

*JEWELS OF THE WESTERN CIVILIZATION*

GEORGE FINLAY'S

HISTORY

OF

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

B.C. 146 - A.D. 1453



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## 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.
14. Augustus establishes a Roman colony at Patrae.

A.D. Year of Rome 753. 194th Olympiad, 4th year, a.m. 5508 of the Byzantines, called the Aera of Constantinople; but other calculations were adopted at Alexandria and Antioch.

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.

115. 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, Polyaeus, 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. Aera of Diocletian, called Aera 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 Basiliskos.

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. Sediton 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 Groths.

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. Slavonians 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 Niketas 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 — Aera 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 scholars 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 Blachernes 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.

Aera 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 Yerrauk (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 Slavonians.

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.

VOLUME I

GREECE UNDER THE ROMANS

## CHAPTER I

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 ascendancy. 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 Achaian 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 Chaldaeans, 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 Chaldaeans 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 revered 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 insignificance, 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, Thespieae, 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, viceroalties, 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 Achaian 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 insignificance 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 autonomia, 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 administration. 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. Licinus 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 fortune.

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 modern 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 state. 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 it 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 increase. 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 re-peopled 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 re-fortified 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 tinged 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 insignificance 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 between 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 ingrafted 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 signaled 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 Thespieae 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 insignificance. 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, it 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 necessities 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 modern 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, Karsps, 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 service. 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 insignificance 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 Establishment 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 do 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 war. 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 modern 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 Achaians, 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 more 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 administration, 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 any body 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 on 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 Bosphorus, 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 Bosphorus, 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 Pamphyliaus, 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 collectors 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 Dyrrachium 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 Dyrrachium. 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 Dyrrachium, 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 benefited 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 modern Europe. A Roman emperor would no more have thought of suddenly creating a financier, or an administrator, than a modern 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 mechanics, 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 perilled 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 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 tinged 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 ceremonies, 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

Huneric, 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 speculation, 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

Amalasueta.

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 Slavonians 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 Slavonians, 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 Slavonians 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 Bosphorus 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 Bosphorus 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 *Silentarii*, *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 Othoman 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 modern 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 (Erzeroum), 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. Jornandes, 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 undertaking. 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 modern 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 fall 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 Chaldaeans 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 School 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 Romaioi. 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

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 Slavonian 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 Slavonians, 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 Slavonic 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 Slavonians, 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 rather 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. *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*)

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 modern 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 Dyrrachium 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 degree, 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. *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*

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 population which 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 Dyrrachium, 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 modern 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, Zachlounians, 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 Slavonian 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 Slavonians to settle in Illyricum, numerous bodies of the Avars and their Slavonic 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 Slavonic subjects retained possession of these conquests for many centuries. The political and social condition of these Slavonic 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 Slavonian 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 Slavonian 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 Slavonian 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 Slavonic 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 Slavonic 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 Slavonians, 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 Slavonian 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 Slavonians 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; Thebarnes, 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 Thebarnes, 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 Western 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 man's annals covered with greater obscurity.

## CHAPTER V

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 Othoman 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 Manichaeans 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 modern 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 Mardaltes, 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 monothelism. 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. Brundisium

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 besiege 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 Mardaites, 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 repopling 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 repopling 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 Slavonians 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 Slavonians and their Bulgarian allies were defeated and the country of the Slavonians subdued. In order to repopulate the fertile shores of the Hellespont about Abydos, Justinian transplanted a number of Slavonian 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 Slavonian troops. Justinian fled from the field of battle, and on his way to the capital he revenged himself on the Slavonians 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 Dyrrachium, 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 Bosphorus, 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 Slavonian 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 Dyrrachium, and the maritime districts of Greece, Macedonia, and Thrace, as far as Constantinople. The interior of the country was everywhere overrun by Slavonic 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 Slavonic 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 Slavonic 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 re-doubted 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 none 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 Slavonians. 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 Slavoman 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 Leake 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 modern 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.

VOLUME II  
THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

FIRST PART  
FROM A.D. 717 TO 1057

BOOK I  
THE CONTEST WITH THE ICONOCLASTS

A.D. 717-367

CHAPTER I  
THE ISAURIAN DYNASTY

A.D. 717-797

Sect. I

CHARACTERISTICS OF BYZANTINE HISTORY

The institutions of Imperial Rome had long thwarted, the great law of man's existence which impels him to better his condition, when the accession of Leo the Isaurian to the throne of Constantinople suddenly opened a new era in the history of the Eastern Empire. Both the material and intellectual progress of society had open deliberately opposed by the imperial legislation. A spirit of conservatism persuaded the legislators of the Roman Empire that its power could not decline, if each order and profession of its citizens was fixed irrevocably in the sphere of their own peculiar duties by hereditary succession. An attempt was really made to divide the population into castes. But the political laws which were adopted to maintain mankind in a state of stationary prosperity by these trammels, depopulated and impoverished the empire, and threatened to dissolve the very elements of society. The Western Empire, under their operation, fell a prey to small tribes of northern nations; the Eastern was so depopulated that it was placed on the eve of being re-peopled by Slavonian colonists, and conquered by Saracen invaders.

Leo III mounted the throne, and under his government the empire not only ceased to decline, but even began to regain much of its early vigour. Reformed modifications of the old Roman authority developed new energy in the empire. Great political reforms, and still greater changes in the condition of the people, mark the eighth century as an epoch of transition in Roman history, though the improved condition of the mass of the population is in some degree concealed by the prominence given to the disputes concerning image-worship in the records of this period. But the increased strength of the empire, and the energy infused into the

administration, are forcibly displayed by the fact, that the Byzantine armies began from this time to oppose a firm barrier to the progress of the invaders of the empire.

When Leo III was proclaimed Emperor, it seemed as if no human power could save Constantinople from falling as Rome had fallen. The Saracens considered the sovereignty of every land, in which any remains of Roman civilization survived, as within their grasp. Leo, an Isaurian, and an Iconoclast, consequently a foreigner and a heretic, ascended the throne of Constantine, and arrested the victorious career of the Mohammedans. He then reorganized the whole administration so completely in accordance with the new exigencies of Eastern society, that the reformed empire outlived for many centuries every government contemporary with its establishment.

The Eastern Roman Empire, thus reformed, is called by modern historians the Byzantine Empire, and the term is well devised to mark the changes effected in the government, after the extinction of the last traces of the military monarchy of ancient Rome. The social condition of the inhabitants of the Eastern Empire had already undergone a considerable change during the century which elapsed from the accession of Heraclius to that of Leo, from the influence of causes to be noticed in the following pages; and this change in society created a new phase in the Roman Empire. The gradual progress of this change has led some writers to date the commencement of the Byzantine Empire as early as the reigns of Zeno and Anastasius, and others to descend so late as the times of Maurice and Heraclius. But as the Byzantine Empire was only a continuation of the Roman government under a reformed system, it seems most correct to date its commencement from the period when the new social and political modifications produced a visible effect on the fate of the Eastern Empire. This period is marked by the accession of Leo the Isaurian.

The administrative system of Rome, as modified by Constantine, continued in operation, though subjected to frequent reforms, until Constantinople was stormed by the Crusaders, and the Greek church enslaved by papal domination. The General Council of Nicaea, and the dedication of the imperial city, with their concomitant legislative, administrative, and judicial institutions, engendered a succession of political measures, whose direct relations were uninterrupted until terminated by foreign conquest. The government of Great Britain has undergone greater changes during the last three centuries than that of the Eastern Empire during the nine centuries which elapsed from the foundation of Constantinople in 330 to its conquest in 1204.

Yet Leo III has strong claims to be regarded as the first of a new series of emperors. He was the founder of a dynasty, the saviour of Constantinople, and the reformer of the church and state. He was the first Christian sovereign who arrested the torrent of Mohammedan conquest; he improved the condition of his subjects; he attempted to purify their religion from the superstitious reminiscences of Hellenism, with which it was still debased, and to stop the development of a quasi-idolatry in the orthodox church. Nothing can prove more decidedly the right of his empire to assume a new name than the contrast presented by the condition of its inhabitants to that of the subjects of the preceding dynasty. Under the successors of Heraclius, the Roman Empire presents the spectacle of a declining society, and its thinly-peopled provinces were exposed to the intrusion of foreign colonists and hostile invaders. But, under Leo, society offers an aspect of improvement and prosperity; the old population revives from its lethargy, and soon increases, both in number and strength, to such a degree as to drive back all intruders on its territories. In the records of human civilization, Leo the Isaurian must always occupy a high position, as a type of what the central power in a state can effect even in a declining empire.

Before reviewing the history of Leo's reign, and recording his brilliant exploits, it is necessary to sketch the condition to which the Roman administrative system had reduced the empire. It would be an instructive lesson to trace the progress of the moral and mental decline of

the Greeks, from the age of Plato and Aristotle to the time of the sixth ecumenical council, in the reign of Justinian II; for the moral evils nourished in Greek society degraded the nation, before the oppressive government of the Romans impoverished and depopulated Greece. When the imperial authority was fully established, we easily trace the manner in which the intercommunication of different provinces and orders of society became gradually restricted to the operations of material interests, and how the limitation of ideas arose from this want of communication, until at length civilization decayed. Good roads and commodious passage-boats have a more direct connection with the development of popular education, as we see it reflected in the worlds of Phidias and the writings of Sophocles, than is generally believed. Under the jealous system of the imperial government, the isolation of place and class became so complete, that even the highest members of the aristocracy received their ideas from the inferior domestics with whom they habitually associated in their own households—not from the transitory intercourse they held with able and experienced men of their own class, or with philosophic and religious teachers. Nurses and slaves implanted their ignorant superstitions in the households where the rulers of the empire and the provinces were reared; and no public assemblies existed, where discussion could efface such prejudices. Family education became a more influential feature in society than public instruction; and though family education, from the fourth to the seventh century, appears to have improved the morality of the population, it certainly increased their superstition and limited their understandings. Emperors, senators, landlords, and merchants, were alike educated under these influences; and though the church and the law opened a more enlarged circle of ideas, from creating a deeper sense of responsibility, still the prejudices of early education circumscribed the sense of duty more and more in each successive generation. The military class, which was the most powerful in society, consisted almost entirely of mere barbarians. The mental degradation, resulting from superstition, bigotry, and ignorance, which forms the marked social feature of the period between the reigns of Justinian I and Leo III, brought the Eastern Empire to the state of depopulation and weakness that had delivered the Western a prey to small tribes of invaders.

The fiscal causes of the depopulation of the Roman Empire have been noticed in a prior volume, as well as the extent to which immigrants had intruded themselves on the soil of Greece. The corruption of the ancient language took place at the same time, and arose out of the causes which disseminated ignorance. At the accession of Leo, the disorder in the central administration, the anarchy in the provincial government, and the ravages of the Slavonians and Saracens, had rendered the condition of the people intolerable. The Roman government seemed incapable of upholding legal order in society, and its extinction was regarded as a proximate event. All the provinces between the shores of the Adriatic and the banks of the Danube had been abandoned to Slavonian tribes. Powerful colonies of Slavonians had been planted by Justinian II in Macedonia and Bithynia, in the rich valleys of the Strymon and the Artanas. Greece was filled with pastoral and agricultural hordes of the same race, who became in many districts the sole cultivators of the soil, and effaced the memory of the names of mountains and streams, which will be immortal in the world's literature. The Bulgarians plundered all Thrace to the walls of Constantinople. Thessalonica was repeatedly besieged by Slavonians. The Saracens had inundated Asia Minor with their armies, and were preparing to extirpate Christianity in the East. Such was the crisis at which Leo was proclaimed emperor by the army, in Amorium AD 716.

Yet there were peculiar features in the condition of the surviving population, and an inherent vigour in the principles of the Roman administration, that still operated powerfully in resisting foreign domination. The people felt the necessity of defending the administration of the law, and of upholding commercial intercourse. The ties of interest consequently ranged a large body of the inhabitants of every province round the central administration at this hour of difficulty. The very circumstances which weakened the power of the court of Constantinople, conferred on the people an increase of authority, and enabled them to take effectual measures for their own defence. This new energy may be traced in the resistance which Ravenna and Cherson offered to the tyranny of Justinian II. The Orthodox Church, also, served as an

additional bond of union among the people, and, throughout the wide extent of the imperial dominions, its influences connected the local feelings of the parish with the general interests of the church and the empire. These misfortunes, which brought the state to the verge of ruin, relieved commerce from much fiscal oppression and many monopolies. Facilities were thus given to trade, which afforded to the population of the towns additional sources of employment. The commerce of the Eastern Empire had already gained by the conquests of the barbarians in the West, for the ruling classes in the countries conquered by the Goths and Franks rarely engaged in trade or accumulated capital. The advantage of possessing a systematic administration of justice, enforced by a fixed legal procedure, attached the commercial classes and the town population to the person of the emperor, whose authority was considered the fountain of legal order and judicial impartiality. A fixed legislation, and an uninterrupted administration of justice, prevented the political anarchy that prevailed under the successors of Heraclius from ruining society in the Roman Empire; while the arbitrary judicial power of provincial governors, in the dominions of the caliphs, rendered property insecure, and undermined national wealth.

There was likewise another feature in the Eastern Empire which deserves notice. The number of towns was very great, and they were generally more populous than the political state of the country would lead us to expect. Indeed, to estimate the density of the urban population, in comparison with the extent of territory from which it apparently derived its supplies, we must compare it with the actual condition of Malta and Guernsey, or with the state of Lombardy and Tuscany in the middle ages. This density of population, joined to the great difference in the price of the produce of the soil in various places, afforded the Roman government the power of collecting from its subjects an amount of taxation unparalleled in modern times, except in Egypt. The whole surplus profits of society were annually drawn into the coffers of the state, leaving the inhabitants only a bare sufficiency for perpetuating the race of tax-payers. History, indeed, shows that the agricultural classes, from the labourer to the landlord, were unable to retain possession of the savings required to replace that depreciation which time is constantly producing in all vested capital, and that their numbers gradually diminished.

After the accession of Leo III, a new condition of society is soon apparent; and though many old political evils continued to exist, it becomes evident that a greater degree of personal liberty, as well as greater security for property, was henceforth guaranteed to the mass of the inhabitants of the empire. Indeed, no other government of which history has preserved the records, unless it be that of China, has secured equal advantages to its subjects for so long a period. The empires of the caliphs and of Charlemagne, though historians have celebrated their praises loudly, cannot, in their best days, compete with the administration organized by Leo on this point; and both sank into ruin while the Byzantine Empire continued to flourish in full vigour. It must be confessed that eminent historians present a totally different picture of Byzantine history to their readers. Voltaire speaks of it as a worthless repertory of declamation and miracles, disgraceful to the human mind. Even the sagacious Gibbon, after enumerating with just pride the extent of his labours, adds, "From these considerations, I should have abandoned without regret the Greek slaves and their servile historians, had I not reflected that the fate of the Byzantine monarchy is passively connected with the most splendid and important revolutions which have changed the state of the world". The views of byzantine history, unfolded in the following pages, are frequently in direct opposition to these great authorities. The defects and vices of the political system will be carefully noticed, but the splendid achievements of the emperors, and the great merits of the judicial and ecclesiastical establishments, will be contrasted with their faults.

The history of the Byzantine Empire divides itself into three periods, strongly marked by distinct characteristics.

The first period commences with the reign of Leo III in 716, and terminates with that of Michael III in 867. It comprises the whole history of the predominance of the Iconoclasts in the

established church, and of the reaction which reinstated the orthodox in power. It opens with the efforts by which Leo and the people of the empire saved the Roman law and the Christian religion from the conquering Saracens. It embraces a long and violent struggle between the government and the people, the emperors seeking to increase the central power by annihilating every local franchise, and even the right of private opinion, among their subjects. The contest concerning image-worship, from the prevalence of ecclesiastical ideas, became the expression of this struggle. Its object was as much to consolidate the supremacy of the imperial authority, as to purify the practice of the church. The emperors wished to constitute themselves the fountains of ecclesiastical as completely as of civil legislation.

The long and bloody wars of this period, and the vehement character of the sovereigns who filled the throne, attract the attention of those who love to dwell on the romantic facts of history. Unfortunately, the biographical sketches and individual characters of the heroes of these ages he concealed in the dullest chronicles. But the true historical feature of this memorable period is the aspect of a declining empire, saved by the moral vigour developed in society, and of the central authority struggling to restore national prosperity. Never was such a succession of able sovereigns seen following one another on any other throne. The stern Iconoclast, Leo the Isaurian, opens the line as the second founder of the Eastern Empire. His son, the fiery Constantine, who was said to prefer the door of the stable to the perfumes of his palaces, replanted the Christian standards on the banks of the Euphrates. Irene, the beautiful Athenian, presents a strange combination of talent, heartlessness, and orthodoxy. The finance minister, Nicephoras, perishes on the field of battle like an old Roman. The Armenian Leo falls at the altar of his private chapel, murdered as he is singing psalms with his deep voice, before day-dawn. Michael the Amorian, who stammered Greek with his native Phrygian accent, became the founder of an imperial dynasty, destined to be extinguished by a Slavonian groom. The accomplished Theophilus lived in an age of romance, both in action and literature. His son, Michael, the last of the Amorian family, was the only contemptible prince of this period, and he was certainly the most despicable buffoon that ever occupied a throne.

The second period commences with the reign of Basil I in 867, and terminates with the deposition of Michael VI in 1057. During these two centuries the imperial sceptre was retained by members of the Basilian family, or held by those who shared their throne as guardians or husbands. At this time the Byzantine Empire attained its highest pitch of external power and internal prosperity. The Saracens were pursued into the plains of Syria. Antioch and Edessa were reunited to the empire. The Bulgarian monarchy was conquered, and the Danube became again the northern frontier. The Slavonians in Greece were almost exterminated. Byzantine commerce filled the whole Mediterranean, and legitimated the claim of the emperor of Constantinople to the title of Autocrat of the Mediterranean Sea. But the real glory of this period consists in the power of the law. Respect for the administration of justice pervaded society more generally than it had ever done at any preceding period of the history of the world—a fact which our greatest historians have overlooked, though it is all-important in the history of human civilization.

The third period extends from the accession of Isaac I Comnenus in 1057, to the conquest of the Byzantine Empire by the Crusaders, in 1204. This is the true period of the decline and fall of the Eastern Empire. It commenced by a rebellion of the great nobles of Asia, who effected an internal revolution in the Byzantine empire by wrenching the administration out of the hands of well-trained officials, and destroying the responsibility created, by systematic procedure. A despotism supported by personal influence soon ruined the scientific fabric which had previously upheld the imperial power. The people were ground to the earth by a fiscal rapacity, over which the splendour of the house of Comnenus throws a thin veil. The wealth of the empire was dissipated, its prosperity destroyed, the administration of justice corrupted, and the central authority lost all control over the population, when a band of 20,000 adventurers, masked as crusaders, put an end to the Roman empire of the East.



In the eighth and ninth centuries the Byzantine Empire continued to embrace many nations differing from the Greeks in language and manners. Even in religion there was a strong tendency to separation, and many of the heresies noticed in history assumed a national character, while the Orthodox Church circumscribed itself more and more within the nationality of the Greeks, and forfeited its ecumenical characteristics. The empire still included within its limits Romans, Greeks, Rumenians, Isaurians, Lycaonians, Phrygians, Syrians, and Gallo-Grecians. But the great Thracian race, which had once been inferior in number only to the Indian, and which, in the first century of our era, had excited the attention of Vespasian by the extent of the territory it occupied, was now exterminated. The country it had formerly inhabited was peopled by Slavonian tribes, a diminished Roman and Greek population only retaining possession of the towns, and the Bulgarians, a Turkish tribe, ruling as the dominant race from Mount Hemus to the Danube. The range of Mount Hemus generally formed the Byzantine frontier to the north, and its mountain passes were guarded by imperial garrisons. Slavonian colonies had established themselves over all the European provinces, and had even penetrated into the Peloponnesus. The military government of Strymon, above the passes in the plain of Heraclea Sintica, was formed to prevent the country to the south of Mounts Orbelos and Skomios from becoming an independent Slavonian province.

The provincial divisions of the Roman Empire had fallen into oblivion. A new geographical arrangement into Themes appears to have been established by Heraclius, when he recovered the Asiatic provinces from the Persians: it was reorganized by Leo, and endured as long as the Byzantine government. The number of themes varied at different periods. The emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, writing about the middle of the tenth century, counts sixteen in the Asiatic portion of the empire, and twelve in the European.

Seven great themes are particularly prominent in Asia Minor, Optimaton, Opsikion, the Thrakesian, the Anatolic, the Bukellarian, the Kibyrraiot, and the Armeniac. In each of these a large military force was permanently maintained, under the command of a general of the province, and in Opsikion, the Thrakesian, and the Kibyrraiot, a naval force was likewise stationed under its own officers. The commanders of the troops were called Strategoi, those of the navy Drangarioi. Several subordinate territorial divisions existed, called Tourms, and separate military commands were frequently established for the defence of important passes, traversed by great lines of communication, called Kleisouras. Several of the ancient nations in Asia Minor still continued to preserve their national peculiarities, and this circumstance has induced the Byzantine writers frequently to mention their country as recognized geographical divisions of the empire.

The European provinces were divided into eight continental and five insular or transmarine themes, until the loss of the exarchate of Ravenna reduced the number to twelve. Venice and Naples, though they acknowledged the suzerainty of the Eastern Empire, acted generally as independent cities. Sardinia was lost about the time of Leo's accession, and the circumstances attending its conquest by the Saracens are unknown.

The ecclesiastical divisions of the empire underwent frequent modifications; but after the provinces of Epirus, Greece, and Sicily were withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Pope, and placed under that of the Patriarch of Constantinople by Leo III, that patriarchate embraced the whole Byzantine Empire. It was then divided into 52 metropolitan dioceses, which were subdivided into 649 suffragan bishoprics, and 13 archbishoprics, in which the prelates were independent but without any suffragans. There were, moreover, 34 titular archbishops.

## Sect. II

## REIGN OF LEO III THE ISAURIAN, A.D. 717-741

When Leo was raised to the throne, the empire was threatened with immediate ruin. Six emperors had been dethroned within the space of twenty-one years. Four perished by the hand of the public executioner, one died in obscurity, after being deprived of sight, and the other was only allowed to end his days peacefully in a monastery, because Leo felt the imperial sceptre firmly fixed in his own grasp. Every army assembled to encounter the Saracens had broken out into rebellion. The Bulgarians and Slavonians wasted Europe up to the walls of Constantinople; the Saracens ravaged the whole of Asia Minor to the shores of the Bosphorus.

Amorium was the principal city of the theme Anatolikon. The Caliph Suleiman had sent his brother, Moslemah, with a numerous army, to complete the conquest of the Roman Empire, which appeared to be an enterprise of no extraordinary difficulty, and Amorium was besieged by the Saracens. Leo, who commanded the Byzantine troops, required some time to concert the operations by which he hoped to raise the siege. To gain the necessary delay, he opened negotiations with the invaders, and, under the pretext of hastening the conclusion of the treaty, he visited the Saracen general engaged in the siege with an escort of only 500 horse. The Saracens were invited to suspend their attacks until the decision of Moslemah—who was at the head of another division of the Mohammedan army—could be known. In an interview which took place with the bishop and principal inhabitants of the Amorium, relating to the proffered terms, Leo contrived to exhort them to continue their defence, and assured them of speedy succour. The besiegers, nevertheless, pressed forward their approaches. Leo, after his interview with the Amorians, proposed that the Saracen general should accompany him to the headquarters of Moslemah. The Saracen readily agreed to an arrangement which would enable him to deliver so important a hostage to the commander-in-chief. The wary Isaurian, who well knew that he would be closely watched, had made his plan of escape. On reaching a narrow defile, from which a cross road led to the advanced posts of his own army, Leo suddenly drew his sabre and attacked the Saracens about his person; while his guards, who were prepared for the signal, easily opened a way through the two thousand hostile cavalry of the escort, and all reached the Byzantine camp in safety. Leo's subsequent military dispositions and diplomatic negotiations induced the enemy to raise the siege of Amorium, and the grateful inhabitants united with the army in saluting him Emperor of the Romans. But in his arrangements with Moslemah, he is accused by his enemies of having agreed to conditions which facilitated the further progress of the Mohammedans, in order to secure his own march to Constantinople. On this march he was met by the son of Theodosius III, whom he defeated. Theodosius resigned his crown, and retired into a monastery, while Leo made his triumphal entry into the capital by the Golden Gate, and was crowned by the Patriarch in the church of St. Sophia on the 25th of March, 717.

The position of Leo continued to be one of extreme difficulty. The Caliph Suleiman, who had seen one private adventurer succeed the other in quick succession on the imperial throne, deemed the moment favourable for the final conquest of the Christians; and, reinforcing his brother's army, he ordered him to lay siege to Constantinople. The Saracen Empire had now reached its greatest extent. From the banks of the Sihun and the Indus to the shores of the Atlantic in Mauretania and Spain, the orders of Suleiman were implicitly obeyed. The recent conquests of Spain in the west, and of Fergana, Cashgar, and Sind in the East, had animated the confidence of the Mohammedans to such a degree that no enterprise appeared difficult. The army Moslemah led against Constantinople was the best appointed that had ever attacked the Christians: it consisted of eighty thousand fighting men. The caliph announced his intention of taking the field in person with additional forces, should the capital of the Christians offer a protracted resistance to the arms of Islam. The whole expedition is said to have employed one

hundred and eighty thousand; and the number does not appear to be greatly exaggerated, if it be supposed to include the sailors of the fleet, and the reinforcements which reached the camp before Constantinople.

Moslemah, after capturing Pergamus, marched to Abydos, where he was joined by the Saracen fleet. He then transported his army across the Hellespont, and, marching along the shore of the Propontis, invested Leo in his capital both by land and sea. The strong walls of Constantinople, the engines of defence with which Roman and Greek art had covered the ramparts, and the skill of the Byzantine engineers, rendered every attempt to carry the place by assault hopeless, so that the Saracens were compelled to trust to the effect of a strict blockade for gaining possession of the city. They surrounded their camp with a deep ditch, and strengthened it with a strong dyke. Moslemah then sent out large detachments to collect forage and destroy the provisions, which might otherwise find their way into the besieged city. The presence of an active enemy and a populous city required constant vigilance on the part of a great portion of his land forces.

The Saracen fleet consisted of eighteen hundred vessels of war and transports. In order to form the blockade, it was divided into two squadrons: one was stationed on the Asiatic coast, in the ports of Eutropius and Anthimus, to prevent supplies arriving from the Archipelago; the other occupied the bays in the European shore of the Bosphorus above the point of Galata, in order to cut off all communication with the Black Sea and the cities of Cherson and Trebizond. The first naval engagement took place as the fleet was taking up its position within the Bosphorus. The current, rendered impetuous by a change of wind, threw the heavy ships and transports into confusion. The besieged directed some fire-ships against the crowded vessels, and succeeded in burning several, and driving others on shore under the walls of Constantinople. The Saracen admiral, Suleiman, confident in the number of his remaining ships of war, resolved to avenge his partial defeat, by a complete victory. He placed one hundred chosen Arabs, in complete armour, in each of his best vessels, and, advancing to the walls of Constantinople, made a vigorous attempt to enter the place by assault, as it was entered long after by Doge Dandolo. Leo was well prepared to repulse the attack, and, under his experienced guidance, the Arabs were completely defeated. A number of the Saracen ships were burned by the Greek fire which the besieged launched from their walls. After this defeat, Suleiman withdrew the European squadron of his fleet into the Sosthenian bay.

The besiegers encamped before Constantinople on the 15th August, 717. The Caliph Suleiman died before he was able to send any reinforcements to his brother. The winter proved unusually severe. The country all round Constantinople remained covered with deep snow for many weeks. The greater part of the horses and camels in the camp of Moslemah perished; numbers of the best soldiers, accustomed to the mild winters of Syria, died from having neglected to take the requisite precautions against a northern climate. The difficulty of procuring food ruined the discipline of the troops. These misfortunes were increased by the untimely death of the admiral, Suleiman. In the meantime, Leo and the inhabitants of Constantinople, having made the necessary preparations for a long siege, passed the winter in security. A fleet, fitted out at Alexandria, brought supplies to Moslemah in spring. Four hundred transports, escorted by men-of-war, sailed past Constantinople, and, entering the Bosphorus, took up their station at Kalos Agros. Another fleet, almost equally numerous, arrived soon after from Africa, and anchored in the bays on the Bithynian coast. These positions rendered the current a protection against the fire-ships of the garrison of Constantinople. The crews of the new transports were in great part composed of Christians, and the weak condition of Moslemah's army filled them with fear. Many conspired to desert. Seizing the boats of their respective vessels during the night, numbers escaped to Constantinople, where they informed the emperor of the exact disposition of the whole Saracen force. Leo lost no time in taking advantage of the enemy's embarrassments. Fire-ships were sent with a favourable wind among the transports, while ships of war, furnished with engines for throwing Greek fire, increased the confusion. This bold attack was successful, and a part of the naval force of the Saracens was destroyed. Some ships

fell a prey to the flames, some were driven on shore, and some were captured by the byzantine squadron. The blockade was now at an end, for Moslemah's troops were dying from want, while the besieged were living in plenty; but the Saracen obstinately persisted in maintaining possession of his camp in Europe. It was not until his foraging parties were repeatedly cut off, and all the beasts of burden were consumed as food, that he consented to allow the standard of the Prophet to retreat before the Christians. The remains of his army were embarked in the relics of the fleet, and on the 15th August, 718, Moslemah raised the siege, after ruining one of the finest armies the Saracens ever assembled, by obstinately persisting in a hopeless undertaking. The troops were landed at Proconnesus, and marched back to Damascus, through Asia Minor; but the fleet encountered a violent storm in passing through the Archipelago. The dispersed ships were pursued by the Greeks of the islands, and so many were lost or captured, that only five of the Syrian squadron returned home.

Few military details concerning Leo's defence of Constantinople have been preserved, but there can be no doubt that it was one of the most brilliant exploits of a warlike age. The Byzantine army was superior to every other in the art of defending fortresses. The Roman arsenals, in their best days, could probably have supplied no scientific or mechanical contrivance unknown to the corps of engineers of Leo's army, for we must recollect that the education, discipline, and practice of these engineers had been perpetuated in uninterrupted succession from the times of Trajan and Constantine. We are not to estimate the decline of mechanical science by the degradation of art, nor by the decay of military power in the field. The depopulation of Europe rendered soldiers rare and dear, and a considerable part of the Byzantine armies was composed of foreign mercenaries. The army of Leo, though far inferior in number to that of Moslemah, was its equal in discipline and military skill; while the walls of Constantinople were garnished with engines from the ancient arsenals of the city, far exceeding in power and number any with which the Arabs had been in the habit of contending. The vanity of Gallic writers has magnified the success of Charles Martel over a plundering expedition of the Spanish Arabs into a marvellous victory, and attributed the deliverance of Europe from the Saracen yoke to the valour of the Franks. A veil has been thrown over the talents and courage of Leo, a soldier of fortune, just seated on the imperial throne, who defeated the long-planned schemes of conquest of the caliphs Welid and Suleiman. It is unfortunate that we have no Isaurian literature.

The catastrophe of Moslemah's army, and the state of the caliphate during the reigns of Omar II and Yesid II, relieved the empire from all immediate danger, and Leo was enabled to pursue his schemes for reorganizing the army and defending his dominions against future invasions. The war was languidly carried on for some years, and the Saracens were gradually expelled from most of their conquests beyond Mount Taurus. In the year 726, Leo was embarrassed by seditions and rebellions, caused by his decrees against image-worship. Heschem seized the opportunity, and sent two powerful armies to invade the empire. Caesarea was taken by Moslemah; while another army, under Moawyah, pushing forward, laid siege to Nicaea. Leo was well pleased to see the Saracens consume their resources in attacking a distant fortress; but though they were repulsed before Nicaea, they retreated without serious loss, carrying on immense plunder. The plundering excursions of the Arabs were frequently renewed by land and sea. In one of these expeditions, the celebrated Sid-al-Battal carried on an individual who was set up by the Saracens as a pretender to the Byzantine throne, under the pretext that he was Tiberius, the son of Justinian II. Two sons of the caliph appeared more than once at the head of the invading armies. In the year 739, the Saracen forces poured into Asia Minor in immense numbers, with all their early energy. Leo, who had taken the command of the Byzantine army, accompanied by his son Constantine, marched to meet Sid-al-Battal, whose great fame rendered him the most dangerous enemy. A battle took place at Acroinon, in the Anatolic theme, in which the Saracens were totally defeated. The valiant Sid, the most renowned champion of Islamism, perished on the field; but the fame of his exploits has filled many volumes of Moslem romance, and furnished some of the tales that have adorned the memory of the Cid of Spain, three hundred years after the victory of Leo. The Western Christians have robbed the Byzantine

empire of its glory in every way. After this defeat the Saracen power ceased to be formidable to the empire, until the energy of the caliphate was revived by the vigorous administration of the Abbassides.

Leo's victories over the Mohammedans were an indispensable step to the establishment of his personal authority. But the measures of administrative wisdom which rendered his reign a new era in Roman history are its most important feature in the annals of the human race. His military exploits were the result of ordinary virtues, and of talents common in every age; but the ability to reform the internal government of an empire, in accordance with the exigencies of society, can only be appreciated by those who have made the causes and the progress of national revolutions the object of long thought. The intellectual superiority of Leo may be estimated by the incompetence of sovereigns in the present century to meet new exigencies of society. Leo judiciously availed himself of many circumstances that favoured his reforms. The inherent vigour which is nourished by parochial and municipal responsibilities, bound together the remnants of the free population in the eastern Roman Empire, and operated powerfully in resisting foreign domination. The universal respect felt for the administration of justice, and the general deference paid to the ecclesiastical establishment, inspired the inhabitants with energies wanting in the West. Civilization was so generally diffused, that the necessity of upholding the civil and ecclesiastical tribunals, and defending the channels of commercial intercourse, reunited a powerful body of the people in every province to the central administration, by the strongest ties of interest and feeling.

The oppressive authority of the court of Constantinople had been much weakened by the anarchy that prevailed throughout the empire in the latter part of the seventh century. The government had been no longer able to inundate the provinces with those bands of officials who had previously consumed the wealth of the curia; and the cities had been everywhere compelled to provide for their own defence by assuming powers hitherto reserved to the imperial officers. These new duties had inspired the people with new vigour, and developed unexpected talents. The destructive responsibility of fiscal guarantees and personal services, imposed by the administration of imperial Rome as a burden on every class of its subjects, from the senator to the ticket-porter, was lightened when the Western Empire fell a prey to foreign conquerors, and when the Eastern was filled with foreign colonists. The curiales and the corporations at last relieved themselves from the attempt of the Roman government to fix society in a stationary condition, and the relief was followed by immediate improvement.

Troubled times had also made the clergy more anxious to conciliate public opinion than official favour. A better and more popular class of bishops replaced the worldly priest satirized by Gregory Nazianzenos. The influence of this change was very great, for the bishop, as the defender of the curia, and the real head of the people in the municipality, enjoyed extensive authority over the corporations of artisans and the mass of the labouring population. From a judge he gradually acquired the power of a civil governor, and the curia became his senate. The ordinary judicial tribunals being cut off from direct communication with the supreme courts, peculiar local usages gained force, and a customary law arose in many provinces restricting the application of the code of Justinian. The Orthodox Church alone preserved its unity of character, and its priests continued to be guided by principles of centralization, which preserved their connection with the seat of the patriarchate at Constantinople, without injuring the energetic spirit of their local resistance to the progress of the Mohammedan power. Throughout the wide extent of the Eastern Empire, the priesthood served as a bond to connect the local feelings of the parish with the general interests of the Orthodox Church. Its authority was, moreover, endeared to a large body of the population from its language being Greek, and from its holy legends embodying national feelings and prejudices. Repulsive as the lives of the saints now appear to our taste, they were the delight of millions for many centuries.

From the earnest period to the present hour, the wealth of most of the cities in the East has been derived from their importance as points of commercial communication. The insane

fury of the Emperor Justinian II, in devastating the nourishing cities of Ravenna and Cherson, failed to ruin these places, because they were then the greatest commercial entrepôts of the trade between India and Europe. But the alarm felt for the ruin of commerce throughout the Christian world, during the anarchy that existed in the last years of the seventh, and early years of the eighth centuries, contributed much to render men contented with the firm government of Leo, even though they may have considered him a heretic. On the other hand, the prevailing anarchy had relieved commerce both from much fiscal oppression and many official monopolies. The moment the financial burdens of the commercial classes were lightened, they experienced an advantage of possessing a systematic administration of justice, enforced by a fixed legal procedure, and consequently they very naturally became warm partisans of the imperial authority, as, in their opinion, the personal influence of the emperor constituted the true fountain of legal order and judicial impartiality. A fixed legislation saved society from dissolution during many years of anarchy.

The obscure records of the eighth century allow us to discern through their dim atmosphere a considerable increase of power in popular feelings, and they even afford some glimpses of the causes of this new energy. The fermentation which then pervaded Christian society marks the commencement of modern civilization, as contrasted with ancient times. Its force arose out of the general diminution of slave labour. The middle classes in the towns were no longer rich enough to be purchasers of slaves, consequently the slave population henceforward became a minority in the Eastern Empire; and those democratic ideas which exist among free labourers replaced the aristocratic caution, inseparable from the necessity of watching a numerous population of slaves. The general attention was directed to the equal administration of justice. The emperor alone appeared to be removed above the influence of partiality and bribery; under his powerful protection the masses hoped to escape official and aristocratic oppression, by the systematic observance of the rules of Roman law. The prosperity of commerce seemed as directly connected with the imperial supremacy as judicial equity itself, for the power of the emperor alone could enforce one uniform system of customs from Cherson to Ravenna. Every trader, and indeed every citizen, felt that the apparatus of the imperial government was necessary to secure financial and legal unity. Above all, Leo, the conqueror of the hitherto victorious Saracens, seemed the only individual who possessed the civil as well as the military talents necessary for averting the ruin of the empire. Leo converted the strong attachment to the laws of Rome prevalent in society into a lever of political power, and rendered the devotion felt for the personal authority of the sovereign the means of increasing the centralization of power in the reformed fabric of the Roman administration. The laws of Rome, therefore, saved Christianity from Saracen domination more than the armies. The victories of Leo enabled him to consolidate his power, and constitute the Byzantine Empire, in defiance of the Greek nation and the Orthodox Church; but the law supplied him with this moral power over society.

As long as Mohammedanism was only placed in collision with the fiscal policy of the Roman government and the intolerance of the Orthodox Church, the Saracens were everywhere victorious, and found everywhere Christian allies in the provinces they invaded. But when anarchy and misfortune had destroyed the fiscal power of the state, and weakened the ecclesiastical intolerance of the clergy, a new point of comparison between the governments of the emperors and the caliphs presented itself to the attention. The question, how justice was administered in the ordinary relations of life, became of vital interest. The code of Justinian was compared with that of the Koran. The courts presided over by judges and bishops were compared with those of the Moolahs. The convictions which arose in the breasts of the subjects of the Byzantine emperors changed the current of events. The torrent of Mohammedan conquest was arrested, and as long as the Roman law was cultivated in the empire, and administered under proper control in the provinces, the invaders of the Byzantine territory were everywhere unsuccessful. The inhabitants boasted with a just pride, that they lived under the systematic rule of the Roman law, and not under the arbitrary sway of despotic power.

Such was the state of the Roman Empire when Leo commenced his reforms. We must now proceed to examine what history has recorded concerning this great reformer. Some fables concerning his life and fortunes owe their existence to the aversion with which his religious opinions were regarded by the Greeks, and they supply us with the means of forming a corrector view of the popular mind than of the emperor's life. At the same time, it must be recollected that they embody the opinions of only a portion of his subjects, adopted towards the close of his reign.

Leo was born at Germanicia, a city of Armenia Minor, in the mountains near the borders of Cappadocia and Syria. Germanicia was taken by the Saracens, and the parents of Leo emigrated with their son to Mesembria in Thrace. They were persons of sufficient wealth to make the Emperor Justinian II a present of five hundred sheep, as he was advancing to regain possession of his throne with the assistance of the Bulgarians. This well-timed gift gained young Leo the rank of spatharios, the personal favour of the tyrant, and a high command on the Lazian frontier. His prudence and courage raised him, during the reign of Anastasius II, to the command of the Anatolic theme.

But another history of his life, unknown to the early historians, Theophanes and Nicephorus, though both these orthodox writers were his bitter enemies and detractors, became current in after times, and deserves notice as presenting us with a specimen of the tales which then fed the mental appetite of the Greeks. Prodigies, prophecies, and miracles were universally believed. Restricted communications and neglected education were conducting society to an infantine dotage. Every unusual event was said to have been predicted by some prophetic revelation; and as the belief in the prescience of futurity was universal, public deceivers and self-deceivers were always found acting the part of prophets. It is said to have been foretold to Leontius that he should ascend the throne, by two monks and an abbot. The restoration of Justinian II had been announced to him while he was in exile by a hermit of Cappadocia. Philippicus had it revealed in a dream, that he was to become emperor; and he was banished by Tiberius II, (Apsimar,) when this vision became publicly known. It is not, therefore, wonderful that Leo should have been honoured with communications from the other world; though, as might have been expected from his heretical opinions, and the orthodoxy of his historians, these communications are represented to have been made by agents from the lower rather than the higher regions.

A circumstance which it was believed had happened to the Caliph Yezid I, proved most satisfactorily to the Greeks that Satan often transacted business publicly by means of his agents on earth. Two Jews—for Jews are generally selected by the orthodox as the fittest agents of the demon—presented themselves to the caliph claiming the gift of prophecy. They announced that, if he should put an end to the idolatrous worship of images throughout his dominions, fate had predestined him to reign for forty years over a rich and flourishing empire. Yezid was a man of pleasure and a bigot, so that the prophecy was peculiarly adapted to flatter his passions. The images and pictures which adorned the Christian churches were torn down and destroyed throughout the caliph's dominions. But Yezid was occupied carrying his decree into execution when he died. His son, Moawyah II, sought the Jewish prophets in vain. The prince of darkness concealed them from his search, and transported them into the heart of Asia Minor, where they had new services to perform.

A young man named Conon, who had quitted his native mountains of Isauria, to gain his living as a pedlar in the wealthier plains, drove his ass, laden with merchandise, to a grove of evergreen oaks near a bubbling fountain, to seek rest during the heat of the day, and count his recent gains. The ass was turned loose to pasture in the little meadow formed by the stream of the fountain, and Conon sat down in the shade, by the chapel of St. Theodore, to eat his frugal meal. He soon perceived two travellers resting like himself, and enjoying their noontide repast. These travellers entered into conversation with young Conon, who was a lad of remarkable strength, beauty, and intelligence. They allowed the fact to transpire that they were Jews,

prophets and astrologers, who had recently quitted the court of the caliph at Damascus, which very naturally awakened in the mind of the young pedlar a wish to know his future fortune, for he may have aspired at becoming a great post-contractor or a rich banker. The two Jews readily satisfied his curiosity, and, to his utter astonishment, informed him that he was destined to rule the Roman Empire. As a proof of their veracity, the prophets declared that they sought neither wealth nor honours for themselves, but they conjured Conon to promise solemnly that, when he ascended the throne, he would put an end to the idolatry which disgraced Christianity in the East. If he engaged to do this, they assured him that his fulfilling the will of Heaven would bring prosperity to himself and to the empire. Young Conon, believing that the prophets had revealed the will of God, pledged himself to purify the Christian Church; and he kept this promise, when he ascended the throne as Leo the Isaurian. But as the prophets had made no stipulation for the free exercise of their own creed, and their interest in Christianity pointed out the true faith, Leo did not consider himself guilty of ingratitude, when, as emperor, he persecuted the Jewish religion with the greatest severity.

Such is the fable by which the later Byzantine historians explain Leo's hostility to image-worship. This adventure appeared to them a probable origin of the ecclesiastical reforms which characterize Leo's domestic policy. In the bright days of Hellenic genius, such materials would have been woven into an immortal tale; the chapel of St Theodore, its fountain, and its evergreen oaks, Conon driving his ass with the two unearthly Jews reclining in the shade, would have formed a picture immortal in the minds of millions; but in the hands of ignorant monks and purblind chroniclers, it sinks into a dull and improbable narrative. Unfortunately it is almost as difficult to ascertain the precise legislative and executive acts by which Leo reformed the military, financial, and legal administration, as it is to obtain an impartial account of his ecclesiastical measures.

The military establishment of the empire had gradually lost its national character, from the impossibility of recruiting the army from among Roman citizens. In vain the soldier's son was fettered, to his father's profession, as the artisan was bound to his corporation, and the proprietor to his estate. Yet the superiority of the Roman armies seems to have suffered little from the loss of national spirit, as long as strict discipline was maintained in their ranks. For many centuries the majority of the imperial forces consisted of conscripts drawn from the lowest ranks of society, from the rude mountaineers of almost independent provinces, or from foreigners hired as mercenaries; yet the armies of all invaders, from the Goths to the Saracens, were repeatedly defeated in pitched battles. The state maxims which separated the servants of the emperor from the people, survived in the Eastern provinces after the loss of the Western, and served as the basis of the military policy of the Byzantine Empire, when reformed by Leo. The conditions of soldier and citizen were deemed incompatible. The law prevented the citizen from assuming the position of a soldier, and watched with jealousy any attempt of the soldier to acquire the rights and feelings of a citizen. An impassable barrier was placed between the proprietor of the soil, who was the tax-payer, and the defender of the state, who was an agent of the imperial power. It is true that, after the loss of the Western provinces, the Roman armies were recruited from the native subjects of the empire to a much greater degree than formerly; and that, after the time of Heraclius, it became impossible to enforce the fiscal arrangements to which the separation of the citizen from the soldier owed its origin, at least with the previous strictness. Still the old imperial maxims were cherished in the reign of Leo, and the numerous colonies of Slavonians, and other foreigners, established in the empire, owed their foundation to the supposed necessity of seeking for recruits as little as possible from among the native population of agriculturists. These colonies were governed by peculiar regulations, and their most important service was supplying a number of troops for the imperial army. Isauria and other mountainous districts, where it was difficult to collect any revenue by a land-tax, also supplied a fixed military contingent.

Whatever modifications Leo made in the military system, and however great were the reforms he effected in the organization of the army and the discipline of the troops, the mass of



the population continued in the Byzantine empire to be excluded from the use of arms, as they had been in the Roman times; and this circumstance was the cause of that unwarlike disposition, which is made a standing reproach from the days of the Goths to those of the Crusaders.

The state of society engendered by this policy opened the Western Empire to the northern nations, and the empire of Charlemagne to the Normans. Leo's great merit was that without any violent political change he infused new energy into the Byzantine military establishment, and organized a force that for five centuries defended the empire without acquiring the power of domineering in the state. As the army was destitute of patriotic feeling, it was necessary to lessen the influence of its commanders. This was done by dividing the provinces into themes, appointing a general of division for each theme, and grouping together in different stations the various corps of conscripts, subject nations, and hired mercenaries. The adoption likewise of different arms, armour, and manoeuvres in the various corps, and their seclusion from close intercommunication with the native legions, guarded against the danger of those rebellious movements which in reality destroyed the Western Empire. As much caution was displayed in the Byzantine Empire to prevent the army from endangering the government by its seditions, as to render it formidable to the enemy by its strength.

The finances are soon felt to be the basis of government in all civilized states. Augustus experienced the truth of this as much as Louis XIV. The progress of society and the accumulation of wealth have a tendency to sink governments into the position of brokers of human intelligence, wealth, and labour; and the finances form the symbol indicating the quantity of these which the central authority can command. The reforms, therefore, which it was in the power of Leo III to effect in the financial administration, must have proceeded from the force of circumstances rather than from the mind of the emperor. To this cause we must attribute the durability of the fabric he constructed. He confined himself to arranging prudently the materials accumulated to his hand. But no sovereign, and indeed no central executive authority, can form a correct estimate of the taxable capacity of the people. Want of knowledge increases the insatiable covetousness suggested by their position; and the wisest statesman is as likely to impose ruinous burdens on the people, if vested with despotic power, as the most rapacious tyrant. The people alone can find ways of levying on themselves an amount of taxation exceeding any burdens that the boldest despot could hope to impose; for the people can perceive what taxes will have the least effect in arresting the increase of the national wealth.

Leo, who felt the importance of the financial administration as deeply as Augustus, reserved to himself the immediate superintendence of the treasury; and this special control over the finances was retained by his successors, so that, during the whole duration of the Byzantine empire, the emperors may be regarded as their own ministers of finance. The grand Logothetes, who was the official minister, was in reality nothing more than the emperor's private secretary for the department. Leo unquestionably improved the central administration, while the invasions of the Saracens and Bulgarians made him extremely cautious in imposing heavy fiscal burdens on the distant cities and provinces of his dominions. But his reforms were certainly intended to circumscribe the authority of municipal and provincial institutions. The free cities and municipalities which had once been entrusted with the duty of apportioning their quota of the land-tax, and collecting the public burdens of their district, were now deprived of this authority. All fiscal business was transferred to the imperial officers. Each province had its own collectors of the revenue, its own officials charged to complete the registers of the public burdens, and to verify all statistical details. The traditions of imperial Rome still required that this mass of information should be regularly transmitted to the cabinet of the Byzantine emperors, as at the birth of our Saviour.

The financial acts of Leo's reign, though they show that he increased the direct amount of taxation levied from his subjects, prove nevertheless, by the general improvement which took place in the condition of the people, that his reformed system of financial administration really lightened the weight of the public burdens. Still, there can be no doubt that the stringency of the

measures adopted in Greece and Italy, for rendering the census more productive, was one of the causes of the rebellions in those countries, for which his Iconoclastic decrees served as a more honourable war-cry. In Calabria and Sicily he added one-third to the capitation; he confiscated to the profit of the treasury a tribute of three talents and a half of gold which had been remitted annually to Rome, and at the same time he ordered a correct register to be kept of all the males born in his dominions. This last regulation excites a burst of indignation from the orthodox historian and confessor Theophanes, who allows neither his reason nor his memory to restrain his bigotry when recording the acts of the first Iconoclast emperor. He likens Leo's edict to Pharaoh's conduct to the children of Israel, and adds that the Saracens, Leo's teachers in wickedness had never exercised the like oppression—forgetting, in his zeal against taxation, that the Caliph Abdelmelik had established the *haratch* or capitation of Christians as early as the commencement of the reign of Justinian II, AD 692.

An earthquake that ruined the walls of Constantinople, and many cities in Thrace and Bithynia, induced Leo to adopt measures for supplying the treasury with a special fund for restoring them, and keeping their fortifications constantly in a state to resist the Bulgarians and Saracens. The municipal revenues which had once served for this purpose had been encroached upon by Justinian I, and the policy of Leo led him to diminish in every way the sphere of action of all local authorities.

The care of the fortifications was undoubtedly a duty to which the central government required to give its direct attention; and to meet the extraordinary expenditure caused by the calamitous earthquake of 740, an addition of one-twelfth was made to the census. This tax was called the *dikeraton* because the payment appears to have been generally made in the silver coins called *keratia*, two of which were equal to a *miliaresion*, the coin which represented one-twelfth of the *nomisma*, or gold Byzant. Thus a calamity which diminished the public resources increased the public burdens. In such a contingency it seems that a paternal government and a wise despot ought to have felt the necessity of diminishing the pomp of the court, of curtailing the expenses of ecclesiastical pageants, and of reforming the extravagance of the popular amusements of the hippodrome, before imposing new burdens on the suffering population of the empire. Courtiers, saints, and charioteers ought to have been shorn of their splendour, before the groans of the provinces were increased. Yet Leo was neither a luxurious nor an avaricious prince; but, as has been said, already, no despotic monarch can wisely measure the burden of taxation.

The influence of the provincial spirit on the legislation of the empire is strongly marked in the history of jurisprudence during Leo's reign. The anarchy which had long interrupted the official communications between the provinces and the capital lent an increased authority to local usages, and threw obstacles in the way of the regular administration of justice, according to the strict letter of the voluminous laws of Justinian. The consequence was that various local abridgments of the law were used as guide-books, both by lawyers and judges, in the provincial tribunals, where the great expense of procuring a copy of the Justinianean collection prevented its use. Leo published a Greek manual of law, which by its official sanction became the primary authority in all the courts of the empire. This imperial abridgment is called the *Ecloga*: it affords some evidence concerning the state of society and the classes of the people for which it was prepared. Little notice is taken of the rights of the agriculturists; the various modes of acquiring property and constituting servitudes are omitted. The *Ecloga* has been censured for its imperfections by Basil I, the founder of a legislative dynasty, who speaks of it as an insult to the earlier legislators; yet the orthodox lawgiver, while he pretended to reject every act of the heretical Isaurian, servilely imitated all his political plans. The brevity and precision of Leo's *Ecloga* were highly appreciated both by the courts of law and the people, in spite of the heterodox opinions of its promulgator. It so judiciously supplied a want long felt by a large portion of society, that neither the attempt of Basil I to supplant it by a new official manual, nor the publication of the great code of the *Basilika* in Greek, deprived it of value among the jurisconsults of the Byzantine Empire.

The legislative labours of Leo were not circumscribed to the publication of the *Ecloga*. He seems to have sanctioned various minor codes, by which the regulations in use relating to military, agricultural, and maritime law were reduced into systematic order. The collections which are attached to the copies of the *Ecloga*, under the heads of military, agricultural, and Rhodian laws, cannot, however, be considered as official acts of his reign; still, they are supposed to afford us a correct idea of the originals he published. Some abstract of the provisions contained in the Roman legislation on military affairs, was rendered necessary by the practice of maintaining corps of foreign mercenaries in the capital. A military code was likewise rendered necessary, in consequence of the changes that took place in the old system, as the Asiatic provinces were gradually cleared of the invading bands of Saracens. The agricultural laws appear to be a tolerably exact copy of the enactments of Leo. The work bears the impress of the condition of society in his time, and it is not surprising that the title which perpetuated the merits and the memory of the heterodox Leo was suppressed by orthodox bigotry. The maritime laws are extremely interesting, from affording a picture of the state of commercial legislation in the eighth century, at the time when commerce and law saved the Roman Empire. The exact date of the collection we possess is not ascertained. That Leo protected commerce, we may infer from its reviving under his government; whether he promulgated a code to sanction or enforce his reforms, or whether the task was completed by one of his successors, is doubtful.

The whole policy of Leo's reign has been estimated by his ecclesiastical reforms. These have been severely judged by all historians, and they appear to have encountered a violent opposition from a large portion of his subjects. The general dissatisfaction has preserved sufficient authentic information to allow of a candid examination of the merits and errors of his policy. Theophanes considers the aversion of Leo to the adoration of images as originating in an impious attachment to the Unitarianism of the Arabs. His own pages, however, refute some of his calumnies, for he records that Leo persecuted the unitarianism of the Jews, and the tendency to it in the Montanists. Indeed, all those who differed from the most orthodox acknowledgment of the Trinity, received very little Christian charity at the hands of the Isaurian, who placed the cross on the reverse of many of his gold, silver, and copper coins and over the gates of his palace, as a symbol for universal adoration. In his Iconoclast opinions, Leo is merely a type of the more enlightened laymen of his age. A strong reaction against the superstitions introduced into the Christian religion by the increasing ignorance of the people, pervaded the educated classes, who were anxious to put a stop to what might be considered a revival of the ideas and feelings of paganism. The Asiatic Christians, who were brought into frequent collision with the followers of Mahomet, Zoroaster, and Moses, were compelled to observe that the worship of the common people among themselves was sensual, when compared with the devotion of the infidels. The worship of God was neglected, and his service transferred to some human symbol. The favourite saint was usually one whose faults were found to bear some analogy to the vices of his worshipper, and thus pardon was supposed to be obtained for sin on easier terms than accords with Divine justice, and vice was consequently rendered more prevalent. The clergy had yielded to the popular ignorance; the walls of churches were covered with pictures which were reported to have wrought miraculous cures; their shrines were enriched by paintings not made with hands; the superstitions of the people were increased, and the doctrines of Christianity were neglected. Pope Gregory II, in a letter to Leo, mentions the fact, that men expended their estates to have the sacred histories represented in paintings.

In a time of general reform, and in a government where ecclesiastics acted as administrative officials of the central authority, it was impossible for Leo to permit the church to remain quite independent in ecclesiastical affairs, unless he was prepared for the clergy assuming a gradual supremacy in the state. The clergy, being the only class in the administration of public affairs connected with the people by interest and feelings, was always sure of a powerful popular support. It appeared, therefore, necessary to the emperor to secure them as sincere instruments in carrying out all his reforms, otherwise there was some reason to fear that they might constitute themselves the leaders of the people in Greece and Asia, as they had

already done at Rome, and control the imperial administration throughout the whole Eastern Empire, as completely as they did in the Byzantine possessions in central Italy.

Leo commenced his ecclesiastical reforms in the year 726 by an edict ordering all pictures in churches to be placed so high as to prevent the people from kissing them, and prohibiting prostration before these symbols, or any act of public worship being addressed to them. Against this moderate edict of the emperor, the Patriarch Germanos and the Pope Gregory II made strong representations. The opposition of interest which reigned between the church and the state impelled the two bodies to a contest for supremacy which it required centuries to decide, and both Germanos and Gregory were sincere supporters of image-worship. To the ablest writer of the time,—the celebrated John Damascenus, who dwelt under the protection of the caliph at Damascus, among Mohammedans and Jews,—this edict seemed to mark a relapse to Judaism, or a tendency to Islamism. He felt himself called upon to combat such feelings with all the eloquence and power of argument he possessed, the empire was thrown into a ferment; the lower clergy and the whole Greek nation declared in favour of image-worship. The professors of the university of Constantinople, an institution of a Greek character, likewise declared their opposition to the edict. Liberty of conscience was the watchword against the imperial authority. The Pope and the Patriarch denied the right of the civil power to interfere with the doctrines of the church; the monks everywhere echoed the words of John Damascenus: “It is not the business of the emperor to make laws for the church. Apostles preached the gospel; the welfare of the state is the monarch’s care; pastors and teachers attend to that of the church”. The despotic principles of Leo’s administration, and the severe measures of centralization which he enforced as the means of reorganizing the public service, created many additional enemies to his government.

The rebellion of the inhabitants of Greece, which occurred in the year 727, seems to have originated in a dissatisfaction with the fiscal and administrative reforms of Leo, to which local circumstances, unnoticed by historians, gave peculiar violence, and which the edict against image-worship fanned into a flame. The unanimity of all classes, and the violence of the popular zeal in favour of their local privileges and superstitions, suggested the hope of dethroning Leo, and placing a Greek on the throne of Constantinople. A naval expedition, composed of the imperial fleet in the Cyclades, and attended by an army from the continent, was fitted out to attack the capital. Agallianos, who commanded the imperial forces destined to watch the Slavonians settled in Greece, was placed at the head of the army destined to assail the conqueror of the Saracens. The name of the new emperor was Kosmas. In the month of April the Greek fleet appeared before Constantinople. It soon appeared that the Greeks, confiding in the goodness of their cause, had greatly overrated their own valour and strength, or strangely overlooked the resources of the Iconoclasts. Leo met the fleet as it approached his capital, and completely defeated it. Agallianos, with the spirit of a hero, when he saw the utter ruin of the enterprise, plunged fully armed into the sea rather than surrender. Kosmas was taken prisoner, with another leader, and immediately beheaded. Leo, however, treated the mass of the prisoners with mildness.

Even if we admit that the Greeks displayed considerable presumption in attacking the Isaurian emperor, still we must accept the fact as a proof of the populous condition of the cities and islands of Greece, and of the flourishing condition of their trade, at a period generally represented as one of wretchedness and poverty. Though the Peloponnesus was filled with Slavonian emigrants, and the Greek peasantry were in many districts excluded from the cultivation of the land in the seats of their ancestors, nevertheless their cities then contained the mercantile wealth and influence, which passed some centuries later into the possession of Venice, Amalfi, Genoa, and Pisa.

The opposition Leo encountered only confirmed him in his persuasion that it was indispensably necessary to increase the power of the central government in the provinces. As he was sincerely attached to the opinions of the Iconoclasts, he was led to connect his ecclesiastical

reforms with his political measures, and to pursue both with additional zeal. In order to secure the active support of all the officers of the administration, and exclude all image-worshippers from power, he convoked an assembly, called a *silention*, consisting of the senators and the highest functionaries in the church and state. In this solemn manner it was decreed that images were to be removed from all the churches throughout the empire. In the capital the change met with no serious opposition. The population of Constantinople of every period of its history has consisted of a mixed multitude of different nations; nor has the majority ever been purely Greek for any great length of time. Nicetas, speaking of a time when the Byzantine Empire was at the height of its power, and when the capital was more a Greek city than at any preceding or subsequent period, declares that its population was composed of various races. The cause of image-worship was, however, generally the popular cause, and the Patriarch Germanos steadily resisted every change in the actual practice of the church until that change should be sanctioned by a general council.

The turn now given to the dispute put an end to the power of the Eastern emperors in central Italy. The Latin provinces of the Roman Empire, even before their conquest by the barbarians, had sunk into deeper ignorance than the Eastern. Civilization had penetrated farther into society among the Greeks, Armenians, and Syrians, than among the Italians, Gauls, and Spaniards. Italy was already dissatisfied with the Constantinopolitan domination, when Leo's fiscal and religious reforms roused local interests and national prejudices to unite in opposing his government. The Pope of Rome had long been regarded by orthodox Christians as the head of the church; even the Greeks admitted his right of inspection over the whole body of the clergy, in virtue of the superior dignity of the Roman see. From being the heads of the church, the popes became the defenders of the liberties of the people. In this character, as leaders of a lawful opposition to the tyranny of the imperial administration, they grew up to the possession of immense influence in the state. This power, having its basis in democratic feelings and energies, alarmed the emperors, and many attempts were made to circumscribe the papal authority. But the popes themselves did more to diminish their own influence than their enemies, for instead of remaining the protectors of the people, they aimed at making themselves their masters. Gregory II, who occupied the papal chair at the commencement of the contest with Leo, was a man of sound judgment, as well as an able and zealous priest. He availed himself of all the advantages of his position, as political chief of the Latin race, with prudence and moderation; nor did he neglect the power he derived from the circumstance that Rome was the fountain of religious instruction for all western Europe. Both his political and ecclesiastical position entitled him to make a direct opposition to any oppressive measure of the emperor of Constantinople, when the edicts of Leo III concerning image-worship prompted him to commence the contest, which soon ended in separating central Italy from the Byzantine Empire.

The possessions of the Eastern emperors in Italy were still considerable. Venice, Rome, Ravenna, Naples, Bari, and Tarentum were all capitals of well-peopled and wealthy districts. The province embracing Venice and Rome was governed by an imperial viceroy or exarch who resided at Ravenna, and hence the Byzantine possessions in central Italy were called the Exarchate of Ravenna. Under the orders of the exarch, three governors or dukes commanded the troops in Ravenna, Rome, and Venice. As the native militia enrolled to defend the province from the Lombards formed a considerable portion of the military force, the popular feelings of the Italians exercised some influence over the soldiery. The Constantinopolitan governor was generally disliked, on account of the fiscal rapacity of which he was the agent; and nothing but the dread of greater oppression on the part of the Lombards, whom the Italians had not the courage to encounter without the assistance of the Byzantine troops, preserved the people of central Italy in their allegiance. They hated the Greeks, but they feared the Lombards.

Gregory II sent Leo strong representations against his first edicts on the subject of image-worship, and after the *silention* he repeated these representations, and entered on a more decided course of opposition to the emperor's ecclesiastical reforms, being then convinced that there was no hope of Leo abandoning his heretical opinions. It seems that Italy, like the rest of the

empire, had escaped in some degree from the oppressive burden of imperial taxation during the anarchy that preceded Leo's election. But the defeat of the Saracens before Constantinople had been followed by the establishment of the fiscal system. To overcome the opposition made to the financial and ecclesiastical reforms, the exarch Paul was ordered to march to Rome and support Marinus, the duke, who found himself unable to contend against the papal influence. The whole of central Italy burst into rebellion at this demonstration against its civil and religious interests. The exarch was compelled to shut himself up in Ravenna; for the cities of Italy, instead of obeying the imperial officers, elected magistrates of their own, on whom they conferred, in some cases, the title of duke. Assemblies were held, and the project of electing an emperor of the West was adopted; but the unfortunate result of the rebellion of Greece damped the courage of the Italians; and though a rebel, named Tiberius Petasius, really assumed the purple in Tuscany, he was easily defeated and slain by Euty chius, who succeeded Paul as exarch of Ravenna. Luitprand, king of the Lombards, taking advantage of these dissensions, invaded the imperial territory, and gained possession of Ravenna; but Gregory, who saw the necessity of saving the country from the Lombards and from anarchy, wrote to Ursus, the duke of Venice, one of his warm partisans, and persuaded him to join Euty chius. The Lombards were defeated by the Byzantine troops, Ravenna was recovered, and Euty chius entered Rome with a victorious army. Gregory died in 731. Though he excited the Italian cities to resist the imperial power, and approved of the measures they adopted for stopping the remittance of their taxes to Constantinople, he does not appear to have adopted any measures for declaring Rome independent. That he contemplated the possibility of events taking a turn that might ultimately lead him to throw off his allegiance to the Emperor Leo, is nevertheless evident, from one of his letters to that emperor, in which he boasts very significantly that the eyes of the West were fixed on his humility, and that if Leo attempted to injure the Pope, he would find the West ready to defend him, and even to attack Constantinople. The allusion to the protection of the king of the Lombards and Charles Martel was certainly, in this case, a treasonable threat on the part of the Bishop of Rome to his sovereign. Besides this, Gregory II excommunicated the exarch Paul, and all the enemies of image-worship who were acting under the orders of the emperor, pretending to avoid the guilt of treason by not expressly naming the Emperor Leo in his anathema. On the other hand, when we consider that Leo was striving to extend the bounds of the imperial authority in an arbitrary manner, and that his object was to sweep away every barrier against the exercise of despotism in the church and the state, we must acknowledge that the opposition of Gregory was founded in justice, and that he was entitled to defend the municipal institutions and local usages of Italy, and the constitution of the Romish church, even at the price of declaring himself a rebel. The election of Gregory III to the papal chair was confirmed by the Emperor Leo in the usual form; nor was that pope consecrated until the mandate from Constantinople reached Rome. This was the last time the emperors of the East were solicited to confirm the election of a pope. Meanwhile Leo steadily pursued his schemes of ecclesiastical reform, and the opposition to his measures gathered strength. Gregory III assembled a council in Rome, at which the municipal authorities, whose power Leo was endeavouring to circumscribe, were present along with the nobles; and in this council the whole body of the Iconoclasts were excommunicated. Leo now felt that force alone could maintain Rome and its bishops in their allegiance. With his usual energy, he despatched an expedition under the command of Manes, the general of the Kibyrraiot theme, with orders to send the pope a prisoner to Constantinople, to be tried for his treasonable conduct. A storm in the Adriatic, the lukewarm conduct of the Greeks in the imperial service, and the courage of the people of Ravenna, whose municipal institutions enabled them to act in an organized manner, caused the complete overthrow of Manes. Leo revenged himself for this loss by confiscating all the estates of the papal see in the eastern provinces of his empire, and by separating the ecclesiastical government of southern Italy, Sicily, Greece, Illyria, and Macedonia, from the papal jurisdiction, and placing these countries under the immediate authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

From this time, AD 733, the city of Rome enjoyed political independence under the guidance and protection of the popes; but the officers of the Byzantine emperors were allowed, to reside in the city, justice was publicly administered by Byzantine judges, and the supremacy

of the Eastern Empire was still recognized. So completely, however, had Gregory III thrown off his allegiance, that he entered into negotiations with Charles Martel, in order to induce that powerful prince to take an active part in the affairs of Italy. The pope was now a much more powerful personage than the Exarch of Ravenna, for the cities of central Italy, which had assumed the control of their local government, entrusted the conduct of their external political relations to the care of Gregory, who thus held the balance of power between the Eastern emperor and the Lombard king. In the year 742, while Constantine V, the son of Leo, was engaged with a civil war, the Lombards were on the eve of conquering Ravenna, but Pope Zacharias threw the whole of the Latin influence into the Byzantine scale, and enabled the exarch to maintain his position until the year 751, when Astolph, king of the Lombards, captured Ravenna. The exarch retired to Naples, and the authority of the Byzantine emperors in central Italy ended.

The physical history of our globe is so intimately connected with the condition of its inhabitants, that it is well to record those remarkable variations from the ordinary course of nature which strongly affected the minds of contemporaries. The influence of famine and pestilence, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, in accelerating the extinction of slavery, has been pointed out by several recent writers on the subject, though that effect was not observed by the people who lived at the time. The importance of the late famine in Ireland, as a political cause, must be felt by anyone who attempts to trace the origin of that course of social improvement on which the Irish seem about to enter. The seventy of the winter of 717 aided Leo in defeating the Saracens at Constantinople. In the year 726, a terrific irruption of the dormant submarine volcano at the island of Thera (Santorini) in the Archipelago, was regarded by the bigoted image-worshippers as a manifestation of divine wrath against Leo's reforms. For several days the sea between Thera and Therasia boiled up with great violence, vomiting forth flames, and enveloping the neighbouring islands in clouds of vapour and smoke. The flames were followed by showers of dust and pumice-stone, which covered the surface of the sea, and were carried by the waves to the shores of Asia Minor and Macedonia. At last a new island rose out of the sea, and gradually extended itself until it joined the older rocky islet called Hieron.

In the year 740 a terrible earthquake destroyed great part of the walls of Constantinople. The statue of Arcadius, on the Theodosian column in Xerolophon, and the statue of Theodosius over the golden gate, were both thrown down. Churches, monasteries, and private buildings were ruined: the walls of many cities in Thrace and Bithynia, particularly Nicomedia, Praenetus, and Nicaea, were so injured as to require immediate restoration. This great earthquake caused the imposition of the tax already alluded to, termed the *dikeration*.

Leo has been accused as a persecutor of learning. It is by no means impossible that his Asiatic education and puritanical opinions rendered him hostile to the legendary literature and ecclesiastical art then cultivated by the Greeks; but the circumstance usually brought forward in support of his barbarism is one of the calumnies invented by his enemies, and re-echoed by orthodox bigotry. He is said to have ordered a library consisting of 33,000 volumes, in the neighbourhood of St. Sophia's, to be burned, and the professors of the university to be thrown into the flames. A valuable collection of books seems to have fallen accidentally a prey to the flames during his reign, and neither his liberality nor the public spirit of the Greeks induced them to display any activity in replacing the loss.

Leo III died in the year 741. He had crowned his son Constantine emperor in the year 720, and married him to Irene, the daughter of the Khan of the Khazars, in 733.

## Sect. III

## CONSTANTINE V COPRONYMUS, A.D. 741-775

Constantine V, called Copronymus, ascended the throne at the age of twenty-two, but he had already borne the title of emperor as his father's colleague one and twenty years, for the Byzantine empire preserved so strictly the elective type of the Roman imperial dignity, that the only mode of securing the hereditary transmission of the empire was for the reigning emperor to obtain his son's election during his own lifetime. Historians tell us that Constantine was a man possessing every vice disgraceful to humanity, combined with habits and tastes which must have rendered his company disgusting and his person contemptible. Yet they record facts proving that he possessed great talents, and that, even when his fortunes appeared desperate, he found many devoted friends. The obloquy heaped on his name must therefore be ascribed to the blind passion inspired by religious bigotry. The age was not one of forbearance and charity. The wisest generally considered freedom of opinion a species of anarchy incompatible with religious feeling, moral duty, and good government; consequently, both iconoclasts and image-worshippers approved of persecution, and practised calumny in favour of what each considered the good cause. Constantine tortured the image-worshippers—they revenged themselves by defaming the emperor. But the persecutions which rendered Constantine a monster in the eyes of the Greeks and Italians, elevated him to the rank of a saint in the opinion of a large body of the population of the empire, who regarded the worship of pictures as a species of idolatry abhorrent to Christianity. His religious zeal, political success, courage, military talents, together with the prosperity that attended his government, all conspired to make him the idol of the Iconoclasts, who regarded his tomb as a sacred shrine until it was destroyed by Michael the orthodox drunkard.

Constantine was able, prudent, active, and brave; but he was not more tender of human suffering than monarchs generally are. The Patriarch Nicephorus justly accuses him of driving monks from their monasteries, and converting sacred buildings into barracks. In modern times, orthodox papist sovereigns have frequently done the same thing, without exciting much ecclesiastical indignation. But when the Patriarch assures us that the emperor's mind was as filthy as his name, we may be allowed to suspect that his pen is guided by orthodoxy instead of truth; and when we find grave historians recording that he loved the odour of horse-dung, and carried on amours with old maids, we are reminded of the Byzantine love of calumny which could delight in the anecdotes of Procopius, and believe that the Emperor Justinian was a man of such diabolical principles, that he was not ashamed to walk about his palace for many hours of the night without his head. An account of the reign of Constantine by an intelligent Iconoclast, even if he represented the emperor as a saint, would be one of the most valuable illustrations of the history of the eighth century which time could have spared. He was accused of rejecting the practice of invoking the intercession of the Virgin Mary, though it is admitted he called her the Mother of God. He was also said to have denied the right of any man to be called a saint; and he had even the audacity to maintain, that though the martyrs benefited themselves by their sufferings, their merit, however great it might be, was not a quality that could be transferred to others. His enemies regarded these opinions as damnable crimes. Few reputations, however, have passed through such an ordeal of malice as that of Constantine, and preserved so many undeniable virtues.

Shortly after his succession, Constantine lost possession of Constantinople through the treachery of his brother-in-law Artavasdos, who assumed the title of emperor, and kept possession of the throne for two years. Artavasdos was an Armenian noble who had commanded the troops of the Armeniac theme in the reign of Theodosius III, and aided Leo to mount the throne. He was rewarded with the hand of Anna, the Isaurian's only daughter, and with the dignity of *curopalates*, second, only to that of Caesar, a rank then usually reserved, for



the imperial blood. Artavasdos had increased his influence by favouring the orthodox; his long services in the highest administrative offices had enabled him to attach many partisans to his personal cause in every branch of the public service. The manner in which Constantine was engaged in a civil war with his brother-in-law reflected no dishonour on the character of the young emperor.

The Saracens had pushed their incursions into the Opsikian theme, where the imperial guards, under the command of Artavasdos, were stationed. Constantine took the field in person to oppose the enemy, and advanced to the plains of Krasos. Here he ordered Artavasdos, who was at Dorylaeum, to join him with the troops of the Opsikian theme. The order alarmed Artavasdos, who seems to have been already engaged in treasonable intrigues. Instead of obeying, he assumed the title of emperor, and attacked Constantine so unexpectedly, that the imperial army was easily dispersed, and the young emperor could only avoid being taken prisoner by galloping off alone. When his own horse sank from fatigue Constantine was compelled to seize a post-horse, which he happened to find ready saddled, in order to continue his flight. He was fortunate enough to reach Amorium in safety.

Artavasdos marched to Constantinople, where, it appears from coins, he affected for some time to act as the colleague of Constantine; and it is possible that some treaty may have been concluded between the brothers-in-law. The usurper, however, soon considered himself strong enough, with the support of the orthodox, to set Constantine aside. The pope acknowledged him as emperor, pictures were replaced in the churches, a strong body of Armenian troops was collected, and Nicephorus, the eldest son of Artavasdos, was crowned as his father's colleague; while Niketas, the second, took the command of the Armeniac theme, where the family possessed great influence. All persons suspected of favouring Constantine were persecuted as heretics hostile to picture-worship.

In the following year (742) Constantine assembled an army composed chiefly of the troops of the Thrakesian and Anatolic themes. With this force he marched to Chrysopolis, (Scutari), hoping that a party in Constantinople would declare in his favour; but, being disappointed, he was compelled to withdraw to Amorium, where he passed the winter. In spring, Artavasdos marched to dislodge him, ordering his son Niketas to bring up the Armenian troops to operate on the right flank of the young emperor. All the country in the usurpers line of march was ravaged, as if it was a territory he never hoped to govern. Constantine, whose military genius had been cultivated by his father, formed a daring plan of campaign, and executed it in the most brilliant manner. While his enemies believed that they were advancing to attack him with superior forces, he resolved to move forward with such celerity as to become the attacking party, before they could approach near enough to combine any simultaneous movements. His first attack was directed against Artavasdos, whose numerous army was inferior in discipline to that of Niketas, and over which he expected an easier victory. A general engagement took place near Sardis, on quitting the Kelvian plain, watered by the Kaister. The victory was complete. The usurper was closely pursued to Cyzicus, from whence he escaped by sea to Constantinople. Constantine then moved forward to meet Niketas, who was defeated in a bloody battle fought at Modrina, in the Boukellarian theme, to the east of the Sangarius. The Armenian auxiliaries and the troops of the Armeniac theme sustained their high reputation, and long disputed the victory.

The emperor then marched to invest Constantinople, crossing the Bosphorus with one division of his army, and sending another, under the command of Sisinnios, the general of the Thrakesian theme, to cross the Hellespont at Abydos, and reduce the cities on the shores of the Propontis. The fleet of the Kibyrraiot theme was ordered to blockade the capital by sea. All communications with Greece, one of the strongholds of the image-worshippers, were thus cut off. Constantine repulsed every sally by land, and famine quickly made frightful ravages in the dense population of the capital, where no preparations had been made for a siege. Constantine acted on this occasion in a very different manner from Artavasdos during the campaign in Asia

Minor. He felt that the people suddenly besieged were his own subjects; and his enemies record that he allowed all the starving population to seek refuge in his camp.

Niketas quickly reassembled the fugitives of his own and his father's army, and made an attempt to cut off Constantine's communications in Bithynia; but the emperor left the camp before Constantinople, and, putting himself at the head of the troops in Asia, again defeated Niketas near Nicomedia. Niketas and the orthodox archbishop of Gangra were both prisoners. The belligerent prelate was immediately beheaded as a traitor; but Niketas was carried to Constantinople, where he was exhibited before the walls laden with fetters. Artavasdos still rejected all terms of capitulation, and Constantine at last ordered a general assault, by which he captured the city on the 2nd November, 743. Artavasdos escaped by sea to a fortress called Pyzanitis, in the Opsikian theme, where he was soon after taken prisoner. His eyes, and those of his sons, Nicephorus and Niketas, were put out; and in this condition they were exhibited as a triumphal spectacle to the inhabitants of Constantinople, at the chariot races given by the emperor to celebrate his re-establishment on the throne. His brother-in-law and nephews were then immured in a monastery. Some of their principal adherents were beheaded. The head of Vaktageios, the principal minister of the usurper, was exhibited for three days in the Augusteon—a custom perpetuated by the Ottoman emperors in similar circumstances until our own times, the heads of rebel viziers having adorned the gate of the Serail during the reign of the late sultan. The Patriarch Anastasios was pardoned, and allowed to remain in possession of his dignity; yet Theophanes says that his eyes were put out, and he was exhibited in the circus, mounted on an ass, and exposed to the scorn of the mob. Sisinnios, who had commanded one division of the emperor's army, was soon found to be engaged in treasonable intrigues, and lost his eyes forty days after he entered the capital in triumph with his sovereign.

Constantine no sooner found himself firmly established on the throne, than he devoted his attention to completing the organization of the empire traced out by his father. The constant attacks of the Saracens and Bulgarians called him frequently to the head of his armies, for the state of society rendered it dangerous to entrust large forces to the command of a subject. In the Byzantine Empire few individuals had any scruple of violating the political constitution of their country, if by so doing they could increase their own power.

The incursions of the Saracens first required to be repressed. The empire of the caliphs was already distracted by the civil wars which preceded the fall of the Ommiad dynasty. Constantine took advantage of these troubles. He reconquered Germanicia and Doliche, and occupied for a time a considerable part of Commagene; but as he found it impossible to retain possession of the country, he removed the Christian population to Thrace, where he founded several flourishing colonies, long distinguished by their religious opinions from the surrounding population, A.D. 746.

The Saracens attempted to indemnify themselves for these losses by the conquest of Cyprus. This island appears to have been reconquered by Leo III, for it had been abandoned to the Mohammedans by Justinian II. The fleet of the caliph sailed from Alexandria, and landed an army at the port of Kerameia; but the fleet of the Kibyrraiot theme arrived in time to blockade the enemy's ships, and of a thousand Mohammedan vessels three only escaped, A.D. 748. The war was continued.

In 752 the imperial armies took the cities of Melitene and Theodosiopolis, but some years later the caliph Mansour recovered Melitene and Germanicia: he seems, however, to have considered the tenure of the last so insecure, that he transported the inhabitants into Palestine. The Saracens invaded the empire almost every summer, but these incursions led to no permanent conquests. The agricultural population along the frontiers of the two empires must have been greatly diminished during these successive ravages; for farm-buildings and fruit-trees were constantly destroyed, and slaves formed the most valuable booty of the soldiers. The mildness and tolerant government of the emperor of Romania (for that name began now to be

applied to the part of Asia Minor belonging to the Byzantine empire) was so celebrated in the East, in spite of his persecution of the image-worshippers at Constantinople, that many Christians escaped by sea from the dominions of the Caliph Al Mansour to settle in those of Constantine. In the year 769 an exchange of prisoners took place, but without interrupting the course of hostilities, which were continued, almost incessantly on the frontiers of the two empires,

The vicinity of the Bulgarians to Constantinople rendered them more dangerous enemies than the Saracens, though their power was much inferior. The Bulgarians were a people who looked on war as the most honourable means of acquiring wealth, and they had long pursued it with profit: for as long as the Byzantine frontiers were populous, they obtained booty and slaves by their incursions: while, as soon as it became depopulated by their ravages, they were enabled to occupy new districts with their own pastoral hordes, and thus increase their numbers and strength. To resist their incursions, Constantine gradually repaired all the fortifications of the towns on the northern frontier, and then commenced fortifying the passes, until the Bulgarians found their predatory incursions attended with loss instead of gain. Their king was now compelled to make the cause of the predatory bands a national question, and an embassy was sent to Constantinople to demand payment of an annual tribute, under the pretext that some of the fortifications erected to guard the passes were situated in the Bulgarian territory, but, in reality, to replace the loss of the plunder which had enabled many of the warlike Bulgarians to live in idleness and luxury. The demands of the king were rejected, and he immediately invaded the empire with a powerful army. The Bulgarians carried their ravages up to the long wall; but though they derived assistance from the numerous Slavonian colonies settled in Thrace, they were defeated, and driven back into their own territory with great slaughter, A.D. 757.

Constantine carried on a series of campaigns, systematically planned, for the purpose of weakening the Bulgarian power. Instead of allowing his enemy to make any incursions into the empire, he was always ready to carry the war into their territory. The difficulties of his enterprise were great, and he suffered several defeats; but his military talents and persevering energy prevented the Bulgarians from profiting by any partial success they obtained, and he soon regained the superiority. In the campaigns of 760, 763, and 765, Constantine marched far into Bulgaria, and carried off immense booty. In the year 766 he intended to complete the conquest of the country, by opening the campaign at the commencement of spring. His fleet, which consisted of two thousand six hundred vessels, in which he had embarked a considerable body of infantry in order to enter the Danube, was assailed by one of those furious storms that often sweep the Euxine. The force which the emperor expected would soon render him master of Bulgaria was suddenly ruined. The shores of the Black Sea were covered with the wrecks of his ships and the bodies of his soldiers. Constantine immediately abandoned the thought of continuing the campaign, and employed his whole army in alleviating the calamity to the survivors, and in securing Christian burial and funeral honours to the dead. A truce was concluded with the enemy, and the Roman army beheld the emperor as eager to employ their services in the cause of humanity and religion, as he had ever been to lead them to the field of glory and conquest. His conduct on this occasion gained him as much popularity with the people of Constantinople as with his troops.

In the year 774 he again assembled an army of eighty thousand men, accompanied by a fleet of two thousand transports, and invaded Bulgaria. The Bulgarian monarch concluded a treaty of peace—which, however, was broken as soon as Constantine returned to his capital. But the emperor was not unprepared, and the moment he heard that the enemy had laid siege to Verzetia, one of the fortresses he had constructed to defend the frontier, he quitted Constantinople in the month of October, and, falling suddenly on the besiegers, routed their army with great slaughter. The following year his army was again ready to take the field; but as Constantine was on his way to join it he was attacked by a mortal illness, which compelled him to retrace his steps. Having embarked at Selymbria, in order to reach Constantinople with as

little fatigue as possible, he died on board the vessel at the castle of Strongyle, just as he reached the walls of his capital, on the 23rd September, 775.

The long war with the Bulgarians was carried on rather with the object of securing tranquillity to the northern provinces of the empire, than from any desire of a barren conquest. The necessity of reducing the Slavonian colonies in Thrace and Macedonia to complete obedience to the central administration, and of secluding them from all political communication with one another, or with their countrymen in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Dalmatia, imposed on the emperor the necessity of maintaining strong bodies of troops, and suggested the policy of forming a line of Greek towns and Asiatic colonies along the northern frontier of the empire. When this was done, Constantine began to root out the brigandage, which had greatly extended itself during the anarchy which preceded his father's election, and which Leo had never been able to exterminate.

Numerous bands lived by plunder, in a state of independence, within the bounds of the empire. They were called Skamars, and, like the Bagauds of Gaul, formed organized confederacies of outlaws, originally consisting of men driven to despair by the intolerable burden of taxation, and the severity of the fiscal legislation. When the incursions of the Bulgarians had wasted the fields of the cultivator, the government still called upon him to pay the full amount of taxation imposed on his estate in prosperous times: his produce, his cattle, his slaves, and his seed-corn were carried away by the imperial officers. He could then only live by plundering his fellow-subjects, who had hitherto escaped the calamities by which he had been ruined, and thus the oppression of the imperial government was avenged on the society that submitted to it without striving to reform its evils. Constantine rooted out these bands.

A celebrated chief of the Skamars was publicly executed at Constantinople with the greatest barbarity, his living body being dissected by surgeons after the amputation of his hands and feet. The habitual barbarity of legal punishments in the Byzantine empire can hardly relieve the memory of Constantine from the reproach of cruelty, which this punishment proves he was ready to employ against the enemies of his authority, whether brigands or image-worshippers. His error, therefore, was not only passing laws against liberty of conscience—which was a fault in accordance with the spirit of the age—but in carrying these laws into execution with a cruelty offensive to human feelings. Yet on many occasions Constantine gave proofs of humanity, as well as of a desire to protect his subjects.

The Slavonians on the coast of Thrace, having fitted out some piratical vessels, carried off many of the inhabitants of Tenedos, Imbros, and Samothrace, to sell them as slaves. The emperor on this occasion ransomed two thousand five hundred of his subjects, preferring to lower his own dignity, by paying a tribute to the pirates, rather than allow those who looked to him for protection to pine away their lives in hopeless misery. No act of his reign shows so much real greatness of mind as this. He also concluded the convention with the Saracens for an exchange of prisoners, which has been already mentioned—one of the earliest examples of the exchanges between the Mohammedans and the Christians, which afterwards became frequent on the Byzantine frontiers. Man was exchanged for man, woman for woman, and child for child. These conventions tended to save the lives of innumerable prisoners, and rendered the future wars between the Saracens and Romans less barbarous.

Constantine was active in his internal administration, and his schemes for improving the condition of the inhabitants of his empire were carried out on a far more gigantic scale than modern governments have considered practicable. One of his plans for reviving agriculture in uncultivated districts was by re-peopling them with colonies of emigrants, to whom he secured favourable conditions and efficient protection. On the banks of the Artanas in Bithynia, a colony of two hundred thousand Slavonians was formed. The Christian population of Germanicia, Doliche, Melitene, and Theodosiopolis was established in Thrace, to watch and restrain the rude Slavonians settled in that province; and these Asiatic colonists long continued to flourish and

multiply. They are even accused of spreading the heretical opinions which they had brought from the East throughout great part of Western Europe, by the extent of their commercial relations and the example of their prosperity and honesty.

It is not to be supposed that the measures of Constantine's administration, however great his political abilities might be, were competent to remove many of the social evils of his age. Agriculture was still carried on in the rudest manner; and as communications were difficult and insecure, and transport expensive, capital could hardly be laid out on land to any extent with much profit. As usual under such circumstances we find years of famine and plenty alternating in close succession. Yet the bitterest enemy of Constantine, the abbot Theophanes, confesses that his reign was one of general abundance. It is true, he reproaches him with loading the husbandmen with taxes; but he also accuses him of being a new Midas, who made gold so common in the hands of all that it became cheap. The abbot's political economy, it must be confessed, is not so orthodox as his calumny. If the Patriarch Nicephorus, another enemy of Constantine, is to be believed, grain was so abundant, or gold so rare, that sixty measures of wheat, or seventy measures of barley, were sold for a *nomisma*, or gold Byzant. To guard against severe drought in the capital, and supply the gardens in its immediate vicinity with water, Constantine repaired the great aqueduct of Valens. The flourishing condition of the towns in Greece at the time is attested by the fact, that the best workmen in cement were sought in the Hellenic cities and the islands of the Archipelago.

The time and attention of Constantine, during his whole reign, were principally engaged in military occupations. In the eyes of his contemporaries, he was judged by his military conduct. His strategic abilities and indefatigable activity were the most striking characteristics of his administration. His campaigns, his financial measures, and the abundance they created, were known to all; but his ecclesiastical policy affected comparatively few. Yet by that policy his reign has been exclusively judged and condemned in modern times. The grounds of the condemnation are unjust. He has not, like his father, the merit of having saved an empire from ruin; but he may claim the honour of perfecting the reforms planned by his father, and of re-establishing the military power of the Roman Empire on a basis that perpetuated Byzantine supremacy for several centuries. Hitherto historians have treated the events of his reign as an accidental assemblage of facts; but surely, if he is to be rendered responsible for the persecution of the image-worshippers, in which he took comparatively little part, he deserves credit for his military successes and prosperous administration, since these were the result of his constant personal occupation. The history of his ecclesiastical measures, however, really possesses a deep interest, for they reflect with accuracy the feelings and ideas of millions of his subjects, as well as of the emperor.

Constantine was a sincere enemy of image-worship, and in his age sincerity implied bigotry, for persecution was considered both lawful and meritorious. Yet with all his energy, he was prudent in his first attempts to carry out his father's policy. While he was struggling with Artavasdos, and labouring to restore the discipline of his troops, and re-establish the military superiority of the Byzantine arms, he left the religious controversy concerning image-worship to the two parties of the clergy who then disputed for pre-eminence in the church. But when his power was consolidated, he steadily pursued his father's plans for centralizing the ecclesiastical administration of the empire. To prepare for the final decision of the question, which probably, in his mind, related as much to the right of the emperor to govern the church, as to the question whether pictures were to be worshipped or not, he ordered the metropolitans and archbishops to hold provincial synods, in order to discipline the people for the execution of the edicts he proposed to carry in a general council of the Eastern church.

This general council was convoked at Constantinople in the year 754. It was attended by 338 bishops, forming the most numerous assembly of the Christian clergy which had ever been collected together for ecclesiastical legislation. Theodosius, metropolitan of Ephesus, son of the Emperor Tiberius III, presided, for the patriarchal chair had been kept vacant since the death of

Anastasius in the preceding year. Neither the Pope nor the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem sent representatives to this council, which was solely composed of the Byzantine clergy, so that it had no right to assume the rank of an ecumenical council. Its decisions were all against image-worship, which it declared to be contrary to scripture. It proclaimed the use of images and pictures in churches to be a pagan and antichristian practice, the abolition of which was necessary to avoid leading Christians into temptation. Even the use of the crucifix was condemned, on the ground that the only true symbol of the incarnation was the bread and wine which Christ had commanded to be received for the remission of sins. In its opposition to the worship of pictures, the council was led into the display of some animosity against painting itself; and every attempt at embodying sacred subjects by what it styled the dead and accursed art, foolishly invented by the pagans, was strongly condemned. The common people were thus deprived of a source of ideas, which, though liable to abuse, tended in general to civilize their minds, and might awaken noble thoughts and religious aspirations. We may fully agree with the Iconoclasts in the religious importance of not worshipping images, and not allowing the people to prostrate themselves on the pavements of churches before pictures of saints, whether said to be painted by human artists or miraculous agency; while at the same time we think that the walls of the vestibules or porticoes of sacred edifices may with propriety be adorned with pictures representing those sacred subjects most likely to awaken feelings of Christian charity. It is by embodying and ennobling the expression of feelings common to all mankind, that modern artists can alone unite in their works that combination of truth with the glow of creative imagination which gives a divine stamp to many pagan works. There is nothing in the circle of human affairs so democratic as art. The council of 754, however, deemed that it was necessary to sacrifice art to the purity of religion. "The godless art of painting" was proscribed. All who manufactured crucifixes or sacred paintings for worship, in public or private, whether laymen or monks, were ordered to be excommunicated by the church and punished by the state. At the same time, in order to guard against the indiscriminate destruction of sacred buildings and shrines possessing valuable ornaments and rich plate and jewels, by Iconoclastic zeal, or under its pretext, the council commanded that no alteration was to be made in existing churches, without the special permission of the patriarch and the emperor—a regulation bearing strong marks of the fiscal rapacity of the central treasury of the Roman empire. The bigotry of the age was displayed in the anathema which this council pronounced against three of the most distinguished and virtuous advocates of image-worship, Germanos, the Patriarch of Constantinople, George of Cyprus, and John Damascenus, the last of the fathers of the Greek church.

The ecclesiastical decisions of the council served as the basis for penal enactments by the civil power. The success of the emperor in restoring prosperity to the empire, many of his subjects to believe that he was destined to reform the church as well as the state, and few thinking men could doubt that corruption had entered deep into both. In many minds there was a contest between the superstitions of picture-worship and the feeling of respect for the emperors administration; but there were still in the Roman empire many persons of education, unconnected with the church, who regarded the superstitions of the people with aversion. To them the reverence paid by the ignorant to images said to have fallen from heaven, to pictures painted by St. Luke, to virgins who wept, and to saints who supplied the lamps burning before their effigies with a perpetual fountain of oil, appeared rank idolatry. There were also still a few men of philosophic minds who exercised the right of private judgment on public questions, both civil and ecclesiastical, and who felt that the emperor was making popular superstition the pretext for rendering his power despotic in the church as in the state. His conduct appeared to these men a violation of those principles of Roman law and ecclesiastical legislation which tendered the systematic government of society in the Roman Empire superior to the arbitrary rule of Mohammedan despotism, or the wild license of Gothic anarchy. The Greek Church had not hitherto made it imperative on its members to worship images;—it had only tolerated popular abuse in the reverence paid to these symbols—so that the ignorant monks who resisted the enlightened Iconoclasts might, by liberal-minded men, be considered as the true defenders of the right of private judgment, and as benefactors of mankind. There is positive evidence that

such feelings really existed, and they could not exist without producing some influence on society generally. Less than forty years after the death of Constantine, the tolerant party was so numerous that it could struggle in the imperial cabinet to save heretics from persecution, on the ground that the church had no authority to ask that men should be condemned to death for matters of belief, as God may always turn the mind of the sinner to repentance. Theophanes has recorded the existence of these humane sentiments in his eagerness to blame them.

Many of the clergy boldly resisted the edicts of Constantine to enforce the new ecclesiastical legislation against images and pictures. They held that all the acts of the council of Constantinople were void, for a general council could only be convoked by an orthodox emperor; and they took upon themselves to declare the opinions of Constantine heterodox. The monks engaged with eagerness in the controversy which arose. The Pope, the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, replied to the excommunications of the council by condemning all its supporters to eternal perdition. The emperor, enraged at the opposition he met with, enforced the execution of his edicts with all the activity and energy of his character; his political as well as his religious views urged him to be a persecutor. It is evident that policy and passion were as much connected with his violence against the image-worshippers as religious feeling, for he treated many heretics with toleration who appeared to be quiet and inoffensive subjects, incapable of offering any opposition to his political and ecclesiastical schemes. The Theopaschites, the Paulicians, and the Monophysites enjoyed religious toleration during his whole reign.

In the year 766 the edicts against image-worship were extended in their application, and enforced with additional rigor. The use of relics and the practice of praying to saints were prohibited. Many monks, and several members of the dignified clergy, were banished; stripes, loss of the eyes and of the tongue, were inflicted as legal punishments for prostration before a picture, or praying before a relic. Yet, even at this period of the greatest excitement, the emperor at times displayed great personal forbearance; when, however, either policy or passion prompted him to order punishment to be inflicted, it was done with fearful severity.

Two cases may be mentioned as affording a correct elucidation of the personal conduct of Constantine. A hermit, named Andreas the Kalybite, presented himself before the emperor, and upbraided him for causing dissension in the church. "If you are a Christian, why dost you persecute Christians?" shouted the monk to his prince, with audacious orthodoxy. Constantine ordered him to be carried off to prison for insulting the imperial authority. He was then called upon to submit to the decisions of the general council; and when he refused to admit the validity of its canons, and to obey the edicts of the emperor, he was tried and condemned to death. After being scourged in the hippodrome, he was beheaded, and his body, according to the practice of the age, was cast into the sea.

Stephen, the abbot of a monastery near Nicomedia, was banished to the island of Proconnesus, on account of his firm opposition to the emperor's edicts; but his fame for piety drew numerous votaries to his place of banishment, who flocked thither to hear him preach. This assembly of seditious and pious persons roused the anger of the civil authorities, and Stephen was brought to Constantinople to be more strictly watched. His eloquence still drew crowds to the door of his prison; and the reverence shown to him by his followers vexed the emperor so much, that he gave vent to his mortification by exclaiming—"It seems, in truth, that this monk is really emperor, and I am nothing in the empire". This speech was heard by some of the officers of the imperial guard. Like that of Henry II concerning Thomas a Becket, it caused the death of Stephen. He was dragged from his prison by some of the emperor's guard, and cruelly murdered. The soldiery and the people joined in dragging his body through the streets, and his unburied remains were left exposed in the place destined to receive those of the lowest criminals. Both Stephen and Andreas were declared martyrs, and rewarded with a place in the calendar of Greek saints.

Orthodox zeal and party ambition combined to form a dangerous conspiracy against Constantine. Men of the highest rank engaged in the plot, and even the Patriarch Constantinos, though himself an Iconoclast, appears to have joined the conspirators. He was removed from the patriarchate, and the dignity was conferred on a Slavonian prelate, named Niketas. The deposed Patriarch was brought to trial and condemned to death. Constantinos, after his condemnation, and apparently with the hope of having his life spared, signed a declaration that he believed the worship of images to be idolatry, that the decrees of the council of Constantinople contained the true doctrines of the orthodox church, and that the faith of the emperor was pure. This last article was added because the patriarch was accused of having countenanced reports charging the emperor with heterodox opinions concerning the Virgin. If Constantinos expected mercy by his pliancy, he was mistaken. His sentence was carried into execution in the cruellest manner. The head of the Greek Church was placed on an ass, with his face towards the tail, and conducted through the streets of the capital, while the mob treated him with every insult. On reaching the amphitheatre his head was struck off. It may easily be supposed that, when the highest ecclesiastic in the empire was treated in this manner in the capital, the severity of the imperial agents in the distant provinces was often fearfully tyrannical.

The spirit of ecclesiastical bigotry which has so often led popes, princes, and Protestants to burn those who differed from them in matters of opinion, gave the image-worshippers as much fortitude to resist as it gave their opponents cruelty to persecute. The religious and political reforms of the Isaurian emperors were equally a subject of aversion to the Pope and the Italians; and all the possessions of the emperors in central Italy had been rendered virtually independent, even before Constantine convoked the council of Constantinople. His struggle with the Saracens and Bulgarians had prevented his making any effort in Italy. At Rome, however, the Popes continued to acknowledge the civil and judicial supremacy of the emperor of the East, even after the Lombards had conquered the exarchate of Ravenna. But the impossibility of receiving any support from Constantine against the encroachments of the Lombards, induced Pope Stephen to apply to Pepin of France for assistance. Pope Paul afterwards carried his eagerness to create a quarrel between Pepin and Constantine so far, that he accused the emperor of hostile designs against Italy, which he was well aware Constantine had little time or power to execute. Pepin, who was anxious to gain the aid of papal authority in his projects of usurpation, made a donation of the exarchate of Ravenna to the papal see in the year 755, though he had not the smallest right to dispose of it. The donation, however, supplied the Pope with a pretext for laying claim to the sovereignty over the country; and there can be no doubt that the papal government was at this very popular among the Italians, for it secured them the administration of justice according to the Roman law, guaranteed to them a considerable degree of municipal independence, and permitted them to maintain their commercial relations with the Byzantine Empire. The political dependence of many of the cities in central Italy, which escaped the Lombard domination, was not absolutely withdrawn from the empire of the East until a new emperor of the West was created, on the assumption of the imperial crown by Charlemagne, to whom the allegiance of the Italians, who threw off Constantine's authority, was at last transferred.

Some remarkable physical phenomena occurred during the reign of Constantine. An unnatural darkness obscured the sun from the 10th to the 15th of August in the year 746. It terrified the inhabitants of Constantinople at the time it occurred; and when the great pestilence broke out in the following year, it was regarded as a prognostic of that calamity. In the year 750, violent earthquakes destroyed whole towns in Syria. In the month of October, 763, a winter of singular severity commenced long before severe cold generally sets in at Constantinople. The Bosphorus was frozen over, and men passed on foot between Europe and Asia in several places. The Black Sea was covered with ice from the Palus Maeotic to Mesembria. When the thaw began in the month of February, 764, immense mountains of ice were driven through the Bosphorus, and dashed with such violence against the walls of Constantinople as to threaten them with ruin. These icebergs were seventy feet in thickness; and Theophanes mentions that, when a boy, he mounted on one of them with thirty of his young companions.



One great calamity in the age of Constantine appears to have travelled over the whole habitable world; this was the great pestilence, which made its appearance in the Byzantine Empire as early as 745. It had previously carried off a considerable portion of the population of Syria, and the Caliph Yezid III perished of the disease in 744. From Syria it visited Egypt and Africa, from whence it passed into Sicily. After making great ravages in Sicily and Calabria, it spread to Greece; and at last, in the year 749, broke out with terrible violence in Constantinople, then probably the most populous city in the universe. It was supposed to have been introduced, and dispersed through Christian countries, by the Venetian and Greek ships employed in carrying on a contraband trade in slaves with the Mohammedan nations, and it spread wherever commerce extended. Monemvasia, one of the commercial cities at the time, received the contagion with the return of its trading vessels, and disseminated the disease over all Greece, and the islands of the Archipelago. On the continent, this plague threatened to exterminate the Hellenic race.

Historians have left us a vivid picture of the horrors of this fearful visitation, which show us that the terror it inspired disturbed the fabric of society. Strange superstitions preoccupied men's minds, and annihilated every sense of duty. Some appeared to be urged by a demoniacal impulse to commit heinous but useless crime, with the wildest recklessness. Small crosses of unctuous matter were supposed to appear suddenly, traced by an invisible hand on the clothes of persons as they were engaged in their ordinary pursuits; examples were narrated of their having appeared suddenly visible to the eyes of the assembled congregation on the vestments of the priest as he officiated at the altar. The individual thus marked out was invariably assailed by the disease on his return home, and soon died. Crosses were constantly found traced on the doors and outer walls of buildings; houses, palaces, huts, and monasteries were alike marked. This was considered as an intimation that some of the inmates were ordered to prepare for immediate death. In the delirium of fear and the first paroxysms of the plague, many declared that they beheld hideous spectres wandering about; these apparitions were seen flitting through the crowded streets of the city, at times questioning the passengers, at times walking into houses before the inmates, and then driving the proprietors from the door. At times it was said that these spectres had even attacked the citizens with naked swords. That these things were not reported solely on the delusion of the fancy of persons rendered insane by attacks of disease, is asserted by a historian who was born about ten years later, and who certainly passed his youth at Constantinople.

The testimony of Theophanes is confirmed by the records of similar diseases in other populous cities. The uncertainty of life offers additional chances of impunity to crime, and thus relaxes the power of the law, and weakens the bonds of moral restraint. Danger is generally what man fears little, when there are several chances of escape. The bold and wicked, deriding the general panic, frequently made periods of pestilence times of revelry and plunder; the very individuals charged as policemen to preserve order in society, finding themselves free from control, have been known to assume the disguise of demons, in order to plunder the terrified and superstitious with impunity. The predominant passions of all find full scope when the feeling of responsibility is removed; shame is thrown aside, the most unfeeling avarice and the wildest debauchery are displayed. But, at the same time, it is on such fearful occasions that we see examples of the noblest courage, the most devoted self-sacrifice and the purest charity. Boccaccio and Defoe, in describing the scenes which occurred at Florence in 1348, and at London in 1665, afford a correct picture of what happened at Constantinople in 747.

The number of dead was so great, that when the ordinary means of transporting the bodies to interment were insufficient, boxes were slung over the pack-saddles of mules, into which the dead were cast without distinction of rank. When the mules became insufficient, low chariots were constructed to receive piles of human bodies, and these frightful hearses were drawn through the streets to receive their loads, by a crowd of men who received a fixed sum of money with each body. Long trenches were prepared without the walls to serve as graves for hundreds of bodies, and into these the aged beggar and the youthful noble were precipitated side

by side. When all the cemeteries around the capital were filled, and the panic kept the mass of the population shut up in their dwellings, bodies were interred in the fields and vineyards nearest to the city gates, or they were cast into vacant houses and empty cisterns. The disease prevailed for a year, and left whole houses tenantless, having exterminated many families. We possess no record of the number of deaths it caused, but if we suppose the population of Constantinople at the time to have exceeded a million, we may form an estimate of the probable loss it sustained, by observing that, during the great plague at Milan, in 1630, about eighty-six thousand persons perished in the course of a year, in a population hardly exceeding one hundred and fifty thousand souls.

After the plague had completely disappeared, the capital required an immense influx of new inhabitants. To fill up the void caused by the scourge, Constantine induced many Greek families from the continent and the islands to emigrate to Constantinople. These new citizens immediately occupied a well-defined social position; for whether artisans, tradesmen, merchants, or householders, they became members of established corporations, and knew how to act in their new relations of life without embarrassment. It was by the perfection of its corporate societies and police regulations, that the Byzantine Empire effected the translocation of the inhabitants of whole cities and provinces, without misfortune or discontent. By modifying the fiscal severity of the Roman government, by relieving the members of the municipality from the ruinous obligation of mutual responsibility for the total amount of the land-tax, and by relaxing the laws that fettered children to the profession or handicraft of their parents, the Byzantine administration infused new energy into an enfeebled social system. It still preserved, as an inheritance from Rome, an intimate knowledge of the practical methods of regulating the relative supplies of labour, food, and population in the manner least likely to inconvenience the government, though undoubtedly with little reference to the measures best calculated to advance the happiness of the people.

This memorable pestilence produced as great changes in the provinces as in the capital. While the population of Constantinople lost much of its Roman character and traditions by the infusion of a large number of Greek emigrants, Greece itself lost also much of its Hellenic character and ancient traditions, by the departure of a considerable portion of its native middle classes for Constantinople, and the destruction of a large part by the plague itself. The middle classes of the Hellenic cities flocked to Constantinople, while an inferior class from the villages crowded to supply their place, and thus a general translocation of the population was effected; and though this emigration may have been confined principally to the Greek race, it must have tended greatly to separate the future traditions of the people from those of an earlier period. The Athenian or the Lacedemonian who settled at Constantinople, lost all local characteristics; and the emigrants from the islands, who supplied their place at Athens and Lacedemon, mingled their traditions and dialect with the Attic and Doric prejudices of their new homes; ancient traditions were thus consigned to oblivion. The depopulation on the continent and in the Peloponnesus was also so great that the Slavonian population extended their settlements over the greater part of the open country; the Greeks crowded into the towns, or into the districts immediately under the protection of their walls. The Slavonian colonies, which had been gradually increasing ever since the reign of Heraclius, attained at this time their greatest extension; and the depopulation caused by this pestilence is said by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who wrote two centuries later, to have been so great, that the Slavonians occupied the whole of the open country in Greece and the Peloponnesus, and reduced it to a state of barbarism. The emperor perhaps confounded in some degree the general translocation of the Greek population itself with the occupation of extensive districts, then abandoned to Slavonian cultivators and herdsmen. It is certain, however, that from this time the oblivion of the ancient Hellenic names of villages, districts, rivers, and mountains became general; and the final extinction of those dialects, which marked a direct affiliation of the inhabitants of particular spots with the ancient Hellenic population of the same districts, was consummated. The new names which came into use, whether Slavonian or Greek, equally mark the loss of ancient traditions.

In closing the history of the reign of Constantine V it is necessary to observe that he deserves praise for the care with which he educated his family. The most bigoted image-worshippers inform us that he was so mild in his domestic circle that he permitted his third wife to protect a nun named Anthusa, who was a most devoted worshipper of images; and one of the emperor's daughters received from this nun both her name and education. The Princess Anthusa was distinguished for her benevolence and piety; she is said to have founded one of the first orphan asylums established in the Christian world; and her orthodox devotion, to pictures obtained for her a place among the saints of the Greek Church, an honour granted also to her godmother and teacher.

#### Sect. IV

### REIGNS OF LEO IV THE KHAZAR, CONSTANTINE VI AND IRENE

A.D. 775-802

Leo IV succeeded his father at the age of twenty-five. His mother, Irene, was the daughter of the emperor or chagan of the Khazars, then a powerful people, through whose territories the greater part of the commercial intercourse between the Christians and the rich countries in eastern Asia was carried on. Leo inherited from his mother a mild and amiable disposition; nor does he appear to have been destitute of some portion of his father's talents, but the state of his health prevented him from displaying the same activity. His reign lasted four years and a half, and his administration was conducted in strict accordance with the policy of his father and grandfather; but the weak state of his health kept the public attention fixed on the question of the imperial succession. Constantine V had selected an Athenian lady, of great beauty and accomplishments, named Irene, to be his son's wife, and Leo had a son named Constantine, who was born in the year 771. The indefinite nature of the imperial succession, and the infancy of Leo's child, gave the two half-brothers of the emperor, who had been invested by their father with the rank of Caesar, some hope of ascending the throne on their brother's death. Leo conferred on his infant son the title of Emperor, in order to secure his succession; and this was done in a more popular manner than usual, at the express desire of the senate, in order to give the ceremony all the character of a popular election. The young emperor's five uncles—the two Caesars, and the three who bore the title of *Nobilissimi*—were compelled to take the same oath of allegiance as the other subjects. Yet, shortly after this, the Caesar Nicephorus formed a conspiracy to render himself master of the government. Leo, who felt that he was rapidly sinking into the grave, referred the decision of his brother's guilt to a *Silention*, which condemned all the conspirators to death. Nicephorus was pardoned, but his partisans were scourged and banished to Cherson. The death of Leo IV happened on the 8th of September, 780.

Constantine was ten years old when his father died, so that the whole direction of the empire devolved on his mother, Irene, who had received the imperial crown from Constantine V; for that emperor seems to have felt that the weak state of Leo's health would require the assistance of Irene's talents. The virtues Irene had displayed in a private station were insufficient to resist the corrupting influence of irresponsible power. Ambition took possession of her own soul, and it was the ambition of reigning alone, not of reigning well. The education of her son was neglected—perhaps as a means of securing her power; favour was avowedly a surer road to preferment than long service, so that the court became a scene of political intrigue, and personal motives decided most public acts. As no organ of public opinion possessed the power of awakening a sense of moral responsibility among the officers of state, the intrigues of the court ended in conspiracies, murder, and treason.

The parties struggling for power soon ranged themselves under the banners of the ecclesiastical factions that had long divided the empire. Little, probably, did many of the leaders care what party they espoused in the religious question; but it was necessary to proclaim themselves members of an ecclesiastical faction in order to secure a popular following. The Empress Irene was known to favour image-worship; as a woman and a Greek, this was natural; yet policy would have dictated to her to adopt that party as the most certain manner of securing support powerful enough to counterbalance the family influence of the Isaurian dynasty, which was now wielded by the uncles of the young emperor. The conflict between the image-worshippers and the Iconoclasts soon commenced. The Caesar Nicephorus, who was as ambitious as his sister-in-law, was eager to drive her from the regency. He organized a conspiracy, in which several ministers and members of the senate took part. Irene obtained full proof of all its ramifications before the conspirators were prepared to act, seized her five brothers-in-law, and compelled them to enter the priesthood. In order to make it generally known that they had assumed the sacerdotal character, they were obliged to officiate during the Christmas ceremonies at the high altar of St Sophia's, while the young emperor and his mother restored to the church the rich jewels of which it had been deprived by the Iconoclast emperors. The intendant-general of posts, the general of the Armeniac theme, the commander of the imperial guard, and the admiral of the Archipelago, who had all taken part in the conspiracy, were scourged, and immured as monks in distant monasteries. Helpidiuss the governor of Sicily, assumed the title of emperor as soon as he found that his participation in the plot was known at court; but he was compelled to seek shelter among the Saracens, in whose armies he afterwards served. Nicephorus Doukas, another conspirator, fled also to the Mohammedans. Some years later, when Constantine VI had assumed the government into his own hands, a new conspiracy was formed by the partisans of his uncles (A.D. 792). The princes were then treated with great severity. The Caesar Nicephorus was deprived of sight; and the tongues of the others were cut out, by the order of their nephew, not long before he lost his own eyes by the order of his mother.

The influence of the clergy in the ordinary administration of justice, and the great extent to which ecclesiastical legislation regulated civil rights, rendered councils of the church an important feature in those forms and usages that practically circumscribed the despotic power of the emperor by a framework of customs, opinions, and convictions which he could with difficulty alter, and rarely oppose without danger. The political ambition of Irene, the national vanity of the Greeks, and the religious feelings of the orthodox, required the sanction of a constitutional public authority, before the laws against image-worship could be openly repealed. The Byzantine Empire had at this time an ecclesiastical, though not a political constitution. The will of the sovereign was alone insufficient to change an organic law, forming part of the ecclesiastical administration of the empire. It was necessary to convoke a general council to legalize image-worship; and to render such a council a fit instrument for the proposed revolution, much arrangement was necessary. No person was ever endued with greater talents for removing opposition and conciliating personal support than the empress. The Patriarch Paul, a decided Iconoclast, was induced to resign, and declare that he repented of his hostility to image-worship, because it had cut off the church of Constantinople from communion with the rest of the Christian world. This declaration pointed out the necessity of holding a general council, in order to establish that communion. The crisis required a new Patriarch, of stainless character, great ability, and perfect acquaintance with the party connections and individual characters of the leading bishops. No person could be selected from among the dignitaries of the church, who had been generally appointed by Iconoclast emperors. The choice of Irene fell on a civilian. Tarasios, the chief secretary of the imperial cabinet—a man of noble birth, considerable popularity, and a high reputation for learning and probity—was suddenly elevated to be the head of the Greek church, and allowed to be not unworthy of the high rank. The orthodox would probably have raised a question concerning the legality of nominating a layman, had it not been evident that the objection would favour the interests of their opponents. The empress and her advisers were not bold enough to venture on an irretrievable declaration in favour of image-worship, until they had obtained a public assurance of popular support. An assembly of the

inhabitants of the capital was convoked in the palace of Magnaura, in order to secure a majority pledged to the cause of Tarasios. The fact that such an assembly was considered necessary is a strong proof that the strength of the rival parties was very nearly balanced, and that this manifestation of public opinion was required in order to relieve the empress from personal responsibility. Irene proposed to the assembly that Tarasios should be elected, Patriarch, and the proposal was received with general acclamation. Tarasios, however, refused the dignity, declaring that he would not accept the Patriarchate unless a general council should be convoked, for restoring unity to the church. The convocation of a council was adopted, and the nomination of Tarasios ratified. Though great care had been taken to fill this assembly with image-worshippers, nevertheless several dissentient voices made themselves heard, protesting against the proceedings as an attack on the existing legislation of the empire.

The Iconoclasts were still strong in the capital, and the opposition of the soldiery was excited by the determination of Tarasios to re-establish image-worship. They openly declared that they would not allow a council of the church to be held, nor permit the ecclesiastics of their party to be unjustly treated by the court. More than one tumult warned the empress that no council could be held at Constantinople. It was found necessary to disperse the Iconoclastic soldiery in distant provinces, and form new cohorts of guards devoted to the court, before any steps could be publicly taken to change the laws of the church. The experience of Tarasios as a minister of state was more useful to Irene during the first period of his patriarchate than his theological learning. It required nearly three years to smooth the way for the meeting of the council, which was at length held at Nicaea, in September, 787. Three hundred and sixty-seven members attended, of whom, however, not a few were abbots and monks, who assumed the title of confessors from having been ejected from their monasteries by the decrees of the Iconoclast sovereigns. Some of the persons present deserve to be particularly mentioned, for they have individually conferred greater benefits on mankind by their learned labours, than they rendered to Christianity by their zealous advocacy of image-worship in this council. The secretary of the two commissioners who represented the imperial authority was Nicephorus the historian, subsequently Patriarch of Constantinople. His sketch of the history of the empire, from the year 602 to 770, is a valuable work, and indicates that he was a man of judgment, whenever his perceptions were not obscured by theological and ecclesiastical prejudices. Two other eminent Byzantine writers were also present. George, called Syncellus, from the office he held, under the Patriarch Tarasios. He has left us a chronological work, which has preserved the knowledge of many important facts recorded by no other ancient authority. Theophanes, the friend and companion of the Syncellus, has continued this work; and his chronography of Roman and Byzantine history, with all its faults, forms the best picture of the condition of the empire that we possess for a long period. Theophanes enjoyed the honour of becoming, at a later day, a confessor in the cause of image-worship; he was exiled from a monastery which he had founded, and died in the island of Samothrace, A.D. 817.

The second council of Nicaea had no better title than the Iconoclast council of Constantinople to be regarded as a general council of the church. The Pope Hadrian, indeed, sent deputies from the Latin Church; but the churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, whose patriarchs were groaning under the government of the caliphs, did not dare to communicate with foreign authorities. An attempt was nevertheless made to deceive the world into a belief that they were represented, by allowing two monks from Palestine to present themselves as the syncelli of these patriarchs, without scrutinizing the validity of their credentials. Pope Hadrian, though he sent deputies, wrote at the same time to Tarasios, making several demands tending to establish the ecclesiastical supremacy of the papal See, and complaining in strong terms that the Patriarch of Constantinople had no right to assume the title of ecumenic. The hope of recovering the estates of the patrimony of St. Peter in the Byzantine provinces, which had been sequestered by Leo III, and of re-establishing the supremacy of the See of Rome made Hadrian overlook much that was offensive to papal pride.

The second council of Nicaea authorized the worship of images as an orthodox practice. Forged passages, pretending to be extracts from the earlier fathers, and genuine from the more modern, were quoted in favour of the practice. Simony was already a prevailing evil in the Greek Church. Many of the bishops had purchased their sees, and most of these naturally preferred doing violence to their opinions rather than lose their revenues. From this cause, unanimity was easily obtained by court influence. The council decided, that not only was the cross an object of reverence, but also that the images of Christ, and the pictures of the Virgin Mary—of angels, and holy men, whether painted in colours, or worked in embroidery in sacred ornaments, or formed in mosaic in the walls of churches—were all lawful objects of worship. At the same time, in order to guard against the accusation of idolatry, it was declared that the worship of an image, which is merely a sign of reverence, must not be confounded with the adoration due only to God. The council of Constantinople held in 754 was declared heretical, and all who maintained its doctrines, and condemned the use of images, were anathematized. The patriarchs Anastasius, Constantinos, and Niketas were especially doomed to eternal condemnation.

The Pope adopted the decrees of this council, but he refused to confirm them officially, because the empress delayed restoring the estates of St. Peter's patrimony. In the countries of Western Europe which had formed parts of the Western Empire, the superstitions of the image-worshippers were viewed with as much dissatisfaction as the fanaticism of the Iconoclasts; and the council of Nicaea was as much condemned as that of Constantinople by a large body of enlightened ecclesiastics. The public mind in the West was almost as much divided as in the East; and if a general council of the Latin Church had been assembled, its unbiassed decisions would probably have been at variance with those supported by the Pope and the council of Nicaea.

Charlemagne published a refutation of the doctrines of this council on the subject of image-worship. His work, called the Caroline Books, consists of four parts, and was certainly composed under his immediate personal superintendence, though he was doubtless incapable of writing it himself. At all events, it was published as his composition. This work condemns the superstitious bigotry of the Greek image-worshippers in a decided manner, while at the same time it only blames the misguided zeal of the Iconoclasts. Altogether it is a very remarkable production, and gives a more correct idea of the extent to which Roman civilization still survived, in Western society, and counterbalanced ecclesiastical influence, than any other contemporary document. In 794 Charlemagne assembled a council of three hundred bishops at Frankfort; and, in the presence of the papal legates, this council maintained that pictures ought to be placed in churches, but that they should not be worshipped, but only regarded with respect, as recalling more vividly to the mind the subjects represented. The similarity existing at this time in the opinions of enlightened men throughout the whole Christian world must be noted as a proof that general communications and commercial intercourse still pervaded society with common sentiments. The dark night of medieval ignorance and local prejudices had not yet settled on the West; nor had feudal anarchy confined the ideas and wants of society to the narrow sphere of provincial interests. The aspect of public opinion alarmed Pope Hadrian, whose interests required that the relations of the West and East should not become friendly. His position, however, rendered him more suspicious of Constantine and Irene, in spite of their orthodoxy, than of Charlemagne, with all his heterodox ideas. The Frank monarch, though he differed in ecclesiastical opinions, was sure to be a political protector. The Pope consequently laboured to foment the jealousy that reigned between the Frank and Byzantine governments concerning Italy, where the commercial relations of the Greeks still counterbalanced the military influence of the Franks. When writing to Charlemagne, he accused the Greeks and their Italian partisans of every crime likely to arouse the hostility of the Franks. They were reproached, and not unjustly, with carrying on an extensive trade in slaves, who were purchased in Western Europe, and sold, to the Saracens. The Pope knew well that this commerce was carried on in all the trading cities of the West, both by Greeks and Latins; for slaves then constituted the principal article of European export to Africa, Syria, and Egypt, in payment of

the produce of the East, which was brought from those countries. The Pope seized and burned some Greek vessels at Centumcellae, (Civita-Vecchia), because the crews were accused of kidnapping the people of the neighbourhood. The violent expressions of Hadrian, in speaking of the Greeks, could not fail to produce a great effect in Western Europe, where the letters of the Popes formed the literary productions most generally read and studied by all ranks. His calumnies must have sunk deep into the public mind, and tended to impress on Western nations that aversion to the Greeks, which was subsequently increased by mercantile jealousy and religious strife.

