.

As this work only proposes to notice the influence of Mohammedanism on the fortunes and condition of the Greek nation, it is not necessary to narrate in detail the progress of the Arab conquests in the Roman Empire. The first hostilities between the followers of Mahomet and the Roman troops occurred while Heraclius was at Jerusalem, engaged in celebrating the restoration of the holy cross, bearing it on his own shoulders up Mount Calvary, and persecuting the Jews by driving them out of their native city. (The holy cross was replaced in the Church of the Resurrection on the 14th of September, 629. In the month of Djoumadi I, in the eighth year of the Hegira, September, 629, war broke out between the Christian subjects of the empire and the Saracens, followers of Mahomet). In his desire to obtain the favour of Heaven by purifying the Holy City, he overlooked the danger which his authority might incur from the hatred and despair of his persecuted subjects. The first military operations of the Arabs excited little alarm in the minds of the emperor and his officers in Syria; the Roman forces had always been accustomed to repel the incursions of the Saracens with ease; the irregular cavalry of the desert, though often successful in plundering incursions, had hitherto proved ineffective against the regularly disciplined and completely armed troops of the empire. But a new spirit was now infused into the Arabian armies; and the implicit obedience which the troops of the Prophet paid to his commands, rendered their discipline as superior to that of the imperial forces, as their tactics and their arms were inferior.

Mahomet did not live to profit by the experience which his followers gained in their first struggle with the Romans. A long series of wars in Arabia ended in the destruction of many rival prophets, and at last united the Arabs into one great nation under the spiritual rule of Mahomet. But Aboubekr, who succeeded to his power as chief of the true believers, was compelled, during the first year of his government, to renew the contest, in consequence of fresh rebellions and insurrections of false prophets, who expected to profit by the death of Mahomet. When tranquillity was established in Arabia, Aboubekr commenced those wars for the propagation of Mohammedanism, which destroyed the Persian empire of the Sassanides, and eclipsed the power of Rome. The Christian Arabs who owned allegiance to Heraclius were first attacked in order to complete the unity of Arabia, by forcing them to embrace the religion of Mahomet. In the year 633 the Mohammedans invaded Syria, where their progress was rapid, although

Heraclius himself generally resided at Emesa or Antioch, in order to devote his constant attention to restoring Syria to a state of order and obedience. The imperial troops made considerable efforts to support the military renown of the Roman armies, but were almost universally unsuccessful. The emperor did not neglect his duty; he assembled all the troops that he could collect, and intrusted the command of the army to his brother Theodore, who had distinguished himself in the Persian wars by gaining an important victory in very critical circumstances. Vartan, who commanded after Theodore, had also distinguished himself in the last glorious campaign in Persia. Unfortunately the health of Heraclius prevented his taking the field in person. The absence of all moral checks in the Roman administration, and the total want of patriotism in the officers and troops at this period, rendered the personal influence of the emperor necessary at the head of the imperial armies, in order to preserve due subordination, and enforce union among the leading men in the empire, as each individual was always more occupied in intriguing to gain some advantage over his colleagues than in striving to advance the service of the State. The ready obedience and devoted patriotism of the Saracens formed a sad contrast to the insubordination and treachery of the Romans, and would fully explain the success of the Mohammedan arms, without the assistance of any very extraordinary impulse of religious zeal, with which, however, there can be no doubt the Arabs were deeply imbued. The easy conquest of Syria by the Arabs is by no means so wonderful as the facility with which they governed it when conquered, and the tranquillity of the population under their government.

Towards the end of the year 633, the troops of Aboubekr laid siege to Bostra, a strong frontier town of Syria, which was surrendered early in the following year by the treachery of its governor. During the campaign of 634 the Roman armies were defeated at Adjnadin, in the south of Palestine, and at a bloody and decisive battle on the banks of the river Yermouk, in which it is said that the imperial troops were commanded by the emperor’s brother Theodore. Theodore was replaced by Vartan, but the rebellion of Vartan’s army and another defeat terminated this general's career. In the third year of the war the Saracens gained possession of Damascus by capitulation, and they guaranteed to the inhabitants the full exercise of their municipal privileges, allowed them to use their local mint, and left the orthodox in possession of the great church of St. John. About the same time, Heraclius quitted Edessa and returned to Constantinople, carrying with him the holy cross, which he had recovered from the Persians, and deposited at Jerusalem with great solemnity only six years before, but which he now considered it necessary to remove into Europe for greater safety. His son, Heraclius Constantine, who had received the imperial title when an infant, remained in Syria to supply his place and direct the military operations for the defence of the province. The events of this campaign illustrate the feelings of the Syrian population. The Arabs plundered a great fair at the monastery of Abilkodos, about thirty miles from Damascus; and the Syrian towns, alarmed for their wealth, and indifferent to the cause of their rulers, began to negotiate separate truces with the Arabs. Indeed, wherever the imperial garrison was not sufficient to overawe the inhabitants, the native Syrians sought to make any arrangement with the Arabs which would insure their towns from plunder, feeling satisfied that the Arab authorities could not use their power with greater rapacity and cruelty than the imperial officers. The garrison of Emesa defended itself for a year in the vain hope of being relieved by the Roman army, and they obtained favourable

terms from the Saracens, even after this long defence. Arethusa (Restan), Epiphanea (Hama), Larissa (Schizar), and Heliopolis (Baalbec), all entered into treaties, which led to their becoming tributary to the Saracen. Chalcis (Kinesrin) alone was plundered as a punishment for its tardy submission, or for some violation of a truce. No general arrangements, either for defence or submission, were adopted by the Christians, whose ideas of political union had been utterly extinguished by the Roman power, and who were now satisfied if they could preserve their lives and properties, without seeking any guarantee for the future. The Romans retained some hope of reconquering Syria, until the loss of another decisive battle in the year 636 compelled them to abandon the province. In the following year, A.D. 637, the Arabs advanced to Jerusalem, and the surrender of the holy city was accompanied by some particular arrangements between the patriarch Sophronius and the caliph Omar, who repaired in person to Palestine to take possession of so distinguished a conquest. The Christian patriarch looked rather to the protection of his own bishopric than to his duty to his country and his sovereign. The facility with which the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius, at this time, and the patriarch of Constantinople, Gennadius, at the time of the conquest of the Byzantine Empire by Mohammed II (A.D. 1453), became the ministers of their Mohammedan conquerors, shows the slight hold which national feelings retained over the minds of the orthodox Greek clergy. It appears strange that Sophronius, who was the head of a Greek and Melchite congregation, living in the midst of a numerous and hostile Jacobite population, should have so readily consented to abandon his connection with the Greek empire and the orthodox church, when both religion and policy seemed so strongly to demand greater firmness; and on this very account, his conduct must be admitted to afford evidence of the humanity and good faith with which the early Mohammedans fulfilled their promises. The state of society in the Roman provinces rendered it impossible to replace the great losses which the armies had suffered in the Syrian campaigns; and the financial resources of the empire forbade any attempt to raise a mercenary force among the northern nations sufficiently powerful to meet the Saracens in the field. Yet the exertions of Heraclius were so great that he concentrated an army at Amida (Diarbekr) in the year 638, which made a bold attempt to regain possession of the north of Syria. Emesa was besieged; but the Saracens soon assembled an overwhelming force; the Romans were defeated, the conquest of Syria was completed, and Mesopotamia was invaded. The subjection of Syria and Palestine was not effected by the Saracens until they had laboured through five vigorous campaigns, and fought several bloody battles. The contest affords conclusive testimony that the reforms of Heraclius had already restored the discipline and courage of the Roman armies; but, at the same time, the indifference of the native population to the result of the wars testifies with equal certainty that he had made comparatively small progress in his civil and financial improvements.

The Arab conquest not only put an end to the political power of the Romans, which had lasted seven hundred years, but it also soon rooted out every trace of the Greek civilisation introduced by the conquests of Alexander the Great, which had flourished in the country for upwards of nine centuries. A considerable number of native Syrians endeavoured to preserve their independence, and retreated into the fastnesses of Mount Lebanon, where they continued to defend themselves. Under the name of Mardaltes, they soon became formidable to the Mohammedans, and for some

time checked the power of the caliphs in Syria, and by the diversions which they made whenever the arms of the Arabs were employed in Asia Minor, they contributed to arrest their progress. The year after Syria was subdued, Mesopotamia was invaded, and proved an easy conquest, as its imperial governors and the inhabitants of the cities readily entered into treaties with the Mohammedans.

As soon as the Arabs had completed the conquest of Syria, they invaded Egypt. The national and religious hostility which prevailed between the native population and the Greek colonists, insured the Mohammedans a welcome from the Egyptians; but at the same time, this very circumstance excited the Greeks to make the most determined resistance. The patriarch Cyrus had adopted the Monothelite opinions of his sovereign, and this rendered his position uneasy amidst the orthodox Greeks of Alexandria. Anxious to avert any disturbance in the province, he conceived the idea of purchasing peace for Egypt from the Saracens, by paying them an annual tribute; and he entered into negotiations for this purpose, in which Mokaukas, who remained at the head of the fiscal department, joined him. The Emperor Heraclius, informed of this intrigue, sent an Armenian governor, Manuel, with a body of troops, to defend the province, and ordered the negotiations to be broken off. The fortune of the Arabs again prevailed, and the Roman army was defeated. Amrou, the Saracen general, having taken Pelusium, laid siege to Misr, or Babylon, the chief native city of Egypt, and the seat of the provincial administration. The treachery or patriotism of Mokaukas, for his position warrants either supposition, induced him to join the Arabs, and assist them in capturing the town. A capitulation was concluded, by which the native Egyptians retained possession of all their property, and enjoyed the free exercise of their religion as Jacobites, on paying a tribute of two pieces of gold for every male inhabitant. If the accounts of historians can be relied on, it would seem that the population suffered less from vicious administration in Egypt than in any other part of the Roman Empire; for about the time of its conquest by the Romans it contained seven millions and a half, exclusive of Alexandria, and its population was now estimated at six millions. This is by no means impossible, for the most active cause of the depopulation of the Roman Empire arose from the neglect of all those accessories of civilization which facilitate the distribution and circulation as well as the production of the necessaries of life. From neglect of this kind Egypt had suffered comparatively little, as the natural advantages of the soil, and the physical conformation of the country, intersected by one mighty river, had compensated for the supineness of its rulers. The Nile was the great road of the province, and nature kept it constantly available for transport at the cheapest rate, for the current enabled the heaviest laden boats, and even the rudest rafts, to descend the river with their cargoes rapidly and securely; while the north wind, blowing steadily for almost nine months in the year, enabled every boat that could hoist a sail to stem the current, and reach the limits of the province with as much certainty, if not with such rapidity, as a modem steam-boat. And when the waters of the Nile were separated over the Delta, they became a valuable property to corporations and individuals, whose rights the Roman law respected, and whose interests and wealth were sufficient to keep in repair the canals of irrigation; so that the vested capital of Egypt suffered little diminution, while war and oppression annihilated the accumulations of ages over the rest of the world. The immense wealth and importance of Alexandria, the only port which Egypt

possessed for communicating with the empire, still made it one of the first cities in the world for riches and population, though it suffered severely by the Persian conquest.

The canal which connected the Nile with the Red Sea furnished the means of transporting the agricultural produce of the rich valley of Egypt to the arid coast of Arabia, and created and nourished a trade which added considerably to the wealth and population of both countries. This canal, in its most improved state, commenced at Babylon, and ended at Arsinoe (Suez). It fertilized a large district on its banks, which has again relapsed into the same condition as the rest of the desert, and it created an oasis of verdure on the shore of the Red Sea. Arsinoe flourished amidst groves of palm-trees and sycamores, with a branch of the Nile flowing beneath its walls, where Suez now withers in a dreary waste, destitute alike of vegetables and of potable water, which are transported from Cairo for the use of the travellers who arrive from India. This canal was anciently used for the transport of large and bulky commodities, for which land carriage would have proved either impracticable or too expensive. By means of it, Trajan transported from the quarries on the Red Sea to the shores of the Mediterranean the columns and vases of porphyry with which he adorned Rome. It may have been neglected during the troubles in the reigns of Phocas and Heraclius, while the Persians occupied the country; but it was in such a state of preservation as to require but slight repairs from the earlier caliphs. A year after Amrou completed the conquest of Egypt, he established the water communication between the Nile and the Red Sea; and the large supplies of grain which he transported to the Red Sea by the canal of Suez, enabled him to relieve the inhabitants of Mecca, who were suffering from famine. After more than one interruption from neglect, it was allowed to become nearly useless for navigation by the policy of the caliphs of Bagdad, and was finally closed by Almanzor A. D. 762-767.