The extinction of the last traces of the supremacy of the Eastern Empire at Rome was the most gratifying result of their machinations to the Popes. On Christmas-day, A.D. 800, Charlemagne revived the existence of the Western Empire, and received the imperial crown from Pope Leo III in the church of St. Peter's. Hitherto the Frank monarch had acknowledged a titular supremacy in the Eastern Empire, and had borne the title of Patrician of the Roman Empire, as a mark of dignity conferred on him by the emperors of Constantinople; but he now raised himself to an equality with the emperors of the East, by assuming the title of Emperor of the West. The assumption of the title of emperor of the Romans was not an act of idle vanity. Roman usages, Roman prejudices, and Roman law still exercised a powerful influence over the minds of the most numerous body of Charlemagne's subjects; and by all the clergy and lawyers throughout his dominions the rights and prerogatives of the Roman emperors of the West were held to be legally vested in his person by the fact of his election, such as it was, and his coronation by the Pope. The political allegiance of the Pope to the emperor, which was then undisputed, became thus transferred from the emperor of the East to the emperor of the West as a matter of course; while the papal rights of administration over the former exarchate of Ravenna, the Pentapolis, and the dukedom of Rome, acquired, under the protection of the Franks, the character of a decided sovereignty. Many towns of Italy at this time acquired a degree of municipal independence which made them almost independent republics. The influence of Roman law in binding society together, the military weakness of the papal power, and the rapid decline of the central authority in the empire of the Franks, enabled these towns to perpetuate their peculiar constitutions and independent jurisdictions down to the French Revolution.

A female regency in an absolute government must always render the conduct of public affairs liable to be directed by court intrigues. When Irene wished to gain Charlemagne as an ally, in order to deprive the Iconoclasts of any hope of foreign assistance, she had negotiated a treaty of marriage between her son and Rotrud, the eldest daughter of the Frank monarch, A.D. 781. But when the question of image-worship was settled, she began to fear that this alliance might become the means of excluding her from power, and she then broke off the treaty, and compelled her son to marry a Paphlagonian lady of the court named Maria, whom the young emperor soon regarded with aversion. Constantine, however, submitted quietly to his mother's domination until his twentieth year. He then began to display dissatisfaction at the state of tutelage in which he was held, and at his complete seclusion from public business. A plan was formed by many leading men in the administration to place him at the head of affairs, but it was discovered before it was ripe for execution. Irene on this occasion displayed unseemly violence, in her eagerness to retain a power she ought immediately to have resigned. The conspirators were seized, scourged, and banished. When her son was conducted into her presence, she struck him, and overwhelmed him with reproaches and insults. The young emperor was then confined so strictly in the palace that all communication with his friends was cut off.

This unprincipled conduct of the regent-mother became the object of general reprobation. The troops of the Armeniac theme refused to obey her orders, and marched to the capital to deliver Constantine. On the way they were joined by other legions, and Irene found herself compelled to release her son, who immediately hastened to the advancing army. A total revolution was effected at court. The ministers and creatures of Irene were removed from office, and some who had displayed particular animosity against Constantine were scourged and

beheaded. Constantine ruled the empire for about six years, (790-797). But his education had been neglected, in a disgraceful manner, and his mind was perhaps naturally fickle. Though he displayed the courage of his family at the head of his army, his incapacity for business, and his inconstancy in his friendships, soon lost him the support of his most devoted partisans. He lost his popularity by putting out the eyes of his uncle, Nicephorus, and cutting out the tongues of his four uncles, who were accused of having taken part in the plots of their brother. He alienated the attachment of the Armenian troops by putting out the eyes of their general, Alexis Mouselen, who had been the means of delivering him from confinement. The folly of this last act was even greater than the ingratitude, for it was done to gratify the revengeful feelings of his mother. These acts of folly, cruelty, and ingratitude destroyed his influence, and induced his sincerest friends to make their peace with Irene, whom it was evident her son would ultimately allow to rule the empire.

The unhappy marriage into which Constantine had been forced by his mother, she at last converted into the cause of his ruin. The emperor fell in love with Theodota, one of his mother's maids of honour, and determined to divorce Maria in order to marry her. Irene, whose ambition induced her to stoop to the basest intrigues, flattered him in this project, as it seemed likely to increase her influence and ruin his reputation. The Empress Maria was induced to retire into a monastery, and the emperor expected to be able to celebrate his marriage with Theodota without difficulty. But the usage of the Byzantine Empire required that the Patriarch should pronounce the sentence of divorce, and this Tarasios, who was a devoted partisan and active political agent of Irene, long refused to do. The imprudence of Constantine, and the insidious advice of Irene, soon involved the emperor in a dispute with the whole body of monks, who had an overwhelming influence in society. The Patriarch at last yielded to the influence of Irene, so far as to allow his catechist to give the veil to the Empress Maria, whom he pronounced divorced, and then to permit the celebration of the emperors marriage with Theodota by Joseph, one of the principal clergy of the patriarchal chapter, and abbot of a monastery in the capital.

In the Byzantine Empire, at this time, constant religious discussions and pretensions to superior sanctity, had introduced a profound religious spirit into the highest ranks of society. Numbers of the wealthiest nobles founded monasteries, into which they retired. The manners, the extensive charity, and the pure morality of these abbots, secured them the love and admiration of the people, and tended to disseminate a higher standard of morality than had previously prevailed in Constantinople. This fact must not be overlooked in estimating the various causes which led to the regeneration of the Eastern Empire under the Iconoclast emperors. Security of life and property, and all the foundations of national prosperity, are more closely connected with moral purity than the ruling classes are inclined to allow. It may not be quite useless, as an illustration of the state of the Byzantine empire, to remind the reader of the violence, injustice, and debauchery which prevailed at the courts of the west of Europe, including that of Charlemagne. While the Pope winked at the disorders in the palace of Charlemagne, the monks of the East prepared the public mind for the dethronement of Constantine, because he obtained an illegal divorce, and formed a second marriage. The corruption of morals and the irregularities prevalent in the monasteries of the West contrast strongly with the condition of the Eastern monks.

The habit of building monasteries as a place of retreat, from motives of piety, was also adopted by some as a mode of securing a portion of their wealth from confiscation, in case of their condemnation for political crimes, peculiar privileges being reserved in the monasteries so founded for members of the founder's family. At this time Plato, abbot of the monastery of Sakkoudion, on Mount Olympus in Bythinia, and his nephew Theodore, who was a relation of the new empress Theodota, were the leaders of a powerful party of monks possessing great influence in the church. Theodore (who is known by the name Studita, from having been afterwards appointed abbot of the celebrated monastery of Studion) had founded a monastery on his own property, in which he assembled his father, two brothers, and a young sister, and, emancipating all his household and agricultural slaves, established them as lay brethren on the



farms. Most of the abbots round Constantinople were men of family and wealth, as well as learning and piety; but they repaid the sincere respect with which they were regarded by the people, by participating in popular prejudices, so that we cannot be surprised to find them constantly acting the part of demagogues. Plato separated himself from all spiritual communion with the Patriarch Tarasios, whom he declared to have violated the principles of Christianity in permitting the adulterous marriage of the emperor. His views were warmly supported by his nephew Theodore, and many monks began openly to preach both against the Patriarch and the emperor. Irene now saw that the movement was taking a turn favourable to her ambition. She encouraged the monks, and prepared Tarasios for quitting the party of his sovereign. Plato and Theodore were dangerous enemies, from their great reputation and extensive political and ecclesiastical connections, and into a personal contest with these men Constantine rashly plunged.

Plato was arrested at his monastery, and placed in confinement under the wardship of the abbot Joseph, who had celebrated the imperial marriage. Theodore was banished to Thessalonica, whither he was conveyed by a detachment of police soldiers. He has left us an account of his journey, which proves that the orders of the emperor were not carried into execution with undue severity. Theodore and his attendant monks were seized by the imperial officers at a distance from the monastery, and compelled to commence their journey on the first horses their escort could, procure, instead of being permitted to send for their ambling mules. They were hurried forward for three days, resting during the night at Kathara in Liviana, Lefka, and Phyraion. At the last place they encountered a melancholy array of monks, driven from the great monastery of Sakkoudion after the arrest of Plato; but with these fellow-sufferers, though ranged along the road, Theodore was not allowed to communicate, except by bestowing on them his blessing as he rode past. He was then carried to Paula, from whence he wrote to Plato that he had seen his sister, with the venerable Sabas, abbot of the monastery of Studion. They had visited him secretly, but had been allowed by the guards to pass the evening in his society. Next night they reached Loupadion, where the exiles were kindly treated by their host. At Tilin they were joined by two abbots, Zacharias and Pionios, but they were not allowed to travel in company. The journey was continued by Alberiza, Anagegrammenos, Perperina, Parium, and Horkos, to Lampsacus. On the road, the bishops expressed the greatest sympathy and eagerness to serve them; but the bigoted Theodore declared that his conscience would not permit him to hold any communication with those who were so unchristian as to continue in communion with Tarasios and the emperor.

From Lampsacus the journey was prosecuted by sea. A pious governor received them at Abydos with great kindness, and they rested there eight days. At Eleaus there was again a detention of seven days, and from thence they sailed to Lemnos, where the bishop treated Theodore with so much attention that his bigotry was laid asleep. The passage from Lemnos to Thessalonica was not without danger from the piratical boats of the Slavonians who dwelt on the coast of Thrace, and exercised the trades of robbers and pirates as well as herdsmen and shepherds. A favourable wind carried the exiles without accident to Kanastron, from whence they touched at Pallene before entering the harbour of Thessalonica, which they reached on the 25th March, 797. Here they were received by a guard, and conducted through the city to the residence of the governor. The people assembled in crowds to view the pious opponents of their emperor; while the governor received them with marks of personal respect, which showed him more anxious to conciliate the powerful monks than to uphold the dignity of the weak emperor. He conducted Theodore to the cathedral, that he might return thanks to God publicly for his safe arrival; he then waited on him to the palace of the archbishop, where he was treated to a bath, and entertained most hospitably. The exiles were, however, according to the tenor of the imperial orders, placed in separate places of confinement; and even Theodore and his brother were not permitted to dwell together. The day of their triumph was not far distant, and their banishment does not appear to have subjected them to much inconvenience. They were martyrs at a small cost.

As soon as Irene thought that her son had rendered himself unpopular throughout the empire, she formed her plot for dethroning him. The support of the principal officers in the palace was secured by liberal promises of wealth and advancement: a band of conspirators was then appointed to seize Constantine, but a timely warning enabled him to escape to Triton on the Propontis. He might easily have recovered possession of the capital, had he not wasted two months in idleness and folly. Abandoned at last by every friend, he was seized by his mother's emissaries and dragged to Constantinople. After being detained some time a prisoner in the porphyry apartment in which he was born, his eyes were put out on the 19th August, 797. Constantine had given his cruel mother public marks of that affection which he appears really to have felt for her, and to which he had sacrificed his best friends. He had erected a statue of bronze to her honour, which long adorned the hippodrome of Constantinople.

Irene was now publicly proclaimed sovereign of the empire. She had for some time been allowed by her careless son to direct the whole administration, and it was his confidence in her maternal affection which enabled her to work his ruin. She of course immediately released all the ecclesiastical opponents of her son from confinement, and restored them to their honours and offices. The Patriarch Tarasios was ordered to make his peace with the monks by excommunicating his creature, the abbot Joseph; and the closest alliance was formed between him and his former opponents, Plato and Theodore, the latter of whom was shortly after rewarded for his sufferings by being elevated to the dignity of abbot of the great monastery of Studion,

The Empress Irene reigned five years, during which her peace was disturbed by the political intrigues of her ministers. Her life offers a more interesting subject for biography than for history, for it is more striking by its personal details, than important in its political effects. But the records of private life in the age in which she lived, and of the state of society at Athens, among which she was educated, are so few, that it would require to be written by a novelist, who could combine the strange vicissitudes of her fortunes with a true portraiture of human feelings, collared with a train of thought, and enriched with facts gleaned from contemporary lives and letters of Greek saints and monks. Born in a private in a provincial, though a wealthy and populous city, it must have required a rare combination of personal beauty, native grace, and mental superiority, to fill the rank of empress of the Romans, to which she was suddenly raised, at the court of a haughty sovereign like her father-in-law Constantine V, not only without embarrassment, but even with universal praise. Again, when vested with the regency, as widow of an iconoclast emperor, it required no trifling talent, firmness of purpose, and conciliation of manner, to overthrow an ecclesiastical party which had ruled the church for more than half a century. On the other hand, the deliberate way in which she undermined the authority of her son, whose character she had corrupted by a bad education, and the callousness with which she gained his confidence in order to deprive him of his throne, and send him to pass his life as a blind monk in a secluded cell, proves that the beautiful empress, whose memory was cherished as an orthodox saint, was endowed with the thoughts and feelings of a demon. Strange to say, when the object of Irene's crimes was reached, she soon felt all the satiety of gratified ambition. She no longer took the interest she had previously taken in conducting the public business of the empire, and abandoned the exercise of her power to seven eunuchs, whom she selected to perform the duties of ministers of state. She forgot that her own elevation to the throne offered a tempting premium to successful treason. Nicephorus, the grand treasurer, cajoled her favourite eunuchs to join a plot, by which she was dethroned, and exiled to a monastery she had founded in Prince's Island; but she was soon after removed to Lesbos, where she died in a few months, almost forgotten. Her fate after her death was as singular as during her life. The unnatural mother was canonized by the Greeks as an orthodox saint, and at her native Athens several churches are still pointed out which she is said to have founded, though not on any certain authority.

Under the government of Constantine VI and Irene, the imperial policy, both in the civil administration and external relations, followed the course traced out by Leo the Isaurian. To

reduce all the Slavonian colonists who had formed settlements within the bounds of the empire to complete submission was the first object of Irene's regency. The extension of these settlements, after the great plague in 747, began to alarm the government. Extensive districts in Thrace, Macedonia, and the Peloponnesus, had assumed the form of independent communities, and hardly acknowledged allegiance to the central administration at Constantinople. Irene naturally took more than ordinary interest in the state of Greece. She kept up the closest communications with her family at Athens, and shared the desire of every Greek to repress the presumption of the Slavonians and restore the ascendancy of the Greek population in the rural districts. In the year 783 she sent Stavrakios at the head of a well-appointed army to Thessalonica, to reduce the Slavonian tribes in Macedonia to direct dependence, and enforce the regular payment of tribute. From Thessalonica, Stavrakios marched through Macedonia and Greece to the Peloponnesus, punishing the Slavonians for the disorders they had committed, and carrying off a number of their able-bodied men to serve as soldiers or to be sold as slaves. In the following year Irene led the young Emperor Constantine to visit the Slavonian settlements in the vicinity of Thessalonica, which had been reduced to absolute submission. Berrhoea, like several Greek cities, had fallen into ruins; it was now rebuilt, and received the name of Irenopolis. Strong garrisons were placed in Philippopolis and Auchialos, to cut off all communication between the Slavonians in the empire, and their countrymen under the Bulgarian government. The Slavonians in Thrace and Macedonia, though unable to maintain their provincial independence, still took advantage of their position, when removed from the eye of the local administration, to form bands of robbers and pirates, which rendered the communications with Constantinople and Thessalonica at times insecure both by land and sea.

After Irene had dethroned her son, the Slavonian population gave proofs of dangerous activity. A conspiracy was formed to place one of the sons of Constantine V on the throne. Irene had banished her brothers-in-law to Athens, where they were sure of being carefully watched by her relations, who were strongly interested in supporting her cause. The project of the partisans of the exiled princes to seize Constantinople was discovered, and it was found that the chief reliance of the Isaurian party in Greece was placed in the assistance they expected to derive from the Slavonian population. The chief of Velzetia was to have carried off the sons of Constantine V from Athens, when the plan was discovered and frustrated by the vigilance of Irene's friends. The four unfortunate princes, who had already lost their tongues, were now deprived of their sight, and exiled with their brother Nicephorus to Panormus, where they were again made tools of a conspiracy in the reign of Michael I.

The war with the Saracens was carried on with varied success during the reigns of Leo IV, Constantine VI, and Irene. The military talents of Leo III and Constantine V had formed an army that resisted the forces of the caliphs under the powerful government of Mansur; and even after the veterans had been disbanded by Irene, the celebrated Haroun Al Rashid was unable to make any permanent conquests, though the empire was engaged in war with the Saracens, the Bulgarians, and the troops of Charlemagne at the same time.

In the year 782, Haroun was sent by his father, the Caliph Mahdy, to invade the empire, at the head of one hundred thousand men, attended by Rabia and Jahja the Barmecid. The object of the Mohammedan prince was, however, rather directed to pillaging the country and carrying off prisoners to supply the slave-markets of his father's dominions, than to effect permanent conquests. The absence of a considerable part of the Byzantine army, which was engaged in Sicily suppressing the rebellion of Helpidios, enabled Haroun to march through all Asia Minor to the shores of the Bosphorus, and from the hill above Sutari to gaze on Constantinople, which must then have presented a more imposing aspect than Bagdad. Irene was compelled to purchase peace, or rather to conclude a truce for three years, by paying an annual tribute of seventy thousand pieces of gold, and stipulating to allow the Saracen army to retire unmolested with all its plunder; for Haroun and his generals found that their advance had involved them in many difficulties, of which an active enemy might have taken advantage. Haroun Al Rashid is said to have commanded in person against the Byzantine Empire in eight campaigns.

Experience taught him to respect the valour and discipline of the Christian armies, whenever able officers enjoyed the confidence of the court of Constantinople; and when he ascended the throne, he deemed it necessary to form a permanent army along the Mesopotamian frontier, to strengthen the fortifications of the towns with additional works, and add to their means of defence by planting in them new colonies of Mohammedan inhabitants. During the time Constantine VI ruled the empire, he appeared several times at the head of the Byzantine armies, and his fickle character did not prevent his displaying firmness in the field. His popularity with the soldiers was viewed with jealousy by his mother, who laboured to retard his movements, and prevent him from obtaining any decided success. The Saracens acknowledged that the Greeks were their superiors in naval affairs; but in the year 792 they defeated the Byzantine fleet in the gulf of Attalia with great loss. The admiral, Theophilus, was taken prisoner, and solicited by the caliph to abjure Christianity and enter his service. The admiral refused to forsake his religion or serve against his country, and Haroun Al Rashid was mean enough to order him to be put to death.

When the Saracens heard that Constantine had been dethroned, and the empire was again ruled by a woman whom they had already compelled to pay tribute, they again plundered Asia Minor up to the walls of Ephesus. Irene, whose ministers were occupied with court intrigues, took no measures to resist the enemy, and was once more obliged to pay tribute to the caliph. The annual incursions of the Saracens into the Christian territory were made in great part for the purpose of carrying away slaves; and great numbers of Christians were sold throughout the caliph's dominions into hopeless slavery. Haroun, therefore, took the field in his wars with the Byzantine Empire more as a slave-merchant than a conqueror. But this very circumstance, which made war a commercial speculation, introduced humanity into the hostile operations of the Christians and Mohammedans: the lower classes were spared, as they were immediately sold for the price they would bring in the first slave-market; while prisoners of the better class were retained, in order to draw from them a higher ransom than their value as slaves, or to exchange them for men of equal rank who had fallen into the hands of the enemy. This circumstance had at last brought about a regular exchange of prisoners as early as the reign of Constantine V, A.D. 769. In the year 797, a new clause was inserted in a treaty for the exchange of prisoners, binding the contracting parties to release all supernumerary captives, on the payment of a fixed sum for each individual. This arrangement enabled the Christians, who were generally the greatest sufferers, to save their friends from death or perpetual slavery, but it added to the inducements of the Saracens to invade the empire. The Byzantine, or, as they were still called, the Roman armies, were placed at a disadvantage in this species of warfare. Their discipline was adapted to defensive military operations, or to meet the enemy on the field of battle, but not to act with rapidity in plundering and carrying off slaves; while the state of society in Christian countries rendered the demand for slaves less constant than in countries where polygamy prevailed, and women were excluded from many of the duties of domestic service.

The war on the Bulgarian frontier was carried on simultaneously with that against the Mohammedans. In the year 788, a Bulgarian army surprised the general of Thrace, who had encamped carelessly on the banks of the Strymon, and destroyed him, with the greater part of the troops. In 791 Constantine VI took the field in person against Cardam, king of the Bulgarians, but the campaign was without any result: in the following year, however, the Emperor was defeated in a pitched battle, in which several of the ablest generals of the Roman armies were slain. Yet, in 796, Constantine again led his troops against the Bulgarians: though victorious, he obtained no success sufficient to compensate his former defeat. The effects of the military organization of the frontier by Constantine V are visible in the superiority which the Byzantine armies assumed, even after the loss of a battle, and the confidence with which they carried the war into the Bulgarian territory.

The Byzantine Empire was at this period the country in which there reigned a higher degree of order, and more justice, than in any other. This is shown by the extensive emigration

of Armenian Christians which took place in the year 787. The Caliph Haroun Al Rashid, whose reputation among the Mohammedans has arisen rather from his orthodoxy than his virtues, persecuted his Christian subjects with great cruelty, and at last his oppression induced twelve thousand Armenians to quit their native country, and settle in the Byzantine Empire. Some years later, in the reign of Michael III the drunkard, orthodoxy became the great feature in the Byzantine administration; and, unfortunately, Christian orthodoxy strongly resembled Mohammedanism in the spirit of persecution. The Paulicians were then persecuted by the emperors, as the Armenians had previously been by the caliphs, and fled for toleration to the Mohammedans.

## CHAPTER II

THE REIGNS OF NICEPHORUS I, MICHAEL I, AND LEO V THE ARMENIAN.  
A.D. 802-820

## Sect. I

## THE REIGN OF NICEPHORUS I

NICEPHORUS held the office of grand logathetes, or treasurer, when he dethroned Irene. He was born at Seleucia, in Pisidia, of a family which claimed descent from the Arabian kings. His ancestor Djaballah, the Christian monarch of Ghassan in the time of Heraclius, abjured the allegiance of the Roman Empire, and embraced the Mohammedan religion. He carried among the stern and independent Moslems the monarchical pride and arrogance of a vassal court. As he was performing the religious rites of the pilgrimage in the mosque at Mecca, an Arab accidentally trod on his cloak; Djaballah, enraged that a king should be treated with so little respect, struck the careless Arab in the face, and knocked out some of his teeth. The justice of the Caliph Omar knew no distinction of persons, and the king of Ghassan was ordered to make satisfactory reparation to the injured Arab, or submit to the law of retaliation. The monarch's pride was so deeply wounded by this sentence that he fled to Constantinople, and renounced the Mohammedan religion. From this king the Arabs, who paid the most minute attention to genealogy, allow that Nicephorus was lineally descended.

The leading features of the reign of Nicephorus were political order and fiscal oppression. His character was said to be veiled in impenetrable hypocrisy; yet anecdotes are recounted which indicate that he made no secret of his avarice, and the other vices attributed to him. His orthodoxy was certainly suspicious, but, on the whole, he appears to have been an able and humane prince. He has certainly obtained a worse reputation in history than many emperors who have been guilty of greater crimes. Many anecdotes are recounted concerning his rapacity.

As soon as he received the Imperial crown, he bethought himself of the treasures Irene had concealed, and resolved to gain possession of them. These treasures are conceived by the Byzantine historians to be a part of the immense sums Leo III and Constantine V were supposed to have accumulated. The abundance and low price of provisions which had prevailed, particularly in the reign of Constantine V, was ascribed to the rarity of specie caused by the hoards accumulated by these emperors. Irene was said to know where all this wealth was concealed; and though her administration had been marked by lavish expenditure and a diminution of the taxes, still she was believed to possess immense sums. If we believe the story of the chronicles, Nicephorus presented himself to Irene in a private garb, and assured her that he had only assumed the imperial crown to serve her and save her life. By flattery mingled with intimidation, he obtained possession of her treasures, and then, in violation of his promises, banished her to Lesbos.

The dethroned Constantine had been left by his mother in possession of great wealth. Nicephorus is accused of ingratiating himself into the confidence of the blind prince, gaining possession of these treasures, and then neglecting him. Loud complaints were made against the extortion of the tax-gatherers in the reigns of Constantine VI and Irene, and Nicephorus

established a court of review to revise the accounts of every public functionary. But his enemies accused him of converting this court into a means of confiscating the property of the guilty, instead of enabling the sufferers to recover their losses.

The accession of Nicephorus was an event unexpected both by the people and the army; and the success of a man whose name was previously almost unknown beyond the circle of the administration, held out a hope to every man of influence that an emperor, who owed his elevation to a conspiracy of eunuchs and a court intrigue, might easily be driven from the throne. Bardanes, whom Nicephorus appointed general of the troops of five Asiatic themes to march against the Saracens, instead of leading this army against Haroun Al Rashid, proclaimed himself emperor. He was supported by Thomas the Slavonian, as well as by Leo the Armenian and Michael the Armorian, who both subsequently mounted the throne. The crisis was one of extreme difficulty, but Nicephorus soon convinced the world that he was worthy of the throne. The rebel troops were discouraged by his preparations, and rendered ashamed of their conduct by his reproaches. Leo and Michael were gained over by a promise of promotion; and Bardanes, seeing his army rapidly dispersing, negotiated for his own pardon. He was allowed to retire to a monastery he had founded in the island of Prote, but his estates were confiscated. Shortly after, while Bardanes was living in seclusion as an humble monk, a band of Lycaonian brigands crossed over from the Asiatic coast and put out his eyes. As the perpetrators of this atrocity were evidently moved by personal vengeance, suspicion fell so strongly on the emperor, that he deemed it necessary to take a solemn oath in public that he had no knowledge of the crime, and never entertained a thought of violating the safe-conduct he had given to Bardanes. This safe-conduct, it must be observed, had received the ratification of the Patriarch and the senate. Bardanes himself did not appear to suspect the emperor; he showed the greatest resignation and piety; gave up the use of wheaten bread, wine, oil, and fish, living entirely on barley cakes, which he baked in the embers. In summer he wore a single leather garment, and in winter a mantle of hair-cloth. In this way he lived contentedly, and died during the reign of Leo the Armenian.

The civil transactions of the reign of Nicephorus present some interesting facts. Though a brave soldier, he was essentially a statesman, and his conviction that the finance department was the peculiar business of the sovereign, and the key of public affairs, can be traced in many significant events. He eagerly pursued the centralising policy of his Iconoclast predecessors, and strove to render the civil power supreme over the clergy and the Church. He forbade the Patriarch to hold any communications with the Pope, whom he considered as the Patriarch of Charlemagne; and this prudent measure has caused much of the virulence with which his memory has been attacked by ecclesiastical and orthodox historians. The Patriarch Tarasios had shown himself no enemy to the supremacy of the emperor, and he was highly esteemed by Nicephorus as one of the heads of the party, both in the church and state, which the emperor was anxious to conciliate. When Tarasios died, A.D. 806, Nicephorus made a solemn display of his grief. The body, and in the patriarchal robes, crowned with the mitre, and seated on the episcopal throne, according to the usage of the East, was transported to a monastery founded by the deceased Patriarch on the shores of the Bosphorus, where the funeral was performed with great pomp, the emperor assisting, embracing the body, and covering it with his purple robe.

Nicephorus succeeded in finding an able and popular prelate, disposed to support his secular views, worthy to succeed Tarasios. This was the historian Nicephorus. He had already retired from public life, and was residing in a monastery he had founded, though he had not yet taken monastic vows. On his election, he entered the clergy, and took the monastic habit. This last step was rendered necessary by the usage of the Greek Church, which now only admitted monks to the episcopal dignity. To give the ceremony additional splendour, Stavrakios, the son of the Emperor Nicephorus, who had received the imperial crown from his father, was deputed to be present at the tonsure.

The Patriarch Nicephoros was no sooner installed than the emperor began to execute his measures for establishing the supremacy of the civil power. Tarasios, after sanctioning the divorce of Constantine VI, and allowing the celebration of his second marriage, had yielded to the influence of Irene and the monks, and declared both acts illegal. The Emperor Nicephorus considered this a dangerous precedent, and resolved to obtain an affirmation of the validity of the second marriage. The new Patriarch assembled a synod, in which the marriage was declared valid, and the abbot Joseph, who had celebrated it, was absolved from all ecclesiastical censure. The monastic party, enraged at the emperor seeking emancipation from their authority, broke out into a furious opposition. Theodore Studita, their leader, calls this synod an assembly of adulterers and heretics, and reproached the Patriarch with sacrificing the interests of religion. But Nicephorus having succeeded in bringing about this explosion of monastic ire on a question in which he had no personal interest, the people, who now regarded the unfortunate Constantine VI as hardly used on the subject of his marriage with Theodota, could not be persuaded to take any part in the dispute. Theodore's violence was also supposed to arise from his disappointment at not being elected Patriarch.

Public opinion became so favourable to the emperor's ecclesiastical views, that a synod assembled in 809 declared the Patriarch and bishops to possess the power of granting dispensations from rules of ecclesiastical law, and that the emperor was not bound by legislative provisions enacted for subjects. Nicephorus considered the time had now come for compelling the monks to obey his authority. He ordered Theodore Studita and Plato to take part in the ecclesiastical ceremonies with the Patriarch; and when these refractory abbots refused, he banished them to Prince's Island, and then deposed them. Had the monks now opposed the emperor on the reasonable ground that he was violating the principles on which the security of society depended, by setting up his individual will against the systematic rules of justice, the maxims of Roman law, the established usages of the empire, and the eternal rules of equity, they would have found a response in the hearts of the people. Such doctrines might have led to some political reform in the government, and to the establishment of some constitutional check on the exercise of arbitrary power; and the exclamation of Theodore, in one of his letters to the Pope "Where now is the gospel for kings?" might then have revived the spirit of liberty among the Greeks.

At this time there existed a party which openly advocated the right of every man to the free exercise of his own religious opinions in private, and urged the policy of the government abstaining from every attempt to enforce unity. Some of this party probably indulged in as liberal speculations concerning the political rights of men, but such opinions were generally considered incompatible with social order. The emperor, however, favoured the tolerant party, and gave its members a predominant influence in his cabinet. Greatly to the dissatisfaction of the Greek party, he refused to persecute the Paulicians, who had formed a considerable community in the eastern provinces of Asia Minor; and he tolerated the Athingans in Pisidia and Lycaonia, allowing them to exercise their religion in peace, as long as they violated none of the laws of the empire.

The financial administration of Nicephorus is justly accused of severity, and even of rapacity. He affords a good personification of the fiscal genius of the Roman Empire, as described by the Emperor Justin II, upwards of three centuries earlier. His thoughts were chiefly of tributes and taxes; and, unfortunately for his subjects, his intimate acquaintance with financial affairs enabled him to extort a great increase of revenue, without appearing to impose new taxes. But though he is justly accused of oppression, he does not merit the reproach of avarice often urged against him. When he considered expenditure necessary, he was liberal of the public money. He spared no expense to keep up numerous armies, and it was not from ill-judged economy, but from want of military talents, that his campaigns were unsuccessful.

Nicephorus restored the duties levied at the entrance of the Hellespont and the Bosphorus, which had been remitted by Irene to purchase popularity after her cruelty to her son. He ordered



all the provinces to furnish a stated number of able bodied recruits for the army, drawn from among the poor, and obliged each district to pay the sum of eighteen nomismata ahead for their equipment - enforcing the old Roman principle of mutual responsibility for the payment of any taxes, in case the recruits should possess property liable to taxation. One-twelfth was likewise added to the duty on public documents. An additional tax of two nomismata was imposed on all domestic slaves purchased beyond the Hellespont. The inhabitants of Asia Minor who engaged in commerce were compelled to purchase a certain quantity of landed property belonging to the fisc at a fixed valuation: and, what tended to blacken the emperor's reputation more than anything else, he extended the hearth-tax to the property of the church, to monasteries, and charitable institutions, which had hitherto been exempted from the burden; and he enforced the payment of arrears from the commencement of his reign. The innumerable private monasteries, which it was the fashion to multiply, withdrew so much property from taxation that this measure was absolutely necessary to prevent frauds on the fisc; but though necessary, it was unpopular. Nicephorus, moreover, permitted the sale of gold and silver plate dedicated as holy offerings by private superstition; and, like many modern princes, he quartered troops in monasteries. It is also made an accusation against his government, that he famished the merchants at Constantinople engaged in foreign trade with the sum of twelve pounds' weight of gold, for which they were compelled to pay twenty per cent interest. It is difficult, from the statements of the Byzantine writers concerning the legislative acts, to form a precise idea of the emperor's object in some cases, or the effects of the law in others. His enemies do not hesitate to enumerate among his crimes the exertions he made to establish military colonies in the waste districts on the Bulgarian frontier, secured by the line of fortresses constructed by Constantine V. His object was to cut off effectually all communication between the unruly Slavonians in Thrace and the population to the north. There can be no doubt of his enforcing every claim of the government with rigor. He ordered a strict census of all agriculturists who were not natives to be made throughout the provinces, and the land they cultivated was declared to belong to the imperial domain. He then converted these cultivators into slaves of the fisc, by the application of an old law, which declared that all who had cultivated the same land for the space of thirty years consecutively, were restricted to the condition of *coloni*, or serfs attached to the soil.

The conspiracies which were formed against Nicephorus cannot be admitted as evidence of his unpopularity, for the best of the Byzantine monarchs were as often victims of secret plots as the worst. The elective title to the empire rendered the prize to successful ambition one which overpowered the respect due to their country's laws in the breasts of the courtiers of Constantinople. It is only from popular insurrections that we can judge of the sovereign's unpopularity. The principles of humanity that rendered Nicephorus averse to religious persecution caused him to treat conspirators with much less cruelty than most Byzantine emperors. Perhaps the historians hostile to his government have deceived posterity, giving considerable importance to insignificant plots, as we see modern diplomatists continually deceiving their courts by magnifying trifling expressions of dissatisfaction into dangerous presages of widespread discontent. In the year 808, however, a conspiracy was really formed to place Arsaber, a patrician, who held the office of questor, or minister of legislation, on the throne. Though Arsaber was of an Armenian family, many persons of rank were leagued with him; yet Nicephorus only confiscated his estates, and compelled him to embrace the monastic life. An attempt was made to assassinate the emperor by a man who rushed into the palace, and seized the sword of one of the guards of the imperial chamber, severely wounding many persons before he was secured. The criminal was a monk, who was put to the torture, according to the cruel practice of the time; but Nicephorus, on learning that he was a maniac, ordered him to be placed in a lunatic asylum. Indeed, though historians accuse Nicephorus of inhumanity, the punishment of death, in cases of treason, was never carried into effect during his reign.

The relations of Nicephorus with Charlemagne were for a short time amicable. A treaty was concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle, in 803, regulating the frontiers of the two empires. In this treaty, the supremacy of the Eastern Empire over Venice, Istria, the maritime parts of Dalmatia, and the south of Italy, was acknowledged; while the authority of the Western Empire in Rome,

the exarchate of Ravenna, and the Pentapolis, was recognised by Nicephorus. The commerce of Venice with the East was already so important, and the Byzantine administration afforded so many guarantees for the security of property, that the Venetians, in spite of the menaces of Charlemagne, remained firm in their allegiance to Nicephorus. Istria, on the other hand, placed itself subsequently under the protection of the Frank emperor, and paid him a tribute of 354 marks. Pepin, king of Italy, was also charged by his father to render the Venetians, and the allies of the Byzantine Empire in the north of Italy, tributary to the Franks; but Nicephorus sent a fleet into the Adriatic, and effectually protected his friends. A body of people, called Orobiats, who maintained themselves as an independent community in the Apennines, pretending to preserve their allegiance to the emperor of Constantinople, plundered Populonium in Tuscany. They afford us proof how much easier Charlemagne found it to extend his conquests than to preserve order. Venice, it is true, found itself in the end compelled to purchase peace with the Frank Empire, by the payment of an annual tribute of thirty-six pounds of gold, in order to secure its commercial relations from interruption; and it was not released from this tribute until the time of Otho the Great. It was during the reign of Nicephorus that the site of the present city of Venice became the seat of the Venetian government, Rivalto (Rialto) becoming the residence of the duke and the principal inhabitants, who retired from the continent to escape the attacks of Pepin. Heraclea had previously been the capital of the Venetian municipality. In 810, peace was again concluded between Nicephorus and Charlemagne, without making any change in frontier of the two empires.

The power of the caliphate was never more actively employed than under Haroun Al Rashid, but the reputation of that prince was by no means so great among his contemporaries as it became in after times. Nicephorus was no sooner seated on the throne, than he refused to pay the caliph the tribute imposed on Irene. The Arabian historians pretend that his refusal was communicated to Haroun in an insolent letter. To resist the attacks of the Saracens, which he well knew would follow his refusal, he collected a powerful army in Asia Minor; but this army broke out into rebellion, and, as has been already mentioned, proclaimed Bardanes emperor. The caliph, availing himself of the defenceless state of the empire, laid waste Asia Minor; and when the rebellion of Bardanes was extinguished, Nicephorus, afraid to trust any of the veteran generals with the command of a large army, placed himself at the head of the troops in Asia, and was defeated in a great battle at Krasos in Phrygia. After this victory the Saracens laid waste the country in every direction, until a rebellion in Chorasán compelled Haroun to withdraw his troops from the Byzantine frontier, and gave Nicephorus time to reassemble a new army. As soon as the affairs in the East were tranquillised, the caliph again invaded the Byzantine Empire. Haroun himself fixed his headquarters at Tyana, where he built a mosque, to mark that he annexed that city to the Mohammedan empire. One division of his army, sixty thousand strong, took and destroyed Ancyra. Heraclea on Mount Taurus was also captured, and sixteen thousand prisoners were carried off in a single campaign, A.D. 806. Nicephorus, unable to arrest these ravages, endeavoured to obtain peace; and in spite of the religious bigotry which is supposed to have envenomed the hostilities of Haroun, the imperial embassy consisted of the bishop of Synnada, the abbot of Gulaias, and the economos of Amastris. As winter was approaching, and the Saracens were averse to remain longer beyond Mount Taurus, the three ecclesiastical ambassadors succeeded in arranging a treaty; but Nicephorus was compelled to submit to severe and degrading conditions. He engaged not to rebuild the frontier fortifications which had been destroyed by the caliph's armies, and he consented to pay a tribute of thirty thousand pieces of gold annually, adding three additional pieces for himself, and three for his son and colleague Stavrakios, which we must suppose to have been medallions of superior size, since they were offered as a direct proof that the emperor of the Romans paid a personal tribute to the caliph.

Nicephorus seems to have been sadly deficient in feelings of honour, for, the moment he conceived he could evade the stipulations of the treaty without danger, he commenced repairing the ruined fortifications. His subjects suffered for his conduct. The caliph again sent troops to invade the empire; Cyprus and Rhodes were ravaged; the bishop of Cyprus was compelled to

pay one thousand dinars as his ransom; and many Christians were carried away from Asia Minor, and settled in Syria.

The death of Haroun, in 809, delivered the Christians from a barbarous enemy, who ruined their country like a brigand, without endeavouring to subdue it like a conqueror. Haroun's personal valour, his charity, his liberality to men of letters, and his religious zeal, have secured him interested panegyrics, which have drowned the voice of justice. The hero of the Arabian Tales and the ally of Charlemagne is vaunted as one of the greatest princes who ever occupied a throne. The disgraceful murder of the Barmecids, and many other acts of injustice and cruelty, give him a very different character in history. His plundering incursions into the Byzantine Empire might have been glorious proofs of courage in some petty Syrian chieftain, but they degrade the ruler of the richest and most extensive empire on the earth into a mere slave-dealer.

The Saracens continued their incursions, and in the year 811, Leo the Armenian, then lieutenant-governor of the Armeniac theme, left a sum of thirteen hundred pounds' weight of silver, which had been collected as taxes, at Euchaites, without a sufficient guard. A band of Saracens carried off this money; and for his negligence Leo was ordered to Constantinople, where the future emperor was scourged, and deprived of his command.

The Slavonian colonies in Greece were now so powerful that they formed the project of rendering themselves masters of the Peloponnesus, and expelling the Greek population. The Byzantine expedition, in the early part of the regency of Irene, had only subjected these intruders to tribute, without diminishing their numbers or breaking their power. The troubled aspect of public affairs, after Nicephorus seized the throne, induced them to consider the moment favourable for gaining their independence. They assembled a numerous force under arms, and selected Patras as their first object of attack. The possession of a commercial port was necessary to their success, in order to enable them to supply their wants from abroad, and obtain a public revenue by the duties on the produce they exported. Patras was then the most flourishing harbour on the west coast of Greece, and its possession would have enabled the Slavonians to establish direct communications with, and draw assistance from, the kindred race established on the shores of the Adriatic, and from the Saracen pirates, among whose followers the Saclavi, or Slavonian captives and renegades, made a considerable figure. The property of the Greeks beyond the protection of the walled towns was plundered, to supply the army destined to besiege Patras with provisions, and a communication was opened with a Saracen squadron of African pirates who blockaded the gulf. Patras was kept closely invested, until want began to threaten the inhabitants with death, and compelled them to think of surrender.

The Byzantine government had no regular troops nearer than Corinth, which is three days' march from Patras. But the governor of the province who resided there was unable immediately to detach a force sufficient to attack the besieging army. In the meantime, as the inhabitants were anxiously waiting for relief, one of their scouts, stationed to announce the approach of succours from Corinth, accidentally gave the signal agreed upon. The enthusiasm of the Greeks was excited to the highest pitch by the hopes of speedy deliverance, and, eager for revenge on their enemies, they threw open the city gates and made a vigorous attack on the besiegers, whom they drove from their position with considerable loss.

The Byzantine general arrived three days after this victory. His jealousy of the military success of the armed citizens induced him to give currency to the popular accounts, which he found the superstition of the people had already circulated, that St. Andrew, the patron of Patras, had shown himself on the field of battle. The devastations committed by the Slavonians, the victory of the Greeks, and the miraculous appearance of the apostle at the head of the besieged, were all announced to the Emperor Nicephorus, whose political views rendered him more willing to reward the church for St. Andrew's assistance, than to allow his subjects to perceive that their own valour was sufficient to defend their property : he feared they might discover that

a well-constituted municipal government would always be able to protect them, while a distant central authority was often incapable, and generally indifferent. Nicephorus was too experienced a statesman, with the examples of Venice and Cherson before his eyes, not to fear that such a discovery among the Greek population in the Peloponnesus would tend to circumscribe the fiscal energy of the Constantinopolitan treasury. The church, and not the people, profited by the success of the Greeks: the imperial share of the spoil taken from the Slavonians, both property and slaves, was bestowed on the church of St. Andrew; and the bishops of Methone, Lacedemon, and Corone, were declared suffragans of the metropolitan of Patras. This charter of Nicephorus was ratified by Leo VI, the Wise, in a new and extended act.

The Bulgarians were always troublesome neighbours, as a rude people generally proves to a wealthy population. Their king, Crumn, was an able and warlike prince. For some time after his accession, he was occupied by hostilities with the Avars, but as soon as that war was terminated, he seized an opportunity of plundering a Byzantine military chest, containing eleven hundred pounds of gold, destined for the payment of the troops stationed on the banks of the Strymon. After surprising the camp, dispersing the troops, murdering the officers, and capturing the treasure, he extended his ravages as far as Sardica, where he slew six thousand Roman soldiers.

Nicephorus immediately assembled a considerable army, and marched to re-establish the security of his northern frontier. The death of Haroun left so large a force at his disposal that he contemplated the destruction of the Bulgarian kingdom; but the Byzantine troops in Europe were in a disaffected state, and their indiscipline rendered the campaign abortive. The resolution of Nicephorus remained, nevertheless, unshaken, though his life was in danger from the seditious conduct of the soldiery; and he was in the end compelled to escape from his own camp, and seek safety in Constantinople.

In 811, a new army, consisting chiefly of conscripts and raw recruits, was hastily assembled, and hurried into the field. In preparing for the campaign, Nicephorus displayed extreme financial severity, and ridiculed the timidity of those who counselled delay with a degree of cynicism which paints well the singular character of this bold financier. Having resolved to tax monasteries, and levy an augmentation of the land-tax from the nobility for the eight preceding years, his ministers endeavoured to persuade him of the impolicy of his proceedings; but he only exclaimed, "What can you expect! God has hardened my heart, and my subjects can expect nothing else from me". The historian Theophanes says that these words were repeated to him by Theodosios, the minister to whom they were addressed. The energy of Nicephorus was equal to his rapacity, but it was not supported by a corresponding degree of military skill. He led his army so rapidly to Markelles, a fortress built by Constantine VI, within the line of the Bulgarian frontier, that Crumn, alarmed at his vigour, sent an embassy to solicit peace. This proposal was rejected, and the emperor pushed forward and captured a residence of the Bulgarian monarch's near the frontiers, in which a considerable amount of treasure was found. Crumn, dispirited at this loss, offered to accept any terms of peace compatible with the existence of his independence, but Nicephorus would agree to no terms but absolute submission.

The only contemporary account of the following events is in the chronicle of Theophanes, and it leaves us in doubt whether the rashness of Nicephorus or the treason of his generals was the real cause of his disastrous defeat. Even if we give Crumn credit for great military skill, the success of the stratagem, by which he destroyed a Byzantine army greatly superior to his own, could not have been achieved without some treasonable co-operation in the enemy's camp. It is certain that an officer of the emperor's household had deserted at Markelles, carrying away the emperor's wardrobe and one hundred pounds' weight of gold, and that one of the ablest engineers in the Byzantine service had previously fled to Bulgaria. It seems not improbable, that by means of these officers treasonable communications were maintained with the disaffected in the Byzantine army.

When Nicephorus entered the Bulgarian territory, Crumn had a much larger force in his immediate vicinity than the emperor supposed. The Bulgarian troops, though defeated in the advance, were consequently allowed to watch the movements of the invaders, and entrench at no great distance without any attempt to dislodge them. It is even said that Crumn was allowed to work for two days, forming a strong palisade to circumscribe the operations of the imperial army, while Nicephorus was wasting his time collecting the booty found in the Bulgarian palace; and that, when the emperor saw the work finished, he exclaimed, "We have no chance of safety except by being transformed into birds!". Yet even in this desperate position the emperor is said to have neglected the usual precautions to secure his camp against a night attack. Much of this seems incredible,

Crumn made a grand nocturnal attack on the camp of Nicephorus, just six days after the emperor had invaded the Bulgarian kingdom. The Byzantine army was taken by surprise, and their camp entered on every side; the whole baggage and military chest were taken; the Emperor Nicephorus and six patricians, with many officers of the highest rank, were slain; and the Bulgarian king made a drinking-cup of the skull of the emperor of the Romans, in which the Slavonian princes of the Bulgarian court pledged him in the richest wines of Greece when he celebrated his triumphal festivals. The Bulgarians must have abandoned their strong palisade when they attacked the camp, for a considerable portion of the defeated army, with the Emperor Stavrakios, who was severely wounded, Stephen the general of the guard, and Theoctistos the master of the palace, reached Adrianople in safety. Stavrakios was immediately proclaimed his father's successor, and the army was able and willing to maintain him on the throne, had he possessed health and ability equal to the crisis. But the fiscal severity of his father had created a host of enemies to the existing system of government, and in the Byzantine Empire a change of administration implied a change of the emperor. The numerous statesmen who expected to profit by a revolution declared in favour of Michael Rhangabé, an insignificant noble, who had married Procopia the daughter of Nicephorus. Stavrakios was compelled by his brother-in-law to retire into a monastery, where he soon died of his wounds. He had occupied the throne two months.

## Sect. II.

### MICHAEL I RHANGABÉ

A.D. 812-813

Michael I was crowned by the Patriarch Nicephoros, after signing a written declaration that he would defend the church, protect the ministers of religion, and never put the orthodox to death. This election of a tool of the bigoted party in the Byzantine church was a reaction against the tolerant policy of Nicephorus. The new emperor began his reign by remitting all the additional taxes imposed by his predecessor which had awakened clerical opposition. He was a weak, well-meaning man; but his wife Procopia was a lady of superior qualifications, who united to a virtuous and charitable disposition something of her father's vigour of mind. Michael's reign proved the necessity of always having a firm hand to guide that complicated administrative machine which the Byzantine sovereigns inherited from the empire of Rome.

Michael purchased popularity in the capital by the lavish manner in which he distributed the wealth left by Nicephorus in the imperial treasury. He bestowed large sums on monasteries, hospitals, poor-houses, and other charitable institutions, and he divided liberal gratuities among

the leading members of the clergy, the chief dignitaries of the state, and the highest officers of the army. His piety, as well as his party connections, induced him to admit several monks to a place in his council; and he made it an object of political importance to reconcile the Patriarch Nicephoros with Theodore Studita. But by abandoning the policy of his predecessor, after it had received the Patriarch's sanction and become the law of the church, Michael lost more in public opinion than he gained by the alliance of a troop of bigoted monks, who laboured to subject the power of the emperor and the policy of the state to their own narrow ideas. The abbot Joseph, who had celebrated the marriage of the Emperor Constantine VI, was again excommunicated, as the peace-offering which allowed the bigots to renew their communion with the Patriarch.

The counsels of Theodore Studita soon involved the government in fresh embarrassment. To signalise his zeal for orthodoxy, he persuaded the emperor to persecute the Iconoclasts, who during the preceding reign had been allowed to profess their opinions without molestation. It was also proposed, in an assembly of the senate, to put the leaders of the Paulicians and Athigans to death, in order to intimidate their followers and persuade them to become orthodox Christians. This method of converting men to the Greek church excited strong opposition on the part of the tolerant members of the senate; but the Patriarch and clergy having deserted the cause of humanity, the permanent interests of Christianity were sacrificed to the cause of orthodoxy.

While the emperor persecuted a large body of his subjects on the northern and eastern frontiers of his empire, he neglected to defend the provinces against the incursions of the Bulgarians, who ravaged great part of Thrace and Macedonia, and took several large and wealthy towns. The weight of taxation which fell on the mass of the population was not lightened when the emperor relieved the clergy and the nobility from the additional burdens imposed on them by Nicephorus. Discontent spread rapidly. A lunatic girl, placed in a prominent position, as the emperor passed through the streets of Constantinople, cried aloud "Descend from thy seat! descend, and make room for another!" The continual disasters which were announced from the Bulgarian frontier made the people and the army remember with regret the prosperous days of Constantine V, when the slave-markets of the capital were filled with their enemies. Encouraged by the general dissatisfaction, the Iconoclasts formed a conspiracy to convey the sons of Constantine V, who were living, blind and mute, in their exile at Panormus, to the army. The plot was discovered, and Michael ordered the helpless princes to be conveyed to Aphinsa, a small island in the Propontis, where they could be closely guarded. One of the conspirators had his tongue cut out.

The wars of Mohammed Alemen and Almamun, the sons of Haroun al Rashid, relieved the empire from all serious danger on the side of the Saracens. But the Bulgarian war, to which Michael owed his throne, soon proved the cause of his ruin. The army and the people despised him, because he owed his elevation, not to his talents, but to the accident of his marriage, his popularity with the monks, and the weakness of his character, which made him an instrument in the hands of a party. Public opinion soon decided that he was unfit to rule the empire. The year after the death of Nicephorus, Crumn invaded the empire with a numerous army and took the town of Develtos. Michael left the capital accompanied by the Empress Procopia, in order to place himself at the head of the troops in Thrace; but the soldiers showed so much dissatisfaction at the presence of a female court, that the emperor turned back to Constantinople from Tzourlou. The Bulgarian king took advantage of the disorder which ensued to capture Anchialos, Berrhoea, Nicaea, and Probaton in Thrace; and that province fell into such a state of anarchy, that many of the colonists established by Nicephorus in Philippopolis and on the banks of the Strymon abandoned their settlements and returned to Asia.

Crumn nevertheless offered peace to Michael, on the basis of a treaty concluded between the Emperor Theodosius III and Cornesius, prior to the victories of the Iconoclast princes. These terms, fixing the frontier at Meleona, and regulating the duties to be paid on merchandise in the Bulgarian kingdom, would have been accepted by Michael, but Crumn availed himself of his

success to demand that all deserters and refugees should be given up. As the Bulgarians were in the habit of ransoming the greater part of their captives at the end of each campaign, and of killing the remainder, or selling them as slaves, this clause was introduced into the treaty to enable Crumn to gratify his vengeance against a number of refugees whom his tyranny had caused to quit Bulgaria, and who had generally embraced Christianity. The emperor remitted the examination of these conditions to the imperial council, and in the discussion which ensued, he, the Patriarch Nicephoros, and several bishops, declared themselves in favour of the treaty, on the ground that it was necessary to sacrifice the refugees for the safety of the natives of the empire who were in slavery in Bulgaria, and to preserve the population from further suffering. But Theoctistos the master of the palace, the energetic Theodore Studita, and a majority of the senators, declared that such conduct would be an indelible stain to the Roman Empire, and would only invite the Bulgarians to recommence hostilities by the fear shown in the concession. The civilians declared it would be an act of infamy to consign to death, or to a slavery worse than death, men who had been received as subjects; and Theodore pronounced that it was an act of impiety to think of delivering Christians into the hands of pagans, quoting St. John, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out". The emperor, from motives of piety, yielded to the advice of Theodore. Could he have adopted something of the firm character of the abbot, he would either have obtained peace on his own terms, or secured victory to his army.

While the emperor was debating at Constantinople, Crumn pushed forward the siege of Mesembria, which fell into his hands in November, 812. He acquired great booty, as the place was a commercial town of considerable importance; and he made himself master of twenty-six of the brazen tubes used for propelling Greek fire, with a quantity of the combustible material prepared for use in this artillery. Yet, even after this alarming news had reached Constantinople, the weak emperor continued to devote his attention to ecclesiastical affairs instead of military. He seems to have felt that he was utterly unfit to conduct the war in person; yet the Byzantine or Roman army demanded to be led by the emperor.

In the spring of 813, Michael had an army in the field prepared to resist the Bulgarians; and Crumn, finding that his troops were suffering from a severe epidemic, retreated. The Emperor, proud of his success, returned to his capital. The epidemic which had interrupted the operations of the enemy was ascribed to the intervention of Tarasios, who had been canonised for his services to orthodoxy; and the emperor, in order to mark his gratitude for his unexpected acquisition of military renown, covered the tomb of St. Tarasios with plates of silver weighing ninety-five lb., an act of piety which added to the contempt the army already felt for their sovereign's courage and capacity.

In the month of May, Michael again resumed the command of the army, but instead of listening to the advice of the experienced generals who commanded the troops, he allowed himself to be guided by civilians and priests, or he listened to the suggestions of his own timidity. There were at the time three able officers in the army Leo the Armenian, the general of the Anatolic theme; Michael the Amorian, who commanded one wing of the army; and John Aplakes, the general of the Macedonian troops. Leo and Aplakes urged the emperor to attack the Bulgarians; but the Amorian, who was intriguing against Theoctistos the master of the palace, seems to have been disinclined to serve the emperor with sincerity. The Bulgarians were encamped at Bersinikia, about thirty miles from the Byzantine army; and Michael, after changing his plans more than once, resolved at last to risk a battle. Aplakes, who commanded the Macedonian and Thracian troops, consisting chiefly of hardy Slavonian recruits, defeated the Bulgarian division opposed to him; but a panic seized a party of the Byzantine troops; and Leo, with the Asiatic troops, was accused of allowing Aplakes to be surrounded and slain, when he might have saved him. Leo certainly saved his own division, and made it the rallying-point for the fugitives; yet he does not appear to have been considered guilty of any neglect by the soldiers themselves. The emperor fled to Constantinople, while the defeated army retreated to Adrianople.

Michael assembled his ministers in the capital, and talked of resigning his crown; for he deemed his defeat a judgment for mounting the throne of his brother-in-law. Procopia and his courtiers easily persuaded him to abandon his half-formed resolution. The army in the meantime decided the fate of the Empire. Leo the Armenian appeared alone worthy of the crown. The defeated troops saluted him Emperor, and marched to Constantinople, where nobody felt inclined to support the weak Michael; so that Leo was acknowledged without opposition, and crowned in St. Sophia's on the 11th July, 813.

The dethroned emperor was compelled to embrace the monastic life, and lived unmolested in the island of Prote, where he died in 845. His eldest son, Theophylactus, who had been crowned as his colleague, was emasculated, as well as his brother Ignatius, and forced into a monastery. Ignatius became Patriarch of Constantinople in the reign of Michael III.

### Sect. III

#### LEO V THE ARMENIAN

A.D. 813-820

When Leo entered the capital, the Patriarch Nicephoros endeavoured to convert the precedent which Michael I had given, of signing a written declaration of orthodoxy, into an established usage of the empire; but the new emperor excused himself from signing any document before his coronation, and afterwards he denied the right to require to favour the Iconoclasts, but he was no bigot. The Asiatic party in the army and in the administration, which supported him, were both enemies to image-worship. To strengthen the influence of his friends was naturally the first step of his reign. Michael the Amorian, who had warmly supported his election, was made a patrician. Thomas, another general, who is said to have been descended from the Slavonian colonists settled in Asia Minor, was appointed general of the federates. Manuel, an Armenian of the noble race of the Mamiconians, received the command of the Armenian troops, and subsequently of the Anatolic theme. At Christmas the title of Emperor was conferred on Sembat, the eldest son of Leo, who then changed his name to Constantine.

Leo was allowed little time to attend to civil business, for six days after his coronation, Crumn appeared before the walls of Constantinople. The Bulgarian king encamped in the suburb of St. Mamas, and extended his lines from the Blachernian to the Golden Gate; but he soon perceived that his army could not long maintain its position, and he allowed his troops to plunder and destroy the property of the citizens in every direction, in order to hasten the conclusion of a treaty of peace. Leo was anxious to save the possessions of his subjects from ruin, Crumn was eager to retreat without losing any of the plunder his army had collected. A treaty might have been concluded, had not Leo attempted to get rid of his enemy by an act of the basest treachery. A conference was appointed, to which the emperor and the king were to repair, attended only by a fixed number of guards. Leo laid a plot for assassinating Crumn at this meeting, and the Bulgarian monarch escaped with the greatest difficulty, leaving his chancellor dead, and most of his attendant's captives. This infamous act was so generally approved by the perverted religious feelings of the Greek ecclesiastics, that the historian Theophanes, an abbot and holy confessor, in concluding his chronological record of the transactions of the Roman emperors, remarks that the empire was not permitted to witness the death of Crumn by this ambushade, in consequence of the multitude of the people's sins.



The Bulgarians avenged the emperor's treachery on the helpless inhabitants of the empire in a terrible manner. They began by destroying the suburb of St. Mamas; palaces, churches, public and private buildings were burnt to the ground; the lead was torn from the domes, which were fireproof; the vessels taken at the head of the port were added to the conflagration; numerous beautiful works of art were destroyed, and many carried off, among which particular mention is made of a celebrated bronze lion, a bear, and a hydra. The Bulgarians then quitted their lines before Constantinople, and marched to Selymbria, destroying on their way the immense stone bridge over the river Athyras, (Karason,) celebrated for the beauty of its construction. Selymbria, Rhedestos, and Apres were sacked; the country round Ganas was ravaged, but Heraclea and Panion resisted the assaults of the invaders. Men were everywhere put to the sword, while the young women, children, and cattle were driven away to Bulgaria. Part of the army penetrated into the Thracian Chersonese, and laid waste the country, Adrianople was compelled to surrender by famine, and after it had been plundered, the barbarians retired unmolested with an incredible booty, and an innumerable train of slaves.

The success of this campaign induced a body of 30,000 Bulgarians to invade the empire during the winter. They captured Arcadiopolis; and though they were detained for a fortnight, during their retreat, by the swelling of the river Rheginas, (Bithyas,) Leo could not venture to attack them. They regained the Bulgarian frontier, carrying away fifty thousand captives and immense booty, and leaving behind them a terrible scene of desolation.

Emboldened by the apparent weakness of the empire Crumn made preparations for besieging Constantinople by collecting all the machines of war then in use. Leo thought it necessary to construct a new wall beyond that in existence at the Blachernian gate, and to add a deep ditch, for in this quarter the fortifications of the capital appeared weak. Crumn died before the opening of the campaign; and Leo, having by the greatest exertion at last collected an army capable of taking the field, marched to Mesembria. There he succeeded in surprising the Bulgarians by a night attack on their camp. The defeat was most sanguinary. The Bulgarian army was annihilated, and the place where the dead were buried was long called the Mountain of Leo, and avoided by the Bulgarians as a spot of evil augury. After this victory the emperor invaded Bulgaria, which he ravaged with as much cruelty as Crumn had ever shown in plundering the empire. At last a truce for thirty years was concluded with Montagon, the new king. The power of these dangerous neighbours was so weakened by the recent exertions they had made, and by the wealth they had acquired, that for many years they were disposed to remain at peace.

The influence of the Byzantine emperors in the West, though much diminished by the conquests of Charlemagne, the independence of the Popes, and the formation of two Saracen kingdoms in Africa and Spain, continued, nevertheless, to be very great, in consequence of the extensive mercantile connections of the Greeks, who then possessed the most lucrative part of the commerce of the Mediterranean.

At this time the Aglabits of Africa and the Ommiads of Spain ruled a rebellious and ill-organised society of Mohammedan chiefs of various races, which even arbitrary power could not bend to the habits of a settled administration. Both these states sent out piratical expeditions by sea, when their incursions by land were restrained by the warlike power of their neighbours. Michael I had been compelled to send an army to Sicily, to protect it from the incursions of pirates both from Africa and Spain. Lampedosa had been occupied by Saracen corsairs, and many Greek ships captured, before the joint forces of the Dukes of Sicily and Naples, with the vessels from Amalfi and Venice, defeated the plunderers and cleared the sea for a while. The quarrels of the Aglabits and Ommiads induced the former to conclude a truce for ten years with Leo, and to join the naval forces of the Greeks and Venetians in attacking the Spanish Saracens.

The disturbances which prevailed in the East during the caliphate of Almamun insured tranquillity to the Asiatic frontier of the empire, and allowed Leo to devote his whole attention

to the internal state of his dominions. The church was the only public institution immediately connected with the feelings of the whole population. By its conduct the people were directly interested in the proceedings of the imperial government. Ecclesiastical affairs, offering the only field for the expression of public opinion, became naturally the centre of all political ideas and party struggles. Even in an administrative point of view, the regular organization of the clergy under parish priests, bishops, and provincial councils, gave the church a degree of power in the state which compelled the emperor to watch it attentively. The principles of ecclesiastical independence inculcated by Theodore Studita, and adopted by the monks, and that portion of the clergy which favoured image worship, alarmed the emperor. This party inculcated a belief in contemporary miracles, and in the daily intervention of God in human affairs. All prudence, all exertion on the part of individuals, was as nothing compared to the favour of some image accidentally endowed with divine grace. That such images could at any time reveal the existence of a hidden treasure, or raise the possessor to high official rank, was the common conviction of the superstitious and enthusiastic, both among the laity and the clergy; and such doctrines were especially favoured by the monks, so that the people, under the guidance of these teachers, became negligent of moral duties and regular industry. The Iconoclasts themselves appealed to the decision of Heaven as favouring their cause, by pointing to the misfortunes of Constantine VI, Irene, Nicephorus, and Michael I, who had supported image-worship, and contrasting their reigns with the victories and peaceful end of Leo the Isaurian, Constantine V, and Leo IV, who were the steady opponents of idolatry.

Leo V, though averse to image-worship, possessed so much prudence and moderation, that he was inclined to rest satisfied with a direct acknowledgment that the civil power possessed the right of tolerating religious difference. But the army demanded the abolition of image-worship, and the monks the persecution of Iconoclasts. Leo's difficulties, in meddling with ecclesiastical affairs, gave his policy a dubious character, and obtained for him, among the Greeks, the name of the Chameleon. Several learned members of the clergy were opposed to image-worship; and of these the most eminent were the abbot John Hylilas, of the illustrious family of the Morochorzanians, and Anthony, bishop of Syllaenum. John, called, from his superior learning, the Grammmarian, was accused by the ignorant of studying magic; and the nickname of Lekanomantis was given him, because he was said to read the secrets of futurity in a brazen basin. The Iconoclasts were also supported by Theodotos Kassiteras, son of the patrician Michael Melissenos, whose sister had been the third wife of Constantine V. These three endeavoured to persuade Leo to declare openly against image-worship. On the other hand, the majority of the Greek nation was firmly attached to image-worship; and the cause was supported by the Patriarch, by Theodore Studita, and a host of monks. The emperor flattered himself that he should be able to bring about an amicable arrangement to insure general toleration, and commanded John Hylilas to draw up a report of the opinions expressed by the earliest fathers of the church on the subject of image-worship.

As soon as he was in possession of this report, he asked the Patriarch to make some concessions on the subject of pictures, in order to satisfy the army and preserve peace in the church. He wished that the pictures should be placed so high as to prevent the people making the gross display of superstitious worship constantly witnessed in the churches. But the Patriarch coldly pronounced himself in favour of images and pictures, whose worship, he declared, was authorised by immemorial tradition, and the foundation of the orthodox faith was formed according to the opinion of the church on tradition as well as on Holy Scripture. He added that the opinions of the church were inspired by the Holy Spirit as well as the Scriptures. The emperor then proposed a conference between the two parties, and the clergy was thrown into a state of the greatest excitement at this proposition, which implied a doubt of their divine inspiration. The Patriarch summoned his partisans to pass the night in prayers for the safety of the church, in the cathedral of St. Sophia. The emperor had some reason to regard this as seditious, and he was alarmed at the disorders which must evidently arise from both parties appealing to popular support. He summoned the Patriarch to the palace, where the night was spent in controversy. Theodore Studita was one of those who attended the Patriarch on this

occasion, and his steady assertion of ecclesiastical supremacy rendered him worthy, from his bold and uncompromising views, to have occupied the chair of St Peter. He declared plainly to the emperor that he had no authority to interfere with the doctrines of the church, since his rule only extended over the civil and military government of the empire. The church had full authority to govern itself. Leo was enraged at this boldness, and dissatisfied with the conduct of the Patriarch, who anathematised Anthony, the bishop of Syllaeum, who was viewed as the leader of the Iconoclasts; but for the present the clergy were only required to abstain from holding public assemblies.

The Iconoclasts, however, now began to remove images and pictures from the churches in possession of the clergy of their party, and the troops on several occasions insulted the image over the entrance of the imperial palace, which had been once removed by Leo the Isaurian, and replaced by Irene. The emperor now ordered it to be again removed, on the ground that this was necessary to avoid public disturbance. These acts induced Theodore Studita to call on the monks to subscribe a declaration that they adhered firmly to the doctrines of the church, with respect to image-worship, as then established. The emperor, alarmed at the danger of causing a new schism in the church, but feeling himself called upon to resist the attacks now made on his authority, determined to relieve the civil power from the necessity of engaging in a contest with the ecclesiastical, by assembling a general council of the church, and leaving the two parties in the priesthood to settle their own differences. As he was in doubt how to proceed, it happened that both the Patriarch and the abbot, John Hylilas, were officiating together in the Christmas ceremonies while Leo was present, and that John, in the performance of his duty, had to repeat the words of Isaiah, "To whom then will ye liken God? or what will ye compare unto him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains". In pronouncing these words, he turned to the emperor, and uttered them in the most emphatic manner. A few days after this scene, a band of mutinous soldiers broke into the patriarchal palace and destroyed the pictures of the saints with which the building was adorned, and committing other disorders, until they were driven out by the regular guard. At length, in the month of April, 815, Leo ordered a provincial synod to assemble at Constantinople, and before this assembly the Patriarch Nicephoros was brought by force, for he denied its competency to take cognisance of his conduct. He was deposed, and confined in a monastery which he had founded, where he survived twelve years a time which he passed more usefully for the world, in compiling the historical works we possess, than he could have passed them amidst the contests of the patriarchal dignity.

The bigotry of both parties rendered the moderate policy of the emperor of no effect; and public attention became so exclusively absorbed by the state of the church, that it was impossible for him to remain any longer neuter. His first decided step was to nominate a new Patriarch hostile to image-worship; and he selected Theodotos Melissenos, a layman already mentioned, who held a high post in the imperial court. The example of the election of Tarasios prevented the votaries of image-worship disputing the legality of the election of a layman; but they refused to acknowledge Theodotos, on the ground that the deposition of Nicephoros was illegal, and that he was consequently still their lawful Patriarch. Theodotos was nevertheless ordained and consecrated, A.D. 815. He was a man of learning and ability, but his habits as a military man and a courtier were said to be visible in his manners, and he was accused of living with too great splendour, keeping a luxurious table, and indulging habitually in society of too worldly a character.

A general council of the church was now held at Constantinople, in which the new Patriarch, and Constantine the son of Leo, presided; for the emperor declined taking a personal part in the dispute, in order to allow the church to decide on questions of doctrine without any direct interference of the civil power. This council re-established the acts of that held in 754 by Constantine V, abolishing image-worship, and it anathematised the Patriarchs Tarasios and Nicephoros, and all image-worshippers. The clergy, therefore, who adhered to the principles of the image-worshippers were, in consequence, deprived of their ecclesiastical dignities, and sent

into banishment; but the party revolutions that had frequently occurred in the Greek church had introduced a dishonourable system of compliance with the reigning faction, and most of the clergy were readier to yield up their opinions than their benefices. This habitual practice of falsehood received the mild name of arrangement, or economy, to soften the public aversion to such conduct.

The Iconoclast party, on this occasion, used its victory with unusual mildness. They naturally drove their opponents from their ecclesiastical offices; and when some bold monks persisted in preaching against the acts of the council, they banished these non-conformists to distant monasteries; but it does not appear that the civil power was called upon to enforce conformity with the customary rigor. The council had decided that images and pictures were to be removed from the churches, and if the people resisted their removal, or the clergy or monks replaced them, severe punishments were inflicted for this violation of the law. Cruelty was a feature in the Byzantine civil administration, without any impulse of religious fanaticism.

Theodore Studita, who feared neither patriarch nor emperor, and acknowledged no authority in ecclesiastical affairs but the church, while he recognised nothing as the church but what accorded with his own standard of orthodoxy, set the decrees of this council at defiance. He proceeded openly through the streets of the capital, followed by his monks in solemn procession, bearing aloft the pictures which had been removed from the churches, to give them a safe asylum within the walls of the monastery of Studion. For this display of contempt for the law he was banished by the emperor to Asia Minor; and his conduct in exile affords us a remarkable proof of the practical liberty the monks had acquired by their honest and steady resistance to the civil power. All eyes were fixed on Theodore as the leader of the monastic party; and so great was the power he exerted over public opinion that the emperor did not venture to employ any illegal severity against the bold monk he had imprisoned. Indeed, the administration of justice in the Byzantine Empire seems never to have been more regular and equitable than during the reign of Leo the Armenian.

Theodore from his prison corresponded not only with the most eminent bishops and monks of his party, and with ladies of piety and wealth, but also with the Pope, to whom, though now a foreign potentate, the bold abbot sent deputies, as if he were himself an independent Patriarch in the Eastern Church. His great object was to oppose the Iconoclasts in every way, and prevent all those over whose minds he exercised any influence from holding communion with those who conformed to their authority. One thing seems to have distressed and alarmed him, and he exerted all his eloquence to expose its fallacy. The Iconoclasts declared that no one could be a martyr for Christ's sake, who was only punished by the usual power for image-worship, since the question at issue had no connection with the truth of Christianity. Theodore argued that the night of heresy was darker than that of ignorance, and the merit of labouring to illuminate it was at least as great. The Emperor Leo was, however, too prudent to give any of Theodore's party the slightest hope of claiming the crown of martyrdom. He persisted in his policy of enforcing the decrees of the council with so much mildness, and balancing his own expressions of personal opinion with such a degree of impartiality that he excited the dissatisfaction of the violent of both parties.

Even in a corrupted and factious society, most men appreciate the equitable administration of justice. Interest and ambition may indeed so far pervert the feelings of an administrative or aristocratic class, as to make the members of such privileged societies regard the equal distribution of justice to the mass of people as an infringement of their rights; and the passions engendered by religious zeal may blind those under its influence to any injustice committed against men of different opinions. Hence it is that a government, to secure the administration of justice, must be established on a broader basis than administrative wisdom, aristocratic pre-eminence or religious orthodoxy. In the Byzantine Empire, public opinion found no home among the mass of the population, whose minds and actions were regulated and enslaved by administrative influence, by the power of the wealthy, and by the authority of the

clergy and the monks. One result of this state of society is visible in the violence of party passion displayed concerning insignificant matters in the capital; and hence it arose at last that the political interests of the empire were frequently disconnected with the subjects that exercised the greatest influence on the fate of the government. The moderation of Leo, which, had public opinion possessed any vitality, ought to have rendered his administration popular with the majority of his subjects in the provinces, certainly rendered it unpopular in Constantinople. Crowds, seeking excitement, express the temporary feelings of the people before deliberation has fixed the public opinion. Leo was hated by the Greeks as an Armenian and an Iconoclast; and he was disliked by many of the highest officers in the state and the army for the severity of his judicial administration, and the strictness with which he maintained moral as well as military discipline, so that no inconsiderable number of the class who directed state affairs were disposed to welcome a revolution. Irene had governed the empire by eunuchs, who had put up everything for sale; Nicephorus had thought of those reforms only that tended to fill the treasury; Michael I had been the tool of a bigoted faction. All these sovereigns had accumulated opposition to good government.

Leo undertook the task of purifying the administration, and he commenced his reforms by enforcing a stricter dispensation of justice. His enemies acknowledged that he put a stop to corruption with wonderful promptitude and ability. He restored the discipline of the army, he repressed bribery in the courts of justice, by strictly reviewing all judicial decisions, and he re-established an equitable system of collecting the revenue. He repaired the fortresses destroyed by the Bulgarians, and placed all the frontiers of the empire in a respectable state of defence. All this, it was universally acknowledged, was due to his personal activity in watching over the proceedings of his ministers. Even the Patriarch Nicephoros, whom he had deposed, gave testimony to his merits as an emperor. When he heard of Leo's assassination he exclaimed, "The church is delivered from a dangerous enemy, but the empire has lost a useful sovereign".

The officers of the court, who expected to profit by a change of measures, formed a conspiracy to overthrow Leo's government, which was joined by Michael the Amorion, who had long been the emperor's most intimate friend. The ambition of this turbulent and unprincipled soldier led him to think that he had as good a right to the throne as Leo; and when he perceived that a general opposition was felt in Constantinople to the emperor's conduct, his ambition got the better of his gratitude, and he plotted to mount the throne. It was generally reported that Leo had refused to accept the Imperial crown, when proclaimed emperor by the army at Adrianople, from his knowledge of the difficulties with which he would have to contend, and that Michael forced him to yield his assent, by declaring that he must either accept the crown, or be put to death to make way for a new candidate. The turbulent character of Michael gave currency to this anecdote.

Michael's conduct had long been seditious, when at length his share in a conspiracy against the government was discovered, and he was tried, found guilty, and condemned to death. It is said by the chronicles that the court of justice left it to the emperor to order his execution in any way he might think proper, and that Leo condemned him to be immediately cast into the furnace used for heating the baths of the palace, and prepared to attend the execution in person. It is needless to say that, though cruelty was the vice of the Byzantine court, we must rank this story as a tale fitter for the legends of the saints than for the history of the empire. The event took place on Christmas-eve, when the empress, hearing what was about to happen, and moved with compassion for one who had long been her husband's intimate friend, hastened to Leo, and implored him to defer the execution until after Christmas-day. She urged the sin of participating in the Holy Communion with the cries of the dying companion of his youth echoing in his ear. Leo who, though severe, was not personally cruel yielded to his wife's entreaties, and consented with great reluctance to postpone the punishment, for his knowledge of the extent of the conspiracy gave him a presentiment of danger. After giving orders for staying the execution, he turned to the empress and said, "I grant your request: you

think only of my eternal welfare; but you expose my life to the greatest peril, and your scruples may bring misfortune on you and on our children”.

Michael was conducted back to his dungeon, and the key of his fetters was brought to Leo. It was afterwards told in Constantinople that during the night the emperor was unable to sleep. A sense of impending danger, disturbing his imagination, impelled him to rise from his bed, envelop himself in a mantle, and secretly visit the cell in which Michael was confined. There he found the door unlocked and Michael stretched on the bed of his jailor, buried in profound sleep, while the jailor himself was lying on the criminal's bed on the floor. The emperor's alarm was increased at this spectacle. He withdrew to consider what measures he should take to watch both the prisoner and the jailor. But Michael had already many partisans within the walls of the palace, and one of these had, having observed the emperor's nocturnal visit to the criminal's cell, immediately awakened Michael. There was not a moment to lose. As a friendly confessor had been introduced into the palace to afford the condemned criminal the consolations of religion, this priest was sent to Theoctistos to announce that, unless a blow was instantly struck, Michael would at daylight purchase his own pardon by revealing the names of the principal conspirators. This message caused the conspirators to resolve on the immediate assassination of the emperor.

The imperial palace was a fortress separated from the city like the present serai of the sultan. It was the practice of Leo to attend matins in his chapel, and as it was Christmas day, a number of the best singers in Constantinople were that morning admitted at a postern-gate before daybreak, in order to join in the celebration of the service, whose solemn chant was then the admiration of the Christian world. Leo, who was of a religious turn of mind, delighted in displaying his deep sonorous voice in the choir. He delayed his measures for securing Michael and the jailor to hasten to the chapel, and the conspirators availed themselves of his presence during the celebration of divine service to execute their plans. Disguised as choristers, with daggers concealed in their clothes, they obtained admittance at the postern, and ranged themselves among the singers in the imperial chapel.

The morning was dark and cold, and both the emperor and the officiating chaplain were enveloped in furred mantles, which, with the thick bonnets they wore as a protection against the damp, effectually concealed their faces. But as soon as the powerful voice of Leo was heard in the solemn hymns, the assassins pressed forward to stab him. Some, however, mistaking the chaplain for the emperor, wounded the priest, whose cries revealed the mistake, and then all turned on Leo, who defended himself for some time with the crucifix which he snatched up. His hand was soon cut off, and he fell before the communion-table, where his body was hewed in pieces.

The assassins then hurried to the cell of Michael, whom they proclaimed emperor, and thus consummated the revolution for which he was under sentence of death. Few sovereigns of the Byzantine Empire seem to have exerted themselves more sincerely than Leo V to perform the duties of their station, yet few have received less praise for their good qualities; nor did his assassination create any reaction of public opinion in his favour. Though he died with the crucifix in his hand, he was condemned as if he had been a bigoted iconoclast. His wife and children were compelled to adopt a monastic life.

## CHAPTER III

## THE AMORIAN DYNASTY

A.D. 820-867

## Sect. I

## MICHAEL II THE STAMMERER

A.D. 820-829

MICHAEL II was proclaimed emperor with the fetters on his limbs; and the first spectacle of his reign was the jailor delivering him from a felon's bonds. When relieved from his irons, he proceeded to the church of St. Sophia, where he was crowned by the Patriarch.

Michael II was born in the lowest rank of society. He had entered the army as a private soldier in early youth, but his attention to his duties, and his military talents, quickly raised him to the rank of general. His influence over the troops aided in placing Leo V on the imperial throne. Amorium was his birthplace, an important and wealthy city, inhabited by a mixed population of various races and languages, collected together by trading interests. The Phrygians, who formed the majority, still retained many native usages, and some religious ideas adverse to Greek prejudices. Many Jews had also been established in the city for ages, and a sect called the Athingans, who held that the touch of many things was a contamination, had numerous votaries.

The low origin of Michael, and the half-suppressed contempt he disclosed for Greek learning, Roman pride, and ecclesiastical tradition, awakened some animosity in the breasts of the pedants, the nobles, and the orthodox of Constantinople. It is not surprising, therefore, that the historians who wrote under the patronage of the enemies of the Amorian dynasty should represent its founder as a horse-jockey, a heretic, and a stammerer. As he showed no particular favour to the Greek party in the Byzantine church, his orthodoxy was questioned by the great body of the clergy; and as he very probably expressed himself with hesitation in the Greek language, as spoken at court, any calumny would find credit with the Hellenic populace, who have always been jealous of strangers, and eager to avenge, by words, the compliance they have been compelled to yield by deeds to foreign masters.

Michael, however, had sagacity to observe the difficulties which the various parties in the church and court had the power of raising up against his administration. To gain time, he began by conciliating every party. The orthodox, headed by Theodore Studita and the exiled Patriarch Nicephoros, were the most powerful. He flattered these two ecclesiastics, by allowing them to return to the capital, and even permitted Theodore to resume his functions as abbot of Studion; but, on the other hand, he refused to adopt their suggestions for a reaction in favour of image-worship. He seems to have been naturally inclined to religious toleration, and he was anxious to repress all disputes within the pale of the church, as the best means of maintaining the public tranquillity. In order to give a public guarantee for the spirit of the civil power, which he desired

should characterize his reign, he held a *silention* to announce toleration of private opinion in ecclesiastical questions; but it was declared that the existing laws against the exhibition of images and pictures in churches were to be strictly enforced. The indifference of Michael to the ecclesiastical disputes which agitated a church, to many of whose doctrines he was at heart adverse, did not create so violent an opposition as the sincerer conduct of his predecessors, who banished images on religious grounds.

The elevation of a new emperor, who possessed few claims to distinction, awakened, as usual, the hopes of every ambitious general. A formidable rival appeared in the person of Thomas, the only officer of eminence who had remained faithful to the rebel Bardanes, when Leo and Michael deserted his standard. Thomas, as has been already mentioned, was appointed general of the federates by Leo V, but, owing to some circumstances which are not recorded, he had retired into the dominions of the caliph, and remained for some time on the borders of Armenia. His origin, whether Slavonian or Armenian, by separating him in an unusual degree from the ruling classes in the empire for he was, like Michael, of a very low rank in society caused him to be regarded as a friend of the people; and all the subject races in the empire espoused his cause, which in many provinces took the form of an attack on the Roman administration, rather than of a revolution to place a new emperor on the throne. This rebellion is remarkable for assuming more of the character of a social revolution than of an ordinary insurrection. Thomas overran all Asia Minor without meeting with any serious opposition even on the part of the towns; so that, with the exception of the Armeniac theme and Opsikion, his authority was universally acknowledged, and the administration was conducted by his officers. He concluded an alliance with the Saracens to enable him to visit Antioch, and receive the imperial crown from the hands of the Patriarch Job. This alliance with the infidels tended to injure his popularity; and when he returned accompanied by large bodies of mercenary troops, collected from the Mohammedan tribes on the frontier, the public enthusiasm for his cause became sensibly diminished. Thomas, too, feeling more confidence in the power of his army, began to show himself careless of the good-will of the people.

The only manner of putting an end to the war was by taking Constantinople, and this Thomas prepared to attempt. An immense fleet was assembled at Lesbos. Gregorios Pterotes, a relation of Leo V, who had been banished to Skyros by Michael, was sent into Thrace at the head of ten thousand men to prepare for the arrival of Thomas, who soon followed with the bulk of his army, and formed the siege of Constantinople. Michael had taken every precaution for sustaining a long siege, and Thomas seems to have committed a serious error in attacking so strong a city, while the troops of the Armeniac theme and of Opsikion were in sufficient strength to attack his communications with the centre of Asia Minor, and maintain a constant communication with the garrison of Constantinople from the coast of Bithynia. The army of Thomas, though very numerous, was in part composed of an undisciplined rabble, whose plundering propensities increased the difficulty of obtaining supplies. On the other hand, Constantinople, though closely invested, was well supplied with all kinds of provisions and stores, and the inhabitants displayed great firmness in opposing an enemy whom they saw bent on plunder, while Michael and his son Theophilus performed the duties of able generals. Two attempts were made to storm the fortifications, one during the winter, in 821, and the other in the spring of 822; and both were equally unsuccessful and entailed considerable loss on the besiegers. In the meantime the partisans of Michael collected a fleet of 350 ships in the islands of the Archipelago and Greece; and this force, having gained a complete victory over the fleet of Thomas, cut off the besiegers from communication with Asia.

The Bulgarians, in order to profit by the civil war, invaded the empire, and plundered the country from which the rebels were compelled to draw their supplies. Thomas marched to oppose them with a part of his army, but was defeated, and lost the greater part of his baggage. He was so much weakened by this defeat that Michael sallied out from Constantinople, again routed him, and compelled the rebel army to retire to Arcadiopolis, where Thomas was soon closely besieged. For five months the place was obstinately defended, but at last Thomas was



delivered up by his own followers; and his adopted son, who had been invested with the title of Emperor, was captured shortly after in Byza. Both were hanged, after their limbs had been cut off. This junction of a son with the reigning emperor as his successor had become a rule of the Byzantine constitution, which was rarely neglected by any sovereign. Two chiefs attached to the party of Thomas continued for some time to defend the towns of Kabala and Saniana in Asia Minor, until the latter place was betrayed by one who bargained to be appointed archbishop of Neocesarea, a fact recorded in a satirical verse preserved by one of the Byzantine historians.

This remarkable civil war lasted nearly three years, and is distinguished by some features of unusual occurrence from most of the great rebellions in the Byzantine Empire. The large fleets collected on both sides prove that the population and wealth of the coasts and islands of the Archipelago had not declined under the administration of the Iconoclasts, though this part of the empire was likely to be least favoured by the central power, as having attempted to dethrone Leo III, and having always firmly supported the party of the image worshippers. The most numerous partisans of Thomas, and those who gave the strong revolutionary impulse to the rebellion at its commencement, were that body of the Asiatic population which national distinctions or religious opinions excluded from participation in public and local affairs, and to whom even the ecclesiastical courts were shut, on account of their heretical opinions; and to the ecclesiastical courts alone recourse could be had for the equitable administration of justice in some cases. The discontent of these classes, joined to the poverty created by excessive taxation, supplied the army of Thomas with those numerous bands of marauders, eager to seek revenge, who spread desolation far and wide, alarmed all men possessing property, and ultimately rained his enterprise. The indiscipline of his troops, and his incapacity to apply any remedy to the financial oppression and religious intolerance against which the population of the Asiatic provinces had taken up arms, alienated the minds of all who expected to find in him an instrument for reforming the empire. But had Thomas really been a man of a powerful mind, he might have laid the foundation of a new state of society in the Eastern Empire, by lightening the burden of taxation, carrying out toleration for religious opinions, securing an impartial administration of justice even to heretics, and giving every class of subjects, without distinction of nationality or race, equal security for their lives and property. The spirit of the age was, however, averse to toleration, and the sense of justice was so defective that these equitable principles could only have been upheld by the power of a well-disciplined mercenary army.

The necessity of adopting a general measure for improving the condition of the people was not felt by Michael II, even when this rebellion was suppressed; and though he saw that some reduction of taxation to the lower classes was required, he restricted the boon to the Armeniac theme and Opsikion, because these provinces had not joined Thomas in the civil war; and even in them he only reduced the hearth-tax to one half of the amount imposed by Nicephorus I. The rest of the empire was oppressed more than usual, as a punishment. It is certain that this unfortunate rebellion caused an immense destruction of property in Asia Minor, and was no inconsiderable cause of the accumulation of property in immense estates, which began to depopulate the country, and prepare it for the reception of a new race of inhabitants.

The state of society under every known government was at this period troubled by civil wars. The seeds of these convulsions may, therefore, be sought in some general cause affecting the relations of the various classes of men in the development of social progress, and so far it lay beyond the immediate influence of the political laws of the respective governments, whether Mohammedan or Christian. The frame of society in the Saracen and Frank empires betrayed as many signs of decay as in the Byzantine. One of the remarkable features of the age is the appearance of bands of men, so powerful as to set the existing governments everywhere at defiance. These bands consisted in great part of men of what may be called the middle and higher classes of society, driven by dissatisfaction with their prospects in life to seek their fortunes as brigands and pirates; and the extent to which slavery and the slave-trade prevailed, afforded them a ready means of recruiting their forces with daring and desperate men. The feeling which in our days impels nations to colonise new countries, and improve uncultivated

lands, in the ninth century led the Saracens and Normans to ravage every country they could enter, destroy capital, and consequently diminish cultivation and population.

Crete and Sicily, two of the most valuable provinces of the Byzantine empire, inhabited almost exclusively by Greeks, and both in a high state of civilisation and prosperity, were conquered by the Saracens without offering the resistance that might have been expected from the wealth and numbers of the inhabitants. Indeed, we are compelled to infer that the change from the orthodox sway of the emperors of Constantinople to the domination of the Mohammedans, was not considered by the majority of the Greeks of Crete and Sicily so severe a calamity as we generally believe. In almost every case in which the Saracens conquered Christian nations, history unfortunately reveals that they owed their success chiefly to the favour with which their progress was regarded by the mass of the people. To the disgrace of most Christian governments, it will be found that their administration was more oppressive than that of the Arabian conquerors. Oppression commenced when the rude tribes of the desert adopted the corruptions of a ruling class. The inhabitants of Syria welcomed the first followers of Mahomet; the Copts of Egypt contributed to place their country under the domination of the Arabs; the Christian Berbers aided in the conquest of Africa. All these nations were induced, by hatred of the government at Constantinople, to place themselves under the sway of the Mohammedans. The treachery of the nobles, and the indifference of the people, made Spain and the south of France an easy prey to the Saracens. The conquest of Crete and Sicily must be traced to the same causes, for if the mass of the people had not been indifferent to the change, the Byzantine government could easily have retained possession of these valuable islands. The same disgraceful characteristic of Christian monarchies is also apparent at a much later period. The conquest of the Greeks, Servians, and Vallachians by the Othoman Turks was effected rather by the voluntary submission of the mass of the Christians than by the power of the Mohammedans. This fact is rendered apparent by the effective resistance offered by the Albanians under Scanderbeg. Church and state must divide between them this blot on Christian society, for it is difficult to apportion the share due to the fiscal oppression of Roman centralisation, and to the unrelenting persecution of ecclesiastical orthodoxy.

Crete fell a prey to a band of pirates. The reign of Al Hakem, the Omniade caliph of Spain, was disturbed by continual troubles; and some theological disputes having created a violent insurrection in the suburbs of Cordova, about 15,000 Spanish Arabs were compelled to emigrate in the year 815. The greater part of these desperadoes established themselves at Alexandria, where they soon took an active part in the civil wars of Egypt. The rebellion of Thomas, and the absence of the naval forces of the Byzantine Empire from the Archipelago, left the island of Crete unprotected. The Andalusian Arabs in Alexandria availed themselves of this circumstance to invade the island, and establish a settlement on it, in the year 823. Michael was unable to take any measures for expelling these invaders, and an event soon happened in Egypt which added greatly to the strength of this Saracen colony. The victories of the lieutenants of the Caliph Almamun compelled the remainder of the Andalusian Arabs to quit Alexandria; so that Abou Hafs, called by Greeks Apochaps, joined his countrymen in Crete with forty ships, determined to make the new settlement their permanent home. It is said by the Byzantine writers that they commenced their conquest of the island by destroying their fleet, and constructing a strong fortified camp, surrounded by an immense ditch, from which it received the name of Chandak, now corrupted by the Western nations into Candia. The construction of the new city, as the capital of their conquests, was part of the Saracen system of establishing their domination. The foundation of Cairo, Cairowan, Fez, Cufa, and Bagdad, was the result of this policy. A new state of society, and new institutions, were introduced with greater facility in a new residence.

The Saracen pirates derived some facilities towards rendering their conquests permanent, from the circumstance that their bands generally consisted of young men, destitute of domestic ties, who were seeking family establishments as well as wealth. It was thus that they became real colonists, to a much greater extent than is usually the case with conquerors in civilised

countries. The ease, moreover, with which the Saracens, even of the highest rank, formed marriages with the lower orders, and the equality which reigned among the followers of the Prophet, presented fewer barriers to the increase of their number than prevailed in the various orders and classes of Byzantine society. The native population of Crete was in a stationary, if not a declining condition, at the time of the arrival of the Saracens, while these new colonists were introduced into the country under circumstances extremely favourable to a rapid increase of their numbers. History, however, rarely enables us to mark, from age to age, the increase and decrease of the different classes, tribes, and nations concerning whose affairs it treats, though no fact is more important to enable us to form a correct estimate of the virtues and vices of society, to trace the progress of civilisation, and understand the foundations of political power.

The Emperor Michael II was at length, by the defeat of Thomas, enabled to make some attempts to drive the invaders out of Crete. The first expedition was intrusted to the command of Photinos, general of the Anatolic theme, a man of high rank and family; it was also strengthened by a reinforcement under Damianos, count of the imperial stables and protospatharios; but this expedition was completely defeated. Damianos was slain, and Photinos escaped with a single galley to Dia. The second attack on the Saracens was commanded by Krateros, the general of the Kibyrraiot theme, who was accompanied by a fleet of seventy ships of war. The Byzantine historians pretend that their army was victorious in a battle on shore, but that the Saracens, rallying during the night, surprised the Christian camp, and captured the whole fleet. Krateros escaped in a merchant vessel, but was pursued and taken near Cos, where he was immediately crucified by the Saracens.

The Saracens, having established their sovereignty over the twenty-eight districts into which Crete was then divided, sent out piratical expeditions to plunder the islands of the Archipelago and the coasts of Greece. Michael, alarmed lest more of his subjects should prefer the Saracen to the Byzantine government, fitted out a well-appointed fleet to cruise in the Aegean Sea, and named Oryphas to command it. A choice of the best soldiers in the empire was secured, by paying a bounty of forty byzants a man; and in this, a most effective squadron, with a body of experienced warriors on board, the Byzantine admiral scoured the Archipelago. The Saracen pirates from Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, who had been stimulated by the successes of their countrymen to plunder the Greeks, were pursued and destroyed; but Oryphas was unable to effect anything, when he attacked the Cretan colony on shore. This fleet was subsequently neglected; and, in the first year of the reign of Theophilus, an imperial squadron was totally destroyed by the Saracens, in a naval engagement near Thasos, leaving the corsairs masters of the sea. The islands of the Archipelago were then plundered, and immense booty in property and slaves was carried off. The Saracens retained possession of Crete for one hundred and thirty-five years.

The conquest of Sicily was facilitated by the treachery of Euphemios, a native Greek of high rank, who is said to have carried off a nun, and whom the emperor ordered to be punished by the loss of his nose; for though Michael himself espoused Euphrosyne, the daughter of Constantine VI, after she had taken the veil, he did not intend that any of his subjects should be allowed a similar license. Euphemios was informed of the emperor's order in time to save his nose, by exciting a sedition in Syracuse, his native city. In this tumult, Gregoras the Byzantine governor was slain. Michael then deputed Photinos, whose unsuccessful expedition to Crete has been already mentioned, to supply the place of Gregoras, and carry on the war against the Saracens of Africa, whom Euphemios had already invited into Sicily, to distract the attention of the Byzantine military. Ziadet Allah, the Aglabite sovereign of Cairowan, had paid particular attention to his fleet, so that he was well prepared to carry on the war, and delighted to gain an entrance for his troops into Sicily. In June, 827, his admiral effected a junction with the ships of Euphemios, who had been driven out of Syracuse, and the Saracens landed at Mazara. Photinos was defeated in a battle near Platana, and retreated to Enna. The Saracens occupied Girgenti, but they were not strong enough to commence offensive operations until the Byzantine fleet was driven off the coast by the arrival of a squadron of ships from Spain, which joined the Aglabites,

and enabled fresh reinforcements to arrive from Africa. The war was then carried on with activity: Messina was taken in 831; Palermo capitulated in the following year; and Enna was besieged, for the first time in 836. The war continued with various success, as the invaders received assistance from Africa, and the Christians from Constantinople. The Byzantine forces recovered possession of Messina, which was not permanently occupied by the Saracens until 843. The Emperor Theophilus was too much engaged by his military operations in Asia Minor to send effectual aid to the Sicilians; while his father Michael II had been too fond of his ease on the throne to devote the requisite attention to the business of the distant provinces. Michael III thought of nothing but his pleasures. At length in the year 859, Enna was taken by the Saracens. Syracuse, in order to preserve its commerce from ruin, had purchased peace by paying a tribute of 50,000 byzants; and it was not until the reign of Basil I, in the year 878, that it was compelled to surrender, and the conquest of Sicily was completed by the Arabs. Some districts, however continued, either by treaty or by force of arms, to preserve their municipal independence, and the exclusive exercise of the Christian religion, within their territory, to a later period.

The loss of Crete and Sicily seems to have been viewed with strange apathy by the court at Constantinople. The reason of this is probably to be attributed to the circumstance that the surplus revenue was comparatively small, and the defence of these distant possessions was found often to require a military force, which it was deemed might be more advantageously employed in the capital. These feelings of the statesmen at Constantinople were doubtless strengthened by the circumstance that a portion of the population, both in Crete and Sicily, had acquired a degree of municipal independence extremely adverse to the principles which guided the imperial cabinet.

The bold and indefatigable abbot, Theodore Studita, still struggled to establish the supremacy of the church over the emperor in religious and ecclesiastical affairs. He appears to deserve the credit of having discovered the necessity of creating a systematic restraint on the arbitrary authority of the sovereign; but his scheme for making the ecclesiastical legislation superior to the executive power was defective, inasmuch as it sought to confer on the church a more irresponsible and dangerous authority than that of which the emperor would have been deprived. Experience had not yet taught mankind that no irresponsible power, whether it be intrusted to king or priest, in a monarchy or a republic, can be exercised without abuse. Until the law is superior to the executive government there is no true liberty; but in the Byzantine Empire the emperor was above the law, and the imperial officials and the clergy had a law of their own, and so the people were doubly oppressed.

The conduct of Michael in conducting ecclesiastical business indicates that he was not destitute of statesmanlike qualities, though he generally thought rather of enjoying his ease on the throne than of fulfilling the duties of his high station. During the civil war he was anxious to secure the good-will of the monks and of the Greek party in the church. He recalled Theodore from banishment, and declared himself in favour of perfect toleration. This was far from satisfying the enthusiastic abbot, and the bigoted ecclesiastics of his party; and after the establishment of tranquillity they incited the image-worshippers to an open violation of the laws against presenting pictures to the adoration of the people. Theodore also engaged with fresh zeal in an extensive correspondence with all persons of influence whom he knew to be favourable to his party. The emperor ordered him to discontinue this correspondence, as of a seditious tendency; but the bold abbot ventured to argue the case with Michael himself in a long letter, which is preserved in his works.

The policy of forming friendly relations with the western nations of Europe was every day becoming more apparent to the rulers of the Byzantine Empire, as the political influence of the Popes extended itself, and the power of the western nations increased. Michael II, in order to prevent the discontented image-worshippers from receiving support from the Franks, opened negotiations with the Emperor Louis le Debonnaire, in the hope of obtaining a condemnation of

image-worship similar to that of Charlemagne. In the year 824, an embassy, bearing a vainglorious and bombastical letter, announcing the defeat of Thomas, reached the court of Louis. In this epistle Michael recapitulates the religious principles which ought to guide the emperors of the Romans in their ecclesiastical affairs. He alludes to the condemnation of image-worship by the council of Frankfort, and declares that he has not destroyed holy images and pictures, but only removed them to such an elevation as was necessary to prevent the abuses caused by popular superstition. He considers the councils held for the condemnation of image-worship merely as local synods, and fully recognises the existence of a higher authority in general councils of the church, giving, at the same time, his own confession of faith, in terms which he knew would secure the assent of Louis and the Frank clergy. He then solicits the Frank emperor to induce the Pope to withdraw his protection from the rebellious image-worshippers who had fled from the Byzantine Empire to Rome. A synod was convoked at Paris in consequence of this communication, which condemned the worship of images in the same terms as the Caroline Books, and blamed the second council of Nicaea for the superstitious reverence it had shown for images, but, at the same time, approved of the rebuke given to the Eastern emperors, for their rashness in removing and destroying images, by Pope Hadrian, A.D. 825. The Emperor Louis was also requested by the synod to forward a letter to Pope Eugenius, inviting him to write to the Emperor Michael, in order to re-establish peace and unity in the Christian church. But the Pope, the two emperors, and Theodore Studita, were all afraid of plunging into ecclesiastical discussions at this period; for public opinion had been so exercised in these polemics, that it was impossible to foresee the result of the contest. Matters were therefore allowed to go on during the reign of Michael without any open rupture. The imprisonment of Methodios, afterwards Patriarch of Constantinople, and the condemnation to death of Euthymios, bishop of Sardis, were the only acts of extreme severity with which the image-worshippers could reproach Michael; and these seem to have originated from political and party motives rather than from religious opinions, though the zeal of these ecclesiastics rendered them eager to be considered as martyrs.

The marriage of Michael with Euphrosyne, the daughter of Constantine VI, who had already taken the veil, was also made a ground for exciting public reprobation against the emperor. It is probable, however, that more importance is given to this marriage, as a violation of religion, by later writers, than it received among contemporaries. The Patriarch absolved Euphrosyne from her vows, and the senate repeatedly solicited the emperor to unite himself with the last scion of Leo the Isaurian, the second founder of the Eastern Empire. Michael affected to be averse to second marriages, and to yield only to the public wish. That the marriage of the emperor with a nun excited the animosity of the monks, who regarded marriage as an evil, and second marriages as a delict, is very natural; and it would, of course, supply a fertile source of calumnious gossip to the enemies of the Amorian dynasty.

Michael II died in October, 829, and was buried in a sarcophagus of green Thessalian marble, in the sepulchral chapel erected by Justinian in the Church of the Holy Apostles.

## Sect. II

### THEOPHILUS

A.D. 829-842

No emperor ever ascended the throne of Constantinople with greater personal and political advantages than Theophilus. His education had been the best the age could supply, and he possessed considerable talent and industry. The general direction of his education had been intrusted to John the Grammarian, one of the most accomplished as well as the most learned men of the time. In arts and arms, in law and theology, the emperor was equally well instructed: his taste made him a lover of poetry, music, and architecture; his courage rendered him a brave soldier, his sense of justice a sound legislator, but his theology made him a stern bigot; and a discontented temperament of mind prevented his accomplishments and virtues from producing a harmonious union. All acknowledged his merit, none seemed affectionately attached to his person; and in the midst of his power he was called the Unfortunate. During his father's lifetime he had been intrusted with an active share in the government, and had devoted particular attention to the ecclesiastical department. He embraced the party of the Iconoclasts with fervour; and though his father endeavoured to moderate his zeal, his influence seems to have produced the isolated acts of persecution during the reign of Michael, which were at variance with that emperor's general policy.

Theophilus observed that the population of the empire was everywhere suffering from the defects of the central government, and he was anxious to remedy the evil. He erroneously attributed the greatest part of the sufferings of the people to the corruption of the administration, instead of ascribing it to the fact that the central authorities assumed duties which they were unable to execute, and prevented local bodies, who could easily have performed these duties in an efficient manner, from attempting to undertake them. Theophilus, however, justly believed that a great reform might be effected by improving the administration of justice, and he set about the task with vigour; still many of his measures for enforcing equitable conduct on the part of the judges were so strongly marked with personality, that his severity, even when necessary, was stigmatised as cruel. He was in the habit of riding through the streets of Constantinople on a weekly visit to the church of St Mary at Blachern, in order to afford his subjects a public opportunity of presenting such petitions as might otherwise never reach his hands. The practice is perpetuated in the Othoman Empire to this day. The sultan pays a public visit to one of the principal mosques of his capital weekly for the same purpose. In both cases it may be received as a proof of the want of a better and more systematic control over the judicial administration of a mighty empire. There was no emperor, in the reign of Theophilus, to parade the streets of provincial towns, where control was most wanted; and there is no substitute for the sultan's procession to the mosque in the provincial cities of Turkey.

The first proof Theophilus gave of his love of justice was so strangely chosen, that it was represented as originating in the wish to get rid of some dangerous courtiers, rather than in a sense of equity. He assembled the senate, and, exhibiting to its astonished members the candelabrum of which one of the branches had been struck off at the assassination of Leo V, he demanded whether the laws of the empire and divine justice did not both call for the punishment of the men who had committed the double sacrilege of murdering their emperor, and shedding his blood before the altar. Some senators, prepared for the scene, suggested that, in order to avert the vengeance of Heaven, it was necessary to put the traitors to death. Theophilus immediately ordered the prefect of Constantinople to arrest every person concerned in Leo's assassination and bring them to trial, whether they belonged to the party of the image-worshippers or of the Greek ecclesiastics. They were all convicted, and executed in the Hippodrome, vainly protesting against the injustice of their sentence, since their deed had been ratified and pardoned by the Emperor Michael II, and the reigning emperor confirmed that ratification by enjoying the profit of their act.

Other examples of the emperor's severity were less liable to suspicion. A poor widow accused Petronas, the emperor's brother-in-law, an officer of talents and courage, of having, in violation of law, raised his house so high as to render hers almost uninhabitable from want of air and light. The laws concerning the disposition of private buildings in Constantinople were always regarded as an important object of imperial legislation. Theophilus ordered the grievance

to be redressed; but the complaint was subsequently reiterated, and the emperor discovered that his brother-in-law had disobeyed his decision. He now gave orders that the newly built house should be levelled with the ground, and condemned Petronas to be scourged in the public highway. Sometime after this, Petronas was appointed to the high post of governor of Cherson, and during the reign of his nephew, Michael III, he defeated the Saracens in an important battle in Asia Minor, as will be hereafter related. This anecdote illustrates the state of society at the Byzantine court, by the contrast it presents between the servile feelings of the Romans and Greeks of Constantinople, and the independent spirit of the Franks and Germans of Western Europe. In the Eastern Empire the shame of blows was nothing, and a bastinado inflicted on an emperor's brother-in-law, who retained his official rank, was not likely to be a very painful operation. The degradation of the punishment was effaced by the arbitrary nature of the power that inflicted it. The sense of justice inherent in mankind is always wounded by the infliction of arbitrary punishment; cruelty or caprice are supposed to dictate the sentence; the public attention is averted from the crime, and pity is often created when the sufferer really deserves to be branded with infamy.

On another occasion, as Theophilus rode through the streets, a man stepped forward, and, laying his hand on the horse the emperor was riding, exclaimed, "This horse is mine, O emperor!". On investigating the circumstances, it appeared that the horse had really been taken by force from its proprietor by an officer of rank, who wished to present it to the emperor on account of its beauty. This act of violence was also punished, and the proprietor received two pounds' weight of gold as an indemnity for the loss he had sustained. The horse was worth about one hundred byzants.

Theophilus was also indefatigable in examining the police details of the capital, and looking into the state of the markets. It is true that the abundance of provisions, and their price at Constantinople, was a matter of great importance to the Byzantine government, which, like the Roman, too often sacrificed the prosperity of the provinces to the tranquillity of the capital; yet still the minute attention which Theophilus gave to performing the duties of a prefect, indicate that he was deficient in the grasp of intellect required for the clear perception of the duties of an emperor.

The reign of Theophilus was an age of anecdotes and tales. It had many poetic aspirations, smothered in chronicles and legends of saints. Volumes of tales were then current which would have given us a better insight into Byzantine manners than the folios of the historians, who have preserved an outline of a few of these stories. Theophilus seems to have been a kind of Byzantine Haroun Al Rashid. Unfortunately the Iconoclasts appear to have embodied more of this species of literature in their habits than the orthodox, who delighted in silly legends concerning saints rather than in imaginative pictures of the deeds of men; and thus the mirror of truth has perished, while the fables that have been preserved are neglected from their unnatural stupidity.

Theophilus was unmarried when he ascended the throne, and he found difficulty in choosing a wife. At last he arranged with his stepmother, Euphrosyne, a project for enabling him to make a suitable selection, or at least to make his choice from a goodly collection. The empress-mother invited all the most beautiful and accomplished virgins at Constantinople to a fête in her private apartments. When the gaiety of the assembled beauties had removed their first shyness, Theophilus entered the rooms, and walked forward with a golden apple in his hand. Struck by the grace and beauty of Eikasia, with whose features he must have been already acquainted, and of whose accomplishments he had often heard, he stopped to address her. The proud beauty felt herself already an empress; but Theophilus commenced his conversation with the ungallant remark, "Woman is the source of evil", to which the young lady too promptly replied, "But woman is also the cause of much good". The answer or the tone jarred on the captious mind of the emperor, and he walked on. His eye then fell on the modest features of the young Theodora, whose eyes were fixed on the ground. To her he gave the apple without

risking a word. Eikasia, who for a moment had felt the throb of gratified ambition, could not recover from the shock. She retired into a monastery which she founded, and passed her life dividing her time between the practice of devotion and the cultivation of her mind. She composed some hymns, which continued long in use in the Greek Church. A short time after this, the Empress Euphrosyne retired into the monastery of Gastria, an agreeable retreat, selected also by Theodista, the mother of Theodora, as her residence.

Theodora herself is the heroine of another tale, illustrating the corruption of the officials about the court, and the inflexible love of justice of the emperor. The courtiers in the service of the imperial family had been in the habit of drawing large profits from evading the custom-duties to which other traders were liable, by engaging the emperor-colleague or the empress in commercial adventures. The revenue of the state and the commerce of the honest merchant both suffered by this aristocratic mode of trading. Theophilus, who knew of the abuse, learned that the young empress had been persuaded to lend her name to one of these trading speculations, and that a ship, laden with a valuable cargo in her name, was about to arrive at Constantinople. In order to put an end to these frauds by a striking example, he took care to be informed as this ship entered the port. When this vessel arrived, it displayed the imperial standard, and stood proudly towards the public warehouses with a fair wind. Theophilus, who had led the court to a spot overlooking the port, pretending to be struck by the gallant appearance of the vessel, demanded with what military stores she was laden, and whence she came. The truth was soon elicited, and when he obtained a full confession of the nature of the cargo, he ordered it to be landed and publicly burned; for he said, it was never heard that a Roman emperor or empress turned trader.

The principles of toleration which had guided the imperial administration during the preceding reigns were not entirely laid aside by Theophilus, and though his religious bigotry was strong, he preferred punishing the image worshippers for disobedience to the civil laws to persecuting them for their ecclesiastical opinions. The emperor's own prejudices in favour of the divine right of kings were as intolerant as his aversion to image-worship, so that he may really have acted as much on political as religious grounds. His father had not removed pictures from the walls of churches when they were placed in elevated situations; and had Theophilus followed his example, Iconoclasts and image worshippers might at last have accepted the compromise, and dwelt peaceably together in the Eastern Church. The monks, too, had been wisely allowed considerable latitude within the walls of their monasteries, though they were forbidden to preach publicly to the people in favour of image-worship. Theophilus was inclined to imitate the policy of Leo the Isaurian, but he could not venture to dissolve the refractory monasteries and imprison the monks. The government of the earlier Iconoclasts reposed on an army organised by themselves, and ready to enforce all their orders; but in the time of Theophilus, the army neither possessed the same power over society, nor was it equally devoted to the emperor.

In the year 832, an edict was issued prohibiting every display of picture-worship, and commanding that the word *holy*, usually placed in letters of gold before the name of a saint, should be erased. This edict was at times carried into execution in an arbitrary and oppressive manner, and caused discontent and opposition. A celebrated painter of ecclesiastical subjects, named Lazaros, who acquired great fame during the reign of Michael III, was imprisoned and scourged, but subsequently released from confinement at the intercession of Theodora. Two monks, Theophanes the Singer and Theodore Graptos, were much more cruelly treated, for, in addition to other tortures, some verses were branded on the forehead of Theodore, who from that circumstance received his surname of Graptos.

Sometime after the publication of this edict against image worship, John the Grammarian was elected Patriarch. Though a decided opponent of image-worship, he was a man of a larger intellect and more tolerant disposition than his imperial pupil, over whose mind, however, he fortunately retained considerable influence. Still, when the emperor found his edict unavailing,



he compelled the Patriarch to assemble a synod, which was induced to excommunicate all image-worshippers. As the Patriarch was averse to these violent proceedings, it can hardly be supposed that they produced much effect within the pale of the church; but they certainly tended to inflame the zeal of those marked out for persecution, and strengthened the minds of the orthodox to perform what they considered to be their duty, arming them with faith to resist the civil power. The spirit of religious strife was awakened, and the emperor was so imprudent as to engage personally in controversies with monks and priests. These discussions ruffled his temper and increased his severity, by exposing the lofty pretensions he entertained of his dignity and talents to be wounded by men who gloried in displaying their contempt for all earthly power. Theophilus sought revenge for his injured vanity. The monks who persisted in publicly displaying images and pictures were driven from their monasteries; and many members of the clergy, distinguished for learning and beloved for virtue, were imprisoned and scourged. Yet, even during the height of his resentment, the emperor winked at the superstition of those who kept their opinions private, tolerated the prejudices of the Empress Theodora, and at her request released Methodios, the future Patriarch of Constantinople, from prison.

The wealth of the Byzantine Empire was at this period very great, and its industry in the most flourishing condition, Theophilus, though engaged in expensive and disastrous wars, found the imperial revenue so much increased by the augmented commerce of his subjects, that he was able to indulge an inordinate passion for pomp and display. His love of art was gratified by the fantastic employment of rich materials in luxurious ornament, rather than by durable works of useful grandeur. His architectural taste alone took a direction at times advantageous to the public. The walls of Constantinople towards the sea were strengthened, and their height increased. He founded an hospital, which remained one of the most useful institutions of the city to the latest days of Byzantine history; but, at the same time, he gratified his love of display in architecture, by constructing palaces, at an enormous expense, in no very durable manner. One of these, built in imitation of the great palace of the caliphs at Bagdad, was erected at Bryas, on the Asiatic shore. The varied form, the peculiar arches, the coloured decorations, the mathematical tracery, and the rich gilding, had induced John the Grammarian, when he visited the Caliph Motassem as ambassador from Theophilus, to bring back drawings and plans of this building, which was totally different from the Byzantine style then in use. Other buildings constructed by Theophilus are described by historians in a way that indicates they must have been far superior in magnificence to the works of preceding or following emperors.

Theophilus was also an enthusiastic admirer of music, and as church-music was in his time one of the principal amusements of persons of taste, musical science was devoted to add to the grandeur and solemnity of ecclesiastical ceremonies. In works of art, the emperor's taste appears not to have been very pure. A puerile vanity induced him to lavish enormous sums in fabricating gorgeous toys of jewellery. In these ornaments, singular mechanical contrivances were combined with rich figures to astonish the spectator. A golden plane-tree, covered with innumerable artificial birds that warbled and fluttered their wings on its branches, vultures that screamed, and lions that roared, stood at the entrance of the hall of state. Invisible organs, that filled the ceilings of the apartments with soft melody, were among the strange things that Theophilus placed in the great palace of Constantinople. They doubtless formed the theme of many Byzantine tales, of which we still see a reflected image in the Arabian Nights.

Two laws of Theophilus deserve especial notice: one exhibits him in the character of a capricious tyrant; the other reveals the extent to which elements adverse to Roman and Greek nationality pervaded Byzantine society. The first of these edicts ordered all the Romans that is, all the subjects of the empire, to wear their hair cropped short, under the pain of the bastinado. Theophilus pretended that he wished to restore old Roman fashions, but the world believed that the flowing locks of others rendered him ashamed of his own bald head. The other law declared that the marriage of Persians and Romans did in no way derogate from the rights of those who were citizens of the empire; and it shows that a very great emigration of Persian Christians from the dominions of the caliphs must have taken place, or such a law would not have become

necessary. Theophobus, one of the most distinguished leaders of the Persians, who claimed descent from the Sassanides, married Helena, the emperor's sister.

The wide extended frontiers of the empire required Theophilus to maintain relations with the sovereigns of a large portion of Asia and Europe. To secure allies against his great enemy, the Caliph of Bagdad, he renewed the ancient alliance of the emperors of Constantinople with the sovereign of the Khazars; but this people was now too much occupied in defending its own territories against a new race of intruders, called Patzinaks, to renew their invasions of the northern provinces of the Mohammedan empire. The progress of the Patzinaks alarmed Theophilus for the security of the Byzantine commerce with the northern nations, from which the imperial treasury drew immense duties; and he sent his brother-in-law Petronas (whom, as we have mentioned, he had condemned to be scourged) to Cherson, which was then a free city like Venice, with orders to construct a fortress on the banks of the Don. This commercial colony, called Sarkel, was used as the trading depot with the north. A friendly intercourse was kept up with Louis le Debonnaire and his son Lothaire. The Venetians were invited to assist in the naval war for the defence of Sicily and southern Italy against the Saracens of Africa. An embassy was sent to Abderrahman II, the caliph of Spain, to secure the commerce of the Greeks in the West from any interruption, and to excite the Ommiad caliph to hostilities against the Abassides of Bagdad.

When Theophilus ascended the throne, the Byzantine and Saracen empires enjoyed peace; but they were soon involved in a fierce contest, which bears some resemblance to the mortal combat between the Roman and Persian empires in the time of Heraclius. Almamun, who ruled the caliphate from 813 to 833, was a magnificent and liberal sovereign, distinguished for his love of science and literature, and eager to surpass the Greeks in knowledge and the Romans in arms. Though not himself a soldier, his armies were commanded by several celebrated generals. The want of a moral check on the highest officials of arbitrary governments usually prevents the existence of a sense of duty in political relations, and hence rebellions and civil wars become prevalent. In the reign of Almamun, the disturbances in Persia reduced the population, whether fire-worshippers or Christians, to despair; and a great number, unable to live in their native country, escaped into the Byzantine Empire, and established themselves at Sinope. This immigration seems to have consisted chiefly of Christians, who feared equally the government of Almamun and the rebel Babek, who, though preaching the equality of all mankind, was accused of allowing every license to his own followers. The Persian troops at Sinope were placed under the command of Theophobos, and their number was increased by an addition of seven thousand men, when Afshin, the general of the Caliph Motassem, defeated Babek, and extinguished the civil war in Persia.

The protection granted by Theophilus to refugees from the caliph's dominions, induced Almamun to invade the empire in the year 831; and the Saracen general, Abu Chazar, completely defeated the Byzantine army, commanded by Theophilus in person. The emperor repaired this disgrace in the following year by gaining a victory over the Saracens in Charsiana, which he celebrated with great pomp and vainglory in the hippodrome of Constantinople. Almamun revenged the defeat of his generals by putting himself at the head of his army, ravaging Cappadocia, and capturing Heracleia.

The armies of the Byzantine Empire at this period consisted in great part of foreign mercenaries. Some secondary causes, connected with the development of society, which have escaped the notice of historians, operated to render the recruitment of armies more than usually difficult among the civilised portions of mankind, and caused all the powerful sovereigns of the age to exclude their native subjects as much as possible from the use of arms. In the Saracen Empire this feeling led to the transference of all military power into the hands of Turkish mercenaries; and in the Frank Empire it led to the exposure of the country, without defence, to the incursions of the Normans. It is true that jealousy of the Arab aristocracy in one case, and fear of the hostile disposition of the Romanised population in the other, had considerable

influence on the conduct of the caliphs and the Western emperors. The Byzantine Empire, though under the influence of similar tendencies, was saved from a similar fate by a higher degree of political civilization. The distrust of Theophilus for his generals was shown by the severity with which he treated them. Manuel, one of the best officers of the empire, disgusted at his suspicions, fled to the Saracens, and served with distinction in their armies against the rebels of Chorasán. Alexis Mousel, an Armenian, who received the favourite daughter of Theophilus in marriage, with the rank of Caesar, was degraded and scourged in consequence of his father-in-law's suspicions.

Immediately after the death of Almamun, the emperor sent John the Grammarian on an embassy to Motassem, who had succeeded his brother as caliph. The object of this embassy was to conclude a lasting peace, and at all events to persuade Manuel, whose fame in the war of Chorasán had reached the ears of Theophilus, to return home. With the caliph the negotiations appear not to have been as successful as the emperor expected, but with Manuel they succeeded perfectly. The magnificence of John on this occasion gave rise to many wonderful tales, and the Greeks were long amused by the accounts of the marvellous wealth displayed by the priestly ambassador.

Not very long after this embassy, Theophilus, availing himself of the troubles occasioned in the caliph's dominions by the civil wars arising out of the heretical opinions concerning the human composition of the Koran, which had been favoured by Almamun, invaded the caliph's dominions. The Byzantine troops ravaged the country to the south of Melitene, anciently called Commagene, defeated the Saracens with great loss, captured Zapetra, and penetrated as far as Samosata, which Theophilus also took and destroyed. Zapetra, or Sosopetra, lay about two days' journey to the west of the road from Melitene to Samosata. The Greeks pretended that it was the birthplace of Motassem, and that the caliph sent an embassy to the emperor entreating him to spare the town, which he offered to ransom at any price; but Theophilus dismissed the ambassadors and razed Zapetra to the ground. This campaign seems to have been remarkable for the cruelty with which the Mohammedans were treated, and the wanton ravages committed by the Persian emigrants in the Byzantine service. The Saracens repeated one of the tales in connection with this expedition which was current among their countrymen, and applied, as occasion served, from the banks of the Guadalquivir to those of the Indus. In Spain it was told of Al Hakem, in Asia of Motassem. A female prisoner, when insulted by a Christian soldier, was reported to have exclaimed in her agony, "Oh, shame on Motassem". The circumstance was repeated to the caliph, who learned at the same time that the unfortunate woman was of the tribe of Hashem, and consequently, according to the clannish feelings of the Arabs, a member of his own family. Motassem swore by the Prophet he would do everything in his power to revenge her.

In the meantime Theophilus, proud of his easy victories, returned to Constantinople, and instead of strengthening his frontier, and placing strong garrisons near the mountain passes, brought his best troops to Constantinople to attend on his own person. As he entered the hippodrome in a chariot drawn by four white horses, wearing the colours of the blue faction, his happy return was hailed by the people with loud shouts. His welcome was more like that of a successful charioteer than of a victorious general.

The Persian mercenaries, whose number had now increased to thirty thousand, were placed in winter-quarters at Sinope and Amastris, where they began to display a seditious spirit; for Theophilus could neither trust his generals nor acquire the confidence of his soldiers. These mercenaries at last broke out into rebellion, and resolved to form a Persian kingdom in Pontus. They proclaimed their general Theophobus king; but that officer had no ambition to insure the ruin of his brother-in-law's empire by grasping a doubtful sceptre; and he sent assurances to Theophilus that he would remain faithful to his allegiance, and do everything in his power to put an end to the rebellion. Without much difficulty, therefore, this army of Persians was gradually

dispersed through the different themes, but tranquillity was obtained by sacrificing the efficiency of one of the best armies in the empire.

Motassem, having also re-established tranquillity in the interior of his dominions, turned his whole attention to the war with the Byzantine Empire. A well-appointed army of veterans, composed of the troops who had suppressed the rebellion of Babek, was assembled on the frontiers of Cilicia, and the caliph placed himself at the head of the army, on the banks of the Cydnus, in the year 838. A second army of thirty thousand men, under Afshin, advanced into the empire at a considerable distance to the north-east of the grand army, under the immediate orders of the caliph. Afshin had suppressed the rebellion of Babek after it had lasted twenty years, and was considered the ablest general of the Saracens. On hearing that the army of Afshin had invaded Lykandos, Theophilus intrusted the defences of the Cilician passes, by which the caliph proposed to advance, to Aetios, the general of the Anatolic theme, and hastened to stop the progress of Afshin, whose army, strengthened by a strong body of Armenians under Sembat the native governor of the country, and by ten thousand Turkish mercenaries, who were then considered the best troops in Asia, was overrunning Cappadocia. Theophilus, apprehensive that this army might turn his flank, and alarmed lest the Armenians and Persians, of which it was part composed, might seduce those of the same nations in his service, was anxious to hasten an engagement. The battle was fought at Dasymon, where the Byzantine army, commanded by Theophobus and Manuel, under the immediate orders of Theophilus, attacked the Saracens. The field was fiercely contested, and for some time it seemed as if victory would favour the Christians; but the admirable discipline of the Turkish archers decided the fate of the day. In vain the emperor exposed his person with the greatest valour to recover the advantage he had lost; Manuel was compelled to make the most desperate efforts to save him, and induce him to retreat. The greater part of the Byzantine troops fled from the field, and the Persian mercenaries alone remained to guard the emperor's person. During the night, however, Theophilus was informed that the foreigners were negotiating with the Saracens to deliver him up a prisoner, and he was compelled to mount his horse, and ride almost unattended to Chiliokomon, where a portion of the native troops of the empire had rallied. From thence he retired to Donylaeum, where he endeavoured to assemble an army to defend Amorium, Manuel died of the wounds he received in saving the emperor.

While Theophilus was marching to his defeat, the advanced guard of the Caliph's army, under Ashnas and Wassif, threaded the Cilician passes in the direction of Tyana; and Aetios, unable to resist their advance, allowed the main body of the Saracens to penetrate into the central plains of Asia Minor without opposition. Abandoning the whole of the Anatolic theme to the invaders, he concentrated his forces under the walls of Amorium. After ravaging Lycaonia and Pisidia, Motassem marched to besiege Amorium. The capture of this city, as the birthplace of the Amorian dynasty, had been announced by the caliph to be the object of the campaign; and it was said that 130,000 men had marched out of Tarsus with AMORIUM painted on their shields. Motassem expected to carry the place by assault, and the defeat of Theophilus by his lieutenants inspired him with the hope of carrying his arms to the shores of the Bosphorus, and plundering the Asiatic suburb of Constantinople. But all his attempts to storm Amorium, though repeated with fresh troops on three successive days, were defeated by Aetios, who had thrown himself into the city with the best soldiers in his army, and the caliph found himself obliged to commence a regular siege. Theophilus now sued for peace. The bishop of Amorium and the leading citizens offered to capitulate, for the numerous army within the walls soon exhausted the provisions. But Motassem declared that he would neither conclude a peace nor grant terms of capitulation; vengeance was what he sought, not victory, Amorium was valiantly defended for fifty-five days, but treachery at length enabled the caliph to gratify his passion, just as he was preparing to try the fortune of a fourth general assault. The traitor who sold his post and admitted the Saracens into the city was named Voiditzes. In this case both the Christian and Mohammedan accounts agree in ascribing the success of the besiegers to treason in the Christian ranks, and the defence appears to have been conducted by Aetios both with skill and valour. The cruelty of Motassem far exceeded that of Theophilus. Thirty thousand persons were

massacred, and the inhabitants who were spared were sold as slaves. The city of Amorium was burned to the ground, and the walls destroyed. The ambassadors sent by Theophilus to beg for peace had been detained by the caliph, to witness his conquest. They were now sent back with this answer, "Tell your master that I have at last discharged the debt contracted at Zapetra".

Motassem, however, perceived that a considerable change had taken place in the empire since the days in which the Saracens had besieged Constantinople. He did not even consider it prudent to attempt advancing to the shores of the Bosphorus, but returned to his own dominions, carrying with him Aetios and forty officers of rank captured in Amorium. For seven years these men were vainly urged to embrace the Mohammedan faith; at last they were put to death by Vathek, the son of Motassem, and they are regarded as martyrs by the Orthodox Church. Theophilus is said to have offered the Caliph Motassem the sum of 2400 Ib. of gold to purchase peace, and the deliverance of all the Christians who had been taken prisoner during the war; but the caliph demanded in addition that a Persian refugee named Naser, and Manuel, of whose death he appears not to have been assured, should also be given up. Theophilus refused to disgrace himself by delivering up Naser, and the treaty was broken off. Naser was shortly after killed in an engagement on the frontier.

The war was prosecuted for some years in a languid manner, and success rather inclined to the Byzantine arms. The port of Antioch, on the Orontes, was taken and plundered by a Greek fleet; the province of Melitene was ravaged as far as Marash; Abou Said, who had defeated and slain Naser, was in turn himself defeated and taken prisoner. At last a truce seems to have been concluded, but no exchange of prisoners took place.

Theophilus never recovered from the wound his pride received at Amorium. The frequent defeats he sustained in those battles where he was personally engaged, contrasted with the success of his generals, rankled in his melancholy disposition. His sensitive temperament and the fatigues of his campaigns undermined his health. To divert his mind, he indulged his passion for building; and so great were the resources of the Byzantine treasury, that even at this period of misfortune he could lavish enormous sums in idle ornament it would have been well, both for him and for the Christian world, had he employed some of this wealth at an earlier period in fortifying the frontier and diminishing the burden of the land-tax. He now erected a new chapel called Triconchos, a circus for public races, a staircase called Sigma, a whispering gallery called the Mystery, and a magnificent fountain called Phiala. But the emperor's health continued to decline, and he perceived that his end was not very distant.

Theophilus prepared for death with prudence and courage, but with that suspicion which disgraced his character. A council of regency was named to assist Theodora. His habitual distrust induced him to exclude Theophobos from this council. He feared lest Theophobos might seize the throne by means of the army, or establish an independent kingdom in the Armeniac theme by means of the Persian mercenaries. The conspiracy on the night after the defeat at Dasymon had augmented the jealousy with which the emperor regarded his brother-in-law ever after the rebellion of the Persian troops at Sinope and Amastris. He now resolved to secure his son's throne at the expense of his own conscience, and ordered Theophobos to be beheaded. Recollecting the fortune of his father, and the fate of Leo the Armenian, he commanded the head of his brother-in-law to be brought to his bedside. The agitation of the emperor's mind, after issuing this order, greatly increased his malady; and when the lifeless head of his former friend was placed before him, he gazed long and steadily at its features, his mind doubtless wandering over the memory of many a battle-field in which they had fought together. At last he "slowly exclaimed, Thou art no longer Theophobos, and I am no more Theophilus", then, turning away his head, he sank on his pillow, and never again opened his lips.

## Sect. III

## MICHAEL III THE DRUNKARD

A.D. 842-867

Michael the son of Theophilus was between three and four years old when his father died. His mother Theodora, having been crowned empress, was regent in her own right. The will of her husband had joined with her, as a council of administration, Theoktistos, the ablest statesman in the empire; Manuel, the uncle of the empress; and Bardas, her brother. Thekla, an elder sister of Michael, had also received the title of Empress before her father's death.

The great struggle between the Iconoclasts and the image worshippers was terminated during the regency of Theodora, and she is consequently regarded by the orthodox as a pattern of excellence, though she countenanced the vices of her son, by being present at his most disgraceful scenes of debauchery. The most remarkable circumstance, at the termination of this long religious contest, is the immorality which invaded all ranks of society. The moral and religious sincerity and strictness which, during the government of the early Iconoclasts, had raised the empire from the verge of social dissolution to dignity and strength, had subsequently been supplanted by a degree of cant and hypocrisy that became at last intolerable. The sincerity of both the ecclesiastical parties, in their early contests, obtained for them the respect of the people; but when the political question concerning the subjection of the ecclesiastical to the civil power became the principal object of dispute, official tyranny and priestly ambition only used a hypocritical veil of religious phrases for the purpose of concealing their interested ends from popular scrutiny. As usual, the people saw much farther than their rulers supposed, and the consequence was that, both parties being suspected of hypocrisy, the influence of true religion was weakened, and the most sacred ties of society rent asunder. The Byzantine clergy showed themselves ready on all occasions to flatter the vices of the civil government: the monks were eager for popular distinction, and acted the part of demagogues; while servile prelates and seditious monks were both equally indifferent to alleviating the people's burdens.

Every rank of society at last proclaimed that it was weary of religious discussion and domestic strife. Indifference to the ecclesiastical questions so long predominant, produced indifference to religion itself, and the power of conscience became dormant; enjoyment was soon considered the object of life; and vice, under the name of pleasure, became the fashion of the day. In this state of society, of which the germs were visible in the reign of Theophilus, superstition was sure to be more powerful than religion. It was easier to pay adoration to a picture, to reverence a relic, or to observe a ceremony, than to regulate one's conduct in life by the principles of morality and the doctrines of religion. Pictures, images, relics, and ceremonies became consequently the great objects of veneration. The Greek population of the empire had identified its national feelings with traditional usages rather than with Christian doctrines, and its opposition to the Asiatic puritanism of the Isaurian, Armenian, and Amorion emperors, ingrafted the reverence for relics, the adoration of pictures and the worship of saints, into the religious fabric of the Eastern Church, as essentials of Christian worship. Whatever the church has gained in this way, in the amount of popular devotion, seems to have been lost to popular morality.

The senate at this time possessed considerable influence in administrative business. It was called upon to ratify the will of Theophilus, and a majority of its members were gained over to the party of the empress, who was known to favour image-worship. The people of Constantinople had always been of this party; and the Iconoclasts of the higher ranks, tired of

the persecutions which had been the result of the ecclesiastical quarrel, desired peace and toleration more than victory. The Patriarch, John the Grammarian, and some of the highest dignitaries in the church, were, nevertheless, conscientiously opposed to a species of devotion which they thought too closely resembled idolatry, and from them no public compliance could be expected. Manuel, however, the only member of the regency who had been a fervent Iconoclast, suddenly abandoned the defence of his opinions; and his change was so unexpected that it was reported he had been converted by a miracle. A sudden illness brought him to the point of death, when the prayers and the images of the monks of Studion as suddenly restored him to health. Such was the belief of the people of Constantinople, and it must have been a belief extremely profitable to the monks.

It was necessary to hold a general council in order to effect the restoration of image worship; but to do this as long as John the Grammarian remained Patriarch was evidently impossible. The regency, however, ordered him to convoke a synod, and invite to it all the bishops and abbots sequestered as image worshippers, or else to resign the patriarchate. John refused both commands, and a disturbance occurred, in which he was wounded by the imperial guards. The court party spread a report that he had wounded himself in an attempt to commit suicide, the greatest crime a Christian could commit. The great mechanical knowledge of John, and his studies in natural philosophy, were already considered by the ignorant as criminal in an ecclesiastic; so that the calumnious accusation, like that already circulated of his magical powers, found ready credence among the orthodox Greeks. The court seized the opportunity of deposing him. He was first exiled to a monastery, and subsequently, on an accusation that he had picked out the eyes in a picture of a saint, he was scourged, and his own eyes were put out. His mental superiority was perhaps as much the cause of his persecution as his religious opinions.

Methodios, who had been released from imprisonment by Theophilus at the intercession of Theodora, was named Patriarch, and a council of the church was held at Constantinople in 842, to which all the exiled bishops, abbots, and monks who had distinguished themselves as confessors in the cause of image worship were admitted. Those bishops who remained firm to their Iconoclastic opinions were expelled from their Sees, and replaced by the most eminent confessors. The practices and doctrines of the Iconoclasts were formally anathematised, and banished for ever from the Orthodox Church. A crowd of monks descended from the secluded monasteries of Olympus, Ida, and Athos, to revive the enthusiasm of the people in favour of images, pictures, and relics; and the last remains of traditional idolatry were carefully interwoven with the established religion in the form of the legendary history of the saints.

A singular scene was enacted in this synod by the Empress Theodora. She presented herself to the assembled clergy, and asked for an act declaring that the church pardoned all the sins of her deceased husband, with a certificate that divine grace had effaced the record of his persecutions. When she saw dissatisfaction visible in the looks of a majority of the members, she threatened, with frank simplicity, that if they would not do her that favour, she would not employ her influence as empress and regent to give them the victory over the Iconoclasts, but would leave the affairs of the church in their actual situation. The Patriarch Methodios answered, that the church was bound to employ its influence in relieving the souls of orthodox princes from the pains of hell, but, unfortunately, the prayers of the church had no power to obtain forgiveness from God for those who died without the pale of orthodoxy. The church was only intrusted with the keys of heaven to open and shut the gates of salvation to the living, the dead were beyond its help. Theodora, however, determined to secure the services of the church for her deceased husband. She declared that in his last agony Theophilus had received and kissed an image she laid on his breast. Although it was more than probable that the agony had really passed before the occurrence happened, her statement satisfied Methodios and the synod, who consented to absolve its dead emperor from excommunication as an Iconoclast, and admit him into the bosom of the orthodox church, declaring that, things having happened as the Empress Theodora certified in a written attestation, Theophilus had found pardon from God.

The victory of the image worshippers was celebrated by the installation of the long-banished pictures in the church of St. Sophia, on the 19th February, 842, just thirty days after the death of Theophilus. This festival continues to be observed in the Greek Church as the feast of orthodoxy on the first Sunday in Lent.

The first military expedition of the regency was to repress a rebellion of the Slavonians in the Peloponnesus, which had commenced during the reign of Theophilus. On this occasion the mass of the Slavonian colonists was reduced to complete submission, and subjected to the regular system of taxation; but two tribes settled on Mount Taygetus, the Ezerits and Melings, succeeded in retaining a certain degree of independence, governing themselves according to their own usages, and paying only a fixed annual tribute. For the Ezerits this tribute amounted to three hundred pieces of gold, and for the Melings to the trifling sum of sixty. The general who commanded the Byzantine troops on this occasion was Theoktistos Briennios, who held the office of protospatharios.

In the meantime Theoktistos the regent, anxious to obtain that degree of power and influence which, in the Byzantine as in the Roman Empire, was inseparable from military renown, took the command of a great expedition into Cholcis, to conquer the Abasges. His fleet was destroyed by a tempest, and his troops were defeated by the enemy. In order to regain the reputation he had lost, he made an attempt in the following year to reconquer the island of Crete from the Saracens. But while he was engaged in the siege of Chandax, (Candia,) the report of a revolution at Constantinople induced him to quit his army, in order to look after his personal interests and political intrigues. The troops suffered severely after they were abandoned by their general, whom they were compelled at last to follow.

The war with the caliph of Bagdad still continued, and the destruction of a Saracen fleet, consisting of four hundred galleys, by a tempest off Cape Chelidonia, in the Kibyrraiot theme, consoled the Byzantine government for its other losses. The caliph had expected, by means of this great naval force, to secure the command of the Archipelago, and assist the operations of his armies in Asia Minor. The hostilities on the Cilician frontier were prosecuted without any decided advantage to either party, until the unlucky Theoktistos placed himself at the head of the Byzantine troops. His incapacity brought on a general engagement, in which the imperial army was completely defeated, at a place called Mauropotamos, near the range of Mount Taurus. After this battle, an officer of reputation, (Theophanes, from Ferganah) disgusted with the severity and blunders of Theoktistos, deserted to the Saracens, and embraced Islamism. At a subsequent period, however, he again returned to the Byzantine service and the Christian religion.

In the year 845, an exchange of prisoners was effected on the banks of the river Lamus, a day's journey to the west of Tarsus. This was the first that had taken place since the taking of Amorium. The frequent exchange of prisoners between the Christians and the Mussulmans always tended to soften the miseries of war; and the cruelty which inflicted martyrdom on the forty-two prisoners of rank taken at Amorium in the beginning of this year, seems to have been connected with the interruption of the negotiations which had previously so often facilitated these exchanges.

A female regency was supposed by the barbarians to be of necessity a period of weakness. The Bulgarians, under this impression, threatened to commence hostilities unless the Byzantine government consented to pay them an annual subsidy. A firm answer on the part of Theodora, accompanied by the display of a considerable military force on the frontier, however, restrained the predatory disposition of King Bogoris and his subjects. Peace was re-established after some trifling hostilities, an exchange of prisoners took place, the commercial relations between the two states became closer; and many Bulgarians, who had lived so long in the Byzantine empire as to have acquired the arts of civilised life and a knowledge of Christianity,



returning to their homes, prepared their countrymen for receiving a higher degree of social culture, and with it the Christian religion.

The disturbed state of the Saracen Empire, under the Caliphs Vathek and Motawukel, would have enabled the regency to enjoy tranquillity, had religious zeal not impelled the orthodox to persecute the inhabitants of the empire in the south-eastern provinces of Asia Minor. The regency unfortunately followed the counsels of the bigoted party, which regarded the extinction of heresy as the most important duty of the rulers of the state. A numerous body of Christians were persecuted with so much cruelty that they were driven to rebellion, and compelled to solicit protection for their lives and property from the Saracens, who seized the opportunity of transporting hostilities within the Byzantine frontiers.

The Paulicians were the heretics who at this time irritated the orthodoxy of Constantinople. They were enemies of image worship, and showed little respect to the authority of a church establishment, for their priests devoted themselves to the service of their fellow-creatures without forming themselves into a separate order of society, or attempting to establish a hierarchical organization. Their social and political opinions were viewed with as much hatred and alarm by the ecclesiastical counsellors of Theodora, as the philanthropic principles of the early Christians had been by the pagan emperors of Rome. The same calumnies were circulated among the orthodox against the Paulicians, which had been propagated amongst the heathen against the Christians. The populace of Constantinople was taught to exult in the tortures of those accused of manicheanism, as the populace of Rome had been persuaded to delight in the cruelties committed on the early Christians as enemies of the human race.

From the time of Constantine V the Paulicians had generally enjoyed some degree of toleration; but the regency of Theodora resolved to consummate the triumph of orthodoxy, by a cruel persecution of all who refused to conform to the ceremonies of the established church. Imperial commissioners were sent into the Paulician districts to enforce ecclesiastical union, and every individual who resisted the invitations of the clergy was either condemned to death or his property was confiscated. It is the boast of orthodox historians that ten thousand Paulicians perished in this manner. Far greater numbers, however, escaped into the province of Melitene, where the Saracen emir granted them protection, and assisted them to plan schemes of revenge.

The cruelty of the Byzantine administration at last goaded the oppressed to resistance within the empire and the injustice displayed by the officers of the government induced many, who were themselves indifferent on the religious question, to take up arms against oppression. Karbeas, one of the principal officers on the staff of Theodotos Melissenos, the general of the Anatolic theme, hearing that his father had been crucified for his adherence to the doctrines of the Paulicians, fled to the emir of Melitene, and collected a body of five thousand men, with which he invaded the empire. The Paulician refugees were established, by the caliph's order, in two cities called Argaous, and Amara; but their number soon increased so much, by the arrival of fresh emigrants, that they formed a third establishment at a place called Tephrike, (Divrek), in the district of Sebaste, (Sivas,) in a secluded country of difficult access, where they constructed a strong fortress, and dwelt in a state of independence. Omar, the emir of Melitene, at the head of a Saracen army, and Karbeas with a strong body of Paulicians, ravaged the frontiers of the empire. They were opposed by Petronas, the brother of Theodora, then general of the Thrakesian theme. The Byzantine army confined its operations to defence; while Alim, the governor of Tarsus, having been defeated, and civil war breaking out in the Saracen dominions in consequence of the cruelties of the Caliph Motawukel, the incursions of the Paulicians were confined to mere plundering forays. In the meantime a considerable body of Paulicians continued to dwell in several provinces of the empire, escaping persecution by outward conformity to the Greek Church, and by paying exactly all the dues levied on them by the Byzantine clergy. The whole force of the empire was not directed against the Paulicians until some years later, during the reign of Basil I.

In the year 852, the regency revenged the losses inflicted by the Saracen pirates on the maritime districts of the empire, by invading Egypt. A Byzantine fleet landed a body of troops at Damietta, which was plundered and burned: the country round was ravaged, and six hundred female slaves were carried away.

Theodora, like her female predecessor Irene, displayed considerable talents for government. She preserved the tranquillity of the empire, and increased its prosperity in spite of her persecuting policy; but, like Irene, she neglected her duty to her son in the most shameful manner. In the series of Byzantine sovereigns from Leo III (the Isaurian) to Michael III, only two proved utterly unfit for the duties of their station, and both appear to have been corrupted by the education they received from their mothers. The unfeeling ambition of Irene and the heartless vanity of Theodora were the original causes of the folly of Constantine VI and the vices of Michael III. The system of education generally adopted at the time seems to have been singularly well adapted to form men of ability, as we see in the instances of Constantine V, Leo IV, and Theophilus, who were all educated as princes and heirs to the empire. Even if we take the most extended view of Byzantine society, we shall find that the constant supply of great talents displayed in the public service must have been the result of careful cultivation and judicious systematic study. No monarchical government can produce such a long succession of able ministers and statesmen as conducted the Byzantine administration during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. The remarkable deficiency of original genius during this period only adds an additional proof that the mind was disciplined by a rigid system of education.

Theodora abandoned the care of her child's education to her brother Bardas, of whose taste and talents she may have been a very incompetent judge, but of whose debauched manners she must have seen and heard too much. With the assistance of Theoktistos she arrogated to herself the sole direction of the public administration; and viewed with indifference the course of idleness and profligacy by which Bardas corrupted the principles of her son in his endeavour to secure a mastery over his mind. Both mother and uncle appear to have expected to profit by the young emperor's vices. Bardas soon became a prime favourite, as he not only afforded the young emperor every facility for gratifying his passions, but supported him in the disputes with the regency that originated on account of his lavish expenditure. Michael at last came to an open quarrel with his mother. He had fallen in love with Eudocia, the daughter of Inger, of the great family of the Martinakes, a connection which both Theodora and Theoktistos viewed with alarm, as likely to create a powerful opposition to their political influence. To prevent a marriage, Theodora succeeded in compelling Michael, who was then in his sixteenth year, to marry another lady named Eudocia, the daughter of Dekapolitas. The young debauchee, however, made Eudocia Ingerina his mistress, and, towards the end of his reign, bestowed her in marriage on Basil the Macedonian as a mark of his favour. She became the mother of the Emperor Leo VI, the Wise.

This forced marriage enabled Bardas to excite the animosity of Michael against the regency to such a degree that he was persuaded to sanction the murder of Theoktistos, whose able financial administration was so generally acknowledged that Bardas feared to contend openly with so honest a minister. Theoktistos was arrested by order of the young emperor, and murdered in prison. The majority of Michael III was not immediately proclaimed, but Bardas was advanced to the office of Master of the Horse, and assumed the direction of the administration. He was consequently regarded as the real author of the murder of Theoktistos.

Theodora, though her real power had ceased, continued to occupy her place as empress-regent; but in order to prepare for her approaching resignation, and at the same time prove the wisdom of her financial administration, and the value of the services of Theoktistos, by whose counsels she had been guided, she presented to the senate a statement of the condition of the imperial treasury. By this account it appeared that there was then an immense accumulation of specie in the coffers of the state. The sum is stated to have consisted of 109,000 lb. of gold, and 300,000 lb. of silver, besides immense stores of merchandise, jewels, and plate. The Empress

Theodora was evidently anxious to guard against all responsibility, and prevent those calumnious accusations which she knew to be common at the Byzantine court. The immense treasure thus accumulated would probably have given immortal strength to Byzantine society, had it been left in the possession of the people, by a wise reduction in the amount of taxation, accompanied by a judicious expenditure for the defence of the frontiers, and for facilitating the conveyance of agricultural produce to distant markets.

The Empress Theodora continued to live in the imperial palace, after the murder of Theoktistos, until her regency expired, on her son attaining the age of eighteen. Her residence there was, however, rendered a torture to her mind by the unseemly exhibitions of the debauched associates of her son. The eagerness of Michael to be delivered from her presence at length caused him to send both his mother and his sisters to reside in the Carian Palace, and even to attempt persuading the Patriarch Ignatius to give them the veil. After her banishment from the imperial palace, Theodora still hoped to recover her influence with her son, if she could separate him from Bardas; and she engaged in intrigues with her brother's enemies, whose secret object was his assassination. This conspiracy was discovered, and only tended to increase the power of Bardas. He was now raised to the dignity of curopalat. Theodora and the sisters of Michael were removed to the monastery of Gastria, the usual residence of the ladies of the imperial family who were secluded from the world. After the death of Bardas, however, Theodora recovered some influence over her son; she was allowed to occupy apartments in the palace of St. Mamas, and it was at a party in her rural residence at the Anthemian Palace that Michael was assassinated. Theodora died in the first year of the reign of Basil I; and Thekla, the sister of Michael, who had received the imperial title, and was as debauched in her manners as her brother, continued her scandalous life during great part of Basil's reign; yet Theodora is eulogised as a saint by the ecclesiastical writers of the Western as well as the Eastern church, and is honoured with a place in the Greek calendar.

Encouraged by the counsels and example of Bardas, Michael plunged into every vice. His orgies obtained for him the name of the Drunkard; but, in spite of his vicious conduct, his devotion to chariot-races and his love of festivals gave him considerable popularity among the people of Constantinople. The people were amused by his follies, and the citizens profited by his lavish expenditure. Many anecdotes concerning his vices have been preserved, but they are deserving of detailed notice only as proofs of the great demoralization then existing at Constantinople, for, as facts concerning Michael, it is probable they have received their colouring from the flatterers of the dynasty of his assassin. Michael's unworthy conduct, however, ultimately rendered him contemptible to all classes. Had the emperor confined himself to appearing as a charioteer in the Hippodrome, it would have been easily pardoned; but he carried his extravagance so far as to caricature the ceremonies of the orthodox church, and publicly to burlesque the religious processions of the clergy. The indifference of the people to this ribaldry seems doubly strange, when we reflect on the state of superstition into which the Constantinopolitans had fallen, and on the important place occupied by the Eastern Church in Byzantine society. Perhaps, however, the endeavours which had been made, both by the church and the emperors, to render church ceremonies an attractive species of public amusement, had tended to prepare the public mind for this irreverent caricature. It is always imprudent to trifle with a serious subject, and more especially with religion and religious feelings. At this time, music, singing, eloquence, magnificence of costume, and scenic effect, had all been carefully blended with architectural decoration of the richest kind in the splendid church of St. Sophia, to excite the admiration and engage the attention. The consequence was, that religion was the thing least thought of by the people, when they assembled together at ecclesiastical festivals. Their object was to enjoy the music, view the pageantry, and criticise the performers. Michael gratified the supercilious critics by his caricatures, and gave variety to the public entertainments by the introduction of comedy and farce. The necessity of this was felt in the Roman Catholic Church, which authorised similar saturnalia, to prevent the ground being occupied by opponents. The Emperor Michael exhibited a clever but very irreverent caricature of the ecclesiastical processions of the Patriarch and clergy of Constantinople. The masquerade

consisted of an excellent buffoon arrayed in the patriarchal robes, attended by eleven mimic metropolitan bishops in full costume, embroidered with gold, and followed by a crowd disguised as choristers and priests. This *cortège* accompanied by the emperor in person, as if in a solemn procession, walked through the streets of the capital singing ridiculous songs to psalm tunes, and burlesque hymns in praise of debauchery, mingling the richest melodies of Oriental church-music with the most discordant nasal screams of Greek popular ballads. This disgraceful exhibition was frequently repeated, and on one occasion encountered the real Patriarch, whom the buffoon saluted with ribald courtesy, without exciting a burst of indignation from the pious Greeks.

The depravity of society in all ranks had reached the most scandalous pitch. Bardas, when placed at the head of the public administration, took no care to conceal his vices; he was accused of an incestuous intercourse with his son's wife, while the young man held the high office of generalissimo of the European troops. Ignatius the Patriarch was a man of the highest character, eager to obtain for the church in the East that moral supremacy which the papal power now arrogated to itself in the West. Disgusted with the vices of Bardas, he refused to administer the sacrament to him on Advent Sunday, when it was usual for all the great dignitaries of the empire to receive the Holy Communion from the hands of the Patriarch, AD 857. Bardas, to revenge himself for this public mark of infamy, recalled to the memory of the young emperor the resistance Ignatius had made to Theodora's receiving the veil, and accused him of holding private communication with a monk who had given himself out to be a son of Theodora, born before her marriage with Theophilus. As this monk was known to be mad, and as many senators and bishops were attached to Ignatius, it would have been extremely difficult to convict the Patriarch of treason on such an accusation; and there appeared no possibility of framing any charge of heresy against him. Michael was, however, persuaded to arrest him on various charges of having committed acts of sedition, and to banish him to the island of Tenebinthos.

It was now necessary to look out for a new Patriarch, and the circumstances required that the successor of Ignatius should be a man of high character as well as talent, for the deposed Patriarch had occupied no ordinary position. His father and his maternal grandfather (Michael I and Nicephorus I) had both filled the throne of Constantinople; he was celebrated for his piety and his devotion to the cause of the church. But his party zeal had already raised up a strong opposition to his measures in the bosom of the church; and Bardas took advantage of these ecclesiastical dissensions to make the contest concerning the patriarchate a clerical struggle, without bringing the state into direct collision with the church, whose factious spirit did the work of its own degradation. Gregory, a son of the Emperor Leo V, the Armenian, was Bishop of Syracuse. He had been suspended by the Patriarch Methodios for consecrating a priest out of his diocese. During the patriarchate of Ignatius, the hereditary hostility of the sons of two rival emperors had perpetuated the quarrel, and Ignatius had probably availed himself with pleasure of the opportunity offered him of excommunicating Gregory as some revenge for the loss of the imperial throne. It was pretended that Gregory had a hereditary aversion to image-worship, and the suspicions of Methodios were magnified by the animosity of Ignatius into absolute heresy. This dispute had been referred to Pope Benedict III, and his decision in favour of Ignatius had induced Gregory and his partisans, who were numerous and powerful, to call in question the legality of the election of Ignatius. Bardas, availing himself of this ecclesiastical contest, employed threats, and strained the influence of the emperor to the utmost, to induce Ignatius to resign the patriarchate; but in vain. It was, therefore, decided that Photius should be elected Patriarch without obtaining a formal resignation of the office from Ignatius, whose election was declared null.

Photius, the chief secretary of state, who was thus suddenly raised to the head of the Eastern Church, was a man of high rank, noble descent, profound learning, and great personal influence. If we believe his own declaration, publicly and frequently repeated, he was elected against his will; and there seems no doubt that he could not have opposed the selection of the

emperor without forfeiting all rank at court, and perhaps incurring personal danger. His popularity, his intimate acquaintance with civil and canon law, and his family alliance with the imperial house, gave him many advantages in his new rank. Like his celebrated predecessors, Tarasios and Nicephorus, he was a layman when his election took place. On the 20th December 857, he was consecrated a monk by Gregory, archbishop of Syracuse; on the following day he became an anagnostes; the day after, a sub-deacon; next day he was appointed deacon; and on the 24th he received priest's orders. He was then formally elected Patriarch in a synod, and on Christmas-day solemnly consecrated in the church of St. Sophia.

The election of Photius, which was evidently illegal, only increased the dissensions already existing in the church; but they drew off the attention of the people in some degree from political abuses, and enabled Bardas to constitute the civil power judge in ecclesiastical matters. Ignatius and the leading men of his party were imprisoned and ill-treated; but even the clergy of the party of Photius could not escape being insulted and carried before the ordinary tribunals, if they refused to comply with the iniquitous demands of the courtiers, or ventured to oppose the injustice of the government officials. Photius soon bitterly repented having rendered himself the agent of such men as Bardas and Michael; and as he knew their conduct and characters before his election, we may believe the assertion he makes in his letters to Bardas himself, and which he repeats to the Pope, that he was compelled to accept the patriarchate against his wish.

In the meantime, Ignatius was allowed so much liberty by the crafty Bardas, who found Photius a less docile instrument than he had expected, that his partisans assembled a synod in the church of Irene for forty days. In this assembly Photius and his adherents were excommunicated. Bardas, however, declared in favour of Photius, and allowed him to hold a counter-synod in the Church of the Holy Apostles, in which the election of Ignatius was declared uncanonical, as having been made by the Empress Theodora in opposition to the protest of several bishops. The persecution of Ignatius was renewed; he was exiled to Mitylene, and his property was sequestered, in the hope that by these measures he would be induced to resign the patriarchal dignity. Photius, however, had the sense to see that this persecution only increased his rival's popularity, and strengthened his party; he therefore persuaded the emperor to recall him, and reinstate him in the possession of his private fortune. Photius must have felt that his own former intimacy with his debauched relation Bardas, and his toleration of the vices of Michael, had fixed a deep stain on his character in the eyes of all sincere Christians.

It was now necessary to legalize the election of Photius, and obtain the ratification of the deposition of Ignatius by a general council of the church; but no general council could be convoked without the sanction of the Pope. The Emperor Michael consequently despatched ambassadors to Rome, to invite Pope Nicholas I to send legates to Constantinople, for the purpose of holding a general council, to put an end to the dissensions in the Eastern Church. Nicholas appointed two legates, Zacharias and Rodoald, who were instructed to examine into the disputes concerning the patriarchate, and also to demand the restitution of the estates belonging to the patrimony of St. Peter in Calabria and Sicily, of which the papal See had been deprived in the time of Leo III.

The Pope, moreover, required the emperor to re-establish the papal jurisdiction over the Illyrian provinces, and recognise its right to appoint the archbishop of Syracuse, and confirm the election of all the bishops in the European provinces of the empire. The Popes were now beginning to arrogate to themselves that temporal power over the whole church which had grown out of their new position as sovereign princes; but they based their temporal ambition on that spiritual power which they claimed as the rock of St. Peter, not on the donation of Charlemagne. The truth is, that the first Christian emperors had laid a firm foundation for the papal power, by constituting the Bishop of Rome a kind of secretary of state for Christian affairs. He was employed as a central authority for communicating with the bishops of the provinces; and out of this circumstance it very naturally arose that he acted for a considerable period as a minister of religion and public instruction in the imperial administration, which

conferred immense power in a government so strictly centralised as that of the Roman Empire. The Christian emperors of the West, being placed in more direct collision with paganism than those of the East, vested more extensive powers, both of administration and police, in the Bishop of Rome, and the provincial bishops of the Western Church, than the clergy attained in the East. This authority of the bishops increased as the civil and military power of the Western Empire declined; and when the imperial city became a provincial city of the Eastern Empire, the popes became the political chiefs of Roman society, and inherited no small portion of the influence formerly exercised by the imperial administration over the provincial ecclesiastics. It is true, the Bishops of Rome could not exercise this power without control, but, in the opinion of a majority of the subjects of the barbarian conquerors in the West, the Pope was the legal representative of the civilisation of imperial Rome as well as the legitimate successor of St Peter, and the guardian of the rock on which Christianity was founded. Unless the authority of the popes be traced back to their original position as archbishops of Rome and patriarchs of the Western Empire, and the institutions of the papal church be viewed as they originally existed in connection with the imperial administration, the real value of the papal claims to universal domination, founded on traditional feelings, cannot be justly estimated. The popes only imitated the Roman emperors in their most exorbitant pretensions; and the vicious principles of Constantine, while he was still a pagan, continue to exert their corrupt influence over the ecclesiastical institutions of the greater part of Europe to the present day.

The popes early assumed that Constantine had conferred on the Bishop of Rome a supreme ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the three European divisions of his dominions, when he divided the empire into four prefectures. There were, indeed, many facts which tended to support this claim. Africa, in so far as it belonged to the jurisdiction of the European prefectures, acknowledged the authority of the Bishop of Rome; and even after the final division of the empire, Dacia, Macedonia, Thessaly, Epirus, and Greece, though they were separated from the prefecture of Illyricum, and formed a new province of the Eastern Empire, continued to be dependent on the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Pope. The Patriarch of Antioch was considered the head of the church in the East. Egypt formed a peculiar district in the ecclesiastical, as it did in the civil administration of the Roman Empire, and had its own head, the Patriarch of Alexandria. The Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople were modern creations. The bishop of Jerusalem, who had been dependent on the Patriarch of Antioch, received the honorary title of Patriarch at the council of Nicaea, and the Emperor Theodosius II conferred on him an independent jurisdiction over the three Palestines, the two Phoenicias, and Arabia; but it was not until after the council of Chalcedon that his authority was acknowledged by the body of the church, and it was then restricted to the three Palestines, A.D. 451.

The bishop of Byzantium had been dependent on the metropolitan or exarch of Heraclea before the translation of the imperial residence to his See, and the foundation of Constantinople. In the council held at Constantinople in 381, he was first ranked as Patriarch, because he was the bishop of the capital of the Eastern Empire, and placed immediately after the Bishop of Rome in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. St. Chrysostom and his successors exercised the patriarchal jurisdiction, both in Europe and Asia, over the Eastern Empire, just as the popes of Rome exercised it in the Western, yielding merely a precedence in ecclesiastical honour to the representative of St. Peter. In spite of the opposition of the bishops of old Rome, the bishops of new Rome thus attained an equality of power which made the popes tremble for their supremacy, and they regarded the Patriarchs of Constantinople rather as rivals than as joint rulers of the church. Their ambitious jealousy, joined to the aspiring arrogance of their rivals, caused all the evils they feared. The disputes between Ignatius and Photius now gave the Pope hopes of re-establishing the supremacy of Rome over the whole church, and of rendering the Patriarchs of the East merely vicegerents of the Roman See.

The Papal legates sent by Nicholas were present at a general council held at Constantinople in the year 861, which was attended by three hundred and eighteen bishops. Bardas and Photius had succeeded in securing the goodwill of the majority of the Eastern

clergy. They also succeeded in gaining the support of the representatives of the Pope, if they did not purchase it. Ignatius, who was residing in his mother's palace of Posis, was required to present himself before the council. He was deposed, though he appealed to the Pope's legates, and persisted in protesting that the council did not possess a legal right to depose him. It is said that a pen was placed forcibly between his fingers, and a cross drawn with it, as his signature to the act of deposition. He was then ordered to read his abdication, on the day of Pentecost, in the Church of the Holy Apostles; but, to avoid this disgrace, he escaped in the disguise of a slave to the Prince's Islands, and concealed himself among the innumerable monks who had taken up their abode in these delicious retreats. Bardas sent Oryphas with six galleys to examine every one of the insular monasteries in succession, in order to arrest the fugitive; but the search was vain. After the termination of the council, Ignatius returned privately to his maternal palace, where he was allowed to remain unmolested. The discussions of this council are said by its enemies to have been conducted in a very tumultuous manner; but as the majority was favoured by the Patriarch, the papal legates, and the imperial administration, it is not likely that any confusion was allowed within the walls of the council, even though the party of Ignatius was supported by the Empresses Theodora and Eudocia, and by the great body of the monks. The Emperor Michael, with great impartiality, refused to throw the whole weight of his authority in either scale. The truth is, that, being somewhat of a freethinker as well as a debauchee, he laughed at both parties, saying that Ignatius was the patriarch of the people, Photius the patriarch of Bardas, and Gryllos (the imperial buffoon) his own patriarch. Nevertheless, Ignatius was deposed, and the acts of the council were ratified by the papal legates.

The legates of the Pope certainly yielded to improper influence, for, besides approving the measures of the Byzantine government with reference to the patriarchate, they neglected to demand the recognition of the spiritual authority of the papal see in the terms prescribed by their instructions. They were consequently disavowed on their return to Rome. The party of Ignatius appealed to the Pope, who, seeing that no concessions could be gained from Michael, Bardas, or Photius, embraced the cause of the deposed Patriarch with warmth. A synod was convoked at Rome; Photius was excommunicated, in case he should dare to retain possession of the patriarchal chair, after receiving the papal decision in favour of Ignatius, A.D. 863. Gregory, the archbishop of Syracuse, who had ordained Photius, was anathematised, and declared a schismatic, as well as all those who held communion with him, if he continued to perform the sacerdotal functions. When the acts of this synod were communicated to Michael by papal letters, the indignation of the emperor was awakened by what he considered the insolent interference of a foreign priest in the affairs of the empire, and he replied in a violent and unbecoming letter. He told his Holiness that he had invited him to send legates to the general council at Constantinople, from a wish to maintain unity in the church, not because the participation of the Bishop of Rome was necessary to the validity of the acts of the Eastern Church. This was all very reasonable; but he went on to treat the Pope and the Latin clergy as barbarians, because they were ignorant of Greek. For this insult, however, the emperor received a sharp and well-merited rebuke from Pope Nicholas, who asked him why he styled himself Emperor of the Romans, if he thought the language of the Roman Empire and of the Roman church a barbarous one. It was a greater disgrace, in the opinion of the Pope, for the Roman emperor to be ignorant of the Roman language, than for the head of the Roman church to be ignorant of Greek.

Nicholas had nothing to fear from the power of Michael, so that he acted without the restraint imposed on Gregory II in his contest with Leo the Isaurian. Indeed, the recent success of the Pope, in his dispute with Lothaire, king of Austrasia, gave him hopes of coming off victorious, even in a quarrel with the Eastern emperor. He did not sufficiently understand the effect of more advanced civilisation and extended education on Byzantine society. Nicholas, therefore, boldly called on Michael to cancel his insolent letter, declaring that it would otherwise be publicly burned by the Latin clergy; and he summoned the rival Patriarchs of Constantinople to appear in person before the papal court, that he might hear and decide their differences.

This pretension of the Pope to make himself absolute master of the Christian church, awakened the spirit of resistance at Constantinople, and caused Photius to respond by advancing new claims for his See. He insisted that the Patriarchs of Constantinople were equal in rank and authority to the Popes of Rome. The disputes of the clergy being the only subject on which the government of the Eastern Empire allowed any expression of public opinion, the whole attention of society was soon directed to this ecclesiastical quarrel. Michael assembled a council of the church in 866, at which pretended representatives of the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem were present: and in this assembly Pope Nicholas was declared unworthy of his See, and excommunicated. There was no means of rendering this sentence of excommunication of any effect, unless Louis II, the emperor of the West, could be induced, by the hatred he bore to Nicholas, to put it in execution. Ambassadors were sent to urge him to depose the Pope, but the death of Michael suddenly put an end to the contest with Rome, for Basil I embraced the party of Ignatius.

The contest between Rome and Constantinople was not merely a quarrel between Pope Nicholas and the Patriarch Photius. There were other causes of difference between the two Sees, in which Ignatius was as much opposed to papal pretensions as Photius. Not to mention the old claim of Rome to recover her jurisdiction over those provinces of the Byzantine Empire which had been dissevered from her authority, a new conflict had arisen for supremacy over the church in Bulgaria. When the Bulgarian king Crumn invaded the empire, after the defeat of Michael I, he carried away so many prisoners that the Bulgarians, who had already made considerable advances in civilisation, were prepared, by their intercourse with these slaves, to receive Christianity. A Greek monk, Theodore Koupharas, who remained long a prisoner in Bulgaria, converted many by his preaching. During the invasion of Bulgaria by Leo V, a sister of King Bogoris was carried to Constantinople as a prisoner, and educated with care. The Empress Theodore exchanged this princess for Theodore Koupharas, and on her return she introduced the Christian religion into her brother's palace.

War subsequently broke out between the Bulgarian monarch and the empire, and Michael and Bardas made an expedition against the Bulgarians in the year 861. The circumstances of the war are not detailed; but in the end the Bulgarian king embraced Christianity, receiving the name of Michael from the emperor, who became his sponsor. To purchase this peace, however, the Byzantine emperor ceded to the Bulgarians all the country along the range of Mount Haemus, called by the Greeks Sideras, and by the Bulgarians Zagora, of which Debeltos is the chief town. Michael pretended that the cession was made as a baptismal donation to the king. The change in the religion of the Bulgarian monarch caused some discontent among his subjects, but their opposition was soon vanquished with the assistance of Michael, and the most refractory were transported to Constantinople, where the wealth and civilisation of Byzantine society produced such an impression on their minds that they readily embraced Christianity.

The Bulgarian monarch, fearing lest the influence of the Byzantine clergy on his Christian subjects might render him in some degree dependent on the emperor, opened communications with Pope Nicholas for the purpose of balancing the power of the Greek clergy by placing the ecclesiastical affairs of his kingdom under the control of the Latins. He expected also to derive some political support for this alliance, when he saw the eagerness of the Pope to drive the Eastern clergy out of Bulgaria, Pope Nicholas appears to have thought that Photius would have made great concessions to the papal See, in order to receive the pallium from Rome; but when that Patriarch treated the question concerning the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Eastern church in Bulgaria as a political affair, and referred its decision to the imperial cabinet, the Pope sent legates into Bulgaria, and the churches of Rome and Constantinople were involved in a direct conflict for the ecclesiastical patronage of that extensive kingdom. At a later period, when Ignatius was re-established as Patriarch, and the general council of 869 was held to condemn the acts of Photius, Pope Hadrian found Ignatius as little inclined to make any concessions to the papal See in Bulgaria as his deposed rival, and this subject remained a permanent cause of quarrel between the two churches.



Michael, though a drunkard, was not naturally deficient in ability, activity, or ambition. Though he left the ordinary administration of public business in the hands of Bardas, on whom he conferred the title of Caesar, which was then almost equivalent to a recognition of his title as heir-apparent to the empire, still he never allowed him to obtain the complete control over the whole administration, nor permitted him entirely to crush his opponents in the public service. Hence many officers of rank continued to regard the emperor, with all his vices, as their protector in office. Like all the emperors of Constantinople, Michael felt himself constrained to appear frequently at the head of his armies. The tie between the emperor and the soldiers was perhaps strengthened by these visits, but it can hardly be supposed that the personal presence of Michael added much to the efficiency of military operations.

The war on the frontiers of the Byzantine and Saracen empires was carried on by Omar, the emir of Melitene, without interruption, in a series of plundering incursions on a gigantic scale. These were at times revenged by daring exploits on the part of the Byzantine generals. In the year 856, Leo, the imperial commander-in-chief, invaded the dominions of the caliph. After taking Anazarba, he crossed the Euphrates at Samosata, and advanced with his army into Mesopotamia, ravaging the country as far as Amida. The Saracens revenged themselves by several plundering incursions into the different parts of the empire. To stop these attacks, Michael put himself at the head of the army, and laid siege to Samosata without effect. Bardas accompanied the emperor rather to watch over his own influence at court, than to assist his sovereign in obtaining military glory. The following year Michael was engaged in the campaign against the Bulgarians, of which the result has been already mentioned. In 860, he led an army of 40,000 European troops against Omar of Melitene, who had carried his plundering incursions up to the walls of Sinope. A battle took place in the territory of Dasymon, near the spot which had witnessed the defeat of Theophilus, and the overthrow of Michael was as complete as that of his father. The same difficulties in the ground which had favoured the retreat of Theophilus enabled Manuel, one of the generals of Michael, to save the army.

The war was still prosecuted with vigour on both sides. In 863, Omar entered the Armeniac theme with a large force, and took Amisus. Petronas, the emperor's uncle, who had now acquired considerable military experience and reputation as general of the Thrakesian theme, was placed at the head of the Byzantine army. He collected his forces at Aghionoros, near Ephesus, and when his army was reinforced by a strong body of Macedonian and Thracian troops, marched towards the frontier in several divisions, which he concentrated in such a manner as to cut off the retreat of Omar, and enclose him with an overwhelming force. The troops under Nasar, the general of the Boukelkrian theme, strengthened by the Armeniac and Paphlagonian legions, and the troops of the theme Koloneia, enclosed the Saracens on the north. Petronas himself, with the Thrakesian, Macedonian, and Thracian legions, secured the passes and advanced from the west; while the troops of the Anatolic, Opsikian, and Cappadocian themes, with the divisions of the Kleisourarchs of Seleucia and Charsiana, having secured the passes to the south, cut off the direct line of Omar's retreat. An impassable range of rocky mountains, broken into precipices, rendered escape to the eastward impracticable. The headquarters of Petronas were established at Poson, a place situated on the frontiers of the Paphlagonian and Armeniac themes, near the river Lalakon, which flows from the north to south. Omar had encamped in a plain without suspecting the danger lurking in its rugged boundary to the east. He suddenly found himself enclosed by the simultaneous advance of the various divisions of the Byzantine army, and closely blockaded. He attempted to escape by attacking each division of the enemy in succession, but the strength of the positions selected by the imperial officers rendered all his attacks vain. Omar at last fell in the desperate struggle; and Petronas, leading fresh troops into the plain to attack the weary Saracens, completed the destruction of their army. The son of Omar contrived to escape from the field of battle, but he was pursued and taken prisoner by the Kleisourarch of Charsiana, after he had crossed the Halys. When Petronas returned to Constantinople, he was allowed to celebrate his victory with great pomp and public rejoicings. The Byzantine writers estimated the army that was destroyed at 40,000, while the Arabian historians reduced their loss to only 2000 men. Public opinion in

the empire of the caliph, however, considered the defeat as a great calamity; and its real importance may be ascertained from the fact, that alarming seditions broke out against the government when the news reached Bagdad. After this victory, too, the eastern frontier enjoyed tranquillity for some time

In the year 865, a nation hitherto unknown made its first appearance in the history of the world, where it was destined to act no unimportant part. Its entrance into the political system of the European nations was marked by an attempt to take Constantinople, a project which it has often revived, and which the progress of Christian civilisation seems to indicate must now be realised at no very distant date, unless the revival of the Bulgarian kingdom to the south of the Danube create a new Slavonian power in the east of Europe capable of arresting its progress. In the year 862, Rurik, a Scandinavian or Varangian chief, arrived at Novgorod, and laid the first foundation of the state which has grown into the Russian empire. The Russian people, under Varangian domination, rapidly increased in power, and reduced many of their neighbours to submission. Oskold and Dir, the princes of Kiof, rendered themselves masters of the whole course of the Dnieper, and it would seem that either commercial jealousy or the rapacity of ambition produced some collision with the Byzantine settlements on the northern shores of the Black Sea; but from what particular circumstances the Russians were led to make their daring attack on Constantinople is not known. The Emperor Michael had taken the command of an army to act against the Saracens, and Oryphas, admiral of the fleet, acted as governor of the capital during his absence. Before the Emperor had commenced his military operations, a fleet of two hundred Russian vessels of small size, taking advantage of a favourable wind, suddenly passed through the Bosphorus, and anchored at the mouth of the Black River in the Propontis, about eighteen miles from Constantinople. This Russian expedition had already plundered the shores of the Black Sea, and from its station within the Bosphorus it ravaged the country about Constantinople, and plundered the Prince's Islands, pillaging the monasteries, and slaying the monks as well as the other inhabitants. The emperor, informed by Oryphas of the attack on his capital, hastened to its defence. Though a daring and cruel enemy, the Russians were by no means formidable to the strength and discipline of the Byzantine forces. It required no great exertions on the part of the imperial officers to equip a force sufficient to attack and put to flight these invaders; but the barbarous cruelty of the soldiers and sailors, and the wild daring of their Varangian leaders, made a profound impression on the people of Constantinople, suddenly rendered spectators of the miseries of war, in their most hideous form, in a moment of perfect security. We need not, therefore, be surprised to find that the sudden destruction of these dreaded enemies by the drunken emperor, of whom the citizens of the capital entertained probably even more contempt than he merited as a soldier, was ascribed to the miraculous interposition of the Virgin of the Blachern, rather than to the superior military tactics and overwhelming numbers of the imperial forces. How far this expedition of the Russians must be connected with the enterprising spirit of that vigorous band of warriors and pirates from Scandinavia, who, under the name of Danes, Normans, and Varangians, became the sovereigns of Normandy, Naples, Sicily, England, and Russia, is still a subject of learned discussion.

About the same time a fleet, manned by the Saracens of Crete, plundered the Cyclades, and ravaged the coast of Asia Minor, carrying off great booty and a number of slaves. It would seem that the absence of the Emperor Michael from Constantinople at the time of the Russian attack was connected with this movement of the Saracens.

Our conceptions of the manner in which the Byzantine Empire was governed during Michael's reign, will become more precise if we enter into some details concerning the court intrigues and personal conduct of the rulers of the state. The crimes and assassinations, which figure as the prominent events of the age in the chronicles of the time, were not, it is true, the events which decided the fate of the people; and they probably excited less interest among contemporaries who lived beyond the circle of court favour, than history would lead us to suppose. Each rank of society had its own robberies and murders to occupy its attention. The state of society at the court of Constantinople was not amenable to public opinion, for few knew

much of what passed within the walls of the great palace; but yet the immense machinery of the imperial administration gave the emperors' power a solid basis, always opposed to the temporary vices of the courtiers. The order which rendered property secure, and enabled the industrious classes to prosper, through the equitable administration of the Roman law, nourished the vitality of the empire, when the madness of a Nero and the drunkenness of a Michael appeared to threaten political order with ruin. The people, carefully secluded from public business, and almost without any knowledge of the proceedings of their government, were in all probability little better acquainted with the intrigues and crimes of their day than we at present. They acted, therefore, when some real suffering or imaginary grievance brought oppression directly home to their interests or their feelings. Court murders were to them no more than a tragedy or a scene in the amphitheatre, at which they were not present.

Bardas had assassinated Theoktistos to obtain power, yet, with all his crimes, he had great natural talents and some literary taste. He had the reputation of being a good lawyer and a just judge; and after he obtained power, he devoted his attention to watch over the judicial department as the surest basis of popularity. Nevertheless, we find the government of Michael accused of persecuting the wealthy, merely for the purpose of filling the public treasury by the confiscation of their property. This was an old Roman fiscal resource, which had existed ever since the days of the republic and whose exercise under the earlier emperors calls forth the bitterness of Tacitus in some of his most vigorous pages. After Bardas was elevated to the dignity of Caesar, his mature age gave him a deeper interest in projects of ambition than in the wild debauchery of his nephew. He devoted more time to public business and grave society, and less to the wine-cup and the imperial feasts. New boon-companions assembled round Michael, and, to advance their own fortunes, strove to awaken some jealousy of the Caesar in the breast of the emperor. They solicited the office of spies to watch the conduct of one who, they said, was aspiring to the crown. Michael, seeing Bardas devoted to improving the administration of justice, reforming abuses in the army, regulating the affairs of the church, and protecting learning, felt how much he himself neglected his duties, and naturally began to suspect his uncle. The reformation of the Caesar was an act of sedition against the worthless emperor.

The favourite parasite of Michael at this time was a man named Basil, who from a simple groom had risen to the rank of lord chamberlain. Basil had attracted the attention of the emperor while still a stable-boy in the service of an officer of the court. The young groom had the good fortune to overcome a celebrated Bulgarian wrestler at a public wrestling match. The impression produced by this victory over the foreigner, who had been long considered invincible, was increased by a wonderful display of his power in taming the wildest horses, for he possessed the singular natural gift of subduing horses by a whisper. The emperor took him into his service as a groom; but Basil's skill as a sportsman soon made him a favourite and a companion of one who showed little discrimination in the choice of his associates. At the imperial orgies, Basil's perseverance as a boon-companion, and his devotion to all the whims of the emperor, raised him quickly to the highest offices of the court, and he was placed in constant attendance on his sovereign. These favours awakened the jealousy of Bardas, who suspected the Macedonian groom of the power of whispering to Michael as well as to horses. At the same time it secured Basil the support of all the Caesar's enemies, who considered a drunken groom, even though he had risen to great power at court, as a person not likely to be their rival in ministerial offices.

Basil, however, soon received a very high mark of Michael's personal favour. He was ordered to divorce his wife and marry Eudocia Ingerina, who had long been the emperor's mistress; and it was said that the intercourse continued after she became the wife of the chamberlain. Every ambitious and debauched officer about the court now looked to the fall of Bardas as the readiest means of promotion. Symbatios an Armenian, a patrician and postmaster of the empire, who was the son-in-law of Bardas, dissatisfied with his father-in-law for refusing to gratify his inordinate ambition, joined Basil in accusing the Caesar of plotting to mount the throne. The emperor, without much hesitation, authorised the two intriguers to assassinate his uncle.

An expedition for reconquering Crete from the Saracens was about to sail. The emperor, the Caesar, and Basil all partook of the holy sacrament together before embarking in the fleet, which then proceeded along the coast of Asia Minor to Kepos in the Thrakesian theme. Here the army remained encamped, under the pretext that a sufficient number of transports had not been assembled. Bardas expressed great dissatisfaction at this delay; and one day, while he was urging Michael to give orders for the immediate embarkation of the troops, he was suddenly attacked by Symbatios and Basil, and murdered at the emperor's feet. Basil, who, as chamberlain, had conducted him to the imperial tent, stabbed him in the back.

The accomplished but unprincipled Bardas being removed, the project of invading Crete was abandoned, and Michael returned to the capital. On entering Constantinople, however, it was evident that the assassination of his uncle had given universal dissatisfaction. Bardas, with all his faults, was the best of Michael's ministers, and the failure of the expedition against Crete was attributed to his death. As Michael passed through the streets, a monk greeted him with this bitter salutation: "All hail, emperor! all hail from your glorious campaign! You return covered with blood, and it is your own!". The imperial guards attempted in vain to arrest the fanatic; the people protected him, declaring he was mad.

The assassination of Bardas took place in spring 866; and on the 26th of May, Michael rewarded Basil by proclaiming him his colleague, with the title of Emperor. Symbatios expected that his participation in his father-in-law's murder would have secured him the title of Caesar; but he soon perceived he had injured his own fortunes by his crime. He now sought to obtain by open force what he had failed to gain by private murder. He succeeded in drawing Peganes, who commanded the troops in the Opsikian theme, into his conspiracy. The two rebels took up arms, and proclaimed that their object was not to dethrone Michael, but to depose Basil. Though they drew together a considerable body of troops, rendered themselves masters of a great extent of country, and captured many merchant-ships on their passage to Constantinople, they did not venture to attack the capital. Their plan was ill concerted, for before the end of the summer they had allowed themselves to be completely surrounded by the imperial troops. Peganes was taken prisoner at Kotaëion, and conducted to Constantinople, where his eyes were put out. He was then placed in the Milion, with a platter in his hand, to ask charity from the passers-by. Symbatios was subsequently captured at Keltizene. When he reached Constantinople, he was conducted before Michael. Peganes was brought out to meet him, with a censer of earthenware filled with burning sulphur instead of incense. Symbatios was then deprived of one of his eyes, and his right hand was cut off. In this condition he was placed before the palace of Lausus, with a dish on his knees, as a common beggar. After exhibiting his rebellious officers in this position for three days, Michael allowed them to be imprisoned in their own houses. When Basil mounted the throne, they were pardoned as men no longer dangerous.

The degrading punishment, to which two men of the highest rank in the empire were subjected, made a deep impression on the people of Constantinople. The figure of Peganes, a soldier of high reputation, standing in the Milion, asking for an obolos, with a platter in his hand like a blind beggar, haunted their imagination, and, finding its way into the romances of the age, was borrowed to illustrate the greatest vicissitudes of court favour, and give colouring to the strongest pictures of the ingratitude of emperors. The fate of Peganes and Symbatios, woven into a tale called the Life of Belisarius, in which the interest of tragic sentiment was heightened by much historical and local truth, has gained immortality in European literature, and confounded the critical sagacity of eminent modern writers.

One of the few acts which are recorded of the joint reign of Michael and Basil was the desecration of the tomb of Constantine V (Copronymus). This base act was perpetrated to flatter a powerful party in the church, of which the leading members were hostile to Bardas, on account of his persecution of Ignatius. The precarious position of Photius after the murder of his patron, and the inherent subserviency of the Greek ecclesiastical dignitaries, made him ready to countenance any display of orthodoxy, however bigoted, that pleased the populace. The

memory of Constantine V was still cherished by no inconsiderable number of Iconoclasts. Common report still boasted of the wealth and power to which the empire had attained under the just administration of the Iconoclast emperors, and their conduct served as a constant subject of reproach to Michael. The people, however, were easily persuaded that the great exploits of Constantine V, and the apparent prosperity of his reign, had been the work of the devil. The sarcophagus in which the body of this great emperor reposed was of green marble, and of the richest workmanship. By the order of the drunken Michael and the Slavonian groom Basil, it was broken open, and the body, after having lain for upwards of ninety years in peace, was dragged into the circus, where the body of John the Grammarian, torn also from the tomb, was placed beside it. The remains of these great men were beaten with rods to amuse the vilest populace, and then burned in the Amastrianon, the filthiest quarter of the capital, and the place often used for the execution of malefactors. The splendid sarcophagus of Constantine was cut in pieces by order of Michael, to form a balustrade in a new chapel he was constructing at Pharos.

The drunkenness of Michael brought on delirium tremens, and rendered him liable to fits of madness. He observed that Basil's desire to maintain the high position he had reached produced the same reformation in his conduct which had been visible in that of Bardas. The Emperor Basil became a very different man from Basil the groom. The change was observed by Michael, and it rendered him dissatisfied with his colleague. In one of his fits of madness he invested another of the companions of his orgies, named Basiliskian, with the imperial title.

In such a court there could be little doubt that the three emperors, Michael, Basil, and Basiliskian, could not long hold joint sway. It was probably soon a race who should be the first murdered, and in such cases the ablest man is generally the most successful criminal. Basil, having reason to fear for his own safety, planned the assassination of his benefactor with the greatest deliberation. The murder was carried into execution after a supper-party given by Theodora to her son in the palace of Anthimos, where he had resolved to spend a day hunting on the Asiatic coast. Basil and his wife, Eudocia Ingerina, were invited by the empress-mother to meet her son, for all decency was banished from this most orthodox court. Michael, according to his usual habit, was carried from the supper-table in a state of intoxication, and Basil accompanied his colleague to his chamber, of which he had previously rendered the lock useless. Basiliskian, the third of this infamous trio, was sleeping, in a state of intoxication, on the bed placed in the imperial apartment for the chamberlain on duty. The chamberlain, on following his master, found the lock of the door useless and the bolts broken, but did not think of calling for assistance to secure the entrance in the palace of the empress-mother.

Basil soon returned, attended by John of Chaldia, a Persian officer named Apelates, a Bulgarian named Peter, Constantine Toxaras, his own father Bardas, his brother Marines, and his cousin Ayleon. The chamberlain immediately guessed their purpose, and opposed their entry into the chamber. Michael, disturbed by the noise, rose from his drunken sleep, and was attacked by John of Chaldia, who cut off both his hands with a blow of his sabre. The emperor fell on the ground. Basiliskian was slain in the meantime by Apelates. Constantine Toxaras, with the relatives of Basil, guarded the door and the corridor leading to the apartment, lest the officers of the emperor or the servants of Theodora should be alarmed by the noise. The shouts of the chamberlain and the cries of Michael alarmed Basil and those in the chamber, and they rushed into the corridor to secure their retreat. But the tumult of debauchery had been often as loud, and the cries of murder produced no extraordinary sensation where Michael was known to be present. All remaining silent without, some of the conspirators expressed alarm lest Michael should not be mortally wounded. John of Chaldia, the boldest of the assassins, returned to make his work sure. Finding the emperor sitting on the floor uttering bitter lamentations, he plunged his sword into his heart, and then returned to assure Basil that all was finished.

The conspirators crossed over to Constantinople, and having secured their entrance into the imperial palace by means of two Persians, Eulogios and Artabasd, who were on guard, Basil was immediately proclaimed sole emperor, and the death of Michael III was publicly

announced. In the morning the body of Michael was interred in a monastery at Chrysopolis, near the palace of Anthimos. Theodora was allowed to direct the funeral ceremonies of the son whom her own neglect had conducted to an early and bloody death.

The people of Constantinople appear to have taken very little interest in this infamous assassination, by which a small band of mercenary adventurers transferred the empire of the Romans from the Amorian dynasty to a Macedonian groom, whose family reigned at Constantinople for two centuries, with greater power and glory than the Eastern Empire had attained since the days of Justinian.

## CHAPTER IV

## STATE OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE DURING THE ICONOCLAST PERIOD

## Sect. I

## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DIPLOMATIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

IN ancient times, when the civilization of the Greek people had attained its highest degree of moral culture, the Hellenic race was assailed almost simultaneously by the Persians, Carthaginians, and Tyrrhenians. The victories obtained over these enemies are still regarded as the triumphs on which the political civilization of Europe, and of the great dwelling-place of liberty beyond the Atlantic, is based. The age of Leo the Isaurian found the government of the Byzantine Empire in a position not very dissimilar from that of the Greek race in the time of Miltiades. The Athenian people fought for the political progress of human civilization on the plain of Marathon. Leo battled for the empire of law and administration behind the walls of Constantinople; the victory of Miltiades secured only one hundred and fifty years of liberty to the Greeks, that of the Iconoclast gave nearly five centuries of despotic power to a system hostile to the development of the human intellect. The voice of fame has conferred immortal glory on the doubtful virtues of the Athenian general, and treated with neglect the profound statesmanship of the stern Isaurian sovereign; and it has done so not unjustly, for the gratitude of all succeeding ages is due to those who extend the political ideas of mankind, whereas those who only preserve property must be satisfied with the applause of the proprietors. Nevertheless the Iconoclast period of Byzantine history presents a valuable study to the historian, both in what it did and what it left undone in the greatness of the Imperial administration, and the littleness of the people who were its subjects.

The Byzantine Empire passed through a more dangerous ordeal than classic Greece, inasmuch as patriotism is a surer national bulwark than mechanical administration. The struggle for the preservation of Constantinople from the Saracens awakens no general feelings and noble aspirations; it only teaches those who examine history as political philosophers, what social and administrative tendencies a free people ought carefully to avoid. On this subject the scanty annals of the Greek people, as slaves of the Byzantine emperors, though far from an attractive chapter in history, are filled with much premonitory instruction for nations in an advanced social condition.

Neither the emperors of Constantinople, though they styled themselves Emperors of the Romans, nor their subjects, though calling themselves Roman citizens, sought at this period to identify themselves with the reminiscences of the earlier Roman Empire. The Romans of Italy and the Greeks of Hellas had both now fallen very low in public opinion. Constantinople, as a Christian capital, claimed to be the mistress of a new world, and the emperors of the East considered themselves masters of all the territories of pagan Rome, because the dominion over all Christians was a right inherent in the emperor of the orthodox. But Constantinople was founded as an antagonist to old Rome, and this antagonism has always been a portion of its existence. As a Christian city, its church and its ecclesiastical language always stood in

opposition to the church and ecclesiastical language of Rome. The thoughts of the one were never transferred in their pure conception to the mind of the other. For several centuries Latin was the language of the court, of the civil government, and of the higher ranks of society at Constantinople. In the time of Leo III, and during the Byzantine Empire, Greek was the language of the administration and the people, as well as of the church, but we are not to suppose, from that circumstance, that the inhabitants of the city considered themselves as Greeks by descent. Even by the populace the term would have been looked upon as one of reproach, applicable as a national appellation only to the lower orders of society in the Hellenic themes. The people of Constantinople, and of the Byzantine Empire at large, in their civil capacity, were Romans, and in their religious, orthodox Christians; in no social relation, whether of race or nationality, did they consider themselves Greeks.

At the time of the succession of Leo III, the Hellenic race occupied a very subordinate position in the empire. The predominant influence in the political administration was in the hands of Asiatics, and particularly of Armenians, who filled the highest military commands. The family of Leo the Isaurian was said to be of Armenian descent; Nicephorus I was descended from an Arabian family; Leo V was an Armenian; Michael II, the founder of the Amorian dynasty, was of a Phrygian stock. So that for a century and a half, the Empress Irene appears to be the only sovereign of pure Greek blood who occupied the imperial throne, though it is possible that Michael Rhangabé was an Asiatic Greek. Of the numerous rebels who assumed the title of Emperor, the greater part were Armenians. Indeed, Kosmas, who was elected by the Greeks when they attacked Constantinople in the year 727, was the only rebel of the Greek nation who attempted to occupy the throne for a century and a half. Artabasdos, who rebelled against his brother-in-law, Constantine V, was an Armenian. Alexis Mousel, strangled by order of Constantine VI in the year 790; Bardan, called the Turk, who rebelled against Nicephorus I; Arsaber, the father-in-law of Leo V, convicted of treason in 808; and Thomas, who revolted against Michael II, were all Asiatics, and most of them Armenians. Another Alexis Mousel, who married Maria, the favourite daughter of Theophilus; Theophobos, the brother-in-law of the same emperor; and Manuel, who became a member of the council of regency at his death, were likewise of foreign Asiatic descent. Many of the Armenians in the Byzantine Empire at this time belonged to the oldest and most illustrious families of the Christian world, and their connection with the remains of Roman society at Constantinople, in which the pride of birth was cherished, is a proof that Asiatic influence had eclipsed Roman and Greek in the government of the empire. Before this happened the Roman aristocracy transplanted to Constantinople must have become nearly extinct. The names which appear as belonging to the aristocracy of Constantinople, when it became thoroughly Greek, make their first appearance under the Iconoclasts; and the earliest are those of Doukas, Skleros, and Melissenos. The order introduced into society by the political and ecclesiastical reforms of Leo III, gave a permanence to high birth and great wealth, which constituted henceforth a claim to high office. A degree of certainty attended the transmission of all social advantages which never before existed in the Roman Empire. This change would alone establish the fact that the reforms of Leo III had rendered life and property more secure, and consequently circumscribed the arbitrary power of preceding emperors by stricter forms of administrative and legal procedure. An amusing instance of the influence of aristocratic and Asiatic prejudices at Constantinople, will appear in the eagerness displayed by Basil I, a Slavonian groom from Macedonia, to claim descent from the Armenian royal family. The defence of this absurd pretension is given by his grandson, Constantine VII (Porphyrogenitus.)

It is difficult to draw an exact picture of the Byzantine government at this period, for facts can easily be collected, which, if viewed in perfect isolation, would, according to our modern ideas, warrant the conclusion, either that it was a tyrannical despotism, or a mild legal monarchy. The personal exercise of power by the emperor, in punishing his officers with death and stripes, without trial, and his constant interference with the administration of justice, contrast strongly with the boldness displayed by the monks and clergy in opposing his power. In order to form a correct estimate of the real position occupied by the Byzantine empire in the



progressive improvement of the human race, it is necessary to compare it, on one hand, with the degraded Roman empire which it replaced; and on the other with the arbitrary government of the Mohammedans, and the barbarous administration of the northern nations, which it resisted. The regularity of its civil, financial, and judicial administration, the defensive power of its military and naval establishments, are remarkable in an age of temporary measures and universal aggression. The state of education and the moral position of the clergy certainly offer favourable points of comparison, even with the brilliant empires of Haroun Al Rashid and Charlemagne. On the other hand, fiscal rapacity was the incurable canker of the Byzantine, as it had been of the Roman government. From it arose all those precautionary measures which reduced society to a stationary condition. No class of men was invested with a constitutional or legal authority to act as defenders of the people's rights against the fiscalty of the imperial administration. Insurrection, rebellion, and revolution were the only means of obtaining either reform or justice, when the interests of the treasury were concerned. Yet even in this branch of its administration no other absolute government ever displayed equal prudence and honesty. Respect for the law was regarded by the emperors as self-respect; and the power possessed by the clergy, who in some degree participated in popular feelings, contributed to temper and restrain the exercise of arbitrary rule.

Yet the Byzantine Empire, however superior it might be to contemporary governments, presents points of resemblance, which prove that the social condition of its population was in no inconsiderable degree affected by some general causes operating on the general progress of human civilization in the East and the West. The seventh century was a period of disorganization in the Eastern Empire, and of anarchy in all the kingdoms formed out of the provinces of the Western. Even throughout the dominions of the Saracens, in spite of the power and energy of the central administration of the caliphs, the nations under its rule were in a declining state.

The first step towards the constitution of modern society, which renders all equal in the eye of the law, was made at Constantinople about the commencement of the eighth century. The reign of Leo III opens a new social era for mankind, as well as for the Eastern Empire; for when he reorganised the frame of Roman society, he gave it the seeds of the peculiar features of modern times. Much of this amelioration is, without doubt, to be attributed to the abilities of the Iconoclast emperors; but something may be traced to the infusion of new vigour into society from popular feelings, of which it is difficult to trace the causes or the development. The Byzantine Empire, though it regained something of the old Roman vigour at the centre of its power, was unable to prevent the loss of several provinces; and Basil I succeeded to an empire of smaller extent than Leo III, although to one that was far richer and more powerful. The exarchate of Ravenna, Rome, Crete, and Sicily had passed under the dominion of hostile states. Venice had become completely independent. On the other hand it must be remembered, that in 717 the Saracens occupied the greater part of Asia Minor and Cyprus, from both which they had been almost entirely expelled before 867. The only conquest of which the emperors of Constantinople could boast was the complete subjugation of the allied city of Cherson to the central administration. Cherson had hitherto enjoyed a certain degree of political independence which had for centuries secured its commercial prosperity. Its local freedom was destroyed in the time of Theophilus, who sent his brother-in-law Petronas to occupy it with an army, and govern it as an Imperial province. The power of the emperor was, however, only momentarily increased by the destruction of the liberties of Cherson; the city fell rapidly from the degree of wealth and energy which had enabled it to afford military aid to Constantine the Great, and to resist the tyranny of Justinian II, and lost much of its commercial importance.

Historians generally speak of the Byzantine Empire at this period as if it had been destitute of military power. Events as far removed from one another, in point of time, as our own misfortunes in India at the Black Hole of Calcutta, and the massacre of Kabul, are cited to prove that the Byzantine government was incapable, and the Byzantine army feeble and unwarlike. The truth is this, the Byzantine Empire was a highly civilised society, and

consequently its tendencies were essentially defensive when those of the rest of the world were aggressive. The Saracens, Franks, and Bulgarians were nations devoted to war, and yet the Byzantine Empire effectually resisted and long outlived these empires of warriors. No contemporary government possessed a permanent military establishment so perfectly organised as the emperor of Constantinople, nor could any bring into the field, on a sudden exigency, a better appointed army. The caliphs had the power of deluging the frontier provinces with larger bodies of light troops than could be prevented from plundering the country, for the imperial armies were compelled to act on the defensive in order to secure the fortified towns, and defensive warfare can rarely protect all the assailable points of an extensive frontier. Whole provinces were therefore often laid waste and depopulated; yet, under the Iconoclast emperors, the Byzantine territories increased in prosperity. The united attacks of the Saracens, Bulgarians, and Franks inflicted trifling evils on the Byzantine Empire, compared with what the predatory incursions of small bands of Normans inflicted on the empire of the successors of Charlemagne, or the incessant rebellions and civil wars on the dominions of the caliphs.

The Saracens devoted all the immense wealth of their empire to their military establishment, and they were certainly more formidable enemies to the Byzantine emperors than the Parthians had been to the Romans; yet the emperors of Constantinople resisted these powerful enemies most successfully. The Saracen troops were no way inferior to the Byzantine in arms, discipline, artillery, and military science; their cavalry was mailed from head to foot, each horseman bearing a lance, a scimitar, and a bow slung over his shoulder. Their discipline was of the strictest kind, and their armies moved not only with catapults and military engines for field service, but also with all the materials and machines requisite for besieging cities. Under Kassim a band of six thousand men ventured to invade India; yet the caliphs never thought of encountering the Byzantine army unless with immense numbers of their chosen warriors; and they sustained more signal defeats from the emperors of Constantinople than from all the other enemies they encountered together. The bloody contests and hard-fought battles with the armies of the caliphs in Asia Minor, entitle the Byzantine army to rank for several centuries as one of the best the world has ever seen.

The Bulgarians were likewise dangerous enemies. Their continual wars gave them no mean knowledge of military science; and the individual soldiers, from their habits of life, possessed the greatest activity and powers of endurance. In the wars at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries they fought completely armed in steel, and possessed military engines of every kind then known. We have the testimony of a Byzantine writer, that the armies of Crumm were supplied with every warlike machine discovered by the engineering knowledge of the Romans.

In all the scientific departments of war, in the application of mechanical and chemical skill to the art of destruction, and in the construction of engines for the attack and defence of fortresses, there can be no doubt that the Byzantine engineers were no way inferior to the Roman; for in the arsenals of Constantinople, the workmen and the troops had been uninterruptedly employed from generation to generation in executing and improving the same works. Only one important invention seems to have been made, which changed, in some degree, the art of defence on shore, and of attack at sea: this was the discovery of Greek fire, and the method of launching it to a certain distance from brazen tubes.

The aristocracy of the Byzantine Empire, though not exclusively devoted to war, like the nobility of other contemporary nations, was still deeply imbued with the military spirit. No people can boast of a greater number of warlike sovereigns than the Byzantine Empire, from the accession of Leo III to the death of Michael III. During this period of a century and a half, not one of the emperors failed to appear at the head of the army; and Leo III, Constantine V, Leo V, Michael II, and Theophilus, were experienced generals; the careless Constantine VI and the debauched Michael III appeared to greater advantage in the camp than in the capital; and it was

only the weak, religious persecutor, Michael Rhangabé, who was absolutely contemptible as a soldier.

Amidst this military energy, nothing seems more remarkable than the indifference with which the loss of central Italy, and the islands of Crete and Sicily, was viewed by the Byzantine government. It would seem that the value of these distant provinces was estimated at Constantinople solely by the amount of revenue they produced to the imperial treasury, and that when the expenses of a province absorbed all its revenues, or its reconquest was found to entail a degree of outlay that was never likely to be repaid, the emperors were often indifferent at the loss.

The foundation of the Frank Empire by Charles Martel very nearly corresponds with the organization of the Byzantine by Leo III. The invasion of Italy by Pepin, A.D. 754, and the temporal authority conceded to the popes, compelled the Byzantine emperors to enter into negotiations with Charlemagne on a footing of equality. The importance of maintaining friendly relations with Constantinople is said by Eginhard to have influenced Charlemagne in affecting to receive the imperial crown from the Pope by surprise; he wished to be able to plead that his election as emperor of the West was unsought on his part. Interest silenced pride on both sides, and diplomatic relations were established between the two emperors of the East and the West; embassies and presents were sent from Constantinople to Charlemagne and his successors, treaties were concluded and the Byzantine government became in some degree connected with the international system of medieval Europe. The superiority still held by the court of Constantinople in public opinion, is manifest in the Greek salutations with which the Pope flattered Charlemagne at the commencement of his letters; yet Greek official salutations had only lately supplanted Latin at Constantinople itself.

The political alliances and diplomatic relations of the Byzantine court were very extensive; but the most important were those with the Khan of the Khazars, who ruled all the northern shores of the Caspian Sea, and with the Omniad caliphs of Spain. Scandinavian ambassadors who had passed through Russia visited the splendid court of Theophilus; but their mission related rather to mercantile questions, or to the manner of furnishing recruits to the mercenary legions at Constantinople, than to political alliance.

The remarkable embassy of John the Grammarian, who was sent by Theophilus as ambassador to the Caliph Motassem, deserves particular notice, as illustrating the external character of Byzantine diplomacy. The avowed object of the mission was to conclude a treaty of peace, but the ambassador had secret instructions to employ every art of persuasion to induce Manuel, one of the ablest generals of the empire, who had distinguished himself greatly in the civil wars of the Saracens, to return to his allegiance. The personal qualities of John rendered him peculiarly well suited to this embassy. To great literary attainments he joined a degree of scientific knowledge, which gained him the reputation of a magician, and he was perfectly acquainted with the Arabic language. All these circumstances insured him a good reception at the court of Bagdad, which had been so lately and so long governed by the Caliph Almamun, one of the greatest encouragers of science and literature who ever occupied a throne. The Byzantine ambassador was equally celebrated for his knowledge of medicine, architecture, mechanics, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, and astrology; and probably even the Caliph Motassem, though a free-thinker, and a disbeliever in the divine origin of the Koran, shared so much of the popular belief as to credit the tale that the learned Christian priest could read the secrets of futurity in a brazen basin, and felt great curiosity to converse with a man who possessed this rare gift of brazen magnetism.

On quitting Constantinople, John was furnished with the richest furniture, splendid carpets, damasked silk hangings, and plate chased and inlaid with the most beautiful ornaments, taken from the imperial palaces, to which was added 400 lb. of gold for the current expenses of the embassy.

According to the usage of the East, the ambassador was lodged at Bagdad in a palace furnished by the caliph. The magnificent style in which the diplomatic priest installed himself in the apartments he reserved for his own use made a sensation at the court of Motassem, though many then living had witnessed the splendour of Haroun Al Rashid. This lavish display of wealth was better adapted to gratify the vanity of Theophilus than to advance the conclusion of a lasting peace. If we could place implicit confidence in the stories recorded by the Byzantine writers, of various tricks to which the ambassador resorted in order to augment the wonder of the Saracen nobles at the enormous wealth of the Christians, we should be inclined to question the judgment of John himself. His conduct could only have originated in personal pride; and the course attributed to him would have been more likely to excite the Mohammedans to active warfare, where they had prospect of plundering so rich an enemy, than of persuading them to conclude a treaty of peace.

One anecdote, dwelt on with peculiar satisfaction, deserves to be recorded. John possessed a splendid golden basin and ewer, richly chased and ornamented with jewels, and of this he made a great display. Throughout the East, and in many parts of European Turkey at the present day, where knives and forks are not yet in use, it is the practice to wash the hands immediately before commencing a meal, and on rising from the table. A servant pours water from a ewer over the hands of the guest, while another holds a basin to receive it as it falls. This, being done by each guest in turn, would leave ample time for observing the magnificent golden utensils of John at the entertainments he was in the habit of giving to the leading men in Bagdad. At a grand entertainment given by the Byzantine ambassador to the principal nobility of the caliph's court, the slaves rushed into the hall where the guests were assembled, and informed John, in a state of great alarm, that his magnificent golden basin was not to be found. The Saracens eagerly suggested measures for its recovery; but John treated the affair with indifference, and calmly ordered his steward to give the slaves another. Soon two slaves appeared, one bearing in his hand a golden ewer, and the other a basin, larger and more valuable, if not more elegant, than that which it was supposed had been stolen. These had been hitherto kept concealed, on purpose to attract public attention by this pitiful trick.

John, however, gained the respect of the Saracens by his disinterested conduct, for he declined to receive any present of value for himself, even from the caliph. Motassem, therefore, presented him with a hundred Christian captives; but even then he sent immediately to Theophilus, to beg him to return a like number of Saracen prisoners to the caliph. No general exchange of prisoners, however, appears to have been effected at the time of this embassy, which, with other circumstances, affords a proof that the avowed object of the embassy totally failed. When John returned to Constantinople, he persuaded the Emperor Theophilus to construct the palace of Bryas in the varied style of Saracenic architecture, of which those who have seen the interior of the palaces at Damascus, or the work of Owen Jones on the Alhambra, can alone form an adequate idea.

The great wealth of the Byzantine government at this period derived from the commercial pre-eminence it then enjoyed among the nations of the earth. The commerce of Europe centred at Constantinople in the eighth and ninth centuries more completely than it has ever since done in any one city. The principles of the government, which reprobated monopoly, and the moderation of its duties, which repudiated privileges, were favourable to the extension of trade. While Charlemagne rained the internal trade of his dominions by fixing a maximum of prices, and destroyed foreign commerce under the persuasion that, by discouraging luxury, he could enable his subjects to accumulate treasures which he might afterwards extort or filch into his own treasury, Theophilus prohibited the persons about his court from engaging in mercantile speculations, lest by so doing they should injure the regular channels of commercial intercourse, by diminishing the profits of the individual dealer. Theophilus proclaimed that commerce was the principal source of the wealth of his people, and that as many derived their means of subsistence from trade, and drew from it alone the funds for payment of the public burdens, any interference with the liberty of commerce was a public as well as a private injury. The political

importance of the commercial classes induced Irene, when she usurped the empire, to purchase their favour by diminishing the duties levied at the passages of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont.

During this period the western nations of Europe drew their supplies of Indian commodities from Constantinople, and the Byzantine Empire supplied them with all the gold coin in circulation for several centuries.

The Greek navy, both mercantile and warlike, was the most numerous then in existence. Against the merchantships of the Greeks, the piratical enterprises of the Egyptian, African, and Spanish Arabs were principally directed. Unfortunately we possess no authentic details of the commercial state of the Byzantine Empire, nor of the Greek population during the Iconoclast period, yet we may safely transfer to this time the records that exist proving the extent of the Greek commerce under the Basilian dynasty. Indeed, we may remember that, as the ignorance and poverty of Western Europe was much greater in the eleventh and twelfth centuries than in the eighth and ninth, we may conclude that Byzantine commerce was also greater.

The influence of the trade of the Arabians with the East Indies on the supply of the markets of Western Europe has been overrated, and that of the Greeks generally lost sight of. This is, in some degree, to be attributed to the circumstance that the most westerly nations, in the times preceding the Crusades, were better acquainted with the commerce and the literature of the Arabs of Spain than with that of the Byzantine Greeks, and also to the preservation of an interesting account of the extensive voyages of the Arabs in the Indian seas during this very period, when we are deprived of all records of Byzantine commerce. The Byzantine markets drew their supplies of Indian and Chinese productions from Central Asia, passing to the north of the caliph's dominions through the territory of the Khazars to the Black Sea. This route was long frequented by the Christians, to avoid the countries in the possession of the Mohammedans, and was the highway of European commerce for several centuries. Though it appears at present a far more difficult and expensive route than that by the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, it was really safer, more rapid, and more economical, in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. This requires no proof to those who are acquainted with caravan life in the East, and who reflect on the imperfections of ancient navigation, and the dangers which sailing vessels of any burden are exposed to in the Red Sea. When the Venetians and Genoese began to surpass the Greeks in commercial enterprise, they endeavoured to occupy this route; and we have some account of the line it followed, and the manner in which it was carried on, after the East had been thrown into confusion by the conquests of the Crusaders and Tartars, in the travels of Marco Polo. For several centuries the numerous cities of the Byzantine Empire supplied the majority of the European consumers with Indian wares, and it was in them alone that the necessary security of property existed to preserve large stores of merchandise. Constantinople was as much superior to every city in the civilized world, in wealth and commerce, as London now is to the other European capitals. And it must also be borne in mind, that the countries of Central Asia were not then in the rude and barbarous condition into which they have now sunk, since nomad nations have subdued them. On many parts of the road traversed by the caravans, the merchants found a numerous and wealthy population ready to traffic in many articles sought after both in the East and West; and the single commodity of furs supplied the traders with the means of adding greatly to their profits.

Several circumstances contributed to turn the great highway of trade from the dominions of the caliphs to Constantinople. The Mohammedan law, which prohibited all loans at interest, and the arbitrary nature of the administration of justice, rendered all property, and particularly commercial property, insecure. Again, the commercial route of the Eastern trade, by the way of Egypt and the Red Sea, was suddenly rendered both difficult and expensive, about the year 767, by the Caliph Al Mansur, who closed the canal connecting the Nile with the Red Sea. The harvests of Egypt, which had previously filled the coast of Arabia with plenty, could no longer be transported in quantity to the ports of the Red Sea; living became expensive; the population

of Arabia declined; and the carrying trade was ruined by the additional expenditure required. The caliph certainly by this measure impoverished and depopulated the rebellious cities of Medina and Mecca to such a degree as to render their military and political power less dangerous to the central authority at Bagdad, but at the same time he ruined the commerce of Egypt with India and the eastern coast of Southern Africa. Since that period, this most important line of communication has never been restored, and the coarser articles of food, of which Egypt can produce inexhaustible stores, are deprived of their natural market in the arid regions of Arabia. The hostile relations between the caliphs of Bagdad and Spain likewise induced a considerable portion of the Mohammedan population on the shores of the Mediterranean to maintain close commercial relations with Constantinople.

A remarkable proof of the great wealth of society at this period is to be found in the immense amount of specie in circulation. We have already noticed that the Byzantine empire furnished all the western nations of Europe with gold coin for several centuries; and when the hoards of the Mohammedan conquerors of India fell a prey to European invaders, it was found that the gold coins of the Byzantine emperors formed no small part of their treasures. The sums accumulated by Al Mansur and Theophilus were so great, that no extortion could have collected them unless the people had been wealthy, and great activity had existed in the commercial transactions of the age. It is true that the Caliph Al Mansur was remarkable for his extreme parsimony during twelve years of his reign. During this period he is said to have accumulated a treasure amounting to six hundred millions of dirhems in silver, and fourteen millions of dinars of gold, or at the rate of 1,680,000 lb. a-year. The Emperor Theophilus, whose lavish expenditure in various ways has been recorded, left a large sum in the imperial treasury at his death, which, when increased by the prudent economy of the regency of Theodora, amounted to one thousand and ninety-nine centenaries of gold, three thousand centenaries of silver, besides plate and gold embroidery, that, on being melted down, yielded two hundred centenaries of gold. The gold may be estimated as equal to about four millions and a half of sovereigns, and the weight of silver as equal to 930,000 lb., and the remainder of the treasure as equal to 800,000 sovereigns, making the whole equal to a metallic coinage of 5,230,000 sovereigns, and of course far exceeding that sum in its exchangeable value, from the comparative scarcity of the precious metals, and the more circumscribed circulation of money. There does not appear to be any exaggeration in this account of the sums left in the Byzantine treasury at the termination of the regency of Theodora, for the historians who have transmitted it wrote under the government of the Basilian dynasty, and under circumstances which afforded access to official sources of information. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, their patron, who lived in the third generation after Theodora, would not have authorized any misrepresentation on such a subject.

Some further confirmation of the general wealth of the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean, in which commerce was allowed some degree of liberty, is found in the wealth of Abderrahman III, in Spain, who is said to have possessed an annual revenue of 5,480,000 dinars, though some historians have calculated the whole income of his treasury at 12,945,000, which would be equal to 5,500,000 lb. sterling. The poverty of Europe at a later period, when the isolation caused by the feudal system had annihilated commerce and prevented the circulation of the precious metals, cannot be used as an argument against the probability of this wealth having existed at the earlier period of which we are treating.

In contrasting the state of commercial society in the Byzantine and Saracen empires, we must not overlook the existence of one social feature favourable to the Mohammedans. The higher classes of the Byzantine empire, imbued with the old Roman prejudices, looked on trade of every kind as a debasing pursuit, unsuitable to those who were called by birth or position to serve the state, while the Saracens still paid an outward respect to the antique maxims of Arabian wisdom, which inculcated industry as a source of independence even to men of the highest rank. In deference to this injunction, the Abassid caliphs were in the habit of learning some trade, and selling the product of their manual labour, to be employed in purchasing the food they consumed.

Perhaps we may also hazard the conjecture that a considerable addition had, shortly before the reign of Theophilus, been made to the quantity of precious metals in existence by the discovery of new mines. We know, indeed, that the Saracens in Spain worked mines of gold and silver to a considerable extent, and we may therefore infer that they did the same in many other portions of their vast dominions. At the same time, whatever was done with profit by the Saracens was sure to be attempted by the Christians under the Byzantine government. The abundance of Byzantine gold coins still in existence leads to the conclusion that gold was obtained in considerable quantities from mines within the circuit of the Eastern Empire.

## Sect. II

### STATE OF SOCIETY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE IN THE EIGHTH AND NINTH CENTURIES

The wealth of nations depends in a great degree on their commerce, but the health and strength of a people is derived from its agricultural industry. The population which is pressed into large cities by commercial pursuits, or crowded into little space by manufacturing industry, even the wanderers with the caravan and the navigators of ships, rarely perpetuate their own numbers. All these hunters after riches require to be constantly recruited from the agricultural population of their respective countries. This constant change, which is going on in the population of cities, operates powerfully in altering the condition of society in each successive generation. Hence we find the nature of society in Constantinople strongly opposed to the principles of the Byzantine government. The imperial government, as has been already mentioned, inherited the conservative principles of Roman society, and, had it been possible, would have fettered the population to its actual condition, and reduced the people to castes. The laws of Providence opposed the laws of Rome, and society dwindled away. The ruling classes in the Western Empire had expired before their place was occupied by the conquering nations of the north. In the Eastern Empire, the change went on more gradually; the towns and cities were far more numerous, but many of them embraced within their own walls an agricultural population, which not only recruited the population engaged in trade, but also sent off continual colonies to maintain the great cities of the of the empire and especially Constantinople. This great capital, recruited from distant towns, and from nations dissimilar in manners and language, was consequently always undergoing great changes, yet always preserving its peculiar type of a city destitute of any decided nationality, and of homogeneity in its society. It became in turn a Roman, an Asiatic, and a Greek city, as the Roman, the Asiatic, or the Greek aristocracy acquired the predominant influence in the administration. Under the Iconoclasts, it was decidedly more an Asiatic city than either a Greek or a Roman. Whether the Asiatics, the Greeks, or the Slavonians formed the greater number of the inhabitants, cannot be ascertained. The aristocracy was certainly Asiatic, the middle classes and artisans were chiefly Greeks, but the lowest rabble, the day labourers, the porters, and the domestic servants, when not slaves, appear to have consisted principally of the Slavonians of Thrace and Macedonia, who, like the Emperor Basil the Macedonian, entered the city with a wallet on their shoulder to seek their fortune. A similar condition of society exists today, and thousands of labourers may be seen weekly arriving at Constantinople in the steamers from the Asiatic coast of the Black Sea, and from the coasts between Smyrna, Thessalonica, and the capital.

The causes of decline in society throughout the Roman world have been already noticed, and the nature of the improvement which took place in the Eastern Empire during the reigns of Leo III and his successors has been pointed out. It is now necessary to examine why the improvement of society so soon assumed a stationary aspect, and arrested the revival of civilization. We must not forget that the empire was still Roman in its name, traditions, and prejudices. The trammels, binding the actions and even the thoughts of the various classes, were very slightly relaxed, and the permanent relaxation had been made in the interest of the government, not of the people. Men of every rank were confined within a restricted circle, and compelled to act in their individual spheres in one unvarying manner. Within the imperial palace the incessant ceremonial was regarded as the highest branch of human knowledge. It was multiplied into a code, and treated as a science. In the church, tradition, not gospel, was the guide, and the innumerable forms and ceremonies and liturgies were hostile to the exercise of thought and the use of reason. Among the people at large, though the curial system of castes had been broken down, still the trader was fettered to his corporation, and often to his quarter or his street, where he exercised his calling amidst men of the same profession. The education of the child, and the tendencies of society, both prevented the individual from acquiring more than the confined knowledge requisite for his position in the empire. No learning, no talent, and no virtue could conduct either to distinction or wealth, unless exercised according to the fixed formulas that governed the state and the church. Hence even the merchant, who travelled over all Asia, and who supported the system by the immense duties he furnished to government, supplied no new ideas to society, and perhaps passed through life without acquiring many.

This peculiar constitution of society affords us the explanation of the causes which have created some of the vices in the character of the Greeks of later times, which are erroneously supposed to be an inheritance of the days of liberty. The envy and jealousy produced by party contests, in small cities acting as independent governments, was certainly very great, and, we may add, quite natural, where men were violent from their sincerity, and political institutions rendered law imperfect. The envy and jealousy of modern times were baser feelings, and had their origin in meaner interests. Roman society crowded men of the same professions together, and in some measure excluded them from much intercourse with others. The consequence was, that a most violent struggle for wealth, and often for the means of existence, was created amongst those living in permanent personal contact. Every man was deeply interested in rendering himself superior to his nearest neighbour; and as the fixed condition of everything in the empire rendered individual progress unattainable, the only method of obtaining any superiority was by the depreciation of the moral or professional character of a rival, who was always a near neighbour. Envy and calumny were the feelings of the mind which Roman society under the emperors tended to develop with efficacy in every rank. The same cause produces the same effect in the Greek bazaar of every Turkish town of the present day, where tradesmen of the same profession are crowded into the same street. When it is impossible to depreciate the merit of the material and the workmanship, it is easy to calumniate the moral character of the workman.

The influence of the Greek Church on the political fabric of the empire had been long in operation, yet it had failed to infuse a sound moral spirit into either the administration or the people. Still it may be possible to trace some of the secondary causes which prepared the way for the reforms of Leo III to the sense of Justice, moral respect, and real religious faith, infused into the mass of the population by a comparison of the doctrines of Christianity with those of Mohammedanism. But the blindness of the age has concealed from our view many of the causes which impelled society to co-operate with the Iconoclast emperors in their career of improvement and reorganization. That the moral condition of the people of the Byzantine empire under the Iconoclast emperors was superior to that of any equal number of the human race in any preceding period, can hardly be doubted. The bulk of society occupied a higher social position in the time of Constantine Copronymus than of Pericles; the masses had gained more by the decrease of slavery and the extension of free labour than the privileged citizens had lost. Public opinion, though occupied on meaner objects, had a more extended basis, and



embraced a larger class. Perhaps, too, the war of opinions concerning ecclesiastical forms or subtleties tended to develop pure morality as much as the ambitious party-struggles of the Pnyx. When the merits and defects of each age are fairly weighed, both will be found to offer lessons of experience which the student of political history ought not to neglect.

There may be some difference of opinion concerning the respective merits of Hellenic Roman, and Byzantine society, but there can be none concerning the superiority of Byzantine over that which existed in the contemporary empires of the Saracens and the Franks. There we find all moral restraints weakened, and privileged classes or conquering nations ruling an immense subject population, with very little reference to law, morality, or religion. Violence and injustice claimed at Bagdad an unbounded license, until the Turkish mercenaries extinguished the caliphate, and it was the Norman invaders who reformed the social condition of the Franks. Mohammedanism legalised polygamy with all its evils in the East. In the West, licentiousness was unbounded, in defiance of the precepts of Christianity. Charles Martel, Pepin, and Charlemagne are said all to have had two wives at a time, and a numerous household of concubines. But on turning to the Byzantine Empire, we find that the Emperor Constantine VI prepared the way for his own ruin by divorcing his first wife and marrying a second, in what was considered an illegal manner. The laws of the Franks attest the frequency of female drunkenness; and the whole legislation of Western Europe, during the seventh and eighth centuries, indicates great Immorality, and a degree of social anarchy, which explains more clearly than the political events recorded in history, the real cause of the fall of one government after another. The superior moral tone of society in the Byzantine Empire was one of the great causes of its long duration; it was its true conservative principle.

The authority exercised by the senate, the powers possessed by synods and general councils of the church, and the importance often attached by the emperors to the ratification of their laws by *silentia* and popular assemblies, mark a change in the Byzantine empire In strong contrast with the earlier military empire of the Romans. The highest power in the state had been transferred from the army to the laws of the empire no inconsiderable step in the progress of political civilization. The influence of those feelings of humanity which resulted from this change, are visible in the mild treatment of many unsuccessful usurpers and dethroned emperors. During the reign of Nicephorus I, the sons of Constantine V, Bardanes, and Arsaber, were all living in monasteries, though they had all attempted to occupy the throne. Constantine VI, and Michael I lived unmolested by their successors.

The marked feature of ancient society was the division of mankind into two great classes: freemen and slaves. The proportion between these classes was liable to continual variation, and every considerable variation produced a corresponding alteration in the laws of society, which we are generally unable to follow. The progress of the mass of the population was, however, constantly retarded until the extinction of slavery. But towards that boon to mankind, great progress was made in the Byzantine Empire during the eighth and ninth centuries. The causes that directly tended to render free labour more profitable than it had been hitherto, when applied to the cultivation of the soil, and which consequently operated more immediately in extinguishing predial slavery, and repressing the most extensive branch of the slave-trade, by supplying the cities with free emigrants, cannot be indicated with precision. It has been very generally asserted that we ought to attribute the change to the influence of the Christian religion. If this be really true, cavillers might observe that so powerful a cause never in any other case produced its effects so tardily. Unfortunately, however, though ecclesiastical influence has exercised immense authority over the internal policy of European society, religious influence has always been comparatively small; and though Christianity has laboured to abolish slavery, it was often for the interest of the church to perpetuate the institution. Slavery had, in fact, ceased to exist in most European countries, while many Christians still upheld its legality and maintained that its existence was not at variance with the doctrines of their religion.

The precise condition of slaves in the Byzantine Empire at this period must be learned from a careful study of the imperial legislation of Rome, compared with later documents. As a proof of the improved philanthropy of enlightened men during the Iconoclast period, the testament of Theodore Studita deserves to be quoted. That bold and independent abbot says: "A monk ought not to possess a slave, neither for his own service, nor for the service of his monastery, nor for the culture of its lands; for a slave is a man made after the image of God"; but he derogates in some degree from his own merits, though he gives a correct picture of the feelings of his time, by adding, "and this, like marriage, is only allowable in those living a secular life".

The foundation of numerous hospitals, and other charitable institutions, both by emperors and private individuals, is also a proof that feelings of philanthropy as well as religion had penetrated deeply into men's minds.

The theological spirit which pervaded Byzantine society is to be attributed as much to material causes as to the intellectual condition of the Greek nation. Indeed, the Greeks had at times only a secondary share in the ecclesiastical controversies in the Eastern Church; though the circumstance of those controversies having been carried on in the Greek language has made the nations of western Europe attribute them to a philosophic, speculative, and polemic spirit inherent in the Hellenic mind. A very slight examination of history is sufficient to prove, that several of the heresies which disturbed the Eastern church had their origin in the more profound religious Ideas of the Oriental nations, and that many of the opinions called heretical were, in a great measure, expressions of the mental nationality of the Syrians, Armenians, Egyptians, and Persians, and had no connection whatever with the Greek mind.

Even the contest with the Iconoclasts was a dispute in which the ancient Oriental opinions concerning the operations of mind and matter were as much concerned, as the Greek contest between the necessity of artificial symbols of faith on the one hand, and the duty of developing the intellectual faculties by cultivating truth through the reason, not the Imagination, on the other. The ablest writer on the Greek side of the question, John Damascenus, was a Syrian, and not a Greek. The political struggle to establish the centralization of ecclesiastical and political power was likewise quite as important an element in the contest as the religious question; and as soon as it appeared firmly established, the emperors became much more inclined to yield to popular prejudices. The victory of the image worshippers tended to exalt a party in the Eastern Church devoted to ecclesiastical tradition, but little inclined to cultivate Hellenic literature or cherish Hellenic ideas, which it considered hostile to the legendary lore contained in the lives of the saints. From the victory of this party, accordingly, we find a more circumscribed circle of intellectual culture began to prevail in the Byzantine Empire. John the Grammarian, Leo the Mathematician, and Photius, who acquired his vast literary attainments as a layman, were the last profound and enlightened Byzantine scholars; they left no successors, nor has any Greek of the same intellectual calibre since appeared in the world.

A greater similarity of thought and action may be traced throughout the Christian world in the eighth century than in subsequent ages. The same predominance of religious feeling and ecclesiastical ceremonials; the same passion for founding monasteries and raising discussions; the same disposition to make life subservient to religion, to make all amusements ecclesiastical, and to embody the enjoyment of music, painting, and poetry in the ceremonies of the church; the same abase of the right of asylum to criminals by the ecclesiastical authorities, and the same antagonism between the church and the state, is visible in the East and the West.

The Orthodox Church was originally Greek; the seven general councils whose canons had fixed its doctrines were Greek; and the popes, when they rose into importance, could only adopt a scheme of theology already framed. The religious or theological portion of Popery, as a section of the Christian church, is really Greek; and it is only the ecclesiastical, political, and theocratic peculiarities of the fabric which can be considered as the work of the Latin

Church. The general unity of Christians was, however, prominent in good as well as evil, for if the missionary labours of Boniface among the Germans, at the commencement of the eighth century, reflect glory on the Latin Church, the conversion of the Bulgarians in the middle of the ninth, by the ministry of Methodius and Cyrillos, is honourable to the Byzantine. These two monks, natives of Thessalonica, where they lived surrounded by a fierce tribe of Slavonians, devoted themselves to study the language of these troublesome neighbours. Under the regency of the Empress Theodora, they rendered their knowledge of the Slavonian dialect the means of propagating Christianity and advancing the cause of civilization, by visiting Bulgaria in the character of missionaries. They are universally allowed to have conducted their mission in a Christian spirit, and to have merited the great success that attended their labours.

The great improvement which took place in the administration of justice, and the legal reforms effected by Leo III and Constantine V, have been already noticed. Leo V and Theophilus also gained the greatest praise, even from their adversaries, for the strict control they established over the forms of proceeding and the decisions of the courts of law. The legal monuments of this period, however, by no means correspond with the extent of the administrative improvement which took place. The era of legislative greatness in the Byzantine empire was under the Basilian dynasty, but it was under the Iconoclast emperors that new vigour was infused into the system, and the improvements were made which laid the foundation of the stability, wealth, and power of the Byzantine empire.

The scientific attainments of the educated class in the Byzantine Empire were unquestionably very considerable. Many were invited to the court of the Caliph Almamun, and contributed far more than his own subjects to the reputation that sovereign has deservedly gained in the history of science. The accurate measurement of the earth's orbit in his time seems to show that astronomical and mathematical knowledge had at no previous period attained a greater height; and if the Byzantine authorities are to be credited, one of their learned men, Leo the Mathematician, who was afterwards archbishop of Thessalonica, was invited to the court of the caliph, because he was universally recognised to be superior to all the scientific men at Bagdad in mathematical and mechanical knowledge. A proof that learning was still cultivated in the distant provinces of the Byzantine empire, and that schools of some eminence existed in Greece, is to be found in the fact that Leo, when a layman, retired to a college in the island of Andros to pursue his studies, and there laid the foundation of the scientific knowledge by which he acquired his reputation. After he was compelled, on account of his opposition to image-worship, to resign the archbishopric of Thessalonica, the general respect felt for his learning obtained for him from Bardas Caesar the appointment of president of the new university, founded at Constantinople in the reign of Michael III, in which chairs of geometry and astronomy had been established, as well as the usual instruction in Greek literature.

It was under the direction of Leo that several of those remarkable works of jewellery, combined with wonderful mechanical contrivances, were executed for the Emperor Theophilus, which have been already mentioned. The perfection of the telegraph by fire-signals, from the frontiers of the empire to the shores of the Bosphorus, and the machinery by which the signals were communicated to a dial placed in the imperial council-chamber, were also the work of Leo. The fame which still attended distinguished artists and mechanics at Constantinople shows us that the love of knowledge and art was not entirely extinct; and the relics of Byzantine jewellery, often found buried in the most distant regions of Europe, prove that a considerable trade was carried on in these works.

Even the art of statuary was not entirely neglected, for it has been noticed already that Constantine VI erected a statue of bronze in honour of his mother Irene. Painting, however, was more universally admired, and mosaics were easily adapted to private dwellings. There were many distinguished painters in the Byzantine Empire at this time, and there is reason to think that some of their productions were wonderful displays of artistic skill, without giving credit to the miraculous powers of the works of Lazaros. The missionary Methodios is recorded to have

awakened the terror of the King of the Bulgarians by a vivid representation of the tortures of the damned, in a painting combining the natural portraiture of frightful realities mixed with horrors supplied from a fertile imagination. The sombre character of Byzantine art was well adapted to the subject, and the fame Methodios acquired among his contemporaries, as well as from those in after times who saw his paintings, may be accepted as a proof that they possessed some touches of nature and truth. It would be unfair to decide peremptorily on the effect of larger works of art from the illuminated Byzantine manuscripts which still exist. Art is subject to strange vicissitudes in very short periods, as may be seen by anyone who compares a guinea of the reign of George III with a coin of Cromwell or even Queen Anne, or who looks at Whitehall and the National Gallery.

The literature of the ancient world was never entirely neglected at Constantinople, so that the intellectual culture of each successive period must always be viewed in connection with the ages immediately preceding. The literary history of Constantinople consequently opens immediately a field of inquiry too wide to be entered on in the limited space assigned to this political history. The works of the classic writers of Hellas, of the legists of Rome, and of the fathers of Christian theology, all exercised a direct influence on Byzantine literature at every period of its existence, until Constantinople was conquered by the Turks. It has been too much the practice of the literary historians of Europe to underrate the positive knowledge of ancient literature possessed by the learned in the East during the eighth and ninth centuries. What has been often called the dawn of civilization, even in the West, was nothing more than an acquaintance with the bad models transmitted from the last ages of ancient literature. It is as great an error as to suppose that the English of the present day are ignorant of sculpture, because they are occupied in adorning the new Houses of Parliament with deformed statues; and of architecture, because they have built a gallery for their pictures ill-suited to the desired object.

The most eminent Byzantine writers of this period were George Syncellus, Theophanes, the Patriarch Nicephorus, and perhaps John Malalas, in history; John Damascenus (who perhaps may be considered as a Syrian) and Theodore Studita in theology; and Photius, in general literature. During the middle ages the Greek scientific writers became generally known in western Europe by means of translations from Arabic versions, and this circumstance has induced many to draw the conclusion that these works were better known and more popular among the Arabs at Cordova, Cairo, and Bagdad, than among the Greeks at Constantinople. The *Almagest* of Ptolemy affords an example of this double translation and erroneous inference.

## BOOK TWO

## BASILIAN DYNASTY

PERIOD OF THE POWER AND GLORY OF THE BYZANTINE  
EMPIRE

A.D. 867-1057

## CHAPTER I

## CONSOLIDATION OF BYZANTINE LEGISLATION AND DESPOTISM.

A.D. 867-963

## Sect. I

## REIGN OF BASIL I THE MACEDONIAN

A.D. 867-886

THE history of Basil I has been transmitted to us by writers who compiled their works under the eye of his grandson, the Emperor Constantine VII, and by that grandson with his own pen. Under such auspices, history is more likely to conceal than to divulge the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. One instance of falsification may be mentioned. The imperial compilations would fain persuade us that the Slavonian groom was a man of noble descent, and that he could trace that descent either through a line of paternal or maternal ancestors to Constantine, to the Arsacids, and to Alexander the Great, yet they allow that his father laboured as a poor peasant in the neighbourhoods of Adrianople, until Basil himself, despising the cultivation of the paternal farm, sought to improve his fortune by wandering to the capital. We are told by other authorities that Basil was a Slavonian, and we know that the whole of Thrace and Macedonia was at this period cultivated by Slavonian colonists. His father's family had been carried away captive into Bulgaria when Basil was almost an infant, at the time Crumm took Adrianople, A.D. 813. During the reign of Theophilus, some of the Byzantine captives succeeded in taking up arms and marching off into the empire. Basil, who was among the number, after serving the governor of Macedonia for a time, revolved to seek his fortune in Constantinople. He departed, carrying all his worldly wealth in a wallet on his shoulders, and reached the capital on a summer's evening without knowing where to seek a night's rest. Fatigued with his journey, he sat down in the portico of the church of St. Diomed, near the Adrianople gate, and slept there all night. In a short time he found employment as a groom in

the service of a courtier named Theophilites, where his talent of taming unruly horses, his large head, tall figure, and great strength, rendered him remarkable; while his activity, zeal, and intelligence secured him particular notice from his master, and rapid promotion in his household.

Theophilites was sent into the Peloponnesus on public business by the Empress Theodora, while she was regent; and Basil, who accompanied his master, fell sick at Patras with the fever, still so prevalent in the Morea. Here he was fortunate enough to acquire the protection of an old lady of immense wealth, whose extraordinary liberality to the unknown youth induces us to suppose that she was herself of Slavonian race. She made Basil a member of her family, by uniting him with her own son John, in those spiritual ties of fraternity which the Greek Church sanctions by peculiar rites; and she bestowed on him considerable wealth when he was able to return to his master. It would appear that Basil had already acquired a position of some rank, for the widow Danielis furnished him with a train of thirty slaves. The riches Basil acquired by the generosity of his benefactress were employed in purchasing an estate in Macedonia, and in making liberal donations to his own relations. He still continued in the service of Theophilites, but his skill in wrestling and taming horses at last introduced him to the Emperor Michael, who immediately became his patron. His progress as boon-companion, friend, colleague, and murderer of this benefactor, has been already recounted.

The elevation of a man like Basil to the throne of Constantinople was a strange accident; but the fact that he reigned for nineteen years seems still more singular, when we recollect that he could neither boast of military service nor administrative knowledge. Nothing can prove more completely the perfection of the governmental machine at the time of his accession, than the circumstance that a man without education could so easily be moulded into a tolerable emperor. Personally, he could have possessed no partisans either in the army or the administration; nor is it likely that he had many among the people. We are tempted to conjecture that he was allowed to establish himself on the throne, because less was known about him than about most of the other men of influence at court, and consequently less evil was laid to his charge, and less personal opposition was created by his election. He succeeded in maintaining his position by displaying unexpected talents for administration. Able and unprincipled, he seems to have pursued a line of conduct which prevented the factions of the court, the parties in the church, the feelings of the army, and the prejudices of the people, from ever uniting in opposition to his personal authority. His knowledge of the sentiments of the people rendered him aware that financial oppression was the most dangerous grievance both to the emperor and the empire; he therefore carefully avoided increasing the public burdens, and devoted his attention to the establishment of order in every branch of the public service.

The depravity and impiety of Michael III had disgusted the people. Basil, in order to proclaim that his conduct was to be guided by different sentiments, seized the opportunity of his coronation in the Church of St. Sophia to make a public display of his piety. After the ceremony was concluded, he knelt down at the high altar and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, thou hast given me the crown; I deposit it at thy feet, and dedicate myself to thy service". The crimes and intrigues of courts are often kept so long secret in despotic governments, that it is possible few of those present who heard this declaration were aware that a few hours only had elapsed since the hypocritical devotee had buried his sword in the bosom of his sovereign and benefactor.

For two years Basil made no changes in the government of the church. Photius, the actual Patriarch, was unpopular from his connection with the family of the late emperor, and the toleration he had shown for the vices of the court, while Ignatius, his deposed predecessor, possessed a powerful body of partisans among the people and the monks. Basil attached this numerous and active party to his interest by reinstating Ignatius in the patriarchate; but at the same time he contrived to avoid exciting any violent opposition on the part of Photius, by keeping up constant personal communications with that accomplished and able ecclesiastic. Photius was at the head of a party possessed of no inconsiderable weight in the church and the

public administration. The aristocratic classes, and the Asiatics generally, favoured his cause; while the people of Constantinople and the Greeks of Europe were warm supporters of Ignatius.

The arbitrary authority of the emperor over the church is as strongly displayed in the treatment of Photius by Basil, as in the persecution of Ignatius by Bardas and Michael. Photius had occupied the patriarchal chair for ten years, and though his election may have been irregular, his ecclesiastical authority was completely established; and there appeared no chance that anything would occur to disturb it, when Basil, to gain a body of active political partisans, suddenly reinstated Ignatius. It is said that Photius reproached the emperor with the murder of his benefactor; but as that Patriarch was allowed to remain in office for about two years, his deposition must be ascribed entirely to political motives. The fact is that Basil was anxious to secure the support of the monks in the East, and of the Pope of Rome in the West, yet he feared to quarrel with the party of Photius.

The negotiations with the Pope had occupied some time, but when they were brought to a conclusion, a general council was held at Constantinople, which is called by the Latins the eighth general council of the church. Only one hundred and two bishops could be assembled on this occasion, for the greater part of the dignified clergy had been consecrated by Photius, and many adhered to his party. Photius himself was compelled to attend, but his calm and dignified attitude deprived his enemies of the triumph they had expected. The acts of the council of 861, by which Ignatius had been deposed, were declared to be forgeries, and the consecration of Photius as a priest was annulled.

The accusation of forgery was generally regarded as false, since it rested only on some slight changes which had been made in the translation of the Pope's letter to the emperor, and these changes had been sanctioned by the papal legates who were present in the council. The Latins, who expect the Greeks to tolerate them in lengthening the Creed, have made a violent outcry against the Greeks, on this occasion, for modifying a papal letter in a Greek translation. The compliancy of Basil, the reintegration of Ignatius, and the subservient disposition of the council of 869, induced the Pope to suppose that the time had arrived when it would be possible to regain possession of the estates belonging to the patrimony of St. Peter in the provinces of the Eastern Empire, which had been confiscated by Leo III, and that the supremacy of the See of Rome over the kingdom of Bulgaria might now be firmly established. He even hoped to gain the power of controlling the ecclesiastical affairs of the Eastern Church. Such pretensions, however, only required to be plainly revealed to insure unanimous opposition on the part of the emperor, the clergy, and the people throughout the Byzantine Empire. Ignatius and Basil showed themselves as firm in resisting papal usurpation as Photius and Michael.

In the meantime, Photius was banished to the monastery of Skepés; and we possess several of his letters, written during the period of his disgrace, which give a more favourable view of his character than would be formed from his public life alone. They afford convincing proof of the falsity of some of the charges brought against him by his opponents. The real fault of Photius was, that the statesman, and not the Christian, was dominant in his conduct as Patriarch; but this has been a fault so general at Rome, at Constantinople, and at Canterbury, that he would have incurred little censure in the West had he not shown himself a devoted partisan of his national church, and a successful enemy of papal ambition. The majority of the Eastern bishops, in spite of his exile, remained attached to his cause, and it was soon evident to Basil that his restoration was the only means of restoring unity to the Greek church. Accordingly, when Ignatius died in the year 878, Photius was reinstated as Patriarch, and another general council was assembled at Constantinople. This council, which is called the eighth general council of the church by the Eastern Christians, was attended by three hundred and eighty-three bishops. The Emperor Basil, the Pope, and Photius, all resolved to temporize, and each played his own game of diplomacy and tergiversation, in the hope of ultimately succeeding. The Pope proved the greatest loser, for his legates were bribed—or at least the Latins say so—to yield up everything that Basil and Photius desired. They are even accused of

having allowed a covert attack on the orthodoxy of Rome, in lengthening the Creed, by the addition of the words 'and the Son', to pass unchallenged. The passion displayed by the clergy of the Greek and Latin churches, during the quarrels between Ignatius and Photius, makes it difficult to ascertain the truth. It appears, however, that Pope John VIII would have restored the Nicene Creed to its original form, by expunging the clause which had been added, if he could have secured the concessions he required from the Eastern church and the Byzantine emperor to his political pretensions. Certainly this is to be implied from the letter addressed to Photius; but papal writers have since defended the consistency and infallibility of the popes, by asserting that the copy of the letter annexed to the acts of the council is a forgery. If either of the churches committed a tithe of the iniquities with which they charge one another, we must allow that Christianity exercised very little influence on the priestly character during the ninth century.

When the Emperor Leo VI succeeded his father Basil, Photius was again banished, in order to make way for the emperor's brother Stephen to occupy the patriarchal throne. Photius was exiled to a monastery in Armenia, AD 886, and he died in this retirement in the year 891, leaving behind him the reputation of having been the most accomplished and learned man of his time, and one of the last enlightened scholars in the East. Even Leo treated him with respect; and in his letter to the Pope announcing his exile, he spoke of it as a voluntary resignation, which may, perhaps, be accounted a proof that it was the result of a political negotiation. As this distinguished man was one of the most dangerous opponents of papal ambition prior to the time of Luther, his conduct has been made the object of innumerable misrepresentations; and the writers of the Romish church even now can rarely discuss his conduct in moderate language, and with equitable feelings.

The most interesting point of dispute to the heads of the Eastern and Western churches in their quarrels, for some time, was the supremacy over the church of the Bulgarians. This was a momentous political question to the Byzantine emperors, independent of its ecclesiastical importance to the patriarchs of Constantinople, for papal influence was sure to be employed in a manner hostile to the Eastern Empire. Besides this, as the claim of Rome to supremacy over Bulgaria rested on the ancient subjection of the Danubian provinces to the archbishopric of Thessalonica, in the times when that archbishopric was immediately dependent on the papal See, the establishment of papal authority in Bulgaria would have afforded good ground for commencing a struggle for withdrawing Thessalonica itself from the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, and placing it under the control of the Pope of Rome. The conduct of the emperors of Constantinople in these ecclesiastical negotiations was therefore the result of sound policy, and it was marked with moderation and crowned with success.

The financial administration of Basil was, on the whole, honourable to his government. At his accession, he gave out that he found only 300 lb. of gold, and a small quantity of silver coin in the imperial treasury. This served as a pretext for a partial resumption of some of the lavish grants of Michael to worthless favourites, and in this way Basil collected 30,000 lb. of gold without increasing the public burdens. With this supply in hand for immediate wants, he was enabled to take measures for effecting the economy necessary to make the ordinary revenues meet the demands of the public service. His personal experience of the real sufferings of the lower orders, and the prudence imposed by his doubtful position, prevented him, during the whole course of his reign, from augmenting the taxes; and the adoption of this policy insured to his government the power and popularity which constituted him the founder of the longest dynasty that ever occupied the throne of Constantinople. Though his successors were, on the whole, far inferior to his predecessors of the Iconoclast period in ability, still their moderation, in conforming to the financial system traced out by Basil, gave the Byzantine empire a degree of power it had not previously possessed.

The government of the Eastern Empire was always systematic and cautious. Reforms were slowly effected; but when the necessity was admitted, great changes were gradually completed. Generations, however, passed away without men noticing how far they had quitted



the customs of their fathers, and entered on new paths leading to very different habits, thoughts, and institutions. The reign of no one emperor, if we except that of Leo the Isaurian, embraces a revolution in the institutions of the state, completed in a single generation; hence it is that Byzantine history loses the interest to be derived from individual biography. It steps over centuries marking rather the movement of generations of mankind than the acts of individual emperors and statesmen, and it becomes a didactic essay on political progress instead of a living picture of man's actions. In the days of the liberty of Athens, the life of each leader embraces the history of many revolutions, and the mind of a single individual seems often to guide or modify their course; but in the years of Constantinopolitan servitude, emperors and people are borne slowly onward by a current of which we are not always certain that we can trace the origin or follow the direction. These observations receive their best development by a review of the legislative acts of the Basilian dynasty. It was reserved to Basil I and his son Leo VI to complete the reorganization of the empire commenced by Leo III; for the promulgation of a revised code of the laws of the empire, in the Greek language, was the accomplishment of an idea impressed on the Byzantine administration by the great Iconoclast reformer, and of which his own *Ecloga* or manual was the first imperfect expression.