As soon as the Arabs had settled the affairs of the native population, they laid siege to Alexandria. This city made a vigorous defence, and Heraclius exerted himself to succour it; but, though it held out for several months, it was taken by the Arabs, when the troubles which occurred at Constantinople after the death of Heraclius prevented the Roman government from sending reinforcements to the garrison. The confidence of the Saracens induced them to leave a feeble garrison for its defence; and the Roman troops, watching an opportunity for renewing the war, recovered the city, and massacred the Mohammedans, but were soon compelled to retire to their ships, and make their escape. The conquest of Alexandria is said to have cost the Arabs twenty-three thousand men; and they are accused of using their victory like rude barbarians, because they destroyed the libraries and works of art of the Greeks, though a Mohammedan historian might appeal to the permanence of their power, and the increase in the numbers of the votaries of the Prophet, as a proof of the profound policy and statesman-like views of the men who rooted out every trace of an adverse civilization and a hostile race. The professed object of the Saracens was to replace Greek persecution by Mohammedan toleration. Political sagacity convinced the Arabs that it was necessary to exterminate Greek civilization in order to destroy Greek influence. The Goths, who sought only to plunder the Roman Empire, might spare the libraries of the Greeks, but the Mohammedans, whose object was to convert as well as subdue, considered it a duty to root out everything that presented any obstacle to the ultimate success of their schemes for the

advent of Mohammedan civilization. In less than five years (A. D. 646), a Roman army, sent by the emperor Constans under the command of Manuel, again recovered possession of Alexandria, by the assistance of the Greek inhabitants who had remained in the place; but the Mohammedans soon appeared before the city, and, with the assistance of the Egyptians, compelled the imperial troops to abandon their conquest. The walls of Alexandria were thrown down, the Greek population driven out, and the commercial importance of the city destroyed. Thus perished one of the most remarkable colonies of the Greek nation, and one of the most renowned seats of that Greek civilization of which Alexander the Great laid the foundations in the East, after having flourished in the highest degree of prosperity for nearly a thousand years. (Alexandria was founded B.C. 332. After the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens, the Egyptian or Coptic language began to give way to the Arabic, because the number of the Copts was gradually reduced by the oppressive government of their new masters. Amrou, the conqueror of Egypt, who governed it several years, is said to have left at his death a sum equal to eight millions sterling, accumulated by his extortions. The caliph Othman is said to have left only seven millions in the Arabian treasury at his death. The officers soon became richer than the State).

The conquest of Cyrenaica followed the subjugation of Egypt as an immediate consequence. The Greeks are said to have planted their first colonies in this country six hundred and thirty-one years before the Christian era and twelve centuries of uninterrupted possession appeared to have constituted them the perpetual tenants of the soil; but the Arabs were very different masters from the Romans, and under their domination the Greek race soon became extinct in Africa. It is not necessary here to follow the Saracens in their conquests westward. The dominant people with whom they had to contend in the western provinces, was Latin, and not Greek. The ruling classes were attached to the Roman government, though often rendered discontented by the tyranny of the emperors; they defended themselves with far more courage and obstinacy than the Syrians and Egyptians. The war was marked by considerable vicissitudes, and it was not till the year 698 that Carthage fell permanently into the hands of the Saracens, who, according to their usual policy, threw down the walls and ruined the public buildings, in order to destroy every trace of the Roman government in Africa. The Saracens were singularly successful in all their projects of destruction; in a short time both Latin and Greek civilization was exterminated on the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

The success of the Mohammedan religion, under the earlier caliphs, did not keep pace with the progress of the Arab arms. Of all the native populations of the countries subdued, the Arabs of Syria alone appear to have immediately adopted the new religion of their co-national race; but the great mass of the native races in Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Cyrenaica, and Africa, clung firmly to their faith, and the decline of Christianity in all these countries is to be attributed rather to the extermination than to the conversion of the Christian inhabitants. The decrease in the number of the Christians was invariably attended by a decrease in the numbers of the inhabitants, and arose evidently from the oppressive treatment which they suffered under the Mohammedan rulers of these countries,—a system of tyranny which was at last carried so far as to reduce whole provinces to unpeopled deserts, ready to receive an Arab population,

almost in a nomad state, as the successors of the exterminated Christians. It was only when Mohammedanism presented its system of unity, in opposition to the evident falsity of idolatry, or to the unintelligible discussions of an incomprehensible theology, that the human mind was easily led away by its religious doctrines, which addressed the passions of mankind rather too palpably to be secure of commanding their reason. The earliest Mohammedan conversions of foreign races were made among the subjects of Persia, who mingled native or provincial superstitions with the Magian faith, and among the Christians of Nubia and the interior of Africa, whose religion may have departed very far from the pure doctrines of Christianity. The success of the Mohammedans was generally confined to barbarous and ignorant converts; and the more civilized people retained their faith as long as they could secure their national existence. This fact contrasts remarkably with the progress of Christianity. In one case success was obtained solely by moral influence; in the other principally by material power. The peculiar causes which enabled the Christians of the seventh and eighth centuries, in the debased mental condition into which they had fallen, to resist Mohammedanism, and to prefer extinction to apostasy, deserve a more accurate investigation than they have yet met with from historians.

The construction of the political government of the Saracen Empire was far more imperfect than the creed of the Mohammedans, and shows that Mahomet neither contemplated extensive foreign conquests, nor devoted the energies of his powerful mind to the consideration of the questions of administration which would arise out of the difficult task of ruling a numerous and wealthy population possessed of property but deprived of civil rights. No attempt was made to arrange any systematic form of political government, and the whole power of the State was vested in the hands of the chief priest of the religion, who was only answerable for the due exercise of this extraordinary power to God, his own conscience, and his subjects' patience. The moment, therefore, that the responsibility created by national feelings, military companionship, and exalted enthusiasm, ceased to operate on the minds of the caliphs, their administration became far more oppressive than that of the Roman emperors. No local magistrates elected by the people, and no parish priests, connected by their feelings and interests both with their superiors and inferiors, bound society together by common ties; and no system of legal administration, independent of the military and financial authorities, preserved the property of the people from the rapacity of the government. Socially and politically the Saracen Empire was little better than the Gothic, Hunnish, and Avar monarchies; and that it proved more durable, is to be attributed to the powerful enthusiasm of Mahomet’s religion, which tempered for some time its avarice and tyranny.

Even the military successes of the Arabs are to be ascribed in some measure to accidental causes, over which they themselves exercised no control. The number of disciplined and veteran troops who had served in the Roman and Persian armies could not have been matched by the Arabian armies. But no inconsiderable part of the followers of Mahomet had been trained in the Persian war, and the religious zeal of neophytes, who regarded war as a sacred duty, enabled the youngest recruits to perform the service of veterans. The enthusiasm of the Arabians was more powerful than the discipline of the Roman troops, and their strict obedience to their leaders compensated

in a great degree for their inferiority in arms and tactics. But a long war proved that the military qualities of the Roman armies were more lasting than those of the Arabs. The important and rapid conquests of the Mohammedans were assisted by the religious dissensions and national antipathies which placed the great bulk of the people of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt in hostility to the Roman government, and neutralized many of the advantages which they might have derived from their military skill and discipline amidst a favourable population. The Roman government had to encounter the excited energies of the Arabs, at a moment, too, when its resources were exhausted and its strength was weakened by a long war with Persia, which had for years paralyzed the influence of the central executive administration, and enabled numerous chiefs to acquire an independent authority. These chiefs were generally destitute of every feeling of patriotism; nor can this excite our wonder, for the feeling of patriotism was then an unknown sentiment in every rank of society throughout the Eastern Empire ; their conduct was entirely directed by ambition and interest, and they sought only to retain possession of the districts which they governed. The example of Mokaukas in Egypt, and of Youkinna at Aleppo, are remarkable instances of the power and treasonable disposition of many of these imperial officers. But almost every governor in Syria displayed equal faithlessness. Yet in spite of the treason of some officers, and the submission of others, the defence of Syria does not appear to have been on the whole disgraceful to the Roman army, and the Arabs purchased their conquest by severe fighting and at the cost of much blood. An anecdote mentioned in the History of the Saracens shows that the importance of order and discipline was not overlooked by Khaled, the Sword of God, as he was styled by his admiring countrymen; and that his great success was owing to military skill, as well as religious enthusiasm and fiery valour. 'Mead', says the historian, encouraged the Saracens with the hopes of Paradise, and the enjoyment of everlasting life, if they fought for the cause of God and religion. "Softly", said Khaled; "let me get them into good order before you set them upon fighting". Under all the disadvantages mentioned, it is not surprising that the hostile feelings of a numerous, wealthy, and heretical portion of the Syrian community, willing to purchase peace and toleration at any reasonable sacrifice, should have turned the scale against the Romans. The struggle became doubtful from the moment that the people of Damascus concluded an advantageous truce with the Arabs. Emesa and other cities could then venture to follow the example, merely for the purpose of securing their own property, without any reference to the general interests of the province, or the military plans of defence of the Roman government. Yet one of the chiefs, who held a portion of the coast of Phoenicia, succeeded in maintaining his independence against the whole power of the Saracens, and formed in the mountains of Lebanon a small Christian principality, of which the town of Byblos (Djebail) was the capital. Round this nucleus some native Syrians, called Mardaites, rallied in considerable force.

The great influence exercised by the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria tended also to weaken and distract the measures adopted for the defence of Syria and Egypt, Their willingness to negotiate with the Arabs, who were resolved only to be satisfied with conquest, placed the Roman armies and government in a disadvantageous position. Where the chances of war are nearly balanced, the good will of the people will eventually decide the contest in favour of the party that they espouse. Now there is strong reason to believe, that even a majority of the orthodox subjects of the Roman

empire, in the provinces which were conquered during the reign of Heraclius, were the well-wishers of the Arab; that they regarded the emperor with aversion as a heretic; and that they fancied they were sufficiently guaranteed against the oppression of their new masters, by the rigid observance of justice which characterized their earlier acts. A temporary diminution of tribute, or escape from some oppressive act of administration, induced them to compromise their religious position and their national independence. The fault is too natural to be severely blamed. They feared that Heraclius might commence a persecution in order to enforce conformity with his monothelite opinions, for of religious liberty the age had no just conception; and the Syrians and Egyptians had been slaves for far too many centuries to be impressed with any idea of the sacrifices which a nation ought to make in order to secure its independence. The moral tone adopted by the Caliph Aboubekr, in his instructions to the Syrian army, was also so unlike the principles of the Roman government, that it must have commanded profound attention from a subject people. “Be just”, said the proclamation of Aboubekr, “the unjust never prosper; be valiant, die rather than yield; be merciful, slay neither old men, children, nor women. Destroy neither fruit-trees, grain, nor cattle; keep your word, even to your enemies; molest not those men who live retired from the world, but compel the rest of mankind to become Mussulmans, or to pay us tribute, — if they refuse these terms, slay them”. Such a proclamation announced to Jews and Christians sentiments of justice and principles of toleration which neither Roman emperors nor orthodox bishops had ever adopted as the rule of their conduct. This remarkable document must have made a deep impression on the minds of an oppressed and persecuted people. Its effect was soon increased by the wonderful spectacle of the Caliph Omar riding into Jerusalem on the camel which carried all the baggage and provisions which he required for his journey from Mecca. The contrast thus offered between the rude simplicity of a great conqueror and the extravagant pomp of the provincial representatives of a defeated emperor must have embittered the hatred already strong in an oppressed people against a rapacious government. Had the Saracens been able to unite a system of judicial legislation and administration, and of elective local and municipal governments for their conquered subjects, with the vigour of their own central power and the religious monarchy of their own national government, it is difficult to conceive that any limits could ultimately have been opposed to their authority by the then existing states into which the world was divided.

But the political system of the Saracens was of itself utterly barbarous, and it only caught a passing gleam of justice, while worldly prudence tempered the religious feelings of their prophet’s doctrines. A remarkable feature of the policy by which they maintained their power over the provinces which they conquered, ought not to be overlooked, as it illustrates both their confidence in their military superiority and the low state of their social civilization. They generally destroyed the walls of the cities which they subdued, whenever the fortifications offered peculiar facilities for defence, or contained a native population active and bold enough to threaten danger from rebellion. Many celebrated Roman cities were destroyed, and the Saracen administration was transferred to new capitals, founded where a convenient military station for overawing the country could be safely established. Thus Alexandria, Babylon or Misr, Carthage, Ctesiphon, and Babylon were destroyed, and Fostat, Kairowan, Cufa, Bussora, and Bagdad rose to supplant them.

Sect. III.

Constans II. A.D. 641-668

After the death of Heraclius, the short reigns of his sons, Constantine III, or Heraclius Constantine, and Heracleonas, were disturbed by court intrigues and the disorders which result from the want of a settled law of succession. In such conjunctures, the people and the courtiers learn alike to traffic in sedition. Before the termination of the year in which Heraclius died, his grandson, Constans II, mounted the imperial throne at the age of eleven, in consequence of the death of his father Constantine and the dethronement of his uncle Heracleonas. An oration made by the young prince to the senate after his accession, in which he invoked the aid of that body, and spoke of their power in terms of reverence, warrants the conclusion that the official aristocracy had again recovered its influence over the imperial administration; and that, though the emperor's authority was still held to be absolute by the constitution of the empire, it was really controlled by the influence of the patricians and other great officers in the state.

Constans grew up to be a man of considerable abilities and of an energetic character, but possessed of violent passions, and destitute of all the amiable feelings of humanity. The early part of his reign was marked by the loss of several portions of the empire. The Lombards extended their conquests in Italy from the Maritime Alps to the frontiers of Tuscany; and the exarch of Ravenna was defeated with considerable loss near Modena; but still they were unable to make any serious impression on the exarchate. Armenia was compelled to pay tribute to the Saracens. Cyprus was rendered tributary to the caliph, though the amount of the tribute imposed was only seven thousand two hundred pieces of gold, which is said to have been half the amount previously paid to the emperor. But this trifling sum can have hardly amounted to the moiety of the surplus usually paid into the imperial treasury after the expenses of the local government were defrayed, and cannot have borne any relation to the amount of taxation levied by the Roman emperors in the island. It contrasts strangely with the large payments made by single cities for a year's truce in Syria, and the immense wealth collected by the Arabs in Syria, Egypt, Persia, and Africa. The commercial town of Aradus, in Syria, which had hitherto resisted the Saracens from the strength of its insular position, was now taken and destroyed. In a subsequent expedition, Cos was taken by the treachery of its bishop, and the city plundered and laid waste. Rhodes was then conquered, and its conquest is memorable for the destruction of the celebrated Colossus, which, though it fell about fifty-six years after its erection, had been, even in its prostrate condition, regarded as one of the wonders of the world. The admiration of the Greeks and Romans had protected it from destruction for nine centuries. The Arabs, to whom works of art possessed no value, broke it in pieces, and sold the bronze of which it was composed. The metal is said to have loaded nine hundred and eighty camels.