The legal reforms of the early Iconoclast emperors were sufficient to supply the exigencies of the moment, in the state of anarchy, ignorance, and disorder to which the provinces of the empire were then reduced by the ravages of the Slavonians, Bulgarians, and Saracens. But when the vigorous administration of the Isaurian dynasty had driven back these invaders, and re-established order and security of property, the rapid progress of society called for additional improvements, and for a systematic reform in the legislation of the empire. Enlarged views concerning the changes which it was necessary to make in the compilations of Justinian were gradually adopted. Nicephorus I and Leo V (the Armenian) seem to have confined their attention to practical reforms in the dispensation of justice, by improving the forms of procedure in the existing tribunals, but when Bardas was charged with the judicial department, during the reign of Michael III, the necessity of a thorough revision of the laws of the empire began to be deeply felt. Bardas was probably ambitious of the glory of effecting this reform as the surest step to the imperial throne. The legal school at Constantinople, which he encouraged, certainly prepared the materials for the great legislative work that forms the marked feature in consolidating the power of the Basilian dynasty.

The legislative views of Basil I were modelled in conformity to the policy impressed on the Byzantine empire by Leo III. They were directed to vest all legislative power in the hands of the emperor, and to constitute the person of the sovereign the centre of law as much as of financial authority and military power. The senate had continued to act as a legislative council from time to time during the Iconoclast period, and the emperors had often invited it to discuss important laws, in order to give extraordinary solemnity to their sanction. Such a practice suggested the question whether the senate and the people did not still possess a right to share in the legislation of the empire, which opportunity might constitute into a permanent control over the imperial authority in this branch of government. The absolute centralization of the legislative authority in the person of the emperor was the only point which prevented the government of the Byzantine empire from being theoretically an absolute despotism, when Basil I ascended the throne, and he completed that centralization. Though the senate consisted of persons selected by the sovereign, and though it acted generally as a subservient agent of the executive power, still, as some of the most powerful men in the empire were usually found among its members, its position as a legislative council invested it with a degree of political influence that might have checked the absolute power of the emperor. Basil deprived it of all participation in legislative functions, and restricted its duties solely to those of an administrative council. At the same time, the privileges formerly possessed by the provincial proprietors, the remains of the Roman curia, or of the more recently formed municipalities that had grown up to replace them, were swept away as offensive to despotic power. Cherson had been robbed of its free institutions as early as the reign of Theophilus, but the total abolition of municipal institutions by imperial edict was certainly rather theoretical than practical. The long series of

progressive alterations in society, which had destroyed the efficacy of the older municipalities, had replaced them by new societies and corporations having confined and local objects, too far beneath the sphere of action of the central administration to excite any jealousy on the part of those deputed to exercise the imperial power. The bishops now lost their position of defenders of the people, for as they were chosen by the sovereign, the dignitaries of the Byzantine church were remarkable for their servility to the civil power.

The promulgation of the *Basilika* may be considered as marking the complete union of all legislative, executive, judicial, financial, and administrative power in the person of the emperor. The church had already been reduced to complete submission to the imperial authority. Basil, therefore, may claim to be the emperor who established arbitrary despotism as the constitution of the Roman Empire. The divine right of the sovereign to rule as God might be pleased to enlighten his understanding and soften his heart, was henceforth the recognized organic law of the Byzantine Empire. The compilation of the laws of Justinian is one of the strangest examples of the manner in which sovereigns vitiate the most extensive and liberal reforms, by their conservative prejudices in practical details. Justinian reconstructed the legislation of the Roman Empire, in order to adapt it to the wants of the people who spoke Greek; yet he restricted the benefit of his new code, by promulgating it in Latin, though that language had ceased to be in use among three quarters of his civilized subjects. The conservative principles of the imperial government, and the pride of the higher classes of Constantinople in their Roman origin, induced the emperor to cling to the use of the Latin language as marking their connection with past ages, and drawing a line of separation between the government and the mass of the people. Justinian himself pronounced the condemnation of his own conduct by publishing his latest laws in Greek, and thus leaving his legislation dispersed in sources promulgated in two different languages.

A Greek school of legists, founded long before the time of Justinian, but which flourished during his reign, did much to remedy this defect, by translating the Latin body of the law. Greek translations of the Institutions, the Pandects, the Code, and the Edicts, as well as Greek commentaries on these works, soon replaced the original Latin texts, and became the authorities that guided the courts of law throughout the Eastern Empire. The decline of knowledge, and the anarchy that prevailed during the century in which the empire was ruled by the Heraclian dynasty, caused the translations of the larger works to be neglected, and the writings of commentators, who had published popular abridgments, to be generally consulted. The evil of this state of things was felt so strongly when Leo III had restored some degree of order throughout the empire, that, as we have already mentioned, he promulgated an official handbook of the law, called the *Ecloga*. From that time the subject of legislative reform occupied the attention of the imperial government, as well as of those professionally engaged in the administration of justice; and it appears certain that Bardas had made considerable progress towards the execution of those legislative reforms which were promulgated by Basil I, and completed by Leo VI. Indeed, it appears probable that the project was conceived as early as the time of Theophilus, whose personal knowledge of the law was greater than was possessed by his successors, who have gained a high place in history as law reformers.

The precise share which the predecessors of Basil are entitled to claim in the legislative labours of the Basilian dynasty cannot be determined with exactitude, but that it is not inconsiderable, is evident from the internal evidence afforded by the works themselves. Certainly divine right to rule the state as emperor could never have rendered the Slavonian groom, who had qualified for the throne as the boon-companion of Michael the Drunkard, a fit person to direct the progress of legislation. All that could be expected from him was, that he should learn to appreciate the importance of the subject, and adopt the labours of the jurisconsults who had assisted Bardas. It seems, therefore, probable that he envied the popularity the Caesar had gained by his attention to legal business, and understood fully that there was no surer mode of acquiring the goodwill of all classes than by becoming himself a law reformer. Basil, however, though eager to obtain the glory of publishing a new code, remained

utterly ignorant of legislation, and personally incapable of guiding the work. A consequence of his eagerness to obtain the desired end, and of his ignorance of what was necessary to the proper performance of the task, is apparent in the first legal work published by his authority, called the Procheiron, or manual of law. The primary object of this publication was to supplant the Ecloga of Leo III in order to efface the memory of the reforms of the Iconoclasts. The Procheiron appears to have been promulgated as early as the year 870, and it bears marks of having been hurried into premature publicity. The first half of the work is executed in a completely different manner from the latter part. In the earlier titles, the texts borrowed from the Institutions, Pandects, Code, and Novels of Justinian, are arranged in regular order, and are followed by the modern laws; this well-arranged plan is abandoned in the latter ties, apparently in consequence of a sudden determination having been adopted to hurry forward the publication. The much-abused Ecloga of Leo III was then adopted as the most available guide-book, and, in conjunction with the Institutes and Novels, became the principal source consulted. The Pandects and the Code were neglected, because they required too much time and study for their arrangement.

This fact suggests the conclusion that a commission of jurisconsults had been named as revisers of the law, who had been sitting from the time of Bardas; and these lawyers had systematically proceeded to compile a manual of the law in forty titles, and a new civil code or revision of the old law in sixty books, in which they had made considerable progress, when Basil suddenly hurried forward the premature publication of the manual in the form it now bears. It is impossible that the same spirit can have directed the latter portion of the work which dictated the compilation of the earlier. The science of Bardas is visible in the one, the ignorance of Basil in the other. For many years Basil remained satisfied with his performance as a legislator, for he was unable to appreciate the legal wants of the empire; but the subject was again forced on his attention by the confusion that prevailed in the sources of the law, to which the tribunals were still compelled to refer.

At length, in the year 884, a new code, embracing the whole legislation of the empire in one work, was published under the title of the Revision of the Old Law. The respect paid to the laws of Rome was so deeply implanted in the minds of the people, that new laws, however superior they might have been, could not have insured the same solid basis for their support, which was claimed by a legislation aspiring to be regarded merely as the legitimate representative of the Roman jurisprudence, clothed in a Greek dress. The code of Basil was nothing but a compilation formed from the Greek translations of Justinian's laws, and the commentaries on them which had received the sanction of the Byzantine tribunals and legal schools. But this revision of the old law was hurried forward to publicity on account of some special reason, suggested either by imperial vanity or accidental policy. In the Procheiron, Basil had announced that the revised code about to be promulgated consisted of sixty books, yet, when he published it, the work was divided into forty. This premature edition was, however, again revised by Leo VI; and it is the new and more complete code published by that emperor in sixty books, as originally announced, which we now possess under the title of Basilika, or *imperial laws*; but no perfect manuscript has been preserved.

The object proposed in the Basilian legislation was too simple not to have been long in agitation before the precise plan on which it was ultimately executed was adopted. The Basilika is merely a reunion, in one work, of all the sources of Roman law in vigour at the time, without any attempt to condense them into clearer and more precise rules. Every preceding law or maxim of jurisprudence actually in force, is arranged under its own head in a series of books and titles, distributed so as to facilitate their use in the courts of law and chambers of counsel. Some modern commentaries have been added to the work as we possess it, which appear not to have formed part of the original text.

After the promulgation of the first edition of the Basilika, Basil published a second legal manual, to serve as an introduction to its study. It is called the Epanagoge, but it appears never to have attained the popularity of the Ecloga and the Procheiron.

The Basilika remained the law of the Byzantine Empire until its conquest by the Franks, and it continued in use as the national law of the Greeks at Nicaea, Constantinople, and Trebizond, and in the Morea, until they were conquered by the Ottomans. The want of a system of law growing up out of the social exigencies of the people, and interwoven in its creation with the national institutions, is a serious defect in Greek civilization. Since the time of the Achaean league, the Greeks have not possessed a national government, and they have never possessed a national system of laws; hence their communal institutions and municipal rights have received only such protection as the church could afford them; and even the church was generally the subservient instrument of the Roman, Byzantine, and Turkish governments. The evil still exists—the spirit of Bavarian law and French centralization have prevented an admirable basis for municipal liberties, which existed in the communal institutions, from receiving legislative development in the spirit of the nation. The pedantry of Phanariots, who cling to Byzantine prejudices, induced the rulers of liberated Greece to declare the Basilika, of which no perfect copy exists, to be the law of the new Greek kingdom.

Basil found the army in a much better state than the financial administration; for, even amidst the disorders of Michael's reign, measures had been taken to maintain the discipline of the troops. Basil had, consequently, only to maintain the army on the footing on which he found it, without augmenting the power of the generals he entrusted with the command of large armies. Being personally without either military experience or scientific knowledge, Basil can only be considered responsible for the general direction of the military affairs of his reign; and in this he does not appear to have displayed much talent. He allowed the Saracens to take Syracuse, while he kept the marines of the imperial navy employed in digging the foundations of a new church, and the ships in transporting marbles and building materials for its construction. Basil, indeed, like all his predecessors, appeared more than once at the head of his armies in the East; for this was a duty which no emperor of Constantinople since Leo III had ventured to neglect. It is probable, however, that his presence was calculated rather to restrain than to excite the activity of his generals, who were sure to be rendered responsible for any want of success, and to be deprived of every merit in case of victory; while any brilliant personal exploit, which eclipsed the glory of the emperor, might have the effect of making them objects of jealousy.

The principal military operation of Basil's reign was the war he carried on with the Paulicians. This sect first made its appearance in Armenia about the middle of the seventh century, in the reign of Constans II, and it was persecuted by that emperor. Constantine IV, (Pogonatus,) Justinian II, and Leo III, all endeavoured to extirpate the heresy as one which threatened the unity of the church; for unity in religious opinions was then regarded as the basis of the prosperity of the empire, and a portion of its political constitution. Constantine V, after taking Melitene, transported numbers of Asiatic colonists into Thrace, many of whom were converts to the Paulician doctrines. Under this emperor and his immediate successors they enjoyed toleration, and made many converts in Pontus, Cappadocia, Phrygia, and Pisidia. Nicephorus allowed them all the rights of citizens, and they continued to be loyal subjects, until Michael I commenced persecuting them in the most barbarous manner. This circumstance, though it affords the orthodox historian Theophanes great delight, ultimately prepared the way for the depopulation of Asia Minor. These cruelties continued under Leo V, until some of the Paulicians, rising in rebellion, slew the bishop of Neocesarea, and the imperial commissioners engaged in torturing them, and withdrew into the province of Melitene, under the protection of the caliph. From this period they are often found forming the vanguard of the Saracen invasions into the south-eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire. Under Michael II and Theophilus some degree of religious toleration was restored, and the Paulicians within the bounds of the empire were allowed to hold their religious opinions in tranquillity. But their persecution

recommenced during the regency of Theodora; and the cruelty with which they were treated drove such numbers into rebellion, that they were enabled to found an independent republic, as has been already mentioned. If we believe the friends of the Paulicians, they were strict Christians, who revered the teaching of St. Paul, and proposed him as their sole guide and legislator; but if we credit their enemies, they were Manicheans, who merged Christianity in their heretical opinions.

The little republic founded by the Paulicians at Tephrike, against which the armies of the Emperor Michael III had contended without any decided success, though it owed its foundation to religious opinion, soon became a place of refuge for all fugitives from the Byzantine empire; and its existence as a state, on the frontier of a bigoted and oppressive government, became a serious danger to the rulers of Constantinople. Chrysochir, the son of Karbeas, succeeded his father in the command of the armed bands of Tephrike, and supported his army by plundering the Byzantine provinces, as the Danes or Normans about the same time maintained themselves by their expeditions in France and England. The number of prisoners taken by the Paulicians was so great that Basil found himself compelled to send an embassy to Tephrike, for the purpose of ransoming his subjects. Petrus Siculus, the ambassador, remained at Tephrike about nine months, but was unable to effect any peaceable arrangement with Chrysochir. He has, however, left us a valuable account of the Paulician community. During his residence at Tephrike, he discovered that the Paulicians had sent ambassadors into Bulgaria, to induce the king of that newly converted country to form an alliance with them, and missionaries to persuade the people to receive their doctrines, which were prevalent in some districts of Thrace. The ravages committed by the Paulician troops, the bad success of the embassy of Peter Siculus, and the danger of an increase of the power of Chrysochir by new alliances, determined Basil at length to make a powerful effort for the destruction of this alarming enemy. It was evident nothing short of extermination could put an end to their plundering expeditions.

In 871, Basil made his first attack on the Paulicians; but, after destroying some of their villages, he suffered a severe check, and lost a considerable portion of his army, he himself only escaping in consequence of the valour of Theophylactus, the father of the future emperor, Romanus I, who by this exploit brought himself forward in the army. Fortunately for Basil, the repeated seditions of the Turkish mercenaries at Bagdad had weakened the power of the caliphate; a succession of revolutions had caused the deposition and murder of several caliphs within the space of a few years, and some of the distant provinces of the immense empire of the Abassides had already established independent governments. The Paulicians, therefore, at this period could obtain no very important aid from the Saracens, who, as we are informed by Basil's son, the Emperor Leo VI, in his work on military tactics, were regarded as the best soldiers in the world, and far superior both to the Bulgarians and Franks. Basil had found little difficulty in driving all the plundering bands of the Paulicians back into their own territory; but it was dangerous to attempt the siege of Tephrike as long as the enemy could assemble an army to attack the rear of the besiegers in the frontier towns of the caliph's dominions. The empires of Constantinople and Bagdad were at war, though hostilities had for some time been languidly carried on. Basil now resolved to capture or destroy the fortified towns which had afforded aid to the Paulicians. After ravaging the territory of Melitene, he sent his general, Christophoros, with a division of the army to capture Sozopetra and Samosata; while he himself crossed the Euphrates, and laid waste the country as far as the Asanias. On his return, the emperor fought a battle with the Emir of Melitene, who had succeeded in collecting an army to dispute his progress. The success of this battle was not so decided as to induce Basil to besiege either Melitene or Tephrike, and he returned to Constantinople leaving his general to prosecute the war. In the meantime, Chrysochir, unable to maintain his troops without plunder, invaded Cappadocia, but was overtaken by Christophoros at Agranes, where his movements were circumscribed by the superior military skill of the Byzantine general Chrysochir found himself compelled to retreat, with an active enemy watching his march. Christophoros soon surprised the Paulician camp, and Chrysochir was slain in the battle. His head was sent to Constantinople, that the Emperor Basil might fulfil a vow he had made that he would pierce it with three arrows.

Tephrike was taken not long after, and destroyed. The town of Catabatala, to which the Paulicians retired after the loss of Tephrike, was captured in the succeeding campaign, and the Paulician troops, unable to continue their plundering expeditions, either retreated into Armenia or dispersed. Many found means of entering the Byzantine service, and were employed in southern Italy against the African Saracens.

The war with the Saracens continued, though it was not prosecuted with vigour by either party. In the year 876, the Byzantine troops gained possession of the fortress of Lulu, the bulwark of Tarsus, which alarmed the Caliph Almutamid for the safety of his possessions in Cilicia to such a degree, that he entrusted their defence to his powerful vassal, Touloun, the viceroy of Egypt. In the following year, the Emperor hoping to extend his conquests, again appeared at the head of the army of Asia, and established his headquarters at Caesarea. His object was to drive the Saracens out of Cilicia, but he only succeeded in ravaging the country beyond the passes of Mount Taurus up to the suburbs of Germanicia, Adana, and Tarsus, without being able to gain possession of any of these cities. After the emperor's return to Constantinople, the commander-in-chief of the army, Andrew the Slavonian, continued to ravage the Saracen territory, and destroyed an army sent to oppose him on the banks of the river Podandos. This defeat was, however, soon avenged by the Mohammedans, who routed Stypotes, the successor of Andrew, with great loss, as he was preparing to besiege Tarsus. In the thirteenth year of his reign, (780,) Basil again invaded the caliphate, but failed in an attempt to take Germanicia. The war was subsequently allowed to languish, though the Saracens made several plundering expeditions against the Christians, both by land and sea; but the fortress of Lulu, and some other castles commanding the passes of Mount Taurus, remained in the possession of the Byzantine troops.

The Saracens of Africa had for some time past devastated the shores of every Christian country bordering on the Mediterranean, and plundered the islands of the Ionian Sea and the Archipelago as regularly as the Paulicians had ravaged Asia Minor. Basil was hardly seated on the throne before an embassy from the Slavonians of Dalmatia arrived at Constantinople, to solicit his aid against these corsairs. A Saracen fleet of thirty-six ships had attacked Dalmatia, in which a few Roman cities still existed, maintaining a partial independence among the Slavonian tribes, who had occupied all the country. Several towns were taken by the Saracens, and Ragusa, a place of considerable commercial importance, was closely besieged. Basil lost no time in sending assistance to the inhabitants. A fleet of a hundred vessels, under the admiral Niketas Oryphas, was prepared for sea with all possible expedition: and the Saracens, hearing of his approach, hastily abandoned the siege of Ragusa, after they had invested it for fifteen months. The expedition of Oryphas re-established the imperial influence in the maritime districts of Dalmatia, and obtained from the Slavonians a direct recognition of the emperor's sovereignty. They retained their own government, and elected their magistrates; and their submission to the Byzantine empire was purchased by their being permitted to receive a regular tribute from several Roman cities, which, in consideration of this payment, were allowed to occupy districts on the mainland without the neighbouring Slavonians exercising any jurisdiction over such property. The Roman inhabitants in the islands on the Dalmatian coast had preserved their allegiance to the Eastern emperors, and maintained themselves independent of the Slavonians, who had conquered and colonized the mainland, receiving their governors and judges from the central authority at Constantinople.

As early as the year 842, two rival princes, of Lombard race, who disputed the possession of the duchy of Beneventum, solicited assistance from the Saracens; and the Infidels, indifferent to the claims of either, but eager for plunder, readily took part in the quarrel. A body of Saracens from Sicily, who had arrived for the purpose of assisting one of the Christian claimants, resolved to secure a firm establishment in Italy on their own account. To effect this they stormed the city of Bari, though it belonged to their own ally. At Bari they formed a camp for the purpose of ravaging Italy, and made it their station for plundering the possessions of the Frank and Byzantine empires on the coast of the Adriatic. In 846, other bands of Sicilian

Saracens landed at the mouth of the Tiber, and plundered the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul, both then without the walls of Rome. Indeed, the 'mistress of the world' was only saved from falling into the hands of the Mohammedans by the troops of the Emperor Louis II (850). Shortly after, Pope Leo IV fortified the suburb of the Vatican, and thus placed the church of St. Peter in security in the new quarter of the town called the Leonine city. From this period the ravages of the Saracens in Italy were incessant, and the proprietors who dwelt in the country were compelled to build fortified towers, strong enough to resist any sudden attacks, and so high as to be beyond the reach of fire kindled at their base. The manners formed by this state of social insecurity coloured the history of Italy with dark stains for several centuries. In the year 867, the Emperor Louis II exerted himself to restrain the ravages of the Saracens. He laid siege to Bari, and sent ambassadors to Constantinople to solicit the cooperation of a Byzantine fleet. The fleet of Oryphac, strengthened by the naval forces of the Dalmatian cities, was ordered to assist the operations of the Western emperor; but the pride of the court of Constantinople (more sensitive than usual), prevented the conclusion of a treaty with a sovereign who claimed to be treated as emperor of the West. In February, 871, Louis carried the city of Bari by assault, and put the garrison to the sword. The Franks and Greeks disputed the honour of the conquest, and each attempted to turn it to their own profit, so that the war was continued in a desultory manner, without leading to any decided results; and the cultivators of the soil were in turn plundered by the Lombard princes, the Saracen corsairs, and the German and Byzantine emperors. The Saracens again attacked Rome, and compelled Pope John VIII to purchase their retreat by engaging to pay an annual tribute of 25,000 marks of silver. The south of Italy was a scene of political confusion. The Dukes of Naples, Amalfi, and Salerno joined the Saracens in plundering the Roman territory; but Pope John VIII, placing himself at the head of the Roman troops, fought both with Christians and Mohammedans, won battles, and cut off the heads of his prisoners, without the slightest reference to the canons of the church. The bishop of Naples, as bold a warrior as the Pope, dethroned his own brother, and put out his eyes, on the pretext that he had allied himself with the Infidels; yet, when the bishop had possessed himself of his brother's dukedom, he also kept up communications with the Saracens, and aided them in plundering the territory of Rome. This lawless state of affairs induced the Italians to turn for security to the Byzantine Empire. The troops of Basil rendered themselves masters of Bari without difficulty, and the extent of the Byzantine province in southern Italy was greatly extended by a series of campaigns, in which Nicephorus Phokas, grandfather of the emperor of the same name, distinguished himself by his prudent conduct and able tactics. The Saracens were at last expelled from all their possessions in Calabria. The Byzantine government formed its possessions into a province called the Theme of Longobardia, but this province was constantly liable to vary in its extent; and though Gaeta, Naples, Sorrento, and Amalfi acknowledged allegiance to the Emperor of Constantinople, his authority was often very little respected in these cities.

While Basil was successful in extending his power in Italy, the Saracens revenged themselves in Sicily by the conquest of Syracuse, which fell into their hands in 878, and placed them in possession of the whole island. The city, though besieged on the land side by the Saracens established in Sicily, and blockaded by a fleet from Africa, made a gallant defence, and might have been relieved had the emperor shown more activity, or entrusted the force prepared for its relief to a competent officer. The expedition he sent, though it was delayed until nothing could be effected without rapid movements, wasted two months in the port of Monemvasia, where it received the news of the fall of Syracuse. The loss of the last Greek city in Sicily was deeply felt by the people of the Byzantine empire, on account of its commercial importance; and it was reported that the news of so great a calamity to the Christian world was first made known to the inhabitants of Greece by an assembly of demons, who met in the forest of Helos, on the banks of the Eurotas, to rejoice in the event, where their revels were witnessed by a Laconian shepherd. Basil, however, seems to have treated the ruin of a Greek city as a matter of less importance than did Satan. The daring with which the Saracens carried on their naval expeditions over the Mediterranean at this period is a remarkable feature in the state of

society. The attacks of the Danes and Normans on the coasts of England and France were not more constant nor more terrible.

Some of these expeditions deserve to be noticed, in order to point out the great destruction of capital, and the disorganization of society they caused. For some years they threatened the maritime districts of the Eastern Empire with as great a degree of insecurity as that from which society had been delivered by Leo III. In the year 881, the emir of Tarsus, with a fleet of thirty large ships, laid siege to Chalcis, on the Euripus; but Oiniates, the general of the theme of Hellas, having assembled the troops in his province, the emir was killed in an attempt to storm the place, and the Saracen expedition was completely defeated. Shortly after this, the Saracens of Crete ravaged the islands of the Archipelago with a fleet of twenty-seven large ships and a number of smaller vessels. Entering the Hellespont, they plundered the island of Proconnesus; but they were at last overtaken and defeated by the imperial fleet under Oryphas. Undismayed by their losses, they soon fitted out a new fleet, and recommenced their ravages, hoping to avoid the Byzantine admiral by doubling Cape Taenarus, and plundering the western shores of Greece. Niketas Oryphas, on visiting the port of Kenchrees, found that the corsairs were already cruising off the entrance of the Adriatic. He promptly ordered all his galleys to be transported over the Isthmus of Corinth by the ancient tram-road, which had been often used for the same purpose in earlier times, and which was still kept in such a state of repair that all his vessels were conveyed from sea to sea in a single night. The Saracens, surprised by this sudden arrival of a fleet from a quarter where they supposed there was no naval force, fought with less courage than usual, and lost their whole fleet. The cruelty with which the captives, especially the renegades, were treated, was to the last degree inhuman, and affords sad proof of the widespread misery and deep exasperation their previous atrocities had produced, as well as of the barbarity of the age. No torture was spared by the Byzantine authorities. Shortly after this an African fleet of sixty vessels, of extraordinary size, laid waste Zante and Cephallenia. Nasar, the Byzantine admiral, who succeeded Niketas Oryphas, while in pursuit of this fleet, touched at Methone to revictual; but at that port all his rowers deserted, and his ships were detained until the general of the Peloponnesian theme replaced them by a levy of Mardaites and other inhabitants of the peninsula. The Byzantine naval force, even after this contrariety, was again victorious over the Saracens; and the war of pillage was transferred into Sicily, where the Greeks laid waste the neighbourhoods of Palermo, and captured a number of valuable merchant-ships, with such an abundant supply of oil that it was sold at Constantinople for an obolos the litra.

During these wars, Basil recovered possession of the island of Cyprus, but was only able to retain possession of it for seven years, when the Saracens again reconquered it.

Much of Basil's reputation as a wise sovereign is due to his judicious adoption of administrative reforms, called for by the disorders introduced into the government by the neglect of Michael III. His endeavours to lighten the burden of taxation without decreasing the public revenues was then a rare merit. But the eulogies which his grandson and other flatterers have heaped on his private virtues deserve but little credit. The court certainly maintained more outward decency than in the time of his predecessor, but there are many proofs that the reformation was merely external. Thekla, the sister of the Emperor Michael III, who had received the imperial crown from her father Theophilus, had been the concubine of Basil, with the consent of her brother. After Basil assassinated the brother, he neglected and probably feared the sister, but she consoled herself with other lovers. It happened that on some occasion a person employed in the household of Thekla waited on the emperor, who, with the rude facetiousness he inherited from the stable-yard, asked the domestic, "Who lives with your mistress at present?". The individual (Neatokomites) was immediately named, for shame was out of the question in such society. But the jealousy of Basil was roused by this open installation of a successor in the favours of one who had once occupied a place on the throne he had usurped, and he ordered Neatokomites to be seized, scourged, and immured for life in a monastery. It is said that he was base enough to order Thekla to be ill-treated, and to confiscate



great part of her private fortune. The Empress Eudocia Ingerina avenged Thekla, by conducting herself on the throne in a manner more pardonable in the mistress of Michael the Drunkard than in the wife of Basil. When her amours were discovered, the emperor prudently avoided scandal, by compelling her lover to retire privately into a monastery.

The most interesting episode in the private history of Basil is the friendship of Danielis, the Greek lady of Patras. As she had laid the foundation of his wealth while he was only a servant of Theophilites, we may believe that she was eager to see him when she heard that he was seated on the imperial throne. But though she might boast of having been the first to perceive the merits of Basil, she must have doubted whether she would be regarded as a welcome visitor at court. Basil, however, was not ungrateful to those who had assisted him in his poverty, and he sent for the son of his benefactor, and raised him to the rank of protospatharios. The widow also received an invitation to visit Constantinople, and see her adopted son seated on the throne—which, it was said, she had long believed he was destined by heaven to fill; for it had been reported that, when Basil first entered the cathedral of St. Andrew at Patras, a monk was seized with a prophetic vision, and proclaimed that he was destined to become emperor. This prophecy Danielis had heard and believed. The invitation must have afforded her the highest gratification, as a proof of her own discernment in selecting one who possessed affection and gratitude, as well as great talents and divine favour. The old lady was the possessor of a princely fortune, and her wealth indicates that the state of society in the Peloponnesus was not very dissimilar in the ninth century from what it had been in the first centuries of our era, under the Roman government, when Caius Antonius and Eurykles were proprietors of whole provinces, and Herodes Atticus possessed riches that an emperor might have envied.

The lady Danielis set off from Patras in a litter or covered couch, carried on the shoulders of ten slaves; and the train which followed her, destined to relieve these litter-bearers, amounted to three hundred persons. When she reached Constantinople, she was lodged in the apartments of the palace of Magnaura appropriated for the reception of princely guests. The rich presents she had prepared for the emperor astonished the inhabitants of the capital, for no foreign monarch had ever offered gifts of equal value to a Byzantine sovereign. The slaves that bore the gifts were themselves a part of the present, and were all distinguished for their youth, beauty, and accomplishments. Four hundred young men, one hundred eunuchs, and one hundred maidens, formed the living portion of this magnificent offering. A hundred pieces of the richest coloured drapery, one hundred pieces of soft woollen cloth, two hundred pieces of linen, and one hundred of cambric, so fine that each piece could be enclosed in the joint of a reed. To all this a service of cups, dishes, and plates of gold and silver was added. When Danielis reached Constantinople, she found that the emperor had constructed a magnificent church as an expiation for the murder of his benefactor, Michael III. She sent orders to the Peloponnesus to manufacture carpets of unusual size, in order to cover the whole floor, that they might protect the rich mosaic pavement, in which a peacock with outspread tail astonished everyone who beheld it by the extreme brilliancy of its colouring. Before the widow quitted Constantinople, she settled a considerable portion of her estates in Greece on her son, the protospatharios, and on her adopted child the emperor, in joint property.

After Basil's death, she again visited Constantinople; her own son was also dead, so she constituted the Emperor Leo VI her sole heir. On quitting the capital for the last time, she desired that the protospathar Zenobios might be despatched to the Peloponnesus, for the purpose of preparing a register of her extensive estates and immense property. She died shortly after her return; and even the imperial officers were amazed at the amount of her wealth: the quantity of gold coin, gold and silver plate, works of art in bronze, furniture, rich stuffs in linen, cotton, wool, and silk, cattle and slaves, palaces and farms, formed an inheritance that enriched even an emperor of Constantinople. The slaves, of which the Emperor Leo became the proprietor, were so numerous that he ordered three thousand to be enfranchised and sent to the theme of Longobardia, as Apulia was then called, where they were put in possession of land, which they

cultivated as serfs. After the payment of many legacies, and the division of a part of the landed property, according to the dispositions of the testament, the emperor remained possessor of eighty farms or villages. This narration furnishes a curious glimpse into the condition of society in Greece during the latter part of the ninth century, which is the period when the Greek race began to recover a numerical superiority, and prepare for the consolidation of its political ascendancy over the Slavonian colonists in the Peloponnesus. Unfortunately, history supplies us with no contemporary facts that point out the precise causes of the diminution of the relative numbers of the Slavonians, and the rapid increase in the absolute numbers of the Greek agricultural population. We are left to seek for explanations of these facts in the general laws which regulate the progress of population and the decline of society.

The steps by which Basil mounted the throne were never forgotten by the political and military adventurers, who considered the empire a fit reward for a successful conspirator. John Kurkuas, a patrician of great wealth, who commanded the Ikanates, expected to seize the crown as a lawful prize, and engaged sixty-six of the leading men in the public administration to participate in his design. The plot was revealed to Basil by some of the conspirators, who perceived they could gain more by a second treachery than by persisting in their first treason. Kurkuas was seized, and his eyes were put out: the other conspirators were scourged in the hippodrome; their heads were shaved, their beards burned off, and after being paraded through the capital they were exiled, and their estates confiscated. The clemency of Basil in inflicting these paternal punishments, instead of exacting the penalties imposed by the law of treason, is lauded by his interested historians. The fate of Kurkuas, however, only claims our notice, because he was the father of John Kurkuas, a general whom the Byzantine writers consider as a hero worthy to be compared with Trajan and Belisarius. Kurkuas was also the great-grandfather of the Emperor John Zimiskes, one of the ablest soldiers who ever occupied the throne of Constantinople.

Though Basil founded the longest dynasty that ruled the Byzantine Empire, the race proceeded from a corrupt source. Constantine, the son of Basil's first wife, Maria, was regarded with much affection by his father, and received the imperial crown in the year 868, but died about the year 879. The loss was severely felt by the emperor, who expressed an eager desire to be assured that his favourite child enjoyed eternal felicity. The abbot Theodoros Santabaren took advantage of this paternal solicitude to impose on the emperor's superstition and credulity. A phantom, which bore the likeness of Constantine, met the emperor while he was hunting, and galloped towards him, until it approached so near that Basil could perceive the happy expression of his son's face. It then faded from his sight; but the radiant aspect of the vision satisfied the father that his deceased son was received to grace.

Leo, the eldest child of Eudocia, was generally believed to be the son of Michael the Drunkard; and though Basil had conferred on him the imperial crown in his infancy, (AD 870,) he seems never to have regarded him with feelings of affection. It would seem he entertained the common opinion concerning the parentage of Leo. The latter years of Basil were clouded with suspicion of his heir, who he feared might avenge the murder of Michael, even at the risk of becoming a parricide. Whether truly or not, young Leo was accused of plotting against Basil's life before he was sixteen years of age. The accusation was founded on the discovery of a dagger concealed in the boot of the young prince, while he was in attendance on his father at a hunting-party, when Byzantine etiquette demanded that he should be unarmed. The historians who write under the eye of Leo's son, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, pretend that the abbot Theodoros Santabaren persuaded Leo to conceal the weapon for his own defence, and then informed Basil that his son was armed to attempt his assassination. The charge underwent a full examination, during which the young emperor was deprived of the insignia of the imperial rank; but the result of the investigation must have proved his innocence, for, in spite of the suspicions rooted in Basil's mind, he was restored to his rank as heir-apparent.

The cruelty displayed by Basil in his latter days loosens the tongues of his servile historians, and indicates that he never entirely laid aside the vices of his earlier years. While engaged in hunting, to which he was passionately devoted, a stag that had been brought to bay rushed at him, and, striking its antlers into his girdle, dragged him from his horse. One of the attendants drew his hunting-knife, and, cutting the girdle, saved the emperor's life; but the suspicious despot, fearing an attempt at assassination, ordered his faithful servant to be immediately decapitated. The shock he received from the stag brought on a fever, which terminated his eventful life, and he ended his reign, as he had commenced it, by the murder of a benefactor. Though he was a judicious and able sovereign, he has been unduly praised, because he was one of the most orthodox emperors of Constantinople in the opinion of the Latin as well as of the Greek Church.

## Sect. II

### LEO VI THE PHILOSOPHER

A.D. 886-912

Leo the Philosopher gave countenance to the rumour that he was the son of Michael III by one of the first acts of his reign. He ordered the body of the murdered emperor to be transported from Chrysopolis, where it had been interred by Theodora, and entombed it with great ceremony in the Church of the Holy Apostles.

In every characteristic of a sovereign Leo differed from Basil, and almost every point of difference was to the disadvantage of the philosopher. The Pace with which the throne was retained by a man such as Basil had appeared before he became sole emperor, is explained, when we see a trifling pedant like Leo ruling the empire without difficulty. The energy which had re-established the Eastern Empire under the Iconoclasts was now dormant, and society had degenerated as much as the court. When the foundations of the Byzantine government were laid by Leo III, the mass of society was as eager to reform its own vices as the emperor was to improve the administration; but when Basil mounted the throne, the people were as eager to enjoy their wealth as the emperor to gratify his ambition. The emperors of Constantinople, as the throne was to a certain degree elective, are generally types of their age; and though Leo the Philosopher succeeded as the son and successor of Basil, no sovereign ever represented the character of his age better. He typifies the idle spirit of conservatism as correctly as Constantine V does the aggressive energy of progress.

Leo VI was a man of learning and a lover of luxurious ease, a conceited pedant and an arbitrary but mild despot. Naturally of a confined intellect, he owes his title of 'the Philosopher', or 'the Learned', rather to the ignorance of the people, who attributed to him an acquaintance with the secrets of astrological science, than either to his own attainments, or to any remarkable patronage he bestowed on learned men. His personal character, however, exercised even greater influence on the public administration of the empire than that of his predecessors, for the government was now so completely despotic that the court, rather than the cabinet, directed the business of the state. Hence it was that the empire met with disgraceful disasters at a period when its force was sufficient to have protected all its subjects. The last traces of the Roman constitution were now suppressed, and the trammels of an inviolable court ceremonial, and the invariable routine of administrators and lawyers, were all that was preserved of the institutions of an earlier and grander period. The extinction of the Roman

Empire, and complete consolidation of Byzantine despotism, is recorded in the edicts of Leo, suppressing the old municipal system, and abolishing *senatus-consulta*. The language of legislation became as despotic as the acts of the emperor were arbitrary. Two Patriarchs, Photius and Nikolaos, were removed from the government of the church by the emperor's order. Leo lived in open adultery on a throne from which Constantine VI had been driven for venturing on a second marriage while his divorced wife was living. Yet Zoe, the fourth wife of Leo VI, gave birth to the future emperor, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in the purple chamber of the imperial palace, before the marriage ceremony had been performed. A Saracen renegade, named Samonas, was for years the prime favourite of the infatuated Leo, who raised him to the rank of patrician, and allowed him to stand godfather to his son Constantine, though great doubts were entertained of the orthodoxy, or perhaps of the Christianity, of this disreputable favourite. The expenditure of the imperial household was greatly increased; the revenue previously destined to the service of the empire was diverted to the gratification of the court, and corruption was introduced into every branch of the administration by the example of the emperor, who raised money by selling places. The Emperor Basil, like his predecessors, had been contented to make use of a galley, with a single bank of oars, in his visits to the country round Constantinople; but Leo never condescended to move unless in a dromon of two banks of oars, rowed by two hundred men—and two of these vessels were constantly maintained as imperial yachts. Constantine Porphyrogenitus recounts an anecdote concerning the corruption of his father's court, which deserves particular notice, as proving, on the best evidence, that the emperor encouraged the system by sharing in its profits. Ktenas, a rich man in holy orders, and the best public singer of the time, was extremely anxious to possess acknowledged rank at the imperial court. He secured the support of Samonas, the Saracen grand-chamberlain, and hoped to obtain the rank of protospatharios, by offering to make the emperor a present of forty pound's weight of gold, the pay of the office amounting only to a pound of gold annually. The Emperor Leo refused, declaring, as his son tells us, that it was a transaction unworthy of the imperial dignity, and that it was a thing unheard of to appoint a clerk protospatharios. The old man, however, by the means of Samonas, increased his offers, adding to his first proposal a pair of earrings, worth ten pounds of gold, and a richly-chased table of silver gilt, also worth ten pounds of gold. This addition produced so great an effect on Leo's mind, that, according to his own declaration, he disgraced the imperial dignity, for he made a member of the clergy a protospatharios. Constantine then chuckles at his father's good fortune; for after receiving sixty pounds' weight of gold, the new protospatharios only lived to draw two years' pay.

The strongest contrast between the administration of Leo and Basil was visible in the financial affairs of the empire. Though the direct taxes were not increased, the careless conduct of Leo, and his neglect to maintain the strict control over the tax-gatherers exercised by his father, allowed every species of abuse to creep into this branch of government, and the people were subject to the severest oppression. Monopolies were also created in favour of the creatures of the court, which were the cause of great complaints, and one of these ultimately involved the empire in a most disastrous war, with the Bulgarians.

The state of the church in the Byzantine Empire was always important, as ecclesiastical affairs afforded the only opportunity for the expression of public opinion. A considerable body of the clergy was more closely connected with the people, by feelings and interests, than with the court. At this time, however, all classes enjoyed a degree of sensual abundance that rendered society torpid, and few were inclined to take part in violent contests. The majority of the subjects of the Byzantine empire, perhaps, never felt greater aversion to the conduct of the government, both in civil and ecclesiastical matters; and we may attribute the parade Leo made of his divine right to govern both the state and the church, to the fact that he was fully aware of the popular feeling; but no class of men saw any probability of bettering their condition, either by revolution or change, so that a bad government began to be looked upon as one of the unavoidable evils of an advanced state of civilization, and as one of the inevitable calamities which Heaven itself had interwoven in man's existence.

The Emperor Leo VI deposed the Patriarch Photius without pretending any religious motive for the change. The object was to confer the dignity on his brother Stephen, who was then only eighteen years of age. Photius retired into a monastery, where, as has been already mentioned, he was treated with respect by Leo, who pretended that his resignation was a voluntary act. Photius survived his deposition about five years, more universally respected, and probably happier, than when he sat on the patriarchal throne, though he had been excommunicated by nine popes of Rome. Leo displayed a mean spirit in his eagerness to punish the abbot Theodoros Santabaren, whom he regarded as the author of his degradation and imprisonment during his father's reign. Failing to procure evidence to convict the abbot of any crime, he ordered him to be scourged and exiled to Athens. His eyes were subsequently put out by the emperor's order. But Leo, though a tyrant, was not implacable, and some years later Theodoros was recalled to Constantinople, and received a pension.

The predominance of ceremonial feelings in religion is shown in a remarkable manner by the legislative acts of the Byzantine government, relating to the observance of the Sabbath. As early as the reign of Constantine the Great, AD 321, there is a law commanding the suspension of all civil business on Sunday; and this enactment is enforced by a law of Theodosius I, in 386. During the contests concerning image-worship, society was strict in all religious observances, and great attention was paid to Sunday. In the year affecting the practice of piety, even while he made a parade of ecclesiastical observances, revoked all the exemptions which the law had hitherto made in favour of the performance of useful labour on Sunday, and forbade even necessary agricultural work, as dishonouring the Lord's day. Arguing with the bigotry of the predestinarian, that the arbitrary will of God, and not the fixed laws which he has revealed to man, gives abundant harvests to the earth, the emperor regards the diligence of the agriculturist as of no avail. Fate became the refuge of the human mind when the government of Rome had rendered the improvement of pagan society hopeless; superstition assumed its place among the Christians, and the stagnation in the Byzantine Empire persuaded men that no prudence in the conduct of their affairs could better man's condition.

Ecclesiastical affairs gave Leo very little trouble during his reign, but towards its end he was involved in a dispute with the Patriarch Nikolaos the mystic. After the death of Leo's third wife, without male issue, the emperor, not wishing to violate openly the laws of the Eastern Church, enforced by his own legislation, which forbade fourth marriages, installed the beautiful Zoe Carbonopsina, a grandniece of the historian Theophanes, as his concubine in the palace. Zoe gave birth to a son in the purple chamber, who was the celebrated emperor and author, Constantine VII (Porphyrogenitus). The young prince was baptized in the Church of St. Sophia by the Patriarch Nikolaos, but that severe ecclesiastic only consented to officiate at the ceremony on receiving the emperor's promise that he would not live any longer with his concubine. Three days after the baptism of Constantine, the Emperor Leo celebrated his marriage with Zoe, and conferred on her the imperial title, thus keeping his promise to the Patriarch in one sense. But Nikolaos, indignant at having been paltered with in a double sense, degraded the priest who performed the nuptial ceremony, and interdicted the entry of the church to Leo. The emperor only thought it necessary to pay so much respect to the interdict as to attend the church ceremonies by a private door; and the people, caring little about the quarrel, laughed when they saw the imperial philosopher showing so much wit. Leo, however, took measures to gain the Pope's goodwill, and when assured of papal support, he deposed Nikolaos and appointed Euthymios the syncellus his successor. The new Patriarch, though he had been a monk on Mount Olympus, recognized the validity of the emperor's fourth marriage, on the pretext that the public good required the ecclesiastical laws to yield to the exigencies of the state. The populace, to excuse their Patriarch, believed a report that the emperor had threatened, in case the Patriarch refused to recognize the validity of his marriage with Zoe, to publish a law allowing every man to marry four wives at the same time. This rumour, notwithstanding its absurdity, affords strong proof of the power of the emperor, and of the credulity with which the Greeks received every rumour unfavourable to their rulers.

The legislative labours of Leo's reign are more deserving of attention than his ecclesiastical skirmishes, though he only followed in the traces of his father, and made use of materials already prepared to his hand. We have already noticed that he published a revised edition of the Basilika, to which he added a considerable amount of supplementary legislation. Byzantine law, however, even after it had received all the improvements of Basil and Leo, was ill suited to serve as a practical guide to the population of the empire. The Basilika is an inspiration of imperial pride, not a work whose details follow the suggestions of public utility. Whole titles are filled with translations of imperial edicts, useless in the altered circumstances of the empire; and one of the consequences of the ill-devised measure of adopting an old code was, that no perfect copy of the Basilika has been preserved. Many books fell into neglect, and have been entirely lost. The sovereigns of the Byzantine Empire, except while it was ruled by the Iconoclasts, felt that their power rested on the fabric of the Roman administration, not on their own strength.

The collection of the edicts or 'novels' of Leo, inserted in the editions of the Corpus Juris Civilis, has rendered the legislation of Leo more generally known than his revised edition of the Byzantine code. These edicts were published for the purpose of modifying portions of the law, as promulgated in the Basilika. The greater number are addressed to Stylianos, who is supposed to have been the father of Zoe, Leo's second wife, and it is thought they were published between the years 887 and 893, while Stylianos was master of the offices and logothetes.

The military events of Leo's reign were marked by several disgraceful defeats; but the strength of the empire was not seriously affected by the losses sustained, though the people often suffered the severest misery. The Asiatic frontier was generally defended with success. Nicephorus Phokas, who had distinguished himself in Italy during the reign of Basil, acquired additional glory by his activity as general of the Thrakesian theme. The Saracens, nevertheless, continued to make destructive inroads into the empire, as it was found impossible to watch every point where they could assemble an army. In the year 887, the town of Hysela in Charsiana was taken, and its inhabitants carried away into slavery. In 888, Samos was plundered, and the governor, with many of the inhabitants, made prisoner. In 893, the fortress of Koron in Cappadocia was taken. In 901, reciprocal incursions were made by the Christians and Mohammedans, but the Byzantine troops were more successful than the Saracen, for they penetrated as far as the district of Aleppo, and carried off fifteen thousand prisoners. This advantage was compensated by the victories of the Saracen fleet, which took and plundered the island of Lemnos. The Saracen fleet also, in the year 902, took and destroyed the city of Demetrias in Thessaly, where all the inhabitants who could not be carried away, and sold with profit as slaves, were murdered. During these calamities, Leo, in imitation of his father, employed the resources of the state, which ought to have been devoted to putting the naval forces of the empire in an efficient condition, in building a new church, and in constructing a monastery for eunuchs. Before the end of Leo's reign, the isolated and independent position assumed by several of the Saracen emirs on the frontier, enabled the Byzantine generals to make some permanent conquests. Melias, an Armenian who had distinguished himself in the Bulgarian war, gained possession of the country between Mount Amanus and the Euphrates, and this district was formed into a new theme called Lykandos. The Saracens were also driven from the city of Theodosiopolis by Leo Katakalon, and the Araxes was constituted the boundary of the empire towards the Iberians.

The ruinous effects of the piratical system of warfare pursued by the Saracen fleets, and the miseries it inflicted on thousands of Christian families in the Byzantine empire, deserves a record in the page of history. Fortunately we do not require in describing what really happened, to indulge the imagination by painting what probably occurred, for time has spared the narrative of one of the sufferers, in which the author describes his own fate, and the calamities he witnessed, with the minute exactitude of truth and pedantry. Many severe blows were inflicted on the Byzantine Empire by the daring enterprises of the Mohammedans, who took advantage of the neglected state of the imperial navy to plunder the richest cities of Greece. But the most

terrible catastrophe the Christians suffered was the sack of Thessalonica, the second city of the empire in population and wealth. Of this event Johannes Cameniates, an ecclesiastic of the order of Readers, and a native of the place, has left us a full account. He shared all the dangers of the assault, and after the capture of his native city he was carried prisoner to Tarsus, in order to be exchanged at one of the exchanges of prisoners which took place between the Christians and Saracens from time to time in that city.

Thessalonica is situated at the head of an inner basin terminating the long gulf stretching up to the northward, between the snowy peaks and rugged mountains of Olympus and Ossa to the west, and the rich shores of the Chalcidice and the peninsula of Cassandra to the east. The bay, on which the city looks down, affords a safe anchorage; and in the tenth century an ancient mole enclosed an inner port within its arms, where the largest vessels could land or receive their cargoes as in a modern dock. This port bounded the city on the south, and was separated from it by a wall about a mile in length running along the shore. Within, the houses rose gradually, until the upper part of the city was crowned with an acropolis, separated from the hills behind by a rugged precipice. This citadel is now called the Seven Towers. Two ravines, running to the sea from the rocky base of the acropolis, serve as ditches to the western and eastern walls of the city, which to this day follow the same line, and present nearly the same aspect as in the reign of Leo the Philosopher. Their angles at the sea, where they join the wall along the port, are strengthened by towers of extraordinary size. The Egnatian Way, which for many centuries served as the highroad for the communications between Rome and Constantinople, formed a great street passing in a straight line through the centre of the city from its western to its eastern wall. This relic of Roman greatness, with its triumphal arches, still forms a marked feature of the Turkish city; but the moles of the ancient port have fallen to ruin, and the space between the sea-wall and the water is disfigured by a collection of filthy huts. Yet the admirable situation of Thessalonica, and the fertility of the surrounding country, watered by several noble rivers, still enables it to nourish a population of upwards of sixty thousand souls. Nature has made it the capital and seaport of a rich and extensive district, and under a good government it could not fail to become one of the largest and most flourishing cities on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Leo of Tripolis was the most active, daring, and skilful of the Saracen admirals. He was born of Christian parents, at Attalia in Pamphylia, but became a renegade, and settled at Tripolis in Syria after he embraced the Mohammedan faith. In the year 904, Leo sailed from Tarsus with a fleet of fifty-four ships, each carrying two hundred men, besides their officers and a few chosen troops. The ablest corsairs in the East were assembled for this expedition, and a rumour of the unusual care that was shown in fitting out the fleet reached the court of the idle philosopher at Constantinople. He foresaw that some daring attack on his dominions would be made, and would fain have placed the imperial navy in a condition to defend the islands and shores of the Aegean; but though the commerce of Greece could have supplied sailors to man the largest force, the negligence and incapacity of the admiralty had been so great, that several years of misfortune were required to raise the Byzantine fleet to the condition from which it had fallen. The naval force that was now sent to defend the empire did not venture to encounter the Saracen fleet, but retired before it, seeking shelter within the Hellespont, and leaving the whole Archipelago unprotected. In the meantime fugitives reached Constantinople, who reported that the enemy proposed to attack Thessalonica.

The walls of Thessalonica had been originally of great strength, but the fortifications were in a neglected state, and the city was almost without a garrison of regular troops. The sea-wall was in want of repair, and parts were so low that it was not difficult to mount the battlements from the yards of the ships in the port. On the land side the floors of the towers that flanked the walls had in some places fallen into such a state of decay, that the communications of the defenders on the curtains were interrupted. The emperor, when informed of the defenceless state of the place, increased the confusion by his injudicious meddling. He sent a succession of officers from the capital with different instructions, fresh counsels, and new powers; and, as usually happens in similar cases, each of his deputies availed himself of his

authority to alter the plan of defence adopted by his predecessor. As might be expected under such circumstances, the Saracens arrived before the fortifications were repaired, and before the arrangements for defence were completed.

The most alarming defect in the fortifications was the condition of the wall that ran along the border of the port. It was too low, without the necessary towers to afford a flanking defence, and in several places the depth of the water admitted ships to approach close to the quay that ran under its battlements. Petronas, the first officer sent by the emperor, thinking that there was not sufficient time to raise the wall or construct new towers, adopted measures for preventing the approach of the enemy's ships. To effect this, he transported to the port the sculptured sarcophagi, and immense blocks of marble that then adorned the Hellenic tombs on both sides of the Egnatian Way, without the western and eastern gates of the city, and commenced laying them in the sea at some distance from the quay. His object was to form a mole reaching within a few feet of the surface of the water, against which the enemy might run their ships, and leave them exposed, for some time, to the missiles and Greek fire of the defenders of the city. But the inhabitants of Thessalonica showed themselves insensible of danger before it approached, and incapable of defending themselves when it arrived. Their whole confidence was placed in St. Demetrius, who had never deceived them—not in their emperor, whose armies and fleets were every day defeated. They knew that Thessalonica had often repulsed the attacks of the Slavonians in the seventh and eighth centuries—they boasted that it had never been taken by pagan or unbelievers; and they believed that, whenever it had been besieged, St. Demetrius had shown himself active in its defence : it was therefore the universal opinion, that as patron saint he would now defend a place in which he had a strong personal interest; for in no other spot on earth was he worshipped by so numerous, so wealthy, and so devoted a community? The fate of Thessalonica proves the wisdom of Leo III in endeavouring to exterminate the worship of images and saints.

Petronas had not made much progress with his work when he was superseded by an officer named Leo, who was appointed general of the theme of Thessalonica. Leo, finding that the wall towards the port was not higher than the immense stem-galleries of the ships then in use, ordered the undertaking of Petronas to be suspended, and every nerve to be strained to mice the wall. Reports became every day more alarming. At one time it was announced that the Saracen fleet had pursued the Byzantine admiral, Eustathios Argyros, up the Hellespont as far as Parium. Afterwards it became certain that it had quitted the Hellespont and reached Thasos. The people of the city would not, however, shake off their apathy, and their confidence in St. Demetrius. They showed little aptitude for building or for military discipline; the wall advanced slowly, and the militia did not seem likely to defend it with alacrity, even should it be completed. At this conjuncture a third officer arrived from Constantinople, named Niketas. His arrival was of itself sufficient to produce some disorder; but, unfortunately, an accident that happened shortly after threw everything into confusion. Leo and Niketas met on horseback to inspect the defences of the city; the horse of Leo reared, threw his rider, and injured his right thigh and side in such a manner that his life was in danger, and for several days he was unable to move. This accident invested Niketas with the chief command.

Niketas seems to have had more military experience than his predecessor, and he felt that the citizens of Thessalonica, though they formed a numerous militia, were not to be depended on for defending the place. He therefore endeavoured to assemble a body of troops accustomed to war, by calling on the general of the theme of Strymon to send some of the federate Slavonians from his government; but the envy or negligence of the general, and the avarice and ill-will of the Slavonian leaders, prevented the arrival of any assistance from that quarter. Though Niketas threatened to report the misconduct of the general of Strymon to the emperor, he could obtain no addition to the garrison, except a few ill-equipped Slavonian archers from the villages in the plains near the city. The generals seemed all to place too much confidence in human prudence; the people preferred relying on St. Demetrius and heaven. To secure the divine aid, a solemn procession of all the clergy and citizens, accompanied by every stranger



residing in Thessalonica, headed by the archbishop and the civil and military authorities, visited the church of St. Demetrius. Public prayers were offered up day and night with great fervor; but long after, when Joannes Cameniates recorded that the intervention of St. Demetrius had proved unavailing, he acknowledged that God permitted the destruction of Thessalonica to show mankind that nothing renders the divine ear accessible to the intercession of the saints but pious life and good deeds.

The Saracens stopped a short time at Thasos to prepare engines for hurling stones, and other machines used in sieges. At last, as the inhabitants of Thessalonica were leaving their houses at daybreak, to attend morning prayer, on Sunday the 29th of July 904, a rumour arose that the enemy was already in the gulf, and only concealed from view by Cape Ekvolos. The unwarlike city was filled with lamentations, tumult, and alarm; but the citizens enrolled in the militia armed themselves, amidst the tears of their wives and children, and hastened to the battlements. The anxious crowd had not long to wait before fifty-four ships were seen rounding the cape in succession with all sail, set. The sea-breeze bore them rapidly forward, and before noon they were at anchor close to the city. The entrance of the port between the moles was shut by a chain; and to prevent this chain from being broken by hostile ships impelled by the strong sea-breezes of the summer months, several vessels had been sunk across the mouth, Leo of Tripolis immediately reconnoitred the fortifications, and examined the unfinished work of Petronas, in order to ascertain if it were still practicable to approach the wall beyond its junction with the mole. After this examination was completed a desultory attack was made on the place to occupy the attention of the garrison, and induced the besieged to show all their force and means of defence.

Next day the Saracens landed and attacked the gate Roma, which was situated in the eastern wall, and not far from the sea. Seven of the engines constructed at Thasos were placed in battery, and an attempt was made to plant sealing-ladders against the fortifications, under cover of a shower of stones, darts, and arrows; but a vigorous sally of the Byzantine troops repulsed the assault and captured the ladders. In the afternoon the plan of attack was changed. It was resolved to force an entrance by burning down two of the four gates in the eastern wall. The gate Roma and the gate Cassandra, on the Egnatian Way, were selected. Wagons filled with dry wood, pitch, and sulphur, were covered over by fishing-boats turned upside down, to prevent those on the wall from setting fire to the combustibles at a distance. Sheltered by these boats, the Saracen sailors pushed the wagons close to the gates, and when they had lighted their fires, they escaped to their companions with their shields over their heads, while the rising flames, the stones from the ballist, and the arrows of the archers, distracted the attention of the defenders of the wall. The iron plates on the doors were soon heated red-hot, and, the door-posts being consumed, the gates fell; but when the fire burned low, an inner gateway was seen closed with masonry, and well protected by flanking towers, so that the Saracens gained nothing by the success of this project. But the real object of the besiegers in all these preliminary operations had only been to draw off the attention of the Greeks from the point where most danger was to be apprehended. The second night of the siege was a sleepless one for both parties. The inhabitants, seriously alarmed at the daring courage and contempt of death displayed by the assailants, deemed it necessary to keep up a strict watch along the whole circuit of the fortifications, lest some unguarded spot should be found by the besiegers during the darkness. On board the fleet an incessant noise of hammers, and of Arabs and Ethiopians shouting, with a constant moving of lights, proclaimed that active preparation was going on for renewing the attack.

When Leo of Tripolis reconnoitred the fortifications, he had ascertained that his ships could approach the wall in several places, and he had carefully marked the spots. The interval had been employed in getting everything ready for an attack in this quarter, and now the night was devoted to complete the work, in order that the besieged might remain in ignorance of the design until the moment of its execution. It was necessary to form stages, in which the assailants could overlook the defenders of the place, and from which they could descend on the wall. The

project was executed with ability and promptitude in a very simple manner. Two ships were bound firmly together by cables and chains, and the long yards of the immense lateen sails then in use were reversed, so as to extend far beyond the bows of the double ship. These yards were strong enough to support a framework of wood capable of containing a small body of men, who were protected by boards on the sides from missiles, while shrouds kept up a constant communication with the deck below. These cages, when swung aloft from the yards, could be elevated above the battlements where the sea-wall was lowest, and to the besieged looked like the tops of towers suddenly raised out of the sea. In the morning the double ships were rowed into their positions, and the fight commenced between the besiegers in their hanging towers and the defenders on the ramparts. Stones, arrows, pots filled with flaming combustibles, and fire launched from long brazen tubes, the composition of which had been at an earlier period a secret known only in the Byzantine arsenal, now came pouring down from above on the Greeks, who were soon driven from the battlements. The Ethiopians of the Alexandrian ships were the first to make good their footing on the wall, and as soon as they had cleared the whole line of the fortifications towards the sea from its defenders, they broke open the gates, and the crews of the other ships rushed into the city. The sailors employed to collect the booty entered with their drawn swords, wearing only their trousers, in order that no plunder might be abstracted secretly. The militia fled without a thought of further resistance: the Slavonians escaped from a gate in the citadel, which they had secured as a means of retreat.

The Saracens divided themselves into bands, and commenced slaughtering every person they found in the streets, though they encountered crowds of women and children, who had rushed out of their houses to learn the cause of the unusual commotion. A number of the inhabitants endeavoured to escape by the Golden Gate, which formed the entrance of the Egnatian Way into the city from the west, but the crowd rendered it impossible to throw open the doors. A party of Ethiopians came upon the people as they were struggling to effect their purpose. Hundreds were crushed to death or suffocated, and the blacks stabbed the rest, without sparing age or sex. John Cameniates, his father, his uncle, and two brothers, fled towards the wall that separates the town from the citadel, intending to conceal themselves in a tower until the first fury of the assailants was assuaged. They had hardly ascended the wall when a band of Ethiopians reached the place in pursuit of a crowd of people, whom they murdered before the eyes of the terrified family. The Ethiopians then mounted the wall, but a tower was between them and Cameniates, of which the floor was in such a ruinous condition that it seemed dangerous to pass. As the enemy paused, John Cameniates deemed the moment favourable to implore mercy, and running quickly over a beam that remained unbroken, he threw himself at the feet of the black captain, promising that he would reveal where a treasure was hidden, in case his own life and that of his relations was spared. His confidence won the favour of the barbarians, one of whom understood Greek, and the family was taken under their protection; yet as they were marching through the streets, Cameniates received two wounds from an Ethiopian belonging to another band. On their way to the port the prisoners were carried into the convent of Akroullios, where they found the chief of the Ethiopians seated in the vestibule. After hearing the promises of old Cameniates, he rose and entered the church, in which about three hundred Christians had been collected. There, seating himself cross-legged on the altar, he made a signal to his followers, who immediately put all to death, leaving only the family of Cameniates. From this hideous spectacle they were conducted to the Saracen admiral.

After Leo of Tripolis had heard what Cameniates had to say, he sent a guard to convey the treasure to the port. Fortunately the hoard, which contained all the wealth of many members of the family, was found untouched, for had it not satisfied the avarice of the chiefs, the whole family would have been murdered, as happened in many other cases. This treasure was received by Leo only as a ransom for the lives of his prisoners, who were embarked in order to be exchanged at Tarsus for Saracens in captivity among the Christians. Cameniates found Leo, the general of the theme of Thessalonica, Niketas, the third envoy of the emperor, and Rodophyles, a eunuch of the imperial household, who had stopped as he was conveying a hundred pounds' weight of gold to the Byzantine army in Italy, all among the prisoners. Rodophyles was brought

before the Saracen admiral, who had learned from the captives that he was entrusted with treasure. The eunuch boldly replied that he had performed his duty to the emperor, by sending away the gold to the general of the theme of Strymon as soon as the enemy approached; and when Leo of Tripolis found that this was true, he flew into a passion, and ordered Rodophyles to be beaten to death on the spot.

Several days were spent in collecting the booty in the city, in releasing such of the captives as had friends in the neighbourhoods able to purchase their liberty by the payment of a second ransom, and in negotiating the exchange of two hundred persons, for whom an officer of the emperor named Simeon engaged that an equal number of Saracen captives should be delivered up at Tarsus. When all other business was settled, the Saracens threatened to burn the city, and succeeded in forcing the general of Strymon to deliver up the gold for which Rodophyles had lost his life, in order to save the place from destruction. The hostile fleet quitted the harbour of Thessalonica ten days after the capture of the city. Cameniates was embarked in the ship of the Egyptian admiral, who served under Leo of Tripolis. The crew consisted of two hundred men and eight hundred captives; men, women, and children were crowded together on the lower deck. These unfortunate people, all of whom were of the higher ranks, suffered indescribable misery, and many died of hunger, thirst, and suffocation before they reached the island of Crete, where, after a fortnight's confinement, they were allowed to land for the first time. The fleet had deviated from its course in order to avoid falling in with the Byzantine squadron, for it was impossible to fight when every ship was crowded with prisoners. It had therefore remained six days at Patmos and two at Naxos, which was then tributary to the Saracens at Crete.

The fleet anchored at Zontarion, a port opposite the island of Dia, which afforded better shelter than the harbour of Chandax, and where it could obtain the seclusion necessary for dividing the slaves and spoil among the different parties composing the expedition, in order that each might hasten home before the autumnal storms commenced. The whole of the captives were landed, and three days were spent by them in endeavouring to find their relations, and unite families that had been dispersed, many of which were again separated by the new division. As not only the fifty-four ships of Leo's fleet, but also several Byzantine men-of-war and merchantmen, taken in the port of Thessalonica, had been filled with prisoners, it is not surprising that the number, even after the loss sustained on the passage, still amounted to twenty-two thousand souls. Of these, with the exception of the small number reserved for exchange at Tarsus, all consisted of young men and women in the flower of their youth, or children remarkable for the bloom of their beauty: they had been saved from the slaughter of the older inhabitants, or selected from those seized in the houses, because they were sure of commanding a high price in the slave-markets of the East. When all the booty had been landed, the spoil was divided by lot, and then the fleet dispersed, the ships sailing from Crete directly to Alexandria, or to the different ports of Syria to which they belonged. Many of the unfortunate prisoners, exposed to sale in the slave-markets of Fostal, the capital of Egypt and Damascus, were transported to Ethiopia and Arabia, and even to the southern parts of Africa; the more fortunate were repurchased from those to whose share they had fallen, by the Cretans, and by them resold to their friends.

The island of Crete had become a great slave-mart, in consequence of the extensive piracies of its Saracen population; and at this time the slave-trade was the most profitable branch of commerce in the Mediterranean. A large portion of the Greek inhabitants of Crete having embraced Mohammedanism, and established communications with the Christian slave-merchants in the Byzantine Empire, carried on a regular trade in purchasing Byzantine captives of wealthy families, and arranging exchanges of prisoners with their relations. As these exchanges were private speculations, and not, like those at Tarsus, under the regulation of an official cartel, the Christians were generally compelled to pay a considerable sum as redemption-money, in order to deliver their relatives, in addition to releasing a Saracen captive. After the buying and selling of the captives from Thessalonica had been carried on for several

days, the Saracens embarked their prisoners for their ultimate destination. The wife of one of the brothers of Cameniates was purchased by a Cretan slave-merchant, but he had the misery of seeing his mother, his wife, and two of his children, (for the third had died during the voyage) embarked in a ship belonging to Sidon. Cameniates, with his father, and the greater part of the captives set apart for the exchange at Tarsus, were put on board a Byzantine man-of-war, the upper deck of which was occupied by the Saracens, while the Christians were crowded on the lower, in filth and darkness.

On the passage from Crete to Syria, an event happened which shows that Leo, the Saracen admiral, was a man of energy and courage, well fitted for his daring occupation, and by no means so deaf to the calls of humanity, in the hour of the most terrific danger, as his ferocious conduct after the taking of Thessalonica might lead us to believe. A violent storm threatened one of the smaller galleys with destruction, for it broke in the middle—an accident to which ancient ships, from their extreme length and want of beam, were very liable. The Saracens on board were near the admiral's ship, and that in which Cameniates was embarked, and they requested Leo to order the crew of the Byzantine man-of-war to throw all the captives overboard and receive them. The order was given, allowing the crew to quit the sinking ship, but the violence of the wind had driven the ship in which Cameniates was embarked to such a distance that the signals of the admiral were unnoticed or unheeded. Leo, however, ordered his own ship to be brought as near the galley as possible, and succeeded in saving, not only the Saracen crew, but every Christian on board, though the crews and captives of the two vessels amounted to upwards of one thousand persons. The Byzantine generals, Leo and Niketas, who were on board Leo's ship, recounted the circumstances to Cameniates, and declared that their ship was ill-calculated to contain so great a crowd, and was navigated with great difficulty. After refitting at Cyprus, the squadron reached Tripolis on the 14th of September. The father of Cameniates died there, before the prisoners were removed to Tarsus. While waiting at Tarsus, in fear of death from the unhealthiness of the place, Cameniates wrote the account of his sufferings, from which the preceding narrative has been extracted; and we must pardon what he calls the feebleness, but what others are more likely to term the inflation of his style, on account of the interesting matter embalmed in its verbosity. The worthy Anagnostes appears to have returned to his native city, and obtained the office of koubouklesios to the archbishop.

The taking of Thessalonica affords a sad lesson of the inefficiency of central governments, which deny the use of arms to the people, to defend the wealthy and unfortified cities of an extensive empire. The tendency of a court to expend the revenues of the state on the pageantry of power, on palaces, churches, and fêtes in the capital, without bestowing a thought on the destruction of a village or the loss of a parish, reveals to us one of the paths by which despotic power invariably tends to degrade the mass of human civilization.

The wealth the Saracens had obtained at Thessalonica invited them to make fresh attacks on the empire, until at last the public sufferings compelled the Emperor Leo, in the last year of his reign, to make a vigorous attempt to put an end to the piracies of the Cretans, A.D. 912. Himerios, who had gained a naval victory over the Saracens in the year 909, was entrusted with the command of a powerful fleet, and commenced his operations by clearing the Archipelago of the Cretan pirates. His fleet consisted of forty dromons or war-galleys of the largest size, besides other vessels; and it was manned by twelve thousand native sailors, besides seven hundred Russians, who are considered worthy of especial enumeration. A powerful army, under the orders of Romanus the future emperor, was assembled at Samos for the purpose of besieging Chandax; but after eight months of insignificant demonstrations, the expedition was defeated with great loss by the Saracens, under the command of Leo of Tripolis and Damian, off the coast of Samos. Himerios escaped with difficulty to Mitylene, but Romanus saved the remains of the imperial force.

In southern Italy, everything was in such a state of confusion that it is not worth while following the political changes it suffered. The dukes of Naples, Gaeta, Salerno and Amalfi

were at times the willing subjects of the Byzantine emperor, and at times their personal ambition induced them to form alliances with the Saracens of Africa and Sicily, or, with the Pope and the Romans, to carry on war with the Byzantine generals of the theme of Longibardia (Apulia). The Italian population, as in ancient times, consisted of many nations living under different laws and usages, so that only a powerful central government, or a system of political equality, could preserve order in the discordant elements. The state of civilization rendered the first difficult, the second impossible. The popes were always striving to increase their power, allying themselves alternately with the Franks and the Byzantines; the native Italian population in the cities was struggling for municipal independence; a powerful aristocracy, of Germanic origin, was contending for power; the Byzantine authorities were toiling to secure an increase of revenue, and the whole peninsula was exposed to the plundering incursions either of the Hungarians or of the Saracens. In this scene of confusion the Emperor Leo was suddenly compelled to take an active part by the loss of Bari, which was seized by the Duke of Beneventum. A Byzantine army regained possession of that city, and revenged the injury the Greeks had suffered by taking Beneventum, which, however, only remained in possession of the imperial troops for four years. The Byzantine fleet in Italy was subsequently defeated by the Sicilian Saracens in the Straits of Messina. In short, the administration of Leo the Philosopher in Italy was marked by his usual negligence and incapacity, and the weakness of his enemies alone preserved the Byzantine possessions.

The kingdom of Bulgaria had for a considerable period proved a quiet neighbour and useful ally. It formed a barrier against the Turkish tribes, whom the ruin of the Khazar Empire drove into Europe. Leo, however, allowed himself to be involved in hostilities with the Bulgarians by the avarice of his ministers. Stylianos, the father of his second wife Zoe, established a monopoly of the Bulgarian trade in favour of two Greek merchants. To conceal the extortions to which this monopoly gave rise, the depôt of the Bulgarian commerce was removed from Constantinople to Thessalonica. The Bulgarians, whose interest suffered by this fraud, applied to their King Simeon for protection; and when the Emperor Leo, after repeated solicitations, took no steps to redress the injustice, the Bulgarian monarch declared war. An almost uninterrupted peace of seventy-four years had existed between the sovereigns of Constantinople and Bulgaria, for only temporary and trifling hostilities had occurred since the treaty between Leo V and Mortagan in 814. Bogoris—called, after his baptism, Michael—had governed his kingdom with great prudence, and not only converted all his subjects to Christianity, but also augmented their means of education and wellbeing. His own religious views induced him to join the Eastern Church, and he sent his second son Simeon to Constantinople for his education. Bogoris retired into a monastery, and left the throne to his eldest son Vladimir, about the year 885. The disorderly conduct of Vladimir drew his father from his retreat, who was compelled to dethrone and put out the eyes of this unworthy prince, before immuring him in a monastery. He then placed his second son Simeon on the throne, (A.D. 888,) and, retiring again to his cell, died a monk, A.D. 907.

Simeon proved an able and active monarch. His education at Constantinople had enlarged his mind, but inspired him with some contempt for the meanness and luxury of the Byzantine court, and for the pedantry and presumption of the Greek people. He was himself both a warrior and a scholar, but he followed the military system of the Bulgarians, and wrote in his native language. The Bulgarian nation had now attained the position occupied some centuries before by the Avars. They were the most civilized and commercial of all the northern barbarians, and formed the medium for supplying the greater part of Germany and Scandinavia with the necessary commodities from Asia, and with Byzantine manufactures and gold. This extensive and flourishing trade had gone on increasing ever since a treaty, fixing the amount of duties to be levied on the Byzantine frontier, had been concluded in the year 716, during the reign of Theodosius III. The stipulations of that treaty had always formed the basis on which the commercial relations between the two states had been re-established, at the conclusion of every war; but now two Greek merchants, Stavrakios and Kosmas, bribed Mousikos, a eunuch in the household of Stylianos, to procure an imperial ordinance for transferring the whole of the

Bulgarian trade to Thessalonica. These Greeks, having farmed the customs, felt that they could carry on extortions at a distance which could not be attempted as long as the traders could bring their goods to Constantinople, and place themselves under the immediate protection of the central administration. The monopoly, though it inflicted great losses both on the Greek and Bulgarian traders, was supported by the favourite minister of the emperor, who refused to pay any attention to the reclamations of the Bulgarian government in favour of its subjects. Simeon, who was not of a disposition to submit to contemptuous treatment, finding that he had no hope of obtaining redress by peaceable means, invaded the empire. The Byzantine army was completely defeated, and the two generals who commanded were slain in the first battle. But Simeon tarnished his glory by his cruelty: he ordered the noses of all the prisoners to be cut off, and sent the Byzantine soldiers, thus mutilated, to Constantinople. Leo, eager to revenge this barbarity, sent a patrician, Niketas Skleros, to urge the Hungarians, a Turkish tribe which had recently quitted the banks of the Don to occupy the country still possessed by its descendants, to attack the Bulgarians. They did so, and defeated them. They sold their prisoners to the Emperor Leo, who was compelled, shortly after, to deliver them to Simeon, King of Bulgaria, without ransom, in order to purchase peace; for the Magyars were defeated in a second battle, and retired from the contest. Leo, like many absolute sovereigns, had conceived too high an idea of his power and prerogatives to pay any respect to his engagements, when he thought it for his advantage to forget his promises. He took the earliest opportunity of seeking for revenge, and having assembled what he supposed was an invincible army, he sent Leo Katakalon, his best general, to invade Bulgaria. This army was completely destroyed at a place called Bulgarophygos, and after this lesson Leo was glad to conclude peace, A.D.893.

About the same time the oppressive conduct of the imperial governor at Cherson caused an insurrection of the inhabitants, in which he was murdered.

Leo, in spite of his title of ‘the Philosopher’, was not a man in whose personal history mankind can feel much interest. Though his reign was undisturbed by rebellion or civil war, his life was exposed to frequent dangers. His concubine Zoe discovered a conspiracy against him, and another was revealed by the renegade Samonas, and became the origin of his great favour at court. The prime conspirator was scourged and exiled to Athens. In 902, an attempt was made to murder Leo in the church of St Mokios by a madman, who was armed only with a stick. The blow was broken by the branch of a chandelier, yet the emperor received a severe wound.

Leo died in the year 912, after a reign of twenty-five years and eight months.

### Sect. III

#### ALEXANDER (912-913), MINORITY OF CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYROGENITUS (913-920), ROMANUS I LECAPENUS, (912-944)

Alexander, who succeeded to the throne, or rather to the government of the empire, on the death of his brother Leo, (for he had long borne the title of Emperor), was more degraded in his tastes, and more unfit for his station, than Michael the Drunkard. Fortunately for his subjects, he reigned only a year; yet he found time to inflict on the empire a serious wound, by rejecting the offer of Simeon, king of Bulgaria, to renew the treaty concluded with Leo. Alexander, like his predecessor, had a taste for astrology; and among his other follies he was persuaded that an

ancient bronze statue of a boar in the Agora was his own genius. This work of art was consequently treated with the greatest reverence; it was adorned with new tusks and other ornaments, and its reintegration in the hippodrome was celebrated as a public festival, not only with profane games, but even with religious ceremonies, to the scandal of the orthodox.

Leo VI had undermined the Byzantine system of administration, which Leo III had modelled on the traditions of imperial Rome. He had used his absolute power to confer offices of the highest trust on court favourites notoriously incapable of performing the duties entrusted to them. The systematic rules of promotion in the service of the government; the administrative usages which were consecrated into laws; the professional education which had preserved the science of government from degenerating with the literature and language of the empire, were for the first time habitually neglected and violated. The administration and the court were confounded in the same mass, and an emperor, called the Philosopher, is characterized in history for having reduced the Eastern Empire to the degraded rule of an Oriental and arbitrary despotism. Alexander carried this abuse to a great extent, by conferring high commands on the companions of his debaucheries, and by elevating men of Slavonian and Saracen origin to the highest dignities.

The only act of Alexander's reign that it is necessary to particularize is the nomination of a regency to act during the minority of his nephew Constantine. The Patriarch Nikolaos, who had been reinstated in office, was made one of its members; but Zoe Carbopsina, the young emperor's mother, was excluded from it.

Constantine VII was only seven years old when he became sole emperor. The regency named by Alexander consisted of six members exclusive of the Patriarch, two of whom, named Basilitzes and Gabrilopulos, were Slavonians, who had attained the highest employments and accumulated great wealth by the favour of Alexander. The facility with which all foreigners obtained the highest offices at Constantinople, and the rare occurrence of any man of pure Hellenic race in power, is a feature of the Byzantine government that requires to be constantly borne in mind, as it is a proof of the tenacity with which the empire clung to Roman traditions, and repudiated any identification with Greek nationality.

It is difficult, in the period now before us, to select facts that convey a correct impression of the condition, both of the government and the people. The calamities and crimes we are compelled to mention tend to create an opinion that the government was worse, and the condition of the inhabitants of the empire more miserable than was really the case. The ravages of war and the incursions of pirates wasted only a small portion of the Byzantine territory, and ample time was afforded by the long intervals of tranquillity to repair the depopulation and desolation caused by foreign enemies. The central government still retained institutions that enabled it to encounter many political storms that ruined neighbouring nations; yet the weakness of the administration, the vices of the court, and the corruption of the people during the reigns of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his father-in-law Romanus I, seemed to indicate a rapid decay in the strength of the empire, and they form a heterogeneous combination with the institutions which still guaranteed security for life and property to an extent unknown in every other portion of the world, whether under Christian or Mohammedan sway. The merits and defects of the Byzantine government are not found in combination in any other portion of history, until we approach modern times.

Hereditary succession was never firmly established in the Byzantine Empire. The system of centralization rendered the prime-minister, who carried on the administration for a minor or a weak sovereign, virtually master of the empire. Against this danger Alexander had endeavoured to protect his nephew, by creating a regency of six members, no one of whom could aspire at becoming the colleague of young Constantine. But the arbitrary nature of the imperial power created a feeling of insecurity in the minds of all officials, as long as that power was not vested in a single individual. This feeling inspired every man of influence with the hope of being able

to render himself sole regent, and with the desire of assuming the title of Emperor, as the only method of permanently maintaining the post of guardian to the young prince. The most popular man of the time was Constantine Dukas, who had fled to the Saracens with his father Andronikos, in order to escape the anger of Leo VI. His father had embraced Mohammedanism, but Dukas had thrown himself on the mercy of Leo rather than forsake his religion, and had been rewarded by a command on the south-eastern frontier. For three years he served with distinction, and his valour and liberality rendered him popular among the soldiers. The death of Alexander found him commanding a division of the Byzantine army in Asia Minor, with the rank of general of the imperial guard: and a party of the officers of state, knowing his boundless ambition, fixed their eyes on him as the man most likely to overthrow the regency. Even the Patriarch Nikolaos was privy to the schemes of those who urged Dukas to repair secretly to Constantinople, for this ambitious ecclesiastic expected more authority over a young man possessing absolute power, than over six wary statesmen experienced in every department of public business.

As soon as Dukas reached the capital, he was proclaimed emperor by his partisans, who had already prepared the troops and the people for a change; and he marched immediately to the palace of Chalke, where the young emperor resided, and of which he expected to gain possession without difficulty. His attack was so sudden that he rendered himself master of the outer court; but the alarm was soon given, and all the entries into the palace were instantly closed. John Eladas, one of the members of the regency, assumed the command of the guards on duty, and a furious battle was fought in the court. The rebels were repulsed, and the horse of Dukas slipping on the flags of the pavement he was slain. Three thousand men are said to have fallen in this short tumult, in which both parties displayed the most daring courage. The conspirators who fell were more fortunate than those who were taken by the regency, for these latter were put to death with inhuman cruelty; and the Patriarch was justly censured for the apathy he showed when men were tortured, of whose plots he had been cognisant. Several persons of high rank were beheaded, and some were hung on the Asiatic shore opposite the imperial palace. The wife of Constantine Dukas was compelled to take the veil, and banished to her property in Paphlagonia, where she founded a monastery. Stephen, her only surviving son, was made a eunuch, and every other male of the noble house of Dukas perished on this occasion. The family that afterwards bore the name, and ascended the throne of Constantinople, was of more modern origin.

The affection of the young emperor for his mother, and the intrigues of the different members of the regency, who expected to increase their influence by her favor, reinstated Zoe Carbopsina in the palace, from which she had been expelled by Alexander. As she had received the imperial crown, she shared the sovereign authority with the regents as a matter of right, and through the influence of John Eladas, she soon became the absolute mistress of the public administration. Zoe thought of little but luxury and amusement. Her administration was unfortunate, and a complete defeat of the Byzantine army by the Bulgarians created a general feeling that the direction of public affairs ought no longer to be entrusted to a woman of her thoughtless disposition.

The evils inflicted on the inhabitants of Thrace by Simeon, king of Bulgaria, after his rupture with Alexander, equaled the sufferings of the empire during the earlier incursions of the Huns and Avars. In the year 913, shortly after Alexander's death, Simeon marched up to the walls of Constantinople almost without opposition; but he found the city too well garrisoned to admit of his remaining long in its vicinity: he retired after an ineffectual attempt to settle the terms of a treaty in a conference with the Patriarch. In 914 he again invaded the empire, and in this campaign Adrianople was betrayed into his hands by its governor, an Armenian named Pankratakas, who, however, as soon as the Bulgarians retired, restored it to the Byzantine government.



A Turkish tribe, called by the Byzantine writers Patzinaks, who had contributed to destroy the flourishing monarchy of the Khazars, had driven the Magyars or Hungarians before them into Europe, and at this period had extended their settlements from the shores of the Sea of Azof and the falls of the Dnieper to the banks of the Danube. They were thus neighbors of the Russians and the Bulgarians, as well as of the Byzantine province of Cherson. They were nomades, and inferior in civilization to the nations in their vicinity, by whom they were dreaded as active and insatiable plunderers, always ready for war and eager for rapine. The regency of the Empress Zoe, in order to give the people of Thrace some respite from the ravages of the Bulgarians, concluded an alliance with the Patzinaks, who engaged, on receiving a sum of money, to act in cooperation with the imperial forces. They were to attack the Bulgarians in the rear, the means of crossing the Danube being furnished by the Byzantine government. Zoe, in the meantime, trusting to negotiations she was carrying on at Bagdad for securing tranquility in Asia Minor, transferred the greater part of the Asiatic army to Europe, and prepared to carry the war into the heart of Bulgaria, and compel Simeon to fight a battle, in order to prevent his country being laid waste by the Patzinaks. A splendid army was reviewed at Constantinople, and placed under the command of Leo Phokas, a man possessing great influence with the aristocracy, and a high military reputation. Before the troops marched northward they received new arms and equipments; liberal advances of pay were made to the soldiers, and numerous promotions were made among the officers. The second in command was Constantine the Libyan, one of the conspirators in the plot of Dukas, who had escaped the search of the regency until he obtained the pardon obtained Zoe's government. The fleet appointed to enter the mouth of the Danube, in order to transport the Patzinaks over the river, was placed under the command of Romanus the grand admiral.

Leo Phokas pressed forward, confident of success; but Romanus felt no inclination to assist the operation of one whom a successful campaign would render the master of the empire. He is accused of throwing impediments in the way of the Patzinaks, and delaying to transport them over the Danube at the time and place most likely to derange the operations of the Bulgarians. The conduct of Leo was rash, that of Romanus treacherous. Simeon was enabled to concentrate all his forces and fight a battle at a place called Achelous, in which the Byzantine army was defeated, with an immense loss both in officers and men, (20th August 917). Leo escaped to Mesembria, where he attempted to rally the fugitives; but Romanus, as soon as he heard of the disaster, sailed directly to Constantinople without attempting to make any diversion for the relief of his countrymen, or endeavouring to succour the defeated troops as he passed Mesembria. He was accused of treason on his return, and condemned to lose his sight; but he retained possession of the fleet by the support of the sailors; and the empress, who began to perceive her unpopularity, countenanced his disobedience, as she expected to make use of his support.

The partisans of Leo openly urged his claims to be placed at the head of the administration, as the only man capable by his talents of preventing a revolution; and the chamberlain Constantine urged Zoe to appoint him a member of the regency, and invest him with the conduct of public affairs. The empress began to distrust Romanus, from the preponderating power he possessed as long as the fleet remained in the vicinity of the capital. The fleet was therefore ordered into the Black Sea; but Romanus had already received secret encouragement to oppose the designs of Leo from Theodore, the governor of the young emperor, and he delayed sailing, under the pretext that the sailors would not put to sea until their arrears were paid. The crisis was important; so the chamberlain Constantine visited the fleet with the money necessary for paying the sailors, determined to hasten its departure, and perhaps to arrest the grand admiral. This step brought matters to an issue. Romanus seized the money and paid the sailors himself, keeping the chamberlain under arrest. This daring conduct on the part of a man hitherto considered as deficient in ambition as well as capacity, spread alarm in the palace, for it revealed to the empress that there was another pretender to supreme power. Zoe immediately despatched the Patriarch Nikolaos, and some of the principal officers of state, to visit the fleet in order to induce the sailors to return to their allegiance; but the populace,

eager for change, and delighted to see the government in a state of embarrassment, attacked the envoys with stones, and drove them back into the palace. The empress, at a loss what measures to adopt, vainly sought for information concerning the causes of this sudden revolution. At last Theodore, the young emperor's governor, declared that the conduct of Leo Phokas and the chamberlain Constantine had caused the popular dissatisfaction, for Leo had ruined the army and Constantine had corrupted the administration. He suggested that the easiest mode of putting an end to the existing embarrassments would be for the young Emperor Constantine to assume the supreme power into his own hands. This was done, and the young prince, or rather his tutor Theodore in his name, invited the Patriarch and one of the regents named Stephen to consult on the measures to be adopted, though both were known to be hostile to his mother's administration. This produced an immediate revolution at court. The principal officers of state attached to the party of Phokas were dismissed from their employments, which were conferred on men pledged to support the new advisers of the young emperor. Leo, not perceiving that Romanus was directly connected with the new administration, proposed a coalition, but received from that wary intriguer only assurances of friendship and support, while he openly obeyed the orders of the new ministers. Romanus, however, was soon informed by his friend Theodore that the Patriarch and Stephen had resolved to remove him from his command, that they might render him as harmless as Leo : bold measures were therefore rendered necessary, and without hesitation the admiral ranged his fleet in hostile array under the walls of the palace Bukoleon. His friends within, under the direction of the patrician Niketas, invited him to enter and protect the young emperor, and at the same time forced the Patriarch and Stephen to retire. The Emperor Constantine had been already predisposed in favor of Romanus by his tutor, so that he received the insurgent admiral in a friendly manner. The young prince, accompanied by the court, repaired to the chapel in Pharo, where Romanus took an oath of fidelity on the wood of the true cross, and was invested with the offices of and master and grand heteriarch, or general of the foreign guards, on the 25th of March 919.

Before a month elapsed, the fortunes of Romanus were further advanced by the charms of his daughter Helena. Constantine VII became deeply smitten with her beauty, and the ambition of the father precipitated the marriage in order to secure the title of Basileopater, which gave him precedence over every other officer of state, 27th April 919. He was now even more than prime-minister, and his position excited deeper envy. Leo Phokas took up arms in Bithynia and marched to Chrysopolis, (Scutari), declaring that his object was to deliver the young emperor from restraint; but his movement was so evidently the result of disappointed ambition that he found few to support him, and he was soon taken prisoner and deprived of sight. Another conspiracy, having for its object the assassination of the Basileopater, also failed. The Empress Zoe was accused of attempting to poison him, and immured in a monastery. The governor Theodore, perceiving that he no longer enjoyed the confidence of the friend he had contributed to elevate, began to thwart the ambitious projects of Romanus, and was banished to his property in Opsikion. Romanus, finding that there was now nothing to prevent his indulging his ambition, persuaded his son-in-law to confer on him the title of Caesar, and shortly after to elevate him to the rank of emperor. He was crowned as the colleague of Constantine Porphyrogenitus by the Patriarch Nikolaos in the Church of St Sophia, on the 17th December 919.

Few men ever possessed the absolute direction of public affairs in the Byzantine Empire without assuming the imperial title, even though they had no intention of setting aside the sovereign whose throne they shared. It was well understood that there was no other means of securing their position, for as long as they remained only with the rank of prime-minister or Caesar, they were exposed to lose their sight, or be put to death by a secret order of the sovereign, obtained through the intrigues of a eunuch or a slave. But as soon as they assumed the rank of emperor of the Romans, their person was sacred, being protected both by the law of high treason and the force of public opinion, which regarded the emperor as the Lord's anointed. Two of the greatest sovereigns who ever sat on the throne of Constantinople, Nicephorus II

(Phokas), and John I (Zimiskes), shared the throne with Basil II and Constantine VIII as Romanus I did with Constantine VII.

Romanus was a man whose character was too weak to admit of enlarged views. His vanity was hurt by the fact that he occupied only the second place in the empire, and to gratify his passion for pageantry, and secure the place of honour in the numerous ceremonies of the Byzantine court, he usurped the place of his son-in-law and conferred the imperial crown on his own wife Theodora, and on his eldest son Christophoros, giving both precedence over the hereditary emperor. Romanus had served in his youth as a marine, and he had risen to the highest rank without rendering himself remarkable either for his valour or ability; the successful career of his family, therefore, naturally excited the dissatisfaction of the aristocracy and the ambition of every enterprising officer. His reign was disturbed by a series of conspiracies, all having for their avowed object the restoration of Constantine Porphyrogenitus to his legitimate rights, though, probably, the real object of the conspirators was to gain possession of the power and position occupied by Romanus. In the year 921, the great officers of the empire—the grandmaster of the palace, the minister of fortifications, and the director-general of charitable institutions—were discovered plotting. Shortly after, a patrician, with the aid of the captain of the guard of Maglabites or mace-bearers, undismayed by the preceding failure, again attempted to dethrone Romanus; and a third conspiracy, planned by the treasurer and keeper of the imperial plate, one of the chamberlains, and the captain of the imperial galley, was organized. All were discovered, and the conspirators were punished. In 924, Boilas, a patrician, rebelled on the frontiers of Armenia, but his troops were defeated by the celebrated general John Kurkuas, and he was confined in a monastery. Again, in 926, one of the ministers of state and the postmaster-general formed a plot, which proved equally abortive.

As years advanced, the feeble character of Constantine Porphyrogenitus became more apparent. His want of talent, and his devotion to literature and art, warned the ablest statesmen to avoid compromising their fortunes by supporting the cause of one so little qualified to defend his own rights. Romanus, too, having assumed his three sons, Christophoros, Stephanos, and Constantinos, as his colleagues, and placed his son Theophylaktos on the patriarchal throne, considered his power perfectly secure. The spirit of discontent was, nevertheless, very prevalent; the people in the capital and the provinces were as little inclined to favour the usurping family as the nobility. An impostor, born in Macedonia, made his appearance in the theme Opsikion, where he announced himself to be Constantine Dukas; and though taken, and condemned to lose his hand like a common forger, he was enabled to raise a second rebellion after his release. He procured an artificial hand of brass, with which he wielded his sword; the common people flocked round him, and resisted the government with so much determination that he was captured with difficulty, and, to revenge the display he had made of the weakness of Romanus's power, he was burned alive in the Amastrion at Constantinople.

In early life Romanus had been a votary of pleasure, but when the possession of every wish for three-and-twenty years had tamed his passions, he became a votary of superstition. Feelings of religion began to affect his mind, and at last he allowed it to be discovered that he felt some remorse for having robbed his son-in-law of his birth-right, in order to bestow the gift on his own children, who treated him with less respect than their brother-in-law. Christophoros was dead, and Stephanos, impelled either by fear that his father would restore Constantine Porphyrogenitus to the first place in the government, or excited by the usual unprincipled ambition that pervaded the Byzantine court, resolved to secure the possession of supreme authority by deposing his father. Romanus was seized by the agents of his son and carried off to the island of Prote, where he was compelled to embrace the monastic life. Constantinos, his younger son, though he had not been privy to the plot, readily joined in profiting by his father's ill-treatment. Such crimes, however, always excite indignation in the breasts of the people; and in this case the inhabitants of Constantinople, hearing vague rumours of scenes of dethronement, banishment, and murder, in the imperial palace, became alarmed for the life of their lawful sovereign, Constantine Porphyrogenitus. They felt an attachment to the injured

prince, whom they saw constantly at all the church ceremonies, degraded from his hereditary place; his habits were known, many spoke in his praise, nobody could tell any evil of him. A mob rushed to the palace, and, filling the courts, insisted on seeing the lawful emperor. His appearance immediately tranquillized the populace, but hopes were awakened in the breasts of many intriguers by this sudden display of his influence. A new vista of intrigue was laid open, and the most sagacious statesmen saw that his establishment on the throne as sole emperor was the only means of maintaining order. Every man in power became a partisan of his long-neglected rights, and a restoration was effected without opposition. The Emperors Stephanos and Constantinos were seized by the order of Constantine VII, while they were sitting at a supper-party, and compelled to adopt the monastic habit, 27th January 945.

#### Sect. IV

### CONSTANTINE VII (PORPHYROGENITUS), ROMANUS II.

A.D. 945-963.

We are principally indebted to the writings of the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, or to works compiled by his order, for our knowledge of Byzantine history during the latter half of the ninth and earlier half of the tenth centuries. His own writings give us a picture of his mind, for he generally communicates his information as it occurs to himself, without hunting for classic and ecclesiastical phrases, and seeking for learned allusions and antiquated words to confuse and astonish his readers, as was the fashion with most of the Byzantine nobles who affected the literary character. Of his person we have a correct description in the writings of his dependants. He was tall and well made, with broad shoulders, a long neck, and a long face. This last feature is represented in caricature on some of the coins of his reign. His skin was extremely fair, his complexion ruddy, his eyes soft and expressive, his nose aquiline, and his carriage straight as a cypress. He was a lover of good cheer, and kept the best of cooks, and a cellar of excellent wine of all the choicest kinds; but he indulged in no excesses, and his morals were pure. He was reserved and mild in his intercourse with his familiars, eloquent and liberal to his dependants, so that we must not wonder that his panegyrists forgot his defects. In a despotic sovereign, such a character could not fail to be popular.

Constantine's long seclusion from public business had been devoted to the cultivation of his taste in art, as well as to serious study. He was a proficient in mathematics, astronomy, architecture, sculpture, painting, and music. The works of his pencil were of course lauded as equal to the pictures by Apelles; his voice was often heard in the solemn festivals of the church. An encyclopaedia of historical knowledge—of which a part only has reached our time, but even this part has preserved many valuable fragments of ancient historians—and treatises on agriculture and the veterinary art, were compiled under his inspection.

The historical works written by his order were a chronicle in continuation of the Chronography of Theophanes, embracing the period from the reign of Leo V (the Armenian) to the death of Michael III. The name of the writer is said to be Leontios. A second work on the same period, but including the reign of Basil I, was also written by Genesius; and a third work, by an anonymous continuator, carried Byzantine history down to the commencement of the reign of his son Romanus II.

The writings ascribed to Constantine himself are peculiarly valuable, for several relate to subjects treated by no other author. The life of his grandfather, Basil I, tells some truths, from vanity, that an experienced flatterer would have concealed for fear of wounding family pride. A short geographical notice of the themes or administrative divisions of the Byzantine Empire gives us the means of connecting medieval with ancient geography. But the emperor's most valuable work is a treatise on the government of the empire, written for the use of his son Romanus, which abounds with contemporary information concerning the geographical limits and political relations of the people on the northern frontier of the empire and of the Black Sea, with notices of the Byzantine power in Italy, and of the condition of the Greeks and Slavonians in the Peloponnesus, of which we should otherwise know almost nothing. Two essays on military tactics—one relating to naval and military operations with the regular troops of the empire, and the other to the usages of foreigners—contain also much information. The longest work, however, that Constantine wrote, and that on which he prided himself most, was an account of the ceremonies and usages of the Byzantine court. It is probably now the least read of his writings, yet it has been edited with care, though it is published without an index which merited more than a translation.

The government of Constantine was on the whole mild and equitable, and the empire during his reign was rich and flourishing. When he became despotic master of the East, he continued to think and act very much as he had done in his forced seclusion. He displayed the same simplicity of manner and goodness of heart. His weakness prevented him from being a good sovereign, but his humanity and love of justice preserved him from being a bad one, and he continued all his life to be popular with the mass of his subjects. His kind disposition induced him to allow his son, Romanus II, to marry Theophano, a girl of singular beauty, and of the most graceful and fascinating manners, but the daughter of a man in meat circumstances. The Byzantine historians, who are more frequently the chroniclers of aristocratic scandal than of political history, and whose appetite for popular calumny swallows the greatest improbabilities, have recorded that Theophano repaid the goodness of the emperor by inducing Romanus to poison his father. They pretend that the chief butler was gained, and that Constantine partook of a beverage, in which poison was mingled with medicine prescribed by his physician. Accident prevented him from swallowing enough to terminate his life, but the draught injured a constitution already weak. To recover from the languor into which he fell, he made a tour in Bithynia in order to enjoy the bracing air of Mount Olympus, and visit the principal monasteries and cells of anchorites, with which the mountain was covered. But his malady increased, and he returned to Constantinople to die, 9th Nov. 959.

The picture which we possess of the conduct of Constantine in his own family is so amiable, that we are compelled to reject the accusations brought against Romanus and Theophano;—we can no more believe that they poisoned Constantine, than we can credit all the calumnies against Justinian recounted by Procopius. To perpetrate such a crime, Romanus would have been one of the worst monsters of whose acts history has preserved a record; and a character so diabolical would have revealed its inherent wickedness during the four years he governed the empire with absolute power. Yet he appears only as a gay, pleasure-loving, pleasure-hunting prince. His father and his sisters always regarded him with the tenderest affection. Agatha, the youngest, was her father's constant companion in his study, and acted as his favourite secretary. Seated by his side, she read to him all the official reports of the ministers; and when his health began to fail, it was through her intermediation that he consented to transact public business. That such a proceeding created no alarming abuses, and produced neither serious complaints nor family quarrels, is more honourable to the heart of the princess than her successful performance of her task to her good sense and ability. It proves that affection, and not ambition, prompted her conduct. Historians and novelists may recount that Romanus, who lived in affectionate intercourse with such a father and sister, became a parricide, but the tenor of actual life rejects the possibility of any man acting suddenly, and for once, as a monster of iniquity.

The necessity of a safety-valve for political dissatisfaction, such as is afforded by a free press or a representative assembly, to prevent sedition, is evident, when we find a popular prince like Constantine exposed to numerous conspiracies. Men will not respect laws which appear to their minds to be individual privileges, and not national institutions. Conspiracies then form an ordinary method of gambling for improving a man's fortune, and though few could aspire at the imperial throne, every man could hope for promotion in a change. Hence, we find a plot concocted to place the old Romanus I again on the throne. Partisans were even found who laboured for the worthless Stephanos, who was successively removed to Proconessus, Rhodes, and Mitylene. Constantinos also, who was transported to Tenedos and then to Samothrace, made several attempts to escape. In the last he killed the captain of his guards, and was slain by the soldiers. The conspirators in all these plots were treated with comparative mildness, for the punishment of death was rarely inflicted either by Romanus I or Constantine VII.

In spite of the wealth of the empire, and though the government maintained a powerful standing army and regular navy, there were many signs of an inherent weakness in the state. The emperors attempted to make pride serve as a veil for all defects. The court assumed an inordinate degree of pomp in its intercourse with foreigners. This pretension exposed it to envy; and the affectation of contempt assumed by the barbarians, who were galled by Byzantine pride, has been reflected through all succeeding history, so that we find even the philosophic Gibbon sharing the prejudices of Luitprand. Constantine Porphyrogenitus has fortunately left us an unvarnished picture of this senseless presumption, written with the foolish simplicity of an emperor who talks of what a statesman would feel inclined to conceal. He tells of the diplomatic arts and falsehoods to be used in order to prevent foreign princes obtaining a dress or a crown similar to that worn by the emperor of Constantinople; and he seems to consider this not less important than preventing them from obtaining the secret of Greek fire. Foreign ambassadors are to be told that such crowns were not manufactured on earth, but had been brought by an angel to the great Constantine, the first Christian emperor; that they have always been deposited in the sacristy of St Sophia's, under the care of the Patriarch, and are only to be used on certain fixed ceremonies. The angel pronounced a malediction on any one who ventured to use them, except on the occasions fixed by immemorial usage; and the Emperor Leo IV, who had neglected this divine order, and placed one on his head, had quickly died of a brain fever. Similar tales and excuses were to be invented, in order to refuse the demands of princes who wished to intermarry with the imperial family; and the bestowal of Greek fire was to be eluded in the same way.

The attachment of the people had once rendered the Patriarch almost equal to the emperor in dignity, but the clergy of the capital were now more closely connected with the court than the people. The power of the emperor to depose as well as to appoint the Patriarch was hardly questioned, and of course the head of the Eastern Church occupied a very inferior position to the Pope of Rome. The church of Constantinople, filled with courtly priests, lost its political influence, and both religion and civilization suffered by this additional centralization of power in the imperial cabinet. From this period we may date the decline of the Greek Church.

The Patriarch Nikolaos, the mystic who had been deposed by Leo VI for opposing his fourth marriage, (A.D. 908,) was reinstated by Alexander, who acted in opposition to most of his brother's measures, A.D. 912. After Romanus I was established on the throne, Nikolaos yielded so far to the pre-eminence of the civil power as to consent to a union with the party of his successor, Euthymios, and to own that the marriage of Leo had been sanctified by the act of the Patriarch de facto. This was done to avoid what Nikolaos called scandal in the church, but the political experience of the bigoted ecclesiastic having shown him that he must look for support and power to the emperor, and not to the people, he became at last as subservient to the court as the mild Euthymios had ever been. On the death of Nikolaos, (925,) Stephen the eunuch, who was archbishop of Amasia, was appointed his successor, who, after a patriarchate of three years, was succeeded by Tryphon (A.D. 928). Tryphon held the office provisionally until Theophylaktos, the son of the Emperor Romanus I, should have attained the full age for

ordination; but in order to avoid too great scandal in the church, Tryphon was deposed a year before Theophylaktos was appointed. The imperial youth was then only sixteen years of age, but his father obtained a papal confirmation of his election by means of Alberic, consul and patrician of Rome, who kept his own brother, Pope John XI, a prisoner at the time. Legates were sent to Constantinople, who installed Theophylaktos in the patriarchal chair on the 2d February 933. The highest order of priests in the corporation then called the Church, both in the East and West, insulted Christianity. The crimes and debauchery of the papal court were, however, more offensive than the servility and avarice of the Greek hierarchy. John XI was appointed Pope at the age of twenty-five, through the influence of his mother Marosia (AD 931). Marosia and her second husband, Guy of Tuscany, had dethroned, and it is supposed murdered, John X, of the family of Cenci. John XI as we have mentioned, was imprisoned by his brother Alberic, and died in confinement, a victim to the political intrigues of his brother and his mother. Alberic ruled Rome for about thirty years, and during that time the popes were only the patriarchs of the Latin church. On Alberic's death, his son Octavian succeeded him as patrician, and became Pope at the age of eighteen, under the name of John XII (AD 956). He is generally considered the greatest criminal that ever occupied the papal throne.

The conduct of the Patriarch Theophylaktos was not much worse than might have been expected from a young man whose father had provided him with a bishopric, merely that he might enjoy a suitable rank and revenue. As long as his father could keep persons about the young man capable of controlling his conduct, outward decency was preserved; but age soon rendered him independent of advice, and he openly indulged tastes extremely unsuitable to his ecclesiastical dignity. He lived like a debauched young prince, and sold ecclesiastical preferments to raise money for his pleasures. He converted the celebration of divine service at St. Sophia's into a musical festival, adorned with rich pageantry. His passion for horses and for hunting exceeded that of the Emperor Basil I, and it caused his death, as it had done that of the imperial groom. The patriarchal stables are said to have contained two thousand horses. The magnificence of the building, and the manner in which his favourite steeds were fed, bathed, and perfumed, was one of the wonders of Constantinople. On one occasion, as Theophylaktos was officiating at the high altar of St. Sophia's, a slave crept up to him and whispered that his favourite mare had foaled. The congregation was alarmed by the precipitation with which the "most holy" pontiff finished the service. The young Patriarch threw aside his ecclesiastical vestments as quickly as possible, and ran to the stable. After satisfying himself that everything was done for the comfort of the mare and foal, he returned to his cathedral to occupy his place in the procession. The people of Constantinople submitted to receive religious instruction from this festival and hunting loving Patriarch for twenty years; but strange must have been the reports that circulated through the provinces of the empire concerning the impious proceedings, profane songs, indecent dances, and diabolical ceremonies, with which he defiled the Church of the Divine Wisdom, could we look into the secret history of some provincial Procopius. The death of Theophylaktos was in keeping with his life. One of his horses, as self-willed as the Patriarch, and as unfit for its duty, dashed him against a wall. The accident brought on a dropsy, and he died in 956, after having too long disgraced the Greek church, and made St. Sophia's an opera-house. He was succeeded by Polyeuktos, an ecclesiastic whose parents had marked him out for an ecclesiastical life.

It has been said that the general condition of the inhabitants of the Byzantine empire was prosperous; but in a despotic government, any negligence on the part of the central administration is infallibly followed by cruelty and extortion on the part of some of its distant agents, who exercise a power too great to be left uncontrolled without the certainty of abuse. The weakness both of Romanus I and Constantine VII allowed considerable disorder to prevail at Constantinople, and the grossest acts of tyranny to be committed in the provinces. Chases, a man of Saracen extraction, was raised to high office by the companions of the debauchery of Alexander, and was governor of the theme of Hellas during the minority of Constantine. His insatiable avarice and infamous profligacy at last drove the inhabitants of Athens to despair, and as he was attending divine service in the great temple of the Acropolis—once dedicated to the

Divine Wisdom of the pagans—they rose in tumult, and stoned their oppressor to death at the altar. A governor of Cherson had been murdered for oppression at the end of the reign of Leo the Philosopher. John Muzalon, the governor of Calabria, now shared the same fate. As no attention was paid by such officers to protecting the commercial lines of trade either by sea or land, the navigation of the Archipelago and the Adriatic was infested by pirates, and the great roads of Asia and Europe were dangerous from the bands of brigands, who remained unmolested in their vicinity. Urso Participatio, the seventh doge of Venice, sent his son Petro to Constantinople to announce his election, and concert measures to protect the commerce of the Adriatic against the Saracen and Slavonian pirates. Petro was honored with the title of protospatharios, and received many valuable presents from the emperor. But no measures were adopted for protecting trade; and as the son of the doge of Venice returned home, he was seized by Michael, duke of Slavonia, and delivered to Simeon, king of Bulgaria. The Slavonian kept the presents he had received, and the Bulgarian compelled his father to pay a large ransom for his release.

Hugh of Provence, king of Italy, sent an embassy to Romanus I. The Slavonians in the neighbourhood of Thessalonica attacked the ambassadors, but the Italians of their suite defeated the brigands, and captured several, whom they carried to Constantinople and delivered to the emperor for punishment.

Weak, however, as the Byzantine Empire may appear to us, it presented a very different aspect to all contemporary governments; for in every other country the administration was worse, and property and life were much more insecure. Its alliance was consequently eagerly sought by every independent state, and the court of Constantinople was visited by ambassadors from distant parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The Greeks were then the greatest merchants and capitalists in the world, and their influence was felt not only by all the nations professing Christianity, but by the rival caliphs of Bagdad and Cordova, and the hostile Mohammedan princes of Egypt and Mauritania; it extended even to the Saxon monarchs of England.

The Slavonians of the Peloponnesus, who had gained a temporary independence during the latter part of the reign of Theophilus, remained tranquil from the time of their subjection by Theodora's regency, until the careless administration of Romanus I again invited them to rebel. Two tribes, the Melings and Ezerites, who dwelt round Mount Taygetus in a state of partial independence, conceived the hope of delivering themselves from the Byzantine yoke, and boldly refused to pay the usual tribute. Krinites Arotas, the general of the Peloponnesian theme, was ordered to reduce them to obedience, but he was unable to make them lay down their arms until he had laid waste their country from March to November, without allowing them either to reap or sow. On their submission, their tribute was increased, and each tribe was obliged to pay six hundred byzants annually. But disturbances occurring not long afterwards among the Byzantine officers, and a new tribe called the Slavonians entering the peninsula, the Melings and Ezerites sent deputies to the Emperor Romanus to solicit a reduction of their tribute. The peaceable inhabitants saw their property threatened with plunder and devastation if the Melings and Ezerites should unite with the Slavonians; the central government was threatened with the loss of the revenues of the province; so the emperor consented to issue a golden bull, or imperial charter with a golden seal, fixing the tribute of the Melings at sixty gold byzants, and that of the Ezerites at three hundred, as it had been before their rebellion.

The Slavonian population of the Peloponnesus was not confined to the tributary districts; nor, indeed, were these the only Slavonians who retained their own local administration. The whole country, from the northern bank of the Alpheus to the sources of the Ladon and Erymanthus, was in their possession and they governed it according to their national usages until the Crusaders conquered Greece. A considerable body of the Slavonians had also begun to adopt Byzantine civilization, and some of the wealthiest contended for the highest places in the administration of the empire. The patrician Niketas took an active share in the intrigues which placed the imperial crown on the head of Romanus. His pride and presumption, as well as



his Slavonian descent, are ridiculed by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, though the patrician had formed an alliance with the imperial family.

From this time we hear nothing more of the Sclavonians settled in the Peloponnesus, until the peninsula was invaded by the Crusaders, after they had taken Constantinople, and established the Frank empire of Romania (A.D. 1204).

The condition of the town of Maina and the district about Cape Taenarus presents us with a picture of the vicissitudes the Greeks had suffered during the decline of the Roman Empire. The population of this rugged promontory consisted of the poorer class of agricultural Laconians, and it kept possession of this arid district when the Sclavonians seized the rich plain of the Eurotas, and drove the Greeks out of Sparta. The strangers occupied all the rich pastures on Mount Taygetus, but want of water prevented their advance along the promontory of Taenarus, and the fortified town of Maina enabled the inhabitants to defend their liberty, and support themselves by exporting oil. This secluded country long remained in a state of barbarism, and the rural population soon relapsed into idolatry, from which they were not converted to Christianity until the reign of Basil I. In the time of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the town of Maina was a place of some commercial importance, and was governed by an officer appointed by the general of the Peloponnesian theme; but the district continued to pay only four hundred pieces of gold to the imperial treasury, which was the amount levied on it in the days of the Roman empire.

It was fortunate for the Byzantine empire that the caliphate of Bagdad had lost its former military power, for if an active enemy on the southern frontier had taken advantage of the embarrassments caused by an enterprising warrior like Simeon, king of Bulgaria, in the north, the empire might have been reduced to the deplorable condition from which it had been raised by the vigour of the Iconoclasts. But repeated rebellions had separated many of the richest provinces from the caliphate, and the tyranny of a religious sway, that enforced unity of faith by persecution, compelled heresy to appeal to the sword on every difference of opinion. This additional cause of ruin and depopulation, added to the administrative anarchy that was constantly on the increase in the caliph's dominions, had greatly weakened the Saracen power. The innumerable discussions which a formal orthodoxy created in the Greek Church were trifling in comparison with those which the contemplative tendencies of the Asiatic mind raised in the bosom of Islam.

Several independent dynasties were already founded within the dominions of the caliph of Bagdad, which were disturbed by several sects besides the Karmathians. Yet, amidst all their civil wars, the Mohammedans made continual incursions into Asia Minor, and the Byzantine troops avenged the losses of the Christians by ravaging Syria and Mesopotamia. Slaves and cattle were carried off by both parties, whether victors or vanquished, so that the country became gradually depopulated; and in succeeding generations we find the richest provinces between the Halys, the Euphrates, and the Mediterranean in a state of desolation. The suburbs of the towns were reduced to ashes; valleys, once swarming with inhabitants, and cultivated with the spade, so that they could support millions, were reduced to sheep-walks. During the regency of Zoe, Damian, emir of Tyre, with a powerful fleet under his command, attacked Strobilos in Carla, but he was repulsed; and in the following year the Byzantine army made an irruption into the territories of Germanicia and Samosata, and carried off fifty thousand prisoners, according to the accounts of the Arabian historians. The empress-regent would have willingly concluded peace with the Saracens at this time, for she was compelled to transport the greater part of the Asiatic army into Europe to resist Simeon, king of Bulgaria, and it appears that a truce and exchange of prisoners took place. The Byzantine arms had been so much more successful than the Saracen during the preceding campaigns, that when all the Christians had been exchanged, the number of Mohammedans still unredeemed was so great that the caliph had to pay a hundred and twenty thousand pieces of gold for their release, according to the stipulated price fixed by the convention.

Romanus I, who had obtained the throne by means of the support of the navy, appears to have paid more attention to keep it in good order than his predecessors. In the year 926, Leo of Tripolis, who visited the Archipelago, seeking to repeat his exploits at Thessalonica, was encountered in the waters of Lemnos by the imperial squadron under John Radenos, and so completely defeated that it was with difficulty he saved his own ship.

The wars of the Karmathians brought the caliphate into such a disturbed state that the Christians of Armenia again raised their banner, and, uniting their forces with the Byzantine generals, obtained great successes over the Saracens. John, the son of that Kurkuas, who had been deprived of sight for conspiring against Basil I, was appointed commander-in-chief by Romanus, and commenced a career of conquest ably followed up a few years later by the Emperors Nicephorus II and John I (Zimiskes.) The military skill of John Kurkuas, the high discipline of his army, and the tide of conquest which flowed with his presence, revived aspirations of military renown long dormant at Constantinople. The learned were pleased to compare him with Trajan and Belisarius, the heroes of the Western and Eastern Empires.

As early as the reign of Leo VI, the Armenians under Melias had made considerable progress. The territory they delivered from the yoke of the Mohammedans was formed into a small theme, called Lykandos, and Melias was named its general, with the rank of patrician. From the year 920 to 942, John Kurkuas was almost uninterruptedly engaged against the Saracens. In 927 he ravaged the province of Melitene, and took the capital, of which, however, he only retained possession for a month. Two years after, the Saracen emir of Melitene, finding himself unable to resist the Byzantine armies, engaged to pay tribute to the emperor. In the meantime, the Armenians, with the assistance of a division of Byzantine troops, had pushed their conquests to the lake of Van, and forced the Saracens of Aklat and Betlis not only to pay tribute, but to allow the cross to be elevated in their cities higher than the domes of their mosques. The long series of annual incursions recorded by the Byzantine and Arabian writers may be described in the words plunder, slavery, depopulation. In the campaign of 941, the Byzantine troops are said to have reduced fifteen thousand Saracens to slavery. But the exploit which raised the reputation of John Kurkuas to the highest pitch of glory, was the acquisition of the miraculous handkerchief with a likeness of our Saviour visibly impressed on its texture; a relic which the superstition of the age believed had been sent by Christ himself to Abgarus, prince of Edessa. In the year 942, John Kurkuas crossed the Euphrates, plundered Mesopotamia as far as the banks of the Tigris, took Nisibis, and laid siege to Edessa. The inhabitants of the city purchased their safety by surrendering the miraculous handkerchief. The victorious general was removed from his command shortly after, and the relic was transported to Constantinople by others.

The parallel drawn by the people of Constantinople between John Kurkuas and Belisarius, seems imperfectly borne out by the conquests of the later general; but the acquisition of a relic weighed, in those days, more than that of a kingdom. Yet, perhaps, even the miraculous portrait of Edessa would not have been compared with the conquest of the Vandal and Gothic monarchies, had the two-and-twenty years of John Kurkuas's honourable service not been repaid by courtly ingratitude. In the plenitude of his fame, the veteran was accused of aspiring at the empire, and removed from all his employments. Romanus I, like Justinian, when he examined the accusation, was convinced of its falsity, but he was jealous and mean-spirited.

During the government of Constantine VII, the war was continued with vigour on both sides. Seif Addawalah, the Hamdanite, called by the Greeks Chabdan, who was emir of Aleppo, invaded the empire with powerful armies. Bardas Phokas, the Byzantine general, displayed more avarice than energy; and even when replaced by his son Nicephorus, the future emperor, victory was not immediately restored to the imperial standards. But towards the end of Constantine's reign, Nicephorus, having removed various abuses both in the military and civil service, which had grown out of the gains arising from the traffic in plunder, and slaves

captured in the annual forays of the troops, at last prepared an army calculated to prosecute the war with glory. The result of this labour became visible in the reign of Romanus II.

After the conquest of Crete, the whole disposable force of the empire in Asia was placed under the command of Nicephorus, who, according to the Arabians, opened the campaign of 962 at the head of one hundred thousand men. The Saracens were unable to oppose this army in the field; Doliche, Hierapolis, and Anazarba were captured, and Nicephorus advanced to Aleppo, where Seif Addawalah had collected an army to protect his capital. The position of the Hamdanite was turned by the superior tactics of the Byzantine general, his communications with his capital cut off, his army at last defeated, and his palace and the suburbs of Aleppo occupied. A sedition of the Arab troops, and a quarrel between the inhabitants and the garrison, enabled Nicephorus to enter the city, but the citadel defied his attacks. On the approach of a Saracen army from Damascus, Nicephorus abandoned his conquest, carrying away immense booty from the city of Aleppo, and retaining possession of sixty forts along the range of Mount Taurus as the result of his campaign.

The disastrous defeat of the Byzantine army by the Bulgarians at Achelous was the primary cause of the elevation of Romanus I to the throne; and as emperor, he conducted the war quite as ill as he had directed the operations of the fleet when admiral, though he could now derive no personal advantage from the disasters of his country. In 921, the warlike monarch of the Bulgarians advanced to the walls of Constantinople, after defeating a Byzantine army under John Rector. The imperial palace of the fountains, and many villas about the city, were burned, and Simeon retired unmolested with immense booty. The city of Adrianople was taken in one campaign by treachery, lost and reconquered in another by famine. In the month of September 923, Simeon again encamped before the walls of Constantinople, after having ravaged the greater part of Thrace and Macedonia with extreme barbarity, destroying the fruit-trees and burning the houses of the peasantry. He offered, however, to treat of peace, and proposed a personal interview with Romanus I, who was compelled to meet his proud enemy without the walls, in such a way that the meeting had the appearance of a Roman emperor suing for peace from a victorious barbarian. Romanus, when he approached the ground marked out for the interview, saw the Bulgarian army salute Simeon as an emperor with loud shouts and music, while the bodyguard of the Bulgarian king, resplendent with silver armour, astonished the people of Constantinople by its splendour, and the veteran soldiers of the empire by its steady discipline. It seems that the rebellion of the Slavonians in the Peloponnesus filled Romanus with anxiety; but he affected to solicit peace from motives of religion and humanity, that he might alleviate the sufferings of his subjects. The basis of peace was settled at this conference, and Simeon retired to his own kingdom laden with the plunder of the provinces and the gold of the emperor. The Byzantine writers omit to mention any of the stipulations of this treaty, so that there can be no doubt that it was far from honourable to the empire. It must be remarked, however, that they are always extremely negligent in their notice of treaties, and have not transmitted to us the stipulations of any of those concluded with the Khazars, or other nations through whose territory a great part of the commercial intercourse of the Byzantine empire with India and China was carried on, and from which the wealth of Constantinople was in a great measure derived.

Simeon then turned his arms against the Servians and Croatians. His cruelty in these hostilities is said to have surpassed anything ever witnessed. The inhabitants were everywhere deliberately murdered, and all Servia was so depopulated that its richest plains remained uncultivated for many years. Every inhabitant not slain was carried into Bulgaria to be sold as a slave; and the capital was so completely destroyed, that, seven years after the retreat of the invaders, only fifty men were found in its vicinity, living as hunters. At last the Bulgarian army was completely defeated by the Croatians, whom the cruelty of Simeon had driven to despair. Simeon died shortly after, and Servia placed itself under the protection of the Byzantine government.

Bulgaria had been formidable at this time by the talents of Simeon rather than its own power. It was now threatened with invasion by the Magyars, who were carrying on plundering incursions into Germany, Italy, and even into France. Peter, who had succeeded his father Simeon, was anxious to secure his southern frontier by forming a closer union with the empire: he married Maria, the daughter of the Emperor Christophoros, and a long peace followed this alliance. But the ties of allegiance were not very powerful among the Bulgarian people, and a rebellion was headed by Michael the brother of Peter. The rebels maintained themselves in a state of independence after Michael's death, and when they were at last compelled to emigrate, they entered the territory of the empire, and, passing through the themes of Strymon, Thessalonica, and Hellas, seized on Nicopolis, and retained possession of that city and the surrounding country for some time. It seems that the incursion of Sclavesians into the Peloponnesus was connected with this inroad of the Bulgarians.

Thrace had not enjoyed sufficient respite from the ravages of the Bulgarians to recover its losses, before it was plundered by the Hungarians, who advanced to the walls of Constantinople in 934. The retreat of these barbarians was purchased by a large sum of money, paid in the Byzantine gold coinage, which was then the most esteemed currency throughout the known world. In 943, the Hungarians again ravaged Thrace, and their retreat was again purchased with gold. The last year of the reign of Constantine VII was again marked by an invasion of the Hungarians, who approached Constantinople; but on this occasion they were defeated by the imperial troops, who attacked their camp during the night.

The Byzantine wars in Italy present a series of vicissitudes connected with political intrigues, based on no national object, and leading to no general result. The imperial generals at times united with the Saracens to plunder the Italians, and at times aided the Italians to oppose the Saracens; sometimes occupied to accumulate treasures for themselves, and at others to extend the influence of the emperor. One of the Byzantine governors, named Krinitas, carried his avarice so far as to compel the people of Calabria (Apulia) to sell their grain at a low price, and then, having created a monopoly of the export trade in his own favour, sold it at an exorbitant profit to the Saracens of Africa. Constantine VII, hearing of this extortion, dismissed him from all employment, and confiscated his wealth; but the people who were governed by deputies possessing such powers were sure to be the victims of oppression.

During the regency of Zoe (AD 915), Eustathios, the governor of Calabria, concluded a treaty with the caliph of Africa, by which the Byzantine authorities in Italy were bound to pay a yearly tribute of 22,000 gold byzants, and the caliph engaged to restrain the hostilities of the Saracens of Sicily. This tribute was subsequently reduced to 11,000 byzants, but the treaty remained in force until the reign of the Emperor Nicephorus II. Even this distant province in the south of Italy was not safe from the plundering incursions of the Hungarians, who in the year 948 embarked on the Adriatic, and ravaged Apulia under the walls of Otranto. The general interests of Christianity, as well as the extent of Byzantine commerce, induced the Byzantine government to aid Hugh of Provence and the Genoese in destroying the nest of Saracen pirates established at Fraxinet, in the Alps, to the eastward of Nice.

Romanus II was only twenty-one years of age when he ascended the throne. He bore a strong resemblance to his father in person, and possessed much of his good-nature and mildness of disposition, but he was of a more active and determined character. Unfortunately, he indulged in every species of pleasure with an eagerness that ruined his health and reputation, though his judicious selection of ministers prevented its injuring the empire. He was blamed for inhumanity, in compelling his sisters to enter a monastery; but as his object was a political one, in order to prevent their marriage, he was satisfied with their taking the veil, though they refused to wear the monastic dress; and he allowed them to live as they thought fit, and dispose of their own private fortunes at will. His own object was obtained if he prevented any of the ambitious nobles from forming an alliance with them, which would have endangered the hereditary right of his own children. His good-nature is avouched by the fact that when Basilios

called the Bird, a favourite minister of his father, engaged a number of patricians in a conspiracy to seize the throne, he allowed none of the conspirators to be put to death. Though he spent too much of his time surrounded by actors and dancers, both the administration of civil and military affairs was well conducted during his reign. His greatest delight was in hunting, and he spent much of his time in the country surrounded by his gay companions, his horses, and his dogs. His excesses in pleasure and fatigue soon ruined his constitution; but when he died at the age of twenty-four, the people, who remembered his tall well-made figure and smiling countenance, attributed his death to poison. His wife, whose beauty and graceful manner never won the public to pardon a low alliance, which appeared to their prejudices to disgrace the majesty of the purple, was accused of this crime, as well as of having instigated the death of her father-in-law. Romanus on his death-bed did not neglect his duty to the empire. He had observed that his able prime-minister, Joseph Bringas, had begun to manifest too great jealousy of Nicephorus Phokas; he therefore left it as his dying injunction that Nicephorus should not be removed from the command of the army employed against the Saracens.

Joseph Bringas, who conducted the administration during the reign of Romanus II, was a man of talent and integrity. His worst act, in the eyes of his contemporaries, was, that he withdrew a eunuch, named John Cherinas, from a monastery into which he had been exiled by Constantine VII, and conferred on him the dignity of patrician, with the command of the foreign guards. The Patriarch protested in vain against this act of sacrilege; Bringas wanted a man to command the guard, over whom he knew the leading nobles could exercise no influence; so the monk quitted his frock, put on armour, and became a leading man at court. Sisinius, one of the ablest and most upright men in the public service, was made prefect of Constantinople, and rendered the administration of justice prompt and equitable. A general scarcity tried the talents and firmness of Bringas, and he met the difficulty by his great exertions, though it occurred at the very time it was necessary to make extraordinary preparations to provision the expedition against Crete. Every measure to alleviate the public distress was taken in a disinterested spirit. Everything required for the army was immediately paid for; to prevent speculation in corn, the exportation of provisions from the capital was prohibited—a law which may often be rendered necessary as a temporary measure of police, though it is a direct violation of the permanent principles of sound commercial policy.

The great event of the reign of Romanus II was the conquest of Crete. The injury inflicted on Byzantine commerce by the Saracen corsairs, fitted out in the numerous ports on the north side of that island, compelled many of the Greek islands of the Archipelago to purchase protection from the rulers of Crete by the payment of a regular tribute. The trade of Constantinople and its supplies of provisions were constantly interrupted, yet several expeditions against Crete, fitted out on the largest scale, had been defeated. The overthrow of that undertaken in the reign of Leo VI has been noticed. Romanus I was unwilling to revive the memory of his share in that disaster, and left the Cretans undisturbed during his reign; but Constantine VII, towards the end of his reign, prepared an expedition on a very grand scale, the command of which he entrusted to a eunuch named Gongyles. This expedition was completely defeated; the Byzantine camp was taken, and the greater part of the force destroyed. Gongyles himself escaped with difficulty.

Romanus was hardly seated on the throne before he resolved to wipe off the disgrace the empire had suffered. The only mode of protecting the commerce of the capital and the coasts of Greece was to conquer the island of Crete, and expel all the Saracen population. Romanus determined to fit out an expedition on a scale suitable for this undertaking, and he knew that in Nicephorus Phokas he possessed a general equal to the enterprise. Bringas aided the emperor with zeal and energy, and gave no countenance to the endeavours that some courtiers made to awaken the jealousy of Romanus, that too much glory might accrue to Nicephorus from the successful termination of so great an undertaking.

The expedition was strong in numbers and complete in its equipments. The fleet consisted of dromons and chelands. The dromon was the war-galley, which had taken the place of the triremes of the ancient Greeks and the quinqueremes of the Romans; it had only two tiers of rowers, and the largest carried three hundred men, of whom seventy were marine soldiers. The chelands were smaller and lighter vessels, adapted for rapid movements, and fitted with tubes for launching Greek fire, and their crews seem to have varied from 120 to 160 men. More than three hundred large transports attended the ships of war, freighted with military machines and stores. We are not to suppose that the dromons and chelands were all fitted for war; a few only were required for that purpose, and the rest served as transports for the army, and the provisions necessary for a winter campaign. The land forces consisted of chosen troops from the legions of Asia and Europe, with Armenian, Slavonian, and Russian auxiliaries. The port of Phygela, near Ephesus, served as the place of rendezvous for the ships collected from the coasts of Greece and the islands of the Aegean. Everything was ready in the month of July 960, and Nicephorus disembarked his troops in Crete without sustaining any loss, though the Saracens attempted to oppose the operation. The city of Chandax was prepared to defend itself to the last extremity, and the Mohammedans in the rest of the island took active measures for resisting the progress of the Byzantine troops, and preventing their deriving any supplies from the interior. Chandax was too strongly fortified to be taken without a regular siege, so that the first operation of Nicephorus was to invest it in form. To insure the fall of the place, even at the risk of prolonging the siege, he began his operations by forming a complete circumvallation round his camp and naval station, which he connected with the sea on both sides of the city, and thus cut the enemy off from all communication with the Saracens in the country. The pirates of Chandax had often been at war with all the world, and they had fortified their stronghold in such a way that it could be defended with a small garrison, while the bulk of their forces were cruising in search of plunder. The repeated attacks of the Byzantine emperors had also warned them of the dangers to which they were exposed. Towards the land, a high wall protected the city; it was composed of sun-dried bricks, but the mortar of which they were formed had been kneaded with the hair of goats and swine into a mass almost as hard as stone, and it was so broad that two chariots could drive abreast on its summit. A double ditch of great depth and breadth strengthened the work, and rendered approach difficult.

One of the parties sent out by Nicephorus to complete the conquest of the island having been cut off, he was compelled to take the field in person as soon as he had completed his arrangements for blockading the fortress during the winter. The Saracens, encouraged by their success, had assembled an army, and proposed attempting to relieve the besieged city, when they were attacked in their position, and routed with great loss. The Byzantine general, in order to intimidate the defenders of Chandax, ordered the heads of those slain in the country to be brought to the camp, stimulating the activity of his soldiers in this barbarous service by paying a piece of silver for every head. They were then ranged on spears along the whole line of the circumvallation towards the fortifications of the city; and the number of slain was so great, that many more were cast into the place by means of catapults, in order to let the besieged see the full extent of the loss of their countrymen.

A strict blockade was maintained during the whole winter. When the weather permitted, light galleys cruised before the port, and at all times several of the swiftest dromons and chelands were kept ready to pursue any vessel that might either attempt to enter or quit the port. But though the Saracens were reduced to suffer great privations, they showed no disposition to surrender, and Nicephorus pressed on the siege as spring advanced with mines and battering-rams. At last a practicable breach was effected, and the place was taken by storm on the 7th of May, 961. The accumulated wealth of many years of successful piracy was abandoned to the troops, but a rich booty and numerous slaves were carried to Constantinople, and shown in triumph to the people.

To complete the conquest of the island, it was necessary to exterminate the whole of the Saracen population. To effect this, the fortifications of Chandax were levelled with the ground,

and a new fortress called Temenos, situated on a high and rugged hill, about twelve miles inland, was constructed and garrisoned by a body of Byzantine and Armenian troops. Many Saracens, however, remained in the island, but they were reduced to a state approaching servitude. The greater part of the Greek population in some parts of the island had embraced Mohammedanism during the 135 years of Saracen domination. When the island was reconquered, an Armenian monk named Nikon became a missionary to these infidels, and he had the honour of converting numbers of the Cretans back to Christianity. As soon as the conquest of the island was completed, the greater part of the army was ordered to Asia Minor; but Nicephorus was invited by the emperor to visit Constantinople, where he was allowed the honour of a triumph. He brought Kurup, the Saracen emir of Crete, a prisoner in his train.

We may here pause to take a cursory view of the state of Greece during the ninth and tenth centuries. The preceding pages have noticed the few facts concerning the fortunes of this once glorious land that are preserved in the Byzantine annals, but these facts are of themselves insufficient to explain how a people, whose language and literature occupied a predominant position in society, enjoyed neither political power nor moral pre-eminence as a nation. The literary instruction of every child in the empire who received any intellectual culture was thoroughly Greek: its first prayers were uttered in that language: its feelings were refined by the perusal of the choicest passages of the Greek poets and tragedians, and its opening mind was enlarged by the writings of the Greek historians and philosophers; but here the influence ended, for the moral education of the citizen was purely Roman. The slightest glance into history proves that the educated classes in the Byzantine Empire were generally destitute of all sympathy with Greece, and looked down on the Greeks as a provincial and alien race. The fathers of the church and the ecclesiastical historians, whose works were carefully studied, to complete the education of the Byzantine youth, and to prepare them for public life, quickly banished all Hellenic fancies from their minds as mere schoolboy dreams, and turned their attention to the atmosphere of practical existence in church and state. Byzantine society was a development of Roman civilization, and hence the Byzantine mind was practical and positive : administration and law were to it what liberty and philosophy had been to the Hellenes of old. The imagination and the taste of Hellas had something in their natural superiority that was repulsive to Byzantine pedantry, while their paganism excited the contempt of ecclesiastical bigots. A strong mental difference was therefore the permanent cause of the aversion to Greece and the Greeks that is apparent in Byzantine society, and which only begins to disappear after the commencement of the eleventh century. Its operation is equally visible in the Hellenic race, in whom the spirit of local patriotism has always been powerful, and it kept them aloof from the Byzantine service, so that the native Greeks really occupy a less prominent figure in the social and political history of the empire than they were entitled to claim.

The great social feature of the Hellenic race, during the ninth and tenth centuries, is the stationary condition of society, for the apathy resulting from the secret protestation of the Greek mind against Roman influence was confined to the higher classes. The eighth century was unquestionably a period of great activity, increase, and improvement among the Greeks, as among every other portion of the population of the Eastern Empire. But after the subjection of the Slavonian colonists in the first years of the ninth century, and the reestablishment of extensive commercial relations over the whole Mediterranean, Greek society again relapsed into a stationary condition. There is no doubt that the general aspect of the country had undergone a total change ; and its condition in the tenth century was as different from its condition in the seventh, as the state of the southern provinces of Russia, in the present century, is from their state in the thirteenth, after the devastations of the Tartars. Numerous new cities had been built.

The legendary history of the Greek monasteries tells us that the country was once utterly deserted, that the rugged limestone mountains were overgrown with forests and thick brushwood, and that into these deserted spots holy hermits retired to avoid the presence of pagan Slavonians, who occupied the rich plains and pastoral slopes of the lower hills. In these retreats the holy anchorites dreamed that they were dwelling in cells once occupied by saints of

an earlier day—men who were supposed to have fled from imaginary persecutions of Roman emperors, who had depopulated whole provinces by their hatred to Christianity, instead of by administrative oppression; and the hermits saw visions revealing where these predecessors had concealed portraits painted by St. Luke himself, or miraculous pictures, the work of no human hand. Such is perhaps a not unapt representation of a large part of the rural districts of Greece during the seventh century. The immense extent of the private estates of a few rich individuals, from the time of Augustus to that of Leo the Philosopher, left whole provinces depopulated, and fit only to be used as pasture. Landlords, robbers, pirates, and slavery had all conspired to reduce Greece to a state of degradation and depopulation before the Sclavonians colonized her soil.

The vigorous administration of the Iconoclasts restored order, reduced the aristocracy to obedience, subdued the Sclavonians, and revived industry and commerce. The state of Greece was again changed, the Greek population increased as if they had been new colonists settled on a virgin soil, and from the end of the ninth century to the invasion of the Crusaders, Greece was a rich and flourishing province. The material causes of this wealth are as evident as the moral causes of its political insignificance. The great part of the commerce of the Mediterranean was in the hands of the Greeks; the wealth and laws of the Byzantine empire placed ample capital at their command; the silk manufacture was to Thebes and Athens what the cotton manufacture now is to Manchester and Glasgow; Monemvasia was then what Venice became at a later period; the slave-trade, though it filled the world with misery, and Christian society with demoralization, brought wealth to the shores of Greece. The mass of the agricultural population, too, enjoyed as much prosperity as the commercial. The produce of the country was abundant, and labor bore a far higher price than has ever been the case in Western Europe. This was a natural result of the state of things in the vicinity of every town and village in Greece. The nature of all the most valuable produce of the land rendered the demand for labour at particular seasons very great; and this labour yielded immense profits, for it fructified olive groves, vineyards, and orchards of the choicest kinds, formed by the accumulated capital of ages. The labour of a few days created an amount of produce which bore no comparison with its cost, and Greece at this time possessed a monopoly of the finer kinds of oil, wine, and fruit. Moreover, the pastoral habits of the Sclavonians, who still occupied large provinces at a distance from the principal towns, prevented the cultivation of corn over a great extent of country; and the ruin of the excellent roads, which in ancient times had admitted of the transport of huge blocks of marble, and the march of armies accompanied by elephants over the roughest mountains, rendered the transport of grain to any considerable distance impossible. All these circumstances rendered labour valuable. The cultivation of grain by spade husbandry was often a matter of necessity, so that the agricultural labourer could easily maintain a position of comparative ease and abundance.

In this state of society, the only chance of improvement lay in the moral advancement of the citizen, which required the union of free local institutions with a well-organized central administration of the state, and a system for distributing justice over which the highest political power could exert no influence. Unfortunately no central government on the continent of Europe, which has possessed strength sufficient to repress local selfishness, and the undue power of privileged classes, has ever yet avoided fiscal oppression; and this was the case in the Byzantine empire. The social condition of the Greeks nourished intense local selfishness; the central operation of the Byzantine government led to severe fiscal exactions. The result of the political and financial, as well as of the moral state of the country, was to produce a stationary condition of society. Taxation absorbed all the annual profits of industry; society offered no invitation to form new plantations, or extend existing manufactures, and the age afforded no openings for new enterprises; each generation moved exactly in the limits of that which had preceded it, so that Greece, though in a state of material prosperity, was standing on the brink of decline. That decline commenced the moment the Italians were enabled to avail themselves of the natural resources of their country. Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, freed from the fiscal



oppression of a central government, became first the rivals and then the superiors of the Greeks in commerce, industry, and wealth.

## CHAPTER II

## PERIOD OF CONQUEST AND MILITARY GLORY

A.D. 963- 1025

## Sect. I

## REIGN OF NICEPHORUS II, PHOKAS, AND JOHN I (ZIMISKES)

A.D. 963-1025

The Empress Theophano was left by Romanus II regent for her sons, but as she was brought to bed of a daughter only two days before her husband's death, the whole direction of public business remained in the hands of Joseph Bringas, whose ability was universally acknowledged, but whose severity and suspicious character rendered him generally unpopular. His jealousy soon involved him in a contest for power with Nicephorus Phokas, who, however, did not venture to visit Constantinople until his personal safety was guaranteed by the Empress Theophano and the Patriarch Polyeuktes. Nicephorus was allowed to celebrate his victories in Syria by a triumph, in which he displayed to a superstitious crowd the relics he had obtained by his victories over the Mohammedans; and the piety of the age attached as much importance to these as his troops did to the booty and slaves with which they were enriched. Bringas saw that the popularity of Nicephorus and the powerful influence of his family connections must soon gain him the title of Emperor, and his jealousy appears to have precipitated the event he feared. He formed a plot to have the victorious general seized, in order that his eyes might be put out. Nicephorus being informed of his danger, and having secured the support of the Patriarch by his devout conduct, persuaded Polyeuktes to take prompt measures to protect him from the designs of Bringas. The senate was convoked, and the Patriarch proposed that Nicephorus should be entrusted with the command of the army in Asia, according to the last will of Romanus II. Bringas did not venture to oppose this proposal of the Patriarch, which was eagerly adopted; and Nicephorus, after taking an oath never to injure the children of Romanus, his lawful sovereigns, proceeded to take the command of all the Byzantine forces in Asia.

Bringas still pursued his schemes; he wrote to John Zimiskes, the ablest and most popular of the generals under the orders of Nicephorus, offering him the supreme command if he would seize the general-in-chief, and send him to Constantinople as a prisoner. Zimiskes was the nephew of Nicephorus; but his subsequent conduct shows that conscience would not have arrested him in the execution of any project for his own aggrandizement. On the present occasion, he may have thought that the power of Bringas was not likely to be permanent, and he may have known that he would show little gratitude for any service; while the popularity of Nicephorus with the troops made fidelity to his general the soundest policy. Zimiskes carried the letter of the prime-minister to Nicephorus, and invited him to assume the imperial title, as the only means of securing his own life and protecting his friends. It is said that John Zimiskes and Romanus Kurkuas were compelled to draw their swords, and threaten to kill their uncle, before he would allow himself to be proclaimed emperor. The same thing had been said of Leo V (the Armenian), that he was compelled to mount the throne by his murderer and successor,

Michael II. Nicephorus at last yielded, and marched immediately from Caesarea to Chrysopolis, where he encamped. Bringas found little support in the capital. Basilios, the natural son of the Emperor Romanus I, armed his household, in which he had three thousand slaves, and, exciting a sedition of the populace, sallied into the streets of Constantinople, and attacked the houses of the ministers, most of whom were compelled to seek an asylum in the churches. Nicephorus was invited to enter the capital, where he was crowned by the Patriarch Polyeuktes, in St. Sophia's, on the 16th of August, 963.

The family of Phocas was of Cappadocian origin, and had now for three generations supplied the empire with distinguished generals. Nicephorus proved an able emperor, and a faithful guardian of the young emperors; but his personal bearing was tinged with military severity, and his cold phlegmatic temper prevented his using the arts necessary to gain popularity either with the courtiers or the citizens. His conduct was moral, and he was sincerely religious; but he was too enlightened to confound the pretensions of the church with the truth of Christianity, and, consequently, in spite of his real piety, he was calumniated by the clergy as a hypocrite. Indeed, there was little probability that a strict military disciplinarian, who ascended the throne at the age of fifty-one, should prove a popular prince, when he succeeded a young and gay monarch like Romanus II.

The coronation of Nicephorus was soon followed by his marriage with Theophano, a match which must have been dictated to the beautiful widow by ambition and policy rather than love; though the Byzantine writers accuse her of a previous intrigue with the veteran general, and record that she exerted great authority over him by her persuasive manners. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Patriarch, but shortly after its celebration he forbade the emperor to enter the chancel of St. Sophia's, where the imperial throne was placed, declaring that even the emperor must submit to the penance imposed by the orthodox church on second marriages, which excluded the contracting party from the body of the church for a year. The hostile feeling, on the part of Polyeuktes, that produced this insolence, also encouraged a report that Nicephorus had acted as godfather to one of the children of Romanus and Theophano—a connection which, according to the Greek church, forms an impediment to marriage. The Patriarch appears to have adopted this report without consideration, and threatened to declare the marriage he had celebrated null; he had even the boldness to order the emperor to separate from Theophano immediately. But this difficulty was removed by the chaplain who had officiated at the baptism. He came forward, and declared on oath that Nicephorus had not been present, nor had he, the priest, ever said so. The Patriarch found himself compelled to withdraw his opposition, and, to cover his defeat, he allowed Nicephorus to enter the church without remark. This dispute left a feeling of irritation on the mind of the emperor, and was probably the cause of some of his severities to the clergy, while it certainly assisted in rendering him unpopular among his bigoted subjects.

Nicephorus had devoted great attention to improving the discipline of the Byzantine army, and, as it consisted in great part of mercenaries, this could only be done by a liberal expenditure. His chief object was to obtain troops of the best quality, and all the measures of his civil administration were directed to fill the treasury. An efficient army was the chief support of the empire; and it seemed, therefore, to Nicephorus that the first duty of an emperor was to secure the means of maintaining a numerous and well-appointed military force. Perhaps the people of Constantinople would have applauded his maxims and his conduct, had he been more liberal in lavishing the wealth he extorted from the provinces on festivals and shows in the capital. A severe famine, at the commencement of his reign, increased his unpopularity. This scarcity commenced in the reign of Romanus II, and, among the reports circulated against Joseph Bringas, it was related that he had threatened to raise the price of wheat so high, that, for a piece of gold, a man should only purchase as much as he could carry away in his pockets. It is very probable that the measures adopted by Nicephorus tended to increase the evil, though Zonaras, in saying that he allowed each merchant to use his own interest as a law, would lead us to infer that he abolished monopolies and maximums, and left the trade in grain free. The fiscal

measures of his reign, however, increased the burden of taxation. He retrenched the annual largesses of the court, and curtailed the pensions granted to courtiers. The worst act of his reign, and one for which the Byzantine historians have justly branded him with merited odium, was his violation of the public faith, and the honour of the Eastern Empire, by adulterating the coin, and issuing a debased coin, called the *tetarteron*. This debased money he employed to pay the debts of the state, while the taxes continued to be exacted in the old and pure coin of the empire. The standard of the coinage of the Eastern Empire, it must always be borne in mind, remained always the same until the taking of Constantinople by the Crusaders. The gold coins of Leo III and of Isaac II are of the same weight and purity; and the few emperors who disgraced their reigns by tampering with the currency have been branded with infamy. Perhaps there is no better proof of the high state of political civilization in Byzantine society. But the strong grounds of dissatisfaction against Nicephorus were ripened into personal animosity by an accidental tumult in the hippodrome, in which many persons lost their lives. It happened that, while the troops were going through the evolutions of a sham-fight, a report arose that the emperor intended to punish the people, who had thrown stones at him, and insulted him as he passed through the streets. This caused a rush out of the enclosures, and many persons, men, women, and children, perished. The citizens, of course, insisted that the massacre was premeditated.

The whole reign of Nicephorus was disturbed by the ill-will of the clergy, and one of his wisest measures met with the most determined opposition. In order to render the military service more popular among his native subjects, and prevent the veterans from quitting the army under the influence of religious feelings distorted by superstition, he wished the clergy to declare that all Christians who perished in war against the Saracens were martyrs in the cause of religion. But the Patriarch, who was more of a churchman than a patriot, considered it greater gain to the clergy to retain the power of granting absolutions, than to bestow the most liberal donation of martyrs on the church; and he appealed to the canons of St. Basil to prove that all war was contrary to Christian discipline, and that a Christian who killed an enemy, even in war with the Infidels, ought to be excluded from participating in the holy sacrament for three years. With a priesthood supporting such religious opinions, the Byzantine Empire had need of an admirable system of administration, and a series of brave and warlike emperors, to perpetuate its long existence. In the first year of his reign, Nicephorus endeavoured to restrain the passion for founding monasteries that then reigned almost universally. Many converted their family residences into monastic buildings, in order to terminate their lives as monks, without changing their habits of life. The emperor prohibited the foundation of any new monasteries and hospitals, enacting that only those already in existence should be maintained; and he declared all testamentary donations of land property in favour of the church void. He also excited the anger of the clergy, by forbidding any ecclesiastical erection to be made until the candidate had received the imperial approbation. He was in the habit of leaving the wealthiest sees vacant, and either retained the revenues or compelled the new bishop to pay a large portion of his receipts annually into the imperial treasury.

Nicephorus was so well aware of his unpopularity, that he converted the great palace into a citadel, which he made capable of defence with a small garrison. As the army was devoted to him, he knew that beyond the walls of Constantinople he was in no danger. In estimating the character and conduct of Nicephorus II, we must not forget that his enemies have drawn his portrait, and that, unfortunately for his reputation, modern historians have generally attached more credit to the splenetic account of the Byzantine court by Luitprand, the bishop of Cremona, than diplomatic despatches of that age are entitled to receive. Luitprand visited Constantinople as ambassador from the German emperor, Otho the Great, to negotiate a marriage between young Otho and Theophano, the stepdaughter of Nicephorus. Otho expected that the Byzantine emperor would cede his possessions in southern Italy as the dowry of the princess; Nicephorus expected the German emperor would yield up the suzerainty over Beneventum and Capua for the honour of the alliance. As might be expected, from the pride and rapacity of both parties, the ambassador failed in his mission; but he revenged himself by

libelling Nicephorus; and his picture of the pride and suspicious policy of the Byzantine court in its intercourse with foreigners gives his libel some value, and serves as an apology for his virulence.

The darling object of Nicephorus was to break the power of the Saracens, and extend the frontiers of the empire in Syria and Mesopotamia. In the spring of 964, he assembled an army against Tarsus, which was the fortress that covered the Syrian frontier. The river Cydnus flowed through the city, dividing it into two portions, which were united by three bridges. The place was populous, well fortified, and amply supplied with every means of defence, so that the emperor was compelled to raise the siege, and lead his army against Adana, which he took. He then formed the siege of Mopsuestia, and, employing his men to run a subterraneous gallery under the walls, he prevented the besieged from observing the operation by throwing the earth taken from the excavation into the Pyramus during the night. When his mine was completed, the beams which supported the walls were burned, and as soon as the rampart fell, the Byzantine army carried the place by storm. Next year (965), Nicephorus again formed the siege of Tarsus with an army of forty thousand men. The place was inadequately supplied with provisions; and though the inhabitants were a warlike race, who had long carried on incursions into the Byzantine territory, they were compelled to abandon their native city, and retire into Syria, carrying with them only their personal clothing. A rich cross, which the Saracens had taken when they destroyed the Byzantine army under Stypiotes in the year 877, was recovered, and placed in the church of St. Sophia at Constantinople. The bronze gates of Tarsus and Mopsuestia, which were of rich workmanship, were also removed, and placed by Nicephorus in the new citadel he had constructed to defend the palace. In the same year Cyprus was reconquered by an expedition under the command of the patrician Niketas.

For two years the emperor was occupied at Constantinople by the civil administration of the empire, by a threatened invasion of the Hungarians, and by disputes with the king of Bulgaria; but in 968 he again resumed the command of the army in the East. Early in spring he marched past Antioch at the head of eighty thousand men, and, without stopping to besiege that city, he rendered himself master of the fortified places in its neighbourhoods, in order to cut it off from all relief from the caliph of Bagdad. He then pushed forward his conquests; Laodicea, Hierapolis, Aleppo, Arca, and Emesa were taken, and Tripolis and Damascus paid tribute to save their territory from being laid waste. In this campaign many relics were surrendered by the Mohammedans. In consequence of the approach of winter, the emperor led his army into winter quarters, and deferred forming the siege of Antioch until the ensuing spring. He left the patrician Burtzes in a fort on the Black Mountain, with orders to watch the city, and prevent the inhabitants from collecting provisions and military stores. The remainder of the army, under the command of Peter, was stationed in Cilicia. As he was anxious to reserve to himself the glory of restoring Antioch to the empire, he ordered his Lieutenants not to attack the city during his absence. But one of the spies employed by Burtzes brought him the measure of the height of a tower which it was easy to approach, and the temptation to take the place by surprise was not to be resisted. Accordingly, on a dark winter night, while there was a heavy fall of snow, Burtzes placed himself at the head of three hundred chosen men, and gained possession of two of the towers of Antioch. He immediately sent off a courier to Peter, requesting him to advance and take possession of the city; but Peter, from fear of the emperor's jealousy, delayed moving to the assistance of Burtzes for three days. During this interval, however, Burtzes defended himself against the repeated attacks of the whole population with great difficulty. The Byzantine army at length arrived, and Antioch was annexed to the empire after having remained 328 years in the power of the Saracens. The Emperor Nicephorus, instead of rewarding Burtzes for his energy, dismissed both him and Peter from their commands.

The Fatimite caliph Moez reigned at Cairowan, and was already contemplating the conquest of Egypt. Nicephorus not only refused to pay him the tribute of eleven thousand gold byzants, stipulated by Romanus I, but even sent an expedition to wrest Sicily from the Saracens. The chief command was entrusted to Niketas, who had conquered Cyprus; and the army,

consisting chiefly of cavalry, was more particularly placed under the orders of Manuel Phokas, the emperor's cousin, a daring officer. The troops were landed on the eastern coast, and Manuel rashly advanced, until he was surrounded by the enemy and slain. Niketas also had made so little preparation to defend his position, that his camp was stormed, and he himself taken prisoner and sent to Africa. Nicephorus, who had a great esteem for Niketas in spite of this defeat, obtained his release by sending to Moez the sword of Mahomet, which had fallen into his hands in Syria. Niketas consoled himself during his captivity by transcribing the works of St. Basil, and a MS. of his penmanship still exists in the National Library at Paris.

The affairs of Italy were, as usual, embroiled by local causes. Otho, the emperor of the West, appeared at the head of an army in Apulia, and having secured the assistance of Pandulf, prince of Beneventum, called Ironhead, carried on the war with frequent vicissitudes of fortune. Ironhead was taken prisoner by the Byzantine general, and sent captive to Constantinople. But the tyrannical conduct of the Byzantine officials lost all that was gained by the superior discipline of the troops, and favoured the progress of the German arms. Society had fallen into such a state of isolation, that men were more eager to obtain immunity from all taxation than protection for industry and property, and the advantages of the Byzantine administration ceased to be appreciated.

The European provinces of the empire were threatened with invasion both by the Hungarians and Bulgarians. In 966, Nicephorus was apprised of the intention of the Hungarians, and he solicited the assistance of Peter, king of Bulgaria, to prevent their passing the Danube. Peter refused, for he had been compelled to conclude a treaty of peace with the Hungarians, who had invaded Bulgaria a short time before. It is even said that Peter took advantage of the difficulty in which Nicephorus appeared to be placed, by the numerous wars that occupied his troops, to demand payment of the tribute Romanus I had promised to Simeon. Nicephorus, in order to punish the insolence of one whom he regarded as his inferior, sent Kalokyres, the son of the governor of Cherson, as ambassador to Russia, to invite Swiatoslaff, the Varangian prince of Kieff, to invade Bulgaria, and entrusted him with a sum of fifteen hundred pounds' weight of gold, to pay the expenses of the expedition. Kalokyres proved a traitor : he formed an alliance with Swiatoslaff, proclaimed himself emperor, and involved the empire in a bloody war with the Russians.

Unpopular as Nicephorus II was in the capital, his reign was unusually free from rebellions of the troops or insurrections in the provinces. His life was terminated in his own palace by domestic treachery. His beautiful wife Theophano, and his valiant nephew John Zimiskes, were his murderers. Theophano was said to have been induced to take part in the conspiracy from love for Zimiskes, whom she expected to marry after he mounted the throne. Zimiskes murdered his friend and relation from motives of ambition. A band of conspirators, selected from the personal enemies of the emperor, among whom was Burtzes, accompanied John Zimiskes at midnight to the palace wall overlooking the pont of Bukoleon, and the female attendants of the empress hoisted them up from their boat in baskets. Other assassins had been concealed in the palace during the day, and all marched to the apartment of the emperor. Nicephorus was sleeping tranquilly on the floor—for he retained the habits of his military life amidst the luxury of the imperial palace. Zimiskes awoke him with a kick, and one of the conspirators gave him a desperate wound on the head, while Zimiskes insulted his uncle with words and blows: the others stabbed him in the most barbarous manner. The veteran, during his sufferings, only exclaimed, "O God! grant me thy mercy". John I was immediately proclaimed emperor by the murderers. The body of Nicephorus was thrown into the court, and left all day on the snow exposed to public view, that everybody might be convinced he was dead. In the evening it was privately interred.

Thus perished Nicephorus Phokas on the 10th December 969—a brave soldier, an able general, and, with all his defects, one of the most virtuous men and conscientious sovereigns that ever occupied the throne of Constantinople. Though born of one of the noblest and

wealthiest families of the Eastern Empire, and sure of obtaining the highest offices at a proud and luxurious court, he chose a life of hardship in pursuit of military glory; and a contemporary historian, who wrote after his family had been ruined by proscription, and his name had become odious, observes, that no one had ever seen him indulge in revelry or debauchery even in his youth.

#### REIGN OF JOHN I ZIMISKES

John I was a daring warrior and an able general. He was thoughtless, generous, and addicted to the pleasures of the table, so that, though he was by no means a better emperor than Nicephorus, he was far more popular at Constantinople: hence we find that his base assassination of his sovereign and relative was easily pardoned and forgotten, while the fiscal severity of his predecessor was never forgiven. The court of Constantinople was so utterly corrupt, that it was relieved from all sense of responsibility; the aristocracy knew no law but fear and private interest, and no crime was so venial as successful ambition. The throne was a stake for which every courtier held it lawful to gamble, who was inclined to risk his eyes or his life to gain an empire. Yet we must observe that both Nicephorus and John were men of nobler minds than the nobles around them, for both respected the rights and persons of their wards and legitimate princes, Basil and Constantine, and contented themselves with the post of prime-minister and the rank of emperor.

The chamberlain Basilios had been rewarded by Nicephorus, for his services in aiding him to mount the throne, with the rank of President of the Council, a dignity created on purpose. He was now entrusted by John with the complete direction of the civil administration. The partisans of Nicephorus were removed from all offices of trust, and their places filled by men devoted to Zimiskes, or hostile to the family of Phokas. All political exiles were recalled, and a parade of placing the young emperors, Basil and Constantine, on an equality with their senior colleague was made, as an insinuation that they had hitherto been retained in an unworthy state of inferiority. At the same time, measures were adopted to prevent the rabble of the capital from plundering the houses of the wealthy nobles who had been dismissed from their appointments, which was a usual proceeding at every great political revolution in Constantinople.

The coronation of John I was delayed by the Patriarch for a few days, for Polyeuktes lost no opportunity of showing his authority. He therefore refused to perform the ceremony until Zimiskes declared that he had not imbedded his hands in the blood of his sovereign. He pointed out his fellow-conspirators, Leo Valantes and Atzypothodoros, as the murderers, and excused himself by throwing the whole blame of the murder on the Empress Theophano. The officers thus sacrificed were exiled, and the empress was removed from the imperial palace. John was then admitted to the favour of the Patriarch, on consenting to abrogate the law of Nicephorus, providing that the candidates for ecclesiastical dignities should receive the emperor's approbation before their election, and promising to bestow all his private fortune in charity. After his coronation, he accordingly distributed one-half of his fortune among the poor peasants round Constantinople, and employed the other in founding a hospital for lepers, in consequence of that disease having greatly increased about this time. He also increased his popularity by remitting the tribute of the Armeniac theme, which was his native province, and by Priding to the largesses which it was customary for the emperor to distribute.

The Patriarch Polyeuktes died about three months after the coronation, and Zimiskes selected Basilios, a monk of Mount Olympus, as his successor; and without paying any respect to the canons which forbid the interference of the laity in the election of bishops, he ordered him to be installed in his dignity. The monk proved less compliant than the emperor expected. After

occupying the patriarchal chair about five years, he was deposed for refusing to appear before the emperor to answer an accusation of treason. The Patriarch declared the emperor incompetent to sit as his judge, asserting that he could only be judged or deposed by a synod or general council of the church. He was nevertheless banished to a monastery he had built on the Scamander, and from which he is called Scamandrinus. Antonios, the abbot of Studio; was appointed Patriarch in his place.

The family of Phokas had so long occupied the highest military commands, and disposed of the patronage of the empire, that it possessed a party too powerful to be immediately reduced to submission. The reign of John was disturbed by more than one rebellion excited by its members. Leo, the brother of Nicephorus, had distinguished himself by gaining a great victory over the Saracens in the defiles of Kylindros, near Andrassos, while his brother was occupied with the conquest of Crete. During the reign of Nicephorus he held the office of curopalates, but had rendered himself hated on account of his rapacity. His second son, Bardas Phokas, held the office of governor of Koloneia and Chaldia when Nicephorus was murdered, and was banished to Amasia. Bardas was one of the best soldiers and boldest champions in the Byzantine army. In the year 970 he escaped from confinement, and rendered himself master of Caesarea, where he assumed the title of Emperor. In the meantime his father, escaping from Lesbos, and his elder brother Nicephorus from Imbros, attempted to raise a rebellion in Europe. These two were soon captured, and John, satisfied that he had ruined the family when he murdered the Emperor Nicephorus, spared their lives, and allowed the sentence which condemned them to lose their eyes to be executed in such a way that they retained their eyesight. Bardas, however, gave the emperor some trouble, and it was necessary to recall Bardas Skleros from the Russian war to take the command against him. Phokas, when deserted by his army, escaped to a castle he had fortified as a place of refuge, where he defended himself until Skleros persuaded him to surrender, on a promise that he should receive no personal injury. Zimiskes, who admired his daring courage, condemned him to reside in the island of Chios, and adopt the monastic robe. His father Leo, who escaped a second time from confinement, and visited Constantinople in the hope of rendering himself master of the palace during the absence of the emperor, was discovered, and dragged from St. Sophia's, in which he sought an asylum. His eyes were then put out, and his immense estates confiscated.

John, in order to connect himself with the Basilian dynasty, married Theodora, one of the daughters of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. Another more important marriage is passed unnoticed by the Byzantine writers. Zimiskes, finding that he could ill spare troops to defend the Byzantine possessions in Italy against the attacks of the Western emperor, released Pandulf of Beneventum, after he had remained three years a prisoner at Constantinople, and by his means opened amicable communications with Otho the Great. A treaty of marriage was concluded between young Otho and Theophano, the sister of the Emperors Basil and Constantine. The nuptials were celebrated at Rome on the 14th of April 972; and the talents and beauty of the Byzantine princess enabled her to act a prominent and noble part in the history of her time.

A curious event in the history of the Eastern Empire, which ought not to pass unnoticed, is the transportation of a number of heretics, called by historians Manicheans, from the eastern provinces of Asia Minor, to increase the colonies of Paulicians and other heretics already established round Philippopolis. This is said to have been done by the Emperor John, by advice of a hermit named Theodoros, whom he elevated to the dignity of Patriarch of Antioch. The continual mention of numerous communities of heretics in Byzantine history proves that there is no greater delusion than to speak of the unity of the Christian church. Dissent appears to have been quite as prevalent, both in the Eastern and Western churches, before the time of Luther, as it has been since. Because the Greeks and Italians have been deficient in religious feeling, and their superior knowledge enabled them to affect contempt for other races, the history of dissent has been neglected, and religious investigation decried under the appellation of heresy.



The Russian war was the great event of the reign of John Zimiskes. The military fame of the Byzantine emperor, who was unquestionably the ablest general of his time, the greatness of the Russian nation, whose power now overshadows Europe, the scene of the contest, destined in our day to be again the battlefield of Russian armies in a more successful campaign, and the political interest which attaches to the first attempt of a Russian prince to march by land to Constantinople, all combine to give a practical as well as a romantic interest to this war.

The first Russian naval expedition against Constantinople in 865 would probably have been followed by a series of plundering excursions, like those carried on by the Danes and Normans on the coasts of England and France, had not the Turkish tribe called the Patzinaks rendered themselves masters of the lower course of the Dnieper, and become instruments in the hands of the emperors to arrest the activity of the bold Varangians. The northern rulers of Fief were the same rude warriors that infested England and France, but the Russian people was then in a more advanced state of society than the mass of the population in Britain and Gaul. The majority of the Russians were freemen; the majority of the inhabitants of Britain and Gaul were serfs. The commerce of the Russians was already so extensive as to influence the conduct of their government, and to modify the military ardour of their Varangian masters. But this commerce, after the fall of the Khazar Empire, and the invasion of Europe by the Magyars and Patzinaks, was carried on under obstacles which tended to reduce its extent and diminish its profits, and which it required no common degree of skill and perseverance to overcome. The wealth revealed to the rapacious Varangian chiefs of Kiev by the existence of this trade invited them to attack Constantinople, which appeared to be the centre of immeasurable riches.

After the defeat in 865, the Russians induced their rulers to send envoys to Constantinople to renew commercial intercourse, and invite Christian missionaries to visit their country; and no inconsiderable portion of the people embraced Christianity, though it continued long after better known to the Russian merchants than to the Varangian warriors. The commercial relations of the Russians with Cherson and Constantinople were now carried on directly, and numbers of Russian traders took up their residence in these cities. The first commercial treaty between the Russians of Kiev and the Byzantine Empire was concluded in the reign of Basil I. The intercourse increased from that time. In the year 902, seven hundred Russians are mentioned as serving on board the Byzantine fleet with high pay; in 935, seven Russian vessels, with 415 men, formed part of a Byzantine expedition to Italy; and in 949, six Russian vessels, with 629 men, were engaged in the unsuccessful expedition of Gongyles against Crete. In 966, a corps of Russians accompanied the unfortunate expedition of Niketas to Sicily. There can be no doubt that these were all Varangians, familiar, like the Danes and Normans in the West, with the dangers of the sea, and not native Russians, whose services on board the fleet could have been of little value to the masters of Greece.

But to return to the history of the Byzantine wars with the Russians. In the year 907, Oleg, who was regent of Kiev during the minority of Igor the son of Rurik, assembled an army of Varangians, Slavonians, and Croatians, and, collecting two thousand vessels or boats of the kind then used on the northern shore of the Euxine, advanced to attack Constantinople. The exploits of this army, which pretended to aspire at the conquest of Tzaragrad, or the City of the Caesars, were confined to plundering the country round Constantinople; and it is not improbable that the expedition was undertaken to obtain indemnity for some commercial losses sustained by imperial negligence, monopoly, or oppression. The subjects of the emperor were murdered, and the Russians amused themselves with torturing their captives in the most barbarous manner. At length Leo purchased their retreat by the payment of a large sum of money. Such is the account transmitted to us by the Russian monk Nestor, for no Byzantine writer notices the expedition, which was doubtless nothing more than a plundering incursion, in which the city of Constantinople was not exposed to any danger. These hostilities were terminated by a commercial treaty in 912, and its conditions are recorded in detail by Nestor.

In the year 941, Igor made an attack on Constantinople, impelled either by the spirit of adventure, which was the charm of existence among all the tribes of Northmen, or else roused to revenge by some violation of the treaty of 912. The Russian flotilla, consisting of innumerable small vessels, made its appearance in the Bosphorus while the Byzantine fleet was absent in the Archipelago. Igor landed at different places on the coast of Thrace and Bithynia, ravaging and plundering the country; the inhabitants were treated with incredible cruelty; some were crucified, others were burned alive, the Greek priests were killed by driving nails into their heads, and the churches were destroyed. Only fifteen ships remained at Constantinople, but these were soon fitted up with additional tubes for shooting Greek fire. This force, trifling as it was in number, gave the Byzantines an immediate superiority at sea, and the patrician Theophanes sailed out of the port to attack the Russians. Igor, seeing the small number of the enemy's ships, surrounded them on all sides, and endeavoured to carry them by boarding; but the Greek fire became only so much more available against boats and men crowded together, and the attack was repulsed with fearful loss. In the meantime, some of the Russians who landed in Bithynia were defeated by Bardas Phokas and John Kurkuas, and those who escaped from the naval defeat were pursued and slaughtered on the coast of Thrace without mercy. The Emperor Romanus ordered all the prisoners brought to Constantinople to be beheaded. Theophanes overtook the fugitive ships in the month of September, and the relics of the expedition were destroyed, Igor effecting his escape with only a few boats. The Russian Chronicle of Nestor says that, in the year 944, Igor, assisted by other Varangians, and by the Patzirt, prepared a second expedition, but that the inhabitants of Cherson so alarmed the Emperor Romanus by their reports of its magnitude, that he sent ambassadors, who met Igor at the mouth of the Danube, and sued for peace on terms to which Igor and his boyards consented. This is probably merely a salve applied to the vanity of the people of Kiev by their chronicler; but it is certain that a treaty of peace was concluded between the emperors of Constantinople and the princes of Kiev in the year 945. The stipulations of this treaty prove the importance attached to the commerce carried on by the Russians with Cherson and Constantinople. The two Russo-Byzantine treaties preserved by Nestor are documents of great importance in tracing the history of civilization in the east of Europe. The attention paid to the commercial interests of the Russian traders visiting Cherson and Constantinople, and the prominence given to questions of practical utility instead of to points of dynastic ambition, may serve as a contrast to many modern treaties in the west of Europe. The trading classes would not have been powerful enough to command this attention to their interests on the part of the warlike Varangians, had a numerous body of free citizens not been closely connected with the commercial prosperity of Russia. Unfortunately for the people, the municipal independence of their cities, which had enabled each separate community to acquire wealth and civilization, was not joined to any central institutions that insured order and a strict administration of justice, consequently each city fell separately a prey to the superior military force of the comparatively barbarian Varangians of Scandinavia. The Varangian conquest of Russia had very much the same effect as the Danish and Norman conquests in the West. Politically, the nation appeared more powerful, but the condition of all ranks of the people socially was much deteriorated. It was, however, the Tartar invasion which separates the modern and the medieval history of Russia, and which plunged the country into the state of barbarism and slavery from which Peter the Great first raised it.

The cruelty of the Varangian prince Igor, after his return to Russia, caused him to be murdered by his rebellious subjects. Olga, his widow, became regent for their son Swiatoslaff. She embraced the Christian religion, and visited Constantinople in 957, where she was baptized. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus has left us an account of the ceremony of her reception at the Byzantine court. A monk has preserved the commercial treaties of the empire, an emperor records the pageantry that amused a Russian princess. The high position occupied by the court of Kiev in the tenth century is also attested by the style with which it was addressed by the court of Constantinople. The golden bulls of the Roman emperor of the East, addressed to the prince of Russia, were ornamented with a pendent seal equal in size to a double solidus, like those addressed to the kings of France.

We have seen that the Emperor Nicephorus II sent the patrician Kalokyres to excite Swiatoslaff to invade Bulgaria, and that the Byzantine ambassador proved a traitor and assumed the purple. Swiatoslaff soon invaded Bulgaria at the head of a powerful army, which the gold brought by Kalokyres assisted him to equip, and defeated the Bulgarian army in a great battle, AD 968. Peter, king of Bulgaria, died shortly after, and the country was involved in civil broils; taking advantage of which, Swiatoslaff took Presthlava the capital, and rendered himself master of the whole kingdom. Nicephorus now formed an alliance with the Bulgarians, and was preparing to defend them against the Russians, when Swiatoslaff was compelled to return home, in order to defend his capital against the Patzinaks. Nicephorus assisted Boris and Romanus, the sons of Peter, to recover Bulgaria, and concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with Boris, who occupied the throne. After the assassination of Nicephorus, Swiatoslaff returned to invade Bulgaria with an army of 60,000 men, and his enterprise assumed the character of one of those great invasions which had torn whole provinces from the Western Empire. His army was increased by a treaty with the Patzinaks and an alliance with the Hungarians, so that he began to dream of the conquest of Constantinople, and hoped to transfer the empire of the East from the Romans of Byzantium to the Russians. It was fortunate for the Byzantine empire that it was ruled by a soldier who knew how to profit by its superiority in tactics and discipline. The Russian was not ignorant of strategy, and having secured his flank by his alliance with the Hungarians, he entered Thrace by the western passes of Mount Haemus, then the most frequented road between Germany and Constantinople, and that by which the Hungarians were in the habit of making their plundering incursions into the empire.

John Zimiskes was occupied in the East when Swiatoslaff completed the second conquest of Bulgaria and passed Mount Haemus, expecting to subdue Thrace during the emperor's absence with equal ease, AD 970. The empire was still suffering from famine. Swiatoslaff took Philippopolis, and murdered twenty thousand of the inhabitants. An embassy sent by Zimiskes was dismissed with a demand of tribute, and the Russian army advanced to Arcadiopolis, where one division was defeated by Bardas Skleros, and the remainder retired again behind Mount Haemus.

In the following spring, 971, the Emperor John took the field at the head of an army of fifteen thousand infantry and thirteen thousand cavalry, besides a bodyguard of chosen troops called the Immortals, and a powerful battery of field and siege engines. A fleet of three hundred galleys, attended by many smaller vessels, was despatched to enter the Danube and cut off the communications of the Russians with their own country.

Military operations for the defence and attack of Constantinople are dependent on some marked physical features of the country between the Danube and Mount Haemus. The Danube, with its broad and rapid stream, and line of fortresses on its southern bank, would be an impregnable barrier to a military power possessing an active ally in Hungary and Servia; for it is easy to descend the river and concentrate the largest force on any desired point of attack, to cut off the communications or disturb the flanks of the invaders. Even after the line of the Danube is lost, that of Mount Haemus covers Thrace; and it formed a rampart to Constantinople in many periods of danger under the Byzantine emperors. It was then traversed by three great military roads passable for chariots. The first, which has a double gorge, led from Philippopolis to Sardica by the pass called the Gates of Trajan (now Kapou Dervend), throwing out three branches from the principal trunk to Naissos and Belgrade. The great pass forms the point of communication likewise with the upper valley of the Strymon, from Skupi to Ulpiana, and the northern parts of Macedonia. Two secondary passes communicate with this road to the north-east, affording passage for an army—that of Kezanlik, and that of Isladi; and these form the shortest lines of communication between Philippopolis and the Danube about Nicopolis, through Bulgaria. The second great pass is towards the centre of the range of Haemus, and has preserved among the Turks its Byzantine name of the Iron Gate. It is situated on the direct line of communication between Adrianople and Roustchouk. Through this pass a good road might easily be constructed. The third great pass is that to the east, forming the great line of

communication between Adrianople and the Lower Danube near Silistria (Dorystolon). It is called by the Turks Nadir Dervend. The range of Haemus has several other passes independent of these, and its parallel ridges present numerous defiles. The celebrated Turkish position at Shoumla is adapted to cover several of these passes, converging on the great eastern road to Adrianople.

The Emperor John marched from Adrianople just before Easter, when it was not expected that a Byzantine emperor would take the field. He knew that the passes on the great eastern road had been left unguarded by the Russians, and he led his army through all the defiles of Mount Haemus without encountering any difficulty. The Russian troops stationed at Presthlava, who ought to have guarded the passes, marched out to meet the emperor when they heard he had entered Bulgaria. Their whole army consisted of infantry; but the soldiers were covered with chain armour, and accustomed to resist the light cavalry of the Patzinaks and other Turkish tribes. They proved, however, no match for the heavy-armed lancers of the imperial army; and, after a vigorous resistance, were completely routed by John Zimiskes, leaving eight thousand five hundred men on the field of battle. On the following day Presthlava was taken by escalade, and a body of seven thousand Russians and Bulgarians, who attempted to defend the royal palace, which was fortified as a citadel, were put to the sword after a gallant defence. Sphengelos, who commanded this division of the Russian force, and the traitor Kalokyres, succeeded in escaping to Dorystolon, where Swiatoslaff had concentrated the rest of the army; but Boris, king of Bulgaria, with all his family, was taken prisoner in his capital.

The emperor, after celebrating Easter in Presthlava, advanced by Pliscova and Dinea to Dorystolon, where Swiatoslaff still hoped for victory, though his position was becoming daily more dangerous. The Byzantine fleet entered the Danube and took up its station opposite the city, cutting off all the communications of the Russians by water, at the same time that the emperor encamped before the walls and blockaded them by land. Zimiskes, knowing he had to deal with a desperate enemy, fortified his camp with a ditch and rampart according to the old Roman model, which was traditionally preserved by the Byzantine engineers. The Russians enclosed within the walls of Dorystolon were more numerous than their besiegers, and Swaitoslaff hoped to be able to open his communications with the surrounding country, by bringing on a general engagement in the plain before all the defenses of the camp were completed. He hoped to defeat the attacks of the Byzantine cavalry by forming his men in squares, and, as the Russian soldiers were covered by long shields that reached to their feet, he expected to be able, by advancing his squares like moving towers, to clear the plain of the enemy. But while the Byzantine legions met the Russians in front, the heavy-armed cavalry assailed them with their long spears in flank, and the archers and slingers under cover watched coolly to transfix every man where an opening allowed their missiles to penetrate. The battle nevertheless lasted all day, but in the evening the Russians were compelled, in spite of their desperate valour, to retire into Dorystolon without having effected anything. The infantry of the north now began to feel its inferiority to the veteran cavalry of Asia sheathed in plate armour, and disciplined by long campaigns against the Saracens. Swiatoslaff, however, continued to defend himself by a series of battles rather than sorties, in which he made desperate efforts to break through the ranks of his besiegers in vain, until at length it became evident that he must either conclude peace, die on the field of battle, or be starved to death in Dorystolon. Before resigning himself to his fate, he made a last effort to cut his way through the Byzantine army; and on this occasion the Russians fought with such desperation, that contemporaries ascribed the victory of the Byzantine troops, not to the superior tactics of the emperor, nor to the discipline of a veteran army, but to the personal assistance of St. Theodore, who found it necessary to lead the charge of the Roman lancers, and shiver a spear with the Russians himself, before their phalanx could be broken. The victory was complete, and Swiatoslaff sent ambassadors to the emperor to offer terms of peace.

The siege of Dorystolon had now lasted more than two months, and the Russian army, though reduced by repeated losses, still amounted to twenty-two thousand men. The valour and

contempt of death which the Varangians had displayed in the contest, convinced the emperor that it would cause the loss of many brave veterans to insist on their laying down their arms; he was therefore willing to come to terms, and peace was concluded on condition that Swiatoslaff should yield up Dorystolon, with all the plunder, slaves, and prisoners in possession of the Russians, and engage to swear perpetual amity with the empire, and never to invade either the territory of Cherson or the kingdom of Bulgaria; while, on the other hand, the Emperor John engaged to allow the Russians to descend the Danube in their boats, to supply them with two medimni of wheat for each surviving soldier, to enable them to return home without dispersing to plunder for their subsistence, and to renew the old commercial treaties between Kiev and Constantinople, July, 971.

After the treaty was concluded, Swiatoslaff desired to have a personal interview with his conqueror. John rode down to the bank of the Danube clad in splendid armour, and accompanied by a brilliant suite of guards on horseback. The short figure of the emperor was no disadvantage where he was distinguished by the beauty of his charger and the splendour of his arms, while his fair countenance, light hair, and piercing blue eyes fixed the attention of all on his bold and good-humoured face, which contrasted well with the dark and sombre visages of his attendants. Swiatoslaff arrived by water in a boat, which he steered himself with an oar. His dress was white, differing in no way from that of those under him, except in being cleaner. Sitting in the stern of his boat, he conversed for a short time with the emperor, who remained on horseback close to the beach. The appearance of the bold Varangian excited much curiosity, and is thus described by a historian who was intimate with many of those who were present at the interview: the Russian was of the middle stature, well formed, with strong neck and broad chest. His eyes were blue, his eyebrows thick, his nose flat, and his beard shaved, but his upper lip was shaded with long and thick mustaches. The hair of his head was cropped close, except two long locks which hung down on each side of his face and were thus worn as a mark of his Scandinavian race. In his ears he wore golden earrings ornamented with a ruby between two pearls, and his expression was stern and fierce.

Swiatoslaff immediately quitted Dorystolon, but he was obliged to winter on the shores of the Euxine, and famine thinned his ranks. In spring he attempted to force his way through the territory of the Patzinaks with his diminished army. He was defeated, and perished near the cataracts of the Dnieper. Kour, prince of the Patzinaks, became the possessor of his skull, which he shaped into a drinking-cup, and adorned with the moral maxim, doubtless not less suitable to his own skull, had it fallen into the hands of others, "He who covets the property of others, oft loses his own". We have already had occasion to record that the skull of the Byzantine emperor, Nicephorus I, had ornamented the festivals of a Bulgarian king; that of a Russian sovereign now figured in the tents of a Turkish tribe.

The results of the campaign were as advantageous to the Byzantine empire as they were glorious to the Emperor John. Bulgaria was conquered, a strong garrison established in Dorystolon, and the Danube once more became the frontier of the Roman empire. The peace with the Russians was uninterrupted until about the year 988, when, from some unknown cause of quarrel, Vladimir the son of Swiatoslaff attacked and gained possession of Cherson by cutting off the water.

The Greek city of Cherson, situated on the extreme verge of ancient civilization, escaped for ages from the impoverishment and demoralization into which the Hellenic race was precipitated by the Roman system of concentrating all power in the capital of the empire. Cherson was governed for centuries by its own elective magistrates, and it was not until towards the middle of the ninth century that the Emperor Theophilus destroyed its independence. The people, however, still retained in their own hands some control over their local administration, though the Byzantine government lost no time in undermining the moral foundation of the free institutions which had defended a single city against many barbarous nations that had made the Roman emperors tremble. The inhabitants of Cherson long looked with indifference on the

favour of the Byzantine emperor, cherished the institutions of Hellas, and boasted of their self-government.

A thousand years after the rest of the Greek nation was sunk in irremediable slavery, Cherson remained free. Such a phenomenon as the existence of manly feeling in one city, when mankind everywhere else slept contented in a state of political degradation, deserved attentive consideration. Indeed, we may be better able to appreciate correctly the political causes that corrupted the Greeks in the Eastern Empire, if we can ascertain those which enabled Cherson, though surrounded by powerful enemies and barbarous nations, to preserve

A Homer's language murmuring in her streets,

And in her haven many a mast from Tyre.

In the reign of Diocletian, while Themistos was president of Cherson, Sauromates, king of Bosphoros, passing along the eastern shores of the Euxine, invaded the Roman Empire. He overran Lazia and Pontus without difficulty, but on the banks of the Halys he found the Roman army assembled under the command of Constantius Chlorus. On hearing of this invasion, Diocletian sent ambassadors to invite the people of Cherson to attack the territories of the king of Bosphoros, in order to compel him to return home. Cherson, holding the rank of an allied city, could not avoid conceding that degree of supremacy to the Roman emperor which a small state is compelled to yield to a powerful protector, and the invitation was received as a command. Chrestos had succeeded Themistos in the presidency; he sent an army against Bosphoros, and took the city. But the Chersonites, though brave warriors, sought peace, not conquest, and they treated the royal family and all the inhabitants of the places that had fallen into their hands, in a way to conciliate the goodwill of their enemies. Their successes forced Sauromates to conclude peace and evacuate the Roman territory, in order to regain possession of his capital and family. As a reward for their services, Diocletian granted the Chersonites additional security for their trade, and extensive commercial privileges throughout the Roman Empire.

In the year 332, when Constantine the Great, in his declining age, had laid aside the warlike energy of his earlier years, the Goths and Sarmatians invaded the Roman Empire. The emperor called on the inhabitants of Cherson, who were then presided over by Diogenes, to take up arms. They sent a force well furnished with field-machines to attack the Goths, who had already crossed the Danube, and defeated the barbarians with great slaughter. Constantine, to reward their promptitude in the service of the empire, sent them a golden statue of himself in imperial robes, to be placed in the hall of the senate, accompanied with a charter ratifying every privilege and commercial immunity granted to their city by preceding emperors. He bestowed on them also an annual supply of the materials necessary for constructing the warlike machines of which they had made such good use, and pay for a thousand artillerymen to work these engines. This subsidy continued to be paid in the middle of the tenth century, in the time of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

Years passed on, and Sauromates, the grandson of him who invaded the empire in the time of Diocletian, determining to efface the memory of his grandfather's disgrace, declared war with Cherson. He was defeated by Vyskos, the president of Cherson, at Kapha, and compelled to conclude a treaty of peace, by which Kapha was declared the frontier of the territory of Cherson. Another Sauromates, having succeeded to the throne of Bosphoros, determined to regain possession of Kapha, when Pharnakes was president of Cherson. A single combat between the gigantic king and the patriotic president, in which Sauromates was slain, terminated this war. The dynasty of the Sauromatan family ended, and Bosphoros, becoming a free city in

alliance with Cherson, raised a statue to Phamakes as a testimony of his moderation and philanthropy.

Again, after an interval of years, Lamachos was president of Cherson, but the people of Bosporos, corrupted by the memory of a court, and loving pageantry better than liberty, had elected a king named Asandros. The Bosporians proposed that the son of Asandros should marry the only daughter of Lamachos, in order to draw closer the alliance between the two states; and to this the Chersonites consented, but only on condition that the young Asander should take up his residence in Cherson, and engage never to return to Bosporos—not even to pay the shortest visit to the king his father, or any of his relations—under pain of death. The marriage was celebrated, and Asander dwelt with the young Gycia in the palace of Lamachos, which was a building of regal splendour, covering four of the quadrangles marked out by the intersection of the streets in the quarter of Cherson called Sousa, and having its own private gate in the city walls. Two years after the celebration of this marriage, Lamachos died; his daughter inherited the whole of his princely fortune, and Zetho was elected president of Cherson. At the end of a year, Gycia went out to decorate her father's tomb, and wishing to honour his memory with the greatest solemnity, she received permission from the president and senate to entertain the whole body of the citizens of Cherson, with their wives and children, at a funeral banquet on the anniversary of her father's death as long as she lived. The celebration of this festival suggested to her husband a plan of rendering himself tyrant of Cherson, and for two years he collected men and warlike stores secretly from Bosporos, by means of the ships employed in his commercial affairs. These he concealed in the immense warehouses enclosed within the walls of his wife's palace. Three of his own followers from Bosporos were alone entrusted with the secret of his plot. After a lapse of two years, Asander had collected two hundred Bosporians, with their armour, in the palace of Gycia, and was waiting for the approaching anniversary of the death of Lamachos to destroy the liberty of Cherson.

It happened at this time that a favourite maid of Gycia, offending her mistress, was ordered to be banished from her presence, and confined in a room over the warehouse in which the Bosporians were concealed. As the girl was sitting alone, singing and spinning, her spindle dropped, and rolled along the floor till it fell into a hole near the wall, from which she could only recover it by raising up one of the tiles of the pavement. Leaning down, she saw through the ceiling a crowd of men in the warehouse below, whom she knew by their dress to be Bosporians, and soldiers. She immediately called a servant, and sent him to her mistress, conjuring her to come to see her in her prison. Gycia, curious to see the effect of the punishment on her favorite, visited her immediately, and was shown the strange spectacle of a crowd of foreign soldiers and a magazine of arms concealed in her own palace. The truth flashed on her mind; she saw her husband was plotting to become the tyrant of her native city, and every feeling of her heart was wounded.

She assembled her relations, and by their means communicated secretly with the senate, revealing the plot to a chosen committee, on obtaining a solemn promise that when she died she should be buried within the walls of the city, though such a thing was at variance with the Hellenic usages of Cherson. Whether from the danger of attacking two hundred heavy-armed men, or to avoid war with Bosporos, the president and senate of Cherson determined to destroy the conspiracy by burning the enemy in their place of concealment, and Gycia willingly gave her ancestral palace to the flames to save her country.

When the day of the anniversary of her father's funeral arrived, Gycia ordered the preparations for the annual feast to be made with more than ordinary liberality, and Asander was lavish in his distribution of wine; but due precautions had been taken that the gates of the city should be closed at the usual hour, and all the citizens in their dwellings. At the banquet in her own palace Gycia drank water out of a purple goblet, while the servant who waited on Asander served him with the richest wines. To the delight of her husband, Gycia proposed that all should retire to rest at an early hour, and she took a last melancholy leave of her husband, who hastened

to give his three confidants their instructions, and then lay down to rest until the midnight should call him to complete his treachery. The gates, doors, and windows of the palace were shut up, and the keys, as usual, laid beside Gycia. Her maids had packed up all her jewels, and when Asander was plunged in a sound sleep from the wine he had drank, Gycia rose, locked every door of the palace as she passed, and hastened out, accompanied by her slaves. Order was immediately given to set fire to the building on every side, and thus the liberty of Cherson was saved by the patriotism of Gycia.

The spot where the palace had stood remained a vacant square in the time of the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and Gycia during her lifetime would never allow even the ruins to be cleared away. Her countrymen erected two statues of bronze to honor her patriotism—one in the public agora, showing her in the flower of youth, dressed in her native costume, as when she saved her country; the other clad as a heroine armed to defend the city. On both inscriptions were placed commemorating her services and no better deed could be done at Cherson than to keep the bases of these statues bright and the inscriptions legible, that the memory of the treachery of the king's son, and the gratitude due to the patriotism of Gycia, might be ever fresh in the hearts of the citizens.

Some years after this, when Stratophilos was president, Gycia, suspecting that the gratitude of her countrymen was so weakened that they would no longer be inclined to fulfil their promise of burying her within the walls, pretended to be dead. The event was as she feared; but when the procession had passed the gates, she rose up from the bier and exclaimed, "Is this the way the people of Cherson keep their promise to the preserver of their liberty?" Shame proved more powerful than gratitude. The Chersonites now swore again to bury her in the city, if she would pardon their falsehood. A tomb was accordingly built during her lifetime, and a gilded statue of bronze was erected over it, as an assurance that the faith of Cherson should not be again violated. In that tomb Gycia was buried, and it stood uninjured in the tenth century, when an emperor of Constantinople, impressed with admiration of her patriotism, so unlike anything he had seen among the Greek inhabitants of his own wide extended empire, transmitted a record of her deeds to posterity.

Cherson retained its position as an independent state until the reign of Theophilus, who compelled it to receive a governor from Constantinople; but, even under the Byzantine government, it continued to defend its municipal institutions, and, instead of slavishly soliciting the imperial favour, and adopting Byzantine manners, it boasted of its constitution and self-government. But it lost gradually its former wealth and extensive trade; and when Vladimir, the sovereign of Russia, attacked it in 988, it yielded almost without a struggle. The great object of ambition of all the princes of the East, from the time of Heraclius to that of the last Comnenos of Trebizond, was to form matrimonial alliances with the imperial family. Vladimir obtained the hand of Anne, the sister of the Emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII, and was baptised and married in the Church of the Panaghia at Cherson. To soothe the vanity of the empire, he pretended to retain possession of his conquest as the dowry of his wife. Many of the priests who converted the Russians to Christianity, and many of the artists who adorned the earliest Russian churches with paintings and mosaics, were natives of Cherson. The church raised Vladimir to the rank of a saint; the Russians conferred on him the title of the Great.

John Zimiskes, having terminated the Russian war, compelled Boris to resign the crown of Bulgaria, and accept the title of Magister, as a pensioner of the Byzantine court. The frontier of the Eastern Empire was once more extended to the Danube.

The Saracen war had been carried on vigorously on the frontiers of Syria, while the Emperor John was occupied with the Russian campaign. The continued successes of the Byzantine arms had so alarmed the Mohammedan princes, that an extensive confederacy was formed to recover Antioch, and the command of the army of the caliph was intrusted to Zoher, the lieutenant of the Fatimites in Egypt. The imperial army was led by the patrician Nikolaos, a



man of great military skill, who had been a eunuch in the household of John Zimiskes; and he defeated the Saracens in a pitched battle, and saved Antioch for a time. But in the following year (973) the conquest of Nisibis filled the city of Bagdad with such consternation, that a levy of all Mussulmans was ordered to march against the Christians. The Byzantine troops in Mesopotamia were commanded by an Armenian named Temelek Melchi, who was completely routed near Amida. He was himself taken prisoner, and died after a year's confinement.

With all his talents as a general, John does not appear to have possessed the same control over the general administration as Nicephorus; and many of the cities conquered by his predecessor, in which the majority of the inhabitants were Mohammedans, succeeded in throwing off the Byzantine yoke. Even Antioch declared itself independent. A great effort became necessary to regain the ground that had been lost; and, to make this, John Zimiskes took the command of the Byzantine army in person in the year 974. He marched in one campaign from Mount Taurus to the banks of the Tigris, and from the banks of the Tigris back into Syria, as far as Mount Libanon, carrying his victorious arms, according to the vaunting inaccuracy of the Byzantine geographical nomenclature, into Palestine. His last campaign, in the following year, was the most brilliant of his exploits. In Mesopotamia he regained possession of Amida and Martyropolis; but these cities contained so few Christian inhabitants that he was obliged to leave the administration in the hands of Saracen emirs, who were charged with the collection of the tribute and taxes. Nisibis he found deserted, and from it he marched by Edessa to Hierapolis or Membig, where he captured many valuable relics, among which the shoes of our Savior, and the hair of John the Baptist, are especially enumerated. From Hierapolis John marched to Apamea, Emesa, and Baalbec, without meeting any serious opposition. The emir of Damascus sent valuable presents, and agreed to pay an annual tribute to escape a visit. The emperor then crossed Mount Libanon, storming the fortress of Borzo, which commanded the pass, and, descending to the seacoast, laid siege to Berytus, which soon surrendered, and in which he found an image of the crucifixion that he deemed worthy of being sent to Constantinople. From Berytus he marched northward to Tripolis, which he besieged in vain for forty days. The valor of the garrison and the strength of the fortifications compelled him to raise the siege; but his retreat was ascribed to fear of a comet, which illuminated the sky with a strange brilliancy. As it was now September, he wished to place his worn-out troops in winter-quarters in Antioch; but the inhabitants shut the gates against him. To punish them for their revolt, he had the folly to ravage their territory, and cut down their fruit-trees; forgetting, in his barbarous and impolitic revenge, that he was ruining his own empire. Burtzes was left to reconquer Antioch for the second time; which, however, he did not effect until after the death of the Emperor John.

The army was then placed in winter-quarters on the frontiers of Cilicia, and the emperor hastened to return to Constantinople. On the journey, as he passed the fertile plains of Longias and Dryze, in the vicinity of Anazarba and Podandus, he saw them covered with flocks and herds, with well-fortified farmyards, but no smiling villages. He inquired with wonder to whom the country belonged, in which pasturage was conducted on so grand a scale; and he learned that the greater part of the province had been acquired by the president Basilios in donations from himself and his predecessor, Nicephorus. Amazed at the enormous accumulation of property in the hands of one individual, he exclaimed, "Alas! the wealth of the empire is wasted, the strength of the armies is exhausted, and the Roman emperors toil like mercenaries, to add to the riches of an insatiable eunuch!" This speech was reported to the president. He considered that he had raised both Nicephorus and John to the throne; his interest now required that it should return to its rightful master, and that the young Basil should enjoy his heritage. The Emperor John stopped on his way to Constantinople at the palace of Romanos, a grandson of Romanus I; and it is said he there drank of a poisoned cup presented to him by a servant gained by the president. Certain it is that John Zimiskes reached the capital in a dying state, and expired on the 10th of January 976, at the age of fifty-one.

## Sect. II

## REIGN OF BASIL II BULGAROKTONOS,

A.D. 976-1025.

Basil II was only twenty years of age when he assumed the direction of public affairs, and for some time he continued to indulge in the pursuit of pleasure, allowing the president Basilios to exercise the imperial power to its fullest extent. Indeed, there can be no doubt that the prime-minister would have attempted to occupy the place of Nicephorus and Zimiskes, had his condition not effectually excluded him from the throne. For some time, however, he ventured to exclude Basil from any active share in the details of administration, and endeavoured to divert his attention to the pomp of the imperial court, and to the indulgence of his passions, to which it was thought the young man was naturally inclined. This conduct probably awakened suspicions in the mind of Basil, who possessed a firm and energetic character, and he watched the proceedings of his powerful minister with attention. His brother, Constantine VIII, who was seventeen when John Zimiskes died, enjoyed the rank of his colleague, but was allowed no share in the public administration, and appeared well satisfied to be relieved from the duties of his station, as he was allowed to enjoy all its luxuries. Basil soon gave up all idle amusements, and devoted his whole time and energy to military studies and exercises, and to public business. Indefatigable, brave, and stern, his courage degenerated into ferocity, and his severity into cruelty. Yet, as he reigned the absolute master of an unprincipled court, and of a people careless of honour and truth, and as the greater part of his life was spent in war with barbarous enemies, we may attribute many of his faults as much to the state of society in his age as to his own individual character. He believed that he was prudent, just, and devout; others considered him severe, rapacious, cruel and bigoted. For Greek learning he cared little, and he was a type of the higher Byzantine moral character, which retained far more of its Roman than its Greek origin, both in its vices and its virtues. In activity, courage, and military skill he had few equals.

Several of the great nobles of the empire considered that their power entitled them to occupy the place left vacant by the death of Zimiskes; and as the great qualities of Basil II were still unknown, they envied the influence of the president Basilios. Among the leading members of the aristocracy, Bardas Skleros, who commanded the army in Asia, gave the president most umbrage, from his military reputation and great popularity. Skleros was accordingly removed from the command of the army, and appointed duke or governor of Mesopotamia. This step precipitated his rebellion. The two ablest generals in the empire were Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas: both were men of illustrious families, and both had filled high offices in the state. As early as the reign of Michael I, a Skleros had been governor of the Peloponnesus; and for four generations the family of Phokas had supplied the empire with a succession of military leaders. Skleros and Phokas had already been opponents in the reign of John I. These two men may be taken as types of the military nobles of the Byzantine empire in the tenth century; and no tale of daring deeds or romantic vicissitudes among the chivalrous adventurers of the West, who had no patrimony but their swords, was more strange than many an episode in the lives of these two nobles, nursed in silken raiment, whose youth was passed in marble palaces on the soft shores of the Bosphorus, who were educated by pedantic grammarians, and trained by Greek theologians, who deemed the shedding even of Saracen blood a sin. Yet these nobles valued themselves as much on their personal skill in arms and headlong daring as any Danish adventurer or Norman knight

Bardas Skleros no sooner reached Mesopotamia than he assumed the title of Emperor, and invaded Asia Minor. He had made no preparations for his rebellion; he trusted to his military reputation for collecting a small army, and to his own skill to make the best use of the troops that joined his standard: nor was he wanting to his fame. Some pecuniary assistance from the emirs of Amida and Martyropolis recruited his finances, and a body of three hundred well-armed Saracen horse was considered a valuable addition to his little army. Undismayed by partial defeats and immense difficulties, he at last gained a complete victory over the Byzantine army at Lapara, on the frontiers of Armenia, and a second at Rageas, over a generalissimo of the empire, who had been sent to repair the preceding disaster. Skleros then marched to Abydos, took Nicaea, and sent his son Romanes into Thrace to make preparations for the siege of Constantinople.

The rebellion of Bardas Phokas, and his exile to Chios, have been already mentioned. He was now called from his retreat, and laid aside the monastic dress, which he had worn for six years, to resume his armour. The old rivals again met in arms, and at first fortune continued to favour Skleros, who was a better tactician than Phokas. The imperial army was defeated at Amorium, but the personal valour of Phokas covered the retreat of his soldiers, and preserved their confidence; for when Constantine Gabras pressed too closely on the rear, Phokas, who was watching his movements, suddenly turned his horse, and, galloping up to the gallant chief, struck him lifeless with his mace-at-arms, and rejoined his own rearguard unhurt. A second battle was fought near Basilika Therma, in the theme Charsiana, and Skleros was again victorious. Phokas retired into Georgia (Iberia), where he received assistance from David, the king of that country, which enabled him to assemble a third army on the banks of the Halys. He found Skleros encamped in the plain of Pankalia. An engagement took place, in which the superior generalship of the rebel emperor was again evident, and Phokas, reduced to despair, sought to terminate the contest by a personal encounter with his rival. They soon met, and their companions suspended the conflict in their immediate vicinity to view the combat between two champions, both equally celebrated for their personal prowess. Skleros was armed with the sword, Phokas with the mace-at-arms; the sword glanced from the well-tempered armour, the mace crushed the helmet, and Skleros fell senseless on his horse's neck. The guards rushing to the rescue, Phokas gained an eminence, from which he could already see a portion of his army in full retreat. But the fortune of the day was changed by an accident. As the officers of Skleros were carrying their wounded leader to a neighbouring fountain, his horse escaped and galloped through the ranks of the army, showing the troops the imperial trappings stained with blood. The cry arose that Skleros was slain. The tie that united the rebels was broken, and the soldiers fled in every direction, or laid down their arms. On recovering, Skleros found that nothing was left for him but to escape with his personal attendants into the Saracen territory, where he was thrown into prison by order of the caliph. Several of his partisans prolonged their resistance through the winter.

Bardas Phokas continued to command the imperial army in Asia for eight years, carrying on war with the Saracens, and compelling the emir of Aleppo to pay tribute to Constantinople. But as the Emperor Basil II advanced in years, his firm character began to excite general dissatisfaction among the Byzantine nobles, who saw that their personal influence, and power of enriching themselves at the public expense, were likely to be greatly curtailed. The attention the emperor paid to public business, and his strict control over the conduct of all officials, began to alarm the president Basilios; while his determination to command the army in person, and to regulate promotions, excited the dissatisfaction of Phokas, who allowed his government to become the refuge of every discontented courtier. The only campaign in which the emperor had yet commanded was one against Samuel, king of Bulgaria, which had proved signally disastrous, so that his interference in military matters did not appear to be authorized by his experience in tactics and strategy. It seems probable that the president excited Phokas to take up arms, as a means of rendering the emperor more dependent on his influence and the support of the aristocracy; but Phokas doubtless required very little prompting to make an attempt to seize the throne. Assembling the leading men in his government, and the principal officers of the

army under his command, at the palace of Eustathios Maleinos, in the theme Charsiana, he was proclaimed emperor on the 1st of August 987.

Nearly about the same time, Bardas Skleros succeeded in escaping from the Saracens and entering the empire. He had been released from his prison at Bagdad, and intrusted with the command of a legion of Christian refugees, with which he had distinguished himself in the civil wars of the Mohammedans. His adventures in this service were not unlike those recorded of Manuel in the reign of Theophilus. His sudden appearance in the empire, and his resumption of his claim to the imperial throne, brought the two ancient rivals again into the field, both as rebel emperors, and it seemed that they must decide by a new war which was to march as victor against Basil at Constantinople. Phokas gained the advantage by treachery. He concluded a treaty with his rival, by which a division of Asia Minor was agreed on; and when Skleros visited his camp to hold a conference, Phokas detained him a prisoner. Phokas then devoted all his energy to dethrone his sovereign; and during the summer of 988, he subdued the greater part of Asia Minor; but at the commencement of the following year, a division of his army which he sent to the Bosphorus was defeated by the Emperor Basil, who had just obtained an auxiliary corps of Varangians from his brother-in-law Vladimir, the sovereign of Kiev. Phokas was at this time besieging Abydos, which defended itself with obstinacy until the Emperors Basil and Constantine arrived with the imperial army to relieve it. The imperial troops arrived by sea, and, debarking near Abydos, formed their camp in the plain. Phokas, leaving part of his force to continue the siege, drew out his army to give battle to the emperors. When the two armies were taking up their ground, Phokas rode along the field, seeking for an opportunity to decide the fate of the war by one of those feats of arms in which his personal prowess was so distinguished. His eye caught a sight of the Emperor Basil engaged in ordering the movements of his army, and, dashing forward with his mace-at-arms, he prepared to close in single combat with his sovereign. At the very moment when the object of his sudden movement flashed on the minds of all, Phokas wheeled round his horse, galloped to a little eminence, where he dismounted in sight of both armies and lay down on the ground. A long interval of suspense occurred. Then a rumour ran along the ranks of the rebels that their leader was dead, and the troops dispersed without striking a blow. Phokas had drunk a glass of cold water as he mounted his horse, according to his usual custom, and whether he perished by poison or by a stroke of apoplexy was naturally a question not easily settled by the suspicious and vicious Constantinopolitans. Thus ended the career of Bardas Phokas, by a death as strange as the events of his romantic life. He died in the month of April 989.

Bardas Skleros regained his liberty on the death of his rival, but resigned his pretensions to the imperial dignity on receiving the pardon of Basil. The meeting of the emperor and the veteran warrior was remarkable. The eyesight of Skleros had begun to fail, and he had grown extremely corpulent. He had laid aside the imperial costume, but continued to wear purple boots, which were part of the insignia of an emperor. As he advanced to the tent of Basil, leaning on two of his equerries, Basil, surprised at his infirmity, exclaimed to his attendants, "Is this the man we all trembled at yesterday?" But as soon as he perceived the purple boots, he refused to receive the infirm old general until they were changed. Skleros had then a gracious audience, and was requested to sit down. He did not long survive.

The same attention to public business on the part of the emperor which caused the rebellion of Phokas, produced the fall of the president Basilios, whom Basil deprived of all his offices about the same time. His estates were confiscated, his acts annulled, the populace of Constantinople were allowed to plunder his palace, the sacred offerings and dedications he had made were destroyed, and even the monastery he had founded was dissolved. The celebrated minister died in exile, after having attained a degree of wealth and power which marks an unhealthy condition of the body politic in the Byzantine Empire. No such accumulation of fortune as Basilios is reported to have possessed, could ever have been obtained by a public servant without the exertion of the grossest oppression, either on the part of the individual or the government. The riches of Basilios must almost have rivalled the wealth of Crassus; at least, he

came under the definition of a rich man, according to that wealthy Roman, for he was able to maintain an army. At an early part of his political career, he armed a household of three thousand slaves to aid in placing the imperial crown on the head of Nicephorus II. The aristocracy of Constantinople at this period bore some resemblance, in its social position, to that of Rome at the fall of the Republic, both in wealth and political corruption. The estates of Eustathios Maleinos, in whose house Phokas raised the standard of revolt, were not less extensive than those of the ambitious president. Maleinos was fortunate enough to escape punishment for his share in the rebellion, but some years after, as Basil was returning from a campaign in Syria (AD 995), he stopped at the palace of Maleinos in Cappadocia, and was amazed at the strength of the building, and the wealth, power, and splendour of the household. The emperor saw that a man of courage, in possession of so much influence, and commanding such a number of armed servants, could at any moment commence a rebellion as dangerous as that of Skleros or Phokas. Maleinos received an invitation to accompany the court to the capital, and was never again allowed to visit his estates in Cappadocia. At his death, his immense fortune was confiscated, and most writers ascribed the legislative measures of Basil, to protect the landed property of small proprietors from the encroachments of the wealthy, to the impression produced on his mind by witnessing the power of Maleinos in Cappadocia; but we must bear in mind that, from the time of Romanus I, the Byzantine emperors had been vainly endeavouring to stem the torrent of aristocratic predominance in the provinces; and both Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and Nicephorus II, though in general extremely dissimilar in character and policy, agreed in passing laws to protect the poor against the rich. Basil II fully appreciated all the evils which resulted from the tendency of society to accumulate wealth in the hands of a few individuals, and he endeavoured to aid the middle classes in defending their possessions; but all the power he could exert was unable to prevent the constant diminution that was going on in the number of the smaller landed proprietors, the middle classes in the towns, and generally of the civilised races of mankind throughout the greater part of his empire. The task was beyond the power of legislation, and required an improvement in the moral as well as the political constitution of society. The attempts of the emperor to arrest the progress of the evil may have been useless, but they were unquestionably not disadvantageous to the people. It is therefore strange to find the Patriarch, the higher clergy, and the monks opposed to these measures, and engaged in endeavouring to turn him from his purpose, particularly when he wished to render the rich responsible for the taxes of the ruined poor of their district. The Greek Church has, however, generally been a servile instrument either of the sovereign power or of the aristocracy, and has contributed little either to enforce equity or civil liberty, when the mass of the lower orders was alone concerned. The evil of increasing wealth in the hands of a few individuals, and of a gradual diminution of the intelligent population in the Byzantine Empire, went on augmenting from the time of Basil II. Asia and Europe both lost their civilized races; the immense landed estates of a few Byzantine aristocrats were cultivated by Mohammedan slaves, or Slavonian, Albanian, and Vallachian serfs; manufactures and trade declined with the population, the towns dwindled into villages, and no class of native inhabitants remained possessing strength and patriotism to fight for their homes when a new race of invaders poured into the empire.

The reign of Basil II is the culminating point of Byzantine greatness. The eagles of Constantinople flew during his life, in a long career of victory, from the banks of the Danube to those of the Euphrates, and from the mountains of Armenia to the shores of Italy. Basil's indomitable courage, terrific cruelty, indifference to art and literature, and religious superstition, all combine to render him a true type of his empire and age. The great object of his policy was to consolidate the unity of the administration in Europe by the complete subjection of the Bulgarians and Slavonians, whom similarity of language had almost blended into one nation, and had completely united in hostility to the imperial government.

Four sons of a Bulgarian noble of the highest rank had commenced a revolutionary movement in Bulgaria against the royal family, after the death of Peter and the first victories of the Russians. In order to put an end to these troubles, Nicephorus II had, on the retreat of

Swiatoslaff, replaced Boris, the son of Peter, on the throne of Bulgaria; and when the Russians returned, Boris submitted to their domination. Shortly after the death of John I (Zimiskes), the Bulgarian leaders again roused the people to a struggle for independence. Boris, who escaped from Constantinople to attempt recovering his paternal throne, was accidentally slain, and the four brothers again became the chiefs of the nation. In a short time three perished, and Samuel alone remained, and assumed the title of King. The forces of the empire were occupied with the rebellion of Skleros, so that the vigour and military talents of Samuel succeeded not only in expelling the Byzantine authorities from Bulgaria, but also in rousing the Slavonians of Macedonia to throw off the Byzantine yoke. Samuel then invaded Thessaly, and extended his plundering excursions over those parts of Greece and the Peloponnesus still inhabited by the Hellenic race. He carried away the inhabitants of Larissa in order to people the town of Prespa, which he then proposed to make his capital, with intelligent artisans and manufacturers; and, in order to attach them to their new residence by ties of old superstition, he removed to Prespa the body of their protecting martyr, St. Achilles, who some pretended had been a Roman soldier, and others a Greek archbishop. Samuel showed himself, both in ability and courage, a rival worthy of Basil; and the empire of the East seemed for some time in danger of being transferred from the Byzantine Romans to the Slavonian Bulgarians.

In the year 981, the Emperor Basil made his first campaign against the new Bulgarian monarchy in person. His plan of operations was to secure the great western passes through Mount Haemus, on the road from Philippopolis to Sardica, and by the conquest of the latter city he hoped to cut off the communication between the Bulgarians north of Mount Haemus and the Slavonians in Macedonia. But his military inexperience, and the relaxed discipline of the army, caused this well-conceived plan to fail. Sardica was besieged in vain for twenty days. The negligence of the officers and the disobedience of the soldiers caused several foraging parties to be cut off; the besieged burned the engines of the besiegers in a victorious sortie, and the emperor felt the necessity of commencing his retreat. As his army was passing the defiles of Haemus, it was assailed by the troops Samuel had collected to watch his operations, and completely routed. The baggage and military chest, the emperor's plate and tents, all fell into the hands of the Bulgarian king, and Basil himself escaped with some difficulty to Philippopolis, where he collected the relics of the fugitives. Leo Diaconus, who accompanied the expedition as one of the clergy of the imperial chapel, and was fortunate enough to escape the pursuit, has left us a short but authentic notice of this first disastrous campaign of Basil, the slayer of the Bulgarians.

The reorganisation of his army, the regulation of the internal administration of the empire, the rebellion of Phokas, and the wars in Italy and on the Asiatic frontier, prevented Basil from attacking Samuel in person for many years. Still a part of the imperial forces carried on this war, and Samuel soon perceived that he was unable to resist the Byzantine generals in the plains of Bulgaria, where the heavy cavalry, military engines, and superior discipline of the imperial armies could all be employed to advantage. He resolved, therefore, to transfer the seat of the Bulgarian government to a more inaccessible position. He first selected Prespa as his future capital, but he subsequently abandoned that intention, and established the central administration of his dominions at Achrida. The site was well adapted for rapid communications with his Slavonian subjects in Macedonia, who furnished his armies with their best recruits. To Achrida, therefore, he transferred the seat of the Bulgarian patriarchate, and to this day the archbishop of that city, in virtue of the position he received from Samuel, still holds an ecclesiastical jurisdiction over several suffragans independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople. As a military position, also, Achrida had many advantages: it commanded an important point in the Via Egnatia, the great commercial road connecting the Adriatic with Bulgaria, as well as with Thessalonica and Constantinople, and afforded many facilities for enabling Samuel to choose his points of attack on the Byzantine themes of Macedonia, Hellas, Dyrrachium, and Nicopolis. Here, therefore, Samuel established the capital of the Bulgaro-Slavonian kingdom he founded.

The dominions of Samuel soon became as extensive as the European portion of the dominions of Basil. The possessions of the two monarchs ran into one another in a very irregular form, and both were inhabited by a variety of races, in different states of civilization, bound together by few sympathies, and no common attachment to national institutions. Samuel was master of almost the whole of ancient Bulgaria, the emperor retaining possession of little more than the fortress of Dorystolon, the forts at the mouth of the Danube, and the passes of Mount Haemus. But the strength of the Bulgarian king lay in his possessions in the upper part of Macedonia, in Epiras, and the southern part of Illyria, in the chain of Pindus, and in mountains that overlook the northern and western slopes of the great plains of Thessalonica and Thessaly. In all these provinces the greater part of the rural population consisted of Slavonians, who were hostile to the Byzantine government and to the Greek race; and though an Albanian and Vlachian population was scattered over some parts of the territory, they readily united with Samuel in throwing off the Byzantine yoke, and only opposed his government when he attempted to augment his monarchical power at the expense of their habits of local independence. From the nature of his dominions, his only hope of consolidating a regular system of civil government was by holding out allurements to the local chieftains to submit voluntarily to his authority. It was only by continual plundering expeditions into the Byzantine territory, and especially into Greece, that this object could be attained. He was, therefore, indefatigable in forming a large military force, and employing it constantly in ravaging the plain of Thessaly, and attacking the Greek cities.

In the year 990, Basil visited Thessalonica, to take measures for arresting the progress of Samuel, and left Gregory the Taronite with a strong garrison to resist the Bulgarians, until he himself should be able to turn the whole force of the empire against them. For several years Gregory checked the incursions of Samuel, but at last he was slain in a skirmish, and his son Ashot was taken prisoner. This success secured Samuel from all danger on the side of the garrison of Thessalonica, and he resolved to avail himself of the opportunity to complete the conquest of Greece, or at least to plunder the inhabitants, should he meet with opposition. He marched rapidly through Thessaly, Boeotia, and Attica, into the Peloponnesus; but the towns everywhere shut their gates, and prepared for a long defence, so that he could effect nothing beyond plundering and laying waste the open country. In the meantime, the emperor, hearing of the death of Gregory and the invasion of Greece, sent Nicephorus Ouranos with considerable reinforcements to take the command of the garrison of Thessalonica, and march with all the force he should be able to collect in pursuit of Samuel. Ouranos entered Thessaly, and, leaving the heavy baggage of his army at Larissa, pushed rapidly southward to the banks of the Sperchius, where he found Samuel encamped on the other side, hastening home with the plunder of Greece. Heavy rains on Mounts Oeta and Korax had rendered the Sperchius which at the end of summer is only a brook an impassable torrent at the time Samuel had reached its banks, and Ouranos encamped for the night in the vicinity of the Bulgarian army, without his arrival causing any alarm. But the people of the country had observed that the river was beginning to fall, and as they were anxious that both armies should quit their territory as fast as possible, they were eager to bring on a battle. In the night they showed Ouranos a ford, by which he passed the river and surprised the Bulgarians in their camp. Samuel and his son Gabriel escaped with the greatest difficulty to the counter-forts of Oeta, from whence they gained Tymphrestas and the range of Pindus. The Bulgarian army was completely annihilated, and all the plunder and slaves made during the expedition fell into the hands of Ouranos, A.D. 996.

This great defeat paralyzed the military operations of Samuel for some time, and it was followed by a domestic misfortune which also weakened his resources. He had been induced to allow his daughter to marry Ashot the Taronite, whom he had taken prisoner at Thessalonica, and in order to attach that brave and able young officer to his service, he had intrusted him with the government of Dyrrachium. But Ashot was dissatisfied with his position, and succeeded in persuading the Bulgarian princess to fly with him to Constantinople. Before quitting Dyrrachium, however, he formed a plot with the principal men of the place, by which that

valuable fortress was subsequently delivered up to the emperor. This was a serious political, as well as a grievous domestic wound to Samuel; for the loss of Dyrrachium interrupted the commercial relations of his subjects with Italy, and deprived them of the support they might have derived from the enemies of the Byzantine empire beyond the Adriatic.

Basil had at length arranged the external relations of the empire in such a way that he was able to assemble a large army for the military operations against the kingdom of Achrida, which he determined to conduct in person. The Sclavonians now formed the most numerous part of the population of the country between the Danube, the Aegean, and the Adriatic, and they were in possession of the line of mountains that runs from Dyrrachium, in a variety of chains, to the vicinity of Constantinople. Basil saw many signs that the whole Sclavonic race in these countries was united in opposition to the Byzantine government, so that the existence of his empire demanded the conquest of the Bulgaro-Sclavonian kingdom which Samuel had founded. To this arduous task he devoted himself with his usual energy. In the year 1000, his generals were ordered to enter Bulgaria by the eastern passes of Mount Haemus; and in this campaign they took the cities of greater and lesser Presthlava and Pliscova, the ancient capitals of Bulgaria. In the following year, the emperor took upon himself the direction of the army destined to act against Samuel. Fixing his headquarters at Thessalonica, he recovered possession of the fortresses of Vodena, Berrhoea, and Servia. By these conquests he became master of the passes leading out of the plain of Thessalonica into the plains of Pelagonia, and over the Cambunian mountains into Thessaly, thus opening the way for an attack on the flank and rear of the forces of the kingdom of Achrida. Vodena or Edessa, the ancient capital of the Macedonian princes, had become, like all the cities of this mountainous district, Slavonian. Its situation on a rock overhanging the river Lydias, the sublimity of the scenery around, the abundance of water, the command of the fertile valleys below, the salubrity of the spot, and the strength of the position closing up the direct road between Thessalonica and Achrida all rendered the possession of Vodena an important step to the further operations of the Byzantine arms.

In the following campaign (1002), the emperor changed the field of operations, and, marching from Philippopolis through the western passes of Mount Haemus, occupied the whole line of road as far as the Danube, and cut Samuel off from all communication with the plains of Bulgaria. He then formed the siege of Vidin, which he kept closely invested during the spring and summer, until at last he took that important fortress. Samuel formed a bold enterprise, which he hoped would compel Basil to raise the siege of Vidin, or, at all events, enable him to inflict a deep wound on the empire. Assembling an army at Skoupies, on the upper course of the Vardar, he marched into the valley of the Stebrus, and by the celerity of his movements surprised the inhabitants of Adrianople at a great fair which they held annually on the 15th of August, when the Greek Church commemorates the death of the Virgin Mary. By this long march into the heart of the empire, Samuel rendered himself master of great booty. His success rendered it impossible for him to return as rapidly as he had advanced, but he succeeded in passing the garrison of Philoppopolis and crossing the Strymon and the Vardar in safety, when Basil suddenly overtook him at the head of the Byzantine army. Samuel was encamped under the walls of Skoupies; Basil crossed the river and stormed the Bulgarian camp, rendering himself master of the military chest and stores, and recovering the plunder of Adrianople. He had thus the satisfaction of avenging the defeat he had suffered from Samuel, one and twenty years before, in the passes of Mount Haemus. The city of Skoupies surrendered after the victory and its commander Romanus, the younger brother of Boris, the last king of Bulgaria of the ancient line, whose misfortune prevented his becoming a rival to Samuel, was honourably treated by the emperor. Basil then laid siege to Pernikon, a fortress of great strength, from which he was repulsed by the valour of the Bulgarian governor Krakas. He then withdrew to Philippopolis.

The conquest of Vidin having enabled Basil to deprive Bulgaria of relief from Samuel and the Slavonians of Macedonia, the Byzantine generals easily completed the subjection of the whole of the rich country between Mount Haemus and the Danube. The king of Achrida finding



himself unable to encounter the troops of Basil in the field, and seeing his territory constantly circumscribed by the capture of his fortresses, determined to fortify all the passes in the mountains that lead into Upper Macedonia. By stationing strong bodies of troops, and forming magazines behind these entrenchments, he hoped to present to his assailants the difficulties of a siege in situations where all their supplies would require to be drawn from a great distance, and exposed to be captured or destroyed on the way by the Bulgarian light troops and the Slavonian inhabitants of the mountains. For several years a bloody and indecisive war was carried on, which gradually weakened the resources of the kingdom of Achrida, without affecting the power of the Byzantine Empire.

In the year 1014, Basil considered everything ready for a final effort to complete the subjection of the Slavonian population of the mountainous districts round the upper valley of the Strymon. On reaching the pass of Demirhissar, or the Kleisura, then called Kimbalongo, or Kleidion, he found it strongly fortified. Samuel had placed himself at the head of the Bulgarian army prepared to oppose his progress. The emperor found the pass too strong to be forced; sitting down, therefore, before it, he sent Nicephorus Xiphias, the governor of Philippopolis, with a strong detachment, to make the circuit of a high mountain called Valathista, which lay to the south, that he might gain the rear of the Bulgarian position. This manoeuvre was completely successful. On the 2<sup>g</sup>th of July, Nicephorus attacked the enemy's rear, while Basil assailed their front, and the Bulgarians, in spite of all the exertions of Samuel, gave way on every side. It was only in consequence of the gallant resistance of his son Gabriel that the king of Achrida was saved from being taken prisoner, and enabled to gain Prilapos in safety. The emperor is said to have taken fifteen thousand prisoners, and, that he might revenge the sufferings of his subjects from the ravages of the Bulgarians and Slavonians, he gratified his own cruelty by an act of vengeance, which has most justly entailed infamy on his name. His frightful inhumanity has forced history to turn with disgust from his conduct, and almost buried the records of his military achievements in oblivion. On this occasion he ordered the eyes of all his prisoners to be put out, leaving a single eye to the leader of every hundred, and in this condition he sent the wretched captives forth to seek their king or perish on the way. When they approached Achrida, a rumour that the prisoners had been released induced Samuel to go out to meet them. On learning the full extent of the calamity, he fell senseless to the ground, overpowered with rage and grief, and died two days after. He is said to have murdered his own brother to secure possession of his throne, so that his heart was broken by the first touch of humanity it ever felt.

After his victory, Basil occupied the fort of Matzoukion, and advanced on Strumpitza, where he ordered Theophylaktos Botaniates, the governor of Thessalonica, who had defeated a large body of Bulgarians, to join him by marching northward, and clearing away the entrenchments constructed by Samuel on the road leading from Thessaionlca directly to Strumpitza. In this operation Theophylaktos was surrounded by the Bulgarians and slain, with the greater part of his troops, in the defiles. This check compelled the emperor to retire by the Zagorian mountains to Mosynopolis, having succeeded in gaining possession of the strong fortress of Melenik by negotiation. At Mosynopolis, on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1014, he heard of the death of Samuel, and immediately determined to take advantage of an event likely to prove so favourable to the Byzantine arms. Marching with a strong body of troops through Thessalonica and Vodena, he advanced into Pelagonia, carefully protecting that fertile district from ravage, and destroying nothing but a palace of the Bulgarian kings at Boutelion. From thence he sent a division of the army to occupy Prilapos and Stobi, and, crossing the river Tzerna (Erigon) with the main body, he returned by Vodena to Thessalonica, which he reached on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 1015.

The cruelty of Basil awakened an energetic resistance on the part of the Slavonians and Bulgarians, and Gabriel Radomir, the brave son of Samuel, was enabled to offer unexpected obstacles to the progress of the Byzantine armies. (Cruelty similar to that of Basil was perpetrated on a smaller scale by Richard Coeur-de-Lion, though of course it is not necessary to place strict reliance on the numbers reported by the Byzantine historians. Richard, to revenge

the loss of a body of men, ordered three hundred French knights to be thrown into the Seine, and put out the eyes of fifteen, who were sent home blind, led by one whose right eye had been spared. Philip Augustus, nothing loath, revenged himself by treating fifteen English knights in the same way. Putting out men's eyes was, for several centuries, a common practice all over Europe, and not regarded with much horror. As late as the reign of Henry IV, A.D. 1403, an Act of Parliament was passed, making it felony for Englishmen to cut out one another's tongues, or put out their neighbour's eyes). Vodena revolted, and expelled the imperial garrison, so that Basil was compelled to open the campaign of 1015 with the siege of that place, which he reduced. The inhabitants were transported to Beleros, to make way for Greek colonists; and two forts, Kardia and St. Elias, were built to command the pass to the westward. After receiving an embassy from Gabriel, with proposals which he did not consider deserving of attention, Basil joined a division of his army engaged in besieging Moglena under the immediate command of Nicephorus Xiphias and Constantine Diogenes, who had succeeded Theophylaktos as governor of Thessalonica. By turning the course of the river, the besiegers were enabled to run a mine under the wall, which they supported on wooden props. When the mine was completed, it was filled with combustibles, which reduced the props to ashes, and as soon as the wall fell and opened a breach, Moglena was taken by assault. The whole of the Slavonian population capable of bearing arms was by the emperor's order transported to Vasparoukan in Armenia. The fort of Notia in the vicinity was also taken and destroyed.

Gabriel, the king of Achrida, though brave, alienated the favour of his subjects by his imprudence, and his cousin, John Ladislas, whose life he had saved in youth, was base enough to become his murderer, in order to gain possession of the throne. Ladislas, in order to gain time, both for strengthening himself on the throne and resisting the Byzantine invasion, sent ambassadors to Basil with favourable offers of peace; but the emperor, satisfied that the struggle between the Slavonians and Greeks could only be terminated by the conquest of one, rejected all terms but absolute submission, and pushed on his operations with his usual vigour, laying waste the country about Ostrovos and Soskos, and marching unopposed through the fertile plains of Pelagonia. The defeat of a portion of the Byzantine army by Ibatzes, one of the Bulgarian generals, compelled the emperor to march against him in person; and when Ibatzes retreated into the mountains, Basil returned to Thessalonica, and shortly after established himself at Mosynopolis. The conquest of eastern Macedonia was not yet completed : one division of the Byzantine troops was placed under the command of David the Arianite, which besieged and took the fortress of Thermitza on Mount Strumpitza: another, under Nicephorus Xiphias, crossing Mount Haemus from Philippopolis, took Boion, near Sardica.

The Emperor Basil returned to Constantinople in the month of January 1016, in order to send an expedition to Khazaria, the operations of which had been concerted with Vladimir of Russia, his brother-in-law. He also availed himself of the opportunity to arrange some difficulties relating to the cession of Vasparoukan. When that part of Armenia was annexed to the empire, and the conquest of Khazaria terminated, he again joined the army at Sardica and laid siege to Pernikon, which repulsed his attacks, as it had done fourteen years before. He lost eighty-eight days before the place, but was at last compelled to retire to Mosynopolis.

In the spring of 1017, Basil again turned his arms against Pelagonia. Kasloria, a town situated on a rocky peninsula in a small lake, resisted his attacks, but the booty collected in the open country was considerable; and this he divided into three parts one he bestowed on the Russian auxiliaries who served in his army, another he divided among the native Byzantine legions, and the third he reserved for the imperial treasury. The operations of Basil in the west were for a time arrested by news he received from the governor of Dorystolon, which threatened to render his presence necessary in Bulgaria. Ladislas was concerting measures with the Patzinaks to induce them to invade the empire; but after a slight delay, Basil was informed the alliance had failed, and he resumed his activity. After laying waste all the country round Ostrovos and Moliskos that was peopled by Slavonians, and repairing the fortifications of Berrhosa which had fallen to decay, he captured Setaina, where Samuel had formed great

magazines of wheat. These magazines were kept well filled by Ladislas, so that Basil became master of so great a store that he divided it among his troops. At last the King of Achrída approached the emperor at the head of a considerable army, and a part of the imperial troops were drawn into an ambuscade. The emperor happened to be himself with the advanced division of the army. He instantly mounted his horse and led the troops about him to the scene of action, sending orders for all the other divisions to hasten forward to support him. His sudden appearance at the head of a strong body of the heavy-armed lancers of the Byzantine army, the fury of his charge, the terror his very name inspired, and the cry, "The emperor is upon us!" soon spread confusion through the Bulgarian ranks, and changed the fortune of the day. After this victory, Basil, finding the season too far advanced to follow up his success, returned to Constantinople, where he arrived in the month of January 1018.

Ladislas, whose affairs were becoming desperate, made an attempt to restore his credit by laying siege to Dyrrachium, which he hoped to take before Basil could relieve it. Its possession would have enabled him to open communications with the enemies of Basil in Italy, and even with the Saracens of Sicily and Africa, but he was slain soon after the commencement of the siege. He reigned two years and five months. As soon as the emperor heard of his death, he visited Adrianople to make preparations for a campaign, which he hoped would end in the complete subjugation of the Bulgarian and Slavonian population of the kingdom of Achrída. The Bulgarian leaders gave up all hope of resistance. Krakras, the brave chief of Pernikon, who had twice foiled the emperor, surrendered that impregnable fortress and thirty-five castles in the surrounding district Dragomoutzes delivered up the fortress of Strumpitza, and both he and Krakras were rewarded with the patrician chair. Basil marched by Mosynopolis and Serres to Strumpitza, where he received deputations from most of the cities in Pelagonia, laying their keys at his feet. Even David, the Patriarch of Bulgaria, arrived, bringing letters from the widow of Ladislas, offering to surrender the capital. The emperor continued to advance by Skopia, Stypeia, and Prosakon, and on reaching Achrída he was received rather as the lawful sovereign than as a foreign conqueror. He immediately took possession of all the treasures Samuel had amassed; the gold alone amounted to a hundred *centners*, and with this he paid all the arrears due to his troops, and rewarded them with a donative for their long and gallant service in this arduous war. Almost the whole of the royal family of Achrída submitted, and received the most generous treatment. Three sons of Ladislas, who escaped to Mount Truoros, and attempted to prolong the contest, were soon captured. The noble Bulgarians hastened to make their submission, and many were honoured with high rank at the imperial court. Nothing, indeed, proves more decidedly the absence of all Greek nationality in the Byzantine administration at this period, than the facility with which all foreigners obtained favour at the court of Constantinople; nor can anything be more conclusive of the fact that the centralization of power in the person of the emperor, as completed by the Basilian dynasty, had now destroyed the administrative centralisation of the old Roman imperial system, for we have proofs that a considerable Greek population still occupied the cities of Thrace and Macedonia, though Greek feelings had little influence on the government.

The arrangement of the civil and financial administration of the conquered territory, which had for so many years been separated from the Byzantine Empire, occupied the emperor's attention during the remainder of the year. He also ordered two fortresses to be constructed to command the mountain passes leading to Achrída, one in the lake of Prespa, and the other on the road leading to Vodena and Thessalonica. He then visited Diavolis, in order to inspect the passage over the Macedonian mountains that afforded the easiest communication with Northern Epirus. Nicephorus Xiphias was sent at the same time to destroy all the mountain forts still in the possession of Slavonian chieftains about Servia and Soskos. The taxation of the Slavonian cultivators of the soil was arranged on the same footing on which it had been placed by Samuel. Each pair of oxen for the plough paid annually a measure of wheat, and one of millet, barley, or maize, and each strema of vineyard paid a jar or barrel of wine to the fisc.

Basil now resolved to re-establish the Byzantine influence on the coast of Dalmatia. A division of the army was sent northward to complete the subjection of the mountainous districts of the theme of Dyrrachium as far as the Dalmatian and Servian frontiers; and an imperial fleet entered the Adriatic to act in co-operation with the authorities on shore. The princes of Servia agreed to acknowledge the supremacy of the emperor, and Constantine Diogenes, the imperial general on the Danube, gained possession of the city of Sirmium by an act of the basest treachery.

After passing the winter in his new conquests, Basil made a progress through Greece. At Zeitounion he visited the field of battle where the power of Samuel had been first broken by the victory of Nicephorus Ouranos, and found the ground still strewn with the bones of the slain. The wall that defended the pass of Thermopylae retained its antique name, Skelos; and its masonry, which dated from Hellenic days, excited the emperor's admiration. At last Basil arrived within the walls of Athens, and he was the only emperor who for several ages honoured that city with a visit. Many magnificent structures in the town, and the whole of the temples in the Acropolis, had then hardly suffered any rude touches from the hand of time. If the external painting and gilding which had once adorned the Parthenon of Pericles had faded from their original splendour, the Church of the Virgin, into which it was transformed, had gained a new interest from the mural paintings of saints, martyrs, emperors, and empresses that covered the interior of the cella. The mind of Basil, though insensible to Hellenic literature, was deeply sensible of religious impressions, and the glorious combination of the variety of beauty in art and nature that he saw in the Acropolis touched his stern soul. He testified his feelings by splendid gifts to the city, and rich dedications at the shrine of the Virgin in the Parthenon.

From Greece the emperor returned to Constantinople, where he indulged himself in the pomp of a triumph, making his entry into his capital by the Golden Gate, and listening with satisfaction to the cries of the populace, who applauded his cruelty by saluting him with the title of "The Slayer of the Bulgarians".

I have entered into the history of the destruction of the Bulgarian monarchy of Achrida in some detail, because the struggle was national as well as political; and the persevering resistance offered by the Slavonian population of Macedonia to a warlike sovereign like Basil, proves the density and flourishing condition of that people, and the complete annihilation of all Hellenic influence in extensive provinces, where for ages the civilisation and the language of Greece had been predominant. Against this national energy on the part of the united Bulgarians and Slavonians, the government of Constantinople had nothing to oppose but a well-disciplined army and a wellorganised administration. The Byzantine Empire had never less of a national character than at the present period, when its military glory had reached the highest pitch. Its Roman traditions were a mere name, and it had not yet assumed the Medieval Greek characteristics it adopted at a later period when it was ruled by the family of Comnenos. No national population followed in the rear of Basil's victories, to colonize the lands he systematically depopulated by his ravages and cruelty; and hence it appears that extensive districts, instead of being repopled by Greek settlers, remained in a deserted condition until a nomadic Vallachian population intruded themselves. These new colonists soon multiplied so rapidly that about a century later they were found occupying the mountains round the great plain of Thessaly. The changes which have taken place in the numbers and places of habitation of the different races of mankind, are really as important a branch of historical inquiry as the geographical limits of political governments; and the social laws that regulate the increase and decrease of the various families of the human race, at the same period, and under the same government, are as deserving of study as the actions of princes and the legislation of parliaments, for they exert no inconsiderable influence on the rise and fall of states.

After the conclusion of the Bulgarian war, the attention of Basil was directed to the affairs of Armenia. Great political changes were beginning to take place in Asia, from the decline of the empire of the caliphs of Bagdad; but these revolutions lie beyond the sphere of

Byzantine politics at this time, though they began already to exert an influence on the sovereigns of Armenia. Before Basil had taken the command of his armies in the Bulgarian war, he had made a campaign in Armenia (A.D. 991), and gained possession of a considerable portion of Iberia or Georgia. The whole kingdom had been left to him by the will of David, its last sovereign; but George, the brother of the deceased monarch, advancing his claim to the succession. Basil, in order to avoid a war, agreed to leave George in possession of the northern part. It is not necessary to enter into any details concerning the relations of the empire with the different dynasties that then reigned in each of the principalities into which Armenia was divided. Basil, in order to keep some check on the population of Iberia and Armenia, transported colonies of Bulgarians and Slavonians into the East, while at the same time he removed numbers of Armenians into Bulgaria.

In the year 995, Basil visited the East, in order to re-establish the Byzantine influence in Syria, where it had fallen into discredit in consequence of the defeat of the imperial army on the banks of the Orontes, in the preceding year. The emperor soon succeeded in re-establishing his authority. He took Aleppo, Hems, and Sheizar, and laid siege to Tripolis; but that city resisted his attacks, as it had done those of John Zimiskes; and after his return to Constantinople, the lieutenants of the Fatimite caliphs of Egypt recovered possession of Aleppo.

In the year 1021, the emperor was compelled to take the field in person, to make head against a powerful combination of enemies on the Armenian frontier. Senekarim, the prince of Vasparoukan, had been so alarmed by the threatening aspect of the Mohammedan population on his frontiers that he had ceded his dominions to Basil, and received in exchange the city of Sebaste and the adjacent country as far as the Euphrates, where he established himself with many Armenian families who quitted their native seats. Basil undertook to defend Vasparoukan against the Turkish tribes that began to attack it, and Senekarim engaged to govern Sebaste as a Byzantine viceroy. After this cession had been made, George, the sovereign of the northern part of Iberia and Abasgia, in conjunction with Joannes Sembat, the King of Ani, attacked the Byzantine territory, and their operations rendered the presence of the emperor necessary. They had formed secret relations with Nicephorus Xiphias, who, while governor of Philippopolis, had distinguished himself in the Bulgarian war, and with Nicephorus, the son of Bardas Phokas; and these two generals broke out into open rebellion in Cappadocia, and endeavoured to incite all the Armenians to take up arms. Basil was obliged to suppress this rebellion before he engaged a foreign enemy, and he availed himself of the spirit of treachery inherent among men in power in most absolute governments to effect his purpose. He sent letters secretly to each of the rebel chiefs, offering pardon to him who would assassinate his colleague. Phokas, who was bold and daring like his father, immediately communicated the emperor's letter to Xiphias, who, concealing that he had received one of similar import, availed himself of his friend's confidence to assassinate him at a private interview. The rebel army then melted away, and Basil was able to turn all his forces against the sovereign of Iberia. In the first battle the victory remained doubtful, but in a second the Iberian and Abasgian troops were completely defeated (11th September 1022). Liparit, the general of the Abasgians, was slain, and the kings of Iberia and Armenia were obliged to sue for peace. A treaty was concluded on the banks of the lake Balagatsis, by which Joannes the King of Armenia, who began to be alarmed at the progress of the Turks, ceded his capital, Ani, to Basil after his death, on condition of retaining the government in his own hands as long as he lived. During this campaign, Basil displayed all his usual foresight and energy: he took measures for putting the fortresses on the eastern frontier of the empire in a state to resist the Turks, who threatened to invade the west of Asia; and some of the military engines he ordered to be constructed were of such power and solidity, that when the Seljouk Turks invaded the Byzantine territory in the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos, they found them still well suited for service.

The next object of Basil's ambition was to expel the Saracens from Sicily; and he was engaged in making great preparations for reconquering that island, when he was seized with an illness, which quickly proved fatal. He expired in December 1025, at the age of sixty-eight, after

having governed the empire with absolute power for fifty years. He extended the limits of the Byzantine territory on every side by his conquests, and at the end of his reign the Byzantine Empire attained its greatest extent and highest power.

The body of Basil was interred in the Church of the Evangelists, in the Hebdomon. Two centuries and a half had nearly passed away. The Byzantine empire had been destroyed by the Crusaders, the Asiatic Greeks were endeavoring to expel the Franks from their conquest, and Michael Paleologos their emperor was besieging Constantinople, when some Greek officers, wandering through the ruins of the church and monastery of the Evangelists, admired the remains of its ancient magnificence, and lamented to see that so splendid a monument of Byzantine piety had been converted into a stable under the ruinous administration of the Frank Caesars. In a corner of the building, a remarkable tomb that had been recently broken open arrested their attention. A well-embalmed body of an old man lay in the sarcophagus, and in his hand some idle herdsman had placed a shepherd's pipe. An inscription on the wall showed that the sarcophagus contained the mortal remains of Basil the Slayer of the Bulgarians. The Emperor Michael VIII visited the spot, and when he found it necessary to retire from before Constantinople for a time, he ordered the body to be removed to Selymbria, and interred in the monastery of our Saviour, A.D. 1260.

## CHAPTER III

## PERIOD OF CONSERVATISM ON THE EVE OF DECLINE

AD 1025-1057

## Sect. I

## CONSTANTINE VIII

A.D.1025-1028

THE conquest of the Slavonians in the Thracian, Macedonian, and Illyrian mountains gave a degree of security to the Eastern Empire which it had not enjoyed since the time of Justinian I. If at this period the government had known how to adopt measures for developing the resources of the country, or the Greek people had possessed the energy and moral convictions necessary to force the court to respect their rights as men and citizens, the whole of the provinces lying to the south of Mount Haemus might have become thickly peopled by the natural increase of the Greek race. Land of the best quality was everywhere ready to receive a better cultivation from new colonists; but improvement was checked, on the part of the government, by exactions similar to those which arrest the progress of society in all arbitrary governments; and the Greeks were now destitute of the sentiment of national patriotism; they were as selfish as their government was rapacious. Exorbitant taxes, severe fiscal restrictions, and obstructive social trammels, bore heavily on the agricultural classes, and left them, as their share of the fruits of their labor, little more than was sufficient for perpetuating their race, and supplying a due succession of peasants to labor the lands on which their predecessors toiled. Great part of the extensive provinces, depopulated by the destructive system of hostilities pursued by Basil and Samuel, remained long uncultivated, and were gradually invaded by nomadic tribes, who were allowed to pasture their flocks and herds over the richest plains on paying tribute to the Byzantine authorities.

The position of the empire on the death of Basil required a judicious and economical sovereign to organise the civil administration on such a scale, as not to absorb too large a portion of the funds required for the maintenance of the large army with which it was necessary to guard the extensive frontiers, and yet on a footing that would insure an equitable and prompt administration of justice to the subjugated Slavonians. Unfortunately, Constantine VIII, though he was averse to war and military parade, had no taste for order, and no care for justice. In his personal appearance he bore a strong resemblance to his brother, but any similarity of disposition that ever showed itself was only in defects. His tall robust figure proclaimed the same strength of body and health of constitution, but he was destitute of the activity, fortitude, and courage of Basil. After he assumed the government, he continued to live as he had done while his brother kept him secluded from public business. In the interior of the palace he was surrounded by musicians, singers, dancing girls, and parasites, and he rarely quitted it except to indulge in the chase, or to celebrate public spectacles in the hippodrome for his own amusement and that of the idle populace of the capital. He left all public business to be transacted by his domestic servants, and he shunned the military pageants in which the emperors usually took an active part. Indeed, he appeared to dread the array of troops as more likely to suggest the idea of internal revolutions than foreign wars. His fears rendered him a suspicious and cruel tyrant; and his distrust of all men of talent and influence induced him to intrust the principal offices of the

state to the eunuchs of his household: men bred up amidst scenes of dissipation, gambling, and hunting, and utterly destitute of all experience in public business, were suddenly charged with the most important duties in the empire.

The dignities of chamberlain, keeper of the wardrobe, and commander of the watch, were intrusted to three eunuchs of the domestic establishment of Constantine, and each received the title of President of the Senate. The command of the foreign mercenaries was conferred on a fourth. The Byzantine emperors, like other despots, preferred intrusting strangers with the guardianship of their persons. A fifth, named Spondyles, was appointed duke of Antioch, and intrusted with the command of the troops charged to resist the ambitious projects of the Fatimite caliphs in Syria. The object of the nomination was to furnish the army with a leader incapable of pretending to the throne, not to supply it with an able general. The sixth of this domestic band, named Niketas, became duke of Iberia. The Emperor Basil II must have beaten down the pride of the aristocracy during the latter part of his reign and effected a great change in the position they had held in the time of Basilios the chamberlain and the rebellions of Skleros and Phokas, or the direction of the government would not have been allowed to remain long in the hands of six eunuchs. The spirit of conservatism already pervaded society to such a degree as to form a firm support of despotism. The patience with which Constantine's measures were endured gives us some insight into the social as well as the administrative changes effected by the long reign of his brother. We see that his policy had proved quite as successful in breaking the power of the great families, and in diminishing the influence of the generals of themes, as in destroying the Bulgarian kingdom and subjugating the Sclavonian people. All the power the emperor had taken from others was accumulated in his own person; nothing was done to confer any rights on the people, nor to secure them against injustice on the part of the imperial agents. The emperor's power was made absolute in practice as in theory, and thus the worthless creatures of Constantine VIII were enabled to commit acts of greater oppression than the aristocratic officials whose power Basil had curtailed. Conservatism was now a principle of Byzantine policy, and it is usually a factitious phrase to delude the people from a devotion to order and justice.