As soon as Constans was old enough to assume the direction of public business, the two great objects of his policy were the establishment of the absolute power of the

emperor over the Orthodox Church, and the recovery of the lost provinces of the empire. With the view of securing a perfect control over the ecclesiastical affairs of his dominions, he published an edict, called the Type, in the year 648, when he was only eighteen years old. It was prepared by Paul, the patriarch of Constantinople, and was intended to terminate the disputes produced by the Ecthesis of Heraclius. All parties were commanded by the Type to observe a profound silence on the previous quarrels concerning the operation of the will in Christ. Liberty of conscience was an idea almost unknown to any but the Mohammedans, so that Constans never thought of appealing to any such right; and no party in the Christian church was inclined to waive its orthodox authority of enforcing its own opinions upon others. The Latin Church, led by the Bishop of Rome, was always ready to oppose the Greek clergy, who enjoyed the favour of the imperial court, and this jealousy engaged the pope in violent opposition to the Type. But the bishop of Rome was not then so powerful as directly to question the authority of the emperor in regulating such matters. Perhaps it appeared to him hardly prudent to rouse the passions of a young prince of eighteen, who might prove not very bigoted in his attachment to any party, as, indeed, the provisions of the Type seemed to indicate. The pope Theodore, therefore, directed the whole of his ecclesiastical fury against the Patriarch of Constantinople, whom he excommunicated with circumstances of singular and impressive violence. He descended with his clergy into the dark tomb of St. Peter in the Vatican, now under the centre of the dome in the vault of the great Cathedral of Christendom, where he consecrated the sacred cup, and, having dipped his pen in the blood of Christ, signed an act of excommunication, condemning a brother bishop to the pains of hell. To this indecent proceeding Paul the Patriarch replied by persuading the emperor to persecute the clergy who adhered to the pope's opinion, in a more regular and legal manner, by depriving them of their temporalities, and condemning them to banishment. The pope was supported by nearly the whole body of the Latin clergy, and even by a considerable party in the East; yet, when Martin, the successor of Theodore, ventured to anathematize the Ecthesis and the Type, he was seized by order of Constans, conveyed to Constantinople, tried, and condemned on a charge of having supported the rebellion of the Exarch Olympius, and of having remitted money to the Saracens. The emperor, at the intercession of the Patriarch Paul, commuted his punishment to exile, and the pope died in banishment at Cherson. Though Constans did not succeed in inculcating his doctrines on the clergy, he succeeded in enforcing public obedience to his decrees in the church, and the fullest acknowledgment of his supreme power over the persons of the clergy. These disputes between the heads of the ecclesiastical administration of the Greek and Latin churches afforded an excellent pretext for extending the breach, which had its real origin in national feelings and clerical interests, and which was only widened by the not very intelligible distinctions of monothelitism. Constans himself, by his vigour and personal activity in this struggle, incurred the bitter hatred of a large portion of the clergy, and his conduct has been unquestionably the object of much misrepresentation and calumny.

The attention of Constans to ecclesiastical affairs induced him to visit Armenia, where his attempts to unite the people to his government by regulating the affairs of their church were as unsuccessful as his religious interference elsewhere. Dissensions were increased; one of the imperial officers of high rank rebelled; and the Saracens availed themselves of this state of things to invade both Armenia and Cappadocia, and

succeeded in rendering several districts tributary. The increasing power of Moawyah, the Arab general, induced him to form a project for the conquest of Constantinople, and he began to fit out a great naval expedition at Tripoli in Syria. A daring enterprise of two brothers, Christian inhabitants of the place, rendered the expedition abortive. These two Tripolitans and their partisans broke open the prisons in which the Roman captives were confined, and, placing themselves at the head of an armed band which they had hastily formed, seized the city, slew the governor, and burnt the fleet. A second armament was at length prepared by the energy of Moawyah, and as it was reported to be directed against Constantinople, the Emperor Constans took upon himself the command of his own fleet. He met the Saracen expedition off Mount Phoenix in Lycia, and attacked it with great vigour. The Roman fleet was utterly destroyed and twenty thousand Romans are said to have perished in the battle. The emperor himself owed his safety to the valour of one of the Tripolitan brothers, whose gallant defence of the imperial galley enabled the emperor to escape before its valiant defender was slain and the vessel fell into the hands of the Saracens. Constans retired to Constantinople, but the hostile fleet had suffered too much to attempt any farther operations, and the expedition was abandoned for that year. The death of Othman, and the pretensions of Moawyah to the caliphate, withdrew the attention of the Arabs from the empire for a short time, and Constans turned his forces against the Sclavonians, in order to deliver the European provinces from their ravages. They were totally defeated, numbers were carried off as slaves, and many were compelled to submit to the imperial authority. No certain grounds exist for determining whether this expedition was directed against the Sclavonians who had established themselves between the Danube and Mount Haemus, or against those who had settled in Macedonia. The name of no town is mentioned in the accounts of the campaign.

When the affairs of the European provinces were tranquillized Constans again prepared to engage the Arabs; and Moawyah, having need of all the forces he could command for his contest with All, the son-in-law of Mahomet, consented to make peace, on terms which contrast strangely with the perpetual defeats which Constans is represented by the orthodox historians of the empire to have suffered. The Saracens engaged to confine their forces within Syria and Mesopotamia, and Moawyah consented to pay Constans, for the cessation of hostilities, the sum of a thousand pieces of silver, and to furnish him with a slave and a horse for every day during which the peace should continue. A. D. 659.

During the subsequent year, Constans condemned to death his brother Theodosius, whom he had previously compelled to enter the priesthood. The cause of this crime, or the pretext for it, is not mentioned. From this brother's hand the emperor had often received the sacrament; and this fratricide is supposed to have rendered a residence at Constantinople insupportable to the criminal, who was reported nightly to behold the spectre of his brother offering him the consecrated cup, filled with human blood, and exclaiming, "Drink, brother!". Certain it is, that two years after his brother's death, Constans quitted his capital, with the intention of never returning; and he was only prevented, by an insurrection of the people, from carrying off the empress and his children. He meditated the reconquest of Italy from the Lombards, and proposed rendering Rome again the seat of empire. On his way to Italy the emperor stopped at

Athens, where he assembled a considerable body of troops. This casual mention of Athens by Latin writers affords strong evidence of the tranquil, flourishing, and populous condition of the city and country around. The Sclavonian colonies in Greece must, at this time, have owned perfect allegiance to the imperial power, or Constans would certainly have employed his army in reducing them to subjection. From Athens, the emperor sailed to Italy; he landed with his forces at Tarentum, and attempted to take Beneventum, the chief seat of the Lombard power in the south of Italy. His troops were twice defeated, and he then abandoned his projects of conquest.

The emperor himself visited Rome, where he remained only a fortnight According to the writers who describe the event, he consecrated twelve days to religious ceremonies and processions, and the remaining two he devoted to plundering the wealth of the church. His personal acquaintance with the affairs of Italy and the state of Rome soon convinced him that the eternal city was ill adapted for the capital of the empire, and he quitted it for Sicily, where he fixed on Syracuse for his future residence. Grimoald, the able monarch of the Lombards, and his son Romuald, the Duke of Beneventum, continued the war in Italy with vigour. Brundusium and Tarentum were captured, and the Romans were expelled from Calabria, so that Otranto and Gallipoli were the only towns on the eastern coast of which Constans retained possession.

When residing in Sicily, Constans directed his attention to the state of Africa. His measures are not detailed with precision, but were evidently distinguished by the usual energy and caprice which marked his whole conduct. He recovered possession of Carthage, and of several cities which the Arabs had rendered tributary; but he displeased the inhabitants of the province, by compelling them to pay to himself the same amount of tribute as they had agreed by treaty to pay to the Saracens; and as Constans could not expel the Saracen forces from the province, the amount of the public taxes of the Africans was thus often doubled,—since both parties were able to levy the contributions which they demanded. Moawyah sent an army from Syria, and Constans one from Sicily, to decide who should become sole master of the country. A battle was fought near Tripoli; and the army of Constans, consisting of thirty thousand men, was completely defeated. Yet the victorious Saracens were unable to take the small town of Geloula (Usula), until the accidental fall of a portion of the ramparts laid it open to their assault; and this trifling conquest was followed by no farther success. In the East, the empire was exposed to greater danger, yet the enemies of Constans were eventually unsuccessful in their projects. In consequence of the rebellion of the Armenian troops, whose commander, Sapor, assumed the title of emperor, the Saracens made a successful incursion into Asia Minor, captured the city of Amorium, in Phrygia, and placed in it a garrison of five thousand men; but the imperial general appointed by Constans soon drove out this powerful garrison, and recovered the place.

It appears, therefore, that in spite of all the defeats which Constans is reported to have suffered, the empire underwent no very sensible diminution of its territory during his reign, and he certainly left its military forces in a more efficient condition than he found them. He was assassinated at Syracuse, by an officer of his household, in the year 668, at the age of thirty-eight, after a reign of twenty-seven years. The fact of his having been murdered by one of his own household, joined to the capricious violence that marked many of his public acts, warrants the supposition that his character was of the

unamiable and unsteady nature, which rendered the accusation of fratricide, so readily believed by his contemporaries, by no means improbable. It must, however, be admitted, that the occurrences of his reign afford irrefragable testimony that his heretical opinions have induced orthodox historians to give an erroneous colouring to many circumstances, since the undoubted results do not correspond with their narrative of the passing events.

Sect. IV.

Constantine IV, yielded to the popular ecclesiastical party among the Greeks

Constantine IV, called Pogonatus, or the Bearded, has been regarded by posterity with a high degree of favour. Yet his merit seems to have consisted in his superior orthodoxy, rather than in his superior talents as emperor. The concessions which he made to the see of Rome, and the moderation that he displayed in all ecclesiastical affairs, placed his conduct in strong contrast with the stern energy with which his father had enforced the subjection of the orthodox ecclesiastics to the civil power, and gained for him the praise of the priesthood, whose eulogies have exerted no inconsiderable influence on all historians. Constantine, however, was certainly an intelligent and just prince, who, though he did not possess the stubborn determination and talents of his father, was destitute also of his violent passions and imprudent character.

As soon as Constantine was informed of the murder of his father, and that a rebel had assumed the purple in Sicily, he hastened thither in person to avenge his death and extinguish the rebellion. To satisfy his vengeance, the patrician Justinian, a man of high character, compromised in the rebellion, was treated with great severity, and his son Germanos with a degree of inhumanity that would have been recorded by the clergy against Constans as an instance of the grossest barbarity. (This Germanos, notwithstanding his mutilation by Constantine, became bishop of Cyzicus, and joined the Monothelites in the reign of Philippicus. He retracted, and was made patriarch of Constantinople by Anastasius II, and figured as an active defender of images against Leo III the Isaurian). The return of the emperor to Constantinople was signalized by a singular sedition of the troops in Asia Minor. They marched towards the capital, and having encamped on the Asiatic shores of the Bosphorus, demanded that Constantine should admit his two brothers, on whom he had conferred the rank of Augustus, to an equal share in the public administration, in order that the Holy Trinity in heaven, which governs the spiritual world, might be represented by a human trinity, to govern the political empire of the Christians. The very proposal is a proof of the complete supremacy of the civil over the ecclesiastical authority in the eyes of the people, and the strongest evidence, that in the public opinion of the age the emperor was regarded as the head of the church. Such reasoning as the rebels used could be rebutted by no arguments, and Constantine had energy enough to hang the leaders of the sedition, and sufficient moderation not to molest his brothers. But several years later, either from increased suspicions, or from some intrigues on their part, he deprived them of the rank

of Augustus, and condemned them to have their noses cut off (A.D. 681). The condemnation of his brother to death by Constans figures in history as one of the blackest crimes of humanity, while the barbarity of the orthodox Constantine is passed over as a lawful act. Both rest on the same authority on the testimony of Theophanes, the earliest Greek chronicler, and both may really have been acts of justice necessary for the security of the throne and the tranquillity of the empire. Constans was a man of a violent temper, and Constantine of a mild disposition; both may have been equally just, but both were, without doubt, unnecessarily severe. A brother's political offences could hardly merit a greater punishment from a brother than seclusion in a monastery, and the devotion of monks is not necessarily increased by the loss of their noses. (Theophanes says that the brothers of Constantine IV lost their noses in 609, but were not deprived of the imperial title until 681).

The great object of the imperial policy at this period was to oppose the progress of the Mohammedans. Constans had succeeded in arresting their conquests, but Constantine soon found that they would give the empire no rest unless he could secure it by his victories. He had hardly quitted Sicily to return to Constantinople, before an Arab expedition from Alexandria invaded the island, stormed the city of Syracuse, and after plundering the treasures accumulated by Constans, immediately abandoned the place. In Africa the war was continued with various success, but the Christians were long left without any succours from Constantine, while Moawyah supplied the Saracens with strong reinforcements. In spite of the courage and enthusiasm of the Mohammedans, the native Christian population maintained their ground with firmness, and carried on the war with such vigour, that in the year 676 a native African leader, who commanded the united forces of the Romans and Berbers, captured the newly founded city of Kairowan, which at a subsequent period became renowned as the capital of the Fatimite caliphs. (Kairowan was founded by Akbah in 670; taken by the Christians in 676; recovered by the Arabs under Zohair; but retaken by the Christians in 683; and finally conquered by Hassan in 697).

The ambition of the caliph Moawyah induced him to aspire to the conquest of the Roman Empire; and the military organization of the Arabian power, which enabled the caliph to direct the whole resources of his dominions to any single object of conquest, seemed to promise success to the enterprise. A powerful expedition was sent to beside Constantinople. The time required for the preparation of such an armament did not enable the Saracens to arrive at the Bosphorus without passing a winter on the coast of Asia Minor, and on their arrival in the spring of the year 672, they found that the emperor had made every preparation for defence. Their forces, however, were so numerous, that they were sufficient to invest Constantinople by sea and land. The troops occupied the whole of the land side of the triangle on which the city is constructed, while the fleet effectually blockaded the port. The Saracens failed in all their assaults, both by sea and land; but the Romans, instead of celebrating their own valour and discipline, attributed their success principally to the use of the Greek fire, which was invented shortly before this siege, and was first used on this occasion. The military art had declined during the preceding century as rapidly as every other branch of national culture; and the resources of the mighty empire of the Arabs were so limited, that the caliph was unable to maintain his forces before Constantinople during the winter. The

Saracen army was nevertheless enabled to collect sufficient supplies at Cyzicus to make that place a winter station, while their powerful fleet commanded the Hellespont and secured their communications with Syria. When spring returned, the fleet again transported the army under the walls of Constantinople. This strange mode of besieging cities, unattempted since the times when the Dorians had invaded Peloponnesus, was continued for seven years; but in this warfare the Saracens suffered far more severely than the Romans, and were at last compelled to abandon their enterprise. (During the siege of Constantinople, Abou Eyoub, who had received Mahomet into his house on his flight to Medina, died; and the celebrated mosque of Eyoub, in which the Sultan, on his accession, receives the investiture of the sword, is said to mark the spot where he was buried). The land forces tried to effect their retreat through Asia Minor, but were entirely cut off in the attempt; and a tempest destroyed the greater part of their fleet off the coast of Pamphylia. During the time that this great body of his forces was employed against Constantinople, Moawyah sent a division of his troops to invade Crete, which had been visited by a Saracen army in 651. The island was compelled to pay tribute, but the inhabitants were treated with mildness, as it was the policy of the caliph at this time to conciliate the good opinion of the Christians, in order to pave the way for future conquests. Moawyah carried his religious tolerance so far as to rebuild the church of Edessa at the intercession of his Christian subjects.

The destruction of the Saracen expedition against Constantinople, and the advantage which the mountaineers of Lebanon took of the absence of the Arab troops, by carrying their incursions into the plains of Syria, convinced Moawyah of the necessity of peace. The hardy mountaineers of Lebanon, called Mardaltes, had been increased in numbers, and supplied with wealth, in consequence of the retreat into their country of a mass of native Syrians who had fled before the Arabs. They consisted chiefly of Melchites and Monothelites, and on that account they had adhered to the cause of the Roman Empire when the Monophysites joined the Saracens. The political state of the empire required peace; and the orthodox Constantine did not feel personally inclined to run any risk in order to protect the Mardaites. Peace was concluded between the emperor and the caliph in the year 678, Moawyah consenting to pay the Romans annually three thousand pounds of gold, fifty slaves, and fifty Arabian horses. It appears strange that a prince, possessing the power and resources at the command of Moawyah, should submit to these conditions; but the fact proves that policy, not pride, was the rule of the caliph's conduct, and that the advancement of his real power, and of the spiritual interests of the Mohammedan religion, were of more consequence in his eyes than any notions of earthly dignity.

In the same year in which Moawyah purchased peace by paying tribute to the Roman emperor, the foundations of the Bulgarian monarchy were laid in the country between the Danube and Mount Haemus, and the emperor Constantine himself became tributary to a small horde of Bulgarians. One of the usual emigrations which take place amongst barbarous nations induced Asparuch, a Bulgarian chief, to seize the low country about the mouth of the Danube; his power and activity obliged the emperor Constantine to take the field against him in person. The expedition was so ill conducted, that it ended in the complete defeat of the Roman army, and the Bulgarians subdued a district inhabited by a body of Sclavonians, called the seven tribes, who were compelled

to become their tributaries. These Sclavonians had once been formidable to the empire, but their power had been broken by the emperor Constans. Asparuch established himself in the town of Varna, near the ancient Odessus, and founded the Bulgarian monarchy, a kingdom long engaged in hostilities with the emperors of Constantinople, and whose power tended greatly to accelerate the decline of the Greeks and reduce the numbers of their race in Europe.

The event, however, which exercised the greatest influence on the internal condition of the empire during the reign of Constantine Pogonatus, was the assembly of the sixth general council of the church at Constantinople, which was held under circumstances peculiarly favourable to candid discussion. The ecclesiastical power was not yet too strong to set both reason and the civil authorities at defiance. The decisions of the council were adverse to the Monothelites; and the orthodox doctrine of two natures and two wills in Christ was received by the common consent of the Greek and Latin parties as the true faith of the Christian church. Religious discussion had now taken a strong hold on public opinion, and as the majority of the Greek population had never adopted the opinions of the Monothelites, the decisions of the sixth general council contributed powerfully to promote the union of the Greeks with the imperial administration.

Sect. V.

Justinian II — Depopulation of the Empire, and decrease of the Greeks

Justinian II succeeded his father Constantine at the age of sixteen, and though so very young, he immediately assumed the personal direction of the government. He was by no means destitute of talents, but his cruel and presumptuous character rendered him incapable of learning to perform the duties of his situation with justice. His violence at last rendered him hateful to his subjects; and as the connection of the emperor with the Roman government and people was direct and personal, he was easily driven from his throne by a popular sedition. His rebellious subjects cut off his nose and banished him to Cherson, A.D. 695. In exile his energy and activity gained him the alliance of the Khazars and Bulgarians, and he returned to Constantinople as a conqueror, after an absence of ten years. His character was one of those to which experience is useless, and he persisted in his former course of violence, until, having exhausted the patience of his subjects, he was dethroned and murdered, A.D. 705-711.

The reign of such a tyrant was not likely to be inactive. At its commencement, he turned his arms against the Saracens, though the caliph Abdalmelik offered to make additional concessions, in order to induce the emperor to renew the treaty of peace which had been concluded with his father. Justinian sent a powerful army into Armenia under Leontius, by whom he was subsequently dethroned. All the provinces which had shown any disposition to favour the Saracens were laid waste, and the army seized an immense booty, and carried off a great part of the inhabitants as slaves. The barbarism of the Roman government had now reached such a pitch that the Roman armies were

permitted to plunder and depopulate even those provinces where a Christian population still afforded the emperor some assurance that they might be retained in permanent subjection to the Roman government The soldiers of an undisciplined army,—legionaries without patriotism or nationality,—were allowed to enrich themselves by slave hunts in Christian countries, and the most flourishing agricultural districts were reduced to deserts, incapable of offering any resistance to the Mohammedan nomads. But the caliph Abdalmelik, being engaged in a struggle for the caliphate with powerful rivals, and disturbed by rebels even in his own Syrian dominions, found himself reduced to the necessity of purchasing peace on terms far more favourable to the empire than those of the treaty between Constantine and Moawyah. He engaged to pay Justinian an annual tribute of three hundred and sixty-five thousand pieces of gold, three hundred and sixty slaves, and three hundred and sixty Arabian horses. The provinces of Iberia, Armenia, and Cyprus were equally divided between the Romans and the Arabs; but Abdalmelik obtained the principal advantage from the treaty, for Justinian not only consented to abandon the cause of the Mardaites, but even engaged to assist the caliph in expelling them from Syria. This was effected by the treachery of Leontius, who entered their country as a friend, and murdered their chief. Twelve thousand Mardaite soldiers were enrolled in the armies of the empire, and distributed in garrisons in Armenia and Thrace. A colony of Mardaites was established at Attalia in Pamphylia, and the power of this valiant people was completely broken. The removal of the Mardaites from Syria was one of the most serious errors of the reign of Justinian. As long as they remained in force on Mount Lebanon, near the centre of the Saracen power, the emperor was able to render them a serious check on the Mohammedans, and create dangerous diversions whenever the caliphs invaded the empire. Unfortunately, in this age of religious bigotry, the Monothelite opinions of the Mardaites made them an object of aversion or suspicion to the imperial administration; and even under the prudent government of Constantine Pogonatus, they were not viewed with a friendly eye, nor did they receive the support which should have been granted to them on a just consideration of the interests of Christianity, as well as of the Roman empire.

The general depopulation of the empire suggested to many of the Roman emperors the project of repeopling favoured districts, by an influx of new inhabitants. The origin of many of the most celebrated cities of the Eastern Empire could be traced back to small Greek colonies. These emigrants, it was known, had rapidly increased in number and risen to wealth. The Roman government appears never to have clearly comprehended that the same causes which produced the diminution of the ancient population would be sure to prevent the increase of new settlers; and their attempts at repeopling provinces, and removing the population of one district to new seats, were frequently renewed. Justinian II had a great taste for these emigrations. Three years after the conclusion of peace with Abdalmelik, he withdrew the inhabitants from the half of the island of Cyprus, of which he remained master, in order to prevent the Christians from becoming accustomed to the Saracen administration. The Cypriote population was transported to a new city near Cyzicus, which the emperor called after himself, Justinianopolis. It is needless to offer any remarks on the impolicy of such a project; the loss of life, and the destruction of property inevitable in the execution of such a scheme, could only have been replaced under the most favourable circumstances, and by a long

career of prosperity. It is known that, in consequence of this desertion, many of the Cypriote towns fell into complete ruin, from which they have never since recovered.

Justinian, at the commencement of his reign, made a successful expedition into the country occupied by the Sclavonians in Macedonia, who were closely allied with the Bulgarian principality beyond Mount Haemus. This people, emboldened by their new alliance, pushed their plundering excursions as far as the Propontis. The imperial army was completely successful, and both the Sclavonians and their Bulgarian allies were defeated and the country of the Sclavonians subdued. In order to repeople the fertile shores of the Hellespont about Abydos, Justinian transplanted a number of Sclavonian families into the province of Opsicium. This colony was so numerous and powerful, that it furnished a considerable contingent to the imperial armies.

The peace with the Saracens was not of long duration. Justinian refused to receive the first gold pieces coined by Abdalmelik, which bore the legend, 'God is the Lord'. The tribute had previously been paid in money from the municipal mints of Syria; and Justinian imagined that the new Arabian coinage was an attack on the Holy Trinity. He led his army in person against the Saracens, and a battle took place near Sebastopolis, on the coast of Cilicia, in which he was entirely defeated, in consequence of the treason of the leader of his Sclavonian troops. Justinian fled from the field of battle, and on his way to the capital he revenged himself on the Sclavonians who had remained faithful to his standard for the desertion of their countrymen by putting most of them to death, and he ordered the wives and children of those who had joined the Saracens to be murdered. The deserters were established by the Saracens on the coast of Syria and in the Island of Cyprus; and under the government of the caliph, they were more prosperous than under that of the Roman emperor. It was during this war that the Saracens inflicted the first great badge of civil degradation on the Christian population of their dominions. Abdalmelik established the Haratch, or Christian capitation tax, in order to raise money to carry on the war with Justinian. This unfortunate mode of taxing the Christian subjects of the caliph in a different manner from the Mohammedans completely separated the two classes, and reduced the Christians to the rank of serfs of the State, whose most prominent political relation with the Mussulman community was that of furnishing money to the government. The decline of the Christian population throughout the dominions of the caliphs was the consequence of this ill-judged measure, which has probably tended more to the depopulation of the East than the tyranny of Mussulman rulers or the ravages of Mussulman armies.

The restless spirit of Justinian plunged into the ecclesiastical controversies which divided the church. He assembled a general council, called usually *in Trullo* from the hall of its meeting having been covered with a dome. The proceedings of this council tended only to increase the growing differences between the Greek and Latin parties in the church. Of one hundred and two canons which it sanctioned, the pope finally rejected six, as adverse to the usages of the Latins. Thus an additional cause of separation was created between the Greeks and Latins, and at the very time when both statesmen and priests declared that the strictest unity in religious opinions was necessary to maintain the political power of the empire, the measures of the church, the political arrangements of the times, and the social feelings of the people, all tended to render union impossible. (The six canons rejected were — the fifth, which approves of

the eighty-five apostolic canons, commonly attributed to Clement; the thirteenth, which allows priests to live in wedlock; the fifty-fifth, which condemns fasting on Saturdays; the sixty-seventh, which earnestly enjoins abstinence from blood and things strangled; the eighty-second, which prohibits the painting of Christ in the image of a lamb; and the eighty-sixth, concerning the equality of the bishops of Rome and Constantinople).