Basil II is accused by the Byzantine historians of fiscal severity. In this accusation there is reason to suspect that we learn rather the murmurs of the nobles and populace of Constantinople than the deliberate expression of the public opinion of the whole empire. Basil endeavoured to levy from the rich their due proportion of the public burdens, and to put a stop to the absorption of the estates of the poor by the aristocracy, while at the same time he refrained from lavishing immense sums on the shows in the hippodrome. But whatever may have been the extent of his avarice, we see signs of true liberality in his exertions to lighten the burdens of the industrious classes, and real humanity in his endeavors to spare the poor. It has been already noticed that the taxes were two years in arrear when he died. The proceedings of Constantine form a contrast to those of his brother. On one hand, he exacted the arrears of the public taxes with the greatest severity, while, on the other, he lavished the money thus extorted from the provinces in wasteful expenditure in the capital. During his reign of three years he collected and expended the revenue of five. His palace, like that of a Saracen caliph, was filled with foreign slaves and eunuchs, whose strange appearance and barbarous language astonished the natural-born subjects of the empire.

Though no dangerous insurrection broke out, the general discontent could not be mistaken, and it excited the fears of Constantine and his creatures. Many eminent men, representatives of families renowned in the annals of the empire, were seized, and condemned to lose their sight, because the services of their ancestors in past generations appeared to give them too much influence on public opinion. It is difficult to determine, in each case, whether this was a measure of precaution, or a punishment for political imprudence or actual conspiracy. The names of some of the sufferers deserve a record, because they indicate the position of several distinguished families at the time. Nicephorus Comnenos, the governor of Media or Aspourakan, had bravely defended his province against the incursions of the Saracens; but his



troops having given him some signs of indiscipline and timidity, he had invited them to take an oath that they would never desert him on the field of battle. This excited the jealousy of the emperor, who recalled Comnenos to Constantinople, where he was condemned to lose his sight for administering unlawful oaths to the army. Constantine, the son of Michael Burtzes, who took Antioch, was also deprived of sight; but in his case it was notorious that the punishment was an act of revenge, as this patrician had informed Basil of some unseemly practices of his brother, in order that they might be restrained. The grandsons of the rivals, Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas, were united in misfortune. These two patricians lost their sight on some vague accusations brought against them by the eunuchs of the imperial palace. Basilios Skleros had quarrelled with Prusian, the son of Ladislas, the last king of Achrída. Prusian, who held the rank of magister, and was governor of the theme Boukellarion, fought a duel with Skleros; for the pride of the Byzantine military aristocracy displayed itself with as much courage, if not with as much gallantry, as was ever shown by the chivalry of western Europe. The two duellists were exiled to different islands of the Princes' group; but Basilios was soon deprived of his sight, on pretext that he was plotting to escape. Romanos Kurkuas, a member of a distinguished Armenian family, which had supplied the empire with many able generals, and of which the Emperor John Zimiskes was a scion, also lost his sight, as well as several individuals who bear names not unknown in Byzantine history, and others whose barbarous appellations prove that the Bulgarian and Slavonian aristocracy divided with the Greeks and Armenians a competent share of political influence at the court of Constantinople.

The extent of the disorder caused in the provinces by the creatures sent to govern them by Constantine and his eunuchs, is attested by the notice we possess of some occurrences at Naupactos. The government of that province was intrusted to an officer called, from his violence, Mad George, who, by his tyrannical conduct, drove the people to despair; and in an insurrection which ensued, Mad George was slain, and his palace plundered by the populace. This insurrection was soon quelled; but Constantine took severe vengeance on the inhabitants of Naupactos. Even the archbishop was deprived of his sight, for attempting to protect the people against the exactions of their tyrant.

Foreign nations soon heard how Constantine conducted the government, and hastened to profit by the disorderly state of public affairs. In 1027, the Patzinaks made an irruption into Bulgaria, where they laid waste everything on their line of march. A Saracen fleet cruised among the Cyclades, visiting the islands one after another, and collecting booty from all. But the spirit infused by Basil into the army and navy was not extinct, though their direction had fallen into unworthy hands. Diogenes, the governor of Sirmium, being created duke of Bulgaria, defeated the Patzinaks, and drove them back beyond the Danube. The governors of Samos and Chios assembled a naval force, with which they attacked the Saracen fleet, and captured twelve of the enemy's ships with all the crews.

Constantine VIII was suddenly attacked by a disease which was evidently mortal. When he was near his end, he fixed his eyes on Constantine Dalassenos as his successor. The choice was judicious; and a eunuch of the palace was despatched to summon Dalassenos from his residence in the Armeniac theme, when Simeon, the commander of the watch, expecting to find a weaker and more docile sovereign in Romanos Arghyros, who was connected with the imperial family, prevailed on the emperor to recall his first order, and transfer the empire to Romanos. The destined sovereign, on reaching the palace, was informed by Constantine that he was selected to mount the throne, but that he must divorce his wife, and marry one of the imperial princesses. Romanos hesitated to become emperor on this condition; but Constantine, to quicken his decision, informed him that he must either ascend the throne or lose his eyesight, and gave him a few hours to reflect on the choice. The wife of Romanos, learning the alternative, immediately ordered her head to be shaved, and entered a monastery; thus generously relieving her husband from the odium of sacrificing his honor to his timidity or ambition. Constantine had destined Theodora, the youngest of his three daughters, to be the wife of Romanos; but she refused to participate in the throne by marrying the husband of another

woman. The emperor was compelled, therefore, to make his second daughter Zoe empress, for the eldest had retired into a monastery. The daughters of Constantine were already of mature age. Their education had been shamefully neglected by their father; and Zoe had taken advantage of the want of all moral restraint in which she lived. She had attained the age of forty-eight when she became a bride; but the posterity of Romanus II and Theophano were all remarkable for health, vigor, and longevity. Her marriage with Romanus III and their coronation was celebrated on the 19th November 1028. On the 21st of the month Constantine VIII expired.

## Sect. II.

### THE REIGNS OF THE HUSBANDS OF ZOE

#### Romanus III. AD 1028-1034

For twenty-nine years the empire was ruled by a succession of princes who owed their position on the throne to the daughters of Constantine VIII. Under such circumstances, it is natural that the affairs of the court of Constantinople attract more than usual attention in a review of Byzantine history. Every class of society in the empire appears during this period to have slumbered in prosperity, consuming its revenues in a firm conviction that no external power could disturb the internal security of the state. In no other portion of the civilized world did the inhabitants enjoy an equal degree of wealth and security for life and property; and the military power and financial resources of every neighboring government appeared far inferior to those of the Byzantine Empire. Conservative lethargy was natural under such circumstances.

Romanus III was sixty years old when accident made him an emperor. He was allied to several of the oldest and most illustrious of the aristocracy, and is a type of the kind of sovereign a respectable Byzantine noble of conservative tendencies made, during a time when the political horizon was peculiarly tranquil in the East. He enjoyed the reputation of possessing both accomplishments and learning; but his vanity somewhat obscured the lustre of his talents. Feeling that his sudden elevation would excite the ambition of many of the nobility, he adopted measures to conciliate the favour of every class of his subjects. The church was propitiated by bestowing on the clergy of St. Sophia's an annual revenue of eighty pounds' weight of gold, secured as a permanent charge on the imperial treasury. To gain the nobility and the higher ecclesiastical dignitaries, he abolished the *Allelengyon*, or mutual responsibility of the rich for the taxes due by the poor in their district. It appears that this law, as established by Basil II, had been executed with such severity that several bishops had been reduced to poverty. He also granted a full pardon to all persons who had been persecuted by the jealousy of Constantine VIII. He purchased popularity among the people by releasing all who were confined in the public prisons for debt; and in order to combine justice with charity, he paid their debts to private individuals when he remitted those to the fisc. He redeemed the captives taken by the Patzinaks in their recent invasion of the empire; and, in short, he endeavored in many ways to render himself so generally popular as to deter any rival from aspiring at the throne. These measures for securing popularity were of themselves well chosen, but their favourable effect was greatly increased by a coincidence beyond the emperor's control. The year of his accession proved one of singular fertility every species of grain was abundant in the capital, and a rich harvest of olives supplied the people of the provinces both with oil and money.

The piety of Romanus displayed itself in the usual superstition of his age. Considering the failure of his Syrian campaign as a punishment for his sins, and not a consequence of his ignorance of military affairs, he sought to propitiate Heaven by a lavish expenditure on ecclesiastical objects. He founded a new monastery of the Virgin called Semneion, on the church of which he laid out money with profusion. He endowed the monastery with such enormous revenues that even Byzantine ecclesiastics, in recording his liberality, blame the incongruity of placing monks in the position of luxurious nobles, and complain of the emperor seeking to acquire merit with God by exactions that ruined his subjects. Romanus also covered the capital of the columns in the churches of St Sophia's and Blachern with gilding, and enriched the buildings with expensive ornaments. He is said likewise to have obtained permission from the Fatimite caliph Daher to rebuild the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, which had been destroyed by Caliph Hakem in the year 1010. Subsequent disputes with the Egyptian government appear to have delayed the commencement of the work until the reign of Michael IV, and it was not completed until that of Constantine IX (Monomachus), in the year 1048.

Whenever early education has failed to implant moral feelings in the hearts of men, laws prove ineffectual to supply the want, whether in the case of individuals or nations. The people of the Byzantine Empire were now beginning to have the same hankering after hereditary succession which has lately been manifested by the continental nations of Europe for representative government; but in both cases there appears to have been a want of those firm convictions required for attaining any desired end. As usually happens in political matters, the fault lay with the higher and educated classes of society, who allowed themselves to quit the line of duty to pursue any lure held out to their prejudices or passions. Hence we find conspiracies and rebellions continuing to occur in rapid succession in the Byzantine Empire, where they were regarded as an unavoidable evil in the lot of man. Conservative tendencies were the most powerless political feeling that ever swayed the counsels of Constantinople. But we must not forget that the Byzantine Empire was a government without a nation.

The Empress Zoe never forgave her sister Theodora that superiority of character which had induced their father to offer her the empire, if she would accept the husband of his choice; and Romanus III disliked her for refusing his hand, and feared her on account of her talents. He set a spy over her conduct by drawing from his retreat John, one of the ministers of Basil II, who had deemed it prudent to retire into a monastery on the accession of Constantine VIII. John was now appointed syncellus, and intrusted with the superintendence of Theodora's household. Prusian, the Bulgarian prince who had fought a duel with Romanus Skleros, the brother-in-law of the Emperor Romanus III, was accused of plotting with Theodora to seize the imperial crown. Whether true or false, the jealousy of Zoe and the aversion of Romanus were sure to obtain for this accusation a favourable reception. The emperor had already restored his brother-in-law to his former rank as magistros; he now revenged him by condemning Prusian to lose his sight, and by banishing his mother, the late queen of Bulgaria, to the monastery of Mantineion in the Boukellarian theme. Subsequently, when the court was alarmed at the prospect of a Bulgarian and Slavonian rebellion under the direction of Constantine Diogenes, Prusian was compelled to embrace the monastic life. It seems strange that the project of transferring the sovereignty of the Byzantine empire to a Bulgarian should be recorded by the Byzantine writers, without the smallest notice that such an event was likely to wound either the Roman pride of the aristocracy of Constantinople, or the national vanity of the Greek race; but we must recollect that the founder of the Basilian dynasty was generally considered to have been a Slavonian groom.

Another conspiracy, which was formed soon after that of Prusian, was connected with the same interests, and counted on the same feelings for success. Constantine Diogenes, the governor of Sirmium and duke of Bulgaria, had married a niece of the Emperor Romanus III, and had been appointed governor of Thessalonica. While there, it was discovered that he was engaged in frequent communications with the leaders of the Bulgarian and Slavonian population

of the empire, and it was deemed necessary to transfer him to the government of the Thrakesian theme before arresting him. He was found guilty of conspiracy against the emperor, and condemned to be incarcerated as a monk in the monastery of Studion. John the syncellus, who seems to have been gained over by Theodora, whom he had been appointed to watch, Eustathios Daphnomeles, the governor of Achrida, two grandchildren of Michael Burtzes, the conqueror of Antioch, and George and Varasvatzes, nephews of the patrician Theudatos, were all condemned for participating in this conspiracy. They were publicly scourged, and then banished. Theodora, who was accused of being privy to their plots, was driven from her palace, and imprisoned in the monastery of Petron. Some time after, the Empress Zoe visited her sister, and compelled her to assume the monastic habit. Constantine Diogenes was also accused by the archbishop of Thessalonica of plotting to escape into Illyria, in order to assume the title of emperor. To avoid the loss of his eyesight, and the disgrace of being scourged through the streets of the capital, he threw himself from a window, and was killed on the spot. He was buried in the place appropriated to those who committed suicide, A.D. 1032.

The negligence of Constantine VIII had weakened the military force of the empire. Spondyles, the eunuch intrusted with the government of Antioch, finding that the Saracen emirs who had been rendered tributary by Nicephorus II and John Zimiskes refused to pay tribute, undertook to re-establish the imperial authority. His rashness and incapacity led to the complete defeat of the Byzantine army on the 31st of October 1029, by which all the imperial possessions of Syria were exposed without defence to the attacks of the emirs of Aleppo and Tripolis, who pushed their incursions up to the walls of Antioch, and rendered themselves masters of the fort of Menik, which had been recently constructed in its immediate vicinity.

Romanus III resolved to redeem the honour of the empire at the head of his armies. His brother-in-law, Constantine Karantenos, was sent forward to supersede Spondyles. When the emperor reached Philomilion in Pisidia, he was met by an embassy from the emir of Aleppo, who offered to recognise the supremacy of the empire, and to pay the same tribute he had paid to Basil II. The wisest councillors of Romanus recommended him to accept these terms, for the season was ill suited for invading Syria, where the heat and want of water rendered great part of the country better adapted for the operations of the light-armed cavalry of the Arabs, than for the military tactics of the Byzantine troops, covered with heavy armour. The emperor was so destitute of military experience, that he believed it would be a matter of little difficulty to rival the exploits of Nicephorus, Zimiskes, and Basil, and he marched forward to take possession of Aleppo. He had arrived at a strong fortress called Azaz, about two days' march from that city, when his outposts were attacked and driven in by the Arabs, who prevented his cavalry from collecting forage, and his troops from approaching the water in the neighbourhood. The position of the Byzantine camp was ill chosen; an attempt to repulse the Arabs led to an unpremeditated engagement, in which a considerable body of troops was defeated, and the fugitives, rushing into the camp, spread disorder far and wide. No measures were adopted for restoring order, and the victorious Arabs advanced up to the intrenchments, and kept the imperial army closely blockaded. The emperor was utterly helpless, and under such a commander there was no choice but to retreat to Antioch. This operation was conducted in the most disgraceful manner. At daylight Romanus abandoned the camp, leaving his own tents and baggage, and the warlike machines, tents, and baggage of the army, a prey to the enemy; and this booty fortunately detained the Arabs so long that a great part of the flying army gained Antioch in safety, August 1030.

Romanus, cured of his passion for military fame, hastened back to Constantinople. The generals he left in command of the army proved as incapable as their sovereign, and Menik, the fort in the vicinity of Antioch, remained in the hands of the Saracens. The emperor, however, at last sent Theoktistos, the commander of the foreign mercenaries, with a considerable reinforcement of native and foreign troops, and this officer having formed an alliance with the emir of Tripolis, who was alarmed at the progress of the Egyptian power in Syria, succeeded in taking the fort of Menik. Alach, the son of the emir of Tripolis, visited the court of Romanus,

and so lax were the political and religious ideas of the Byzantines, in spite of their ecclesiastical bigotry, that he was honoured with the rank of a Roman patrician.

Shortly after the defeat of the Emperor Romanus at Azaz, an incident occurred which deserves notice, principally because it brought into notice an officer who soon took a prominent part in the military affairs of the empire, both in Asia and Europe. George Maniakes was governor of the small province called Telouch. After the flight of the army to Antioch, a body of eight hundred Arabs appeared before the walls of the fortress in which he was residing, announcing the death of the emperor, and the overthrow of the Byzantine power in Syria. They ordered Maniakes to evacuate the place, or they threatened to storm it next day, and put every person within its walls to the sword. Maniakes considered that the nature of their summons indicated either their weakness or their determination to fall on his troops by treachery; he therefore asked to be allowed to remain the night in the fortress, to make preparations for his retreat. The Arab camp was supplied with food and refreshments in abundance, and at midnight Maniakes led out the garrison to attack the enemy, who were found plunged in sleep without a guard. The greater part were slain, and two hundred and eighty camels, laden with the spoil of Romanus's camp, were recaptured. This prize was sent as a present to the emperor, accompanied with the noses and ears of the vanquished.

To reward the valour of Maniakes, he was appointed governor of Lower Media, of which Samosata was the capital. The following year the Saracens invaded Mesopotamia, and plundered the country as far as Melitene; but in 1032, Maniakes contrived to bribe the governor of Edessa, who was subject to the emir of Miarfekin (Martyropolis), to deliver up the town. But as soon as the Byzantine troops got possession of three towers in the wall, they were assailed by the Saracen inhabitants, and Maniakes was soon attacked by Apomeran, the emir of Miarfekin, who hastened to expel him from his position. The Saracens, finding it impossible to regain possession of the towers, and learning that fresh troops were marching to the assistance of Maniakes, abandoned Edessa; but before quitting it they burned most of the houses, and destroyed the great church. Though the Saracens had time to carry off the greater part of the wealth of the city they left behind them what was infinitely more valuable in the eyes of the Christians of that age than the whole wealth of the caliphate. The people of Edessa had long boasted that they possessed a letter written by our Saviour to Abgarus, king of Edessa; this precious relic was now brought to Maniakes, and by him transmitted to Constantinople. It is not known at what period this precious document was fabricated. From the city and territory of Edessa a tribute of 50 lb. of gold was annually remitted to the Byzantine treasury.

The disorganised state of the caliphate of Bagdad, and the power acquired by the Turkish mercenaries, induced several Saracen emirs to solicit the protection of Romanus. The emir of Aleppo, in spite of his victory, became tributary to the empire. Aleim, the emir of Perkrin a fortress of great importance, on account of its position delivered up that place to the emperor; and a body of six thousand Byzantine troops, under a Bulgarian patrician, was stationed to defend this advanced post. Aleim was, however, dissatisfied with the reward he received, and opened communications with the Persians, whom he contrived to introduce into Perkrin. The Byzantine garrison was surprised and put to the sword; but a powerful body of native troops and Russian mercenaries soon regained possession of the place, which was taken by assault, and Aleim was put to death.

The Saracens of Africa and Sicily were still in the habit of sending out large fleets to plunder the coasts of the empire. In the year 1031, these pirates laid waste Illyria and the island of Corfu, but they were defeated by the people of Ragusa and the governor of Nauplia, who destroyed the greater part of their fleet. Next year they returned with a large force, and, if we believe the accounts of the Byzantine writers, their fleet consisted of a thousand vessels, and transported ten thousand troops. Two divisions of this great armament were defeated by Nicephoras Karantenos, the governor of Nauplia, and upwards of a thousand prisoners were sent to Constantinople. In 1033, the imperial fleet, under the command of the protospatharios

Tekneas, made a descent on the coast of Egypt, and after collecting considerable booty, and carrying off many prisoners, the expedition returned to Constantinople. Every government at this time found it much easier to plunder the territories of its rivals than to defend its own, for most sovereigns had adopted the policy of disarming the great body of their subjects, fearing that, if they possessed arms, they would employ their strength in delivering themselves from the fiscal exactions of their princes.

During the reign of Romanus III, several parts of Asia Minor suffered very severely from earthquakes, locusts, famine, and pestilence; and in a stationary condition of society these calamities often destroy an amount of capital which is never replaced, and become, therefore, an immediate cause of a rapid depopulation.

For two years before his death the emperor was afflicted by a disease which gradually wasted his frame, and caused his hair and beard to fall off. Many ascribed the disorder to the use of aphrodisiacs, which he took to an immoderate extent, in the hope of leaving an heir to the empire; but others believed that the disease originated in a slow poison administered either by the Empress Zoe or by John the orphanotrophos, who expected to raise his brother Michael to the throne.

This John was a eunuch and a monk, who had entered the household of Romanus while he was yet in a private station, but who, after he became emperor, received the rank of orphanotrophos, or minister of charitable institutions, an office which proves the existence of a high degree of civilization in the Byzantine administration. John had several brothers, one of whom, named Michael, commenced life as a goldsmith and money-changer, but while still young, received a place in the imperial household. The face of Michael had the beauty of a perfect statue; his figure was full of grace, and his manners were attractive and dignified, but the young man was liable to sudden and violent attacks of epilepsy. Zoe, though upwards of fifty, is said to have fallen in love with her handsome servant, and to have carried on an intrigue with him by the assistance of his brother John. Romanus, though informed of his wife's conduct, paid no attention to the accusations, which the epilepsy of Michael seemed to render improbable. In the meantime, the health of the emperor rapidly declined, and on the 11th of April 1034 he was taken from the bath in a dying state. While life yet remained, he was visited by Zoe and some of the officers of the court, but he was already speechless, and the empress quitted his side to take measures with the orphanotrophos for placing her epileptic paramour on the throne.

The moment that life was extinct in the body of Romanus III, Zoe assembled the officers of state in the palace, and invested Michael IV with the imperial robes. He was immediately proclaimed Emperor of the Romans, and seated himself on the vacant throne beside Zoe. The promptitude with which this singular step of raising a domestic to the throne was conceived and executed prevented its encountering the slightest opposition. The Patriarch Alexios was summoned to the palace, where he learned the death of Romanus, and was, to his great astonishment, ordered to crown Michael the Paphlagonian, and celebrate his marriage with the widowed empress. The Patriarch would willingly have delayed making this open display of contempt for decency, but he saw Michael seated on the throne, and he was aware of the power and ability of his brother the orphanotrophos; so, admitting that reasons of state might overrule the dictates of virtue, he celebrated the marriage to avoid greater scandal. Thus a single night saw the aged Zoe the wife of two emperors, a widow and a bride, and Michael a menial and a sovereign. In order to render the sudden elevation of a domestic of the palace less strange in the distant provinces, John, who became his brother's prime-minister, despatched letters to all the governors, announcing that Michael had been selected by the deceased emperor for his successor, and crowned before his death.

*Michael IV, the Paphlagonian, A.D. 1034-1041*

The new emperor, though he ascended the throne in the most disgraceful manner, possessed some good qualities; and his natural good disposition appears neither to have been corrupted by his education as a money-changer, though calumny accused him of having been a fabricator of false coin; nor by his menial service at a corrupt and vicious court, of which he was a depraved member. After he mounted the throne, he soon lost the gaiety of disposition and tranquillity of mind which had increased the beauty of his figure and the grace of his manner. In spite of his constitutional infirmity, he was not destitute of considerable strength of character, and with his vices he united a strong sense of justice. The conduct of Zoe awakened in his mind feelings of distrust for his own safety, and he had spirit enough to dismiss from her service many of the eunuchs of her father's household, who seemed fit agents for new plots. His conscience was soon troubled by his treachery to his benefactor, and during his whole reign he suffered the pangs of remorse. He sought pardon from heaven by praying at the shrines of different saints, and he wasted the revenues of the empire in building monasteries and chapels, and in making lavish donations to priests and monks. But as he continued to enjoy every advantage he had purchased by his crimes, the historians of his reign justly observe that he seemed to trust in the blindness of God for the forgiveness of his sins, as if divine justice could regard good deeds done at the expense of his subjects as any atonement for his private sins, or as any proof of sincere repentance on the part of the imperial sinner. It must be owned that there is more truth in this observation than is agreeable either to the Papal or the Greek Church. The anxiety produced by the cares of his situation soon increased the emperor's malady to such a degree that he became liable to sudden attacks; and even at public ceremonies, when he was seated on the throne, it was necessary to have the canopy of state hung round with curtains, which the chamberlains could let fall to hide him from the assembly as soon as his countenance indicated the approach of the terrible convulsions to which he was liable. When his malady seized him, his features were distorted into hideous expressions, his eyes rolled in wild agony, and he often struck his head against the wall until he fell exhausted on the floor. Though his malady was known to be of old date, the people persisted in regarding it as a judgment for his conduct to his benefactor Romanus, and appealed to it as a visible interposition of divine power, which abandoned him from time to time to be tormented by demons as a punishment for his treachery.

Under these circumstances, it appears strange that Michael retained the throne with so little difficulty, and met with no dangerous rival. It is true, he possessed an able prime minister in his brother, the orphanotrophos, whose interests were completely identified with his own, and who was a statesman competent to relieve him from all the details of administrative labor. Michael could entertain no distrust of his brother John, who could neither supplant him on the throne nor covet it for his posterity. But though the orphanotroph was a faithful brother and an able minister, he was rapacious and tyrannical, and his administration, though serviceable to Michael, was injurious to the wealth and resources of the empire. He is said to have commenced life as a travelling doctor. While Romanus III was in a private station, he intrusted John with the direction of his household; but after he became emperor, his intendant, with the modest title of Orphanotrophos, and in the humble garb of a monk, directed the whole business in the imperial cabinet. When his brother ascended the throne, he openly assumed the duties of president of the imperial council, and though suffering under the loathsome disease of a cancer in the mouth, the energetic eunuch humbled the aristocracy and ruled the people with a rod of iron.

The administration of John the Orphanotrophos deserves attention, not only from forming a principal feature in the reign of Michael IV, but also from marking the era of a mischievous change in the financial system of the Byzantine government. The taxes were everywhere augmented, and collected in a more arbitrary manner. An additional charge of from four to twenty byzants was imposed on every landed estate, according to its extent. John's avidity

compelled the collectors of the revenue in the provinces to increase their exactions, for when they were regular in their remittances to the treasury, and liberal in their presents to the orphanotrophos, their oppressive conduct to the provincials was easily overlooked. This system of extortion caused several serious insurrections during the reign of Michael IV. At its commencement the people of Antioch murdered the collector of taxes in that city, and, alarmed at the vengeance John was likely to take for such an offence, shut their gates against his brother Niketas, whom he sent to be their duke. Niketas succeeded in entering the city, where his first act was to put to death a hundred of the inhabitants, and confiscate the wealth of eleven of the richest families. The people of Aleppo also expelled the imperial commissioner sent to reside among them for fiscal purposes, and their position secured them from the vengeance of the Byzantine minister. When Maria, the emperor's sister, and mother of the future emperor, Michael V, visited the city of Ephesus on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. John the Evangelist, she was struck with compassion at the sight of the excessive misery she beheld in all the country on her road. When she returned to Constantinople, she urged her brother, the orphanotrophos, by every feeling of humanity and religion, to moderate the financial exactions which were rapidly depopulating the empire. The orphanotrophos replied with a smile "You reason like a woman, ignorant of the necessities of the imperial treasury". His conduct, however, proved in the end unprofitable as a financial operation, for it caused an extensive insurrection of the Bulgarian and Slavonian population, which cost more to suppress than had been wrung from them. Even the Greeks found their fiscal sufferings so great that they seemed disposed to join the Slavonians in an attempt to throw off the Byzantine yoke. The collector of the revenues of the theme of Nicopolis was torn in pieces by the people, and the western parts of Greece welcomed the Bulgarian troops.

A government so unpopular as that of Constantinople at this time required not only great talents to direct the central administration, but also a numerous body of firm supporters dispersed through all the provinces, interested to defend the system with all its abuses. This was effected by filling every office with men dependent on the family of Michael IV, and crowding the senate with creatures of the orphanotrophos. On the death of Niketas, Constantine, who was almost as able and active as his brother John, was appointed duke of Antioch, and became afterwards grand domestikos. George was appointed protovestiaros, their brother-in-law Stephen was intrusted with the command of the fleet, and subsequently named commander-in-chief in Sicily; while his son Michael, called, from his father's early profession, Kalaphates, or the Caulker, was appointed by his uncle Caesar, which was almost tantamount to proclaiming him heir-apparent to the Byzantine empire.

John even carried his ambition so far as to make an attempt to place himself at the head of the church as well as the state. Having gained over a party among the bishops to object to the appointment of the Patriarch Alexios as uncanonical, on the ground that he had been intruded on the church by the nomination of Basil II, John proposed to depose Alexios. The Patriarch, however, encountered the attack with courage. He openly discussed the question, and asked what measures were to be taken if all the ordinations which he had made, during the twelve years he had governed the church, were now unexpectedly declared void; and he boldly reminded John, that even the coronation and marriage of the reigning emperor would thus be pronounced null. This boldness alarmed the emperor: and John was compelled to lay aside the hope of becoming Patriarch during the life of Alexios.

Avarice was always a pervading fault of Byzantine society; and the rapacity of the clergy at this period often rivalled the extortions of the fiscal agents of the imperial administration. Two anecdotes, that contrast the moral feelings of a Greek bishop with those of a troop of Varangian soldiers, deserve notice.

Theophanes, the metropolitan of Thessalonica, carried his avarice so far that he held back the payment of the salaries due to the clergy of his chapter; and even during a year of famine refused to pay them their arrears. The Emperor Michael happened to visit Thessalonica, and the



starving priests complained to him of the conduct of their bishop; but even the reproof of the emperor failed to obtain justice to the claims of the clergy. Michael then determined to punish the bishop; but, in order to expose his avarice and meanness in a public manner, he sent one of his household to borrow a hundred pounds' weight of gold, promising to repay the money immediately on his arrival at Constantinople. The bishop excused himself on the score of poverty, declaring, with the most solemn oaths, that he had only thirty pounds' weight of gold in his palace. The emperor immediately sent a commission to search the palace, and the sum of three thousand three hundred pounds' weight of gold was found. Theophanes was banished to a country farm, and Prometheos named his successor.

The Varangian guard was dispersed in winter-quarters in the Thrakesian theme, where one of the soldiers, attempting to use violence on the person of a country-woman, she drew his sword and stabbed him. The man died on the spot; but as soon as the foreign troops heard the true history of the affair, instead of insisting on revenge, they applauded the woman's conduct, put her in possession of all the property her assailant had left in his quarters, and exposed his body without burial, as if he had committed suicide.

The only noble whose great wealth and high character excited the fears of Michael IV, and the jealousy of the orphanotrophos, was Constantine Dalassenos, the man who had been first selected as the husband of Zoe. Dalassenos was residing on his immense estates in the Armeniac theme when he heard of the election and marriage of Michael. The contemptuous words he was said to have uttered sank deep in the mind of the new emperor; and Dalassenos soon received an invitation from the orphanotrophos to visit Constantinople. He, however, declined trusting his person in the capital until he received a solemn assurance of his safety from the emperor. The guarantees he ventured to demand, and which Michael consented to give, afford a curious picture of the proud position of the great nobles, and a sad evidence of the prevalence of falsehood and treachery in the highest ranks of society. A member of the emperor's household, in high office, was sent to Dalassenos with a piece of the holy cross, with the napkin on which the figure of Christ was miraculously imprinted, with the autograph letter of Christ, and with the portrait of the Virgin Mary, painted by the hand of St. Luke; and on these sacred relics this officer swore that he had witnessed the Emperor Michael IV take an oath that Constantine Dalassenos should suffer no injury if he visited the capital. On this assurance Dalassenos repaired to Constantinople, where he was well received by the emperor, and received the title of Proconsul. But shortly after, Niketas, the emperor's brother, who was duke of Antioch, accused him of being privy to the insurrection in which the imperial tax-gatherers had been slain; and on this improbable charge Dalassenos was confined in the island of Plate. His son-in-law Dukas was thrown into prison, and three nobles of great wealth had their estates confiscated, for complaining that this proceeding was a violation of the emperor's oath.

During the Bulgarian rebellion in 1040, a conspiracy was formed to dethrone Michael. Many of the chief men in Constantinople were accused of being privy to the plot; and though they escaped with their lives, the fortunes of the wealthy were confiscated. Among the conspirators was Michael Cerouliarios, whose guilt compelled him to protect his person by becoming a monk. He afterwards attained the dignity of Patriarch, and displayed the same unquiet intriguing spirit at the head of the church as he had done in a private station.

Some seditious proceedings in the Asiatic army were suppressed by the emperor's brother, Constantine, who put out the eyes of several officers; and not venturing to punish their chief, Gregory the Taronite, who was a patrician, by a local tribunal, sent that dignitary to Constantinople, sewed up in the hide of a newly-slain ox, with only holes cut in it for his eyes, and for breathing.

The military power of the empire was not tarnished by the conduct of Michael IV, though he was sneered at by the aristocracy as a Paphlagonian money-changer. The Saracens vainly endeavored to recover the possessions which had been conquered by the Christians in Syria and

Mesopotamia. The emperor's brother, Constantine, while governor of Antioch, displayed some military talents. He relieved Edessa when attacked by a Saracen army. The possession of Edessa by the Byzantine emperors was a source of continual annoyance to the Mohammedans, and their endeavours to regain it were incessant. In the year 1038, two years after it had been relieved by Constantine, they made use of a stratagem which has obtained immortality as an Eastern tale, though, as a fact, it remains buried in the dulness of Byzantine history. Varasvatzes, a Georgian, commanded in Edessa when twelve Arabians of rank presented themselves before the gates, attended by an escort of five hundred horse, and followed by a train of five hundred camels, declaring that they were going on an embassy to the emperor with rich presents from the caliph. The wary Georgian, however, distrusted their numerous escort; and though he gave the chiefs a hospitable reception, and prepared for them a sumptuous entertainment in his palace, he ordered the escort and the train of camels to be encamped without the walls, and sharply watched. While the banquet was proceeding in the city, a poor Armenian, well versed in the Arabic language, offered his services to the travelers, and was permitted to wander about the encampment. While standing near the wicker baskets with which the camels had been laden, he overheard a man conversing with another, and perceived that a band of armed men, for the purpose of surprising Edessa, was the only present for the emperor which the camels carried. Hastening to the palace of the governor, he succeeded in revealing the secret to the watchful Georgian, who found an excuse for quitting his guests. A body of the garrison was sent to overpower the cavalry, while Varasvatzes, proceeding in person to the encampment, ordered the wicker baskets with the presents for the emperor to be opened, and slew the concealed soldiers as they were found. He then returned to his palace, where he ordered his guests to be seized, and informed them of the issue of their treachery. Eleven were put to death, and the chief, mutilated by the loss of his hands, ears, and nose, was sent to announce the result of the adventure to the court of Bagdad.

The ravages of the Saracen fleets from Africa and Sicily were now more destructive than the incursions of their armies in Asia. Myra in Lycia, and many towns in the Cyclades, were plundered in 1034; but in the following year, when two separate fleets returned to renew these devastations, they were both defeated by the governors of the Thrakesian and Kibyrraiot themes, and the prisoners were treated as pirates, and impaled along the Asiatic coast from Adramytium to Strobilos.

To prevent the recurrence of these plundering expeditions, it was resolved to carry the war into Sicily with the greatest vigour. Maniakes, who had distinguished himself as governor of Vaspourakan, was charged with the task of expelling the Saracens from the island. Abulaphar, the emir of Sicily, having formed an alliance with the empire, received the title of Magistros; but his authority was contested by his brother Abucab, and Sicily was involved in a civil war. In the meantime, the independence of the Sicilian chiefs was so great, that many continued their piratical expeditions against the Christians, in spite of the friendly relations established with the emirs. The civil war, however, enabled the Byzantine troops to enter Sicily as allies of Abulaphar, and they met with such success that the two brothers became alarmed, and, forgetting their differences, united to get rid of allies who promised soon to become masters. The moment appeared favorable for expelling the Saracens from the island; and Michael ordered Maniakes, who commanded the Byzantine forces in Italy, to cross the straits of Messina, and sent a powerful fleet, under his brother-in-law Stephen, to assist the operations of the army. Among the troops that Maniakes had assembled in Calabria were three hundred Norman mercenaries, whose skill in arms had already obtained for them the highest military reputation, A.D. 1038.

Messina was taken by storm, and though a large army of Saracens arrived from Africa to defend their countrymen, the Sicilians were completely defeated by Maniakes at a place called Remata. This victory enabled the Byzantine general to subdue the greater part of the island, and he employed the winter in constructing citadels in the towns he had conquered, in order to keep the inhabitants in check; for the number of Saracen proprietors settled in the island, and their spirit of local independence, combined with the financial exigencies of the Byzantine

administration, threatened the Byzantine government with a violent opposition. The importance of the exploits of Maniakes, and the solidity of his buildings, are attested by the renown of his name and the relics of his works. The thick walls and massive round towers of the citadel he constructed at Syracuse still bear the name of the Castle of Maniakes, and show us how much of the strength and stability of Roman architecture survived in the Byzantine system of fortification in the eleventh century. The site of another of his works retains his name, situated on the roots of Mount Etna; but all the remains have disappeared in constructing the modern town of Bronte.

In the spring of 1040, another African army arrived in Sicily, to support the Mohammedan domination. Maniakes made his dispositions for a battle with his usual talent, and, confident of success, he ordered Stephen, the admiral of the fleet, to make dispositions for cutting off the retreat of the Africans. The Byzantine army was worthy of its general, and the invaders were completely routed at a place called Draginas; but the incapacity and misconduct of Stephen allowed the beaten troops to escape on board their fleet, and put to sea. Maniakes was indignant at this proof of negligence or cowardice. On meeting Stephen, he lost all command over his temper, and reproached the emperor's brother-in-law with his unfitness for his station; and when the admiral ventured to reply in an insolent manner, the proud Maniakes, recollecting the caulker, and forgetting the prince, struck him on the head with the seiromast (a kind of javelin) in his hand. This outbreak of passion caused the loss of Sicily. Stephen complained to the orphanotroph of the aristocratic insolence of Maniakes, and accused him of a design to rebel; which appeared no improbable accusation, when brought against a man who dared to strike the emperor's brother-in-law in the presence of many officers of the army. Maniakes was arrested, and sent prisoner to Constantinople, and Stephen was appointed his successor in the government of Sicily. Under a leader so incompetent, the affairs of the Christians soon fell into confusion. Fresh bands of Saracens arrived from Africa; the Byzantine authorities were driven from the towns conquered by Maniakes; the army under the command of Stephen was everywhere worsted; and in a short time Messina alone preserved its allegiance to the government at Constantinople, being preserved by the valor of its governor Katakalon.

The Patzinaks renewed their invasions of the European provinces in the year 1034, when they extended their ravages almost to the walls of Thessalonica. Two years after, they again invaded the empire and wasted Thrace with unusual barbarity, carrying off five imperial officers of high rank as prisoners.

In the year 1040, Servia, which had submitted to the Emperor Basil II, became so discontented with the fiscal measures of the orphanotrophos, that the people rose in rebellion and shook off the Byzantine yoke. Stephen Bogislav placed himself at the head of his countrymen and expelled the imperial authorities. The success of his rebellion was promoted by the seizure of a vessel, with a thousand pounds' weight of gold belonging to the imperial treasury, which was driven on the coast of Illyria. The emperor demanded the restitution of this sum, and when it was refused, sent George Provatas with a large army to reduce Stephen to obedience. The Byzantine troops were defeated through the incapacity of their general, and the independence of Servia firmly established and tacitly recognised.

The fiscal exactions of John the Orphanotrophos produced another rebellion, which threatened to deprive the empire of the fruits of the long campaigns of Basil II. The land-tax or tribute of the Slavonian population had been left, by their conqueror, on the footing it had been established by Samuel when he founded the kingdom of Achrida, and consisted of a moderate payment in kind annually for each yoke of oxen and each strema of vineyard. Michael IV, at the advice of his brother, ordered a tax to be levied in money in lieu of the established payments, and the discontent caused by the measure prepared the population for revolt. While everything proclaimed an approaching rebellion, a Bulgarian slave, named Peter Deleanos, fled from his master at Constantinople, and, on reaching Belgrade on the Danube, announced himself to be the grandson of Samuel, king of Achrida. He was soon joined by numbers of discontented

Bulgarians, and was proclaimed king. His hopes of being able to resist the power of the Byzantine government lay in the Slavonian population of Macedonia and Epirus, not in the Bulgarians of the plains between the Danube and Mount Haemus. He succeeded in making himself master of many strong places in the theme of Dyrrachium, and he commenced the revolution by murdering all the Greeks who fell into his hands. Basil Synnadenos, the governor of Dyrrachium, advanced against him, hoping to extinguish the revolt in its birth; but some intrigues at Constantinople caused him to lose his place, and one of his officers, who was named his successor, proved incapable of executing the plan of operations already traced out. The new governor threw everything into confusion; and a large body of troops in the province consisting of Slavonians, they cast off their allegiance to the emperor, and proclaimed one of their own officers, Teichomeros, king of Bulgaria. Deleanos and Teichomeros agreed to act as allies, and divide the territory from which they might be able to expel the Byzantine officers; but when the two Slavonian armies formed a junction, Deleanos succeeded in persuading the soldiers to put Teichomeros to death in order to preserve the unity of the kingdom.

The rebels were now sufficiently powerful to advance against Thessalonica, where the Emperor Michael had fixed his residence, in order to pay his devotions at the celebrated shrine of St. Demetrius. Alarmed at the threatening aspect of the revolution, and the unprepared state of the central authorities in Macedonia and Greece, he hastened to Constantinople to expedite warlike preparations, leaving a Bulgarian named Ibatzes in charge of his baggage, with orders to follow him to the capital. Ibatzes fled to Deleanos, and delivered all the treasure intrusted to his care to the new monarch. In the mean time, Alusianos, the younger brother of Ladislas, the last king of Achrida, witnessing the rapid progress of the rebellion, and disgusted with the avarice and injustice of the orphanotrophos, quitted Theodosiopolis, of which he was governor, and joined Deleanos in his camp at Ostrovos. He was intrusted with the command of a division of the Bulgarian army, and ordered to undertake the siege of Thessalonica, where he conducted his military operations so ill, that he was very soon defeated by the imperial troops, and lost about 15,000 men. The splendour of the victory was of course attributed to St. Demetrius, who was reported to have taken the command of the Greeks in person. The failure before Thessalonica was in some degree compensated by the capture of Dyrrachium, which had already fallen into the hands of Kaukanos, one of the Bulgarian generals. While these operations were going on in the north, a Slavonian army under Anthimos invaded Greece, and endeavored to rouse their countrymen in the Peloponnesus to take up arms. The inhabitants of Thebes, which was then a wealthy and populous manufacturing city, boldly took the field to defend the cause of the Greek population, but were defeated with great loss.

The oppressive conduct of the Byzantine fiscal agents had been so general, that the Greeks were in some places more inclined to favour the Bulgarian revolution than to support the central government of Constantinople. The people in the theme of Nicopolis murdered Koutzomytes, the taxcollector of the province, and invited the Bulgarians to their assistance, who easily rendered themselves masters of all western Greece. The city of Naupaktos (Lepanto) was alone preserved in its allegiance by the presence of its garrison.

It was fortunate for the Byzantine empire that the political government of the rebels was directed by men destitute of talent and honesty, for the minds of the Greek population were in general so alienated, and the amount of the imperial forces in Greece was so trifling, that it would not have been a difficult matter to have subdued the whole country. But in place of attending to the public cause, Deleanos and Alusianos turned all their attention to intrigue. The first felt that, if he could not destroy his rival, he should lose his throne; and the other feared that his royal blood and his recent defeat would cost him his life. At last Alusianos found an opportunity of seizing the king by treachery, and, putting out his sovereign's eyes, he assumed the vacant crown. But bred up amidst the luxuries of Byzantine civilization, and caring little for Slavonian nationality, he preferred enduring the insolence of the orphanotrophos to encountering the hardships of a revolutionary war. He deserted his countrymen, resigned the title of king, and made his peace with the court of Constantinople.

The Emperor Michael IV was now suffering under a severe attack of dropsy, in addition to repeated paroxysms of his old malady; but he displayed the greatest energy from the moment that the Bulgarian rebellion broke out. He was well aware that he could not hope to survive for any length of time, but his mind seemed to gain vigour from his anxiety to transmit the scepter he held without degradation to his successor. He assembled an army at Thessalonica, and accompanied its movements, though his disease had made such progress that he was lifted from his horse every evening utterly exhausted. The Bulgarian army, left without a leader by the treachery of Alusianos, was defeated and destroyed. The blind Deleanos and the deserter Ibatzes were both taken prisoners, and in one campaign the dying emperor reduced all the Bulgarians and Slavonians who had taken arms to submission, and restored tranquillity in Macedonia, Epirus, and Greece. This vigorous and noble conduct closed the reign of Michael. He returned to Constantinople to die.

The people, who looked on his original malady as a divine judgment, were confirmed in this superstition by the prodigies they witnessed during his reign. Hailstones fell which killed men at their work; earthquakes followed one another with fearful rapidity; meteors blazed in the sky so bright, that the stars were rendered invisible at midnight; and a pestilence visited various parts of the empire with such terrible mortality that the living found it difficult to bury the dead.

#### Taxation

also began to press with increasing severity on a stationary society, so that, in spite of Michael's charitable works his building churches, monasteries, and hospitals his death was awaited with impatience by his subjects, in the hope that it would deliver the empire from the effects of divine wrath. Michael himself participated in the superstition of the people, and when he felt his end approaching, he retired from the imperial palace to the monastery of St. Anarghyros, where he assumed the habit of a monk. He died a few days after, on the 10th of December 1041, having reigned seven years and eight months.

#### *Reign of Michael V Kalaphates, or the Caulker, A.D. 1042*

The Empress Zoe now assumed the direction of the administration as the lawful heiress of the empire, and in virtue of the will of her deceased husband, and she attempted to carry on her government with the assistance of the eunuchs of her household. But a few days' experience of the toils which were imposed on the sovereign by the Byzantine system of administration soon showed her both the inconveniences and dangers of her position. Though the Athenian Irene had ruled the empire as absolute mistress for some years, and several female regents had presided over the government at different times, still the traditional aversion of the Roman state to female sway was not entirely extinct. Zoe, therefore, immediately perceived the necessity of giving the empire a male sovereign, and she took only three days to choose between adopting a son or marrying a husband. Michael the son of Stephen, the unlucky governor of Sicily, had been raised to the rank of Caesar by his uncle Michael IV, and he had the reputation of being a man of capacity and energy; but his uncle, who seems to have formed a more correct judgment of his disposition than the world at large, had seen so much to distrust in his character that he had excluded him from all share of public business, and given him no hope of mounting the throne as his successor. Zoe, too, displayed more confidence in his talents than in his principles; for before placing the crown on his head, she required him to swear in the most solemn manner that he would ever regard her as his benefactress, and treat her as his mother. She also required him to banish the orphanotrophos, Constantine the domestikos, and George the protovestiaros. Michael promised everything and obtained the crown.

But as soon as he felt himself firmly established in power, he revealed his meanness of soul, and treated his benefactress with insolence as well as ingratitude. He recalled the

orphanotrophos to his counsels, and conferred on him the high dignity of despot; but he soon neglected his advice, and placed all his confidence in Constantine, whom he honored with the rank of nobilissimus. He then began to intrigue against the Patriarch Alexios. After receiving the Patriarch with honor, and bestowing on him a donation of four lb. of gold, he appointed a meeting with him at a monastery on the Bosphorus, intending to exclude him from the city, and get a new Patriarch elected during his absence. At last he carried his presumption so far as to send the Empress Zoe to Prince's Island, and compel her to adopt the monastic habit. But when the people heard of this last instance of his ingratitude, which he had the insolence to announce in a public proclamation, their fury burst through every restraint. They assailed the imperial heralds and paraded the city, exclaiming that "the caulker" had ceased to reign, and that they would scatter his bones abroad like dust. An assembly was held in the Church of St. Sophia, to which Theodora was brought from the monastery of Petrion, and proclaimed empress with her sister. In the meantime the emperor, alarmed at the progress of the sedition, brought Zoe back to the palace, and attempted to pacify the people by persuading her to appear at a balcony overlooking the hippodrome. The sight of Michael, however, who endeavoured to address the assembly, revived the popular fury, and preparations were made to storm the palace. The emperor now showed himself a coward as well as a tyrant, and wished to fly to the monastery of Studion. His uncle Constantine, however, made him understand that his only hope of life was in preserving the throne, and roused him to take measures for defending the palace.

The attack was made on the following day, and after a long defence the people, who assaulted it in three divisions from the hippodrome, the court of guard, and the tchukanisterion, stormed the palace. Katakalon, who saved Messina, had just returned from Sicily, and happening to be at the palace, directed the defensive arrangements, while Constantine the nobilissimus, assembling all his household in arms, added to the strength of the guards. The fury of the people overcame all resistance; but it is said that three thousand were slain before they forced their entrance into the interior of the building. Everything was then plundered, and the public registers were destroyed. Michael V and his uncle Constantine succeeded in escaping to the monastery of Studion during the confusion. Zoe immediately assumed the ensigns of the imperial power, and endeavoured to force her sister Theodora back into retirement, but the senate and people insisted that the two sisters should reign conjointly. Though Zoe was eager to tyrannize over her sister, she showed a disposition to spare her own tyrant Michael. She was, however, compelled by Theodora and the senate to join in his condemnation, for the populace shouted incessantly, "Let him be impaled, let him be crucified, let his eyes be put out!" Officers were therefore sent to drag him from his asylum and put out his eyes. When placed beside his uncle in the Sigma to suffer his sentence, he meanly entreated the executioners to put out the eyes of Constantine first; and that daring eunuch submitted to the punishment with the greatest firmness, while the dethroned emperor excited the contempt of the people by his cries and moans. They were then sent to pass the remainder of their lives as monks in the monastery of Elegmos. Michael the Caulker sate on the imperial throne four months and five days.

The joint government of Zoe and Theodora lasted less than two months. We need not wonder, therefore, that it is praised by all historians, for the salutary effects of a violent display of popular indignation were sure to extend over the whole period. Byzantine officials moderated their exactions in alarm, and the two empresses were reminded by the empty chambers of their palace that public opinion was not always to be despised with impunity. In order to secure the support of the imperial council of state, and of the municipality of Constantinople or of the Roman senate and people, as these bodies proudly styled themselves numerous promotions were made and large donations lavished. An ordinance was published prohibiting the sale of official situations, for this species of traffic had been rendered an ordinary source of revenue by the eunuchs of the imperial household, who had possessed themselves of most of the highest offices of the state. At the same time strict orders were issued to enforce the administration of justice with impartiality, and to restrain oppressive conduct on the part of the fiscal agents of government.

The unprincipled manner in which the adventurers and eunuchs, who had been introduced into the public service since the death of Basil II, appropriated the funds in the imperial treasury to their own use, deserves particular notice. Great deficiencies were detected in the accounts of the short financial administration of the nobilissimus Constantine; and the ministers of Zoe and Theodora found it necessary to examine him personally, in order to discover how the money had been employed. The blind monk, knowing that he had no chance of ever quitting the monastery in which he was confined, candidly informed the new ministers that he had abstracted the sum of 5300 lb. of gold from the treasury for his own use, and deposited it in a vaulted cistern attached to his palace, near the Church of the Holy Apostles.

The two sisters appeared always together at the meetings of the senate, and when they held courts of justice, or gave public audiences; but it was evident their union would not prove of long duration. Zoe was jealous of her sister, and though she was eager to be relieved of the burden of public business, she was determined not to allow Theodora to conduct it alone probably the more so, because Theodora showed great aptitude in state affairs, and took great pleasure in performing her administrative duties. Zoe, therefore, bethought herself of looking out for a third husband, to whom she might resign the throne, and thus deprive her sister of the influence she was rapidly acquiring. Zoe was now sixty-two years old, and, the age of passion having passed away, her memory reverted to the merits of Constantine Dalassenos, who had been destined by her father to be her first husband. She invited that proud noble to an interview in the imperial palace, in order to judge of his character before revealing her purpose. But in place of the splendid and gallant nobleman of her imagination, she met a stern old man, who expressed strongly his disapprobation of the whole system of the imperial administration since the death of Basil II; who openly blamed the vices of the court, and hardly concealed his contempt for her own conduct. Such a husband might have infused new vigour into the lethargic system of government, but Zoe was not inclined to submit her actions to the control of so severe a master.

She turned, therefore, to one of her former lovers, Constantine Artoklinas; but when his wife heard of the honor to which he was destined, she displayed none of the meekness of the wife of Romanus III. Artoklinas suddenly sickened and died, and his wife was supposed to have poisoned him, either from jealousy, or from her aversion to be immured in a convent Zoe was easily consoled. She again selected an old admirer, Constantine Monomachos, who had been banished to Mitylene by the jealousy of Michael IV, but recalled on the accession of Zoe and Theodora, and named Judge of Greece. A swift-rowing galley was despatched to convey him to the capital, where, on his arrival, he was invested with the Imperial robes. His marriage with Zoe was celebrated by one of the clergy, for the Patriarch Alexios declined officiating at a third marriage of the empress, which was doubly uncanonical, since both the bridegroom and the bride had been twice married. Nevertheless, on the day after the marriage ceremony, the Patriarch crowned the emperor with the usual solemnities.

*Constantine IX Monomachus. A.D. 1042-1054*

The reign of Constantine IX demands more attention from the historian of the Byzantine Empire than the worthless character of the man or the feeble policy of his cabinet appears at first glance to require. It typifies the moral degradation into which Byzantine society had fallen, for his vices were tolerated, if not approved of, by a large portion of his subjects. His open profligacy expresses the immorality of the age; his profusion indicated the general manner of living among all classes of his subjects; and while he destroyed the civil organisation of the government, and undermined the discipline of the Roman armies, they wasted the national capital and diminished the resources of the empire.

The domestic profligacy of Zoe had been concealed from the public by the household of eunuchs that surrounded her, and by whom the inhabitants of the palace were kept completely separated from the world without its walls. But her third husband, Constantine Monomachos, was so indifferent to all feelings of self-respect as to make an open parade of his vices at the public ceremonies of the court. After he had buried two wives, he obtained the favour of a beautiful young widow belonging to the powerful and wealthy family of Skleros. She was the granddaughter of that celebrated Bardas, who had disputed the empire with Basil II, and the daughter of Romanes Skleros, the brother-in-law of the Emperor Romanus III. The eminence of her family eclipsed the name of her husband, and she was called Skleraina. Infatuated by love for Constantine Monomachos, she openly assumed the position of his mistress, and shared his banishment at Mitylene. It is, however, only justice to the character of the fair Skleraina to observe that, in the opinion of the bigoted members of the Greek church, her position of mistress, as being less uncanonical, was more respectable than it would have been had she become the third wife of her lover. When Zoe raised Constantine to the throne, he bargained to retain his mistress, and the people of Constantinople were treated to the singular spectacle of an emperor of the Romans making his public appearance with two female companions dignified with the title of empress, one as his wife and the other as his mistress. Skleraina was regularly saluted with the title of Augusta, and installed in apartments in the palace, with a separate court as empress, and a rank equal to that held by Theodora. Zoe and she lived together on the best terms, and the want of jealousy of the aged wife is less surprising than her want of self-respect. The disposition of the beautiful Skleraina was extremely amiable, and she was respected to a certain degree for the constancy of her attachment to her lover in his misfortunes, which contrasted with the behaviour of Zoe, who had never allowed any passion, however violent, to retain permanent hold of her heart. She soon lost whatever popularity she enjoyed with the people, on account of the lavish expenditure of the emperor. She had possessed an ample fortune when Constantine was an impoverished exile, and her wealth had been consumed to gratify her lover's luxurious habits. The good-natured sensualist now strove to repay Skleraina with unbounded liberality. Her apartments were rendered more splendid than any Constantinople had yet seen, her elegant manners created round her a graceful court, which seemed more brilliant from its contrast with the dull ceremony that reigned in the apartments of Zoe and Theodora. As the populace can rarely be so completely corrupted in their moral feelings as their superiors, the extravagant expenditure of the emperor on his concubine awakened the public indignation. They felt the financial oppression more grievous when they saw their money employed to insult their feelings, and they began to fancy that the lives of Zoe and Theodora might be in danger in a palace where vice was honored, and where secret murder was supposed to be an ordinary occurrence.

Constantine IX had pursued his career of voluptuous extravagance for two years, without a thought of his duties either to God or to his subjects, when he was suddenly awakened to a sense of the danger of his situation by a furious sedition of the people. On the feast of the Forty Martyrs it was usual for the emperor to walk in solemn procession to the Church of our Saviour in Chalke, from whence he proceeded on horseback to the Church of the Martyrs. But as the procession was about to move from the palace, a cry was raised, "Down with Skleraina; we will not have her for empress! Zoe and Theodora are our mothers we will not allow them to be murdered!". The fury of the populace was ungovernable, and they made an attempt to lay hands on the emperor, to tear him to pieces. Many persons were trodden to death in the tumult, and Constantine was in imminent danger of his life, when the sudden appearance of Zoe and Theodora at a balcony drew off the attention of the crowd, and allowed the emperor to escape. The sisters assured the people that they were not in the smallest danger, and as no leaders stepped forward to direct the populace, tranquillity was easily restored; but the emperor did not accompany the procession to the Church of the Forty Martyrs in the year 1044.

There are some articles in the expenditure of Constantine IX which indicate that he lived in an enlightened age, and reigned over a civilized people. To solace his conscience, he constructed houses of refuge for the aged and hospitals for the poor, as well as monasteries and



churches for the clergy. He also raised the most distinguished literary men of his time to high offices. He completed the rebuilding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and augmented the endowments of the clergy of St. Sophia's, in order that service might be performed with due pomp every day.

In order to fill the treasury, when he had drained it by his lavish expenditure, he adopted a measure which proved ruinous to the empire, and was an immediate cause of the success of the Seljouk Turks in Asia Minor. The frontier provinces of the East had been exempted from the payment of direct taxes to the central government, and the dependent states in alliance with the empire in that quarter had been relieved from tribute, on the condition of maintaining bodies of regular militia constantly under arms, to defend their territories. Constantine IX consented to relieve them from these obligations, on their paying a sum of money into his exhausted treasury. By this impolitic proceeding, an army of fifty thousand men on the Iberian and Armenian frontiers was disbanded, and the Asiatic provinces left open to the invasion of the Seljouk Turks, whose power was rapidly increasing. The money remitted to Constantinople was quickly despatched in luxury and vice.

The death of the Patriarch Alexios, who died in the year 1043, after having ruled the Byzantine Church upwards of seventeen years with some reputation, afforded a sad confirmation of the depraved state of society, and the frightful extent to which avarice had corrupted the Eastern clergy. The emperor, who knew that the Patriarch had heaped up considerable sums of money in a monastery he had constructed, sent and seized this treasure, which was found to amount to the sum of 2500 lb. of gold. Michael Keroularios, who had been compelled to enter a monastery on account of the part he had taken in a conspiracy against Michael IV, was appointed Patriarch, and distinguished himself by his violent proceedings in the disagreement between the sees of Rome and Constantinople.

Theodora, though by her sister's marriage she was deprived of all direct influence over the administration, still possessed the power of violating the law with impunity. John the orphanotrophos was seized by her order while living tranquilly in banishment at Marykatos, and deprived of sight. It was said by some that this cruel deed was executed without the emperor's permission, but others attributed it to revenge on the part of Constantine, who ascribed his long exile at Mitylene to the malice of the orphanotrophos. We must recollect, however, that Theodora was of a sterner and more unforgiving temper than her brother-in-law, and that she had probably good reason for complaining of the conduct of the orphanotrophos, even when he was minister of Romanus III. In any case, it is a sufficient proof of the disorganization of the administration that the act is ascribed to Theodora by Zonaras, who was himself a minister, and that it was inflicted without even the formality of a legal sentence.

A weak and lavish court, surrounded by a proud and wealthy aristocracy, under the government of an absolute sovereign, is the hotbed of rebellion. Constantine IX had ascended the throne, without any merit of his own, by the shameless preference of a worthless old woman. It is not surprising, therefore, that many nobles should have attempted to wrench the sceptre from his hand; but it is a strong proof of the original excellence of the organization of the Byzantine system of administration that all these attempts proved unsuccessful. The conservative tendencies of society, which had grown out of the system of government, presented a passive resistance to all revolutionary endeavours to disturb the established order of things. A sedition in Cyprus, however, occurred even before Constantine IX, mounted the throne. No sooner was it known throughout the empire that Michael V had been dethroned by a popular insurrection, and that the government of Zoe and Theodora was not likely to prove of long duration, than Theophilos Erotikos, the governor of Cyprus, formed the project of gaining possession of that rich island for himself during the threatened confusion. Theophilos was a turbulent and presumptuous man, of ability far inferior to his ambition. Two years previous to his rebellion in Cyprus he had been driven from Servia, which he then governed, by Stephen Bogislav; he now incited the people to attack Theophylaktos, the intendant of finance, on the

ground that this officer collected the taxes with undue rigor. Theophylaktos was slain, and the governor expected that, in removing a check on his plot, he had succeeded in compromising the inhabitants so far as to secure their support to his ambitious project. Constantine IX, however, immediately on assuming the government, despatched a force to suppress the revolt, and as the Cypriots had no idea of waging war against the central government at Constantinople, or of aiding Theophilos to assume the imperial crown, they offered no resistance, and the governor was arrested and sent a prisoner to the capital. The insurrection was considered so contemptible that Theophilos was exhibited to the people at the public games in a female dress, and escaped with the confiscation of his estates.

The rebellion of Maniakes, which occurred in the first year of the reign of Constantine IX, would in all probability have deprived him of the throne, had it not been suddenly terminated by one of those strokes of fortune by which Heaven deranges the wisest plans and destroys the most powerful expeditions. Maniakes was released from confinement at the death of Michael IV, and reappointed to the command of the Byzantine possessions in Italy. He found the Italians everywhere in rebellion, and the chief military power in the hands of the Norman mercenaries, who had formed themselves into an independent community: the cities of Bari, Brindisi, Otranto, and Tarento were alone occupied by Byzantine garrisons. The moment Maniakes landed, he commenced his military operations with the vigor and skill for which he was so remarkable. He defeated the Normans in a well-contested battle between Monopoli and Matera; and as these two towns had shown a hostile disposition, he allowed them to be plundered by his troops, and even ordered two hundred of the principal inhabitants of the latter to be decapitated for favouring the Normans. The animosity between the Greeks and Italians was now so violent that the success of the Normans and the separation of the two churches were produced rather by the hatred of the parties than by the superior valour of the Normans, or by any religious arguments of the clergy. Though the Italians were destitute of the virtue and endurance necessary to gain their independence, they possessed at this time an able and active leader, Arghyros, the son of Mel, and it was in moral far more than in military qualities that they were inferior to the northern mercenaries.

The progress of Maniakes was suddenly arrested by the news that Constantine Monomachos, the lover of Skleraina, was named emperor, for Maniakes was engaged in violent contests with her brother, Romanes Skleros, concerning the limits of their hereditary estates in Asia Minor. Romanes, who had the courage to contend personally with the fiery Maniakes, as his father had contended with Prusianos, the Bulgarian prince, had received some deep insults, for which he now avenged himself by seducing his enemy's wife and seizing the disputed property. Maniakes knew that there was no hope of obtaining justice from the emperor, over whom Skleraina exercised unbounded influence; he resolved, therefore, to administer justice in his own cause. He immediately recruited his army with all the Norman and other mercenaries he was able to collect in Italy, and proclaimed himself emperor. Constantine IX, the moment he heard of the rebellion, sent an officer with a body of troops to arrest Maniakes, expecting that it would be as easy to do so on this occasion as it had proved in Sicily. But Maniakes fell on the Byzantine troops at the moment of their arrival, routed them, and, gaining possession of the treasure they had brought, embarked his own army at Otranto, and landed at Dyrrachium, in the month of February, 1043. The emperor sent an army, under the command of one of Zoe's eunuchs, named Stephen, to arrest the progress of the rebel. Maniakes, despising the unwarlike character of his opponent, attacked the imperial army near Ostrovos. His charge bore down everything, and victory seemed assured to his standard, when an arrow from an unknown hand pierced him to the heart. His death left his followers without a cause, as well as without a leader, and they instantly retired from the field of battle. The Norman, Frank, and Italian mercenaries in the rebel army entered the Byzantine service, and continued for many years to make a prominent figure in the wars of the empire. The victorious eunuch made his public entry into Constantinople mounted on a white charger, with the head of Maniakes borne before him on a lance.

Stephen's accidental success awakened his ambition, and when he found, on his return to the capital, that the emperor did not estimate his services as highly as he considered was their due, he began to plot against him. He selected Leo, the governor of Melitene, as the future emperor, but his intrigues were discovered. Leo and his son Lampros were deprived of sight, but Stephen was only immured in a monastery after his estates were confiscated.

In the year 1047, Constantine IX was again in danger of losing his throne by the rebellion of his own relation, Leo Tornikios. The character of Leo rendered him extremely popular at Adrianople, where he resided. To remove him from the seat of his influence, the emperor named him governor of Iberia, where he was soon accused of aspiring to the throne. Constantine IX, jealous of his talents and popularity, ordered him to resign his governorship and adopt the monastic life; but the friends of Tornikios put him on his guard in time to enable him to escape to Adrianople, where he was immediately proclaimed emperor. At the head of the garrison of that city, and such motley forces as he could assemble on the spur of the occasion, he marched to Constantinople. He hoped to render himself master of the capital by the favour of the citizens, counting more on their aversion to the emperor's conduct than on the military force under his own orders. But the inhabitants feared a military revolution far more than they hated their sovereign. Constantine also, on receiving the first information of the revolt, despatched orders to a Saracen eunuch, who commanded a corps of Byzantine troops in Iberia, to march rapidly to the capital, with all the forces he could concentrate on the way.

Tornikios encamped before the walls in the month of September, and being unable to invest the line of the fortifications from the port to the Sea of Marmora, established himself before the gate of Blachern. The emperor, who, in spite of his warlike surname, was utterly ignorant of military affairs, ordered a party of a thousand men to intrench themselves outside this gate. The operation was undertaken against the advice of his military counsellors; and, to see the result of his own tactics, the emperor placed himself in a balcony overhanging the walls, in full view of the position of his advanced guard. Tornikios immediately took advantage of the imperial folly; he stormed the intrenchment, and the rebel archers, sending a flight of arrows at the balcony, compelled the emperor and his court to abandon their position with ludicrous celerity, amidst the derisive cheers of the citizens as well as of the enemy. But Tornikios, proud of the day's exploit, and trusting always to the delusive hope that the inhabitants would open the gates, delayed pressing the assault as the fugitives were entering within the walls. Next day, when he found the people would hold no communication with him, he ordered a general assault. The garrison had employed the whole night in making preparations to meet it; and as the defence was intrusted to experienced officers, and the citizens supported the regular troops, to save their property from the danger to which it would be exposed if a victorious enemy entered the city, Tornikios was defeated with considerable loss. He now found it necessary to raise the siege and retire to Arcadiopolis. Shortly after, he attacked the city of Rhedestos, and the bishop keeping the inhabitants firm in their allegiance, he was again defeated. His cause now became desperate; for the news reaching his camp that the Asiatic troops had arrived at Constantinople, his followers quitted his standard, and he was forced to seek refuge in a church, from which he was taken by force, and sent to the emperor in chains. On Christmas Eve he was deprived of his sight.

In the year 1050, several nobles of distinction were accused of conspiring to dethrone the emperor. The accusation may have been nothing more than a court intrigue or a fiscal measure, for only one was punished by the confiscation of his estates.

Another plot shows the contemptible condition to which the imperial power had fallen in the estimation of the courtiers. Boilas, a man of low birth, had gained the favour of Constantine IX by his talents for buffoonery and his capacity for business. He amused the emperor by his wit, and relieved him from much embarrassment by his application. Boilas being utterly destitute of all principle, and possessing little judgment with a daring character, conceived the preposterous idea of making himself emperor. He knew that he was fitter to fill the throne than

the reigning emperor, and he thought the court so worthless that he expected to succeed in his design. He applied to several persons in high office to secure their assistance, and found intriguers and malcontents who were willing to make him an instrument in their hands, while he believed he was using them as the servants of his own ambition. The conspiracy was revealed on the very night it had been resolved to assassinate Constantine; but it seems the emperor was never persuaded that his favorite was really guilty, for he soon restored him to his office, in order to enjoy his buffoonery.

The reign of Basil II marks the summit of the military power of the Byzantine Empire. In the reign of Constantine IX the first traces of decay are visible in the military system, which, for three centuries and a half, had upheld a standing army equal to the Saracen forces in the East, and superior to any troops the nations of Europe had been able to maintain permanently in the field. The alliance of the Servians and Armenians was now lost; the Normans were allowed to acquire an independent existence in Italy; and though the Russians and Patzinaks were defeated, the Seljouk Turks began to undermine the whole fabric of the Byzantine power in Asia.

The disorders which attended the dethronement of Michael V induced Stephen Bogislav, the sovereign of Servia, to invade Illyria and Macedonia, from which he carried off immense booty, ravaging the country like a wild beast rather than a man. Constantine IX, in order to prevent his repeating his depredations, ordered the governor of Dyrrachium to march into Servia with a large body of troops the garrisons of all the neighbouring themes that could be immediately concentrated; and it was pretended that the army consisted of sixty thousand men. The general, ignorant of military science, trusted entirely to his numbers, which the Servians were unable to resist in the open field. He pushed carelessly forward into the heart of the country, ravaging everything around, and collecting booty, until he involved himself in the mountainous district, full of narrow defiles and rugged roads. As no enemy was to be found, he here gave the order to return to Dyrrachium; but no sooner was the retreat commenced than the Servians resumed their activity, and Stephen suddenly beset the passes with his army. The head and rear of the Byzantine columns were assailed at the same time, the march was delayed, and the booty lost. The Byzantine general, incapable of combining the movements of his different divisions for their mutual support, and his lieutenants, ignorant of one another's movements, were thrown into inextricable confusion. A general attack of the Servians in one of the mountain passes completed the rout of the army, and, if we believe the Byzantine writers, seven generals and forty thousand men perished in this expedition.

We have already seen that the social condition of the inhabitants of Russia in the preceding century was considerably more advanced than that of the people in Western Europe. Their commerce with the Byzantine Empire, which had been one of the causes of their progress in wealth and civilization, was greatly extended during the present century; and after the conquest of Cherson, and the decay of that flourishing city, a considerable number of Russian merchants established themselves at Constantinople. The influence of these traders soon became very great, for, besides the regular trade they carried on between the north and south, they also acted as bankers for the Varangian and Russian mercenaries in the Byzantine service, and as agents for many Bulgarian and Slavonian landed proprietors, whose produce they purchased. About the commencement of the year 1043, it happened that a Russian of rank was slain in a tumult, and the sovereign of Kief, Yaroslaf, deemed it a favorable occasion for making conquests in the Byzantine territory, as the Normans had done in France, and the Danes in England. The Emperor Constantine in vain offered all reasonable satisfaction; the Northmen and the Russians were determined to try the fortune of war, for they wanted to obtain something very different from indemnity for the consequences of a tumult in the streets of Constantinople. An expedition, composed of Varangians and Russians, under the command of Vladimir, son of Yaroslaf, who had been elected prince of Novgorod by his father's influence, and Viuchata, as his counsellor and lieutenant general, crossed the Black Sea. The commerce of Russia was a matter of so much importance to the capital, the Varangians and Russian mercenaries formed so valuable a part of the imperial land-forces, and the indolent Constantine was so averse to war,

that he made a sacrifice of the punctilio of Byzantine diplomacy, and again demanded peace when the hostile armament appeared off the entrance of the Bosphorus. But the Russians, bent on plunder and conquest, rejected peace, unless the emperor would engage to pay three pounds weight of gold to each soldier in the expedition.

Constantine now made active preparations for repulsing the attack on his capital. He had already arrested all the Russian merchants and soldiers in the empire, and sent them into distant themes, to be guarded as prisoners until the war should be terminated. The greater part of the Byzantine fleet was either absent in the Archipelago or employed on the coast of Italy, but the ships in the port of Constantinople were prepared for sea; and their size, as well as the use of Greek fire, gave them such a superiority over the boats of the Russians that the sailors were eager for a battle. The first naval engagement proved indecisive, and the Russians contrived to destroy a part of the Greek fleet which separated from the main squadron; but in another action the Russians suffered great loss, and a storm shortly after completed the ruin of their enterprise. In landing to plunder, their troops were also defeated. On their retreat, a second storm overtook them in passing Varna, and their losses were so great that, according to the accounts of their own historians, fifteen thousand men perished. Three years elapsed before peace was re-established, but a treaty was then concluded, and the trade at Constantinople placed on the old footing. From this period the alliance of the Russians with the Byzantine empire was long uninterrupted; and as the Greeks became more deeply imbued with ecclesiastical prejudices, and more hostile to the Latin nations, the Eastern church became, in their eyes, the symbol of their nationality, and the bigoted attachment of the Russians to the same religious formalities obtained for them from the Byzantine Greeks the appellation of the most Christian nation.

The Patzinaks, who still occupied the whole country from the Dnieper to the Danube, had not repeated the ravages they committed in the year 1036. They were occupied by wars with the Russians and with the Uzes, a nomadic nation of Turkish race like themselves, but who proved their irreconcilable enemies. Tyrach was at this time king of the Patzinaks, and Kegenes, a man whose merits as a soldier had raised him to rank, commanded the army. The fame of the general excited the envy of the king, and Kegenes was forced to seek shelter in the Byzantine Empire, to which he retired with a numerous body of followers. From an island in the Danube, near Dorystolon, in which he had intrenched himself, the Patzinak general solicited permission to enter the empire, and Constantine IX, well pleased to gain the services of so distinguished a warrior, gave orders that he should be honorably received. Kegenes embraced the Christian religion, and received the title of a Roman patrician. His followers were established in forts on the banks of the Danube, where they employed themselves in plundering the country they had quitted. Tyrach called on the emperor to restrain these forays, but, finding his reclamations neglected, he took advantage of the severe winter of 1048 to cross the Danube on the ice, and invade the empire with a numerous army. Bulgaria was ravaged, but the sudden changes of plenty and privation to which the invaders were compelled to submit spread disease through their ranks. The followers of Kegenes and the Byzantine troops concentrated round them, their numbers were thinned by disease, famine, and incessant attacks, until Tyrach and his whole surviving army were compelled to surrender at discretion. Kegenes urged the Byzantine generals to put all their prisoners to death, observing that it was wise to kill the viper when he was benumbed, lest the returning warmth of the sun should enable him to escape and use his venom; but the Byzantine empire was too civilised for such an act of wholesale inhumanity, and the captive soldiers were established as agricultural colonists on waste lands near Bardica and Naissos. It had always been one of the problems in the Roman empire how to find the means of filling up the drain of the native population that time seemed perpetually to sweep away with unsparing activity. The king and many of the Patzinak nobles were sent to Constantinople, where they embraced Christianity, and were well treated by the emperor.

In the meantime fifteen thousand of the ablest soldiers were selected from among the prisoners, enrolled in the Byzantine army, and sent to join the troops on the Armenian frontier, where an army was preparing to encounter a threatened attack of the Seljouk Turks under

Togrulbeg. This body of Patzinaks was placed under the command of the patrician Constantine Artovalan, but was formed into four divisions under native officers. On reaching Damatrys, Katalaim, one of the Patzinak generals, persuaded his countrymen to attempt forcing their way home. A rapid march enabled them to reach the Bosphorus, but when they arrived at the monastery of St. Taraslos, on the narrowest part of the straits, they found no boats to cross into Europe. Katalaim immediately arranged a body of cavalry in order, and plunged into the stream at their head. A sufficiency of boats was easily secured on the European side, and the whole army transported over. Without any delay they pushed on to Sardica and Naissos, where they were joined by their countrymen, who had been established in that country as agricultural colonists, and then, hastening to the banks of the Danube, they occupied a strong position near the mouth of the river Osmos. They also formed a second camp at a place called the Hundred Hills, and from these stations plundered the districts in their vicinity.

On hearing of this daring movement, the emperor summoned Keghenes and his followers to Constantinople. As these troops lay encamped without the walls waiting for orders, three Patzinaks attempted to assassinate Keghenes, but were secured after inflicting on him some severe wounds. When brought before the emperor, they accused Keghenes of treasonable correspondence with the fugitives, and Constantine, with suspicious timidity, gave credit to their improbable story, and ordered Keghenes to be put under arrest. The immediate consequence of this false step was, that the followers of the arrested general fled and joined their countrymen, who had advanced to the neighborhood of Adrianople. The emperor in his alarm released Tyrach, the Patzmak king, on receiving his oath to reduce his countrymen to obedience; but that monarch, on regaining his liberty, laid aside his Christianity, repudiated his promises, and picked himself at the head of a powerful army, eager to avenge his former defeat. Two Byzantine armies were routed with great slaughter.

Great exertions were used to assemble another army in order to repress the ravages of the Patzinaks, who were devastating all the country between the Danube and Adrianople. Nicephorus Bryennios took the command at the head of the Frank and Varangian mercenaries, and the Asiatic cavalry from Telouch, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia. Keghenes was restored to favor, and sent to negotiate terms of peace with his countrymen. The military operations circumscribed the forays of the enemy, and the Byzantine army surprised and destroyed a number of the Patzinaks at Chariopolis; but Keghenes, trusting himself among his countrymen, was treacherously murdered. After many vicissitudes, the Patzinaks were forced to retreat, and concluded a truce for thirty years.

In Italy the affairs of the empire went to ruin after the departure of Maniakes. Constantine IX favored Arghyros because he had opposed Maniakes, and that chief rendered himself virtually independent, and assumed the title of Prince of Bari and Duke of Apulia. The Normans, taking advantage of the intrigues and dissensions that prevailed, quitted their profession of mercenaries for that of feudal chieftains, and by taking such a part in the wars between Arghyros and Guaimar, prince of Salerno, as their own interests dictated, they succeeded in forming their captains into a confederation of territorial barons, under a leader, who became count of Apulia. Their progress excited the alarm of the emperor of Constantinople, the emperor of Germany, and the Pope; but their services were so often in requisition by powerful rivals, and their conduct was so prudent, that they prevented any coalition of their enemies which might have crushed them in their early career. The Byzantine troops were defeated, the intrigues of the emperor of Germany were baffled, Pope Leo IX, who ventured to appeal to arms, was beaten and taken prisoner, while the victors, as pious as politic, purchased the support of the See of Rome from their captive by offering to hold all their conquests as a fief of St. Peter's chair. The schism of the Greek and Latin churches, which broke out with great animosity about this time, increased the aversion of the Italians to Byzantine domination, and tended quite as much as the military superiority of the Norman troops to give stability to their government.

The capture of Otranto by the Normans under Robert Guiscard, in the year 1055, maybe considered as the termination of the Greek power in Italy.

While the Byzantine Empire was beginning to exhibit symptoms of decline in the West, Constantine IX added to its territories in the East by destroying the Armenian kingdom of the Bagratians, which had long acted a brilliant part in the military history of Asia. No act, however, could have been more unnecessary or imprudent than the annexation of the city of Ani, the last capital of Armenian independence, to the empire, for the whole of the Byzantine frontier was thus thrown open to the invasion of the Seljouk Turks, without the barrier of independent Christian mountaineers that had hung on the flank of previous invaders. It has been mentioned that the Emperor Basil II, during his campaign against the Iberians in 1022, compelled Joannes Sembat to sign a treaty ceding, at his death, Ani and his whole kingdom to the emperor. Constantine IX considered the moment favourable for calling on Gagik, the nephew of Joannes, to fulfill the obligations of this treaty; and when the Armenian objected, he formed an alliance with Aboulsewar, the Saracen emir of Tibium (Tovin), and sent a Byzantine army to attack Ani. The treachery of the Armenian nobles aided the progress of the Byzantine and Saracen arms. Gagik, a prince of some ability, finding it useless to struggle with so powerful a combination, consulted the interests of his subjects by submitting to the Christians. On receiving a safe-conduct for his person, he repaired to plead his cause before the emperor at Constantinople, and the city of Ani surrendered to the Byzantine troops, A.D. 1045. Gagik, finding there was no hope of preserving his ancestral kingdom, accepted the rank of magistros, and received extensive estates in Cappadocia. Thus the oldest Christian kingdom was erased from the list of independent states by a Christian emperor. The only Armenian district which continued to preserve its independence between the Byzantines and Saracens was Kars, where Gagik Abas, a member of the family of the Bagratians, ruled as prince. The Byzantine government carried its jealousy of the Armenians so far as to compel their Patriarch, Peter, to quit the city of Ani and take up his residence at Arzen, from whence they subsequently transferred him to Constantinople.

In the year 1048 the Seljouk Turks attacked the empire. They were one of the hordes which formed itself out of the fragments of that great Turkish Empire, whose commercial connection with Constantinople occupied the attention of Roman statesmen in the time of Justinian. Togrulbeg, called by the Byzantine historians Tangrolipix, was its chief. The Turkish tribes of central Asia were now acting the part, in the empire of the caliphs of Bagdad, which the Goths formerly acted in the Roman Empire. Under Mahmoud the Gaznevid, the Turkish hordes which furnished mercenaries to the caliphs founded for themselves an empire, but the son of the Gasnevid was defeated by new hordes, who elected Togrulbeg as their chief. This new sovereign, after destroying the dynasty of the Bowides, became sultan of Persia, and the limits of his dominions touched the frontiers of the Byzantine conquests in Armenia. Togrulbeg visited Bagdad, assumed the title of Defender of the Faith and Protector of the Caliph; and when he had rendered himself completely master of the temporal power at Bagdad, he compelled the haughty caliph to receive him as a son-in-law, by showing the representative of the Prophet that he possessed the power of starving him on his sacred throne.

Eight years before Togrulbeg succeeded in establishing himself as a sovereign in Bagdat, he sent his cousin Koutoulmish to attack the emir of Diarbekir. Koutoulmish was defeated, and compelled to retreat to the Armenian frontier of Vasparoukan, where he solicited permission to pass through the Byzantine territory, promising to maintain the strictest discipline in his march. The governor of Vasparoukan refused the request of the defeated general, and prepared to oppose the Turks, should they venture to pass the frontier. Koutoulmish, who saw that only prompt and vigorous measures could save him from being surrounded, attacked the Byzantine governor, routed his army, and, carrying him away as a prisoner, sold him as a slave in Tabreez. On his return, he vaunted so loudly the fertility of Vasparoukan, and spoke with such contempt of the Byzantine troops, that Togrulbeg determined to invade the empire. Hassan the Deaf was intrusted with the vanguard, amounting to twenty thousand men, but was completely defeated

near the river Stragna by Aaron the son of Ladislas, the last king of Bulgaria, who was governor of Vasparoukan, and Katakalon the governor of Ani. The main body of the Turkish army, however, under Ibrahim Inal, the nephew of Togrulbeg, avenged the defeat. It was composed of Turks, Kaberoi, and Limnites. Katakalon, an experienced general, wished to meet this army in the field, as it was composed chiefly of infantry, or cavalry whose horses were unshod; but his Bulgarian colleague appealed to the emperor's instructions, which ordered his army to await the arrival of Liparites the prince of Abasgia. The Turkish general, finding the greater part of the wealth of the country secured in strong fortresses, advanced to attack the populous city of Arzen, which was unfortified. The inhabitants, trusting to their numbers and valor, had neglected to convey their valuable effects into the impregnable fortress of Theodosiopolis, in their neighbourhood. Arzen was at this time one of the principal centres of Asiatic commerce, and was filled with warehouses belonging to Syrian and Armenian merchants. The inhabitants defended themselves against the Turks with courage for six days, by barricading the streets and assailing the enemy from the roofs of the houses. Katakalon in vain urged his colleague to march to the relief of the place. Ibrahim, however, felt the danger of an attack on his rear, and, abandoning the hope of securing booty by the taking of the place, thought only of destroying the resources it furnished to the Byzantine government. He set fire to the place and reduced the whole of this great commercial city to ashes. Never was so great a conflagration witnessed before, and it has only since been rivalled by the burning of Moscow. One hundred and forty thousand persons are said to have perished by fire and sword, yet the Turks captured so many prisoners that the slave-markets of Asia were filled with ladies and children from Arzen. The Armenian historians dwell with deep feeling on this terrible calamity, for it commenced a long series of woes which gradually destroyed all the capital accumulated by ages of industry in the mountains of Armenia, rendering them one of the richest and most populous districts in the East. Indeed, the ruin of Arzen was the first step to the dispersion of the Armenian Christians and the desolation of Asia Minor.

As soon as Liparites effected the junction of the Iberian and Abasgian troops with the Byzantine army, a battle was fought with the Turks near Kapetron, on the 18th September 1048. The loss on both sides was great and the results indecisive, but Liparites was taken prisoner, and the Byzantine troops retired. Ibrahim, however, found himself unable to continue the campaign, and returned to Rey. Togrulbeg released Liparites without ransom, or rather he bestowed the ransom sent by the Byzantine emperor on the Abasgian prince, recommending him to be always a friend to the Turks. It is said by Arabian historians that Constantine IX, in order to equal the generosity of Togrul, repaired the Mohammedan mosque at Constantinople.

Negotiations were commenced between Constantine and Togrul, but they led to no result, and Togrul invaded the Byzantine Empire in person. His first attack was directed against the independent principality of Kars, and the Armenians were defeated in battle, and their general, Thatoul, taken prisoner. Thatoul was said to have wounded Arsouran, the son of the favorite minister of Togrul, and when the captive general was led before his conqueror, the sultan told him that if the young man died he should be put to death. To this Thatoul calmly replied, "Sultan, if the wound was inflicted by my hand, your warrior will certainly die". This proved true, and Togrul had the barbarity to execute the brave Armenian, and send his head to the minister whose son had died, as a proof that it could not slay another.

Togrul then directed his forces against the city of Manzikert, employing in the siege an immense ballista which had been constructed by the Emperor Basil II, which he had taken in the town of Bitlis. This immense engine required four hundred men to drag it along, yet it proved of little use to the Turks, for a Gaul in the Byzantine service destroyed it by breaking over it three bottles of an inflammable mixture, while he was approaching the camp of the besiegers as the bearer of a letter to the sultan. The loss of this engine, however, did not abate the courage of the troops, and Alkan, the general of the Khorasmians, promised the sultan to carry the place by assault. The governor of Manzikert made preparations for giving the storming party a desperate reception. The walls were garnished with engines, and the artillery was well supplied with



ponderous stones, gigantic arrows, and beams shod with iron, to launch on the assailants. The defenders were ordered to remain carefully concealed behind the battlements, and Alkan, after commencing the attack with volleys of missiles, advanced to the foot of the wall, satisfied that he had silenced the enemy. But when his men began to plant their ladders, a tempest of stones, arrows, beams, boiling pitch, and smokeballs overwhelmed the bravest, and the rest shrunk back. Their hesitation was the signal for a furious sally, in which Alkan was taken prisoner, and immediately beheaded on the city walls, in sight of the sultan. Togrul, finding that he could not take Manzikert, gave up all hope of breaking through the barrier of fortresses that defended the frontier of the empire, and retired into Persia, AD 1050.

He again invaded the empire in 1052, but the Byzantine army having received a strong reinforcement of Frank and Varangian mercenaries, showed itself so superior to that of the Seljouk sultan in military discipline, that Togrul thought it prudent to retire without hazarding a battle. The military system established by Leo III and Constantine V, and perfected by Nicephorus II, John I, and Basil II, still upheld the glory of the Byzantine arms.

In looking back from modern times at the history of the Byzantine empire, the separation of the Greek and Latin churches appears the most important event in the reign of Constantine IX; but its prominency is owing, on the one hand, to the circumstance that a closer connection began shortly after to exist between the Eastern and Western nations; and, on the other, to the decline in the power of the Byzantine Empire, which gave ecclesiastical affairs greater importance than they would otherwise have merited. Had the successors of Constantine IX continued to possess the power and resources of the successors of Leo III or Basil I, the schism would never have acquired the political importance it actually attained; for as it related to points of opinion on secondary questions, and details of ecclesiastical practice, the people would have abandoned the subject to the clergy and the church, as one not affecting the welfare of Christians, nor the interests of Christianity. The Emperor Basil II, who was bigoted as well as pious, had still good sense to view the question as a political rather than a religious one. He knew that it would be impossible to reunite the two churches; he saw the disposition of the Greek clergy to commence a quarrel, to avoid which he endeavoured to negotiate the amicable separation of the Byzantine ecclesiastical establishment from the papal supremacy. He proposed that the Pope should be honoured as the first Christian bishop in rank, but that he should receive a pecuniary indemnity, and admit the right of the Eastern Church to govern its own affairs according to its own constitution and local usages, and acknowledge the Patriarch of Constantinople as its head. This plan, reasonable as it might appear to statesmen, had little chance of success. The claim of the Bishop of Rome to be the agent of the theocracy which ruled the Christian church was too generally admitted to allow any limits to be put to his authority. The propositions of Basil II were rejected, but the open rupture with Rome did not take place until 1053, when it was caused by the violent and unjust conduct of the Greek patriarch, Michael Keroularios. He ordered all the Latin churches in the Byzantine empire, in which mass was celebrated according to the rites of the Western church, to be closed; and, in conjunction with Leo, bishop of Achrida, the Patriarch of Bulgaria addressed a controversial letter to the bishop of Trani, which revived all the old disputes with the papal church, adding the question about the use of unleavened bread in the holy communion. The people on both sides, who understood little of the points contested by the clergy, adopted the simple rule that it was their duty to hate the members of the other church; and the Greeks, having their nationality condensed in their ecclesiastical establishment, far exceeded the Western nations in ecclesiastical bigotry, for the people in the western nations of Europe were often not very friendly to papal pretensions. The extreme bigotry of the Greeks soon tended to make the people of the Byzantine Empire averse to all intercourse with the Latins, as equals, and they assumed a superiority over nations rapidly advancing in activity, wealth, power, and intelligence, merely because they deemed them heretics. The separation of the two churches proved, consequently, more injurious to the Greeks, in their stationary condition of society, than to the Western Christians, who were eagerly pressing forward in many paths of social improvement.

The Empress Zoe died in the year 1050, at the age of seventy. Constantine IX survived to the year 1054. When the emperor felt his end approaching, he ordered himself, according to the superstitious fashion of the time, to be transported to the monastery of Mangana, which he had constructed. His ministers, and especially his prime-minister, John the logothetes, and president of the senate, urged him to name Nicephorus Bryennios, who commanded the Macedonian troops, his successor. The forms of the imperial constitution rendered it necessary that the sovereign should be crowned in Constantinople, and a courier was despatched to summon Bryennios to the capital. But as soon as Theodora heard of this attempt of her brother-in-law to deprive her of the throne she had been compelled to cede to him, she hastened to the imperial palace, convoked the senate, ordered the guards to be drawn out, and, presenting herself as the lawful empress, was proclaimed sovereign of the empire with universal acclamations. The news of this event embittered the last moments of the dying voluptuary, who hated Theodora for the respect her conduct inspired.

### Sect. III

#### REIGNS OF THEODORA AND MICHAEL VI STRATIOTIKOS, OR THE WARLIKE, A.D. 1054-1057

Theodora, with a good deal of masculine vigour of character, possessed the confined views and acrimonious passions of a recluse. Her first act was to revenge on Bryennios the attempt which her brother-in-law had made to deprive her of the throne. He and his partisans were banished, and his estates confiscated. Her personal attention to the duties of a sovereign, and the strictness with which she overlooked the general administration, proved that, unlike her predecessor, she acted according to the dictates of her own conscience in public affairs, and not as the passive instrument of those who were willing, for their own ends, to relieve her from exertion. Yet she followed the system by which the members of her family, in establishing their despotic power, had undermined the fabric of the Byzantine administration. Instead of selecting the ablest native senators to act as ministers and judges, she intrusted the direction of every department of government to eunuchs of her household, and her primeminister was Leo Strabospondyles, an ecclesiastic, synkellos of the Patriarch of Constantinople. She even sent one of her eunuchs to supersede Isaac Comnenos as commander-in-chief of the army placed on the frontier to watch the movements of the Turks. Isaac belonged to one of those great aristocratic families in Asia Minor whose wealth and power had long excited the jealousy of the emperors; and Theodora now displayed much too openly the distrust with which they were regarded by the central administration. To preserve all power as much as possible in her own hands, she presided in person in the cabinet and the senate, and even heard appeals as supreme judge in civil cases. The performance of this last duty, though little in harmony with the executive power, was in her age looked upon by her subjects as a most laudable act.

Fortune favoured Theodora in the circumstances of her short reign, and her popularity was in a great measure derived from events over which she exercised no control. She was the last scion of a family which had upheld with glory the institutions of the empire for nearly two centuries, which had secured to its subjects a degree of internal tranquillity and commercial prosperity far greater than had been enjoyed during the same period by any equal portion of the human race, and the memory of which in succeeding years excited deep regret in the breasts of the Greeks themselves, though the Greeks were the body of their subjects treated with greatest neglect. During her reign, the empire was disturbed by no civil war, nor desolated by any foreign invasion. The seasons were temperate, the fertility of the earth enabled the people to

enjoy the blessings of peace, and a pestilence which had previously ravaged the principal cities of the empire suddenly ceased.

At the advanced age of seventy-six, Theodora felt herself so robust that she looked forward to a long life; and the monks who swarmed in her palace, observing her infatuated confidence in the vigor of her frame, flattered her with prophecies that she was destined to reign for many years. The superstitious feelings of the time, as well as the personal vanity of Theodora, caused her to place implicit confidence in these ecclesiastical soothsayers; but in the midst of her projects she was suddenly attacked by an intestine disorder that brought her to the grave. To prevent the government falling into the hands of the territorial aristocracy, she, with her dying breath, named Michael Stratiotikos as her successor. He had been a general of some reputation, and an efficient member of the official establishment; but advanced age had converted him into a decrepit general and doting senator. The prime-minister and the eunuchs of Theodora had nevertheless suggested his nomination, as it promised to place on the throne one who could not avoid being an instrument in their hands. Theodora, hoping to recover her health, compelled the new emperor to swear with the most tremendous imprecations that he would always remain obedient to her orders, but she survived his nomination only a few hours; and with her expired the race of Basil the Slavonian groom, and the administrative glory of the Byzantine Empire, on the 30th of August, 1057.

The accession of Michael VI was no sooner known than the president of the senate, Theodosios Monomachos, nephew of Constantine IX, attempted to mount the throne, pretending a hereditary claim to the imperial succession. To enforce his ridiculous pretension, he armed his household slaves, who formed a numerous body, collected assistance from his friends, assembled a mob, and, proceeding through the streets of Constantinople at the head of this band, broke open the public prisons and talked of revolution. His plan was to storm the palace; but the moment his movements were made known to the officers of the native and Varangian companies of guards on duty, they marched against him, and he was immediately abandoned by all his followers. When he sought an asylum in St. Sophia's, he found the doors of the church closed against him and was taken with his son sitting on the steps. This sedition was so contemptible that the people ridiculed the affair in a lampoon, and the emperor only banished its leader to Pergamus.

Michael VI was a man of a limited capacity, and his faculties were now dulled by age; yet accident intrusted him with the direction of the government at a delicate crisis. He was called upon to maintain the integrity of the Roman administrative system against the assaults of a territorial aristocracy, on whom the manners of the age and the altered relations of society had conferred powers at variance with the strict centralization of the empire. Yet the incapacity of Michael must be regarded as having only accelerated a change which it would have required the genius and energy of a great administrative reformer like Leo III to avert, and which could only have been averted by remodelling the constitution of the empire.

The administrative vigor of the government was diminished; its legal supremacy had vanished; the connection between the provinces and the capital was weakened; the people at a distance no longer respected the emperor as the centre of social order and the fountain of impartial justice; ruined roads had broken up the administrative unity of empire; great nobles governed their immense estates as sovereign princes; and frontier communities, being often compelled to defend themselves against foreign invaders by their own resources, began to consider how far those resources could be rendered available to lessen the fiscal extortions of the central government. The territorial aristocracy of the Byzantine Empire had also at this time become warriors like the barons of the feudal states, and as they joined learning to their military qualities, they were able to perform the duties of judges and magistrates on their estates. Jealousy of their power, and the corruption of society in the capital, had led the emperors to intrust not only the direction of the civil administration, but even the highest military commands, to eunuchs of the imperial household, and a gradual hostility had grown up between

this class and the territorial aristocracy. This employment of slaves and domestics as generals and statesmen seems strange to those who judge of the past by the actual condition of society; but no feature in Eastern manners has been more permanent than the high social position acquired by slaves in their masters' families. Their education was often as carefully attended to, their character and abilities more impartially estimated, and their faults more judiciously eradicated, than those of the children of the house. The oldest records of society show us the slave as superior to the hired servant; and the administration of the Ottoman Empire, even in modern times, has been of easier access to the slave than to the citizen. Despotism is also compelled to seek rather for personal devotion than systematic service, and no stronger proof can be adduced of the progress which the Byzantine government had made towards pure despotism, than the power the emperors had acquired of ruling their subjects by the members of their household.

Michael VI was not blind to the hostile feelings of a powerful class of his subjects, but he relied on the permanence of the established order of things. The support of the senate, the obedience of the municipality of Constantinople, the conservative feelings of the clubs of the hippodrome, and of the corporations of the traders, seemed a complete guarantee against the success of any revolution; and the emperor treated all these classes with liberality. He felt, likewise, so confident in the attachment of the soldiers to their military organization, that he imprudently wounded the pride and self-interest of the principal officers of the army and the official nobility, by holding back from them the promotions and donatives they were accustomed to receive at Easter. Other measures, equally ill-judged, were adopted about the same time. Katakalon, the most popular general in the empire, was deprived of the command at Antioch on a charge of fraudulently enriching himself by diminishing the number of soldiers in his government, and extorting money from the inhabitants. The justice of the act was, however, suspected, as he was replaced by Michael Ouranos, a nephew of the emperor. Michael VI, likewise, on reestablishing Nicephorus Bryennios to the rank of which he had been deprived by Theodora, refused to restore his private fortune, which had been unjustly sequestered; and when Bryennios urged his claim in person, the old emperor cut short his solicitations by saying, "Finished work alone merits wages". He had already ordered the restored general to lead a division of three thousand men to reinforce the army in Cappadocia, and Bryennios now left the capital inflamed with anger. Several of the most powerful nobles of Asia Minor had already formed a plot to overthrow the existing government, and they availed themselves of the offence given to Katakalon and Bryennios to establish secret communications with these officers and engage them in the conspiracy. Isaac Comnenus, Romanes Skleros, Michael Burtzes, and Nicephoras Botaneiates, who resided at Constantinople in princely state, directed the plot and arranged the plan of rebellion.

The attention of government was diverted from these conspirators by the conduct of an officer with whom they had no connection. Hervé, a Norman general, who had distinguished himself under Maniakes, had subsequently served the empire with zeal and fidelity. On soliciting the rank of magistros, his claim was treated by the emperor in a way which irritated the pride of the Norman to such a degree that he quitted Constantinople, and hastened to an estate he possessed at Dabarme in Armenia. Collecting three hundred of his countrymen from the garrisons in the neighbourhood, he deserted to the Turks. He found, however, that the Infidels were less inclined to tolerate the proud spirit of independence that characterised the Normans than the Byzantines, and, separating from Samouch, the Seljouk leader, with whom he quarrelled, heled his little band to the city of Aklat, where he was surprised and made prisoner by the emir Aponasar.

The rashness of Bryennios was even greater than that of Hervé; and as he was one of the conspirators, his conduct might have ruined their enterprise. The chiefs at Constantinople, having settled their plans, decided that Isaac Comnenus was to be the future emperor; and after plighting their mutual faith, with all the religious ceremonies and horrid imprecations which were then considered necessary to bind the conscience, retired to their estates to collect troops.

Bryennios had, in the mean time, reached Cappadocia, where he ordered the paymaster of the army to make an advance of pay to the soldiers under his command. This was refused, as being at variance with the emperor's orders. John Opsaras, who held the office of paymaster, was a patrician; yet, when he visited Bryennios in his tent, that officer so completely lost all command over his temper, that he struck him on the face, pulled his beard, threw him on the ground, and then ordered him to be dragged to prison. Another patrician, Lykanthos, who commanded the troops of Pisidia and Lycaonia in a separate camp, convinced that the conduct of Bryennios announced an intention to rebel, hastened with his guards to the spot, delivered Opsaras from confinement, and arrested Bryennios, whose eyes Opsaras ordered to be put out, and then sent him a prisoner to Constantinople.

The principal conspirators, fearing that their plot was discovered, repaired to Kastamona in Paphlagonia, where Isaac Comnenus was waiting, at his family seat, until the preparations for the rebellion were completed. The assembly of the conspirators having put an end to concealment, Isaac Comnenus was conducted by his partisans to the plain of Gounavia, and proclaimed emperor, on the 8th June 1057. Katakalon, finding some difficulty in joining his companions, forged an imperial order, giving him the command of five legions, which he concentrated in the plain of Nicopolis, pretending that he was to lead them against Samouch, a Turkish chief who had invaded the empire. By promises and threats, he succeeded in engaging the officers of this force to join the rebellion; and, effecting a junction with the troops Isaac had already assembled, the rebels crossed the Sangarius, and gained possession of Nice.

The Emperor Michael placed the imperial army under the command of Theodore, a eunuch whom he had raised to the rank of Domestikos of the East, and the Bulgarian prince, Aaron, who, though a brother-in-law of Isaac, was his personal enemy. The imperial generals broke down the bridges over the Sangarius, in order to cut off the communications of the rebels with the provinces in which their family influence lay, and then approached Nicaea. Isaac Comnenus was encamped about twelve stades to the north of the city, and the foragers of the two armies were soon in constant communication; the leaders on both sides overlooking the intercourse, in the expectation of gaining deserters. The imperialists urged their opponents not to sacrifice their lives for an ambitious rebel, who exposed their lives and fortunes for his own profit; while the rebels laughed at the idea of serving an old dotard, who intrusted the command of his armies to eunuchs. Isaac, seeing that nothing was to be gained by these conversations, gave strict orders to break off all communication; and Theodore, attributing the measure to fear, advanced to Petroa, only fifteen stades from the rebel camp.

A battle was thus inevitable. Isaac Comnenus drew out his army, which was composed of veteran troops, at a place called Hades. Katakalon commanded the left wing, and was opposed to Basil Tarchaniotes, the general of the European troops, the ablest and most distinguished of the Macedonian nobility. Romanos Skleros, at the head of the right wing, was opposed to Aaron, who had under his orders the patrician Lykanthos and the Norman Randolph. Isaac and Theodore directed their respective centres. The battle was not severely contested. Aaron routed the right wing of the rebels, but his success led to no result; for Katakalon, having defeated the Macedonian troops, stormed the imperial camp, while Isaac overthrew their centre. The aristocratic constitution of society displays itself in the incidents of this battle. The superior temper of the arms of the chiefs gave their exploits as much importance as in the Homeric battles. When the victorious troops of Isaac and Katakalon assailed the troops of Aaron, Randolph found himself borne away among a crowd of fugitives. Disengaging himself, he perceived Nicephorus Botaneiates leading the pursuers. Shouting his war-cry, the Norman knight met the Asiatic noble; but his sword was broken on the well-tempered helmet of his enemy, and he was led a prisoner to the rebel camp. Several officers of rank were slain in the imperial army, and many made prisoners. The victors lost only one man of rank. Isaac Comnenus advanced to Nicomedia, where he was met by envoys from the Emperor Michael, who offered him the title of Caesar for himself, and a general amnesty for his partisans, if they would lay aside their arms. Isaac knew that he had no safety but as emperor, and Katakalon

boldly opposed all terms of arrangement. Michael Psellos, called the Prince of Philosophers, was one of the envoys, and seeing how matters were likely to end, he deserted the cause of his old master with more promptitude than might have been expected from a learned pedant. The emperor, finding he had nothing to expect from negotiation, attempted to fortify himself in Constantinople. He compelled the senators to take an oath, and subscribe a declaration, that they would never acknowledge Isaac Comnenus as emperor; and he lavished money, places, promotions, and privileges, on the people and the municipality. Yet the moment the victors reached the palace of Damatrys, the senators rushed to St. Sophia's, and begged the Patriarch to absolve them from the oath they had just taken. The stern Patriarch, Michael Keroularios, affected to resist, but consented to be himself the medium of communication with the new emperor. The cause of Michael VI was now hopeless; Isaac was proclaimed emperor, and his predecessor was ordered to quit the imperial palace, that it might be prepared for the reception of the new sovereign. It is said the old man, before departing, sent to ask the Patriarch what he would give him for his resignation; the intriguing pontiff replied, with sarcastic humility, "The kingdom of heaven". On the 31st of August, Michael VI returned as a private individual to his own house, where he lived undisturbed, dying two years after. On the 2nd of September, Isaac I received the imperial crown in the Church of St. Sophia.

To contemporaries, this revolution presented nothing to distinguish it from the changes of sovereign, which had been an ordinary event in the Byzantine empire, and which were ascribed by the wisest statesmen of the time to the decree of Heaven, and not to the working of political and moral causes, which the will of God allows the intelligence of man to employ for effecting the improvement or decline of human affairs. It would be an error to ascribe the success of this rebellion to the weakness of the reigning emperor, and to the defects of his administration, or to the ability of bold and rapacious conspirators, without taking into account the apathy of the inhabitants of the empire to a mere change in the name of their emperor. Perhaps no man then living perceived that this event was destined to change the whole system of government, destroy the fabric of the central administration, deliver up the provinces of Asia an easy conquest to the Seljouk Turks, and the capital a prey to a band of crusaders.

#### *General Observations*

We have now traced the progress of the Eastern Roman Empire through an eventful period of three centuries and a half. We have contemplated the rare spectacle of a great empire reviving from a state of political anarchy and social disorganisation; we have seen it reinvigorated by the establishment of a high degree of order and security for life and property; and we have recorded its progress to the attainment of great military power. We have endeavoured to trace the causes that led to this change, as well as to record the events which accompanied it. It would now be an instructive task to compare the condition of the population living under this reformed Roman Empire with that of the inhabitants of the countries which had once constituted the Empire of the West; but scholars have not yet performed the preliminary work necessary for such an inquiry, so that even a superficial examination of the subject would run into discussions on vague details. Each student of history, therefore, who may happen to turn over the pages of this volume, must institute the comparison for himself in that branch of historical or antiquarian research with which he is most familiar. Unfortunately the records of the Eastern Empire are deprived of one great source of historical interest they tell us very little concerning the condition of the mass of the population; and while they enable us to study the actions and the policy of the emperors, and even to observe the political consequences of their respective administrations, they leave us in ignorance concerning many important questions relating to the composition of the mass of society; they supply few facts for discriminating its separate elements, or for forming a classification of its social ranks. We know that freemen,

serfs, and slaves were mingled together in every city and province; and over the whole surface of the Byzantine dominions, heterogeneous races of mankind were compressed into apparent unity by the powerful government that ruled at Constantinople. But we are without the means of assigning to each class of society, and to each discordant nationality, its exact share and influence in the mass that composed the empire. We perceive that there was no real unity among the people, and yet the unity created by the government was so imposing, that both contemporary and modern historians have treated the history of the Byzantine empire as if it represented the feelings and interests of a Byzantine nation, and almost overlooked the indelible distinctions of the Greek, Armenian, and Slavonian races, which, while forced into simultaneous action by the great administrative power that ruled them, constantly retained their own national peculiarities.

Two grand social distinctions illuminate the obscurities of Byzantine history during the period comprised in this volume. A regular administration of justice, that secured a high degree of security for life and property, gave the people an immeasurable superiority over the subjects of all contemporary governments, and bound the various nations within the limits of the Eastern Empire in willing submission to the central power.

Through all the darkness of the Byzantine annals, we perceive that a middle class exerted some influence on society, and that it formed an element of the population, independent of the heterogeneous national races from which it was composed. But the nature of its composition explains sufficiently why its political influence proved extremely insignificant when compared with its numbers, wealth, and social importance. Local institutions were reduced to such a state of subordination to the central authority, that they wanted the power to train the different nations of which the middle class was composed to similar political sentiments. All attempts of the people to reform their own condition proved fruitless, and demands for redress of public grievances could only prove successful by a revolution. Perhaps this evil may be inherent in the nature of all governments which carry centralization so far as to suppress the expression of public opinion in municipal bodies. In such governments, whether monarchical or republican, the central authority becomes so powerful, that public opinion is rendered inefficacious to effect reform, and the people soon learn to regard revolutions as the only chance of improvement

The middle class through the Byzantine Empire was a remnant of ancient society an element that had survived from the days of municipal liberty and national independence. Many free citizens still continued to till their lands many were occupied in manufactures and commerce. It was the existence of this class which filled the treasury of the emperors (taxation yields comparatively little in a state peopled by great nobles and impoverished serfs); and it was the wealth of the Byzantine government which gave it an ultimate superiority over all its contemporaries for several centuries.

Military excellence was at that time as much the effect of individual strength and activity in the soldier, as of discipline in the army or talent in the general. The wealth of the Byzantine emperors enabled them to fill their armies with the best soldiers in Europe; in their mercenary legions, knights and nobles fought in the ranks, and the captains of their guards were kings and princes. Nor were the native troops inferior to the foreign mercenaries. The lance of the Byzantine officer was famous in personal encounters long before the aristocracy of Western Europe sought military renown by imitating an exercise in which sleight-of-hand rather than valour secured the victory.

It is not difficult to point out generally the causes which supplied the Byzantine treasury with large revenues, at a period when the precious metals were extremely rare in the west of Europe. A curious comparison might be made between the riches and luxury of the court of Constantinople during the reign of Theophilus, and the poverty and rudeness that prevailed at the court of Winchester under his contemporary, Egbert. The difference of the value of the precious metals is peculiarly striking. Theophilus gave two pounds' weight of gold, or a

hundred and forty-four byzants, for a fine horse, of which the market value appears to have been a hundred byzants; yet, among the Saxons, about the same time, the price of a common horse was two-thirds of a pound weight of silver. It is difficult to explain the rarity of the precious metals in the West, when we remember that the tin of Egbert's dominions found its way to Constantinople, and that the byzants of the Eastern emperors were the current gold coin throughout England. The subjects of the Byzantine empire supplied the greater part of western and the whole of northern Europe with Indian produce, spices, precious stones, silk, fine woollen cloth, carpets, cotton, what we now call morocco leather, dye-stuffs, gums, oil, wine, and fruits; besides most manufactured articles, and all luxuries. Yet, from the poverty of the Western nations, their consumption must have been comparatively small. The profits of the trade, however exorbitant they might have been on particular transactions, would not have formed an important article of national wealth, unless a constant profit had been realized by the difference of value of the precious metals in the various countries with which dealings were carried on. Few of the Western nations worked any mines, and yet they were constantly consuming a considerable amount of gold and silver; the Byzantine Empire possessed considerable mines of silver and we know that gold was always abundant in the treasury. Gold and silver coin and slaves were consequently commodities on which a sure profit was always realised. But in the eleventh century a great change took place in society in Western Europe, coincident with the stationary condition of the Byzantine Empire. In the West, the spirit of social reform infused a sentiment of justice into the counsels of kings; in the East, a spirit of conservation, pervading the imperial administration, withered the energies of society.



VOLUME III  
A.D. 1057-1453

BOOK THIRD  
DECLINE AND FALL OF THE BYZANTINE GOVERNMENT  
A.D. 1057-1204

CHAPTER I  
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MODIFIED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE  
POPULATION IN ASIA MINOR. A.D. 1057-1081

Sect. I

Reigns of Isaac I (Comnenus), and of Constantine X (Ducas)

A.D. 1057-1081.

The contemporaries of Isaac Comnenus believed that the Byzantine, or, as they called it, the Roman empire, had attained a degree of wealth and power which secured it a permanent superiority over every other government. A review of the vicissitudes it had undergone in the preceding ages, entitled them to look forward with confidence to centuries of future prosperity. But to those who study the causes of decline in the Byzantine government from a modern point of view, the empire presents a very different aspect. To us, it is apparent that the administrative organization of the Byzantine state, and the social and religious feelings of the popular mind, had already undergone a change for the worse. The power of the emperor had become more absolute in the capital, by the neglect of official education and regular promotion among the servants of the state. The arbitrary will of the emperor had taken the place of the usages of the administration, and courtiers now assumed duties which were formerly executed only by well-trained and experienced officials. This increase of arbitrary power did not conduce to augment the energy of the central government in distant provinces: justice was administered with less firmness and equity, and the distant population felt fewer benefits from their connection with the emperor and with Constantinople. The concentration of all executive power in the cabinet of the sovereign, moreover, caused much important business, in which neither the emperor's personal interest nor authority appeared to be immediately interested, to be greatly neglected; for sovereigns, like private individuals, look with more attention at what relates to their own advantage than at what concerns only the public welfare. The repairs of distant ports, aqueducts, and roads, the improvement of frontier fortifications, and the civil government of unprofitable possessions, were held to absorb more than a due proportion of the funds required to maintain the imperial dignity. The pageants of the palace, of the hippodrome, and of the church, became every year more splendid, for each emperor wished to surpass his predecessors; and in no branch of the imperial duties was it so easy to purchase popular applause. In the meantime, the facilities of provincial intercommunication and the defence of the frontiers were proportionably neglected.

The emperors themselves must be held responsible for the decline of the imperial administration in the Byzantine Empire. The Basilian dynasty, which ruined the political

edifice, was an inferior race of men to the Isaurian princes who repaired it. Basil I was ignorant of civil business, and ill fitted by education to appreciate the value of the system of which accident constituted him the head. Leo VI, Constantine VII, and Romanus II never appeared as leaders of the Roman armies. It was therefore not unnatural that these princes, alarmed by the repeated rebellions, seditions, and conspiracies of the great officers of state and commanders-in-chief should feel extremely jealous of the territorial aristocracy, which had secured to themselves the possession of the highest posts in the government of the empire. In order to avoid the danger of intrusting the nobility with official power, these emperors established a board, consisting of their own private secretaries, which controlled the acts of the ministers of state; and they gradually filled the highest offices in the administration, as well as in the court, with persons belonging to their private households. Every other object gave way to the importance of guarding against revolutions and rebellions; and as the nomination of eunuchs to the highest dignities was a considerable security against the frequent attempts to change the emperor, which had proved so destructive to private property and commercial enterprise, it was not unpopular among the wealthy and industrious citizens and agriculturists. As eunuchs were incapable of mounting the throne, their interests generally led them to guard against revolution, and avoid change. Hence it was that they were so frequently entrusted with the command of large armies and important military expeditions; and, what appears to modern ideas a degradation of the empire, was by contemporaries regarded as a wise conservative policy.

The practice of conducting public business through the medium of a cabinet of private secretaries, led to many evils. Councils of the ministers and great officers of state were laid aside, and the authority of established usages and systematic rules was diminished. Each minister and general received his orders directly from the emperor, and communicated with the imperial secretary charged with the correspondence of the particular department to which the affair in question might relate; and, consequently, subserviency to power became the surest means of advancing the fortunes of all public servants. Wealth was attained and ambition was gratified by affected devotion to the person of the emperor, by mean servility to the court favourite, and by active intrigue among the members of the imperial household, much more surely and rapidly than by attention to professional duties or by patriotic services.

This change in the position of the dignitaries of the empire enabled the sovereign to entrust the direction of the government to the stewards of his household. Now, though these men were not trained in the public service, yet their previous duties prevented the practice from producing so great an amount of public inconvenience as to cause general dissatisfaction. It lowered the standard of official attainments, and diminished the influence of personal responsibility and high character, but it led immediately to no actual disorder. We must recollect that many of the great families in the Byzantine Empire at this period possessed households so numerous as often to count their domestic slaves by thousands. Those who maintained such establishments in the capital were proprietors of immense estates in the provinces, and the intendants who managed their affairs were consequently trained to business in a school which afforded them as extensive an experience of government as can now be gained by the individuals who direct the administration of many of the German principalities. This fact affords some explanation of the capacity for government so generally displayed by the aristocracy of the Roman and Byzantine empires, and of the aptitude shown by eunuchs to perform the duties of ministers, and even of generals. Both these classes found their sphere of duty enlarged and not changed, when from nobles they became emperors, or from stewards ministers of state. But this system being opposed to the true basis of society, which requires a free circulation in all its classes, had a tendency to weaken the body politic. The imperfection of our knowledge in relation to the connection between social and political science, often prevents our tracing the decline of states to their real causes, which are probably more frequently moral than political.

We have seen that the Basilian dynasty transferred the direction of public affairs from the aristocracy to the stewards of the imperial household. These domestics carried on the work of political change by filling the public offices with their own creatures, and thereby destroying the

power of that body of state officials, whose admirable organization had repeatedly saved the empire from falling into anarchy under tyrants, or from being ruined by peculation under aristocratic influence. In this manner the scientific fabric of the imperial power, founded by Augustus, was at last ruined in the East as it had been destroyed in the West. The emperors broke the government to pieces before strangers divided the empire.

The revolution which undermined the systematic administration was already consummated before the rebellion of the aristocracy placed the imperial crown on the head of Isaac Comnenus. No organized body of trained officials any longer existed to resist the egoistical pretensions of the new intruders into ministerial authority. The emperor could now make his household steward prime-minister, and the governor of a province could appoint his butler prefect of the police. The church and the law alone preserved some degree of systematic organization and independent character. It was not in the power of an emperor to make a man a lawyer or a priest with the same ease he could appoint him a chamberlain or a minister of state.

As it was under the later princes of the Basilian period that scientific knowledge ceased to be a requisite for official rank, it is from this period that we must date the decline of every species of information and learning in Byzantine society. The farther we advance in this history we shall see that the house of Comnenus only pursued the course traced out for the imperial government by its predecessors. Basil II was the last emperor of the East who had a really Roman policy, and his views were confined too exclusively to military affairs. Circumstances henceforward directed the progress of events. No future emperor possessed the enlarged views or the political capacity necessary to arrest the social decay that was destroying the Byzantine power, nor did any one aspire at the glory of giving a new organization to the imperial government, in accordance with the new exigencies of society and the altered interests of the various classes of the population. One example will sufficiently explain the manner in which official ignorance and local seclusion operated in destroying the foundations of the internal administration. They rendered the collection of the statistical information, on which the census had been reviewed, extremely difficult. For eleven centuries the Roman census had been accurately compiled; and, from the time of Constantine at least, it had been carefully revised every fifteenth year, in order that necessary reductions and modifications of the most injurious imposts might thus be forcibly obtruded on the attention of the central government. Although the rigid system of dividing the subjects of the emperor into classes or castes ceased after the fall of the Western Empire, and the Byzantine government did not, like the Emperor Augustus, force every man to go up to be taxed into his own city, still the census continued to be framed with great minuteness: every proprietor, every individual inhabitant of the empire, and every species of property, were inscribed in its registers by experienced officials. But when whole provinces were depopulated by the ravages of the Bulgarians and the Saracens, and extensive districts were peopled only by the herdsmen and shepherds of large landed proprietors, like the president Basilios and Eustathios Maleinos, the old system of the census was necessarily relaxed. The great corps of land-surveyors, estimators, and assessors, which for ten centuries had performed its duties with systematic precision, was first diminished, from motives of economy, and then disorganized by being placed under the orders of ignorant and rapacious inspectors, chosen from among the favourites of the court. The consequence was, that this great branch of the Roman imperial constitution was gradually neglected by statesmen who pretended to govern by precedent on conservative principles; and as the census was more and more imperfectly executed, the central government became constantly more ignorant of its real resources.

The insecurity of property in the frontier provinces, and the ignorance resulting from the secluded life of the lower classes on large agricultural estates, reduced the judicial establishments of the empire. As communications became rarer, the business of the courts of law diminished; and, except in the commercial cities, there no longer existed a body of independent lawyers to watch the judges, and restrain the exactions of the fiscal administration and the territorial aristocracy. The judges themselves soon became an inferior class of men, as

they were no longer able to procure the voluminous and expensive law-books required to qualify them for pronouncing their decisions with promptitude and equity. Justice consequently was ill administered, and the people in the distant provinces became more inclined to seek protection from the great landed aristocracy of their immediate neighbourhood, than to look, as formerly, to the emperor alone for security and justice. The spell, which had so long, and under so many vicissitudes, connected the people with the central authority, was thus broken.

In this general decline of civilization, while the roads were falling to decay and the population decreasing, it seems strange that the revenues of the Byzantine Empire continued almost undiminished. This circumstance resulted from two causes. The ruin of the power of the caliphs removed a commercial rival in Asia, and the improvement in the condition of the people throughout Europe created additional markets for the commerce of the East and the manufactures of the Byzantine cities; at the same time, the abundant supply of the precious metals, which for about two centuries had aided in sustaining the power of the emperor, still continued. Though it is difficult to trace from what sources this supply flowed, the fact itself is well established.

The army, next to the finances, was the basis on which the emperors rested their power. The depopulation of the agricultural districts, and the high price of labour in the manufacturing and commercial cities, rendered the Byzantine government more dependent on foreign mercenaries in the eleventh and twelfth centuries than it had been in the ninth and tenth. At the same time, the rapid advances which the population of the other European nations was now making in wealth and civilization rendered it more difficult than formerly for the emperors to purchase the military services of the best European warriors. From this period the Byzantine armies begin to be inferior to those of the western nations; their military system was conservative, while that of the western nations was progressive. The Normans were already superior to the Byzantine troops in valour and endurance, and almost their equals in tactics and science: they soon became their superiors in every military accomplishment, science, and virtue.

#### ISAAC I. AD. 1057

The reign of Isaac Comnenus, though short, proves that he was a man of no ordinary powers of mind. He saw clearly the downward tendency of Byzantine affairs, and he made a vigorous effort to arrest their descent. His education had afforded him the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the whole fabric of the government, and his natural talents enabled him to profit by the advantages of his position. Hence, although he was placed on the throne as the leader of an aristocratic revolution, his policy was to preserve and not to alter the ancient system of administration. His father, Manuel Comnenus, had been a favourite officer of the Emperor Basil II; and, when he died, that prince had undertaken the guardianship of his two sons, Isaac and John. They received the best education which the age afforded in the monastery of Studion, and Isaac commenced his career of public service in the emperor's bodyguard. Under the eye of the indefatigable Basil he learned the steady application to business and the active warlike habits of that prince; but with these virtues he acquired also something of the grave, melancholy, and inflexible character of his patron.

The powerful partisans who had raised him to the throne naturally shared the principal dignities of the empire among themselves; but Isaac, in as far as he was able, conferred on them rewards which induced them to quit the capital, and leave him free to direct the central administration without their interference. Katakalon received the office of *curopalates*, which was also conferred on the emperor's brother John Comnenus, in whose person it was united with that of *mezas domestikos*, or commander of the forces. The support of the patriarch

Michael Keroularios, whose boldness and activity made him an important ally, was purchased by an imprudent augmentation of his political power. The right of nominating the grand *economus* or chancellor, and the *skevophylax* or treasurer of the church of St Sophia, had been hitherto vested in the emperor, who now resigned it to the ambitious patriarch.