A taste for building is a common fancy of sovereigns who possess the absolute disposal of large funds without any feeling of their duty as trustees for the benefit of the people whom they govern. Even in the midst of the greatest public distress, the treasury of nations, on the very verge of ruin and bankruptcy, must contain large sums of money drawn from annual taxation. This treasure, when placed at the irresponsible disposal of princes who affect magnificence, is frequently employed in useless and ornamental building; and this fashion has been so general with despots, that the princes who have been most distinguished for their love of building, have not unfrequently been the worst and most oppressive sovereigns. It is always a delicate and difficult task for a sovereign to estimate the amount which a nation can wisely afford to expend on ornamental architecture; and, from his position, he is seldom qualified to judge correctly on what buildings ornament ought to be employed, in order to make art accord with the taste and feelings of the people. Public opinion affords the only criterion for the formation of a sound judgment on this department of public administration; for, when princes possessing a taste for building are not compelled to consult the wants and wishes of their subjects in the construction of national edifices, they are apt, by their wild projects and lavish expenditure, to create evils far greater than any which could result from an exhibition of bad taste alone. In an evil hour, the love of building took possession of Justinian's mind. His lavish expenditure soon obliged him to make his financial administration more rigorous, and general discontent quickly pervaded the capital. The religious and superstitious feelings of the population were severely wounded by the emperor's eagerness to destroy a church of the Virgin, in order to embellish the vicinity of his palace with a splendid fountain. Justinian's own scruples required to be soothed by a religious ceremony, but the patriarch for some time refused to officiate, alleging that the church had no prayers to desecrate holy buildings. The emperor, however, was the head of the church and the master of the bishops, whom he could remove from office, so that the patriarch did not long dare to refuse obedience to his orders. It is said, however, that the patriarch showed very clearly his dissatisfaction, by repairing to the spot and authorizing the destruction of the church by an ecclesiastical ceremony, to which he added these words, 'to God, who suffers all things, be rendered glory, now and for ever. Amen'. The ceremony was sufficient to satisfy the conscience of the emperor, who perhaps neither heard nor heeded the words of the patriarch, but the public discontent was loudly expressed, and the fury of the populace threatened a rebellion in Constantinople. To avert the danger, he took every measure which unscrupulous cruelty could suggest. As generally happens in periods of general discontent and excitement, the storm burst in an unexpected quarter, and left the emperor suddenly without support. Leontius, one of the ablest generals of the empire, whose exploits have been already mentioned, had been thrown into prison, but was at this time ordered to assume the government of the province of Hellas. He considered the nomination as a mere pretext to remove him from the capital, in order to put him to death at a distance without any trial. On the eve of his departure, Leontius placed

himself at the head of a sedition; Justinian was seized, his ministers were murdered by the populace with savage cruelty, and Leontius was proclaimed emperor. Leontius spared the life of his dethroned predecessor for the sake of the benefits which he had received from Constantine Pogonatus. He ordered Justinian's nose to be cut off, and exiled him to Cherson. From this mutilation the dethroned emperor received the insulting nickname of Rhinotmetus, or Docknose, by which he is distinguished in Byzantine history.

Sect. VI.

Anarchy in the Administration until the accession of Leo III

The government of Leontius was characterized by the unsteadiness which not unfrequently marks the administration of the ablest sovereigns who obtain their thrones by accidental circumstances rather than by systematic combinations. The most important event of his reign was the final loss of Africa, which led to his dethronement. The indefatigable caliph Abdalmelik despatched a powerful expedition into Africa under Hassan; the province was soon conquered, and Carthage was captured after a feeble resistance. An expedition sent by Leontius to defend the province arrived too late to save Carthage, but the commander-in-chief forced the entrance into the port, recovered possession of the city, and drove the Arabs from most of the fortified town on the coast. The Arabs received new reinforcements, which the Roman general demanded from Leontius in vain. At last the Arabs assembled a fleet, and the Romans, being defeated in a naval engagement, were compelled to abandon Carthage, which the Arabs utterly destroyed,—having too often experienced the superiority of the Romans, both in naval affairs and in the art of war, to venture on retaining populous and fortified cities on the sea coast. This curious fact affords strong proof of the great superiority of the Roman commerce and naval resources, and equally powerful evidence of the disorder in the civil and military administration of the empire, which rendered these advantages useless, and allowed the imperial fleets to be defeated by ships collected by the Arabs from among their Egyptian and Syrian subjects. At the same time it is evident that the naval victories of the Arabs could never have been gained unless a powerful party of the Christians had been induced, by their feelings of hostility to the Roman empire, to afford them a willing support; for there were as yet few shipbuilders and sailors among the Mussulmans.

The Roman expedition, on its retreat from Carthage, stopped in the Island of Crete, where a sedition broke out among the troops, in which their general was killed and Apsimar, the commander of the Cibyraiot troops, was declared emperor by the name of Tiberius. (The Cibyraiot Theme included the ancient Caria, Lyda, Pamphylia, and a part of Phrygia; Cibyra Magna was a considerable town at the angle of Phrygia, Caria, and Lycia. Tiberius Caesar was regarded as its second founder, from his having remitted the tribute after a severe earthquake). The fleet proceeded directly to Constantinople, which offered no resistance. Leontius was dethroned, his nose was cut

off, and he was confined in a monastery. Tiberius Apsimar governed the empire with prudence, and his brother Heraclius commanded the Roman armies with success. The imperial troops penetrated into Syria; a victory was gained over the Arabs at Samosata, but the ravages committed by the Romans in this invasion surpassed the greatest cruelties ever inflicted by the Arabs; two hundred thousand Saracens are said to have perished during the campaign. Armenia was alternately invaded and laid waste by the Romans and the Saracens, as the various turns of war favoured the hostile parties, and as the changing interests of the Armenian population induced them to aid the emperor or the caliph. But while Tiberius was occupied in the duties of government, and living without any fear of a domestic enemy, he was suddenly surprised in his capital by Justinian, who appeared before Constantinople at the head of a Bulgarian army.

Ten years of exile had been spent by the banished emperor in vain attempts to obtain power. His violent proceedings made him everywhere detested, but he possessed the daring enterprise and the ferocious cruelty necessary for a chief of *banditti*, joined to a singular confidence in the value of his hereditary claim to the imperial throne; so that no undertaking appeared to him hopeless. After quarrelling with the inhabitants of Cherson, and with his brother-in-law, the king of the Khazars, he succeeded, by a desperate exertion of courage, in reaching the country of the Bulgarians. Terbelis, their sovereign, agreed to assist him in recovering his throne, and they marched immediately with a Bulgarian army to the walls of Constantinople. Three days after their arrival, they succeeded in entering the capital during the night. Ten years of adversity had increased the natural ferocity of Justinian's disposition: and a desire of vengeance, so unreasonable as to verge on madness, seems henceforward to have been the chief motive of his actions. The population of Constantinople was as cruel, if not quite so barbarous, as the nations beyond the pale of Christian civilization. Justinian gratified them by celebrating his restoration with splendid chariot races in the circus. He sat on an elevated throne, with his feet resting on the necks of the dethroned emperors, Leontius and Tiberius, who were stretched on the platform below, while the Greek populace shouted the words of the Psalmist, 'Thou shalt tread down the asp and the basilisk, thou shalt trample on the lion and the dragon'. The dethroned emperors and Heraclius, who had so well sustained the glory of the Roman arms against the Saracens, were afterwards hung from the battlements of Constantinople. Justinian's whole soul was occupied with plans of vengeance. The conquest of Tyana laid Asia Minor open to the incursions of the Saracens, but instead of opposing these dangerous enemies, he directed his disposable forces to punish the cities of Ravenna and Cherson, because they had incurred his personal hatred. Both the proscribed cities had rejoiced at his dethronement; they were both taken and treated with savage cruelty. The Greek city of Cherson, though the seat of a flourishing commerce, and inhabited by a numerous population, was condemned to utter destruction. Justinian ordered all the buildings to be razed with the ground, and every soul within its walls to be put to death; but the troops sent to execute these barbarous orders revolted, and proclaimed an Armenian, called Bardanes, emperor, under the name of Philippicus. Seizing the fleet, they sailed directly to Constantinople. Justinian was encamped with an army in Asia Minor .when Philippicus arrived, and took possession of the capital without encountering any resistance. Justinian was immediately deserted by his whole army, for the troops were as little pleased with his conduct since his restoration, as every other class of his

subjects; but his ferocity and courage never failed him, and his rage was unbounded when he found himself abandoned by every one. He was seized and executed, without having it in his power to offer the slightest resistance. His son Tiberius, though only six years of age, was torn from the altar of a church, to which he had been conducted for safety, and cruelly massacred; and thus the race of Heraclius was extinguished, after the family had governed the Roman Empire for exactly a century (A.D. 611 to 711).

During the interval of six years which elapsed from the death of Justinian II to the accession of Leo the Isaurian, the imperial throne was occupied by three sovereigns. Their history is only remarkable as proving the inherent strength of the Roman body politic, which could survive such continual revolutions, even in the state of weakness to which it was reduced. Philippicus was a luxurious and extravagant prince, who thought only of enjoying the situation which he had accidentally obtained. He was dethroned by a band of conspirators, who carried him off from the palace while in a fit of drunkenness, and after putting out his eyes, left him helpless in the middle of the hippodrome. The reign of Philippicus would hardly deserve notice, had he not increased the confusion into which the empire had fallen, and exposed the total want of character and conscience among the Greek clergy, by re-establishing the Monothelite doctrines in a general council of the eastern bishops.

As the conspirators who dethroned Philippicus had not formed any plan for choosing his successor, the first secretary of state was elected emperor by a public assembly held in the great church of St. Sophia, under the name of Anastasius II. He immediately re-established the orthodox faith, and his character is consequently the subject of eulogy with the historians of his reign. The Saracens, whose power was continually increasing, were at this time preparing a great expedition at Alexandria, in order to attack Constantinople, Anastasius sent a fleet with the troops of the theme Opsicium, to destroy the magazines of timber collected on the coast of Phoenicia for the purpose of assisting the preparations at Alexandria. The Roman armament was commanded by a deacon of St. Sophia, who also held the office of grand treasurer of the empire. The nomination of a member of the clergy to command the army gave great dissatisfaction to the troops, who were not yet so deeply tinctured with ecclesiastical ideas and manners as the aristocracy of the empire. A sedition took place while the army lay at Rhodes: John the Deacon was slain, and the expedition quitted the port in order to return to the capital. The soldiers on their way landed at Adramyttium, and finding there a collector of the revenues of a popular character, they declared him emperor, under the name of Theodosius III.

The new emperor was compelled unwillingly to follow the army. For six months Constantinople was closely besieged, and the emperor Anastasius, who had retired to Nicaea, was defeated in a general engagement. The capital was at last taken by the rebels, who were so sensible of their real interests, that they maintained strict discipline, and Anastasius, whose weakness gave little confidence to his followers, consented to resign the empire to Theodosius, and to retire into a monastery, that he might secure an amnesty to all his friends. Theodosius was distinguished by many good qualities, but his reign is only remarkable as affording a pretext for the assumption of the imperial dignity by Leo III, called the Isaurian. This able and enterprising officer, perceiving that the critical times rendered the empire the prize of any man who had talents to seize and

power to defend it, placed himself at the head of the troops in Asia Minor, assumed the title of emperor, and soon compelled Theodosius to quit the throne and become a priest.

During the period which elapsed between the death of Heraclius and the accession of Leo, the few principles of administration which had lingered in the imperial court were gradually neglected. The long cherished hope of restoring the ancient power and glory of the Roman Empire expired, and even the aristocracy, which always clings the last to antiquated forms and ideas, no longer dwelt with confidence on the memory of former days. The conviction that the empire had undergone a great moral and political change, which severed the future irrevocably from the past, though it was probably not fully understood, was at least felt and acted on both by the people and the government. The sad fact that the splendid light of civilization which had illuminated the ancient world had now become as obscure at Constantinople as at Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage, was too evident to be longer doubted; the very twilight of antiquity had faded into darkness. It is rather the province of the antiquary than of the historian to collect all the traces of this truth scattered over the records of the seventh century.

There is one curious and important circumstance in the history of the later days of the Roman Empire, of which little beyond the mere fact has been transmitted by historians. A long and violent contention was carried on between the imperial power and the aristocracy, which represented the last degenerate remains of the Roman senate. This struggle distracted the councils and paralyzed the energy of the Roman government. It commenced in the reign of Maurice, and existed under various modifications during the whole period of the government of the family of Heraclius. This aristocratic influence had more of an oriental than of a Roman character; its feelings and views originated in that class of society imbued with a semi-Greek civilization which had grown up during the days of the Macedonian rather than of the Roman Empire; and both Heraclius and Constans II, in their schemes for circumscribing its authority in the State, resolved to remove the capital of the empire from Constantinople to a Latin city. Both conceived the vain hope of re-establishing the imperial power on a purely Roman basis, as a means of subduing, or at least controlling, the power of Greek nationality, which was gaining ground both in the State and the Church. The contest terminated in the destruction of that political influence in the Eastern Empire, which was purely Roman in its character. But the united power of Greek and oriental feelings could not destroy the spirit of Rome, until the well-organized civil administration of Augustus and Constantine ceased to exist. The subjects of the empire were no great gainers by the change. The political government became a mere arbitrary despotism, differing little from the prevailing form of monarchy in the East, and deprived of all those fundamental institutions, and that systematic character, which had enabled the Roman state to survive the extravagancies of Nero and the incapacity of Phocas.

The disorganization of the Roman government at this period, and the want of any influence exercised upon the court by the Greek nation, are visible in the choice of the persons who occupied the imperial throne after the extinction of the family of Heraclius. They were selected by accident, and several were of foreign origin, who did not even look upon themselves as either Greeks or Romans. Philippicus was an Armenian, and Leo III, whose reign opens a new era in eastern history, was an Isaurian. On the throne

he proved that he was destitute of any attachment to Roman political institutions, and any respect for the Greek ecclesiastical establishment. It was by the force of his talents, and by his able direction of the State and of the army, that he succeeded in securing his family on the Byzantine throne; for he unquestionably placed himself in direct hostility to the feelings and opinions of his Greek and Roman subjects, and transmitted to his successors a contest between the imperial power and the Greek nation concerning picture-worship, in which the very existence of Greek nationality, civilization, and religion became at last compromised. From the commencement of the iconoclastic contest, the history of the Greeks assumes a new aspect. Their civilization and their connection with the Byzantine Empire become linked with the policy and fortunes of the Eastern Church, and ecclesiastical affairs obtained in their minds a supremacy over all social and political considerations.

Sect. VII.