The dilapidated state of the finances, caused by the extravagant expenditure of Constantine IX (and indeed of most of the emperors who had filled the throne since the death of Basil II, all of whom had wasted immense sums in gifts to their favorites, in courtly splendour, and in ecclesiastical buildings, called for Isaac's immediate attention, and his first care was to reform the administration of the public revenue. He annulled the grants of the state domains made by the successors of Basil II to private individuals, and resumed the sums affected for the foundation and maintenance of a number of monasteries in which the monks were living together rather like clubs of wealthy bachelors than as holy societies of virtuous cenobites. To each monastery the emperor made an allowance of a pension, fixed according to the number of the monks by which it was tenanted. This reduction of the wealth of men who in many cases had sought retirement to enjoy luxurious ease, very naturally excited much dissatisfaction among the higher classes, to whom the monasteries had been useful by affording the means of providing for near relations in a becoming manner without expense; but John Scylitzes, the best historian of this period, who himself attained the rank of *curopalates*, approves of the conduct of Isaac in curtailing the incomes of the monks. The emperor also carried his reforms into his own court by diminishing the expenditure of the imperial household, and abolishing many pensions conferred on senators, nobles, and courtiers, as a matter of favour, without their having any duties to perform. Whenever the arbitrary will of individuals can influence government, there is a great difficulty in preventing the unnecessary accumulation of high-paid and useless titled functionaries. Courtiers receive military rank for which they have no qualification, and without any reference to the numbers of the army or navy. The reforms by which Isaac sought to eradicate these abuses offended a considerable body of idle courtiers in the capital, who were enjoying the fruits of severe impositions wrung from the provinces, and he was assailed with murmurs of dissatisfaction. The poor had too many causes of suffering, which the emperor could do nothing to relieve, to have derived any immediate benefit from these reforms, or felt any gratitude to the reformer. Isaac, indeed, adopted his improvements for the purpose of rendering the public establishments of the empire more efficient, and without any view of diminishing the weight of the public burdens. Every report to his disadvantage was eagerly circulated among the ecclesiastics and the courtiers; they were disseminated among the people, and have coloured the views of historians concerning his character and policy. Every Byzantine writer cites as a proof of his unbounded arrogance that he changed the type of the gold coinage of the empire, and impressed on it his own figure, with a drawn sword in his right hand,—thereby, as they pretend, ascribing his elevation to the throne, not to the grace of God, but to his own courage.

The emperor vainly endeavoured to quiet the turbulent and ambitious disposition of the patriarch by bestowing offices of honour and profit on his nephews; the demands of the proud priest grew daily more exorbitant and his language more insolent. When Isaac at length refused his requests, he indignantly exclaimed to his followers, "I made him an emperor, and I can unmake him". He proclaimed himself the equal of his sovereign by wearing the red boots which the severe ceremonial of the Byzantine court had set apart as one of the distinctive ensigns of the imperial power. This assumption was really equivalent to an act of rebellion against the civil power; and when the patriarch was reproached with his pretensions, he defended his conduct by declaring that there was little or no difference between an emperor and a patriarch, except in so far as the ecclesiastical dignity was more honourable. As such insolence could not be safely tolerated, the emperor determined to depose Michael Ceroularios and appoint a new patriarch; but as it appeared dangerous to take any measures openly against the head of the church in the capital, Isaac watched for an opportunity to arrest Michael when he quitted the city to perform an ecclesiastical ceremony without the walls on the feast of the Holy Apostles. The patriarch was then taken into custody by a company of Varangians, and transported to the island of

Proconnesus. Preparations were going on to depose him in a synod convoked for the purpose, when his death relieved the emperor from all trouble, and enabled him to name the president Constantinos Leichudes as his successor, who, though a layman, was elected by the metropolitans, the clergy, and the people, in regular form. The high reputation of Leichudes rendered his nomination popular. For a long time he had been the principal minister of the Emperor Constantine IX, and his prudent administration was supposed to have averted many of the evil consequences with which that prince's vices threatened the empire.

An invasion of the Hungarians and Patzinaks suddenly summoned Isaac to the northern frontier in the summer of 1059. When he reached Triaditza, the Hungarians and the greater part of the Patzinaks retired, and concluded a treaty of peace. Selté alone, one of the four chiefs who had conducted the famous retreat of the Patzinak auxiliaries from Asia Minor across the Bosphorus in 1049, refused to agree to any terms, and carried on the war from the fastnesses he held on the banks of the Danube. He was, however, soon defeated, and his stronghold destroyed; but while the Byzantine army lay encamped near Lobitza, which had been fortified by Selté as a stronghold in the time of Constantine IX, a sudden autumnal storm broke over the camp with fearful violence; men and horses were swept away by the torrents, and the tents were blown down. The emperor sought shelter under a magnificent old oak, where he was leaning against the trunk when a sudden noise behind induced him to withdraw a few paces in astonishment. His wonder was soon increased by a terrific clap of thunder, and the mighty oak against which he had been leaning fell all around, shivered to pieces. The communications of the army were interrupted by the snow for a few days, and the troops were in danger of starvation. This storm having occurred on the 24th of September, which is the feast of St Thekla, the emperor, as soon as he returned to Constantinople, dedicated a chapel in the palace of Blachern to this saint, whose especial protection he believed had saved him from death.

Not long after his return to Constantinople, the emperor was suddenly attacked by a dangerous illness as he was hunting on the shores of the Bosphorus. Michael Psellos, whose treachery had aided him in mounting the throne, records that his malady was an attack of pleurisy; but Scylitzes adopts the opinion generally current among the people, that the disease had a miraculous origin. Isaac was as passionately devoted to the chase as any of his predecessors, or as any Norman king. As he was pursuing a wild boar of monstrous aspect, the grim animal directed its course straight to the sea, and vanished in the waters of the Bosphorus. In disappearing, it shadowed forth "a demoniacal form, and a flash of lightning threw the emperor senseless from his horse". He was taken up in an alarming state by his attendants, and transported in a boat to the imperial palace. His life was for some time in danger; and believing himself to be on the point of death, he assumed the monastic garb, and selected as his successor Constantine Ducas, the man he deemed best able to restore order in the administration from his financial skill. To enable the empire to profit by the services of the man best suited to its circumstances, Isaac set aside his own brother John; yet he was deceived in his choice. He recovered from his illness; but when restored to health, he showed no regret that he had resigned the throne, and retired into the monastery of Studion, where he had received his education, performing all the duties of the humblest monk, and taking his turn to act as porter at the gate. His wife Catherine, a princess of the Bulgarian royal family, confirmed him in his pious resolutions, and retired also from the world with her daughter Maria. After the death of Isaac, his wife celebrated the anniversary of his decease by an annual religious ceremony, at which she made a liberal distribution of alms. On one occasion she ordered the sum to be doubled, and when it was observed that the liberality was too great for her fortune, she replied, "Perhaps these gifts may be the last I can bestow." Her presentiment was soon verified, and her last solemn command was that her body should be interred in the cemetery of Studion as a simple nun, without any sign to indicate that she was born a Bulgarian princess and had been a Roman empress.

Constantine X displayed on the throne little of the talent which Isaac I had supposed him to possess. He had appeared an able minister as long as his conduct was directed by an energetic

superior, but on the throne he acted as an avaricious pedant. He declared that he valued his learning more than his empire, and his reign must have convinced his subjects that his intellect fitted him for composing orations according to the rules of rhetoric rather than for governing men according to the dictates of justice. Avarice and vanity directed his whole conduct as emperor; naturally sluggish, he hardly thought seriously on any subject but how to increase the receipts of the imperial treasury, and how to display his own eloquence. To satisfy the first, he augmented the weight of taxation by selling the public income to farmers of the revenue, who used every exaction to augment their profits; and to give his people an opportunity of appreciating his eloquence, he sate as a civil judge when he ought to have been performing the duties of a sovereign. Yet even in his judicial capacity he constantly violated the laws, from a blind confidence in his own discernment, which led him to believe that he could measure out equity to individuals in opposition to the general principles of the law.

To save money, he reduced the army, neglected to supply the troops with arms, artillery, and warlike stores, and left the fortifications on the frontiers unrepaired and the garrisons unpaid. Isaac had cleared away an accumulation of brevet officers receiving high pay; Constantine X reinstated many of these in their previous rank, to form a heavy and useless burden on the military establishment of the empire. He also made great promotions among the senators, municipal officers, and heads of corporations in Constantinople, in order to secure a strong body of partisans in the capital. For the same purpose, while he weakened the numerical strength of the army by neglecting to recruit the native legions, he liberally provided for the Varangian guard in the capital, on whose attachment his own personal security depended.

The fate of the population of the Byzantine Empire was now decided by the personal character of the emperor. The avarice of Constantine Ducas caused the ruin of the Christian inhabitants of great part of Asia Minor. The decline of the Byzantine power at this period has been very erroneously attributed to a decided military superiority on the part of the Seljouk Turks, to the great ability of Alp Arslan, and to the rashness of Romanus IV (Diogenes); but the events of the reign of Constantine X prove that it was the consequence of his acts. His avarice caused the loss of the two fortresses which defended the frontiers of the empire in the east and the west, Ani and Belgrade; and he allowed the independent Armenians to be completely subjugated by the Mohammedans without an effort in their favour. These warlike mountaineers had long formed an impregnable barrier against the progress of the Mohammedan powers. The difficulty the great Sultan Alp Arslan met with, in breaking through their country, even though he was aided by intestine discord, fomented by the ecclesiastical intrigues of the Byzantine court, proves that a small imperial army might have repulsed the Seljouk Turks from the fortified cities of Armenia, and secured the independence of the Christian tribes who occupied the labyrinths of the Caucasian and Armenian mountains, thereby preventing the Turks from reaching the Byzantine frontier.

It has been already noticed that the policy of the Byzantine court, under the Basilian dynasty, was hostile to Armenian independence, and it has been mentioned that the destruction of the Armenian kingdom had thrown open the Byzantine possessions in Asia Minor to the invasions of the Seljouk Turks. Constantine X made the Byzantine policy of uniting all Christians under the imperial government and the Greek Church a pretext for gratifying his avarice, by refusing aid to the independent Christians of Iberia and Armenia. He pretended that it would be impolitic to aid those who refused to become vassals of the empire, and criminal to support those who were opposed to the Orthodox Church. Basil II had apparently united the greater part of the Armenian clergy to the Greek Church, but in reality he only destroyed the independence of the nation; and the very circumstances which aided his conquests weakened the defensive power of the imperial government on their newly-acquired frontier.

It is important to observe the precise position of the country peopled by the Armenian race at the time of the Seljouk irruption into Asia Minor, in order to understand how the Byzantine government was so easily deprived of some of the richest and most populous



provinces of the empire. The emperors of Constantinople had suffered far greater losses at the periods when Heraclius and Leo III mounted the throne, and yet both these princes restored to the empire no inconsiderable portion of its ancient power and glory; but the blow now inflicted by the Seljouk Turks, or the avarice of Constantine X, proved an immedicable wound. In the year 1016, as has been already noticed, Armenia was first invaded by this new race of conquerors, whose descendants form at the present day the most numerous part of the population of the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor. Sennacherib, the prince of Vaspourakan, ceded his possessions to Basil II, and received in exchange an appanage in Cappadocia, including the cities of Sebaste, Larissa, and Abara. In the year 1022, Basil II forced John, king of Armenia, to make the cession of his dominions after his death, which Constantine IX compelled Gaghiq to carry into execution by surrendering Ani in 1045. Gaghiq received as an appanage a territory on the frontiers of Cappadocia, including the cities of Bizou, Khorzen, and Lykandos. The power of the kings of Iberia was also curtailed about the same time. They were compelled to cede the southern portion of their dominions to Liparites, an Orpelian prince, who was taken prisoner by the Turks at the battle of Kapetrou, and released by Togroul. Liparites was subsequently murdered by Bagrat, the king of Iberia, and the whole of Georgia and Abasgia were again reunited. Ivané, the son of Liparites, retired into the empire, and received from the Emperor Isaac I an appanage at Archamouni, near Erzeroum.

The Seljouks continued their attacks on Armenia during the reigns of Theodora, Michael VI, and Isaac I, and the ravages they committed drew the serious attention of the Byzantine government to the eastern frontier. At the accession of Constantine X it was evident that the emperor, who was in possession of the greater part of Armenia, must undertake the defence of the whole country, or great part would fall into the hands of the Mohammedans. The principalities of Kars and Lorhi, and the kingdom of Iberia (Georgia), were unable to resist the Turks, if left to their own unassisted resources. The ambition of Ivané, the son of Liparites, opened the passes of the Armenian mountains to the enemies of his country and religion. Dissatisfied with his appanage in the empire, he endeavoured to render himself master of the neighbouring district of Karin, and involved himself in hostilities with the imperial authorities. In order to secure allies capable of protecting him, he connected himself with the Seljouk Turks, and guided the plundering incursions of the Mohammedan armies. In the meantime the Emperor Constantine X, instead of reinforcing his troops in Armenia, and establishing order within his own frontier by seizing Ivané, occupied himself exclusively with the project of effecting a union of the Byzantine and Armenian churches, which he endeavoured to render a profitable undertaking for his treasury. The disorders on the frontier were allowed to increase, as a means of depressing the nobility and clergy hostile to the union, or able to offer some resistance to the fiscal oppression of the Byzantine court. The unjust proceedings of the imperial government and the Greek clergy, in their infatuated zeal for political and ecclesiastical unity, augmented the religious bigotry of the Greek and Armenian people, and sowed the seeds of a deep-rooted national animosity. The calamities of the independent Armenian Christians were regarded as gain to the Orthodox Church, and the emperor fomented civil dissensions among the warriors who formed the strongest barrier of his own provinces against the incursions of the Mohammedans.

In the year 1060, while the affairs of Armenia were in this disturbed state, the armies of Togroul Beg invaded the empire on the Mesopotamian frontier, and laid siege to Edessa. The attack was repulsed by the activity of Vest Katchadour, an Armenian who commanded at Antioch, in Cilicia; but the Seljouks soon renewed their invasion, and a body of their troops advanced as far as Sebaste, which was taken by assault, and plundered for the space of eight days. The following year they surprised the town of Arkni, a frontier fortress of the Mesopotamian theme. The Byzantine general of the district, and a foreign officer named Frangopoulos, with the troops stationed at Edessa, made an attempt to revenge this loss, by attacking the Turkish fortress of Amida, but were defeated in their enterprise.

In the year 1063, Alp Arslan, who had succeeded his uncle Togroul as great sultan, commenced his expeditions against the Christians, by leading his army in person into Iberia and the northern parts of Armenia. He compelled David, the Bagratian prince of Lorhi, to give him a daughter in marriage, and laid waste the kingdom of Iberia in the crudest manner, for it was the policy of the Turks to depopulate the country they desired to subdue. The desolation of the hitherto rich and well-cultivated regions of Iberia, which had been long celebrated for the industry of the inhabitants, the wealth of its numerous towns, and the valour of its warlike population, is to be dated from the destructive ravages of Alp Arslan. The country was compelled to submit to the great sultan; and though the authority of the Turks was never very firmly established, these invaders gradually rendered Iberia, which at the commencement of the eleventh century was the happiest portion of Asia, a scene of poverty and depopulation.

When the spirit of the Georgians was broken, Alp Arslan marched to attack Ani, the capital of Armenia, now garrisoned by a Byzantine force under Bagrat, an Armenian general in the Byzantine service. Ani was situated on a rocky peninsula overhanging the rapid stream of the Rha, the ancient Harpassus. A deep ravine joining the bed of this river protected the city on the west. The base of the triangle on which it stood looked towards the north, and was the only side by which the fortifications could be approached. The ruins of the massive walls that defended the city in this direction still exist to the height of forty feet, attesting the importance of the place, and the wealth and military skill of the Armenian kings who fortified it in the tenth century. The position of Ani was strong, and its fortifications solid, but the army of Alp Arslan was numerous, and well provided with all the warlike machines then used in sieges; the people detested the Byzantine government so much as to be indifferent to their fate, while the spirit of the garrison was depressed by a conviction that the Emperor Constantine would be induced by avarice to abandon them to their own unassisted resources. Ani nevertheless made a gallant defence, and, refusing to capitulate, was taken by storm on the 6th of June, 1064.

After the conquest of Ani, Gaghih, the Bagratian prince of Kara, made the humblest submission to the victor, and was allowed to retain his dominions as a vassal; but he felt his position under the Mohammedans to be so insecure, that he availed himself of the return of Alp Arslan into Persia to cede his territories to the Byzantine emperor, who gave him in exchange the city of Tzamandos with its neighbourhood as an appanage. This transaction removed the last of the Armenian princes from his native country, and was followed by an immense emigration of the people into the provinces of the empire lying to the west and south of their ancient seats. Adom and Abousahl, the sons of Sennacherib, held Sebaste; Gaghih, king of Ani, resided at Bizou; and Gaghih, prince of Kars, now took up his residence at Tzamandos. Whatever might have been the project of the Byzantine court in effecting these strange translocations on the Armenian frontier, they appear to have failed. The duration of these vassal establishments was short and troubled, but from their relics, and from the colonies of Armenian emigrants, a new independent Armenian kingdom arose in Cilicia, which occupied a prominent part in history during the earlier crusades.

During the campaigns of Alp Arslan in Georgia and Armenia, several small armies of Turks invaded the provinces of Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Melitene, and Kaloneia. They plundered the open country, putting all the armed men to the sword, and carrying off the younger inhabitants for the Mohammedan slave-marts. Whenever large bodies of Byzantine troops could be assembled to oppose them, they avoided an engagement, and effected a rapid retreat. The plan by which they expected to render themselves masters of the provinces they invaded, was to exterminate the cultivators of the soil in the extensive plains, in order to leave the country in a fit state to be occupied by their own nomadic tribes. The villages, farm-houses, and plantations were everywhere burned down, and the wells were often filled, in order that all cultivation might be confined to the immediate vicinity of fortified towns. By this policy they soon rendered agricultural property in many extensive districts of Asia Minor so insecure, that whole provinces were left vacant for their occupation before the Seljouk power was able to conquer

the cities. So boldly did they pursue these ravages, that Scylitzes records incursions of Seljouk bands even into Galatia, Honorias, and Phrygia during the reign of Constantine X.

About the time the fortress of Ani was irretrievably lost, the equally important city of Belgrade, which served as the bulwark of the western provinces, was allowed to fall into the hands of the Hungarians without an effort on the part of the emperor to save it. Solomon, king of Hungary, seeing the unprotected state of the Byzantine frontier in Europe, made the plundering incursions of some brigands from Bulgaria a pretext for commencing hostilities and laying siege to Belgrade. The garrison defended the place for three months; but when it appeared that the emperor's avarice would prevent his making any attempt to raise the siege, the place capitulated. Hungarian history boasts of several victories obtained over the imperial troops who attempted to relieve Belgrade, but the Byzantine writers are silent even concerning its capture.

The year after the loss of Ani, the Ouzes or Uzes, a nomad tribe of Turkish origin, whom the Byzantine historians call a more noble and numerous race than the Patzinaks, invaded the European provinces of the empire. This people appears to have first entered the territory of the Patzinaks as friends, and to have lived among them as allies; but in a short time they became engaged in the fiercest hostilities, from the impossibility of fixing any settled frontiers for nomad tribes in the immense plains to the north of the Black Sea. At this period some accidental circumstance impelled an immense body of the Uzes to emigrate, and enabled them to pass through the center of the Patzinak territory to the banks of the Danube, where they soon assembled boats and rafts in sufficient numbers to cross the river. The military force of the invaders amounted to sixty thousand men and two generals, Basilius Apokapes and Nicephorus Botaniates, who commanded the garrisons on the Danube, hastening to oppose their advance, were defeated and taken prisoners. The Uzes then divided their army, in order to extend their plundering incursions over a greater space. One division advanced to the vicinity of Thessalonica, and sent forward parties who extended their ravages even into Greece. But the abundance in which the barbarians revelled during the autumn soon spread disease in their ranks; and the ease with which they had penetrated into every province made them negligent of military precautions. The consequence was that their dispersed bands were everywhere attacked, and they lost all the booty they had collected. When the severity of winter weakened them still farther, the mountaineers of Haemus ventured to harass their main body, which was at last hemmed in on all sides by enemies.

The Emperor Constantine remained an inactive spectator of the ruin of the European provinces, and only availed himself of the reverses of the invaders and the successes of the mountain tribes of his subjects to negotiate with the leaders of the Uzes, and secure their retreat with the smallest expenditure of money. At last, however, the complaints of the people of Constantinople against his avarice and cowardice became so loud as to threaten a revolution, and the emperor felt the necessity of marching out of the capital as if he intended to put himself at the head of an army. After holding a solemn fast, he proceeded to the town of Choïrobacchus, on the road to Adrianople, attended only by a guard of one hundred and fifty men. Shortly after his arrival at that place, it was officially announced to him by a courier from the army that the principal body of the Uzes was completely dispersed. One division, which had advanced as far as Tzourla, had been overwhelmed by the Byzantine troops, while those near the Danube had been cut off by the combined attacks of the Bulgarian militia and the Patzinaks. There can be no doubt that the Emperor Constantine X was aware of these circumstances before he quitted the capital; but he affected to receive the intelligence as unexpected, and attributed the successes to his own piety and rigid fasts, not to the discipline of his army, or the valour of his subjects and allies. The heavenly host, hired by prayers instead of byzants, was said to have fought like ordinary mercenaries, and slain the Uzes with the usual weapons. The manner in which they received payment was peculiarly gratifying to the disposition of Constantine X. According to the usual policy of the Byzantine court, which sought to maintain a balance of power not only among the rival nations beyond the frontier, but even among the various races of its own

subjects, the survivors of the Uzes were established as colonists on public lands in Macedonia. No fact can establish more strongly the anti-Greek spirit of the Byzantine government at this period than the notices we find of this colony of Turks. They soon adopted the Christian religion, and were treated with great favour by the emperors, for their isolated position rendered them more devoted partisans of the central authority, and of the personal power of the emperors, than native subjects. Some of their leading men were honoured with the rank of senators, and rose to the highest dignities in the state. Their national feelings proved, however, at times stronger than their Christianity or their Roman civilization, so that when a body of these Uzes in the army of Romanus IV was opposed to a kindred tribe of Turks in the army of Alp Arslan, before the battle of Manzikert, they deserted to the sultan, and joined their countrymen.

During the reign of Constantine X a severe earthquake spread desolation round Constantinople, and ruined many districts which lay beyond the reach of hostile invasions. A greater amount of vested capital was destroyed in a few hours than the fiercest barbarians could have annihilated in a whole campaign. The walls of cities, the aqueducts, churches, and public buildings, were thrown down throughout all Thrace and Bithynia. At Cyzicus, an ancient temple of great size and splendour, and of a solidity of construction which seemed to announce eternal duration to those accustomed to the puny architectural efforts of the Byzantine emperors, was destroyed. At Nicaea, the walls of the great church, in which the first council of the Church had assembled, were crumbled to their foundations. Earthquakes continued to be felt with alarming violence for the space of two years, as if to terrify men from repairing the dilapidations of the first terrific shock.

When Constantine X found his end approaching, he conferred the regency of the empire, and the guardianship of his sons, who had already received the imperial crown, on his wife, Eudocia Makremvolitissa; but he exacted from her a written promise not to marry a second husband, and he deposited that document in the hands of the patriarch John Xiphilinos. He also engaged the senate to take an oath that it would never acknowledge any other emperor than his own children. The names of the sons of Constantine X who had received the imperial title were Michael, Andronicus, and Constantine. The last, having been born after his father ascended the throne, was called Porphyrogenitus.

## Sect. II

Regency of Eudocia, A.D. 1067; Romanus IV Diogenes, A.D. 1068-1071; Michael VII, A.D. 1071-1078; Nicephorus III, A.D. 1078-1081

In exacting from the senators an oath to maintain the rights of the young emperors, it was not the intention of Constantine X to confer any additional power on the senate; but the circumstance served as a pretext for every ambitious member of that body to plot for his own advancement, under the pretext that he was performing the duty imposed on him by his oath. Eudocia soon perceived that she was in some danger of losing the regency unless she could secure some powerful aid. Her ambition suggested to her, that by choosing a second husband, whom she could raise to the imperial title, she would be able to retain her position even after the majority and marriage of her eldest son. Policy favoured her views, which were sanctioned by the prudent government of Nicephorus II and John I, when they reigned as guardians and colleagues of the young emperors, Basil II and Constantine VIII. Love determined the selection of Eudocia. Her choice fell on Romanus Diogenes, who had been convicted of treason against her children's throne, and was then waiting to receive his sentence from Eudocia as regent. His valour and his popularity with the army were great, and when he received a full pardon from the empress-regent, it excited no suspicion that she viewed him with peculiar favour. The Seljouk

Turks had overrun all Cappadocia, and the capture of Caesareia rendered it necessary to place the army under the command of an able and enterprising general. But before Eudocia could venture to marry Romanus, it was necessary to destroy the document she had signed, promising never to contract a second marriage. Her written engagement was in the hands of the Patriarch, who held it as a national deposit. It required, therefore, some diplomatic skill to enable the empress to accomplish her object; but she could reckon on the utter absence of any sentiment of patriotism among the Byzantine clergy. The duplicity of the empress was aided by the credulous ambition of the Greek Patriarch, John Xiphilinos, who, though he had formerly quitted high rank to become a recluse on Mount Olympus, now resumed all the vices of Constantinopolitan society. Eudocia understood his character, and by leading him to believe that she intended to select his brother as her husband, she induced him to deliver into her hands the document committed to his custody, and persuaded him to become the proposer of a measure in the senate, by which that body pronounced an opinion in favour of her second marriage. When her plans had completely succeeded, she confounded the Patriarch, and gratified the people and the army, by announcing that she had selected Romanus Diogenes, the bravest general in the empire, to fill the imperial throne, and act as guardian to her sons.

Romanus IV was of a distinguished family of Cappadocia. He was connected by birth with most of the great aristocratic nobles of Asia Minor. His father, Constantine Diogenes, had committed suicide in the reign of Romanus III, and he inherited the courage, generosity, and vehemence of his parent. Though an able and skilful officer, his military talents were obscured by a degree of impetuosity that made him too often neglect the suggestions of prudence in those critical circumstances, when a long train of future events depends on the calmness of a moment's decisions. Rashness and presumption were the defects both of his private character and public conduct. Though his marriage with Eudocia seated him on the throne, he found his authority in the capital circumscribed by the influence of the officials, who pretended to support the power of his wife as empress-regent, and who were guided in their opposition by John Ducas, the late emperor's brother, and the natural guardian of the young emperors after the second marriage of their mother. John Ducas also held the rank of Caesar, and his family influence in the senate was very great.

The Varangian guard likewise viewed the elevation of Romanus IV with great jealousy, on account of his popularity with the native troops, whom he had always favoured. These foreigners had openly expressed their discontent at the marriage of Eudocia, which they declared was injurious to the legal rights of the sons of Constantine X, and their seditious behaviour had been with difficulty suppressed. In this state of things, Romanus IV felt that he could only be the real sovereign of the empire by placing himself at the head of a powerful army in the field, and the state of the war with the Seljouk Turks imperiously demanded the whole attention of the Byzantine government.

In the year 1067 the Turks had extended their ravages over Mesopotamia, Melitene, Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia; they had massacred the inhabitants of Caesareia, and plundered the great church of St Basil of the wealth accumulated by many generations of pious votaries. After this campaign, their army wintered on the frontiers of the empire. Romanus now prepared to arrest their future incursions. He looked upon them as little better than hordes of brigands, and thought their light cavalry was ill fitted to contend against a regular army. Confident of superiority on the field of battle, he expected success in the operations of a campaign. The whole disposable forces of the empire were assembled in the Anatolic theme; but the neglected discipline and various tactics of the troops composing the motley army, while they revealed the ruinous effects of the avarice of the late emperor, ought to have cautioned an experienced general to commence his operations by giving unity of action to the body under his command before opposing it to the enemy. Heraclius, and Leo the Isaurian, had re-established the power and restored the glory of the Roman empire with worse materials than the legions of Sclavonians, Armenians, Bulgarians, Franks, and Varangians in the army of Romanus IV. But it required some time and patience to restore the once-celebrated discipline of the Byzantine army,

and to make the modifications which were called for by new contingencies in the arms, armour, and tactics of the native soldiers; and the conservative vanity of Roman prejudices uniting with aristocratic pride and a headstrong disposition, rendered the emperor utterly unfit for such a task. He hurried his troops into the field with all their imperfections, and his rashness inflicted a mortal wound on the empire of the East. It is not necessary to follow his operations in detail, nor to mention all the rapid movements of the Seljouk invaders. The ruin of the Byzantine power in Asia, the extermination of the greater part of the Christian population, the unhappy fate of Romanus himself, and the noble behaviour of his conqueror Alp Arslan, immortalized in the pages of Gibbon, have invested this war with romantic interest, and conferred on it a degree of importance to which neither the military skill nor the political wisdom of the rival combatants entitle it.

The Seljouk armies were principally composed of cavalry, intent on plunder. The Roman troops were mercenaries, destitute of loyalty and patriotism. The Seljouk leaders perceived that, as long as the Byzantine provinces in Asia Minor were inhabited by a numerous population of Christians, supported by a regular army and by a line of fortresses commanding the great roads, it would be impossible for nomad tribes to retain possession of any conquests they might contrive to make. Their policy, therefore, was soon directed to two objects: in the first place, to enrich their followers, increase their own fame, and augment the numbers of their troops by rapid inroads for the collection of plunder; in the second, to reduce the open country as quickly as possible to such a state of depopulation as would admit the establishment of permanent nomad encampments, in the midst of uncultivated plains, far within the frontiers of the empire. In the execution of this plan they carried into effect the instincts of their rude nomadic life, as well as their bigoted schemes for the extermination of Christian civilization, which they felt was the most dangerous obstacle to their power. The great Sultan Alp Arslan was well aware that this war of incursions and devastation offered greater prospects of ultimate success than a series of pitched battles with the disciplined mercenaries of the empire. For two years he withdrew from the scene of action, and left to his lieutenants the task of ravaging and depopulating the Christian provinces of Asia Minor.

The first military operations of the Emperor Romanus were attended with some success. Antioch was exposed to the attacks of the Saracens of Aleppo, who were now emboldened, by the assistance of Turkish troops, to attempt the reconquest of the Byzantine province in Syria. The emperor resolved immediately to march to the south-eastern frontier of the empire, to re-establish the supremacy of the imperial arms; but as he was advancing towards Lykandos, it was announced to him that an army of Seljouks had suddenly broken into Pontus and plundered Neocaesarea. Without losing an hour, he selected a chosen body of troops, and by a rapid countermarch through Sebaste and the mountains of Tephrike, overtook the retreating Turks, and compelled them to abandon their plunder and release their prisoners; but their activity secured the escape of the greater part of their troops. The emperor then returned southward, advancing through the passes of Mount Taurus to the north of Germanicia, called then the defiles of Koukousos, and invading the territory of Aleppo, he captured Hierapolis (Membig), which he fortified as an advanced post for the protection of the southern frontier of the empire. After a good deal of severe fighting with the Saracens of Aleppo, he returned by Alexandretta and the Cilician gates to Podandos. Here he learned that, while he had been wasting the strength of his army by a severe and useless inroad into Syria, a fresh horde of Seljouks, finding the eastern frontier ill guarded, passed all the fortresses, and penetrated by a rapid march into the very heart of Asia Minor. They took and plundered Amorium, after which they effected their retreat with such rapidity that Romanus was unable to pursue them, and therefore continued his march to Constantinople, which he reached in January 1069.

The emperor's second campaign produced no better results than the first. It was deranged by the rebellion of a Norman noble in the Byzantine service, named Crispin, who, moved either by the unbounded insolence and rapacity of the Frank mercenary nobles, or by the necessity of securing the support of his troops, whom the emperor may have neglected to pay with

regularity, commenced plundering the country, and robbing the collectors of the revenue. Though Crispin was himself overpowered, and exiled to Abydos, many parties of Frank soldiers continued to infest the Armeniac theme, and commit great disorders. The country round Caesarea was again overrun by the Turks, and the emperor was compelled to employ his army in clearing his native province from their bands. He found the operation so tedious that it exhausted his patience; and in order to bring matters more speedily to a termination, he ordered all his prisoners to be put to death as highway robbers, and refused to spare a Seljouk chief who had fallen into his hands, though he offered to pay an immense ransom for his life. Romanus, having delivered Cappadocia from the invaders, marched forward by Melitene to the Euphrates, and crossed the river at Romanopolis, with the intention of advancing to Akhlat, on the lake of Van. By the capture of this fortress he hoped to protect the Armenian frontier. Instead of sending forward one of his generals to execute this duty, and remaining himself with the main body of the army, to watch over the conduct of the campaign, he placed himself at the head of the troops destined for the siege of Akhlat, and intrusted the command of the forces destined to cover the frontier of Mesopotamia to Philaretos. This general was defeated during his absence, and the Seljouks again spread their ravages far and wide in Cappadocia and Lycaonia. They advanced as far as the district of Iconium, which they plundered in their usual manner, and then rapidly retreated with the spoil they had collected. The advance of the emperor was arrested by the news of their advance on Iconium. He returned to Sebaste, and sent on orders to the Duke of Antioch to secure the passes at Mopsuestia, while he pressed onward to overtake the Turks at Heracleia (Kybistra). The invaders, hemmed in by these hostile armies, were attacked in the mountains of Cilicia by the Armenian inhabitants; but by abandoning the greater part of their booty, and making only a momentary halt at Valtolivadhi, they contrived to gain a march on their pursuers and cross Mount Sarbadik, from whence they escaped to Aleppo.

In the year 1070 the command of the imperial army was intrusted to Manuel Comnenus, nephew of the Emperor Isaac I, and elder brother of the future Emperor Alexius. The general business of the administration, and a particular desire to save Bari from falling into the hands of the Normans, by whom it was closely besieged, detained Romanus IV in the capital. Manuel Comnenus had risen rapidly to the highest military rank, more by means of his aristocratic position than by superior talents, and he was distinguished more by his personal courage than his military experience. The army was regarded in the Byzantine empire at this period as the special occupation of the nobility, and its highest commands were filled either by members of the great families of Ducas, Comnenus, Botaneiates, Bryennius, Melissenos, and Palaialogos, by Armenian princes and nobles, or by captains of foreign mercenaries, like Hervé, Gosselin, Crispin, and Oursel. Such an army required the strong hand of an emperor like Leo III, and the indefatigable activity of a Constantine V, to compel it to respect order, and keep it amenable to discipline.

Manuel Comnenus established his headquarters at Sebaste, in order to watch any parties of Turks who might attempt to invade the empire. He was soon drawn into an engagement by a Turkish general named Chrysoskroul or Khroudj, in which he was defeated and taken prisoner. The Turks then continued their ravages, penetrating as far as Chonae, which they sacked, after plundering the great church of St Michael, and carrying off all the holy plate, rich offerings, and pious dedications accumulated within its walls. The Christians were insulted by seeing this great temple converted into a barracks for the cavalry of the invaders, and terrified by witnessing the destruction of other buildings. Many of the unfortunate inhabitants who attempted to escape slavery by flight, perished, on this occasion, by a singular fate. The rivers in the vicinity of Chonae pour their waters into an immense subterranean cavern, and it happened that while the wretched fugitives were attempting to escape from the Turks, a sudden inundation swept men, women, and children into this fearful chasm.

At this time Chrysoskroul was revolving projects of rebellion against Alp Arslan, and he soon admitted his prisoner, Manuel Comnenus, to his counsels, for he was anxious to secure some support from the emperor. Manuel persuaded him to visit Constantinople in person, in

order to conclude an alliance with the Byzantine Empire, which was soon completed. The news of this act of rebellion called Alp Arslan to the scene of action. Though he had intrusted the conduct of the war to his officers as long as the plunder of the Roman Empire was its principal object, the moment that the aspect of affairs was changed, by the appearance of a rival to his throne, the great sultan hastened to the Byzantine frontier. He besieged and captured Manzikert, and invested Edessa; but, after losing fifty days before its walls, he was compelled to retire into Persia.

Early in the spring of 1071, Romanus marched at the head of a numerous army to recover Manzikert and meet the sultan. Various inauspicious omens are said to have announced the disastrous issue of his enterprise, and the proofs his army gave of insubordination warranted the inference that his military operations were in great danger of proving unsuccessful. The soldiers pillaged the emperor's subjects wherever a camp was formed; and when an attempt was made to enforce stricter discipline, a whole corps of German mercenaries broke out into a dangerous mutiny, which the emperor had great difficulty in appeasing. The army, however, continued to advance by Sebaste to Theodosiopolis, where the plan of the campaign was finally arranged. Romanus, believing that Alp Arslan would be delayed for some time in Persia on account of the backward state of his preparations, resolved to divide his army in order to gain possession of Akhlat, in which there was a strong Turkish garrison, and which, in the possession of the Byzantine army, would form an excellent base of operations against Persia. Oursel, a Frank chief with a division composed of European mercenaries and Uzes, was sent to besiege Akhlat; while Trachaniotes, with a strong division of Byzantine infantry, was detached to cover the operation. The main body, under the immediate command of the emperor, advanced after this reduction to Manzikert, which was soon retaken. Romanus had hardly taken possession of his conquest before his advanced guard fell in with the skirmishers of the army of Alp Arslan, and in some cavalry engagements which took place the Byzantine troops were severely handled. On the first encounter, Romanus, who was not aware of the sultan's rapid advance, supposed that only a small force was opposed to the imperial army; but when he became aware that the whole Turkish army was in his vicinity, he dispatched orders to Trachaniotes and Oursel to rejoin the main body. These officers, however, finding themselves unexpectedly in the immediate neighbourhood of a large Turkish force, retreated within the frontiers of Mesopotamia, instead of countermarching to effect a junction with the emperor's army. It is difficult to say whether they were induced to take this step from military reasons or treasonable motives. In the meantime a body of Uzes, which had remained with the main body of the army, finding themselves opposed to a division in the hostile army of similar language and race, deserted to the Turks.

#### BATTLE OF MANZIKERT, AD. 1071

The two armies were now so near that a battle seemed unavoidable; but still Alp Arslan, who would willingly have avoided risking a general engagement with the regular army of Romanus, made an offer to conclude peace on favourable terms. Romanus, however, haughtily rejected the proposal, unless the sultan would consent to retire, and allow the Byzantine army to occupy the ground on which he was then encamped, before concluding the treaty. Alp Arslan knew that no secure peace was ever purchased by disgrace. Romanus allowed visions of vainglory to mislead him from performing the duty he owed to the empire. He thought of rivalling Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, when he ought to have been meditating on the causes which had enabled the Turks to plunder Caesarea, Amorium, Iconium, and Chonae.

Both parties prepared for a desperate contest. Romanus placed himself at the head of his own centre; the right wing of his army was commanded by Alyattes, a Cappadocian general; the



left, by Nicephorus Bryennius; and the reserve was led by Andronicus, the son of the Caesar John Ducas, the emperor's bitterest enemy. The Turkish sultan intrusted the immediate command of the battle to the eunuch Tarang, who acted as his lieutenant-general, reserving to himself the direction of the reserve and the power of performing all the duties of a general, without being called upon to act as a mere soldier. But he felt the importance of this first great battle between the Byzantine and Seljouk armies in deciding the fate of the two empires; and he declared that, unless he proved victorious, the field of battle should be his grave. The strength of the Roman army lay in its legions of regular infantry and heavy-armed cavalry, while that of the Turks reposed principally on the excellence of its light cavalry; hence the difficulty of obtaining a partial advantage was not great, but it required a well-combined system of manoeuvres to secure a complete victory. The object of the regular army ought to have been the capture of the enemy's camp, while that of the irregular force was concentrated in forcing any portion of their enemy to make a retrograde movement, in the hope of converting the retreat into a total rout. The rash conduct of Romanus, the vigorous caution of Alp Arslan, the treachery of Andronicus Ducas, and the cowardice or incapacity of the Byzantine nobility, combined to give the Turks a complete victory. The battle had lasted all day without either party gaining any decisive advantage, when the imprudence of the emperor, in ordering a part of the centre to return to the camp before transmitting proper orders to the whole army, afforded Andronicus Ducas a pretext for abandoning the field. Romanus, when he perceived his error, vainly endeavoured to repair it by his personal courage. After fighting like a hero, his horse was at last killed under him, and, a wound in the hand having rendered him powerless, he was taken prisoner. The night had already set in, and the emperor was left to sleep on the ground with the other prisoners, if the pain of his wound and the agony of his mind could admit of repose. In the morning he was brought before Alp Arslan, who, hearing that the Emperor of the Romans had fallen into his hands, placed himself on his throne of state, in the great tent set apart for the ceremonies of the grand sultan's court. As soon as Romanus approached the throne, he was thrown on the ground by the guards, and Alp Arslan, according to the immemorial usage of the Turks, descended from his seat and placed his foot on the neck of his captive, while a shout of triumph rang through the ranks of the various nations of Asia who composed his army. But the Byzantine historians who record this official celebration of his triumph, bear testimony to the mildness and humanity of the conqueror; and add that the emperor was immediately raised from the ground, and received from the grand sultan assurance that he should be treated as a king. That evening Alp Arslan and Romanus supped together, and their conversation is said to have been characterized by the noblest philanthropy on the part of the sultan, and the most daring frankness on that of Romanus. Alp Arslan was really a man of noble sentiments; but at this time his policy led him to gain the goodwill of his prisoner in order to conclude a lasting treaty of peace, for he was eager to pursue other schemes of conquest in the native seats of his race beyond the Oxus. Instead, therefore, of consuming his time in ravaging the empire, and planting his standards on the Asiatic shores of the Bosphorus, he concluded a treaty of peace with Romanus, who engaged to pay him a sum of money large enough to be a suitable ransom for a Roman emperor.

The release of Romanus only overwhelmed the unfortunate emperor with new misfortunes. The aristocracy and people of Constantinople both disliked his government, because it had withdrawn a large part of the public expenditure from the court and the capital, and reduced the salaries of the nobles and the profits of the tradesmen; while the provincial governors and military chiefs were not attached to his person, because he controlled their peculations and oppressions by his presence. Corruption had penetrated so deep into the official society of the Byzantine Empire, that the ruling classes were everywhere bent on converting the public service into a means of gain; and the people, deprived of all power, and even of the capacity of obtaining any political knowledge, were utterly helpless. Romanus had reformed the court, restrained the peculations of the aristocracy, and enforced discipline among the foreign mercenaries; but he was not popular with the people, for he had neither amused them with shows in the hippodrome, nor lightened the burden of their sufferings in the provinces. He was indeed the only man in the empire whose interests and policy were identical with the public

welfare, but unfortunately he was deficient in the prudence and judgment necessary to render this fact generally apparent.

The captivity of Romanus had produced a revolution at court. The Empress Eudocia was compelled to take the veil and retire into a monastery, while the Caesar John Ducas became the real sovereign in the name of his nephew, Michael VII. As soon as the news reached Constantinople that the Emperor Romanus had returned into the empire, orders were sent off by the Caesar to prevent his being acknowledged as emperor. He had only been elevated to the throne to act for Michael VII, and that prince was now able to conduct the government. Such was the reasoning of the enemies of Romanus. Both parties collected troops to support their pretensions. A battle was fought at Doceia, in which the army of Romanus was defeated, and that emperor fled to the fort of Tyropoion; but finding that he could not maintain himself there, he gained the mountains of Cilicia, and retired to Adana. He was soon pursued by Andronicus, who had betrayed him at the battle of Manzikert; and the Armenian governor of Antioch, Katchadour, who had advanced to assist him, having been defeated, the garrison of Adana was so dispirited that they compelled Romanus to surrender on receiving assurance of personal safety. Andronicus required that Romanus should resign the empire and retire into a monastery. This treaty was ratified at Constantinople, and the safety of the dethroned sovereign was guaranteed by the Archbishops of Chalcedon, Heracleia, and Coloneia with the most solemn promises. But the Caesar John Ducas seized the opportunity to gratify his implacable hatred, and, in defiance of the engagement of his son and the promises of the bishops, ordered the eyes of Romanus to be put out. Executioners were sent to inflict the sentence, and to carry the unfortunate emperor to the island of Prote, where he was left without an attendant to dress his wounds, which began to putrefy. The dying Romanus bore the tortures inflicted on him with unshaken fortitude, neither uttering a reproach against his enemies nor a lamentation against his fate, praying only that his sufferings might be received as an expiation of his sins. His wife Eudocia was allowed to honour his remains with a sumptuous funeral. It is said that, before quitting Adana, he collected all the money of which he could dispose, and sent it to the sultan as a proof of his good faith. It was accompanied with this message: "As emperor, I promised you a ransom of a million and a half. Dethroned, and about to become dependent on others, I send you all I possess as a proof of my gratitude".

While Romanus was marching to the defeat which left all Asia Minor at the mercy of the Turks, the Byzantine Empire lost its last hold on Italy. Arghyros, the son of Mel, had been sent by Constantine IX as katapan or viceroy, to arrest the progress of the Normans. He exerted himself with indefatigable energy both in open war and secret intrigue; but the defeat of Pope Leo IX, who fell into the hands of the Normans, rendered all the projects of the Byzantine government vain, and Arghyros repaired in person to Constantinople to solicit additional support. Isaac I, displeased with his conduct, dismissed him from all his employments, and the affairs of Italy were neglected. In the reign of Constantine X, an opportunity presented itself of re-establishing the imperial influence, in consequence of the dissensions of the Normans, but that emperor was too avaricious to take advantage of the circumstances. Robert Guiscard had unjustly seized the heritage of his brother Humphrey, and Abelard, his nephew, fled to Constantinople, attended by Gosselin, a Norman officer of ability and influence. Though the Byzantine officers in Italy received little support from the central government, one of their number, named Maurice, obtained considerable success, and with a corps of Varangians under his command defeated the Normans on several occasions, and regained possession of several towns. But Robert Guiscard, concentrating the whole force of his countrymen, at last captured Otranto, Tarentum, and Brindisi, and laid siege to Bari, the last possession of the Byzantine emperors. The place was attacked in 1068, but was so well defended that the Normans were compelled to convert the siege into a blockade, and Romanus IV determined to make an effort in its favour. In 1070 a fleet was intrusted to Gosselin, with ample supplies for the besieged city; but Gosselin was met by a Norman fleet under the command of Roger, the younger brother of Guiscard, and the future conqueror of Sicily. The Byzantine expedition was defeated, Gosselin was taken prisoner, and the garrison of Bari, hopeless of relief, capitulated on the 15th of April

1071, abandoning for ever the last relics of the authority of the Roman empire of the East in Italy.

## MICHAEL VII

The education of the Emperor Michael VII had been intrusted to Michael Psellus, an able but intriguing pedant, who rendered the young prince a learned grammarian, but, either from natural defects or improper instruction, he turned out a worthless sovereign. Instead of attending to political business, he spent his time in rhetorical exercises or in writing iambics. Feeble, vain, and suspicious, he was easily made the tool of those who flattered his weaknesses. The Archbishop of Side, an able and virtuous prelate, was replaced in the duties of prime-minister by Nicephoritzes, who was recalled from the office of chief judge in Greece to perform the duties of postmaster-general. The emperor being as idle as he was incapable, and the new prime-minister as active as he was unprincipled, Nicephoritzes soon gained the exclusive direction of the weak mind of his sovereign, and established a complete supremacy over the court as well as the public administration. This was done in a great measure by a lavish expenditure of public money; and while he satisfied many claimants on the treasury, he took care to enrich himself.

The Byzantine Empire had now reached a state of society in which wealth was the universal object of pursuit. Every poetic aspiration in the heart of man was dead; honour and fame were the dreams of children. Power itself was an object of ambition, because it was the surest means of attaining wealth, and it is needless to say that under such circumstances rapacity and extortion were vices inherent in official life. The financial difficulties of the government, after the disasters of Romanus IV, must have caused some disorders even under the administration of an honest minister. The imperial revenues were diminished by the incursions of the Turks, which were pushed forward almost with impunity up to the very walls of Nicaea and Nicomedia. The Byzantine practice of filling the provinces with colonies of foreign races, and the lately-adopted usage of settling appanaged chieftains in Asia Minor, now led to several Armenian principalities in Cappadocia and Cilicia assuming an independent position. Yet even under these circumstances the great officers in the capital, the courtiers and the governors of provinces, all insisted on the full payment of their exorbitant salaries, leaving the troops of the line, the fleet, and the public buildings to suffer from the diminished resources of the empire. The court of Constantinople and the shows of the hippodrome were as brilliant as ever; the fortifications, the aqueducts, the roads and the ports of the provincial cities were allowed to fall to ruin. The whole of the money which the minister could draw into the central treasury was devoted to satisfy the rapacious nobility, and keep the turbulent populace of the capital in good-humour. As usually happens when police and cleanliness are neglected for any length of time, famine and plague began to ravage the provinces of Asia Minor which the nomads had plundered. The people, crowded together in the cities, died of starvation, and spread disease. Yet the rapacity and the exigencies of the treasury were so great, that the Emperor Michael availed himself even of these appalling disasters to collect money. Imperial ships were employed to form magazines of grain at Rhaedestum, where a corn-market was established, and the trade in grain became a government monopoly. It is said that the imperial agents took advantage of the public distress to sell the *modius* of wheat for a byzant, and the popular indignation propagated the report that the measure was reduced to three quarters of its legitimate contents. The emperor, who was held by his subjects to be responsible for this fraud, received from them the nickname of Michael Parapinakes, or Michael the Peck-filcher.

While the people were thus oppressed, the principal military chiefs, both natives and foreigners, began to arrogate to themselves the authority of petty princes. Still, in attributing due

importance to the temporary misgovernment of Michael and his minister, we must not neglect the general tendency of all extensive territories in the eleventh century to separate into smaller circles of political action. Centralization in an extensive state, even in the most civilized state of society, requires rapid means of communication. The theories of Roman law and administration, which had long tended to bind the subjects of the Byzantine Empire together, had now lost their influence, and were supplanted by the authority of personal and local power. The same social condition which caused the Byzantine Empire to exhibit a tendency to separation may be traced alike in the history of feudal France and of the Seljouk Empire.

Rebellions against the vigorous sway of Alp Arslan and Malekshah followed one another as rapidly as against the feeble rule of Michael Parapinakes and Nicephorus Botaniates. The impulse of society was the same in the Byzantine and the Seljouk empires; the results only were modified by the character of the individual sovereigns: the valour of the sultans preserved their thrones, the cowardice of the emperors drove them into monasteries, but both empires were equally broken in pieces.

The oppressive conduct and the weakness of the Byzantine government suggested to the Bulgarians the hope of re-establishing their national independence. The Bulgarian aristocracy was always sure of finding a large body of supporters among the Sclavonian population of Macedonia and Greece, as well as among the Bulgarians of Thrace, who were as anxious to be governed by a prince of their own race as the tribes north of Mount Haemus. On this occasion the rebels sent a deputation to Michael, the sovereign of Servia and Croatia, who appeared to be the only Sclavonian prince powerful enough to protect them, and offered the sovereignty of Bulgaria to his son Constantinos Bodinos. The offer was accepted, and the Servian prince was proclaimed king of the Bulgarians, under the name of Peter, at Prisdiana. The Byzantine army, under the command of Damian Dalassenos, a presumptuous noble, was completely defeated, the camp was taken, and a mercenary chief, named Longibardopoulos, was made prisoner with many other officers of rank. This Lombard chief, who had entered the imperial service rather than submit to the Normans, soon gained the favour of the prince of Servia, whose daughter he married, and whose troops he commanded against the emperor he had lately served. The king of the Bulgarians, after his victory, marched to Naissus, which he occupied, while he sent a division of his army to besiege Kastoria, and rouse the Sclavonians of Greece to take up arms. But the attack on Kastoria was defeated, the Sclavonians remained firm in their allegiance, and the king himself was routed and taken prisoner at Taonion in the month of December 1073. The German and Frank troops in the Byzantine army committed the greatest disorders in the country through which they marched. At Prespa, they destroyed the ancient palace of the kings of Achrida, and they plundered the churches of their plate and ornaments whenever they could enter them.

In Asia, Philaretos, an Armenian, who commanded a division of the army of Romanus IV at the defeat of Manzikert, remained at the head of a considerable body of troops. After the death of Romanus he assumed the title of Emperor, and kept possession of a considerable territory in the neighbourhood of Germanicia, which he governed as an independent prince, until at last he made his peace with the emperor on condition of being appointed Duke of Antioch.

Amidst these scenes of disorder, Nestor, a slave of Constantine X, who had risen to the rank of governor of the towns on the Danube, suddenly rebelled. Placing himself at the head of the garrisons under his orders, which were in a state of mutiny from want of pay, and eager to plunder the Bulgarians because some of their countrymen had rebelled, he obtained the assistance of one of the chiefs of the Patzinaks, and marched straight to Constantinople. The rebels demanded the dismissal of Nicephoritzes, but finding their forces inadequate to attack the capital, they separated into small parties, and spread over the country to collect plunder. Nestor remained with the Patzinaks, and retired with them beyond the Danube.

Every calamity of this unfortunate period sinks into insignificance when compared with the destruction of the greater part of the Greek race by the ravages of the Seljouk Turks in Asia Minor. As soon as the conditions of the treaty with Romanus were repudiated by the government at Constantinople, Alp Arslan resolved to revenge himself for the loss of the stipulated ransom and tribute. Other wars demanded his personal attention, but innumerable hordes were instructed to plunder the Roman Empire; and his son Malekshah intrusted Suleiman, the son of Koutoulmish, with a permanent command over all the Turkish encampments in Asia Minor. Suleiman began to lay the foundations of a lasting dominion by attaching the agricultural population to his government, whether they were freemen or serfs. This class cultivated the lands belonging to the great Byzantine landed proprietors, without any hope of bettering their condition. Suleiman now treated them as proprietors of the land they occupied, on their paying a fixed tribute to the Seljouk Empire, and thus the first foundations of the Turkish administration were laid in the opposing interests of two different classes of the Christian population, and in the adverse interests of landlords and tenants.

The progress of the Turks at last roused the Byzantine government to exertion, and a motley army, composed of a variety of different nations, was brigaded together; the principal object kept in view was to prevent the troops agreeing to elect a new emperor. Isaac Comnenus, an elder brother of Alexius I, was appointed to command this force, but was unable to prevent it becoming a scene of anarchy. The mercenaries plundered the people, and when Isaac attempted to punish the soldiers of Oursel for their misdeeds, that Norman, who claimed an exclusive jurisdiction over his own corps, deserted the camp, and induced all the Franks to join his standard. He took possession of Sebaste, expecting to form an independent Norman principality in Pontus, as Robert Guiscard had done in Italy. In the meantime the army of Isaac Comnenus was defeated at Caesarea, his camp stormed, and himself taken prisoner by the Turks. The state of affairs in Asia Minor became then so alarming, that the Caesar John Ducas, who had hitherto spent the greater part of his time hunting in the forests near the shores of the Bosphorus, found himself compelled to take the command of the army. His first operations were directed against the rebel Oursel. He fixed his headquarters at Dorylaeum, and the Norman encamped near the sources of the Sangarius. The two armies met near the bridge over that river called Zompi, which was one of the great lines of communication between Constantinople and the central provinces of Asia Minor. The desertion of his Frank mercenaries, and the disgraceful retreat of Nicephorus Botaniates with the Asiatic reserve, caused the complete defeat of the Caesar's army. John Ducas and his son Andronicus were both made prisoners, and the victorious army of mercenaries advanced to the shores of the Bosphorus, and set fire to some of the houses at Chrysopolis (Scutari). Oursel, however, already perceived that the force under his command was insufficient to overthrow the administrative fabric of the empire, even as then degraded, and he resolved to advance his fortunes by acting as general-in-chief for an emperor of his own creation. A similarity in the circumstances of his position taught him to imitate the policy of Ricimer, and he easily persuaded his prisoner, the Caesar John Ducas, to assume the title of Emperor, and aid in dethroning his nephew.

Michael and his minister were now infinitely more alarmed by their own personal danger than they were concerned at the calamities of the subjects of the empire. An alliance was formed with Suleiman, who commanded the forces of his cousin the great sultan; and a formal treaty was concluded between the Byzantine emperor and the Seljouks in Asia Minor, which received the official ratification of Malekshah. The Emperor Michael conferred on Suleiman the government of the provinces of which the Seljouk Turks were then in possession; which was the phrase adopted by Byzantine pride to make a cession of that large portion of Asia Minor already occupied by the Mohammedans, and the Seljouk emir engaged to furnish the emperor with an army of mercenary troops. The precise conditions of the treaty, or the exact extent of territory ceded to the Turks, are not recorded; and indeed the Byzantine writers mention the existence of this important treaty only in a casual way, though it laid the foundation of the independent power of the Seljouk sultans of Roum, of whom Suleiman was the progenitor, and whose

dynasty long survived the elder branch of the house of Togrulbeg, who reigned as great sultans in Persia.

This treaty was concluded in the year 1074, and a Turkish army immediately marched, with the rapidity that distinguished their military movements, to Mount Sophon, where Oursel was encamped. The light cavalry soon drew Oursel into an ambushade, and he was taken prisoner, along with his phantom emperor. The wife of Oursel, however, who was residing at a neighbouring castle, in which he had laid up a considerable treasure, instantly paid the ransom demanded by his captors, and, collecting his Franks, he marched back to his old quarters in the Armeniac theme, in order to recruit his strength. The Emperor Michael gained possession of his uncle's person by paying the ransom demanded by the Turks, and allowed him to retain his sight on his resigning all his political pretensions, and adopting the monastic life. Alexius Comnenus was now sent to command the Byzantine troops against Oursel, and succeeded in reducing him to such difficulty that he attempted to form an alliance with a Turkish chief named Toutash, who was watching his movements. Alexius had, however, secured the fidelity of the Turk, by promising him a large ransom if he delivered Oursel into his own hands. The Frank leader was at last seized at a conference, and the intriguing Alexius carried him a prisoner to Constantinople, to bargain for wealth and honours for himself.

After the capture of Oursel, the Turks made the treaty with the emperor a pretext for encroaching on the possessions and plundering the wealth of the subjects of the empire; but all open warfare having ceased in Asia Minor, Isaac Comnenus was sent with an army to Antioch, to protect the Byzantine possessions in Syria from the tribes of Seljouks who had conquered Aleppo and Damascus. He was not more fortunate at Antioch than he had been at Caesarea; his army was defeated, his brother-in-law, Constantine Diogenes, the son of Romanus IV, was slain, and he himself wounded and taken prisoner. He was, nevertheless, soon after delivered from captivity by the inhabitants of Antioch, who paid the Turks twenty thousand byzants as his ransom.

#### MICHAEL VII DETHRONED, AD. 1078. REBEL EMPERORS.

The weakness of the emperor and the avarice of the minister invited several members of the aristocracy to profit by the general discontent, in order to mount the throne. Two military nobles of distinguished families took up arms in Europe and Asia. Nicephorus Bryennius, who had gained considerable reputation at Dyrrachium, assembled an army composed of Thracian Bulgarians, Macedonian Sclavonians, Italians, Franks, Uzes, and Greeks. With this army he advanced to Constantinople; but he had no feelings in common with the mass of the inhabitants of the empire, and he permitted his troops to plunder and burn the suburbs of the capital. This conduct produced so determined an opposition to his pretensions, that Michael compelled him to raise the siege and retire, under the pretext that the incursions of the Patzinaks rendered his presence necessary to protect the open country of Thrace. The proceedings of Nicephorus Botaneiates in Asia were even more injurious to the public welfare than those of Bryennius. He purchased the support of Suleiman, the sultan of Roum, by ratifying the treaty concluded with Michael, and abandoning an additional Christian population to the power of the Mohammedans, in order to obtain the assistance of a corps of Seljouk cavalry. Yet he was welcomed by the inhabitants of Nicaea as a deliverer with great rejoicings; and before he reached the Bosphorus he received the news that Michael VII had been dethroned by a general insurrection, in which the senate, the clergy, and the people had with one accord taken part. The imperial pedant had retired into the monastery of Studion with his son Constantine, and left the throne vacant for his successor.

The history of the reign of Nicephorus III (Botaneiates) may be comprised in a few words. He was an old idle voluptuary; the palace was a scene of debauchery, and the public administration, intrusted to the direction of two Sclavonian household slaves, fell into utter disorder. The old emperor thought only of enjoying the few years he had to live, rather as a brute than a man; each member of the aristocracy was engaged in plundering the public treasury, or plotting to seize the empire; and the two ministers, whose very language proclaimed their foreign origin, pillaged the provinces by their agents, or left them to be overrun by the Turks or by rebels. The infatuated Nicephorus moreover excited the disgust of his subjects by marrying Maria the ex-empress, though her husband, the dethroned Emperor Michael VII, was still living as Bishop of Ephesus, and residing in the capital; but it was his wasteful expenditure of public money, and his fraudulent conduct in issuing a base coinage to supply his extravagance, which converted the contempt of all ranks into hatred, and caused his ruin.

Nicephorus III reigned three years, and during that period no less than four rebels assumed the imperial title, besides Alexius Comnenus, by whom he was dethroned. Several Armenian princes in Asia Minor attempted to establish their independence; and two Paulician leaders took up arms in Thrace, and committed many cruelties, to revenge themselves for the persecutions they had suffered. The religious bigotry of the Greeks concurred with the disorganization of the government in accelerating the ruin of the empire.

The rebel emperor Bryennius had failed to take Constantinople from political incapacity, not from want of military force. As soon as Nicephorus III was established on the throne, he sent Alexius Comnenus, now the first general of the empire, to attack the rebels with an army composed of Asiatic Christians, Franks, and Turkish cavalry. The two armies were equal in number, and neither exceeded fifteen thousand men. A battle was fought at Kalavrya, near the river Almyros, in which Bryennius was defeated and taken prisoner. He was then deprived of sight.

As soon as the country round Adrianople was pacified Alexius was sent against the second rebel emperor, Basilakes, who had occupied Thessalonica, and was waiting the result of the contest between Bryennius and Botaneiates to fall on the victorious army. The forces under the command of Basilakes consisted of veteran Frank, Sclavonian, Albanian, and Greek soldiers, and his confidence in his own valour and military talents made him look on success as certain. Alexius, however, contrived to entrap him into a night attack on the imperial camp, which was eighteen miles distant from Thessalonica, on the banks of the Vardar. Basilakes was defeated, and when he attempted to defend the citadel of Thessalonica, he was seized by his own soldiers, and delivered to the emperor, by whose orders he was deprived of sight. Constantine Ducas, the brother of the dethroned Michael VII, was proclaimed emperor by the troops in Asia Minor; but his incapacity was soon so evident that his own partisans delivered him to Nicephorus III, who only compelled him to become a monk, and take up his residence in one of the monasteries in the islands of the Propontis. Nicephorus Melissenos was the fourth rebel. He had strongly opposed the election of Botaneiates, and soon took up arms to dethrone him. His high rank, great wealth, ancient family, and extensive family alliances among the aristocracy, rendered him a dangerous political rival. He was utterly destitute of noble ambition or patriotic feelings; and, to gratify his lust of power, was willing to degrade the Greek race, and dismember the empire. In order to secure the assistance of a large body of Turks, he concluded a treaty with their chiefs, by which he engaged to divide the cities and provinces his army should conquer with these enemies of his faith and nation. Suleiman, the sultan of Roum, took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him to gain possession of Nicaea and plunder Cyzicus. An imperial army was foiled in an attempt to recover possession of Nicaea, which remained in the hands of the Seljouk Turks, until it was restored to the Byzantine Empire by the first crusade.

The troubled state of the empire, and the age of Nicephorus III, rendered the nomination of his successor the great object of court intrigue, and it became known that the old man had

selected his nephew Synadenos to be the future emperor. His procrastination in carrying his determination into effect caused his dethronement. The beautiful Empress Maria had expected, by her marriage with the aged Botaneiates, to secure the throne for her child, and the regency for herself, and she was now alarmed at the prospect of descending from the throne she had occupied as the wife of two emperors, and which she had expected to retain as mother of a third. She now sought support from her relations. The marriage of Isaac Comnenus with her cousin Irene, an Alanian princess, and of Alexius, his brother, with Irene, the daughter of Andronicus Ducas, the cousin of her first husband, attached that influential family to her interest. She now drew closer the bonds of union by adopting Alexius as her son. Court intrigues commenced, a conspiracy was formed, and the Slavonian ministers, Borilas and Germanos, who had risen to power by studying the characters of the aristocracy, saw that the profound dissimulation of Alexius (which his daughter celebrates as political sagacity), joined to his popularity with the troops, rendered him the most dangerous man among the nobility. They proposed to arrest him, and deprive him of sight; but the conspirators were informed of the danger in time to escape to Tzourulos, where Alexius and his friends joined an army assembled to act against Melissenos. The Caesar, John Ducas, who had quitted the monastic habit, George Paleologos, a dashing officer, who married Anna, a younger sister of the wife of Alexius, and several of the ablest officers among the aristocracy, fled to the camp, which was moved to Schiza. As it was necessary to elect an emperor capable of commanding the army, the legitimate claims of Constantine, the son of Michael VII, were set aside, and Alexius was proclaimed emperor by the whole army. The rebels then marched to attack Constantinople; but as the land wall is about four miles long, the besiegers were unable to occupy the whole extent with their lines, and Alexius contented himself with forming his camp on the elevated land which overlooks the Propontis and the city. Romanus IV had constructed a country palace in this sterile and exposed position, which enjoys the advantage of a healthy summer climate, and an abundant supply of water. The spot was called Aretas.

Alexius had no time to lose. Melissenos had already advanced to Damalis, and had opened negotiations for a partition of the empire both with Nicephorus III and the rebels. The imperial ministers urged their master to conclude a treaty with Melissenos, and then fall on the camp of Alexius with an overwhelming force. Procrastination, however, again ruined the affairs of the old emperor. A careful examination of the fortifications of Constantinople, which did not then present its existing aspect of a dilapidated rampart and half-filled ditch, convinced Alexius that there was no hope of taking the place by storm, and that if he entered the city, he must do so by treachery. The most exposed portions of the wall were guarded by native troops and Varangian guards, whose fidelity was proof against seduction; but a tower in the Blachernian quarter, commanding the Charsian gate, had been intrusted to German mercenaries, whose leader, Gilpracht, was bribed to betray his charge. At night, George Paleologos was admitted, and on a given signal the rebel troops took possession of the towers adjoining the gate, and defiled into the streets of Constantinople, which was soon treated as if it had been taken by storm. The army, which hardly recognised any acknowledged leader, dispersed in quest of plunder, and the rebel emperor and his principal partisans were left almost alone in the square called Tauros, exposed to the danger of falling into the hands of the old emperor, had he possessed courage enough to make a vigorous effort in his own defence. The imperial party was still in possession of the palace, which had been converted into a strong citadel by Nicephorus II; while the Varangians and the Chomatian legion, who occupied the city from the forum of Constantine as far as the Milion, stood ranged in order, ready to attack the dispersed bands of the rebels. Alexius was striving to bring forward his best troops, and a battle seemed inevitable. The capital was on the eve of being destroyed by the conflagrations with which each party would cover their operations, when the activity of George Paleologos, who made himself master of the fleet, and the weakness of Nicephorus III, who abandoned his army, and fled to St Sophia's, terminated the contest, and saved Constantinople from ruin. The old emperor consented to resign his crown, and retire into a monastery. Alexius entered the imperial palace, and the rebel army commenced plundering every quarter of the city. Natives and mercenaries vied with one another in license and rapine. No class of society was sacred from their lust and



avarice, and the inmates of monasteries, churches, and palaces were alike plundered and insulted.

This sack of Constantinople by the Slavonians, Bulgarians, and Greeks in the service of the families of Comnenus, Ducas, and Paleologos, who crept treacherously into the city, was a fit prologue to its sufferings when it was stormed by the Crusaders in 1204. From this disgraceful conquest of Constantinople by Alexius Comnenus, we must date the decay of its wealth and civic supremacy, both as a capital and a commercial city. It was henceforth unable to maintain the proud position among the cities of the earth which it had held from the time that Leo III repulsed the Saracens from its walls. New Rome, like old Rome, was destined to receive its deepest wounds from the dagger of the parricide, not from the sword of the enemy. Even Zonaras, a Byzantine historian, who had held high office under the son and grandson of Alexius, points out with just indignation the calamities which attended the establishment of the family of Comnenus on the imperial throne. The power which was thus established in rapine terminated about a century later in a bloody vengeance inflicted by an infuriated populace on the last emperor of the Comnenian family, Andronicus I. Constantinople was taken on the 1st of April 1081, and Alexius was crowned in St Sophia's next day.

## CHAPTER II

## THE DYNASTY OF COMNENUS

A.D. 1081-1185

## Sect. I

## The reign of Alexius I

A.D 1081-1118.

No ordinary talents were required to enable Alexius Comnenus to keep possession of the throne he had suddenly ascended, to the disappointment of many earlier claimants. Surrounded by the families of dethroned emperors, by a warlike nobility, and an army accustomed to rebellion, his position required even greater aptitude as a diplomatist and administrator than ability as a commander-in-chief.

(Two dethroned emperors, Michael VII and Nicephorus III, were living in Constantinople, and four sons of emperors who had received the imperial title during the reigns of their fathers. These were, Constantine Ducas Porphyrogenitus, the son of Constantine X; Leo and Nicephorus Diogenes, sons of Romanus IV and Eudocia (Anna Comnena proves they were crowned, 19-266); and Constantine Ducas, son of Michael VII, who was for some time the titular colleague of Alexius. There were also several rebel emperors who had worn the crown and the red boots for a time, like the Cesar John Ducas, Bryennius, Basilakes, and Melissenos. The three blind calenders, kings' sons, were nothing to this congregation of emperors).

That Alexius was a man of courage cannot be doubted, though, even as a soldier, he trusted more to cunning and deceit than to valour and tactics. There was also a mixture of vanity, presumption, and artifice in his character, which seem to indicate that he was a lucky adventurer, indebted in a great measure to the utter worthlessness of all his competitors for his signal success. His talents, indeed, were chiefly employed in balancing the personal interests of those around him, in neutralizing the effect of their vices, and in turning the vicissitudes of public events to his individual advantage. The mind of Alexius presents us with a Greek type, which becomes predominant as we advance in Byzantine history. The Roman traits, which had given a firmer political character to its earlier annals, had been long fading away, and under the dynasty of Comnenus they disappeared. Alexius never framed any permanent line of policy for improving the national resources, or performing the duties incumbent on the imperial government; his conduct was entirely directed by temporary contingencies and personal accidents; in short, he was a politician, not a statesman. He never aspired beyond the game of personal intrigue, and in that game he acted without principle, mistaking deceit for wisdom, as his daughter, who records his actions, candidly testifies by many an anecdote in her courtly ignorance of the value of common honesty. Personal courage in the field, and low cunning in the cabinet, present so incompatible a union in a great historical character, that we are apt to consider the combination an anomaly of Byzantine society; but an impartial examination of the authentic memoirs of modern courts would convince us that a candid biography of many brilliant sovereigns, written by a daughter to display her learning and eloquence, might afford curious revelations concerning the moral obtuseness of other courts and greater princes.

In weighing the vices of Alexius we must not overlook his merits. When he ascended the throne, the empire was in a state of anarchy and rebellion—its territories were invaded by the Patzinaks, the Turks, and the Normans—yet he succeeded in arresting its partition; and at a later period, when Europe poured into his dominions innumerable hosts of crusaders, whose military force set all direct opposition at defiance, his prudence and administrative knowledge carried the empire through that difficult crisis in safety. His admirers may truly say that, by activity, courage, and patience, he conducted the government through a period of the greatest difficulty, and, like Leo III, saved the empire on the very brink of ruin; but the historian must add, that he made no attempt to reorganize the administration according to the exigencies of a new state of society, nor did he seek to infuse new vigour and moral principles into the decayed institutions of his subjects. Now, it was by doing these things, more than by defeating the Saracens, that Leo III merited the title of the saviour and second founder of the Eastern Empire. Whether any measures Alexius could have adopted would have effected a reform in the social and political evils which were destroying the Byzantine power, and enabled it to prolong its existence, is not a question which history can solve.

While Alexius was placing the imperial crown on his head, his followers were transferring the wealth of the imperial city to their knapsacks. But as soon as his prize was secured, he felt that, in order to retain possession of it, he must immediately repress the disorders of the troops and assuage the indignation of the people. The soldiers were bribed with the little money which the extravagant administration of Nicephorus III had left in the public treasury, to return to their standards and submit to discipline. As it was impossible to make restitution to the plundered citizens, Alexius sought to appease the general indignation by addressing himself to the religious prejudices of the people. The Greek Church, unlike the Roman, has generally been the servile instrument of princes. The emperor was sure of obtaining its pardon, which he hoped would prove effectual in appeasing the indignation of the laity. Those who had not suffered would be edified by the emperor's piety, and those who had been plundered would no longer venture to complain loudly. Alexius openly accused himself as the unfortunate cause of the disorders committed by the army, loudly expressed his sincere repentance, and humbly implored the Patriarch and the synod to impose on him a penance to efface the stain of his sin. The Greek clergy considered that Heaven would be appeased by the emperor sleeping on the floor of his chamber with a stone for a pillow, by his wearing a hair-cloth shirt, and by his eating only dry bread and herbs, and drinking nothing but water, for a space of twenty days. To Alexius, who was young, hardy, and temperate, this punishment was not very terrific; and when he found that the pardon of Heaven could be so cheaply purchased, he availed himself of his knowledge, when in great want of money after his defeat by Robert Guiscard, to seize the wealth of the clergy. But the church, though it pardoned the plunder of laymen without restitution, would not rest satisfied with personal penance alone when the interests of the clergy suffered.

The Byzantine court operated so powerfully in accelerating the decline of the empire, and in preventing any reform in the government, that it is necessary to notice its constitution at the accession of Alexius. Under the Basilian dynasty, eunuchs and slaves had acted as generals and ministers, and the public administration had been conducted, as it generally is in the absolute monarchies of Asia, like a private estate. But Isaac I had been raised to the throne as the leader of the aristocracy, and Alexius was placed in the same position. In the interval, however, the resources and power of the central government had been much diminished, and Alexius was compelled to reward his aristocratic partisans with a lavish distribution of honours and pensions, which imposed a check on his own power and a heavy burden on the public revenues. In order to attach the family of Ducas to the existing state of things, the young Constantine, son of Michael VII, received the title of Emperor as the colleague of Alexius, and John Ducas quitted the monastic habit and resumed his rank as Caesar. The Emperor Alexius and the family of Comnenus occupied the great palace, and the assemblage of apartments clustered round it, which had been fortified by Nicephorus II Phokas, and towered proudly over the port Boukoleon and the hippodrome; while the Empress Maria, the widow of two living husbands,

who had been driven from the throne into the monastery, resided with her son, the titular Emperor Constantine, and the whole family of Ducas, in the palace called Mangana, on the lower ground, towards what is now the Seraglio Point. The traitor Nicephorus Melissenos laid down his arms as soon as he saw his brother-in-law Alexius firmly seated on the throne, and received the rank of Caesar. The title of Augustus, in its Greek form Sevastos, was conferred on several nobles; but to observe some discrimination in the distribution, it was divided into four gradations, *sevastos*, *protosevastos*, *panhypersevastos*, and *sevastokrator*. New titles were invented to gratify inferior partisans, and every title, by insuring to its possessor a pension, swelled the imperial civil list, increased the burdens of the people, and encroached on the resources applicable to the maintenance of the army, the navy, and the judicial establishment. The profits of a career of court favour eclipsed the highest rewards that could be gained in the honourable service of the state during the longest life. Attachment to the personal interests of the emperor was held to be more important than official experience and talent in administration.

(Constantine Ducas wore the imperial robes, signed the imperial decrees, and was named after Alexius in the public prayers. He was betrothed to Anna Comnena, but died before they were married. The Roman empire of Germany at a subsequent period contested the preeminence in titular absurdities with that of Constantinople. The title of *protosevastos* or *archaugustos*, with the pension annexed to the dignity, was conferred on the doges of Venice, Dominico Silvio and Vital Faliero; and the latter was made King of Dalmatin, the title on which the doges founded their right to the sovereignty of the Adriatic. Aboukassim, sultan of Nicaea, was created *sevastotatos*, or most august).

Though the personal position of Alexius at the commencement of his reign was controlled by the influence of the leading members of the aristocracy, he soon delivered himself from this restraint, and assumed despotic power. The admirable central organization of the administrative power enabled the emperor to suppress every attempt at provincial independence, and the political ideas and social habits of the people favoured the imperial authority as much as the mode of conducting public business. The emperor's power was still the only guarantee against anarchy; it was, consequently, still popular, though it was no longer under the legal restraint which a firm and systematic administration of the Roman law had long imposed on the arbitrary acts of its inferior agents. After the time of Alexius, the firmest support of despotism in the Byzantine Empire was in the minds and habits of the Greek people, who from this period became the dominant race at Constantinople.

The government of the Roman Empire, as we have had occasion to observe, exhibited, during its decline, a strong tendency to congeal society into fixed orders and separate castes or classes. This tyrannical system had nearly destroyed the state and exterminated the population, when a great effort of the people and a series of reforming princes in the Iconoclast period saved the empire and modified its institutions into their Byzantine type. The effects of time became again visible at the end of the eleventh century; but at this latter period the spirit of conservatism pervaded the whole mass of society, and each individual citizen clung to the practice of fixed forms and existing usages with a tenacity that rendered any reform difficult. A persuasion that everything was so perfect that it ought to remain stationary, infused as much self-conceit into the minds of the people as it did presumption into the policy of the emperor. This attachment to a stationary condition of society was carried to such a degree that the relics of old formalities and ceremonious usages were considered the essential duties of life in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. In this way the Greek race voluntarily circumscribed its intellects and restrained its reasoning faculties, at the very moment when the nations of Western Europe were boldly entering on a career of reform and progress. Nor are we to suppose that all means of introducing improvement was shut out in the Eastern Empire, had the throne been occupied by an emperor of enlarged views. The respect universally entertained for the Roman law insured the support of popular opinion to every measure of judicial reform, and the whole frame of society was thus open to amelioration. But to enter on the path of law and equity would have compelled the emperor and the ruling classes to make some concessions of fiscal reform, and the patriotism

necessary to make any considerable sacrifice of personal interest was utterly wanting in every class of Byzantine society at this period.

The throne which Alexius had gained by intrigue and daring was considered by others also as a lawful prize. No sovereign, therefore, had to contend with so many rebels. The first rival who claimed the throne was a Byzantine monk, who presented himself to Robert Guiscard in Italy as the dethroned emperor Michael VII. This deception could only have imposed on a willing mind, for the real Michael could be seen at Constantinople by hundreds who knew his person. Michael was so generally despised that, even had he cast off his episcopal robes and appeared in the Norman camp, he would have found few of his former subjects inclined to replace him on the throne he had forfeited. In the year 1084 while Alexius was busily engaged with the Norman war, several senators and officers of the army engaged in a conspiracy, which was discovered before, the leaders had enlisted many followers. As it was a matter of policy to conceal the importance of the plot, Alexius was satisfied with the banishment of the wealthiest culprits, and the confiscation of their estates. In 1091, Ariebes, an Armenian, and Constantine Humbertopoulos, who had assisted Alexius in mounting the throne, engaged in a conspiracy, and were treated in the same way. John Comnenos, governor of Dyrrachium, son of Isaac, the emperor's elder brother, as well as Theodore Gabras, who governed Trebizond almost as an independent prince, with his son Gregory, who subsequently married Maria, the emperor's second daughter, were also accused of treasonable projects. The Turkish pirate Tzachas, who had rendered himself master of Smyrna, Chios, Mitylene, Samos, and Rhodes, assumed the title of Emperor in the year 1092, and inflicted a sensible wound on the vanity of Alexius, by appearing constantly in public with all the ensigns peculiar to an emperor of the Romans. In the same year the fiscal oppression of the Byzantine administration produced revolts in Crete and Cyprus, where the leaders of the insurgents urged the inhabitants to render themselves independent; but Karykas, the Cretan leader, was abandoned by his followers, and put to death on the first appearance of the imperial fleet; while Rapsomates, after a feeble resistance, was captured in Cyprus, and order was restored in both islands.

These troubles were followed by an extensive conspiracy among the members of the imperial family, in which the ex-empress Maria and Michael Taronites, a brother-in-law of Alexius, took part. If we credit the narrative of Anna, Nicephorus Diogenes, son of Romanus IV and Eudocia, undertook to assassinate Alexius. Nicephorus and his brother Leo, who was killed in a battle with the Patzinaks, had been crowned in their infancy, but after their father's captivity they were deprived of the imperial title, and confined in a monastery by the Caesar John Ducas and Michael VII. Nicephorus was admired for his handsome athletic figure, popular manners, skill in warlike exercises, generosity, and courage, so that whenever he appeared in public he was received by the people with friendly salutations. Such popularity is dangerous in a despotic government, yet it is said that he first excited suspicion at court by an open violation of etiquette, and then made some very awkward attempts to murder the emperor. Anna, indeed, represents his conduct as that of a person verging on insanity. He was arrested and put to the torture, which, it was said, compelled him to reveal his accomplices. He and Katakalon Kekavmenos, who had commanded under Alexius at the battle of Kalavrya, lost their eyes; the fortune of Michael Taronites was confiscated, but the ex-empress Maria, being the mother of Alexius by adoption, escaped all punishment. After the loss of his eyes, Nicephorus Diogenes devoted his time to study, and made great progress in geometry by means of figures in relief which were prepared for his use. The fate of Nicephorus affected public opinion so powerfully that an impostor, who assumed the character of Constantine, the eldest son of Romanus by his first marriage, was generally welcomed. Though Constantine had been killed at the battle of Antioch, in which Isaac Comnenus, the emperor's elder brother, had been taken prisoner, twenty years before the appearance of the impostor, he yet found credit with many persons of rank in the capital. Alexius, in alarm, banished him to Cherson, from whence he escaped to the Romans, whom he induced to invade the empire. The hostile army advanced as far as Adrianople, when Alexius was released from the fear of this dangerous rebel by a Byzantine

officer, who decoyed him into an ambuscade and took him prisoner. He was deprived of sights (A.D. 1094).

While the armies of the Crusaders threatened Constantinople, no one ventured to intrigue against the government of Alexius, who was generally considered the only man capable of directing the state. But in 1106, when affairs appeared more tranquil, new competitors were again eager to seize the throne. Salomon, a senator of great wealth, but a vain literary coxcomb, who affected the character of a philosopher, engaged in a plot with four brothers named Anemas, descendants of that Anemas who had been slain in a battle with Swiatoslaff. The plot was discovered; the wealth of the philosophic Salomon and several of his accomplices was confiscated. The four brothers, whose descent from the Saracen emir of Crete was not forgotten, were conducted through the streets of Constantinople mounted on oxen, the hair of their heads and beards torn out with pitch plaster, crowned with horns, and decorated with entrails. After this, they were imprisoned in a tower near the palace of Blachern, which retained the name of the Tower of Anemas until the city was conquered by the Turks. About the same time Gregory Tironites, who had acted as an independent prince in the government of Trebizond, was brought prisoner to Constantinople by his cousin John, and imprisoned in the same tower.

The following year (1107) a new plot was formed to murder Alexius by an illegitimate descendant of Aaron the Bulgarian prince, who was assassinated by his brother Samuel, king of Achrida. The emperor was encamped near Thessalonica, but the presence of the empress and her attendants rendered the execution of the plot difficult. Libels and satires were placed in the imperial tent, in the hope that Irene would be induced to quit the encampment. A search for the author of these libels brought to light the whole plot, yet Aaron was only banished, in consequence of his connection with the royal line of Bulgaria, whose blood flowed in the veins of the empress.

We are inclined to give Alexius credit for extreme moderation, when we find him condemning those who are said to have been convicted of plotting his murder merely to imprisonment and banishment; but as he condemned heretics to be burned alive, we are compelled to suspect that the accusation of having plotted against his life was in many cases a charge added to the real crimes of the culprit, merely to increase the public indignation, and that Alexius knew the charge was without foundation, though his daughter Anna readily adopted every prejudice against those who had certainly shown hostility to her father's authority and person. The want of all political principle among the courtiers, and of all attachment to the government among the people, are, however, proved incontestably by these numerous conspiracies.

The unpopularity of Alexius among the people was caused by the severity with which the public taxes were collected, by the injustice of the monopolies he created for the profit of the fisc and of members of the imperial family, and by the frauds he committed in adulterating the coinage. This mode of cheating his subjects was carried to a greater extent by Alexius than it had been by any of his predecessors, and is one of the strongest symptoms of the incurable decline in the government of the Byzantine Empire. A government which systematically commits such frauds is utterly demoralized; and a people which is so weak as to submit to such oppression, has sunk into a hopeless state of degradation. Alexius paid the public debts in his own debased coinage, but he enforced payment of the taxes, as long as it was possible, in the pure coinage of earlier emperors. The ruin produced by these measures at last compelled him to adopt new regulations for collecting the land-tax; and the credit of his coinage became so bad throughout all the countries in Europe in which Byzantine gold had previously circulated, that the emperor was compelled, in all his public acts with foreigners, to stipulate that he would make all his payments in the gold coins of his predecessors of the name of Michael. The decline of Byzantine commerce in the Mediterranean may be traced to these measures of Alexius, which ruined the credit of the Greek merchants, and transferred a large quantity of capital from the cities of the empire to the republics of Italy.

Ecclesiastical animosities and religious persecutions contributed their share to increase the disorders in the empire. Though Alexius was both superstitious and hypocritical, his necessities, after the Norman war, induced him to assemble a servile synod of Greek ecclesiastics, who authorized him to employ the wealth accumulated as offerings in the churches for the public service. But this act was violently opposed by many of the clergy, and Leo, bishop of Chalcedon, went so far as to maintain that the government had committed sacrilege in melting down sacred objects which were entitled to the adoration of Christians. Alexius took advantage of his imprudence in attributing more than orthodox importance to these objects; and his opinions being condemned by a synod as heretical, he was banished to Sozopolis, where, however, the people regarded him as a saint. The general indignation soon forced the emperor to yield to public opinion, and he published a golden bull ordering restitution to be made for all the sacred plate already employed for the public service, and declaring it to be sacrilege for any one in future to apply church plate to profane uses.

Soon after this Constantinople was troubled by disputes arising out of the opinions taught by a professor of philosophy named Italos, from the native country of his father. Italos had succeeded Psellos as the chief of the philosophers, and his lectures on the Platonic philosophy had gained him so much popularity and influence as a teacher that the clergy became jealous. They soon discovered a taint of heresy in his opinions, and the Patriarch Eustratios Garidhas, who supported him, was deposed. Nikolaos the Grammarian was appointed Patriarch, and Italos was compelled to recant his opinions publicly in the church of St Sophia, (A.D. 1084).

#### BOGOMILIANS.

The heresy of Italos afforded some mental occupation for the people of the capital, but it was followed by a Paulician rebellion, which inflicted many evils on the inhabitants of Thrace. Various Asiatics, generally tainted with heretical opinions, had been established in the neighbourhood of Philippopolis from the time of Constantine V, and had long been remarkable for their industry, and the vigour they displayed in conducting their local affairs. Their moral education was excellent, though their religious opinions were deficient in Grecian orthodoxy. Their lands were well cultivated and bravely defended, and their commercial dealings extended over a great part of Western Europe. After the conquest of the Paulician state at Tephrike by Basil I, numbers of that sect had established themselves in Thrace, where other Asiatic colonists united with them. When Alexius marched against Robert Guiscard, two thousand eight hundred of these Paulicians joined his army as the military contingent they were bound to furnish; but having lost three hundred men in the defeat at Dyrrachium, the remainder, instead of rallying in the imperial camp, returned home. After the conclusion of the war, Alexius determined to punish them for this desertion, and destroy their communal system. He established himself at Mosynopolis, where he summoned the principal men of the Paulicians to his presence. By separating them from one another he disarmed the whole. A judicial sentence was then promulgated, depriving them of their property; and their families were expelled from their houses with great cruelty. It happened that a Paulician, who had been baptized during the reign of Nicephorus III, and had attained the rank of *domestikos*, heard that his four sisters had been driven from their home. Eager to avenge the cause of his family and countrymen, he seized a fortress called Veliatova, and plundered the property of the orthodox Greeks and Bulgarians to the very walls of Philippopolis. In the year 1086 he effected a junction with a colony of Patzinaks which had crossed the Danube, and extended his expeditions over all Thrace. Pakuvian, the grand domestikos of the West, and Branias, were sent to arrest his progress, but the Byzantine army was completely defeated, and both its generals were slain. After this the Patzinak war insured impunity to their Paulician allies for a considerable period; but towards the end of his reign, Alexius found time to think of converting these heretics. Many were

established in a new town called Alexiopolis or Neokastron. Some affected to be converted by the arguments of the emperor, but others persisted in their hereditary heresies. Partly on account of the aversion entertained by the provincial population to the imperial government, whose fiscal severity became from age to age more burdensome, and partly on account of national antipathies, roused into activity by the arrogance which the Greeks displayed as soon as they could assume the position of a dominant race, a very general desire was felt by the inhabitants of Thrace and Bulgaria to emancipate themselves from the ecclesiastical power of the Greek church. This sentiment had long supplied the Paulicians with a perpetual influx of votaries, and enabled them to increase in numbers while the population of the provinces around them was sensibly diminishing. Other heresies also derived a portion of their success from this general feeling of opposition to the central authority of the church and state.

The original constitution of the Eastern Church had been well suited to prevent the formation of heresies based on national feelings, for it admitted the formation of a separate ecclesiastical establishment in each nation, while its central government, by general councils, rendered the subdivision of the hierarchy into a number of independent churches highly advantageous both to the cause of morals among the priesthood and of religion among the people. The power of emperors and popes put an end to this early constitution of the church. The emperor enslaved the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Patriarch enslaved those Christians who remained in communion with the Greek Church. Still, wherever a nation was politically independent, it wished also to be so ecclesiastically. Men may unite voluntarily to receive the dogmas of a common religion, but they cannot accept a foreign ecclesiastical establishment without some feeling of hostility to the foreign priesthood which invades their independence. This feeling gained so great strength in Bulgaria, as to render the Bulgarian hierarchy at last independent of the priesthood at Constantinople. Though the king and people of Bulgaria had adopted all the rites and ceremonies of the Eastern Church, and rejected the solicitations of the popes to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome, they nevertheless seized the opportunity, when it presented itself, to constitute their own ecclesiastical establishment as a national church, under a patriarch entirely independent of the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. This was probably effected in practice long before it received its official recognition from the Byzantine emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople. At length, however, the victorious army of Simeon, king of the Bulgarians, was enabled to dictate terms of peace to the Emperor Romanus I in the year 923, and one of the stipulations of the treaty appears to have been that the emperor and the Byzantine church should publicly recognised the primate of the Bulgarians as a patriarch equal in authority to the other patriarchs of the Eastern Church. In virtue of that treaty, the Patriarch of Constantinople was compelled to acknowledge the complete independence of the Bulgarian church, and to admit the Patriarch of Bulgaria to all the ecclesiastical honours and rank held by the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. It is true that the conquest of Bulgaria by John I Zimiskes put an end to the national independence and the patriarchal dignity in about fifty years; but neither the Emperor John nor his successors could eradicate the feelings of hostility to the ecclesiastical domination of the Greeks, which had sunk deep into the hearts of the Bulgarian and Slavonian population.

It is to the influence of these national feelings, rather than to the mystical religious doctrines which the Paulicians had brought with them from the East, that we must ascribe the growth of the sect called Bogomilians. Their name is derived from the Slavonian language, and the sect had its origin among the Slavonian population of Thrace and Bulgaria. It is not necessary to trace the first principle of their dissent from the Byzantine church to intellectual speculations, tending to harmonize the Oriental doctrines concerning the existence of good and evil as two distinct powers in the universe with the Gospel dispensation; but, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that the Paulicians and Catharists, who had derived their religious sentiments directly from Oriental sources, mingled some of their mystical tenets with the opinions of the Bogomilians. Among the mass of the Slavonians in the Byzantine empire, however, the origin of heresy was simply hatred of the Greek church on account of its simony, aversion to the Greek ecclesiastics on account of their corruption, and a craving for some purer



religious instruction than was offered by an established church, in which religion was suffocated by mechanical forms and unmeaning ceremonies. This is proved clearly by the sympathies which the Bogomilians manifested for the memory as well as the doctrines of the Iconoclasts, and their hostility to the adoration of the Virgin and of saints. At the same time, there is convincing proof that they adopted some of their heretical opinions from the Paulician and Euchite teachers, who never ceased to preach the doctrines of an Oriental theosophy throughout Thrace and Bulgaria during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The Bogomilian heresy was propagated among the Sclavonian population for some time before it excited the attention of the church at Constantinople; but at last its followers became so numerous as to cause alarm among the Byzantine clergy. When the Emperor Alexius was fully informed of the progress the sect was making, he readily joined the Patriarch in rousing the prejudices of the orthodox against the new heresy. His politic spirit felt the importance of forming a close alliance with the clergy on a question where the interests of the church were more directly involved than those of the state; and he was eager to avail himself of a favourable opportunity of awakening passions in the minds of the people which would tend to divert their attention from the political errors, fiscal abuses, and lavish expenditure of the imperial government. The Bogomilian teachers had, however, made so little public display of their opinions, that they were only discovered by means of spies; and perhaps they might have escaped all notice in the political history of the time, had the Emperor Alexius not engaged in personal discussions with Basilios their leader; a controversy which the imperial theologian terminated by committing his inflexible opponent to the flames as a heretic. The conduct of Alexius in the whole transaction fixes a deeper stain on his character than any mystical speculation could reflect on his adversary.

A Bogomilian who was put to the torture by the imperial officers revealed to them that a monk named Basilios was regarded as the leader of the sect, and that he had selected twelve teachers to act as his apostles. When Basilios was brought before the emperor, his demeanour was modest and respectful; his figure was good, but his thin beard gave his withered countenance the air of an ascetic more than of an enthusiast. His manners and conversation made the emperor look on him as a worthy antagonist. The Emperor Alexius, as his daughter informs us repeatedly, prided himself more on gaining his ends than on choosing honourable paths. He received Basilios with an appearance of frankness, and he even invited him to enter on the discussion of religious opinions, in order to make a public display of the political cunning with which he could deceive a heresiarch who had deceived thousands. The learned Anna even boasts that her father knew how to rub sweets on the rim of the cup he induced his antagonist to swallow, and how, with a dose of flattery, he purged the Bogomilian monk of his heretical opinions. "I am anxious", said the imperial hypocrite, "to hear the opinions of your reverence, and learn all the arguments by which you have laboured to correct the vain superstitions of our clergy". The courtiers supposed that the ascetic was misled by flattery; it is more likely he deceived himself by enthusiasm, and expected to make Alexius a convert to truth. He knew but little of the emperor. Roused by his subject, however, Basilios fully explained all his objections to the established church, and revealed the full extent of his heretical opinions, while an imperial secretary, concealed behind a curtain, committed his words to writing. When the discussion was terminated, the emperor drew aside the curtain and showed Basilios that he had been speaking with the patriarch and the most bigoted members of the senate and clergy as his audience. His conviction and condemnation as a heretic before the patriarchal tribunal of Nikolaos the Grammarian followed as a matter of course, and as he refused to renounce his opinions, he was ordered to be burned at the stake. This sentence was passed about the year 1110, but it was not carried into execution until the year 1118; for Anna mentions that it was one of the last, and, in her opinion, one of the most glorious acts of her father's life to burn the heretic. Every solicitation was employed to induce Basilios to retract, and own himself a convert to the imperial arguments, but all was vain; and the courageous demeanour of the heretic induced the people to believe that he expected angels to descend from heaven to release him from the stake. The clergy, however, pretended that he was tormented in his cell by

demons, who stoned him during the night for revealing their secrets. He was burned in the hippodrome, and suffered with the firmness of the noblest martyrs. The spectacle of a fellow-creature committed to the flames was so agreeable to the populace of Constantinople, that they shouted to the emperor to bring out more heretics to be burned; but Alexius prudently cut short the tumult by dismissing the assembly. On another occasion, the emperor ordered two fires to be lighted in the *tchukanesterion* for the purpose of burning other Bogomilians; but some, having shown a disposition to recant, were immediately released, and the others who remained firm in their opinions were remanded to prison.

It is necessary to notice an example of the superstition of Alexius, in order to show how completely his mind was ruled by the spirit of false devotion prevalent in his age and nation. As Alexius was riding with his elder brother Isaac, before he ascended the throne, a reverend old man in the garb of a priest approached and whispered in his ear the words of the Psalmist, "Advance prosperously and reign, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness". He then exclaimed, "O Emperor Alexius" and suddenly disappeared. Both brothers sought the strange priest in vain; and though Alexius pretended to consider the apparition as an illusion of the imagination, his daughter asserts that in his heart he was persuaded that he had received a direct revelation from St John the Evangelist, the son of thunder. On a later occasion, he gave a curious instance of his confidence in a belief that God habitually revealed his will to mortals. In the year 1094, when the Romans invaded the empire to support the pretended Diogenes, Alexius, in the presence and with the participation of the Patriarch Nikolaos, consulted the will of Heaven by depositing on the high altar of St Sophia's two rolls inscribed with the questions whether the Romans were to be attacked or not to be attacked. A priest ignorant of the contents of the two rolls, was ordered to approach the altar, after the Patriarch had performed divine service, and take up one of the papers, which was unfolded, and its contents read to the emperor. The communication thus obtained appeared to him an oracle of God, commanding him to march against the enemy.

When the emperor was so completely under the guidance of superstition, it is not surprising that his conduct was extremely inconsistent. At times the suggestions of reason and true religion could not fail to overpower his fanatical fancies. We find him, accordingly, at times favouring popular preachers whose avowed theme was the eulogy of some beloved saint, and at times persecuting these orators because their doctrines were suspected of heretical or seditious tendencies. At times he tolerated, and at times he persecuted astrologers; for these impostors frequently made the imperial crown one of the prizes which futurity allowed them to distribute. An Athenian astrologer was allowed to sell his predictions to the Constantinopolitans unmolested, while an Alexandrian was banished for mixing too much truth in his predictions. A hermit named Nilos, who had gained great popularity as a public preacher, was accused of heresy, and the emperor was led by his inordinate vanity to engage in personal controversy with the enthusiast; but the monk foiled his theological skill, and defied his earthly power by expressing his readiness to suffer martyrdom for the truth.

#### TREATY OF PEACE WITH THE TURKS, A.D. 1081.

One of the earliest acts of the reign of Alexius was to conclude a treaty of peace with the Seljouk emir Suleiman, who acted in Asia Minor as if he were completely independent of the Grand Sultan Malekshah. The treachery of Nicephorus Melissenos had placed Suleiman in possession of Nicaea, and his troops occupied several posts on the shores of the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora; while Alexius, who required the whole forces of the empire to resist the invasion of Robert Guiscard, was compelled to purchase peace at any price. Under such circumstances, it was only to be expected that the immediate neighbourhood of Constantinople

could be kept free from the Turks, and accordingly the boundaries of the Roman Empire in Asia Minor were by this treaty reduced to very narrow limits. The country immediately opposite the capital, as far as the mouth of the river Sangarius and the head of the gulf of Nicomedia, was evacuated by the Turks, as well as the coast of the Sea of Marmora, from the little stream called Drako, which falls into the gulf of Nicomedia, westward to the city of Prusias. Already the mountains of the Turkish territory were visible from the palace of Alexius and the dome of St Sophia; but the Crusades were destined to repel this torrent of Mohammedan invasion from the shores of Europe for several centuries.

The spirit of enterprise and conquest which, when placed under the guidance of religious enthusiasm, carried the bravest warriors of western Europe as Crusaders to the East, had, in the preceding generation, under the direction of civil wisdom, produced the conquest of England and southern Italy by the Normans. These conquests had raised their military reputation and self-confidence to the highest pitch; and Robert Guiscard, who was lord of dominions in Italy far superior in wealth to the duchy of Normandy, hoped to eclipse the exploits of Duke William in England by conquering the Byzantine empire. But as he knew that he must expect a more prolonged resistance than England had offered to its conqueror, he sought a pretext for commencing the war which would conceal his own object, and have a tendency to induce a party in the country to take up arms against the government he was anxious to overthrow. His daughter Helena had been betrothed to Constantine Dukas, the son of Michael VII, and was still so young that she was residing in the imperial palace at Constantinople, to receive her education, when Michael was dethroned. Nicephorus III sent the child to a convent, and Robert her father stood forward as the champion of Michael's right to recover the throne from which he had been expelled. Under the cover of this pretext, the Norman expected to render himself master of Constantinople, or at all events to gain possession of the rich provinces on the eastern shore of the Adriatic.

The preparations of Robert Guiscard were far advanced when Alexius ascended the throne. To inflame the zeal of his troops, he persuaded Pope Gregory VII that a Greek monk, who had assumed the character of Michael VII, was really the dethroned emperor, and thus induced the Pope to approve of his expedition, and to grant absolution to all the invaders of the Byzantine empire, as if they had been about to commence a holy war. The soldiers were impressed with a deep conviction of the justice of their cause at its outset, and when the imposture of the Greek monk was generally acknowledged, they were inflamed with hopes of plunder and glory.

In the month of June 1081, Robert Guiscard sailed from Brindisi with a well-appointed fleet of a hundred and fifty ships, carrying an army of thirty thousand chosen troops. His first operation was to render himself master of the rich island of Corcyra (Corfu), which then yielded an annual revenue of fifteen hundred pounds' weight of gold to the Byzantine government. He then seized the ports of Butrinto, Avlona, and Kanino, on the mainland, and laid siege to the important city of Dyrrachium, the strongest fortress on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, and the capital of Byzantine Illyria. It was fortunate for the empire that George Paleologos, one of its bravest officers, had entered the place before Robert commenced the siege.

Alexius immediately hastened to the relief of Dyrrachium with as large an army as it was in his power to assemble. He had endeavoured to raise up every obstacle to Robert's expedition, and still hoped that the Emperor of Germany, Henry IV, would cause a serious diversion in his favour by attacking the Norman dominions in Italy. To induce the German emperor to do this, Alexius had paid him a subsidy of 144,000 byzants, and sent him many valuable presents; but Henry was too deeply engaged in his contest with Pope Gregory to spare either time or troops to act against the Normans in southern Italy, and the Byzantine Empire gained little by his alliance. The Venetians proved more valuable allies. Alexius solicited their assistance, as bound to aid the empire by the ties of their ancient allegiance; and he engaged not only to pay them for their services, but also to make good any losses of ships which they might sustain by the war. The

interests of Venice bound them to the cause of the Byzantine government at this time. They were alarmed lest their lucrative trade with Greece and the Levant should be placed at the mercy of the rapacious Normans, in case Robert Guiscard should succeed in gaining possession of the entrance of the Adriatic. They plunged, therefore, into the war without hesitation or reserve.

The Doge Dominic Sylvio sailed from Venice with a powerful fleet to attack the Normans before the Emperor Alexius could collect his army and march to the relief of Dyrrachium. The Norman fleet, which was commanded by Bohemund, the illustrious son of Robert Guiscard, suffered a complete defeat, and the communications of the invading army with Italy were cut off. This difficulty only excited Robert to press the siege with additional vigour. He employed every device then known for the attack of towns. Towers of wood were prepared in frame; battering-rams were used to shake the walls, and balists to sweep the defenders from their summits. But the fortifications of Dyrrachium were too solid to be seriously injured by the feeble machines the Normans had prepared. The immense blocks of stone that formed their foundations were the work of the ancient Greeks who first colonized Epidamnus. The more modern superstructure was so broad that four horsemen could ride abreast on its summit, and it was flanked at proper intervals by towers raised eleven feet above the line of the curtain.

The mode of attack generally most successful in that age consisted in filling up the ditch, and pushing forward a high wooden tower close to the walls. This structure, which moved on rollers, was furnished with a drawbridge, which, reaching the ramparts of the place, enabled the storming party to come to an engagement with its defenders hand to hand. Robert had at first attempted to take Dyrrachium by escalade, and for that purpose had brought up the usual battering machines as close as possible to the body of the place, but all his attacks had been repulsed. Showers of stones, and torrents of burning naphtha and Greek fire, had broken the ladders and burned the tortoises and pavisses of the assailants, while Paleologos, in several desperate sallies, had destroyed the greater part of the battering-rams and balists. The only hope of taking the place before the arrival of the emperor was at last centred on a mighty wooden tower which Robert Guiscard had constructed from the timbers of his ships which the Venetians had rendered useless. This fabric, higher than the towers of Dyrrachium, was built out of reach of the flaming missiles of the besieged, and well protected against their sallies. The interior consisted of a broad staircase, to enable companies of armed men to mount in close order to the summit, whence a drawbridge hung suspended to fall on the ramparts of the enemy. When this tower was completed, an inclined plane and wooden tram-way brought it close to the edge of the ditch with as much ease as a ship glides from the stocks into the sea. But Paleologos and his engineers had watched the progress of the work with attention, and before the mighty tower was put in motion, a framework of masts and yards was constructed on the tower of the city against which it was directed. The appearance of a slender scaffold to resist their mighty tower only excited the contempt of the Normans, and the monster was advanced slowly to the very edge of the ditch without any opposition from the besieged. Five hundred chosen men, in complete armour, were ready to rush on the drawbridge, and already crowded the staircase, when the order was suddenly given to halt. The long masts and yards on the city tower had already descended, and wedged the drawbridge firmly against the body of the structure, where it served as a door to enclose its occupants, and prevent them from making any use of their arms.

At the same instant an immense quantity of combustible materials was projected from the walls, and the tower was in a short time enveloped in flames and smoke, while the whole attack was terminated by a vigorous sortie, which enabled Paleologos to destroy its last relics.

In the middle of October, Alexius at last approached Dyrrachium. He had been joined on his march by Pakurian, the grand-domestikos, with the European troops stationed at Adrianople, and by Bodin, king of Servia, who brought an auxiliary force of active Sclavonian mountaineers to aid the heavy Byzantine infantry. The imperial army was composed of so great a variety of troops that an enumeration of its different corps and nations will afford the reader some information concerning the military condition of the empire at this interesting period, just before

it was visited by the great armies of the Crusaders. The legion of the guards, which usually did duty on the outer walls of the great palace at Constantinople, was commanded by Constantine Opos. The Macedonian legion, recruited in great part from the Sclavonian population of that province, was under the orders of Antiochos. The Thessalian, composed of Greeks, was commanded by Alexander Kavasilas. The contingent of Turkish troops, from a colony settled near Achrida, to overawe the Sclavonian population, and keep open the communication with the Adriatic by the Via Egnatia, was led by Tatikios, an active and able soldier, son of a Saracen who had been taken prisoner by John Comnenus, the emperor's father. The body-guard called Vestiarites was commanded by Panukometes; the Frank mercenaries by Constantine Humbertopulos, a nephew of Robert Guiscard; and the Varangians by Nampites. A corps of two thousand eight hundred Paulicians, from the colonies in the neighbourhood of Philippopolis, had also joined the imperial army, under their own leaders, Xantas and Kuleon. The military proceedings of Alexius, when he reached the neighbourhood of Dyrrachium, were very injudicious. The position of the Normans was extremely dangerous, hemmed in on one side by the numerous army of the emperor, and exposed on the other to constant attacks on the part of an active garrison. Their foraging parties were daily destroyed by the Dalmatians and Albanians, so that, if Alexius had taken up a strong position, and thrown out his light troops all-round the Norman camp, he would soon have destroyed their cavalry, and reduced them to capitulate. But he was jealous of the military glory acquired by Paleologos, and resolved to eclipse it.

The first measure of Alexius betrayed the meanness of his disposition. He ordered Paleologos to quit Dyrrachium, in order that he might confer with him in the imperial camp, and he thus relieved Robert Guiscard from an active enemy in his rear on the day of battle. In opposition to the advice of all the most experienced officers in his army, the emperor then decided on risking a general engagement, though it was evident that by this rash proceeding he offered the enemy the only chance for safety that now remained to them. The battle which took place was as disgraceful to the Byzantine arms as to the emperor's judgment. Alexius commanded the centre in person; his brother-in-law, the Caesar Nicephorus Melissenos, who had put the Turks in possession of Nicaea and the greater part of Bithynia, commanded the right wing, and Pakurian the left. The Varangian guard, having quitted their horses in order to make a display of their valour, led the van on foot. For some time the attack of the Varangians on the Norman line was completely successful, and one wing of Robert's army was broken. A part of the cavalry was forced back to the sea-shore, where the Venetians began to assail them from boats. But Robert regained the advantage by promptly bringing up a fresh division of his troops to attack the flank of the Varangians, to whom the emperor brought no succour. The victors were compelled to retreat to a church in order to make a stand against the Norman cavalry. In the meantime, after a short engagement, the rest of the Byzantine army was broken and fled. Several nobles of the highest rank perished on the field, and the emperor himself was slightly wounded, and compelled to fly without a follower. The King of Servia had remained an idle spectator of a battle which he probably considered as an act of imperial folly, and he retired from the field as soon as his allies were defeated. The loss of the vanquished amounted to about six thousand; but from the loss of the military chest and baggage, and the defective arrangements adopted by Alexius in his confidence of victory, many corps dispersed, and could never be brought back to their standards. The Paulicians, who had behaved with courage and lost three hundred men, finding that they had no hope either of plunder or pay, returned home, in spite of all the exertions of the emperor to detain them.

After the battle, Paleologos found it impossible to enter Dyrrachium; but Alexius succeeded in transmitting orders to the garrison, appointing an Albanian general named Komiskorta governor of the place, and intrusting the custody of the citadel to the Venetians. In the month of February 1082, a Venetian, who guarded one of the towers, betrayed the city to Robert, who had previously put his army into winter-quarters at Glabinitza and Joanina, in order to escape the severe cold of the winter farther north. Alexius collected the remains of the Byzantine army at Deavolis, and repaired himself to Thessalonica, where he passed the winter

collecting a second army; which he was enabled to do, as he had replenished his military chest from the church plate of the richest cathedrals and monasteries in his dominions. The affairs of Italy, before the opening of the second campaign, fortunately compelled Robert Guiscard to quit Illyria, and leave his son Bohemund in command of the Norman army.

The progress of the Normans was arrested by the number of fortified towns in the mountains of Illyria and Epirus, most of them the remains of Hellenic cities or Roman municipalities, whose strong walls secured them against any attack short of a regular siege. The whole summer of 1082 passed without any operation of importance, and Bohemund established his army in its old winter-quarters at Joanina. In the spring of 1083, Alexius had collected an army so powerful that he again marched forward to attack the Normans. In order to break the terrible charge of their cavalry, which no Byzantine horse could resist, the emperor placed a number of chariots before his own troops, armed with barbed poles extending in front like a line of lances, and in these chariots he stationed a strong body of heavy-armed infantry. Bohemund, however, on reconnoitring this strange unwieldy measure of defence, broke up his line of cavalry into two columns, and, leaving the centre of the Byzantine army with the chariots unassailed, fell with fury on the extremity of the two wings. The resistance was short, and the Emperor Alexius again fled with precipitation to Achrida, where Pakurian assembled the fugitives. Bohemund considered it of more importance to the success of his enterprise to render himself master of Arta, than to pursue the beaten army. While he was engaged besieging Arta, Alexius, before the end of autumn, had collected troops sufficient to risk a battle to relieve the besieged city; but he was again defeated by Bohemund, and, seeing his inability to contend with the young Norman in the field, he left Arta to its fate, and retired to Constantinople.

The Normans soon overran all Epirus, and invaded Macedonia, extending their incursions as far as Skopia; but they failed to reduce the citadel of Achrida, though they gained possession of the town. Bohemund, finding that he was unable to take Ostrovos and Berrhoea, could not venture to advance into the plain of Thessalonica, though he penetrated by Vodhena as far as Moglena, and proceeded by Pelagonia and Kastoria into Thessaly, where, after making himself master of Tricala and Tziviskos, he laid siege to Larissa, in which he intended to establish his winter-quarters. This city, however, was defended by Leo Kephalas with great obstinacy; and Alexius, having procured a subsidiary force of seven thousand light cavalry from Suleiman, the Sultan of Nicaea, again took the field in the spring of 1084. After passing Mount Kellia, he quitted the high-road, and, diverging to his left, descended by the southern side of Ossa, having avoided the vale of Tempe. Passing Exeban, a Vallachian village near Andronia, he encamped at Plavitza, on the banks of a stream of the same name. From thence he advanced by the gardens of Delphina to Tricala, from which the Normans had retired. He there learned, by a letter from Leo Kephalas, that Larissa was reduced to the last extremity, and must surrender unless it received immediate succour. Alexius immediately formed his army into two divisions, and advanced to engage the Normans before Larissa. His preparation for a battle was on this occasion made with considerable skill. The principal division of his forces, with which he left the imperial standard, was ordered to engage the enemy with caution, and, after some fighting, to retire in order to a pass called Lykostoma, or the Wolfs Mouth, where they would be protected by the nature of the ground from further pursuit. Alexius, with the other division, at the same time marched with a chosen body of men through the pass of Livatanino, and, avoiding Reveniko, took post at Allage, where he lay concealed until Bohemund should have pursued the other division of his army to a considerable distance. When he found that his stratagem had proved successful, he issued from his concealment, and stormed the Norman camp. This exploit was facilitated by a body of archers, who were instructed to shoot the horses of the Normans as they were forming to make a sally.

The wounded horses became unmanageable, and the dismounted Normans, though terrible on horseback, were almost helpless, on account of the weight of their armour and their pointed boots, which impeded their motions on foot. Bohemund, believing that he had again defeated the emperor, was boasting that he had driven him into the wolf's jaws, when a

messenger arrived with the news that his camp was lost and Larissa relieved. He immediately galloped back with all his knights, but he found that Alexius had already-established himself so strongly in the camp that there was no hope of recovering it. Still the Byzantine army feared the Norman lance too much to venture any engagement in the plain; but next day Bohemund, seeing that he was in danger of being cut off from his resources, retreated to Kastoria. As soon as the Norman army was cut off from plunder, and without any hope of making further conquests, it began to display a mutinous spirit; and Bohemund was compelled to return to Italy, to obtain supplies of money and fresh troops. Brienne, the constable of Apulia, who commanded in his absence, found himself compelled to surrender Kastoria to the Emperor Alexius, and to engage not to bear arms again against the Byzantine Empire.

While Bohemund was carrying on the war against the Emperor of the East, Robert Guiscard had driven the Emperor of the West out of Rome; and after vanquishing Henry IV, he had plundered the Eternal City like another Genseric. He was now ready to resume his schemes of ambition in the East. Collecting a powerful fleet to carry over his victorious army into Epirus, he raised the siege of Corfu, which was invested by the combined naval forces of the Byzantine Empire and the Venetian republic. The united fleets were completely defeated in a great naval battle, in which, according to Anna Comnena, they lost thirteen thousand men. But in the month of July 1085, Robert died in the island of Cephalonia, and with him perished all the Norman projects of conquest in the Byzantine Empire. Dyrrachium was recovered by Alexius with the assistance of the Venetian and Amalphitan merchants established in the place, and the services of the Venetians in this war were rewarded by many commercial privileges which were conferred on them by a golden bull. The Amalphitan merchants at Constantinople were also obliged to place themselves under Venetian protection, and pay dues to the Venetian corporation. The Venetians had been so displeased with their doge, Dominico Silvio, to whose negligence they ascribed their defeat by the Normans, that he had been deposed, and Vital Faliero appointed doge in his stead. On Faliero the Emperor Alexius conferred the title of Protosevastos, to which he attached a considerable pension, and the title of the republic to the sovereignty of Dalmatia and Croatia was formally recognised. From this time the doge appears to have styled himself lord of the kingdoms of Dalmatia and Croatia.

#### PATZINAK WAR, A.D. 1085.

It was fortunate for Alexius that neither the Patzinaks nor the Seljouk Turks availed themselves of his defeats during the Norman war to attack the empire. Their united efforts would, in all probability, have destroyed the Byzantine Empire, and might have exterminated the Greek race. The dominions of the Patzinaks at this time extended along the northern bank of the Danube, from the Carpathian Mountains to the shores of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azof. Over these extensive plains the nomad Patzinaks wandered as lords of the country, amidst a numerous fixed population of Slavonians and Vallachians. It seems at variance with our modern theories concerning the great superiority which civilization is supposed to confer in the arts of war and government, to find the Patzinaks carrying on the administration of their extensive dominions from a movable camp of waggons, and displaying a degree of military and political skill which rendered them for several generations formidable enemies to the Byzantine empire. But it requires no very profound knowledge of history to perceive that military superiority often exists distinct from social civilization, that literary cultivation affords no guarantee for national wisdom and honour, and that theological learning is no proof of individual virtue.

During the Norman war the Patzinaks were themselves attacked by a new horde of Komans. But when the tyranny of Alexius drove the Paulicians into rebellion, a union was

formed between large bodies of Patzinaks and Romans, who invaded the empire under the guidance and with the assistance of the persecuted Paulicians. Their success in defeating the Byzantine army under the grand-domestikos Pakuvian has been already noticed. In the following spring, A.D. 1087, a fresh army of invaders, to the number of eighty thousand men, ravaged Thrace under the command of Tzelgu, but were at last defeated by Nikalaos Mavrokatalon, and their leader slain. The Byzantine army soon after proved again unfortunate; and in the following campaign the emperor, in order to recover the ground then lost crossed the range of Mount Haemus by the central pass called the Iron Gates, in opposition to the counsels of Nicephorus Bryennius, his blind rival, who, when he heard of the imprudent determination of Alexius, observed, "Well! on the other side of the mountains it will soon appear who is best mounted". The emperor pushed forward as far as Dorostylon, but he was there met by the Patzinaks and completely defeated. The enemy made such good use of their victory that they pursued the imperial troops over Mount Haemus, and wintered in the valley of the Hebrus, about seven leagues from its mouth, in the neighbourhood of Kypsele and Taurokomon.

In the spring of the year 1089 the Patzinaks advanced to the vicinity of Constantinople, and the whole campaign was passed in a variety of movements, which led to no certain result except that the barbarians ravaged the country between Adrianople and the capital without sustaining any serious loss. The Princess Anna recounts an occurrence during this campaign which places in a strong light both the weakness of her father and the extreme difficulty of his position. A Patzinak chief named Neantzes, having deserted his countrymen, became a great favourite with the emperor. But Alexius having laid a plan to surprise the Patzinak army by a sudden attack, a soldier discovered that Neantzes contrived to hold a parley with some of his countrymen, and from his knowledge of their language he was satisfied that the deserter was a double traitor. He immediately repaired to the emperor's tent and denounced Neantzes. The Patzinak was summoned to answer the charge, but as soon as his accuser had concluded his narrative, Neantzes drew his sabre, and before anyone could interpose or the soldier make a movement either to defend himself or escape, he slew his accuser in the emperor's presence. Yet, either from timidity or suspicion, the emperor overlooked this insolent act of rebellion; nay, he had even the baseness to attempt to conceal his natural indignation, by making Neantzes a present of one of his own horses. The Patzinak, who knew well that his conduct was unpardonable, used the emperor's horse to make his escape to his countrymen.

Though Alexius could gain no advantage of any importance over the Patzinaks in the field of battle, and was forced to leave all Bulgaria and the greater part of Thrace exposed to their devastations, he nevertheless contrived to destroy considerable numbers of their cavalry in different skirmishes, and his daughter loudly celebrates these partial successes. On one occasion he was besieged at Tzurulos. A rapid but smooth slope lay before the town like a long glacis. Along the top of this slope the emperor ranged all the wheels of his baggage-waggons attached to their axles, and when the Patzinak cavalry had charged half way up the slope, to capture the plunder they saw without the walls, the wheels of the waggons were let loose to run down on them. When the Patzinaks broke their ranks to escape this new mode of attack, the Byzantine troops sallied out of the place and inflicted on them a serious loss. The Patzinak army, however, maintained its ground, and wintered at Bulgarophygia and Nizitza.

In the spring of the year 1090 the emperor took up his position at Choirobacches, and the Patzinak army soon encamped before the place. They were so strong that they were able to detach a body of six thousand cavalry to plunder the country within ten miles of Constantinople, but their confidence became so great that the emperor was enabled to surprise their camp before Choirobacches, and put a considerable number of their troops to the sword. He then disguised his own cavalry by making use of the standards of the Patzinaks, and in this way he destroyed many of their troops who were returning from plundering in the vicinity of Constantinople. But the enemy's force was not broken by this victory, and their innumerable light horse continued to ravage every corner of Thrace. The inordinate vanity of Alexius, nevertheless, induced him to



celebrate this trifling advantage (though it was insufficient to protect the country round his capital from hostile attacks) by a triumphal procession back to Constantinople. The advanced guard of his army wore for the occasion the dress and carried the arms of Patzinaks, as if the emperor was prouder of his own stratagems than of the valour of his army. The prisoners followed, each led by a peasant; then came a body of soldiers, bearing aloft the heads of the slain on their lances; and after this display, the emperor, surrounded by his household and usual body-guard, with the imperial standards, and followed by the trophies of his success. The pageant excited the spleen of Nicephorus Melissenos, who characterized his brother-in-law's vanity with more justice than his brother-in-law had treated his treason. Melissinos sneered at the emperor's victory, as bringing joy to the empire without gain, and grief to the Patzinaks without loss.

Alexius, however, at last succeeded in concluding a treaty with the Komans, by which these barbarians engaged to send a large army to cooperate with him in Thrace. In order to prepare for a great effort Nicephorus Melissenos was sent to assemble the armed peasants of Thrace and Macedonia called Vlachs, and join the regular forces of the empire, which the emperor conducted in person to Enos. The imperial army was there increased by the arrival of the Komans, who were about forty thousand strong; and the Patzinaks, who had concentrated all their troops, found themselves hemmed in between two hostile armies. A great battle was fought at a place called Levounion, in which these barbarians, who had so long ravaged Thrace, were completely defeated on Tuesday the 29th of April 1091. The number of prisoners who were captured by the Byzantine troops was so great that fear induced the soldiers to put many to death during the night after the battle. The remainder, with the families captured in their camp, were established as colonists at Moglena, where they long continued to supply recruits to the imperial armies. The Komans, distrusting the treachery of Alexius, hastened to regain their own seats beyond the Danube, with the booty and prisoners they had secured. A few who remained behind were rewarded by Alexius with additional presents, to secure the goodwill of their nation.