General view of the condition of the Greeks at the extinction of the Roman Power in the East

The history of the European Greeks becomes extremely obscure after the reign of Justinian I. Yet during this period new nations intruded themselves into Greece and the Hellenic race was compelled to struggle hard in order to maintain a footing in its native seats. It has been already mentioned that Avar and Sclavonian tribes effected permanent settlements in Greece. The Hellenic population, unable to contend with the misery to which the cultivators of the soil were reduced, abandoned whole provinces to foreign emigrants, and retired under the protection of walled towns. The Thracian race, which always effectually resisted the influence of Greek civilization, began also to disappear. From an early period the extensive countries in which it was predominant, from the banks of the Danube to the shores of the Aegean Sea were exposed to constant invasions. Romans, Goths, Sclavonians, and Bulgarians depopulated its ancient seats as conquerors and settled in them as colonists. But the territorial changes produced by the Saracen conquests increased the political importance of the Greek race. The frontier towards Syria commenced at Mopsuestia in Cilicia, the last fortress of the Arab power. It ran along the chains of Mounts Amanus and Taurus to the mountainous district to the north of Edessa and Nisibis, called, after the time of Justinian, the Fourth Armenia, of which Martyropolis was the capital. It then followed nearly the ancient limits of the empire until it reached the Black Sea, a short distance to the east of Trebizond. On the northern shores of the Euxine, Cherson was now the only city that acknowledged the supremacy of the empire, retaining at the same time all its wealth and commerce, with the municipal privileges of a free city. In Europe, Mount Haemus formed the barrier against the Bulgarians, while the mountainous ranges which bound Macedonia to the north-west, and encircle the territory of Dyrrhachium, were regarded as the limits of the free Sclavonian states. It is true that large bodies of Sclavonians had penetrated to the

south of this line, and formed separate communities in Greece and the Peloponnesus, but not in the same independent condition with reference to the imperial administration as their northern brethren of the Servian family.

Istria, Venice, and the cities on the Dalmatian coast, acknowledged the supremacy of the empire, though their distant position, their commercial connections, and their religious feelings, were all tending towards a final separation. In the centre of Italy, the exarchate of Ravenna still held Rome in subjection, but the people of Italy were entirely alienated from the political administration, which was now regarded by them as purely Greek, and the Italians, with Rome before their eyes, could hardly admit the pretensions of the Greeks to be regarded as the legitimate representatives of the Roman Empire. The national feelings of the Italians were hostile to the imperial government as soon as it fell into the hands of Greeks; it would have required, therefore, an able and energetic central administration to prevent the loss of central Italy. The condition of the population of the south of Italy and of Sicily was very different. There the majority of the inhabitants were Greeks in language and manners, and few portions of the Greek race had suffered less in number and wealth; yet the cities of Gaeta, Naples, Amalfi, and Sorrento, the district of Otranto, and the peninsula to the south of the ancient Sybaris, now called Calabria, were the only parts which remained under the Byzantine government. Sicily, though it had begun to suffer from the incursions of the Saracens, was still populous and wealthy. Sardinia, the last possession of the Greeks to the westward of Italy, was conquered by the Saracens in the year A.D. 711.

In order to conclude the view which, in the preceding pages, we have endeavoured to present of the various causes that gradually diminished the numbers, and destroyed the civilization, of the Greek race, it is necessary to sketch the position of the nation at the commencement of the eighth century. At this unfortunate period in the history of mankind, the Greeks were placed in imminent danger of the same extinction as their Roman conquerors. The Arabs threatened to annihilate their political power, and the Sclavonians were colonizing their ancient territories. The victories of the Arabs were attended with very different consequences to the Greek population of the countries which they subdued, from those which had followed the conquests of the Romans. Like the earlier domination of the Parthians, the Arab power ultimately exterminated the whole Greek population in the conquered countries; and though, for a short period, the Arabs, like their predecessors the Parthians, protected Greek civilization, their policy soon changed, and everything Greek was proscribed. The arts and sciences which flourished at the court of the caliphs were chiefly derived from their Syrian subjects, whose acquaintance both with Syriac and Greek literature opened to them an extensive range of scientific knowledge from sources utterly lost to the moderns. It is to be observed, that a very great number of the eminent literary and scientific authors of later times were Asiatics, and that these writers frequently made use of their native languages in those useful and scientific works which were intended for the practical instruction of their own countrymen. In Egypt and Cyrenaica the Greek population was soon exterminated by the Arabs, and every trace of Grecian civilization was much sooner effaced than in Syria; though even there no very long interval elapsed before a small remnant of the Greek population was all that survived. Antioch itself, long the third city of the Eastern Empire, the spot where the Christians first received their name and the

principal seat of Greek civilization in Asia for upwards of nine centuries, though it was not depopulated and razed to the ground like Alexandria and Carthage, nevertheless soon ceased to be a Grecian city.

The numerous Greek colonies which had flourished in the Tauric Chersonese, and on the eastern and northern shores of the Euxine, were almost all deserted. The greater number had submitted to the Khazars, who occupied all the open country with their flocks and herds. During the reign of Justin, the city of Bosporus, in Tauris, had been captured by the Turks, who then occupied a considerable portion of the Tauric Chersonesus. The city of Cherson alone continued to maintain its independence in the northern regions of the Black Sea, resembling, in its political relation to the empire, the cities of Dalmatia, and by its share of the northern trade, balancing the power and influence of the barbarian princes in the neighbourhood. Its inhabitants, shut out from the cultivation of the rich lands whose harvests had formerly supplied Athens with grain, were entirely supported by foreign commerce. Their ships exchanged the hides, wax, and salt fish of the neighbouring districts for the necessaries and luxuries of a city life, in Constantinople and the maritime cities of the empire. It affords matter for reflection to find that Cherson,—situated in a climate which, from the foundation of the colony, opposed insurmountable barriers to the introduction of much of the peculiar character of Greek social civilization, and which deprived the art and the popular literature of the mother country of some portion of their charm,—to whose inhabitants the Greek temple, the Greek agora, and the Greek theatre, must ever have borne the characteristics of foreign habits, and in a land where the piercing winds and heavy clouds prevented a life out of doors from being the essence of existence—should still have preserved, to this late period of history, both its Greek municipal organization, and its independent civic government. Yet such was the case; and we know from the testimony of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, that Cherson continued to exist in a condition of respectable independence, though under imperial protection, down to the middle of the tenth century.

In Greece itself the Hellenic race had been driven from many fertile districts by Sclavonian settlers, who had established themselves in large bodies in Greece and the Peloponnesus, and had often pushed their plundering and piratical incursions among the islands of the Archipelago, from which they had carried off numerous bands of slaves. In the cities and islands which the Greeks still possessed, the secluded position of the population, and the exclusive attention which they were compelled to devote to their local interests and personal defence, introduced a degree of ignorance which soon extinguished the last remains of Greek civilization, and effaced all knowledge of Greek literature. The diminished population of the European Greeks occupied the shores of the Adriatic to the south of Dyrrhachium, and the maritime districts of Greece, Macedonia, and Thrace, as far as Constantinople. The interior of the country was everywhere overrun by Sclavonic colonies, though many mountainous districts and most of the fortified places still remained in the possession of the Greeks. It is, unfortunately, impossible to explain with precision the real nature and extent of the Sclavonic colonization of Greece; and, indeed, before it be possible to decide how far it partook of conquest, and how far it resulted from the occupation of deserted and uncultivated lands, it becomes absolutely necessary to arrive at some definite information concerning

the diminution which had taken place in the native agricultural classes, and in the social position of the slaves and serfs who survived in the depopulated districts. The scanty materials existing render the inquiry one which can only engage the attention of the antiquary, who can glean a few isolated facts; but the historian must turn away from the conjectures which would connect these facts into a system. The condition of social life during the decline of the Roman empire led to the division of the provincial population into two classes, the urban and the rustic, or into citizens and peasants; and the superior position and greater security of the citizens gradually enabled them to assume a political superiority over the free peasants, and at last to reduce them, in a great measure, to the rank of serfs, Slaves became, about the same time, of much greater relative value, and more difficult to be procured; and the distinction naturally arose between purchased slaves, who formed a part of the household and of the family of the possessor, and agricultural serfs, whose partial liberty was attended by the severest hardships, and whose social condition was one of the lowest degradation and of the greatest personal danger. The population of Greece and the islands, in the time of Alexander the Great, may be estimated at three millions and a half; and probably half of this number consisted of slaves. We know from the testimonies of Strabo, Plutarch, and Pausanias, that the population decreased greatly under the Roman government and that large districts lay waste. The extent, however, to which the general depopulation affected the agricultural population, and the value of labour, must be ascertained before full light can be thrown on the real nature of the Sclavonic and Albanian colonization of Greece.

No description could exaggerate the sufferings of an agricultural population while it is diminishing in numbers, whether those sufferings proceed from hostile violence or want of food. The plains of Greece were often laid waste by armies of invaders, who carried off slaves and cattle and left landlords to starve in the midst of uncultivated fields. Cities situated in the most fertile regions were dependent on supplies of food from abroad and soon dwindled into walled villages, where what had once been flower-gardens sufficed to furnish grain for the inhabitants and pasture for their cattle. Even Thessalonica, with a territory renowned for its fertility, was only saved from famine by large importations of foreign grain. The smaller cities of Greece and the Peloponnesus did not possess the same advantages of situation, and sank rapidly into ruin. Roads, bridges, aqueducts, and quays were all allowed to decay after Justinian confiscated the municipal revenues of the Greek cities. The transport of provisions by land in a country so precipitous as Greece must always be expensive. The neglect of roads is therefore a primary cause of poverty and barbarism. Even during the period of its greatest prosperity, the Roman government paid attention to those roads only which served as great military lines of communication.

At the beginning of the eighth century we find the native Greeks called Helladikoi by Byzantine writers in order to distinguish them from the ancient Hellenes and from the Romaioi or Greeks of the Roman Empire. The word was a contemptuous name for them as mere provincials. The appellation Hellenes was generally used to indicate the votaries of paganism, and was too closely connected with the historic glory of ancient Hellas to be bestowed on the rude people of an insignificant province. Even so late as the ninth century the inhabitants of the mountainous regions in Laconia still adhered to paganism. Their heathenism however consisted, in all probability, rather in a

superstitious repetition of ancient ceremonies than in the retention of the ideas and feelings of Greek mythology or pagan worship, of which they were doubtless as ignorant as they were of contemporary Christianity.

Even in Asia Minor the decline of the numbers of the Greek race had been rapid. This decline must, however, be attributed rather to bad government causing insecurity of property and difficulty of communication than to hostile invasions; for from the period of the Persian invasion during the reign of Heraclius, the greater part of this immense country had enjoyed almost a century of uninterrupted peace. The Persian invasions had never been very injurious to the sea- coast, where the Greek cities were still numerous and wealthy; but oppression and neglect had already destroyed the internal trade of the central provinces, and literary instruction was becoming daily of less value to the inhabitants of the isolated and secluded districts of the interior. The Greek tongue began to be neglected, and the provincial dialects, corrupted by an admixture of the Lydian, Carian, Phrygian, Cappadocian, and Lycaonian languages, became the ordinary medium of business and conversation. Bad government had caused poverty, poverty had produced barbarism, and the ignorance created by barbarism became the means of perpetuating an arbitrary and oppressive system of administration. The people, ignorant of all written language, felt unable to check the exercise of official abuses by the control of the law, and by direct application to the central administration. Their wish, therefore, was to abridge as much as possible all the proceedings of power; and as it was always more easy to save their persons from the central power than their properties from the subordinate officers of the administration, despotism became the favourite form of government with the great mass of the Asiatic population.

It is impossible to attempt any detailed examination of the changes which had taken place in the numbers of the Greek population in Asia Minor. The fact that extensive districts once populous and wealthy, were already deserts, is proved by the colonies which Justinian II settled in various parts of the country. The frequent repetition of such settlements, and the great extent to which they were carried by the later emperors, prove that the depopulation of the country had proceeded more rapidly than the destruction of its material resources. The descendants of Greek and Roman citizens ceased to exist in districts, while the buildings stood tenantless, and the olive groves yielded an abundant harvest. In this strange state of things the country easily received new races of inhabitants. The sudden settlement of a Sclavonian colony so numerous as to be capable of furnishing an auxiliary army of thirty thousand men, and the unexpected migration of nearly half of the inhabitants of the island of Cyprus, without mentioning the emigration of the Mardaites who were established in Asia Minor, could never have taken place unless houses, wells, fruit-trees, water-courses, enclosures, and roads had existed in tolerable preservation, and thus furnished the new colonists with an immense amount of what may be called vested capital to assist their labour. The fact that these colonies could survive and support themselves, seems a curious circumstance when connected with the depopulation and declining state of the empire which led to their establishment.

The existence of numerous and powerful bands of organized brigands who plundered the country in defiance of the government was one of the features of society at this period, which almost escapes the notice of the meagre historians whom we

possess, though it existed to such an extent as to have greatly aggravated the distress of the Greek population. Even had history been entirely silent on the subject, there could have been no doubt of their existence in the latter days of the Roman Empire, from the condition of the inhabitants, and from the geographical conformation of the land. History affords, however, a few casual evidences of the extent of the evil. The existence of a tribe of brigands in the mountains of Thrace during a period of two centuries, is proved by the testimony of unimpeachable authorities. Menander mentions bands of robbers, under the name of Scamars, who plundered the ambassadors sent by the Avars to the emperor Justin II; and these Scamars continued to exist as an organized society of robbers in the same district until the time of Constantine V (Copronymus), A.D. 765, when the capture and cruel torture of one of their chiefs is narrated by Theophanes.

History also records numerous isolated facts which, when collected, produce on the mind the conviction that the diminution in numbers, and the decline in civilization of the Greek race, were the effect of the oppression and injustice of the Roman government, not of the violence and cruelty of the barbarian invaders of the empire. During the reign of that insane tyrant Justinian II, the imperial troops, when properly commanded, showed that the remains of Roman discipline enabled them to defeat all their enemies in a fair field of battle. The emperor Leontius, and Heraclius the brother of Tiberius Apsimar, were completely victorious over the redoubted Saracens; Justinian himself defeated the Bulgarians and Sclavonians. But the whole power and wealth of the empire was withdrawn from the people and concentrated in the hands of the government. The Greek municipal guards had been deprived of their arms under Justinian I, whose timid policy regarded internal rebellion as far more to be dreaded than foreign invasions. The people were disarmed because their hostile feelings were known and feared. The European Greeks were regarded as provincials just as much as the wild Lycaonians or Isaurians; and if they succeeded in obtaining arms and resisting the progress of the Sclavonians, they owed their success to the weakness and neglect which, in all despotic governments, prevent the strict execution of those laws which are at variance with the feelings and interests of the population, the moment that the agents of the government can derive no direct profit from enforcing them.

The Roman government always threw the greatest difficulties in the way of their subjects' acquiring the means of defending themselves without the aid of the imperial army. The injury Justinian inflicted on the Greek cities by disbanding their local militia, and robbing them of the municipal funds devoted to preserve their physical well-being and mental culture, caused a deep-rooted hatred of the imperial government. This feeling is well portrayed in the bitter satire of Procopius. The hatred between the inhabitants of Hellas and the Roman Greeks connected with the imperial administration soon became mutual; and at last, as has been already mentioned, a term of contempt was used by the historians of the Byzantine Empire to distinguish the native Greeks from the other Greek inhabitants of the empire,—they were called Helladikoi.

After the time of Justinian we possess little authentic information concerning the details of the provincial and municipal administration of the Greek population. The state of public roads and buildings, of ports, of trade, of maritime communications; of the nature of the judicial, civil, and police administration, and of the extent of education among the people—in short, the state of all those things which powerfully influence the

character and the prosperity of a nation, are almost unknown. It is certain that they were all in a declining and neglected state. The local administration of the Greek cities still retained some shadow of ancient forms, and senates existed in many, even to a late period of the Byzantine Empire. Indeed, they must all have enjoyed very much the same form of government as Venice and Amalfi, at the period when these cities first began to enjoy a virtual independence.

The absence of all national feeling, which had ever been a distinguishing feature of the Roman government, continued to exert its influence at the court of Constantinople long after the Greeks formed the bulk of the population of the empire. This spirit separated the governing classes from the people, and constituted all those who obtained employments in the service of the State into a body, directly opposed to Greek nationality, because the Greeks formed the great mass of the governed. The election of many emperors not of Greek blood at this period must be attributed to the strength of this feeling. This opposition between the Greek people and the imperial administration contributed to revive the authority of the Eastern Church. The church was peculiarly Greek; indeed, so much so, that an admixture of foreign blood was generally regarded as almost equivalent to a taint of heresy. As the priests were chosen from every rank of society, the whole Greek nation was usually interested in the prosperity and passions of the church. In learning and moral character the higher clergy were far superior to the rest of the aristocracy, and they possessed sufficient influence to protect their friends and adherents among the people, in many questions with the civil government. This legitimate authority, supported by national feelings and prejudices, gave them unbounded influence, the moment that any dispute ranged the Greek clergy and people on the same side in their opposition to the imperial power. The Greek Church appears for a long period of history as the only public representative of the feelings and views of the nation, and, after the accession of Leo the Isaurian, it must be regarded as an institution which tended to preserve the national existence of the Greeks.

Amidst the numerous vices in the political state of mankind at this period, it is consoling to be able to find a single virtue. The absence of all national feeling in the imperial armies exercised a humane influence on the wars which the empire carried on against the Saracens. It is certain that the religious hatred, subsequently so universal between the Christians and Mohammedans, was not very violent in the seventh and eighth centuries. The facility with which the orthodox patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria submitted to the Mohammedans has been already mentioned. The empire, it is true, was generally the loser by this want of national and patriotic feeling among the Christians; but, on the other hand, the gain to humanity was immense, as is proved by the liberality of Moawyah, who rebuilt the church of Edessa. The Arabs for some time continued to be guided by the sentiments of justice which Mahomet had carefully inculcated, and their treatment of their heretic subjects was far from oppressive, in a religious point of view. When Abdalmelik desired to convert the splendid church of Damascus into a mosque, he abstained, on finding that the Christians of Damascus were entitled to keep possession of it, by the terms of their original capitulation. The insults which Justinian II and the caliph Walid respectively offered to the religion of his rival, were rather the effect of personal insolence and tyranny, than of any sentiment of religious bigotry. Justinian quarrelled with Abdalmelik, on account of the ordinary

superscription of the caliph's letters—"Say there is pone God, and that Mahomet is his prophet". Walid violently expelled the Christians from the great church of Damascus, and converted it into a mosque. At this period, any connection of Roman subjects with the Saracens was viewed as ordinary treason, and not as subsequently in the time of the Crusades, in the light of an inexpiable act of sacrilege. Even the accusation brought against the Pope, Martin, of corresponding with the Saracens, does not appear to have been made with the intention of charging him with blacker treason than that which resulted from his supporting the rebel exarch Olympius. All rebels who found their enterprise desperate, naturally sought assistance from the Saracens, as the most powerful enemies of the empire. The Armenian, Mizizius, who was proclaimed emperor at Syracuse, after the murder of Constans II, applied to the Saracens for aid. The Armenian Christians continually changed sides between the emperor and the caliph, as the alliance of each appeared to afford them the fairest hopes of serving their political and religious interests. But as the Greek nation became more and more identified with the political interests of the church, and as barbarism and ignorance spread more widely among the population of the Byzantine and Arabian empires, the feelings of mutual hatred nourished by almost constant hostilities became more violent.

The government of the Roman Empire had long been despotic and weak, and the financial administration corrupt and oppressive; but still its subjects enjoyed a benefit of which the rest of mankind were almost entirely destitute, in the existence of an admirable code of laws, and a complete judicial establishment, separated from the other branches of the public administration. It is to the existence of this judicial establishment, guided by a published code, and controlled by a body of lawyers educated in public schools, that the subjects of the empire were chiefly indebted for the superiority in civilization which they retained over the rest of the world. In spite of the neglect displayed in the other branches of the administration, the central government always devoted particular care to the dispensation of justice in private cases, as the surest means of maintaining its authority, and securing its power, against the evil effects of its fiscal extortions. The profession of the law continued to form an independent body, in which learning and reputation were a surer means of arriving at wealth and honour than the protection of the great; for the government itself was, from interest, generally induced to select the ablest members of the legal profession for judicial offices. The existence of the legal profession, uniting together a numerous body of educated men, guided by the same general views, and connected by similar studies, habits of thought, and interests, must have given the lawyers an independence both of character and position, which, when they were removed from the immediate influence of the court, could not fail to operate as some check on the arbitrary abuse of administrative and fiscal power.

In all countries which exist for any length of time in a state of civilization, a number of local, communal, and municipal institutions are created, which really perform a considerable portion of the duties of civil government; for no central administration can carry its control into every detail; and those governments which attempt to carry their interference farthest are generally observed to be those which leave most of the real work of government undone. During the greater period of the Roman domination, the Greeks had been allowed to retain their own municipal and

provincial institutions, as has been stated in the earlier part of this work, and the details of the civil administration were left almost entirely in their hands. Justinian I destroyed this system as far as lay in his power; and the effects of the unprotected condition of the Greek population have been seen in the facilities which were afforded to the ravages of the Avars and Sclavonians. As the empire grew weaker, and the danger from the barbarians more imminent, the imperial regulations could not be enforced. Unless the Greeks had obtained the right of bearing arms, their towns and villages must have fallen a prey to every passing band of brigands, and their commerce would have been annihilated by Sclavonian and Saracen cruisers. The inhabitants of Venice, Istria, and Dalmatia, the citizens of Gaeta, Capua, Naples, and Salerno, and the inhabitants of continental Greece, the Peloponnesus, and the Archipelago, would have been exterminated by their barbarous neighbours, unless they had possessed not only arms which they were able and willing to use, but also a municipal administration capable of directing the energies of the people without consulting the central government at Constantinople. The possession of arms, and the government of a native magistracy, gradually revived the spirit of independence; and to these circumstances must be traced the revival of the wealth of the Greek islands, and of the commercial cities of the Peloponnesus. Many patriotic Greeks may possibly have brooded over the sufferings of their country in the monasteries, whose number was one of the greatest social evils of the time; and the furious monks, who frequently issued from their retirement to insult the imperial authority under some religious watchword, were often inspired by political and national resentments which they could not avow, and which perhaps they did not themselves fully understand.

The period of history treated in this volume has brought down the record of events to the final destruction of ancient political society in the Eastern Empire; still the reader must carefully bear in mind that in the seventh and eighth centuries the external appearance of the principal cities of the empire was generally little changed. The outward aspect of the Roman world was modified, but it was not metamorphosed. Though the wealth and the numbers of the inhabitants had diminished, most of the public buildings of the ancient Greeks existed in all their splendour, and it would be a very incorrect picture indeed of a Greek city of this period, to suppose that it resembled in any way the filthy and ill-constructed burghs of the Middle Ages. The solid fortifications of ancient military architecture still defended many cities against the assaults of the Sclavonians, Bulgarians and Saracens; the splendid monuments of ancient art were still preserved in all their brilliancy, though unheeded by the passer-by; the agoras were frequented, though by a less numerous and less busy population; the ancient courts of justice were still in use, and the temples of Athens had yet sustained no injury from time, and little from neglect. The enmity of the iconoclasts to picture-worship, which, as Colonel Leaky justly remarks, has been the theme for much exaggeration, had not yet caused the destruction of the statues and paintings of pure Grecian art. The classical student, with Pausanias in his hand, might unquestionably have identified every ancient site noticed by that author in his travels, and viewed the greater part of the buildings which he describes. In many of the smaller cities of Greece it is doubtless true that the barbarians had left dreadful marks of their ravages. When imperial vanity could be gratified by the destruction of ancient works of art, or when the value of their materials became an object of cupidity, the masterpieces of sculpture were

exposed to ruin. The emperor Anastasius I permitted the finest bronze statues, which Constantine had collected from all the cities of Greece, to be melted into a colossal image of himself. During the reign of Constans II, the bronze tiles of the Pantheon of Rome were taken away. Yet new statues continued to be erected to the emperors in the last days of the empire. A colossal statue of bronze, attributed to the emperor Heraclius, existed at Barletta, in Apulia, as late as the fourteenth century. That the Greeks had not yet ceased entirely to set some value on art, is proved by the well-executed cameos and intaglios, and the existing mosaics, which cannot be attributed to an earlier period. Yet no more barbarous coinage ever circulated than that which issued from the mint of Constantinople during the early part of the seventh century. The soul of art had fled; that public feeling which inspires correct taste was extinct, and the excellence of execution still existing was only the result of mechanical dexterity and apt imitation of good models.

The destinies of literature were very similar to those of art; nothing was now either produced or understood, but what was deemed of practical utility to the body or the soul; yet the memory of the ancient writers was still respected, and the cultivation of ancient literature still conferred a high degree of reputation. Learning was neither neglected nor despised, though its objects were sadly misunderstood, and its pursuits confined to a small circle of votaries. The learned institutions, the libraries, and the universities of Alexandria, Antioch, Berytus, and Nisibis, were destroyed; but at Athens, Thessalonica, and Constantinople, literature and science were not utterly neglected; public libraries and all the conveniences for a life of study still existed. Many towns must have contained individuals who solaced their hours by the use of these libraries; and although poverty, the difficulties of communication, and declining taste, daily circumscribed the numbers of the learned, there can be no doubt that they were never without some influence on society. Their habits of life and the love of retirement, which a knowledge of the past state of their country tended to nourish, inclined this class rather to conceal themselves from public notice, than to intrude on the attention of their countrymen. The principal Greek poet who flourished during the latter years of the Roman Empire, and whose writings have been preserved, is George Pisida, the author of three poems in iambic verses on the exploits of Heraclius, written in the seventh century. It would perhaps be difficult, in the whole range of literature, to point to poetry which conveys less information on the subject which he pretends to celebrate, than that of George Pisida. In taste and poetical inspiration he is quite as deficient as in judgment, and he displays no trace of any national character. The historical literature of the period is certainly superior to the poetical in merit, for though most of the writers offer little to praise in their style, still much that is curious and valuable is preserved in the portion of their writings which we possess. The fragments of the historian Menander of Constantinople, written about the commencement of the seventh century, make us regret the loss of his entire work. From these fragments we derive much valuable information concerning the state of the empire, and his literary merit is by no means contemptible. The most important work relating to this period is the general history of Theophylactus Simocatta, who wrote in the earlier part of the seventh century. His work contains a great deal of curious information, evidently collected with considerable industry; but, as Gibbon remarks, he is destitute of taste and genius, and these deficiencies lead him to

mistake the relative importance of historical facts. He is supposed to have been of Egyptian origin.

Two chronological writers, John Malalas, and the author of the 'Chronicon Paschale', likewise deserve notice, as they supply valuable and authentic testimony as to many important events. The frequent notices concerning earthquakes, inundations, fires, plagues, and prodigies, which appear in the Byzantine chronicles, afford strong ground for inferring that something like our modem newspapers must have been published even in the latter days of the empire. The only ecclesiastical historian who belongs to this period is Evagrius, whose church history extends from A.D. 429 to 593. In literary merit he is inferior to the civil historians, but his work has preserved many facts which would otherwise have been lost. The greater number of the literary and scientific productions of this age are not deserving of particular notice. Few, even of the most learned and industrious scholars, consider that an acquaintance with the pages of those whose writings are preserved, is of more importance than a knowledge of the names of those whose works are lost. The discovery of paper, which Gibbon says came from Samarcand to Mecca about 710, seems to have contributed quite as much to multiply worthless books as to preserve the most valuable ancient classics. By rendering the materials of writing more accessible in an age destitute of taste, and devoted to ecclesiastical and theological disputation, it announced the arrival of the stream of improvement in a deluge of muddy pedantry and dark stupidity.

The mighty change which had taken place in the influence of Greek literature since the time of the Macedonian conquest deserves attention. All the most valuable monuments of its excellence were preserved, and time had in no way diminished their value. But the mental supremacy of the Greeks had, nevertheless, received a severer shock than their political power; and there was far less hope of their recovering from the blow, since they were themselves the real authors of their degeneracy, and the sole admirers of the inflated vanity which had become their national characteristic. The admitted superiority of Greek authors in taste and truth, those universal passports to admiration, had once induced a number of writers of foreign race to aspire to fame by writing in Greek; and this happened, not only during the period of the Macedonian domination, but also under the Roman Empire, after the Greeks had lost all political supremacy, when Latin was the official language of the civilized world, and the dialects of Egypt, Syria, and Armenia possessed a civil and scientific, as well as an ecclesiastical literature. The Greeks forfeited this high position by their inordinate self-adulation. This feeling kept their minds stationary, while the rest of mankind was moving forward. Even when they embraced Christianity they could not lay aside the trammels of a state of society which they had repudiated; they retained so many of their old vices that they soon corrupted Christianity into Greek orthodoxy.

The conquests of the Arabs changed the intellectual as well as the religious and political condition of the East. At Alexandria, in Syria, and in Cyrenaica, the Greeks soon became extinct; and that portion of their literature which still retained a value in the eyes of mankind came to be viewed in a different light. The Arabs of the eighth century undoubtedly regarded the scientific literature of the Greeks with great respect, but they considered it only as a mine from which to extract a useful metal. The study of the Greek language was no longer a matter of the slightest importance, for the learned

Arabians were satisfied if they could master the results of science by the translations of their Syrian subjects. It has been said that Arabic has held the rank of an universal language as well as Greek, but the fact must be admitted only in the restricted sense of applying it to their extensive empire. The different range of the mental and moral power of the literatures of Arabia, of Rome, and of Greece, is in our age fully apparent.

There is no country in the world more directly dependent on commerce for the well-being of its inhabitants than the land occupied by the Greeks round the Aegean Sea. Nature has separated these territories by mountains and seas into a variety of districts, whose productions are so different, that unless commerce afford great facilities for exchanging the surplus of each, the population must remain comparatively small, and languish in a state of poverty and privation.

The Greeks retained the greater share of that commerce which they had for ages enjoyed in the Mediterranean. The conquest of Alexandria and Carthage gave it a severe blow, and the existence of a numerous maritime population in Syria, Egypt, and Africa, enabled the Arabs to share the profits of a trade which had hitherto been a monopoly of the Greeks. The absolute government of the caliphs, their jealousy of their Christian subjects, and the civil wars which so often laid waste their dominions, rendered property too insecure in their dominions for commerce to flourish with the same tranquillity which it enjoyed under the legal despotism of the Eastern emperors; for commerce cannot long exist without a systematic administration, and soon declines, if its natural course be at all interrupted.

The wealth of Syria at the time of its conquest by the Arabs proves that the commerce of the trading cities of the Roman Empire was still considerable. A caravan, consisting of four hundred loads of silk and sugar, was on its way to Baalbec at the time the place was attacked. Extensive manufactories of silk and dye-stuffs flourished, and several great fairs assisted in circulating the various commodities of the land through the different provinces. The establishment of post-horses was at first neglected by the Arabs, but it was soon perceived to be so essential to the prosperity of the country, that it was restored by the caliph Moawyah. The Syrian cities continued, under the Saracen government, to retain their wealth and trade as long as their municipal rights were respected. No more remarkable proof of this fact need be adduced, than the circumstance of the local mints supplying the whole currency of the country until the year 695, when the Sultan Abdalmelik first established a national gold and silver coinage.

Even the Arabian conquests were insufficient to deprive the empire of the great share which it held in the Indian trade. Though the Greeks lost all direct political control over it, they still retained possession of the carrying trade of the south of Europe; and the Indian commodities destined for that market passed almost entirely through their hands. The Arabs, in spite of the various expeditions which they fitted out to attack Constantinople, never succeeded in forming a maritime power; and their naval strength declined with the numbers and wealth of their Christian subjects, until it dwindled into a few piratical squadrons. The emperors of Constantinople really remained the masters of the sea, and their subjects the inheritors of the riches which its commerce affords.

The principal trade of the Greeks, after the Arabian conquests, consisted of three branches,—the Mediterranean trade with the nations of Western Europe, the home trade, and the Black Sea trade. The state of society in the south of Europe was still so disordered, in consequence of the settlements of the barbarians, that the trade for supplying them with Indian commodities and the manufactures of the East was entirely in the hands of the Jews and Greeks, and commerce solely in that of the Greeks. The consumption of spices and incense was then enormous; a large quantity of spice was employed at the tables of the rich, and Christians burned incense daily in their churches. The wealth engaged in carrying on this traffic belonged chiefly to the Greeks; and although the Arabs, after they had rendered themselves masters of the two principal channels of the Indian trade, through Persia and Syria, and by the Red Sea and Egypt, contrived to participate in its profits, the Greeks still regulated the trade by the command of the northern route through central Asia to the Black Sea. The consumption of Indian productions was generally too small at any particular port to admit of whole cargoes forming the staple of a direct commerce with the West. The Greeks rendered this traffic profitable, from the facility with which they could prepare mixed cargoes by adding the fruit, oil, and wine of their native provinces, and the produce of their own industry; for they were then the principal manufacturers of silk, dyed woollen fabrics, jewellery, arms, rich dresses and ornaments. The importance of this trade was one of the principal causes which enabled the Roman empire to retain the conquests of Justinian in Spain and Sardinia, and this commercial influence of the Greek nation checked the power of the Goths, the Lombards, and the Avars, and gained for them as many allies as the avarice and tyranny of the exarchs and imperial officers created enemies. It may not be superfluous to remark, that the invectives against the government and persons of the exarchs which abound in the works of the Italians, and from them have been copied into the historians of Western Europe, must always be sifted with care, as they are the outbreaks of the violent political aversion of the Latin ecclesiastics to the authority of the Eastern Empire, not an echo of the general opinion of society. The people of Rome, Venice, Genoa, Naples, and Amalfi clung to the Roman Empire from feelings of interest, long after they possessed the power of assuming perfect independence. These feelings of interest arose from the commercial connection of the West and East. The Italians did not yet possess capital sufficient to carry on the eastern trade without the assistance of the Greeks. The cargoes from the north consisted chiefly of slaves, wood for building, raw materials of various kinds, and provisions for the maritime districts.

The most important branch of trade, in a large empire, must ever be that which is carried on within its own territory, for the consumption of its subjects. The peculiar circumstances have been noticed that make the prosperity of the inhabitants of those countries which are inhabited by the Greek race essentially dependent on commerce. Internal commerce, if it had been left unfettered by restrictions, would probably have saved the Roman empire; but the financial difficulties, caused by the lavish expenditure of Justinian I, induced that emperor to invent a system of monopolies which ultimately threw the trade of the empire into the hands of the free citizens of Venice, Amalfi, and other cities, whom it had compelled to assume independence. Silk, oil, various manufactures, and even grain, were made the subject of monopolies, and temporary restrictions were at times laid on particular branches of trade for the profit of favoured individuals. The traffic in grain between the different provinces of the empire was

subjected to onerous, and often arbitrary arrangements; and the difficulties which nature had opposed to the circulation of the necessaries of life, as an incentive to human industry, were increased, and the inequalities of price augmented for the profit of the treasury or the gain of the fiscal officers, until industry was destroyed.

These monopolies, and the administration which supported them, were naturally odious to the mercantile classes. When it became necessary, in order to retain the Mediterranean trade, to violate the great principle of the empire, that the subjects should neither be intrusted with arms, nor allowed to fit out armed vessels to carry on distant commerce, these armed vessels, whenever they were able to do so with impunity, violated the monopolies and fiscal regulations of the emperors. The independence of the Italian and Dalmatian cities then became a condition of their commercial prosperity. There can be little doubt, that if the Greek commercial classes had been able to escape the superintendence of the imperial administration as easily as the Italians, they, too, would have asserted their independence; for the emperors of Constantinople never viewed the merchants of their dominions in any other light than as a class from whom money was to be obtained in every possible way. This view is common in all absolute governments. An instinctive aversion to the independent position of the commercial classes, joined to a contempt for trade, usually suggests such measures as eventually drive commerce from countries under despotic rule. The little republics of Greece, the free cities of the Syrian coast, Carthage, the republics of Italy, the Hanse towns, Holland, England, and America, all illustrate by their history how much trade is dependent on those free institutions which offer a security against financial oppression; while the Roman empire affords an instructive lesson of the converse.

The trade of Constantinople with the countries round the Black Sea was an important element in the commercial prosperity of the empire. Byzantium served as the entrepot of this commerce and the traffic to the south of the Hellespont, even before it became the capital of the Roman Empire. After that event, its commerce was as much augmented as its population. It was supplied with grain from Egypt, and cattle from the Tauric Chersonese, and large public distributions of provisions attracted population, kept and made it the seat of a flourishing manufacturing industry. The trade in fur and the commerce with India by the Caspian, the Oxus, and the Indus, centred at Constantinople, whence the merchants distributed the various articles they imported among the nations of the West, and received in exchange the productions of these countries. The great value of this commerce, even to the barbarous nations which obtained a share in it, is frequently mentioned by the Byzantine historians. The Avars profited greatly by this traffic, and the decline of their empire was attributed to its decay; though there can be little doubt that the real cause, both of the decline of the trade and of the Avar power, arose from the insecurity of property, originating in bad government. The wealth of the mercantile and manufacturing classes in Constantinople contributed, in no small degree, to the success with which that city repulsed the attacks of the Avars and the Saracens.

Nothing could tend more to give us a correct idea of the real position of the Greek nation at the commencement of the eighth century, than a view of the moral condition of the lower orders of the people; but, unfortunately, all materials, even for a cursory inquiry into this subject, are wanting. The few casual notices which can be gleaned from

the lives of the saints, afford the only authentic evidence of popular feeling. It cannot, however, escape notice, that even the shock which the Mohammedan conquests gave to the Orthodox Church, failed to recall its ministers back to the pure principles of the Christian religion. They continued their old practice of confounding the intellects of their congregations, by propagating a belief in false miracles, and by discussing the unintelligible distinctions of scholastic theology. From the manner in which religion was treated by the Eastern clergy, the people could profit little from the histories of imaginary saints, and understand nothing of the doctrines which they were instructed to consider as the essence of their religion. The consequence was, that they began to fall back on the idle traditions of their ancestors, and to blend the last recollections of paganism with new superstitions, derived from a perverted application of the consolations of Christianity. Relics of pagan usages were retained; a belief that the spirits of the dead haunted the paths of the living was general in all ranks; a respect for the bones of martyrs, and a confidence in the figures on amulets, became the real doctrines of the popular faith. The connection which existed between the clergy and the people, powerful and great as it really was, appears at bottom to have been based on social and political grounds. Pure religion was so rare, that the word only served as a pretext for increasing the power of the clergy, who appear to have found it easier to make use of the superstitions of the people than of their religious and moral feelings. The ignorant condition of the lower orders, and particularly of the rural population, explains the curious fact, that paganism continued to exist in the mountains of Greece as late as the reign of the Emperor Basil (A.D. 867-886), when the Mainates of Mount Taygetus were at last converted to Christianity.

It is often cited as a proof of the barbarous condition to which Greece was at this time reduced, that it is only mentioned by historians as a place of banishment for criminals. But this mode of announcing the fact, that many persons of rank were exiled to the cities of Greece, leaves an incorrect impression on the mind of the reader, for the most flourishing cities of the East were often selected as the places best adapted for the safe custody of political prisoners. We know from Constantine Porphyrogenitus that Cherson was a powerful commercial city, whose alliance or enmity was of considerable importance to the Byzantine Empire, even so late as the tenth century. Yet this city was selected as a place of banishment for persons of high rank, who were regarded as dangerous state criminals. Pope Martin was banished thither by Constans II, and it was the place of exile of the emperor Justinian II. The emperor Philippicus, before he ascended the throne, had been exiled by Tiberius Apsimar to Cephalonia, and by Justinian I. to Cherson, a circumstance which would lead us to infer that a residence in the islands of Greece was considered a more agreeable sojourn than that of Cherson. Several of the adherents of Philippicus were, after his dethronement, banished to Thessalonica, one of the richest and most populous cities of the empire.

The command of the imperial troops in Greece was considered an office of high rank, and it was accordingly conferred on Leontius, when Justinian II wished to persuade that general that he was restored to favour. Leontius made it the stepping-stone to the throne. But the strongest proof of the wealth and prosperity of the cities of Greece, is to be found in the circumstance of their being able to fit out the expedition which ventured to attempt wresting Constantinople from the grasp of a soldier and

statesman, such as Leo the Isaurian was known to be, at the time when the Greeks deliberately resolved to overturn his throne.

It is difficult to form any correct representation of a state of society so different from our own, as that which existed among the Greeks in the eighth century. The rural districts, on the one hand, were reduced to a state of desolation, and the towns, on the other, flourished in wealth; agriculture was at the lowest ebb, while trade was in a prosperous condition. If, however, we look forward to the long series of misfortunes which were required to bring this favoured land to the state of complete destitution to which it sank at a later period, we may arrive at a more accurate knowledge of its condition in the early part of the eighth century, than would be possible were we to confine our view to looking back at the records of its ancient splendour, and to comparing a few lines in the meagre chronicles of the Byzantine writers with the volumes of earlier history recounting the greatest actions with unrivalled elegance.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME OF

A History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time. B.C 146-A.D. 1864