The wars carried on by Alexius with Bodin king of Servia, and Balkan prince of Dalmatia and Rascia, though they occupied a considerable force at different times, exerted too little influence on the general condition of the Byzantine Empire to be noticed in detail.

On the other hand, the fortunes of the Seljouk Turks influenced the course of European history. We have already seen that their conquests in Asia Minor were facilitated by two causes—by the destruction of the Christian population, and the treachery of the Byzantine rulers. Their incessant plundering incursions systematically exterminated the agricultural classes who were beyond the immediate protection of fortified towns; while the disgraceful cessions of territory they obtained from emperors and rebel chiefs yielded them the possession of as many provinces as they conquered. History records few periods in which so large a portion of the human race was in so short a period reduced from an industrious and flourishing condition to degradation and serfage. Yet the details of this great catastrophe are almost utterly neglected by the Byzantine historians, though its causes can be directly traced to the proceedings of the imperial administration and the conduct of the leading members of the aristocracy of Constantinople. Family prejudice and courtly blindness concealed from the minds of the Prince Nicephorus Bryennius and his spouse, the Princess Anna, how much of the decline of human society was the work of their own relations; and national prejudices, combined with political servility, rendered other contemporary writers more anxious to conciliate patrons by liberal eulogies than to trace the causes of the calamities they witnessed by a searching investigation of the truth.

## SELJOUK TURKS

It has been already noticed that the defeat of the Emperor Romanus IV by Alp Arslan left all Asia Minor exposed to the ravages of the Seljouks, who even then pushed their plundering incursions as far as Nicaea and Nicomedia. Shortly after Suleiman, the son of Koutoulmish, was entrusted with a subordinate sovereignty in Asia Minor by the Grand Sultan Malekshah, and thus became the founder of the Seljouk sultanat of Roum. The dominion of Suleiman over the greater part of Asia Minor was recognised by a treaty with the Byzantine Empire in 1074, when Michael VII purchased the assistance of a Turkish auxiliary force against the rebellion of Oursel and his own uncle John Dukas. Nicephorus III ratified the treaty concluded with Michael VII, augmented the power of the Turks, and abandoned additional numbers of Christians to their domination, to gain their aid in dethroning his lawful prince; and Nicephorus Melissenos, when he rebelled against Nicephorus III, repeated a similar treason against the traitor, and, in hopes of gaining possession of Constantinople, yielded up the possession of Nicaea to Suleiman, which that chief immediately made the capital of his dominions. It must not be forgotten that the hatred which a considerable portion of the Christian population bore to the Byzantine government, on account of the oppressive nature of its financial administration, and to the Greek Church on account of its rapacity, simony, and cruelty, greatly facilitated the consolidation of the Seljouk power. The overthrow of the Iconoclasts and the destruction of the Paulicians were victories of the Greek race and church over the native Asiatics, which were neither forgotten nor forgiven. The strict centralization of power which the emperors of the Basilian family had established also accelerated the disunion in a population destitute of homogeneous elements, by leaving the native population solely dependent on foreign governors for defence, protection, and justice. The effect of this was a tendency towards the formation of several independent principalities in Asia Minor even before the conquests of the Seljouks; and one of these states, the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, long defied the Turkish power. The administration of the Iconoclast emperors had restored Asia Minor to a high degree of prosperity, wealth, and population; but in the time of John I Zimiskes, individual nobles had succeeded in obtaining possession of enormous estates, which were chiefly devoted to pasturage, and thus the diminution of the Christian population had commenced from internal causes of decay in the Byzantine empire before the Seljouk invasions. The nomad Turks consequently, partly on account of this want of inhabitants, and partly on account of the void created by their own devastations, colonized the country to a wonderful extent, and in the course of a single generation became the majority of the inhabitants of Cappadocia, Phrygia, and Galatia. And in this rapid colonization of the country by the Turks, we must seek for the explanation of the obstinate and effectual resistance which these countries were able to offer to the Crusaders, though they had been so recently conquered by the Mohammedans.

When Alexius ascended the throne, the Seljouk conquests in Asia Minor were still considered as a portion of the dominions of the Grand Sultan Malekshah, the son of Alp Arslan, and Suleiman, the sultan of Nicaea, was only his lieutenant, though as a member of the house of Seljouk, and as cousin of Malekshah, he was honoured with the title of Sultan. The prominent position which his posterity occupied in the wars of the Crusaders, their long relations with the Byzantine empire, and the independent position they held as sultans of Iconium, have secured to them a far more lasting place in history than has been obtained by the superior but less durable dynasty of the grand sultans. But at the commencement of the Seljouk domination in Asia Minor, there were other emirs who commanded extensive provinces in Asia Minor with as much independence as Suleiman. Of these, Elchan, who possessed Cyzikus; Tzachas, who acted the pirate at Smyrna; and Charatike, who seized Sinope, are particularly mentioned; while Artuk and Tutak are recorded as having held the command of large armies for particular objects. Toutoush, the brother of Malekshah, who acted as his governor at Damascus at the same time, became the founder of the Syrian dynasty of Seljouk sultans.

The treaty by which the river Drako was declared the boundary between the dominions of Alexius and Suleiman has been mentioned, and the assistance which the Turkish cavalry afforded to the Byzantine empire in the war with the Normans. But as no limits were placed to the progress of Suleiman towards the south, he did not consider himself bound to refrain from the conquest of Antioch, though that city still nominally formed part of the Byzantine Empire. Philaretos the Armenian, who had commanded under Romanus IV at the unfortunate battle of Manzikert, after passing through many vicissitudes, still governed Antioch, which he held rather as an independent prince than as an officer of the imperial government; but, like most of the Christian princes who continued to keep possession of cities and districts surrounded by the Turkish conquests, he acknowledged allegiance to the Emperor of Constantinople. When, however, he was informed of the successful termination of the Norman war, he feared that Alexius would be able to deprive him of his power in Antioch; and to secure his position, he resolved to embrace the Mohammedan faith, and maintain his independence by means of Turkish mercenary troops. His son, pretending that he wished to prevent his father's apostacy, by rendering it unavailing, fled to Suleiman at Nicaea, and offered to put that prince in possession of Antioch before his father could execute his purpose. The importance of the prize roused the activity of Suleiman, who hastened to Antioch, and, arriving unexpectedly before the walls, rendered himself easily master of the city under the guidance of the treacherous son of Philaretos. This conquest involved Suleiman in war with the Emir of Aleppo and with Toutoush, the brother of Malekshah, by whom he was completely defeated in the neighbourhood of Aleppo; and it is said that, to avoid falling into the hands of his enemies, he committed suicide, which is a strong proof that the manners of the Seljouk Turks were not yet completely disciplined to the principles of the Koran (A.D. 1086).

This civil war between two of his near relations and most powerful officers drew the attention of Malekshah to the affairs of Asia Minor. Aboukassim, who had been entrusted by Suleiman with the direction of the administration at Nicaea when he departed on his expedition to Antioch, attempted to maintain himself in a state of independence. Malekshah, in order to secure the assistance, or rather the neutrality, of the Byzantine Empire while he reduced his rebellious vassals to order, concluded a treaty with Alexius, by which the empire recovered several maritime cities from the Turks. But whatever engagements Alexius entered into with Malekshah, he showed himself always ready to treat with Aboukassim, if by so doing he could gain some immediate advantage; and, according to the testimony of his daughter, he obtained possession of Sinope by cheating the grand sultan, and of Nicomedia by a fraudulent violation of the hospitality he had offered to Aboukassim. He, however, conferred on that Mussulman the rank of Sevastotatos; and when Nicaea was besieged by the troops of Malekshah, he sent a Byzantine corps under Tatikios to aid in its defence, but with secret orders to gain possession of the place for himself should the treachery appear practicable. Aboukassim, at last, finding that his own resources were insufficient to maintain his independence, preferred throwing himself on the generosity of Malekshah to intrusting his fortunes to the aid of so faithless an ally as Alexius proved to all persons and on all occasions. He was soon after slain by his enemies, and his brother Pulchas was compelled to surrender Nicaea to Kilidy-Arslan, the son of Suleiman (A.D. 1092).

The Turkish chief who attacked the empire with the greatest energy during the reign of Alexius was Tzachas, the emir of Smyrna. He had been a prisoner at Constantinople during the reign of Nicephorus III, and by entering the Byzantine service had gained the rank of *protonobilissimus*. When Alexius mounted the throne, and the imperial patronage was monopolized by the native aristocracy, Tzachas, seeing he had nothing more to hope from the Byzantine government, assembled a fleet of forty decked vessels, called *agraria*, and by a series of bold and successful enterprises rendered himself master of Clazomene, Phocaea, and Chios. His power increased so steadily that in the year 1090 he defeated the Byzantine fleet under the command of Niketas Kastamonites. For two years he carried on war with the naval forces of Alexius; and having made Smyrna the capital of his dominions in the year 1092, he assumed the title of Emperor, adopting all the insignia of the imperial rank used by the sovereigns of

Constantinople, and by so doing inflicted a deeper wound on the heart of Alexius than he could have struck by any loss of territory. Though Tzachas was at length defeated by John Dukas, the brother of the empress, and lost Samos and several other islands he had conquered, he was still strong enough to besiege Abydos in the year 1093. But Alexius succeeded in inspiring Kilidy-Arslan, who had married Tzachas' daughter, with distrust of his father-in-law; and if we believe Anna, the Sultan of Nicaea was induced by the calumnies of the emperor to assassinate Tzachas with his own hand at a festival. This crime strengthened the alliance between the suborner and the murderer. But many of the Seljouk tribes beyond the Sangarius were sufficiently independent to pay little attention to the treaties of Kilidy-Arslan, and frequently infested the territories of the empire by their incursions. To protect the neighbourhood of Nicomedia, which was now the frontier city of the diminished empire, Alexius cleared out an ancient canal between the lake of Sophon and the gulf of Astacus, which was said to have been originally constructed by the Emperor Anastasius as a defence to the Asiatic territory in the immediate vicinity of his capital, when he fortified its contiguous district in Europe by constructing the great Thracian wall from the Euxine to the Propontis. Alexius erected also a fortress called the Iron Tower, in which he placed a garrison to defend the passage of the canal. The lake and the lower course of the river Sangarius required only a few guards to form an effectual barrier against the plundering incursions of the Turkish nomads. About the time this work was completed, reports reached Constantinople of the great preparations the western nations of Europe were making to deliver Jerusalem from the Turks. Alexius was not without alarm at the multitudes which threatened to enter his dominions; but he hoped to employ the arms of the Franks in such a way as would enable him to restore the Byzantine Empire to some portion of its ancient power and dominion in the East.

## THE CRUSADES

The influence of the Crusades on the progress of European civilization, and the change they produced in the relative condition of the governments and people in the western nations, offers too wide a field even for cursory notice, in a work which confines its investigations strictly to the political history of the Byzantine Empire. I must, therefore, confine my observations on the Crusades to their effects on the government of Constantinople, and on the condition of the Greek Christians. These effects were very different from those which they produced on the Latin nations. In the West, we can trace the germs of much social improvement to the immediate results of the Crusades; but in the East, during the whole period of their continuance, they were an unmitigated evil to the great body of the Christian population. For a time, religious feelings induced the leaders to behave to the Byzantine Empire with some respect, as it was a Christian state; but when ambition and fashion, rather than religious feeling, led men to the holy wars, the Eastern Christians suffered more from the Crusaders than the Mohammedans. It is our task, therefore, to view the Crusades chiefly as the irruption of undisciplined armies seeking to conquer foreign lands, and to retain possession of their conquests by military power; and in this light these celebrated expeditions effected so little in comparison with the forces they brought into the field, and with the individual military pretensions of the leaders, and the government of their Eastern conquests was so ruinous and unjust, that the character of the Western Europeans was for many ages regarded by the Eastern Christians with feelings of contempt and hatred.

Like all the great movements of mankind, the Crusades must be traced to the coincidence of many causes which influenced men of various nations and discordant feelings, at the same period of time, to pursue one common end with their whole heart. Religious zeal, the fashion of pilgrimages, the spirit of social development, the energies that lead to colonization or conquest, and commercial relations, only lately extended so widely as to influence public opinion, all

suddenly received a deep wound. Every class of society felt injured and insulted, and unity of action was created as if by a divine impulse. The movement was facilitated by the circumstance that Europe began to adopt habits of order just at the time when Asia was thrown into a state of anarchy by the invasions of the Seljouk Turks.

Great numbers of pilgrims had always passed through the Byzantine Empire to visit the holy places in Palestine. We still possess an itinerary of the road from Bordeaux to Jerusalem, by the way of Constantinople, written in the fourth century for the use of pilgrims. Though the disturbed and impoverished state of Europe, after the fall of the Western Empire, diminished the number of pilgrims, still, even in times of the greatest anarchy, many passed annually through the Eastern Empire to Palestine. The improvement which dawned on the western nations during the eleventh century, and the augmented commerce of the Italians, gave additional importance to the pilgrimage to the East. About the year 1064, during the reign of Constantine X, an army or caravan of seven thousand pilgrims passed through Constantinople, led by the Archbishop of Mayence and four bishops. They made their way through Asia Minor, which was then under the Byzantine government; but in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem they were attacked by the Bedouins, and only saved from destruction by the Saracen emir of Kamla, who hastened to their assistance. These pilgrims are reported to have lost three thousand of their number, without being able to visit either the Jordan or the Dead Sea. The invasions of the Seljouks increased the disorders in Palestine. The prosperity of the pilgrims suffered as well as their piety. The Easter fair of Jerusalem was of importance to most European nations. Genoese and Pisan fleets traded to Palestine before the Crusades, and the merchants of Amalfi had already founded that glorious hospital of St John, which became a bulwark of Christianity in Rhodes and Malta. At the time of the first crusade, the fleets of the Italian states would have sufficed to transport large armies to Palestine, had conquest been the sole object of the Crusaders; for we have seen that, in a single battle with Robert Guiscard, Venice could lose a whole fleet, with thirteen thousand men on board, without receiving a mortal wound.

In the year 1076 the Seljouk Turks took possession of Jerusalem, and immediately commenced harassing the pilgrims with unheard-of exactions. The Saracens had in general viewed the pilgrims with favour, as men engaged in fulfilling a pious duty, or pursuing lawful gain with praiseworthy industry, and they had levied only a reasonable toll on the pilgrims, and a moderate duty on their merchandise; while, in consideration of these imposts, they had established guards to protect them on the roads by which they approached the holy places. The Turks, on the contrary, acting like mere nomads, uncertain of retaining possession of the city, thought only of gratifying their avarice. They plundered the rich pilgrims, and insulted the poor. The religious feelings of the Christians were irritated, and their commerce ruined; a cry for vengeance arose throughout all Europe, and men's minds were fully prepared for an attempt to conquer Palestine, when Peter the Hermit began to preach that it was a sacred duty to deliver the tomb of Christ from the hands of the Infidels.

Pope Gregory VII was the first pontiff who attempted to excite the European nations to attack the Mohammedans as a religious duty. The Emperor Michael VII had entered into communications with the Papal See, for the ostensible object of uniting the Greek and Latin churches, but principally with the hope of obtaining military succours against the Turks. In 1074, Gregory, moved by the danger to which Christianity was exposed by the rapid progress of the Seljouks, called on the Christians of Europe to take up arms to defend their suffering brethren against the Mohammedans, and proposed to lead the troops himself to Constantinople. Many prepared to accompany the Pope at that time; but the state of Europe, and the various political projects in which Gregory involved himself, rendered this first project of a crusade abortive.

Unfortunately, too, the Pope did more, by his violent interference in the affairs of the Eastern Empire, to estrange the Greeks, than either the exigencies of Byzantine policy or the hopes of assistance could efface. In the year 1078, among the numerous

excommunications, anathemas, and execrations which Gregory launched at emperors, bishops, and princes, he thought fit to excommunicate Nicephorus III. Whether this was done because Nicephorus failed to pay an annual subsidy of 24 lb. of gold, granted by Michael VII to the monastery of Mount Cassino, or because he married the Empress Maria when Michael was compelled to descend from the throne and become a priest, the step was equally impolitic; as so violent and unwarranted an attack on the independence of the empire, by a foreign priest, was sure to unite the Greek clergy and people in opposition to the papal pretensions. Victor III, moved by the spirit which then inspired the court of Rome to assume the direction of European policy, urged the maritime states of Italy to attack the Mohammedans. Like his predecessor Gregory VII, he promised remission of sins to all who engaged in this holy war. The Pisans and Genoese, eager to attack the Saracen pirates who still continued to infest the Italian seas, finding that the papal exhortations secured them a supply of volunteers, fitted out their fleets and invaded Africa, where they met with some success, and from whence they carried off considerable booty. Every year brought the hostility of the Christians to the Mohammedans more prominently before the public. Peter the Hermit began to preach, and at last, in 1095, Pope Urban II assembled a council at Placentia, where ambassadors from Alexius presented themselves to solicit assistance, and enrol some of the distinguished soldiers of the Franks in the service of the Eastern Empire. At the council of Clermont, which was held a short time after, many princes took the cross, and the religious enthusiasm spread with such fervour among a. d. the people that many assembled without loss of time, and commenced their march to deliver Jerusalem.

The conduct of these first bands of Crusaders produced a very unfavourable impression on the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire. Only a part of the expedition consisted of soldiers, and even these troops paid little attention to the orders of Walter the Pennyless, a soldier of some military experience, who was the nominal leader of the army. The majority of this first swarm of Crusaders consisted of pilgrims without arms, order, or discipline, followed by crowds of women and children. Few had made adequate preparation for the journey, or possessed any knowledge of the difficulties they must necessarily encounter, and all were without the requisite pecuniary resources. They had hardly entered the Byzantine Empire before their money was exhausted, and they then began to plunder the Bulgarian villages, and carry off the provisions and cattle of the inhabitants, as if they had been in an enemy's country. This conduct roused the fury of the peasantry, accustomed to war by the incessant plundering incursions of the Hungarians, Patzinaks, and Romans, who fell upon the dispersed bands of the Crusaders, and would in all probability have destroyed the whole expedition, had not the imperial officer who commanded at Naissos saved the greater part, supplied them with rations, and sent them forward to Constantinople. But that hundreds of the unarmed pilgrims, and of the women and children, were seized and sold as slaves to pay for the ravages committed by the plunderers, cannot be doubted. A still more numerous body of pilgrims soon followed, under the personal guidance of Peter the Hermit himself. Though supplied with provisions by the governor of Naissos, this body committed such disorders that at last they were attacked by the garrison of Naissos, and only seven thousand reached Constantinople with Peter. These first divisions of the Crusaders were not so numerous nor powerful as to excite any alarm in Alexius, who had often encountered more numerous armies of Patzinaks, Romans, Turks, and Normans; and as he expected to turn their services to his advantage, he received Peter the Hermit with kindness, and supplied his followers with provisions. But the ravages committed by these undisciplined bands in Servia, Bulgaria, and Thrace sowed the seeds of a deep-rooted hatred of the western nations in the hearts of the Sclavonian and Greek subjects of the Byzantine empire. The bitter fruits of this antipathy will be often apparent in the following pages of this history.

The followers of Walter the Pennyless and Peter the Hermit were soon swelled into a considerable army by fresh arrivals at Constantinople. They were transported over to Asia by the Byzantine fleet, where their imprudence and want of discipline quickly caused their ruin. The various nations composing the army formed separate bands, and their desultory attacks on the Turks led to numbers being cut off in detail. The main body marched to attack Nicaea, and

was completely defeated in a battle, from which only three thousand men escaped into the Byzantine territory.

The great army of the first Crusade only began to march eastward about the time this advanced guard was destroyed. In the summer of the year 1096, the chivalry of Flanders, Normandy, and France began to move towards Constantinople by various routes. Hugh of Vermandois, brother of Philip I king of France; Robert II duke of Normandy; Robert count of Flanders; Stephen count of Blois and Chartres, with some other independent leaders of inferior rank, took the well-known road through Italy, where they passed the winter. Bohemund, now Prince of Tarentum, caught something of their religious enthusiasm, which he grafted on his own private schemes of personal ambition and rapacity; but he was accompanied by his kinsman Tancred, one of the noblest characters of the crusade. Hugh of Vermandois, proud of everything—of his high birth, of his having received a consecrated banner from the Pope, and of his tall person—was impatient to reach Constantinople before any of his comrades, hoping to impose on the Byzantine court by his grandeur. Embarking at Bari with a small suite, he landed in the neighbourhood of Dyrrachium. He soon learned how little respect the Greeks entertained either for the piety or splendour of crusading princes. John Comnenus, the emperor's nephew, was governor of Dyrrachium, and as he was well informed of the views of the imperial court, he detained the great Hugh until he should receive orders from the capital. When Alexius heard that the man of highest rank among the Crusaders was in his power, he began to speculate in what manner he could turn the accident to the greatest advantage. He sent Butumites, an officer of rank, to conduct the Count of Vermandois to Constantinople with becoming honour; and though he really detained him as a hostage, he received him with distinction, and endeavoured to gain his goodwill, in which he soon succeeded. Hugh of Vermandois, notwithstanding his presumption and the royal blood of France, was the first leader of the crusade who was induced to do homage and swear fealty to the Greek emperor. But the circumstance of his arrest, and the degradation of his homage, spread distrust through the army, which had now passed the north-western frontier of the empire, under the guidance of Godfrey of Bouillon.

Godfrey, the future king of Jerusalem, conducted the most warlike if not the most numerous body of the Crusaders. Though attended by irregular bands, who committed great disorders in the march through Hungary and Bulgaria, he maintained such discipline among his regular troops that his cavalry arrived at Philippopolis in good condition. He there learned that the brother of the liege lord of most of the crusading barons was a prisoner at Constantinople, and he sent an embassy to demand his immediate release. Alexius' refusal to comply with this demand was the signal for commencing hostilities. Godfrey advanced by Adrianople and Selymbria, laying waste the country and pillaging the inhabitants, until he reached the walls of Constantinople. Alexius, alarmed at the energy and numbers of his enemies, sent Hugh to the camp of the Crusaders, and peace was thereby restored, but confidence could not be so easily re-established.

It was about Christmas, 1096, that this division of the army reached the Bosphorus. Its hostile attitude and the news that Bohemund, his ancient enemy, was approaching, in company with another division, whose number exceeded this army by which he had more than once been defeated, increased the alarm of Alexius. The emperor now exerted all his ability, and used every machination of flattery, force, and bribery, to secure himself against the evil designs of Bohemund, whom he regarded as the heir of his father's ambitious projects, by engaging the crusading chief to do homage to the Eastern Empire, and swear fidelity to his person. It was with considerable difficulty that Godfrey was persuaded by Hugh of Vermandois to consent to this measure. At last, however, a treaty was concluded between Alexius and the Crusaders. On the one hand, the emperor engaged to assist the Crusaders to recover the Holy Sepulchre, to supply them with an auxiliary force, to protect all the pilgrims who passed through his dominions, and to take care that the armies of the Crusaders should be amply supplied with provisions, in open markets, at reasonable prices. On the other hand, the leaders of the crusade promised to commit no disorders in the empire, to treat Alexius as their liege lord while within

his dominions, to deliver up to him all the cities which had recently belonged to the empire as soon as they recovered them from the Turks, and to do him homage and swear fidelity to his throne. The word of an emperor was regarded a sufficient guarantee for the faith of Alexius; but the princes of the crusade, being already the liegemen of other sovereigns, took an oath of fidelity, and did homage to Alexius, in regular form, to the extent of the engagements contracted by their treaty. On the nature and extent of these engagements, it is probable that the contracting parties, even at the time, placed a different interpretation, and they have been the subject of a good deal of discussion since.

Bohemund would have avoided doing homage and swearing fealty to Alexius if possible; but he soon perceived that he must follow his companions, and endeavour to profit for the time by the favour of Alexius, rather than appear openly as his enemy. Still, both he and Alexius for some time could not refrain from acting on feelings of mutual suspicion and jealousy, which led them into serious political errors; indeed, the hostile feelings and intriguing ambition of Bohemund, rendered his presence in the crusading camp no small addition to the numerous causes of quarrel which occurred between the Greeks and the Crusaders. Fortunately for Alexius, the alliance he had contracted with Robert the Frison in 1088, secured him the friendship of his son Robert count of Flanders, one of the most powerful and valiant leaders of the expedition, whose influence in some degree counteracted the intrigues of the crafty Norman.

It was with the greatest difficulty, and not without actual hostilities with Godfrey, that Alexius succeeded in persuading the leaders to transport their troops over to Asia. All wished to enter Constantinople, and none wished to quit it when they had entered. Its luxuries and amusements so enchanted the young warriors of the West, that they would fain have postponed their vows in the pursuit of pleasure. Godfrey, with the first division of the army, did not cross the Bosphorus until the middle of March 1097. In the meantime Bohemund, Robert count of Flanders, Robert duke of Normandy, Stephen count of Blois, and Eustace count of Bologne, followed one another in succession from the ports on the Adriatic, and after doing homage to Alexius, and receiving valuable presents from him, collected all their followers in Asia. Raymond count of St Giles and Toulouse was the last of the chiefs who joined the army. He had been the first to take the cross, but his preparations occupied much time, for he made a vow never to return to his rich domains, having resolved to spend the rest of his life in the East as a Christian soldier. Could he have foreseen that the power of his family and the wealth of his subjects were soon to become the spoil of another crusade, what would have been the bitterness of his feelings? Raymond collected so large an army that he deemed it prudent to avoid as much as possible the routes of those who preceded him. His own line of march was, nevertheless, very ill chosen. After passing through the north of Italy, instead of descending the valley of the Save, he proceeded from Friouli through Dalmatia. The country was mountainous, destitute of roads, and thinly peopled; the inhabitants were poor, and avoided the strangers, concealing their cattle and provisions in their most sequestered valleys. Hostilities took place; Raymond put out his prisoners' eyes and cut off their hands and noses to intimidate their countrymen, and thereby increased his difficulties. At last he reached Scodra, where he was met by Bodin king of Servia, but the poverty of the country was so great that no adequate supplies of provisions could be obtained; and this army of Crusaders, though better prepared for their journey than any other, suffered greater hardships. Even after reaching Dyrrachium, as they had to march over ground traversed by their predecessors, they were compelled to fight their way through the Albanian, Slavonian, and Bulgarian population of Epirus, Macedonia, and Thrace.

The conduct of Alexius to Raymond was at first extremely haughty and imprudent. Raymond left his troops at Redestos, and repaired to Constantinople to wait on the emperor; but his refusal to do homage like the other princes offended the vanity of Alexius, who, thinking the troops of the count were exhausted by fatigue, cut off their supplies of provisions, and sent armed men to harass them in their quarters, hoping by these measures to force Raymond to do homage. The Count of St Giles was neither to be moved by fear of the emperor nor by the solicitations of the other Crusaders. He declared that he had not taken the cross to enter the



service of any earthly sovereign, but that if the Byzantine emperor would place himself at the head of the expedition, he was ready to obey all his orders. The proceedings of Alexius threatened war, and it required all the prudence of Godfrey and Robert of Flanders to prevent the indignation of Raymond letting loose his army on the environs of Constantinople. Bohemund, gained over for the time by the liberality of Alexius, went so far as to tell the Count of Toulouse that, in case of hostilities breaking out, he should hold it his duty to serve Alexius as his liege lord. This threat the haughty Raymond never forgave. The other leaders at last arranged the quarrel. Raymond swore to observe the treaty entered into by the other Crusaders, and never to undertake anything against the life or the honour of Alexius, but he refused to do him homage. A more intimate acquaintance with the honourable though haughty character of the count showed the emperor the impolicy of the quarrel. He perceived that no projects of worldly ambitions caused the refusal of Raymond, nor could power ever be held by a Crusader less inclined to seek wealth and conquest at the expense of the empire. He found that the word of Raymond was as good a guarantee as the oath of others, and he then endeavoured, by every means in his power, to gain the good opinion of one he had received in the beginning so ill. As Raymond, though severe and haughty, was frank and loyal, he soon forgave the hostilities of Alexius, but he never pardoned the insolent threat of the upstart Bohemund.

The conduct of Alexius towards the Crusaders was certainly deficient both in candour and prudence, but he had a very difficult part to act; and it must be admitted that all his fears and distrust were fully justified by the rapine of the private soldiers, who plundered his subjects, and the insolence of the chiefs, who insulted his authority. The memorable anecdote of the insolence of a petty French chieftain, who has been supposed by Ducange to have been a count of Paris, and who rudely seated himself on the imperial throne at a solemn audience, is familiar both to the readers of history and romance. His conduct must have appeared to the Byzantine courtiers an act of high treason deserving death, and it was regarded by the princes of the crusade as an intolerable piece of rudeness and brutality. The Franks and Greeks were at this time in social conditions which rendered it impossible for them to associate together without feelings of mutual contempt. The narration of Anna Comnena enables us to contrast in a curious manner the experienced anility of the Byzantine court with the idleness and mental inanity of the Western aristocracy. She complains, with great reason, of the presumption, vanity, and loquacity of the chiefs, who, considering themselves entitled by their rank to converse with the emperor, compelled him to sacrifice hour after hour of his valuable time listening to their pretensions and solicitations. Alexius knew that these men were independent chiefs, and he was anxious to avoid giving them offence, for their power so often exceeded their judgment that the neglect of a childish demand or the irritation of an unintentional slight might plunge his empire in a dangerous and bloody war. The personal behaviour of Alexius was more judicious than his political system. He did everything to conciliate the nobles, and his patience, good-humour, and liberality overcame many difficulties, but his health suffered from the fatigue of the interminable audiences he gave the leaders amidst the toils of his other occupations. The silly loquacity of men who wasted their days in idle talk and vain boasting made a very unfavourable impression on the Byzantine nobles, whose social intercourse retained much of Roman gravity, formalized by Oriental ceremony. The chiefs of the crusade also displayed an unseemly eagerness to obtain money and presents from the emperor. Tancred, the flower of Norman chivalry, openly expressed his disgust at the rapacity of his companions. When solicited to do homage to Alexius, which he would fain have avoided, he could not repress his sneers at their venality. Looking one day at the magnificent tent of the emperor, which all were admiring, Tancred exclaimed, "If Alexius would give me that tent full of money, and as much more as he has given to our princes, I might think of doing him homage".

The feudal nations and the subjects of the Byzantine Empire formed different estimates of the exigencies of society. Political order, security of property, and the supremacy of the judicial administration, were, in the opinion of the Eastern Christians, the true objects of government. Personal independence, and the right of each noble to redress his wrongs with his own sword,

were the most valuable privileges of freemen, in the opinion of the Frank nations, the authority of a central administration, which made the most powerful noble submit to the law, was regarded by the feudal barons as an intolerable despotism; while the right of private war, as it existed in western Europe, was considered by the Greeks as a state of anarchy suitable only to a society of lawless bandits. Nor were the feelings of the Eastern and Western clergy towards one another calculated to infuse any addition of Christian charity into the intercourse of the Greeks and Franks. The unfounded and arrogant pretensions of the popes excited the opposition of the whole Greek Church, and were ably exposed by its more learned members. The general ignorance of the Latin clergy raised feelings of contempt, which were changed into abhorrence when the Greeks beheld men calling themselves bishops clad in coats of mail, riding through the streets on fiery chargers, and returning from battle covered with blood. On the other hand, the Latin priests despised the Eastern clergy as a timeserving and slavish body, utterly unfit to uphold the dignity of the priesthood, and they condemned those doctrines as heretical which taught that the clergy were bound to submit to the civil magistrate. In addition to these incongruities, the rival nations mutually reproached one another as insolent, false, and treacherous.

One of the primary causes of the quarrels between the Crusaders and the subjects of the Byzantine Empire arose from the attempts made by the government and its officials to make unfair profits in selling provisions to the strangers. The financial administration of Alexius was remarkable for its rapacity and bad faith. He had cheated his own subjects by issuing debased coin in payment of his debts, and enriched his treasury by oppressive monopolies. He attempted the same system with the Crusaders; but when he beheld the numbers of the armies they assembled under the walls of Constantinople, he saw the necessity of laying aside his previous practice, and attempted, by a liberal distribution of money and provisions, to efface the memory of his earlier frauds. For a time the crusading army appeared to be no better than a host of Byzantine mercenaries; the imperial paymasters carried bags of gold byzants to the leaders, and distributed quarter byzants, or tetartera, among the inferior officers and men.

#### CONQUEST OF NICAIA, A.D. 1097.

The first warlike operation of the Crusaders against the Turks was the siege of Nicaea, a city which, by the terms of their treaty with Alexius, they were bound to restore to the empire. The Byzantine army was so much inferior to that of the Crusaders in number, that the emperor deemed it prudent to watch the siege from a camp at Pelekanon, without taking part in the attack. His general, Tatikios, joined the besiegers with two thousand light cavalry; and a number of boats were transported on waggons from Kios to the Ascanian Lake and filled with Byzantine troops, under the command of Butumites, to blockade Nicaea on the side towards the lake. The Sultan Kilidy-Arslan was defeated in an attempt to raise the siege, and the inhabitants, seeing that they could not long resist the incessant assaults of the Franks, entered into secret arrangements with the Byzantine troops on the lake, and admitted them into the city on receiving a charter from the emperor promising that the lives and property of the Turkish inhabitants should be respected. By this treaty the Byzantine forces entered the city unknown to the Crusaders, who were informed of its surrender by seeing the Byzantine ensigns displayed on the walls. Many of the besiegers were enraged at being thus deprived of the plunder of the first Mohammedan city they had attacked. Alexius, however, pacified the discontent by dividing great part of the public property that fell into his hands among the Crusaders, and furnishing them with abundant supplies of provisions, to enable them to hasten forward through Asia Minor. The emperor at the same time placed a strong garrison in Nicaea, and enrolled in his service many Franks who were without the means of continuing their journey.

The crusading army quitted the neighbourhood of Nicaea about the end of June, and reached Antioch on the 21st October 1097. The country through which they passed had long been the ordinary line of march for the Byzantine armies, and an excellent road for the transport of baggage and provisions had existed only thirty years before, when Romanus IV Diogenes commenced his unfortunate war with Alp Arslan; but the country was now everywhere depopulated, the roads had become impassable, the bridges were broken down, the cisterns ruined, and the wells filled up. The assistance of the petty Armenian princes in Cilicia and Mount Taurus proved of more use to them than the alliance of Alexius. Never, perhaps, had any country fallen so rapidly from civilization to barbarism, or changed the great body of its inhabitants, its language, religion, and mode of life so completely as Asia Minor in the latter half of the eleventh century. A single generation accomplished what a thousand years have often in other circumstances vainly laboured to effect. But the Crusaders, in defiance of sufferings and opposition, advanced steadily, if slowly, storming every city that refused to assist them. At Germanicia, Baldwin, the brother of Godfrey, quitted the grand army, which continued its march to Antioch, and moved eastward to take possession of Edessa, a city which still acknowledged allegiance to the Byzantine emperor. It had surrendered to Pouzan, one of the generals of Malekshah, in the year 1087, but during the contests of the Turks and Saracens in the north of Syria it had recovered its independence. Baldwin now sullied the honour of the Franks, by exciting the people to murder their governor Theodore, and rebel against the Byzantine authority; he then took possession of the place in his own name, and founded the Frank principality of Edessa, which lasted about forty-seven years. This was a direct violation of the treaty with Alexius. Antioch was besieged for seven months. It was winter, and the sufferings of the Crusaders were so great that many deserted the army. Tatikios retired with the Byzantine auxiliaries to Cyprus. Robert duke of Normandy went off to Laodicea, and it required three citations of the chiefs to recall him to his duty. William viscount of Melun, and Peter the Hermit himself, attempted to escape to Europe, but were brought back to the camp by Tancred. At length Antioch was taken by the treachery of an officer, who admitted Bohemund into one of its towers. The departure of the Byzantine contingent served as a good pretext for refusing to cede the city of Antioch to Alexius, who had afforded them no assistance, nor attempted any diversion in their favour, when they were placed in a very critical position immediately after gaining possession of the city. Alexius was advancing with a considerable army in the spring of 1098, in the hope of securing Antioch to himself but on reaching Philomelium he heard that it had already surrendered; but at the same time he was informed that an immense army, under Kerboga, the emir of Mossoul, which had been sent by the Grand Sultan Barkyarok, was about to make an attempt to recover the place. Several deserters from the crusading army, and particularly Stephen count of Blois and Chartres, brought alarming accounts of the magnitude of the Turkish army, and of the unprepared condition of the Crusaders. Their reports induced Alexius to make a precipitate retreat to Constantinople; and in order to retard the progress of the Turks, whom he imagined were already pursuing his army, he invited all the Christians in Phrygia to retire with their families and property into the provinces of the Byzantine empire, and thus save themselves from the inroads of the Mohammedans. The Crusaders defeated the Turkish army, and Bohemund became prince of Antioch rather by his own intrigues than in consequence of any regular concession on the part of the leaders of the crusade.

As Alexius had employed the summer of 1097 in recovering possession of Smyrna, Ephesus, Sardis, Philadelphia, and many other cities on the west coast of Asia Minor, the Crusaders determined to ask some explanation of his neglecting to make a diversion in their favour when they were attacked by Kerboga. Hugh of Vermandois and Baldwin of Hainault were sent to Constantinople as ambassadors for this purpose, and to invite the emperor to join the army and march at its head to Jerusalem; on that condition they offered to put him in possession of Antioch and all their other conquests. But in case of his refusal, the ambassadors were instructed to declare that, Alexius having failed to perform his engagements, the treaty was annulled, and the Crusaders renounced the fealty they had sworn. All this was strictly in accordance with feudal usages, and Alexius had no reason to complain of the proceeding. The mission proved every way unfortunate. Baldwin was never heard of and was probably murdered

by the bands of brigands who infested Asia Minor. Hugh of Vermandois, finding Alexius occupied with other business, and not likely to afford his companions any assistance, abandoned their cause, and returned to France.

It is not surprising that Alexius declined joining the Crusaders. He knew that he was not likely to be obeyed, and he might doubt whether he would be able to force Baldwin and Bohemund to surrender their conquests. His own absence from Constantinople might also be attended with danger, in an empire where pretenders to the throne were constantly starting up, and where feelings of loyalty and hereditary right were almost unknown. Besides this, the arrival of fresh bands of Crusaders required the presence of a considerable military force, under his immediate direction, to protect Constantinople and the environs. Armed pilgrims, who considered that by taking the cross they had purchased absolution for every crime, could only be restrained from plundering the emperor's subjects by fear of the consequences; for we must not overlook the fact, that the Crusaders began about this time to drain off poverty and crime from the western nations of Europe, somewhat as emigration and transportation perform that service for Great Britain at present. It was also a matter of greater importance to the security of the Byzantine Empire that the Turks should be expelled from Bithynia and Phrygia than from Syria and Palestine.

Unfortunately for the Byzantine Empire, Alexius was more eager to gain some diplomatic advantage over the Latins than to promote the prosperity of his subjects and consolidate the strength of the empire. He sent an embassy to the leaders of the crusade, which found them encamped before Archas. His ambassadors demanded that all the towns they had conquered in Syria should be surrendered to the imperial officers. The princes of the crusade, already disgusted with the cowardly manner in which he had deserted their cause before the battle with Kerboga, and no longer standing in need of his assistance, since they had opened communications with the fleets of the Italian republics, treated his ill-timed demand with scorn, and dismissed his envoys with reproaches. Nevertheless the emperor gained possession of the city of Laodicea in Syria, which, however, he soon lost. The inhabitants of Laodicea had thrown off the Turkish yoke, with the assistance of a Flemish pirate named Guymer, about the time the Crusaders took Antioch. The Byzantine fleet soon after landed a garrison, and Guymer, who was endeavouring to establish himself as an independent prince, was thrown into prison. But the Crusaders, on their march from Antioch to Acre, entered Laodicea, and the Byzantine garrison retired to Cyprus. Guymer gained his liberty. Raymond of Toulouse, who was left in possession of the city, now surrendered it to the officers of Alexius, rather than leave it to be occupied by his enemy Bohemund. Andronicus, the Byzantine governor, however, was unable to retain possession of it for any length of time. Tancred soon laid siege to it, and compelled it to capitulate.

In the meantime the Crusaders, who continued to arrive at Constantinople, gave Alexius almost as much trouble, and threatened the empire with as great danger, as the expedition under Godfrey. Jerusalem was already in the hands of the grand army, when a body of Lombards, accompanied, but certainly not commanded, by their archbishop, entered Bulgaria. Their conduct was more lawless than that of the followers of Walter the Pennyless and Peter the Hermit. They remained sometime in the environs of Constantinople, awaiting the arrival of a number of French and German pilgrims who were known to have taken the cross. Their insolence alarmed Alexius, who insisted on their passing over into Asia before new bands arrived, as it would be impossible to furnish all with provisions. With this requisition they refused to comply, and it was necessary to compel them by force. Hostilities broke out; the Lombards attempted to storm the quarter of Blachern, and it was with great difficulty that the Archbishop of Milan and Raymond of Toulouse succeeded in re-establishing order, and persuading them to cross the Bosphorus. They were soon after joined by the Count of Blois and the Constable of the Emperor of Germany. The brilliant appearance of their camp, which was soon filled with wealthy nobles, raised the confidence of the Lombards to the highest pitch. They spoke with contempt of the exploits of the first army which had taken Jerusalem, and,

scorning to follow in the track of others, they determined to march to Bagdad, and destroy the caliphate. Raymond of Toulouse was appointed their leader, but he had little power over the disorderly Italians. Alexius, however, supplied them with five hundred Turkopuls to serve as guides,—an admirable species of light cavalry, but whose origin made them an object of suspicion to the Crusaders.

This army took Ancyra without difficulty, and crossed the Halys without order or precaution, plundering the inhabitants indiscriminately whether they were Christians or Mohammedans. On one occasion the inhabitants of a town came out to meet them in solemn procession, headed by their priests, bearing the crucifix and pictures of their protecting saints. Some acts of hostility had taken place in the neighbourhood, and the dress of the Greek priests being different from that of the Latin clergy, the Crusaders would not listen to a word of explanation, but immediately massacred the peaceful citizens and the ministers of religion. Their brutal conduct and want of discipline caused their ruin. Before they reached Amasia they were surrounded by the Turks, their foraging parties were cut off; they could obtain no information, for the Christians feared them more than the Turks. They were at last attacked and completely defeated. A few only of the leaders escaped, by having maintained some discipline among their personal followers. Raymond, who had long foreseen the inevitable issue of the enterprise, saved himself with the Turkopuls by a precipitate flight.

This unfortunate expedition was followed by others equally disastrous. The Count of Nevers, with a large army, was defeated; and he himself with a few others, reached Antioch on foot. The Count of Poitiers and Hugh of Vermandois made their line of march a scene of disorder and devastation. Before they reached Adrianople they were involved in hostility with the Bulgarian and Sclavonian subjects of the empire, and with the Patzinak and Koman mercenaries in the Byzantine service. The imperial troops were defeated, the governor of Adrianople was taken prisoner, and Alexius was compelled to make every concession they wished, in order to facilitate the progress of these furious pilgrims, and allow them to expend their vigour in contests with the infidels. This army reached Phrygia during the season of the great heats. The harvests were already removed, the forage exhausted, the wells on their road filled up, and the cisterns emptied. Disaster and defeat followed in quick succession. At last their camp was captured and the army dispersed. Hundreds of ladies had joined this band, which it was supposed would make their pilgrimage a triumphal procession, under the leading of the great Hugh: these ladies now became slaves of the Mussulmans, and for many years the slave-markets of Bagdad and the harems of the East were supplied with noble ladies, whom the defeats of the Crusaders were continually consigning to perpetual slavery. Hugh of Vermandois escaped to Tarsus, where he died of fatigue, and the Count of Poitiers reached Antioch with only six attendants. The Latins would not allow that their disasters were caused by their own misconduct and imprudence; they persisted in attributing all their misfortunes to the treachery of the Greeks; and though Alexius delivered many from captivity, the Crusaders generally regarded him as an enemy.

The personal jealousy of Alexius and Bohemund in the end became the immediate cause of war between the Greeks and Latins. Alexius could not forget his defeat in Epirus, and he sought revenge by endeavouring to expel Bohemund from Antioch. Nothing could be more ill-judged, for the city was too distant from the center of his power to be a possession of any value, and the conquest was sure to involve him in hostilities with the Crusaders. In the year 1103 Bohemund was taken prisoner by the Emir Danishmend, who had formed a principality embracing Seveste and all the country round. Alexius, hoping to gain possession of Antioch, offered to purchase Bohemund from Danishmend; but Kilidy-Arslan claiming the prisoner, as representative of the grand sultan in Asia Minor, Danishmend, to secure some profit to himself, released Bohemund on receiving a sum of money paid down, and a promise of support should either Alexius or Kilidy-Arslan attack him. Alexius, foiled in his attempt to make Bohemund his prisoner, attacked Antioch. The Byzantine Empire was thus rashly brought into collision with the Crusaders; and the Greeks, already involved in a contest of commercial interests with the

maritime states of Italy, were soon excluded from a considerable portion of the trade of the Mediterranean at a time when it was receiving a great extension. The Byzantine army, commanded by Butumites and Monastras, advanced from Cilicia, but gained no advantage. The imperial fleet, on the other hand, commanded the sea, and reduced Bohemund to the greatest difficulty. He, however, succeeded in forming an alliance with the Pisans, who sent a fleet to his aid. Part of the Pisan force was detached to plunder Corfu, Cephallenia, Leucadia, and Zante. The main body fell in with the Byzantine fleet between Rhodes and Patara. The Greeks were commanded by Tatikios and Landolph, a Lombard officer of great naval experience; their vanguard was led by Perichytanes, a Peloponnesian noble, who traversed the whole Pisan fleet, sending out streams of Greek fire from both sides of his vessel; but he was not seconded with promptitude, and the engagement, though advantageous to the imperial forces, reflected little honour on the Greek navy. A storm proved more injurious to the Pisans than the battle, and only a small part of their ships gained the port of Laodicea. The Byzantine army now occupied Seleucia and Korykos, near the mouth of the Kalykadnus, and repaired the fortifications of these towns. A naval division on the station completely commanded the channel between Cilicia and Cyprus, and excluded the allies of Bohemund from shelter on the Asiatic coast, so that the communications of the Prince of Antioch were cut off during the winter, when the navigators of the time feared to venture into the open sea to the south of Cyprus.

In 1104 a Genoese fleet, engaged in conveying pilgrims and merchandise to the East, was instructed to assist the Prince of Antioch, with whose dominions the Genoese had established commercial relations. The Genoese succeeded in avoiding the Byzantine fleet. The Greek admiral in the meantime captured the city of Laodicea, but could not take the citadel, though it was only defended by one hundred cavalry and five hundred infantry. The army in Cilicia, under the command of Monastras, having received considerable reinforcements, proceeded to attack the Normans with vigour, and captured Tarsus, Adana, and Mopsuestia (Mamistra). The result of the campaign convinced Bohemund that without fresh troops he could not make head against the forces of the Byzantine Empire; but it was no longer an easy matter for succours to escape the Greek cruisers. Bohemund, seeing that his own presence would be necessary to obtain adequate assistance from the West, resolved to run every risk. In order to deceive any spies the emperor might have placed in Antioch, he is said to have spread a report of his own death; and Tancred assumed the direction of the government of Antioch.<sup>1</sup> A coffin was then prepared in which he could conceal himself, and in this way he was embarked at the port of Suda, in a vessel of which all the equipage were dressed in mourning. The Princess Anna adds that a dead fowl was shut up with him in the coffin; that even in case the vessel should be visited by the Greek officers, they might be deterred from opening the coffin by the offensive odour. "I must acknowledge", says the learned lady, "that there is nothing capable of overcoming the obstinacy with which the barbarians pursue their plans", Bohemund reached the coast of Italy in safety, but a contrary wind delayed him at the entrance of the Adriatic until his provisions and water were exhausted. He ventured to visit Corfu in order to obtain refreshments and purchase provisions; and the governor, not possessing a sufficient force to attack this redoubted enemy of the empire, permitted the communication. On quitting Corfu, Bohemund sent this message to the Byzantine governor—"Inform your master that the Prince of Antioch has arisen from the dead, and will soon give proofs of his vitality".

Bohemund hastened to Rome in order to excite the Pope to aid him against the Emperor Alexius. Pope Pascal II, who adopted all the ambitious schemes of Gregory VII, and strove to establish the papal domination over all Christian princes, approved of the projects of the Norman. Bohemund then visited France, to collect troops for a crusade against the Byzantine Empire. He was received with great honour. Philippe I of France gave him his daughter Constance in marriage, and this alliance alarmed Alexius to such a degree that he forgot his imperial pride so far as to write letters to the republics of Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, refuting the injurious reports which Bohemund had spread concerning his conduct, and declaring that it was a disgraceful calumny to call him an enemy of the Christians and a traitor to the Crusaders. As a

proof of the calumnious nature of Bohemund's accusations, he immediately obtained the release of three hundred knights who were prisoners at Cairo.

Alexius made every preparation to encounter this crusade against the Greeks. He formed a camp at Thessalonica in the autumn of 1105, and sent his nephew Alexius Komnenos to take the command at Dyrrachium, and put that important place in a good state of defence. Isaac Koutostephanos was also sent into the Adriatic with a powerful fleet assembled in the ports of the Aegean Sea. Bohemund was not ready to invade the empire until the autumn of 1107. In the meantime Koutostephanos made an attempt to surprise Brindisi, in which he failed. The Normans on this occasion captured a few of the mercenaries of Turkish race who served in the Byzantine armies. These prisoners may have been Patzinaks, Uzes, Romans, or Turks of the colony at Achrida, and were probably Christians; but their dress and arms were different from anything in use throughout the west of Europe, so that Bohemund presented them to the Pope as a convincing proof that the emperor of Constantinople was in close alliance with the enemies of Christianity. Bohemund, with his usual skill, availed himself of an opportunity to cross the Adriatic when the Greek fleet had retired to Chimaera. He left the port of Bari with two hundred transports and thirty war-galleys, and arrived safely at Avlona on the 9th October 1107, where he landed his army. The cavalry alone amounted to five thousand.

This army resembled that with which William the Conqueror subdued England. It was composed of experienced military adventurers, whom the hope of a richer conquest than that of England had assembled under the banner of the Prince of Tarentum and Antioch. But, fortunately for the Byzantine Empire, instead of fighting a battle immediately on its landing, it was compelled to pass the winter before the walls of Dyrrachium. The strength of that fortress, and the ample supplies with which it had been furnished, saved Alexius from the necessity of giving battle until it suited his convenience; and he had every advantage in his favour. Bohemund was compelled to leave his warriors idle, while his engineers were preparing movable towers, tortoises, and battering-rams; and in the meantime Alexius assembled his army at Thessalonica. The Byzantine court was the real cause of the ruin of the Eastern Empire; its expenses were so great that every branch of the public service was paralyzed to supply its demands whenever money was scarce in the treasury at Constantinople. That Caesars and sevasts might be maintained in becoming pomp, the emperors had long been in the habit of disbanding a considerable part of the native troops at every cessation of active hostilities; and when this happened, court influence, not length of service, decided what officers and troops were to profit by the arrangement. The vanity of Alexius, the necessity he was under of conciliating several powerful aristocratic families, and the exigencies of his numerous relations, had always prevented his reducing the expenses of the court within reasonable bounds; and while the pomp and magnificence of his court at Constantinople surpassed every other in Europe, we find him constantly commencing his military operations with new armies enrolled for the occasion. This circumstance is alone sufficient to explain why his continual wars were productive of such trifling results. Alexius had considered it politic to form an aristocratic guard, consisting of two thousand chosen youths, who were trained with care to military exercises, and instructed in military science. Of these archontopuls, three hundred were sent forward, as soon as Bohemund landed, to secure the passes between Achrida and Dyrrachium.

At the approach of spring, Bohemund began to push forward his works. His ships being useless in consequence of the superiority of the Byzantine fleet, he destroyed them, and employed the timber in the construction of his towers and military engines; but the interruption of his communications with Italy soon proved disastrous to his army. The country round Dyrrachium had been laid waste in the preceding war, and was now either depopulated, or well protected by fortified towns and castles, in which the cultivators had secured their property. From these posts Byzantine troops watched the movements of every forager, and rendered it difficult for the besieging army to obtain the smallest supplies of provisions. On the other hand, the magazines of Dyrrachium were abundantly furnished both with provisions and military stores, the garrison was numerous and in high spirits, the ramparts were well garnished with

military engines, and the governor was active and popular. Bohemund assaulted the place in vain; he advanced his towers and battering-rams, which were of extraordinary size, up to the walls, and he worked mines under the foundations; but his assaults were repulsed, his towers and battering-rams were reduced to ashes, and his miners were suffocated at their work.

Alexius advanced as far as Deavolis, which commands the most important and easiest pass over the great range of mountains between Epirus and Macedonia to the south of Achrida. Experience had convinced him that his mercenaries and militia were unable to resist the Normans in the open field; so he determined to remain in his camp, and direct a series of desultory operations for wearing out the strength of the invaders. His love of intrigue showed itself in a mean artifice he used to spread distrust in the camp of Bohemund. Letters, addressed by the emperor to several of the Norman leaders, in which he pretended to have received information concerning the plans of Bohemund, were sent in a way that they fell into that prince's hands. The artifice appears not to have deceived the crafty Norman, who was more inclined to suspect the perfidy of Alexius than of his companions. He communicated the letters to his officers, and left everyone in the command of the positions they had previously occupied. If this anecdote of imperial policy had been communicated to us in some frank chronicle written by a prejudiced monk, we might have doubted its accuracy, and suspected the writer of having given a calumnious colouring to the incident; but the fact is attested by the beloved daughter of the imperial diplomatist, and affords us a valuable portraiture of the moral obtuseness of the Byzantine court, for Anna Comnena never suspected that she was holding up her father's conduct to the contempt of every honorable man.

The prudence of Alexius in his military proceedings soon placed Bohemund in great difficulties. The mountain passes were all fortified with strong entrenchments. Avlona, Yericho, and Canina were occupied by Michael Kekavmenos; Petroula by Alexander Kavasilas; Divri by Leo Nikerites; and the Kleisoura, or passes of Albania, by Eustathios Kamytzes. But the population of the country, which consisted in great part of Albanians, hardly viewed the Byzantine troops with more favour than the Norman; and when Bohemund paid his guides well, he was enabled to plunder at times with considerable success. While the war was thus prosecuted on shore with very little effect, the negligence of Koutostephanos and the Byzantine nobles on board the fleet, who ran into port when the sea became stormy, enabled the Italians to send a large convoy with provisions and reinforcements to Bohemund. At length, however, Mavrokatakalon having superseded Koutostephanos in the command of the fleet, and the Patzinak, Turkish, and Alain cavalry having posted themselves nearer and nearer to the Norman camp, Bohemund found his army reduced to a state of absolute famine, and made propositions of peace to the governor of Dyrrachium. These proposals were transmitted to the emperor, who still occupied his camp at Deavolis; and Alexius required that Bohemund should visit him in person to settle the terms of the treaty.

Two princes less deserving of trust could hardly have engaged in a negotiation; but after numerous precautions and mutual guarantees, their interests induced them to come to terms, and peace was concluded in the month of September 1108. Bohemund and his principal officers signed an act containing the obligations imposed on them, while Alexius, in order to preserve all his imperial superiority, only ratified these conditions, and made the concessions required on his part in the form of a golden bull. By this treaty, the stipulations of the alliance between the Crusaders and Alexius concluded in 1107 were annulled, in as far as they were applicable to the relations between the emperor and the Prince of Antioch. Bohemund again declared himself the liegeman of Alexius, and of his son John Porphyrogenitus, and bound himself to make war against all the enemies of the emperor who were not invulnerable like the angels, nor endowed with bodies of iron. He engaged to hold his principality in Asia as a fief of the Byzantine Empire, and to surrender any place he might take in future which had in old time belonged to the Byzantine emperors. He bound himself to make war on Tancred in case he should not cease all hostility in Cilicia, and promised immediately to surrender the whole coast between the Cydnus and the Hermon, and the cities of Laodicea, Gabala, Valanea, Marathos, Tortosa, and



Antarados in Syria, and to accept the investiture of the principality of Antioch from the emperor by a golden bull. The limits of his principality were defined as extending to Germanicia, with the exception of the country in the possession of the two Armenian brothers, Leo and Theodore, princes of the house of Reuben, who were subjects of the Byzantine Empire. A pension of two hundred talents or pounds' weight of gold, in byzants of the coinage of the Emperor Michael, was granted to Bohemund, who swore never to separate his interests from those of Alexius and his son John; but to observe all the stipulations of the treaty by the passion of our Saviour—by the Gospel which has subdued the world—by the crown of thorns—and by the nails and lance which pierced the body of the Redeemer. After this termination of all his ambitious schemes of conquest, the Norman prince hastened back to Italy, leaving his army to winter in Epirus, where Alexius promised to supply them with provisions. In the following spring many entered the Byzantine service, some proceeded to Jerusalem, and some returned to Italy. Bohemund, though compelled to remain quiet for some time, was collecting another army, either for the purpose of extending the limits of his principality of Antioch, or of seeking to avenge his defeat, when death put an end to his schemes in the month of February 1111.

The indefatigable energy of Alexius deserves the highest praise. As soon as he had put an end to the war with Bohemund, he turned all his attention to the affairs of Asia Minor; but in the conduct of the war, and in the policy of his civil administration, he allowed his ambition to blind his judgment. Instead of confining his operations to the country nearest to Constantinople, and to the Aegean Sea, he engaged in hostilities with Tancred and the Crusaders on the coast of Syria, leaving the Turks in undisturbed possession of the greater part of the intervening country, though the condition of the Seljouks at the time rendered it probable that a combined attack of the Franks and Greeks might have expelled them from the whole country between Constantinople and Antioch. The brave Sultan Kilidy-Arslan perished in the year 1106. His sons Melek and Massoud succeeded to his dominions, and Melek, the eldest, ruled the western part of Asia Minor. But though a brave soldier, his administration was weak, and many of the Turkish provincial governors assumed an independent position, and were called Sultans. During the ten years that Melek reigned, the Seljouk dominions were a scene of intestine war, Alexius acted with no great energy against the Turks at this period, but during their civil war he succeeded in getting possession of the whole coast of Asia Minor from the Hellespont to Attalia. He repaired the walls of Adramyttium, which had been destroyed by Tzachas, and endeavoured to make it a flourishing commercial city, as it had formerly been, by re peopling it with the inhabitants of the surrounding country. This was perhaps not the most likely way to restore prosperity to Adramyttium, but the reparation of the fortifications excited the jealousy of the nomad Turks in the province, and they assembled a large force to attack the new colony. They were completely defeated in an engagement, and the Greeks captured their camp, with their wives and children. The inhuman cruelty with which the Christians treated their prisoners on this occasion roused the fury of the whole Turkish nation, and gave an energy to their military operations against the Byzantine territory which checked all the plans of the emperor for its improvement. Hassan, the emir of Cappadocia, invaded the empire at the head of twenty-four thousand men, resolved to exact a bloody vengeance for the carnage at Adramyttium. The prudence of Philokales, the governor, who had rebuilt Adramyttium, and happened to be at Philadelphia on his way to assume the command of Attalia, saved the coast of western Asia from ruin. Hassan, not expecting to meet with any opposition in the field, formed his army into three divisions, in order to extend the sphere of his ravages. These divisions were directed against Sardis, Smyrna, and Pergamus; but the Byzantine troops under Philokales, issuing from Philadelphia, successively defeated the two first divisions, and compelled the third to abandon the attack on Pergamus, and save itself by a precipitate retreat.

The progress of the Turkish war was interrupted by the hostilities Alexius carried on with Tancred, which involved the empire in a maritime warfare with the Genoese and Pisans, whose piratical expeditions against the islands and coasts of the Aegean proved ruinous to the commerce and trade of the Greeks. In the year 1112, while the emperor was encamped in the Thracian Chersonesus preparing to send a fleet against the Latins, five Genoese galleys entered

the Hellespont, and plundered the neighbourhood of Abydos. Four, it is true, were captured by the Byzantine fleet, but one escaped to encourage its countrymen to new acts of piracy.

The imposing force Alexius had assembled in Asia Minor enabled him to conclude a temporary peace with Sultan Melek in the year 1112, yet, as the conditions of the treaty are not recorded by his daughter, it seems probable that no cession of territory was made. New armies of Turks arriving in Asia Minor from the frontiers of Persia, and Melek exercising no very extensive authority over the Seljouk chiefs, the sultanat of Iconium was soon again involved in hostilities with the Byzantine Empire. Bithynia, Mysia, the Troad, and the coast of Paphlagonia were ravaged by the Seljouks in successive campaigns. Brusa, Apollonias, and Cyzikos were taken and plundered, the governor of Nicaea was defeated and made prisoner, the inhabitants abandoned the cultivation of the open country, and either emigrated to Europe or clustered round castles in which they could quickly seek protection, or else formed their dwellings in places of difficult access, where they could escape the search of invading armies. These places of refuge and concealment, called Kataphygia, now began to assume a certain degree of political importance in the Byzantine government. The imperial troops often defeated the invaders, but new bands of Turks and Turkomans daily extended the field of their devastations.

The last campaign of Alexius was in the year 1116. The Sultan of Iconium had assembled a large army, composed not only of his own troops and those of the emirs who acknowledged his authority, but also of an army of auxiliaries sent to his assistance by the Sultan of Aleppo. The Turks expected to carry their ravages as far as the shores of the Bosphorus, and to retake the cities which the Crusaders had compelled them to surrender. Alexius determined to avert the danger by carrying the war into the heart of the dominions of Melek before his preparations were completed. After defeating a body of Turks on the banks of the Bhyndacus, near Lopadion, and clearing the neighbourhood of Nicaea from their nomadic hordes, the emperor advanced with his army by Dorylaeum to Santabaris. Here the army was divided into three columns. One, under Stypeiotes, was detached to the left, in order to attack the Turks who had assembled at Amorium, and, falling in with the enemy at Poimanenon, it gained a complete victory. The second division, under Kamytzes, was sent forward to drive back a Turkish force stationed at Polybotos. When this service had been performed, the main body of the army, under the command of the emperor in person, advanced to Kedrea, on the road to Polybotos. Finding, however, that the sultan had carried off all the provisions from the country through which he had proposed to advance, the emperor began to see the necessity of retiring. To pretend that his retreat was dictated by the command of Heaven, he performed a ceremony worthy of his superstition and hypocrisy. Writing on two papers the questions whether he should advance to attack Iconium or stop at Philomelion (Ak Sheher), he deposited his interrogatories on the altar of a church in which he passed the night in prayer. In the morning the priest entering took up one of the papers, and announced that the will of Heaven had fixed Philomelion as the limit of the campaign. In the meantime all the Turkish hordes were hastening to the scene of warfare. A strong body advancing to join the Emir Monolykos, by crossing the bridge over the Sangarius at Zompi (Tchanderl), was defeated by a Byzantine corps, under Bardas, in the plain of Amorium; but to this corps Alexius was compelled to detach reinforcements, to enable it to preserve its advantage over the enemy. The emperor then advanced to Mesonacta, near the Lake of the Forty Martyrs, and continuing his advance, soon reached Philomelion, which he took at the first assault. After ravaging the possessions of the Turks, and summoning the Christians who desired to escape from their Kataphygia to retire under the escort of his army, he commenced his retreat in the most deliberate manner, arranging his order of march so as to afford effectual protection to the immense number of Christian families and enormous quantity of spoil that accompanied his troops. The forces of Melek and Monolykos hung on his flanks and rear, and compelled him to fight a battle in the plain of Polybotos; but they were defeated with loss, and Alexius continued his retreat to Ampous. The subsequent attacks of the Turks were equally unsuccessful, and at last the sultan sent proposals of peace to the emperor. A meeting between Alexius and Melek, who came attended by the old warrior Monolykos, took place between Augustopolis and Acroinion, at which the terms of a treaty were arranged. What these terms

were we are not informed; but the emperor terminated his retreat with honour, bringing all the Christian colonists, with their families and property, safe into the Byzantine territory. Melek perished shortly after, the victim of assassination and fratricide. His brother Massoud, who was his murderer, succeeded him on the throne of Iconium.

Violent attacks of gout, accompanied by increasing weakness, warned Alexius of his approaching end. Near the conclusion of his reign he gained great popularity by burning the Bogomilian heresiarch Basil, and by founding a splendid hospital and orphan asylum.

The deathbed of Alexius affords a melancholy picture of the effects of his duplicity in the bosom of his own family. It seems like a satire on his reign. His habitual distrust of all men had induced him to make his wife and his learned daughter his chief companions, and to employ them in aiding him to perform the routine duties of the imperial administration. The Empress Irene and the Princess Anna proved apt pupils in the school of political intrigue. They deluded themselves into the belief that they understood the whole art of government, and proposed that Anna's husband, the Caesar Nicephorus Bryennios, should share the task of government with them. To effect this, Irene endeavoured to persuade Alexius to nominate the Caesar his successor, though his eldest son John had been invested with the imperial title for twenty-six years. The empress entertained an aversion for John, whose short and ugly figure showed to little advantage in the pageants of the court, while his love of truth and frank character appeared to her a proof of rudeness and stupidity. During the last illness of the emperor she frequently pressed him to declare Nicephorus his successor; but Alexius, who was well acquainted with his son's talents, listened patiently to her advice without following it. When the emperor's end approached, Irene took more daring measures to secure the realization of her wishes. The palace was filled with her creatures, and the Varangian guards on duty were gained over, and prepared to dispute the title of John to the throne. In the meantime John, who had watched all his mother's intrigues, took prompt and decided measures for securing his succession, without bringing matters to an open rupture. While the empress was absent from his father's bedside, he entered his chamber and drew the imperial signet from his finger; an act of which the dying emperor perfectly understood the import, and of which, consistent with his habitual dissimulation, he said nothing to the empress on her return. John immediately employed the signet to assume the direction of the public administration—the treasury, the army, and the fleet. He then hastened to the palace, where the Varangians for a time disputed his authority, and he had some difficulty in avoiding a collision between these foreign guards and the people who supported him; but at length he gained possession of the great palace, which was the citadel of Constantinople. The empress, finding that all her schemes were thus rendered abortive, rushed to the apartment of her dying husband and accused her son of treason, urging him to declare another successor; but Alexius only raised his hands and eyes to heaven, to indicate that his concerns on earth were terminated, and that his thoughts were now directed to another world. The empress, interpreting the gesture according to the emperor's habitual system of duplicity, supposed the movement was made to avoid giving a direct answer, and as she gazed on the dying emperor exclaimed, "You die as you have lived, a hypocrite".

The Emperor Alexius died in the year 1118, aged seventy, having reigned thirty-seven years, four months and a-half.

## Sect. II

### The reign of John II

A.D. 1118-1143

John Comnenus was the most amiable character that ever occupied the Byzantine throne. He was stainless in his private conduct, frank, merciful, generous, prudent, active and brave, economical without avarice, and pious without superstition. Even the Latins bear testimony to his virtue, while the love of his own subjects is declared by the singular exception his government offers of exemption from rebellion and sedition. The only traitors during his reign, which lasted almost a quarter of a century, were members of his own family. The moral and political feelings of his sister and brother appear to have been corrupted by their father's duplicity and their mother's ambition.

The position of John when he mounted the throne was one of some difficulty and danger. His virtues alarmed the courtiers, and were almost unknown to the people. He was consequently compelled to secure his authority by administrative arrangements and military power, and to do this without any effusion of blood was his first care. To avoid all chance of collision with the members of the conspiracy organized by his mother, he never quitted the great palace until he was assured that all his commands for preserving order in the capital and its immediate vicinity had been carried into execution. During this interval his father's funeral was celebrated; and though he took care that the ceremony should be performed with imperial pomp, he did not venture to be present.

The selfishness of his own relations, and the treachery of the Byzantine aristocracy, made a deep impression on his mind. Though they never destroyed his feelings of family affection, nor infused any tinge of melancholy into his equable disposition, they led him, at an early age, to seek elsewhere for a friend. A Turkish lad, remarkable for his personal grace and amiable disposition, fell into the hands of the Emperor Alexius at the capture of Nicaea, and was placed as a domestic slave and personal companion with his son John Porphyrogenitus, who was nearly of the same age. The two youths were educated together, and became sincerely attached to one another. In Axouchos John found the frank character and the love of truth which he sought in vain among his own relations and the Greek courtiers. Years ripened the youthful friendship into mutual respect. Axouchos showed himself a man of talent as well as of courage and virtue; and John, seeing that the fidelity of all his father's ministers had been tampered with by his mother, made the Turkish slave his prime-minister. Axouchos proved himself worthy of the high post; but whatever may have been the amount of his virtues, the very circumstance that the people regarded the appointment of a slave to the rank of minister as a boon to humanity, must be taken as a proof of the oppressive conduct of the aristocracy, the corruption of the general administration, and the decay of wise institutions and right feelings in the people.

The government of John II was disturbed by no internal troubles. Two conspiracies occurred during his reign; one headed by his literary sister Anna, and the other by his brother Isaac, but both proved abortive. The Princess Anna induced several members of the imperial family to join in a plot for placing the imperial crown on the head of her husband Nicephorus Bryennios. For the success of her plan it was necessary that her brother should be murdered, or that his eyes should be put out; and when her more humane husband testified some reluctance to proceed with the plot, the learned princess expressed her contempt for his feminine weakness, as she termed it, in very strong terms, contrasting it with what she considered her own manly inhumanity. The conspiracy was revealed, and John thought it necessary to confiscate his sister's wealth in order to check her future intrigues. He bestowed her palace, which was richly and luxuriously furnished, on Axouchos; but that minister, who thought more of performing the duties of his situation for the emperor's advantage than of enriching himself by the imperial favour, suggested that it would be more politic to restore the palace to Anna. John felt all the prudence as well as the justice of his minister's advice, and replied, "I should, indeed, be unworthy to reign, if I could not forget my anger as readily as you forget your interest". Anna was reinstated in her palace.

Isaac, the only surviving brother of the emperor, was always treated with the greatest kindness and the highest honour. But it would appear that his capacity and disposition prevented

his being entrusted with as great a share of political power as he wished, and, dissatisfied with his position, he fled to the court of the Sultan Massoud at Iconium, accompanied by his eldest son John. During this voluntary exile he led many predatory incursions into the Byzantine Empire, but at last, finding himself both poorer and more neglected at Iconium than he had been at Constantinople, he made his peace with his brother, and was reinstated in his former wealth and rank. The conduct of his son John, however, soon caused a new alienation of feeling between the brothers. John accompanied the emperor his uncle at the siege of Neocaesarea. An Italian knight, highly esteemed for his valour, happened to be dismounted, which the emperor observing, ordered his nephew to remount him on an Arabian horse he was riding, adding, "You have other excellent horses at hand". The pride of the young prince was hurt, and he turned to the Italian, saying, "Take some other horse, and try if you can make me quit my saddle with your lance". A look of the emperor, however, made him think it wise to dismount and surrender his horse. Shortly after he rode oft joined the Turks, with whom he had formerly lived, and embraced the Mohammedan religion. His father Isaac also appears to have engaged in some plots, concerning the details of which we have no information, but he was banished by his brother to Heracleia in Pontus towards the end of his reign.

The historical records of the reign of John II are very imperfect, and relate only to his warlike enterprises. Hence it has been supposed that he was either too strongly biassed in favour of military fame, or that he considered success in war as the surest means of increasing the power and restoring the prosperity of the empire, overlooking the necessity of infusing new vigour into the social organization of the motley population of the Byzantine provinces, and of reforming the gross abuses of the fiscal administration. There can be no doubt that the general opinion of the age viewed military success as the true preservative against all political evils, and the emperor's popularity with the inhabitants of Constantinople must have been considerably increased by the conviction that such was his opinion. The material prosperity of the people of Constantinople was closely identified with the augmentation of the imperial dominions, and only indirectly influenced by the general wellbeing of the rest of the empire. This identification of prejudices and interests between the inhabitants of the capital and the rulers of the state is one of the usual results of strict administrative centralization, and its basis is generally laid by some sacrifice of the interests of the people in the provinces for the profit of the crowds congregated in the vicinity of the sovereign. Rome and Constantinople, by their public distributions of provisions and expensive public amusements, afford proofs of this fact quite as strong as any Eastern despotism, and modern Europe offers something similar in the state of Paris.

The superiority assumed by the Byzantine armies whenever John appeared in the field, proves that he was an able general as well as a brave soldier. His troops showed perfect confidence in his military skill, even when his operations proved unsuccessful; and he used their services with that daring energy which marks the existence of the highest military qualities in a leader. His enterprises were at times foiled; but neither failure nor retreat ever produced discomfiture to his army. His opinions concerning the constitution of the force under his command were those of a professional soldier, not of a patriotic general nor of a feudal monarch. The native militia of the Byzantine provinces, and the nobles of the empire, who were in the habit of returning to pass the winter, after each campaign, in their domestic quarters, were a force on which he placed no reliance; to use his own phrase, he desired soldiers whose thoughts were concentrated in a military life, and who were ready at every season and for any enterprise he might command. This naturally led to a preference of mercenary troops, and his choicest army appears to have been composed of very few Byzantine subjects; its principal divisions consisting of Macedonians, which doubtless means Slavonians and Bulgarians, of Scythians, which signifies Patzinaks and Romans, of Turks and veterans, or guards. His military policy was pursued with skill and energy; the plan of each campaign was well conceived and ably executed; he gained for himself great military renown, and he made the Byzantine armies a terror both to the Turks and Franks. But there appears to have been a want of political system in his Asiatic wars, and he seems to have expended too much of the military resources of his dominions on distant expeditions to Syria, and unnecessary attacks on Armenian Cilicia, from

which no permanent advantage could be expected. It cannot be doubted that, even during his victorious reign, the social condition, and perhaps the numerical population, of the empire continued to decline; and before a generation had elapsed from the death of his son Manuel I, the Byzantine Empire was overthrown, and a Flemish count occupied the imperial throne.

The private conduct of the Emperor John indicates that he viewed with regret the internal evils which weakened the moral and political energy of Greek society; for we must now observe that the Byzantine Empire had assumed a Greek character. Yet we have no reason to suppose that he adopted any measures to root out the administrative abuses or reform the social state of his dominions. The undertaking may have appeared to him one in which the power of government could effect very little; and he may have thought that Divine Providence alone could bring about the revolution in men's thoughts and conduct necessary to produce any effectual improvement. Many persons even at the present day may be of the same opinion, and ask, with reference to our time, what Catholic emancipation, municipal and parliamentary reform, improved central administration, and free trade, could have effected towards improving the general condition of the inhabitants of the British empire, without an extensive emigration, and the accidental discovery of gold in California and Australia, events with which Government had certainly very little connection. But to these persons it may be replied, that unless the previous changes had placed the social and political condition of all British subjects on a harmonious scale, the subsequent events might have increased many evils which they have contributed to diminish. And thus it is not impossible, that if John had endeavoured to improve the administration of justice in the provinces, to relieve trade from monopolies, to secure the fruits of their labour to the agriculturists, and to diminish the burden of fiscal oppression on his people, his reign might have opened a new era of prosperity to the Greek nation. Perhaps, like Leo III, he might have ranked as a restorer of the Eastern Empire under a Greek phase.

There are so many points of similarity between the situation of the empire at the accession of Leo III and at the accession of the family of Comnenus, that they must have made some impression on the mind of the Emperor John II, had history been then studied for political instruction. At both periods the Mohammedans had overrun Asia Minor and threatened Constantinople. In both cases they were driven back, and the empire gained time to reorganize its resources. In the first instance, however, the victory was gained by Leo and the Byzantine army; but in the second, the advantage was derived from the accidental passage of foreign Crusaders. We have seen in the preceding volume with what political prudence Leo profited by his military successes. He boldly forsook the beaten track of Roman conservatism, and created the Byzantine Empire by reforming the whole circle of the imperial administration; and by so doing he infused new life into Christian society. The inhabitants of the Eastern Empire, who appeared to be on the eve of extinction when he mounted the throne, increased rapidly in numbers and wealth before his reign was concluded; while the scheme of policy he traced out for his successors, gave three centuries and a half of prosperity to the Byzantine empire.

When Alexius Comnenus seized the throne, the Byzantine administration required to be once more reformed. New evils had again depopulated the empire and enfeebled the government. Everything was falling to decay. The systematic administration of the Roman Empire, which had preserved the fabric of the imperial power in many periods of difficulty, was now swept away, and replaced by temporary expedients and arbitrary counsels. The emperor had become more despotic as his instruments of government became weaker, and his officials more incapable. The expenses of the imperial court now absorbed the greater part of the revenues of the state; and the army and navy were diminished and neglected, while princes, courtiers, and chamberlains were multiplied and honoured. The civil, financial, and judicial administration was treated as a field for enriching those favoured by the emperor and by the emperor's favourites. The Roman law, which for ages had formed the bulwark of individual rights and the basis of public prosperity in the Eastern Empire, no longer protected the persons and the property of the people against the rapacity of the imperial officers. Ever since the death of Basil II the public property of the state had been visibly going to ruin.

Roads, bridges, aqueducts, ports, public warehouses, and city fortifications, arsenals, war-like machines, and ships, were everywhere becoming unserviceable. Even cisterns, wells, farm-houses, plantations, and other signs of rural civilization, were disappearing over extensive districts where they had once flourished. Colonies of nations in the rudest state of civilization, like the Turks, Patzinaks, and Romans, to whom the cultivation of gardens, vineyards, olive-grounds, silk, and plants used in manufactures was unknown, were established on sites once occupied by populous cities. A little grain was raised in the enclosures of ruined gardens, while sheep pastured through abandoned vineyards, orchards, and olive-groves. It is evident that agricultural industry must have been sadly degraded, and the depopulation of the empire must have made great progress, before the Emperor Alexius could have found vacant lands in the rich plains about Thessalonica and Philippopolis, for the colonies he planted at Moglena and Alexiopolis. In the period of anarchy which preceded the reign of Leo III, the civilized inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire were driven into cities and walled towns; and under such circumstances the Greek race must have diminished much more rapidly than the rude colonists who entered the country could increase.

We shall have occasion to remark that the policy of John, with reference to the agricultural population in Asia Minor was not very enlightened. With the short-sighted view of diminishing the revenues of the Sultan of Iconium, he ruined a flourishing class of Christian agriculturists, who maintained some local independence by paying taxes to the Turks. These people were compelled by the emperor to abandon their farms, with all those improvements which the expenditure of capital for ages on their property had effected, in order to colonize some ruined site in the empire, where all capital of a similar kind had been already annihilated. There can be no doubt that such a colony would soon become extinct.

It is not difficult, even at this distance of time, to point out the measures which ought to have been adopted in order to arrest the decline and depopulation of the empire; but how far the adoption of these measures would have tended to improve the moral condition of the Greek nation must, of course, remain problematical; and without a great improvement in the moral rectitude and political energy of the Greeks at this period, no exertions of the central administration would have sufficed to save the Byzantine empire. The first task was to root out the all-pervading corruption of court influence. Without this, there was no possibility of restoring the systematic and equitable administration of justice. All the benefits which Roman law had conferred on society for so many ages were now nullified by the despotic power of inferior officials; and as long as the expenditure of the court absorbed the greater part of the public revenues, no effective system of administrative control could be framed to check the abuses of the agents of the court in the provinces. The secondary measures were, to sweep away all the monopolies and privileges which were ruining Greek commerce, and to reform the fiscal exactions which were annihilating all capital invested in agriculture. Had such measures of improvement been perseveringly pursued during the quarter of century that John reigned, the Byzantine Empire might perhaps have escaped its impending ruin, and the Greek race its subsequent debasement.

The Emperor John II was engaged in constant wars; but the inhabitants of the empire enjoyed during his reign a degree of internal security to which they had been long strangers. No armies of plunderers ravaged Thrace, Macedonia, Bithynia, and Ionia; and the Greeks especially were secured from all hostile attacks, and were afforded an opportunity of recovering their former commercial and manufacturing activity. The Patzinaks, the Hungarians, and the Servians, indeed, ventured at different times to invade the northwestern provinces of the empire; but they were soon repulsed, and permanent peace was established.

In the autumn of 1122, the Patzinaks, who had remained quiet ever since their defeat in 1091, crossed the Danube in great force, and spread over the country north of Mount Haemus. The emperor established a camp at Beroea to cover the passes, and passed the winter with the army. At the approach of spring, the Patzinaks advanced to force the passes, but were

completely defeated. Even the barrier of waggons, which served as an entrenchment to their encampment, was broken through by the Varangian guard with their battle-axes. This victory terminated the war, and broke the force of the Patzinaks so completely, that it was long commemorated as a feast by the Byzantine Church. The most robust of the prisoners were draughted into the imperial army—some were sold as slaves for the profit of the victorious soldiers, and many were settled as colonists on waste lands in the European provinces, where their descendants were still dwelling at the time of the Latin conquest.

A war with the Servians who had invaded the empire, ended in their complete defeat, and the Servian prisoners were established as colonists on waste lands in the neighbourhood of Nicomedia.

Hostilities broke out between the emperor and Stephen king of Hungary, in consequence of John, whose wife was a Hungarian princess, protecting Bela, who was regarded as the rightful heir to the Hungarian throne. Stephen took Belgrade, which he destroyed, and employed the materials to construct a new town called Zeugmin (Semlin) on the northern bank of the Save. The Hungarian army marched forward to Triaditza, and the emperor established his headquarters at Philippopolis, where, with a strong body of Italian heavy and Turkish light cavalry, he shut up the passes, and waited until he was informed that his flotilla had entered the Danube. He then crossed Mount Haemus, and, driving the Hungarians before him, effected a junction with his flotilla, and defeated a powerful Hungarian army near the fort of Chram. He established a garrison in Branitzova, and returned to Constantinople. The Hungarians, taking the field during the winter, recaptured Branitzova, and the emperor was obliged again to place himself at the head of his army; but both parties, after some severe fighting, became convinced that nothing was to be gained by continuing the war, and peace was concluded, in which the Servians, and perhaps the Venetians, were comprised, on terms favorable to the extension of Byzantine commerce.

(Stephen II was the son of Coloman, who had put out the eyes of his brother Almus and nephew Bela to secure the throne to Stephen, for the brother in Hungary succeeded before the son. Coloman and Almus were sons of Geïsa I, the elder brother of Ladislas, the father of the Empress Irene, John's wife. *L'Art de vérifier les Data* makes Irene (Pyriska) daughter of Geïsa I. But as Geïsa died in 1077, and she was married during the reign of Coloman in 1104, when John was sixteen years of age, it is impossible to place her birth earlier than 1088. Cinnamus says she was the daughter of Ladislas; but he errs in making Almus and Stephen also sons of Ladislas. Bela, though blind, succeeded to the throne of Hungary on the death of Stephen. The series of Hungarian kings is—Geïsa I, from 1075 to 1077; Ladislas, to 1005; Coloman, to 1114; Stephen II, to 1131; Bela II, to 1141).

Previous to this time, the Venetian republic had generally been a firm ally of the Byzantine Empire, and, to a certain degree, it was considered as owing homage to the Emperor of Constantinople. That connection was now dissolved, and those disputes commenced which soon occupied a prominent place in the history of Eastern Europe. The establishment of the Crusaders in Palestine had opened a new field for the commercial enterprise of the Venetians, and in a great measure changed the direction of their maritime trade; while the frequent quarrels of the Greeks and Franks compelled the trading republics of Italy to attach themselves to one of the belligerent parties, in order to secure a preference in its ports. For a short time, habit kept the Venetians attached to the empire; but they soon found that their interests were more closely connected with the Syrian trade than with that of Constantinople. They joined the kings of Jerusalem in extending their conquests, and obtained considerable establishments in all the maritime cities of the kingdom. From having been the customers and allies of the Greeks, they became their rivals and enemies. The commercial fleets of the age acted too often like pirates; and it is not improbable that the Emperor John had good reason to complain of the aggressions of the Venetians. Hostilities commenced; the Doge Dominico Michieli, one of the heroes of the republic, conducted a numerous fleet into the Archipelago, and plundered the islands of Rhodes



and Chios, where he wintered. Next year he continued his depredations in Samos, Mitylene, Paros, and Andros. Modon was also taken and occupied by the Venetians, to serve them as a harbour of refuge on their voyages to and from Syria. The war which the emperor carried on in Dalmatia and Servia appears to have been connected with his hostilities against the Venetians, but the events are hardly noticed by any Byzantine writer. They were really insignificant in the history of the empire, though they appeared of vast importance to the republic of Venice. Peace was re-established by the emperor reinstating the Venetians in the enjoyment of all the commercial privileges they had enjoyed before the war broke out. The attention of the Emperor John was early directed to the affairs of Asia, but he employed the forces of the empire too often rather to extend the authority and increase the fame of his government than to consolidate the prosperity of his dominions.

He left the power of the Turks almost unbroken, while he wasted the wealth and strength of the empire in harassing the Armenians of Cilicia and the Franks of Antioch. Two of his early campaigns (A.D. 1120 and 1121) were devoted to regaining possession of Laodicea and Sozopolis, and clearing the country between the Meander and Attalia from Turkish garrisons and encampments. After the termination of the Hungarian war, John again placed himself at the head of his army in Asia Minor. Three campaigns appear to have been successfully devoted to re-establishing the Byzantine authority on the southern coast of the Black Sea; yet even towards the end of his reign, an alliance between Mohammed the successor of Danishmend, on whom the Turks of Paphlagonia and Pontus were dependent, and Massoud the sultan of Iconium, forced the emperor to form a winter camp on the banks of the Rhyndacus to protect Bithynia, A.D. 1139.

Before this (A.D. 1137) the emperor reduced the Armenian principality of Cilicia to complete dependence on the government at Constantinople. His conquest, however, was not effected without great exertions and considerable loss, while the hatred of the Greeks which it roused in the breasts of the warlike Armenian population of the Cilician mountains favoured the progress of the Turks. Leo, the sovereign of Armenian Cilicia, after carrying on war for some time with the Turks of Antioch, concluded peace with them, and endeavoured to gain possession of Seleucia, the frontier fortress of the Byzantine Empire, and a city of considerable commercial importance. The Emperor John appeared in person, at the head of a powerful army, to punish the Armenian prince, and compel his ally the Prince of Antioch to do homage to the empire, according to the treaty with Bohemund. Tarsus, Adana, and Mopsuestia, were soon reduced by the operations of the Byzantine engineers; but Anabarza and Vahkah, where the natural strength of the position opposed great obstacles to an attack, were only taken by the perseverance of the emperor after an obstinate resistance. After the loss of Vahkah, Leo and his family sought refuge and concealment in the fastnesses of Mount Taurus, but were captured and imprisoned at Constantinople. Leo died in captivity: on some suspicion of treason the emperor ordered the eyes of his son Reuben to be put out, and the Armenian prince died of the operation; but the other son of Leo, named Thoros, returned to Cilicia after the death of John, and re-established the power of the Armenians in Cilicia.

After the reduction of Cilicia the emperor compelled the Prince of Antioch to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Byzantine Empire. The reigning prince was Raymond of Poitiers, who had married Constance the infant daughter of Bohemund II. Constance had been proposed by the people of Antioch to the Emperor John as a wife for his youngest son Manuel, but from some unknown cause he had refused the match. The people of Antioch, and indeed all the inhabitants of the Syrian cities, were extremely hostile to the administrative and judicial authority assumed by the Byzantine clergy; they were, consequently, warmly opposed to the emperor's pretensions to the sovereignty over Antioch. Raymond, however, knew that his forces were insufficient to oppose the army of John. When, therefore, he was summoned to do homage as a vassal, and prepare to receive the emperor, he solicited an interview. At this meeting it was stipulated that Antioch should remain under the existing administration, civil and ecclesiastical, but that Raymond was to hold the principality as a dependence of the Byzantine Empire, and do

homage to John as his sovereign. On the other hand, the emperor engaged to unite his arms with those of the Prince of Antioch and the Count of Edessa, to drive the Turks out of Aleppo, Shizar, Hama, and Hems, the investiture of which he promised to confer on the Prince of Antioch.

The following campaign (A.D. 1138) was carried on against the Turks in Syria, while the Seljouks of Iconium were left unmolested in the rear of the Byzantine army. This appears to have been a very ill-judged enterprise. It added to the renown of the emperor and displayed the superiority of his army, but it conferred no advantage on his empire. Piza, a strong fortress on a rock near the banks of the Euphrates, was taken, and given up to Joscelin, count of Edessa. But the emperor could make no impression on Aleppo, and he only extracted a large sum of money from Shizar. His two allies, Raymond and Joscelin, gave him no assistance, and the manner in which they spent their time in feasting and gambling disgusted the emperor, who felt little anxiety to extend their dominions. He saw that unless he could make Antioch his place of arms, and the headquarters of his army during the winter, there would be great difficulty in making any permanent conquests in Syria. He therefore proposed to Raymond to admit the Byzantine troops into Antioch. The proposition alarmed both the prince and the people; and after the Emperor John had entered the place to treat of the arrangements which it would be necessary to make, a popular tumult arose, which compelled him to withdraw, and he retired with his army from Syria to wait for a more favorable opportunity.

While he had been pursuing his schemes of ambition in the south, the Turks had ravaged the country along the banks of the Sangarius. The emperor was occupied, during the summer of 1139, with an expedition into Paphlagonia and Pontus, in which he advanced as far as Neocaesarea. In this campaign his youngest son Manuel distinguished himself by his valour, and his nephew John fled to the Turks, as has been already mentioned. In winter the army was encamped on the banks of the Rhyndacus, to protect the rich plains of Bithynia.

The emperor now prepared a powerful army, at the head of which he proposed to march to Jerusalem and re-establish the Byzantine supremacy in Syria. The Frank princes, the King of Jerusalem, the Pope, and the Latin clergy, all viewed his project with fear and jealousy, and were eager to thwart his operations. The year 1141 was occupied by military operations against the Sultan of Iconium, in order to secure the frontiers of the empire from all danger during the emperor's absence in Syria. One of the measures adopted by John during this campaign has been already blamed.

On the frontiers of Lycaonia, nearly in a direct line between Attalip and Iconium, there is a large freshwater lake surrounded by mountains, called Pasgusa by Cinnamus. This lake, the Koralis of Strabo, is about twenty miles long and eight broad, and is distant upwards of forty miles from Iconium. Many islands are interspersed on its surface, which in the time of John II were inhabited by a numerous Christian population, enjoying a considerable degree of municipal liberty, and carrying on a flourishing trade with Iconium under the protection of the sultan. The emperor now summoned these islanders to receive Byzantine garrisons; but as the islands were well fortified, and the people feared the fiscal rapacity of the imperial administration, and hated the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Greek Church, they rejected the summons, and prepared to resist the emperor. But though the lake and the island fortifications had proved an effectual defence against the Seljouk Turks, they could oppose only a weak barrier to the scientific attacks of John. Boats were soon constructed, battering-rams and storming-towers were floated on rafts close to the walls, and after a brave resistance the island fortresses were taken and their inhabitants made prisoners. Byzantine garrisons for a while retained possession of these conquests, but when deprived of their industrious inhabitants the islands became useless, and the shores of the lake were deserted.

The emperor passed the winter near Anazarba, on the frontiers of Cilicia, holding his army ready to enter Syria and take possession of Antioch in spring. But while he was revolving

his projects, and arranging everything necessary for his march to Jerusalem, an accident suddenly terminated his life. While he was hunting on Mount Taurus, it happened that he received the charge of a wild boar with his hunting-spear, and in his struggle with the wild beast a poisoned arrow from his own quiver wounded his hand. At first he paid no attention to the wound, and when his arm began to swell with the effect of the poison, he refused to submit to amputation, which would then, perhaps, have proved unavailing. Without loss of time, he made every arrangement necessary for the tranquil transmission of the imperial power to his youngest son, Manuel, whom he selected for his successor on account of his superior talents. John II expired tranquilly on the 8th of April 1143, after a reign of twenty-four years, seven months, and twenty-five days, at the age of fifty-five.

### Sect. III

#### Reign of Manuel I

A.D. 1143-1180

Manuel was not unworthy of his father's preference, but the possession of absolute power at an early age brings temptations which no man can resist. Perhaps if Manuel had enjoyed the advantage of passing a few additional years under his father's eye, he might in his maturer age have become a wise and great prince. He possessed courage, ability, and strength of character; nor was he deficient in literary cultivation, political sagacity, or theological knowledge; but he ascended the throne of a corrupted empire before his passions were disciplined. We need not wonder, therefore, at finding that his vices developed themselves so rapidly as to choke many of his virtues. Neither the institutions of Byzantine society nor the political organization of the government enabled the higher and middling classes of the capital to acquire the knowledge or the virtues necessary to invest them with the authority of public opinion, so that Manuel felt little moral restraint, and rarely considered it an imperative duty to make his conduct conformable to the dictates of his judgment by sacrificing his inclinations. A middle class could hardly be said to exist any longer in the empire, and the Byzantine officials were corrupted by every vice.

Manuel's authority as emperor was peaceably recognised at Constantinople in consequence of the energy and prudence of Axouchos, his father's friend and prime-minister, who hastened to the capital, and took all the necessary precautions before the death of John II was publicly known. The young emperor's elder brother, Isaac, was confined in a monastery and closely watched, while the intrigues of his brother-in-law, the Caesar Roger, were easily rendered abortive. The support of the clergy was purchased by a yearly pension equal to the value of two hundred pounds' weight of gold, and the goodwill of the Patriarch was secured by a further donation of one hundred pounds, which Manuel placed on the high altar of St Sophia's at the time of his coronation. The army was attached by promotions, bounties, and furloughs; and the citizens of Constantinople were gained by the grant of a donative of two pieces of gold to every householder in the capital. The circumstances attending Manuel's accession compelled him to hasten in person to Constantinople, in order to receive the imperial crown in St Sophia's. Custom and popular prejudice rendered the immediate performance of this ceremony absolutely necessary to give a legal sanction to his occupation of the throne, for it often happens that, long after law and religion are neglected, forms and ceremonies exert despotic power over nations deaf to the voice of justice and truth.

Manuel possessed both the personal advantages and mental qualities most admired by his contemporaries. He was tall, handsome, vigorous, and brave; skilled in all military exercises, and indefatigable as a sportsman and a soldier. But his headlong courage degenerated into rashness, and his personal skill made him seek the fame of a daring knight oftener than was prudent in an able general. His unlimited power and violent passions rendered his wars as much a matter of amusement as his hunting parties, and induced him to engage in them with as little reference to their effects on the welfare of his subjects. The wealth of the empire was lavished on brilliant fêtes and tournaments, which were renowned through all Europe as the most magnificent spectacles of the kind that had ever been seen. But the dignity of the empire was forgotten in the emperor's private society, and his love of pleasure was unrestrained by morality and religion. The Byzantine court, already familiar with every vice, was taught by him to tolerate even the crime of incest.

Two anecdotes may be selected to give a picture of the state of society early in Manuel's reign. At one of the social meetings in which he indulged, the conversation of his relations present turned on his own and his father's military exploits. His nephew, John, the son of his deceased brother Andronicus, extolled the deeds of the Emperor John as superior to those of Manuel, and the preference was admitted to be just by Manuel himself who loved his father, and respected his memory. But the emperor's brother Isaac and his cousin Andronicus engaged in a violent altercation on the subject, in which something which Andronicus said offended Isaac to such a degree that he drew his sword, and made a blow at his cousin's head. The emperor, with his usual boldness and promptitude, warded off the blow with his arm, and John Ducas, another cousin of the emperor's, assisted in parrying it with his hunting-whip. Manuel, however, received a wound from his brother's sword, even through his gold-embroidered dress, of which he carried the mark to his grave. His cousin Andronicus showed little gratitude to the emperor in his future life. The circumstances of this affair made a deep impression on the mind of Manuel, to whom it revealed a degree of concealed ill-will and envy the existence of which he had not previously suspected, and he is said ever after to have worn armour under his clothes.

The other anecdote exhibits the court in a state of society so disgusting, that we should be unable to believe the possibility of so much vice under the eye of a Christian clergy and an established church, unless we possessed convincing proofs of the fact. It shows us how far crime may proceed where the aristocracy have no feelings of moral responsibility, and where the church is the creature of a corrupted state. The amours of Andronicus with his cousin Eudocia were the object of much remark, as the connection was considered incestuous among the Greeks. It was notorious, however, that the emperor was carrying on an adulterous and incestuous intercourse with his niece Theodora, the sister of Eudocia. Andronicus, therefore, openly made a jest of his own and his sovereign's infamy, observing that water from the same fountain has the same taste. Yet while such was the state of the court, Manuel gave his imperial sanction to an ecclesiastical prohibition of the marriage of his subjects to the seventh degree of consanguinity.

At this time the aristocracy of Western Europe far surpassed the nobles of the Byzantine Empire in all warlike accomplishments. The military spirit of the times of Nicephorus Phokas, John Zimiskes, and Basil the Bulgarian-slayer, had passed away. This degeneracy of the Greeks induced the Emperor John II to fill his ranks with Turkish mercenaries, and it now caused Manuel to adopt the habits and prejudices of Western chivalry, and in military affairs to show a strong preference in favour of the Franks. Both Manuel's wives were Latin princesses. His first was Bertha, called by the Greeks Irene, who was daughter of the Count of Sulzbach, and sister of the wife of Conrad, emperor of Germany. His second was Maria, the daughter of Raymond and Constance of Antioch, and this marriage mingled the blood of Alexius and Bohemund in an unlucky alliance. His daughter Maria, after having been betrothed to Bela III before he became king of Hungary, promised to William the Good, king of Sicily, and asked in marriage by the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa for his son, Henry VI, was at a ripe age (years, however, not having in any way impaired her beauty) bestowed on Rayner, second son of William, marquis

of Montferrat, who received the rank of Caesar at the marriage, which took place in 1180. At the same time, the emperor's young son Alexius was married to Agnes, the daughter of Louis VII, king of France. To this disposition of the emperor Manuel in favour of the Latins we may trace something of the hostile feeling which the Greek clergy showed to his government on more than one occasion, and there can be no doubt that it was from political and personal reasons, not from religious preference, that Manuel endeavoured to effect a union with the papal church.

(The Patriarch Kosmas of Aegina was deposed by a synod of bishops of the court party. He was accused of favouring the heretical opinions of his friend Niphon, a monk convicted of holding some of the doctrines of the Bogomilians. But the real ground of the deposition of Kosmas was his hostility to Manuel's views, and the suspicion the emperor entertained that he was intriguing with his brother Isaac. The deposed Aeginetan patriarch had very little Christian charity. He appears to have been an ecclesiastic worthy of Manuel's court, for when he heard his sentence, he heaped curses on the heads of his accusers, on the synod, and on the emperor; and his frantic rage went so far that he implored Heaven the empress might never have a child.— Kosmas was patriarch for only ten months, until February 1147).

To form a correct estimate of the position occupied by the Byzantine Empire at this period in the international system of the Christian states, we must bear in mind the superior intellectual cultivation of its rulers and its immense pecuniary resources. Though the Byzantine nobility were inferior to the Western barons in warlike accomplishments, they surpassed even the Latin clergy in intellectual culture. Even the Emperor Manuel, who rivalled the valour of Richard Coeur-de-Lion in the field, was instructed in all the learning of his age. His knowledge of surgery enabled him to dress the broken arm of Baldwin III, king of Jerusalem, and his theological studies enabled him to direct the determinations of the synods of the Byzantine church. After a long dispute with the Greek clergy, he succeeded in expunging an anathema against the God of Mahomet from the church catechism, and replacing it by an anathema against Mahomet and his doctrines.

The relative superiority of the Byzantine Empire to the other Christian states was still very great, though the foundations of its prosperity and strength were already undermined. This superiority was also rendered more apparent in a political point of view, from the immense power conferred on the emperor by the centralization of the whole governmental authority in his person, and by the arbitrary power he was thereby enabled to exercise over the fortunes of his subjects. But we shall see that the splendour of Manuel's reign was purchased by the expenditure of the capital as well as of the income of the empire, and the diminished resources of his dominions became apparent immediately after his death. The wasteful extravagance of his court and his tournaments, together with the expense of the large military establishments he maintained, kept his treasury so low that he was compelled to use both oppression and rapacity in order to fill it; his financial administration was marked by injustice; wealth was seized wherever he could lay his hands on it; the people were impoverished by monopolies, and individuals were enriched by privileges, so that the inhabitants of the provinces began to contemplate subjection to the Franks and the Mohammedans as an alternative by which they could escape spoliation. Unfortunately for the empire, the family of Comnenus was a fruitful stock, and every member of the house required to be provided with an income suitable to their imperial rank; so that if we glance our eye over the long catalogue of these Byzantine princes in the volume of Ducange, and estimate their cost to the state by the fact that, when prisoners, their ransom was generally rated at twenty thousand pieces of gold, there can be no doubt that an army of one hundred thousand men, with its officers and materials of war, might have been maintained for the same expenditure.

But when we look beyond the corruption of the administration, the vices of the court, and the servility of the clergy, we perceive that a desire for improvement still existed in those classes who were free from the immediate circle of official influence. The degraded condition of society was felt, and some anxiety to escape its evils was manifested. The scanty records of the

civil and ecclesiastical jurisprudence of the time, and the pedantic remains of Byzantine literature, allow us to trace this spirit in the history of the law and of the church. Unfortunately for the Eastern Empire, the Greeks, in whom these feelings could alone have produced some practicable political reform, sacrificed their nationality to the pride of calling themselves Romans, and to the profit arising from appropriating to themselves the innumerable offices in the public and in the ecclesiastical administration. The Greeks never made any national opposition to the ruinous abuses of the imperial government. The only constitutional remedy on which all classes in the empire could ever agree, was to depose an emperor when his conduct became intolerable. The officials, who shared in the plunder of the people, declared that no earthly power was entitled to circumscribe the imperial authority, and the people were unable to discover any practical guarantee for their natural rights. The consequence was, incapacity in the rulers and apathy in the subjects, so that the subjugation of the Byzantine Empire by foreigners became at last an easy task

The Greeks were almost excluded from military service by fiscal regulations, for they were regarded by the emperors as more useful in their capacity of taxpayers than they were likely to become as soldiers; yet their prosperity was neglected, their country was left unprotected, and was ravaged by invaders, who destroyed their property, ruined their manufactures, and carried away their artisans to exercise their industry in other lands. A national feeling at length arose among the provincial clergy in Greece, but it was prevented from producing any political effects favourable to popular liberty, by being diverted into a bigoted hatred against the Latins.

We derive some valuable information concerning the condition of the Byzantine Empire during the reign of Manuel from the travels of the Jewish rabbi, Benjamin of Tudela. Whether Benjamin visited in person all the countries he describes is a matter of no great importance, for he certainly records the observations of an eyewitness. The state of the Eastern Empire is sketched with as much clearness and precision as is generally displayed even by modern travellers. The wealth of Constantinople, the power and magnificence of the Emperor Manuel, the commercial activity and manufacturing industry of the Greeks, the riches and luxury of the Byzantine nobles, the unwarlike spirit of the people, the mercenary composition of the imperial armies, and the heterogeneous population of various races and indifferent states of civilization that peopled the provinces, from the Vallachians of Thessaly to the Armenians of Cilicia, are all pointed out by this observing traveller, who, free both from the prejudices of the Latin monk and the antipathies of the Byzantine official, gives us a deeper insight into the composition of the empire than the eulogies of Greek historians, or the calumnies of Western chroniclers.

The external policy of Manuel's reign was guided by a desire to gain renown; the internal was solely directed by a determination to augment the receipts of the imperial treasury. But he was not insensible to the increasing power of the commercial republics of Italy, as we see by the treaties he concluded with the Pisans and the Genoese, and by his protection of the Amalphantans, who had formed a colony at Constantinople when their city was taken by the Normans. Manuel's object was, by these alliances, to counterbalance the great influence the Venetians had acquired over the Byzantine finances by the immense privileges conceded to them by Alexius I, as a reward for their services in the Norman war. Anna Comnena enumerates these concessions in a curious passage, which throws great light on the history of Byzantine commerce, and proves that her father's generosity must have inflicted a severe loss on the native merchants of the empire. A whole street of warehouses was given to the Venetians in the capital. The Amalphantan shopkeepers were compelled to pay them tribute. Their merchandise was exempt from custom duties, and they were permitted to trade over the whole extent of the empire as far as Constantinople and the entrance of the Black Sea, with some special privileges. It is difficult to fix the precise nature of the advantages which they acquired by this treaty over the native merchant; but there is no doubt that it marks the commencement of a system of a commercial policy on the part of the Byzantine government to which we must attribute the ruin of Greek commerce in the Mediterranean, and the estrangement of the Greeks from the imperial

administration. These concessions were also made the ground of many abuses on the part of the Venetians, who, because they paid little, endeavoured to pay nothing, and thus innumerable disputes arose with the fiscal officers as well as with the native merchants. The mutual dissatisfaction arising from such discussions broke out into open hostilities during the reign of John II; and Manuel, warned by his father's difficulties, endeavoured to render the empire independent of the Venetians, by encouraging their commercial rivals to visit his dominions.

In attempting to estimate the effect produced on the trade and manufactures of the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire by the privileges conceded to the Venetians, it is necessary to avoid drawing our inferences from the state of commerce in modern times. The difficulties of transport both by sea and land confined commerce within a smaller sphere, and restricted it to fewer articles. Jews exacted fifty per cent interest, barons gloried in plundering merchants, and merchants often acted as pirates. To us it would seem that immunity from import duties must have very soon thrown the whole trade of the empire into the hands of the Venetians. But we know that this was not the case, and we observe three circumstances which exercised great influence in preventing the immunity from proving as injurious to the imperial treasury as it must have been to private traders. The first was the exclusion of all foreign ships from the Black Sea. The second, the monopoly which the Byzantine government retained of the commerce in grain and all kinds of provisions, both as regarded importation and exportation. And the third was, that the rents of shops and warehouses formed no trifling portion of the imperial revenues at Constantinople; though it is not easy to say how the privileges granted to the Venetians raised the value of this species of property. Other circumstances probably contributed to modify the natural effect of fiscal immunities, and to render them less oppressive to the general trade of the empire than is apparent from historical records. Still, there can be no doubt that the preference accorded by the Byzantine emperors to foreigners during the twelfth century was one of the principal causes of the decline of Greek commerce, which ought to be attributed rather to the direct effect of the fiscal measures of the house of Comnenus than to the increased commercial activity of the Italian republics caused by the Crusades.

#### TREATIES WITH PISA AND GENOA.

The Emperor Alexius I had concluded a commercial treaty with Pisa towards the end of his reign. Manuel renewed this alliance, and he appears to have been the first of the Byzantine emperors who concluded a public treaty with Genoa. The pride of the emperors of the Romans, as the sovereigns of Constantinople were styled, induced them to treat the Italian republics as municipalities still dependent on the empire of the Caesars, of which they had once formed a part; and the rulers both of Pisa and Genoa yielded to this assumption of supremacy, and consented to appear as vassals and liegemen of the Byzantine emperors, in order to participate in the profits which they saw the Venetians gained by trading in their dominions. Several commercial treaties with Pisa and Genoa, as well as with Venice, have been preserved. The obligations of the republics are embodied in the charter enumerating the concessions granted by the emperor, and the document is called a *chrysobulum*, or golden bull, from the golden seal of the emperor attached to it as the certificate of its authenticity.

In Manuel's treaties with the Genoese and Pisans, the republics bind themselves never to engage in hostilities against the empire; but, on the contrary, all the subjects of the republics residing in the emperor's dominions become bound to assist him against all assailants: they engage to act with their own ships, or to serve on board the imperial fleet, for the usual pay granted to Latin mercenaries. They promise to offer no impediment to the extension of the empire in Syria, reserving to themselves the factories and privileges they already possess in any place that may be conquered. They submit their civil and criminal affairs to the jurisdiction of

the Byzantine courts of justice, as was then the case with the Venetians and other foreigners in the empire. Acts of piracy and armed violence, unless the criminals were taken in the fact, were to be reported to the rulers of the republic whose subjects had committed the crime, and the Byzantine authorities were not to render the innocent traders in the empire responsible for the injuries inflicted by these brigands. The republicans engaged to observe all the stipulations in their treaties in defiance of ecclesiastical excommunication, or the prohibition of any individual, crowned or not crowned.

Manuel, in return, granted to the republicans the right of forming a factory, erecting a quay for landing their goods, and building a church; and the Genoese received their grant in an agreeable position on the side of the port opposite Constantinople, where in after times their great colony of Galata was formed. The emperor promised to send an annual present of from four hundred to five hundred gold byzants, with two pieces of a rich brocade then manufactured only in the Byzantine empire, to the republican governments, and sixty byzants, with one piece of brocade, to their archbishops. These treaties fixed the duty levied on the goods imported or exported from Constantinople by the Italians at four per cent; but in the other cities of the empire, the Pisans and Genoese were to pay the same duties as other Latin traders, excepting, of course, the privileged Venetians. These duties generally amounted to ten per cent. The republics were expressly excluded, by the Genoese treaty, from the Black Sea trade, except when they received a special license from the emperor. In case of shipwreck, the property of the foreigners was to be protected by the imperial authorities and respected by the people, and every assistance was to be granted to the unfortunate sufferers. This humane clause was not new in Byzantine commercial treaties, for it is contained in the earliest treaty concluded by Alexius I with the Pisans. On the whole, the arrangements for the administration of justice in these treaties prove that the Byzantine Empire still enjoyed a greater degree of order than the rest of Europe.

The state of civilization in the Eastern Empire, as we have had already occasion to observe, rendered the public finances the moving power of the government, as in the nations of modern Europe. This must always tend to the centralization of political authority, for the highest branch of the executive will always endeavour to dispose of the revenues of the state according to its views of necessity. This centralizing policy led Manuel to order all the money which the Greek commercial communities had hitherto devoted to maintaining local squadrons of galleys for the defence of the islands and coasts of the Aegean, to be remitted to the treasury at Constantinople. The ships were compelled to visit the imperial dockyard in the capital to undergo repairs, and to receive provisions and pay. A navy is a most expensive establishment; kings, ministers, and people are all very apt to think that when it is not wanted at any particular time, the cost of its maintenance may be more profitably applied to other objects. Manuel, after he had secured the funds of the Greeks for his own treasury, soon left their ships to rot, and the commerce of Greece became exposed to the attacks of small squadrons of Italian pirates who previously would not have dared to plunder in the Archipelago. It may be thought by some that Manuel acted wisely in centralizing the naval administration of his empire; but the great number, the small size, and the relative position of many of the Greek islands with regard to the prevailing winds, render the permanent establishment of naval stations at several points necessary to prevent piracy; and unless local interests possess considerable influence in appropriating the funds required for this purpose, it is a duty which is always in danger of being neglected by the central administration. The monarchy established in Greece by the three protecting powers has annihilated the navy of Hydra, Spezia, and Psara, and piracy is at present only kept down by the steamers of the protecting powers. But no general rule can be safely applied to a problem in practical administration. Manuel and Otho ruined the navy of Greece by their unwise measures of centralization; Pericles, by prudently centralizing the maritime forces of the various states, increased the naval power of Athens, and gave additional security to every Greek ship that navigated the sea.

The same fiscal views which induced Manuel to centralize the naval administration when it was injurious to the interests of the empire, prompted him to act diametrically opposite with



regard to the army. The Emperor John had added greatly to the efficiency of the Byzantine military force by improving and centralizing its administration, and he left Manuel an excellent army, which rendered the Eastern Empire the most powerful state in Europe. But Manuel, from motives of economy, abandoned his father's system. Instead of assembling all the military forces of the empire annually in camps, where they received pay, and were subjected to strict discipline, towards the end of his reign he distributed even the regular army in cities and provinces, where they were quartered far apart, in order that each district, by maintaining a certain number of men, might relieve the treasury from the burden of their pay and subsistence while they were not on actual service. The money thus retained in the central treasury was spent in idle festivals at Constantinople, and the troops, dispersed and neglected, became careless of their military exercises, and lived in a state of relaxed discipline. Other abuses were quickly introduced; resident yeomen, shopkeepers, and artisans were enrolled in the legions, with the connivance of the officers. The burden of maintaining the troops was in this way diminished, but the army was deteriorated. In other districts, where the divisions were exposed to be called into action, or were more directly under central inspection, the effective force was kept up at its full complement, but the people were compelled to submit to every kind of extortion and tyranny. The tendency of absolute power being always to weaken the power of the law, and to increase the authority of the executive agents of the sovereign, soon manifested its effects in the rapid progress of administrative corruption. The Byzantine garrisons in a few years became prototypes of the shop keeping janissaries of the Ottoman Empire, and bore no resemblance to the feudal militia of Western Europe, which Manuel had proposed as the model of his reform. This change produced a rapid decline in the military strength of the Byzantine army, and accelerated the fall of the empire.

For a considerable period the Byzantine emperors had been gradually increasing the proportion of foreign mercenaries in their service; this practice Manuel carried farther than any of his predecessors. Besides the usual Varangian, Italian, and German guards, we find large corps of Patzinaks, Franks, and Turks enrolled in his armies, and officers of these nations occupying situations of the highest rank. A change had taken place in the military tactics of the East, caused by the heavy armour and powerful horses which the Crusaders brought into the field, and by the greater personal strength and skill in warlike exercises of the Western troops, who had no occupation from infancy but gymnastic exercises and athletic amusements. The nobility of the feudal nations expended more money on arms and armour than on other luxuries; and this becoming the general fashion, the Western troops were much better armed than the Byzantine soldiers. War became the profession of the higher ranks, and the expense of military undertakings was greatly increased by the military classes being completely separated from the rest of society. The warlike disposition of Manuel led him to favour the military nobles of the West who took service at his court; while his confidence in his own power, and in the political superiority of his empire, deluded him with the hope of being able to quell the turbulence of the Franks, and set bounds to the ambition and power of the popes.

The wars of Manuel were sometimes forced on him by foreign powers, and sometimes commenced for temporary objects; but he appears never to have formed any fixed idea of the permanent policy which ought to have determined the constant employment of all the military resources at his command, for the purpose of advancing the interest of his empire and giving security to his subjects. His military exploits may be considered under three heads:—His wars with the Franks, whether in Asia or Europe; his wars with the Hungarians and Servians; and his wars with the Turks.

His first operations were against the principality of Antioch. The death of John II caused the dispersion of the fine army he had assembled for the conquest of Syria; but Manuel sent a portion of that army, and a strong fleet, to attack the principality. One of the generals of the land forces was Prosuch, a Turkish officer in high favour with his father. Raymond of Antioch was no longer the idle gambler he had shown himself in the camp of the Emperor John; but though he was now distinguished by his courage and skill in arms, he was completely defeated, and the

imperial army carried its ravages up to the very walls of Antioch, while the fleet laid waste the coast. Though the Byzantine troops retired, the losses of the campaign convinced Raymond that it would be impossible to defend Antioch, should Manuel take the field in person. He therefore hastened to Constantinople, as a suppliant, to sue for peace; but Manuel, before admitting him to an audience, required that he should repair to the tomb of the Emperor John, and ask pardon for having violated his former promises. When the Hercules of the Franks, as Raymond was called, had submitted to this humiliation, he was admitted to the imperial presence, swore fealty to the Byzantine Empire as Prince of Antioch, and became the vassal of the Emperor Manuel. The conquest of Edessa by the Mohammedans, which took place in the month of December 1144, rendered the defence of Antioch by the Latins a doubtful enterprise, unless they could secure the assistance of the Greeks.

Manuel involved himself in a war with Roger, king of Sicily, which perhaps he might have avoided by more prudent conduct. An envoy he had sent to the Sicilian court concluded a treaty, which Manuel thought fit to disavow with unsuitable violence : this gave the Sicilian king a pretext for commencing war, but the real cause of hostilities must be sought in the ambition of Roger and the hostile feelings of Manuel. Roger was one of the wealthiest princes of his time; he had united under his sceptre both Sicily and all the Norman possessions in southern Italy; his ambition was equal to his wealth and power, and he aspired at eclipsing the glory of Robert Guiscard and Bohemund by some permanent conquests in the Byzantine Empire. On the other hand, the renown of Roger excited the envy of Manuel, who, proud of his army, and confident of his own valour and military skill, hoped to reconquer Sicily. His passion made him forget that he was surrounded by numerous enemies, who would combine to prevent his employing all his forces against one adversary. Manuel consequently acted imprudently in revealing his hostile intentions; while Roger could direct all his forces against one point, and avail himself of Manuel's embarrassments. He commenced hostilities by inflicting a blow on the wealth and prosperity of Greece, from which it never recovered.

At the commencement of the second crusade, when the attention of Manuel was anxiously directed to the movements of Louis VII of France, and Conrad, emperor of Germany, Roger, who had collected a powerful fleet at Brindisi, for the purpose either of attacking the Byzantine empire or transporting the Crusaders to Palestine, availed himself of an insurrection in Corfu to conclude a convention with the inhabitants, who admitted a garrison of one thousand Norman troops into their citadel. The Corfiotes complained with great reason of the intolerable weight of taxation to which they were subjected, of the utter neglect of their interests by the central government, which consumed their wealth, and of the great abuses which prevailed in the administration of justice; but the remedy they adopted, by placing themselves under the rule of foreign masters, was not likely to alleviate these evils. The Sicilian admiral, after landing the Norman garrison at Corfu, sailed to Monemvasia, then one of the principal commercial cities in the East, hoping to gain possession of it without difficulty; but the maritime population of this impregnable fortress gave him a warm reception, and easily repulsed his attack. After plundering the coasts of Euboea and Attica, the Sicilian fleet returned to the west, and laid waste Acamania and Aetolia; then entered the Gulf of Corinth, and debarked a body of troops at Crissa. This force marched through the country to Thebes, plundering every town and village on the way. Thebes offered no resistance, and was plundered in the most deliberate and barbarous manner. The inhabitants were numerous and wealthy. The soil of Boeotia is extremely productive, and numerous manufactures established in the city of Thebes gave additional value to the abundant produce of agricultural industry. A century had elapsed since the citizens of Thebes had gone out valiantly to fight the army of Sclavonian rebels in the reign of Michael IV the Paphlagonian, and that defeat had long been forgotten. But all military spirit was now dead, and the Thebans had so long lived without any fear of invasion that they had forgotten the use of arms. The Sicilians found them not only unprepared to offer any resistance, but so surprised that they had not even adopted any effectual measures to secure or conceal their movable property. The conquerors, secure against all danger of interruption, plundered Thebes at their leisure. Not only gold, silver, jewels, and church plate were carried off, but even the goods

found in the warehouses, and the rarest articles of furniture in private houses, were transported to the ships. Bales of silk and dyed leather were sent off to the fleet as deliberately as if they had been legally purchased in time of peace. When all ordinary means of collecting booty were exhausted, the citizens were compelled to take an oath on the Holy Scriptures that they had not concealed any portion of their property; yet many of the wealthiest were dragged away captive, in order to profit by their ransom; and many of the most skilful workmen in the silk-manufactories, for which Thebes had long been famous, were pressed on board the fleet to labour at the oar.

From Boeotia the army passed to Corinth. Nicephorus Kaluphes, the governor, retired into the Acro-Corinth, but the garrison appeared to his cowardly heart not strong enough to defend this impregnable fortress, and he surrendered it to George Antiochenus, the Sicilian admiral, on the first summons. On examining the fortress of which he had thus unexpectedly gained possession, the admiral could not help exclaiming that he fought under the protection of Heaven, for if Kaluphes had not been more timid than a virgin, Corinth should have repulsed every attack. Corinth was sacked as cruelly as Thebes; men of rank, beautiful women, and skilful artisans, with their wives and families, were carried away into captivity. Even the relics of St Theodore were taken from the church in which they were preserved; and it was not until the whole Sicilian fleet was laden with as much of the wealth of Greece as it was capable of transporting that the admiral ordered it to sail. The Sicilians did not venture to retain possession of the impregnable citadel of Corinth, as it would have been extremely difficult for them to keep up their communications with the garrison. This invasion of Greece was conducted entirely as a plundering expedition, having for its object to inflict the greatest possible injury on the Byzantine Empire, while it collected the largest possible quantity of booty for the Sicilian troops. Corfu was the only conquest of which Roger retained possession; yet this passing invasion is the period from which the decline of Byzantine Greece is to be dated.

The century and a-half which preceded this disaster had passed in uninterrupted tranquillity, and the Greek people had increased rapidly in numbers and wealth. The power of the Sclavonian population sank with the ruin of the kingdom of Achrida; and the Sclavonians who now dwelt in Greece were peaceable cultivators of the soil, or graziers. The Greek population, on the other hand, was in possession of an extensive commerce and many flourishing manufactures. The ruin of this commerce and of these manufactures has been ascribed to the transference of the silk trade from Thebes and Corinth to Palermo, under the judicious protection it received from Roger; but it would be more correct to say, that the injudicious and oppressive financial administration of the Byzantine emperors destroyed the commercial prosperity and manufacturing industry of the Greeks; while the wise liberality and intelligent protection of the Norman kings extended the commerce and increased the industry of the Sicilians.

When the Sicilian fleet returned to Palermo, Roger determined to employ all the silk-manufacturers in their original occupations. He consequently collected all their families together, and settled them at Palermo, supplying them with the means of exercising their industry with profit to themselves, and inducing them to teach his own subjects to manufacture the richest brocades, and to rival the rarest productions of the East. Roger, unlike most of the monarchs of his age, paid particular attention to improving the wealth of his dominions by increasing the prosperity of his subjects. During his reign the cultivation of the sugar-cane was introduced into Sicily. The conduct of Manuel was very different: when he concluded peace with William, the son and successor of Roger, in 1158, he paid no attention to the commercial interests of his Greek subjects; the silk-manufactures of Thebes and Corinth were not reclaimed and reinstated in their native seats; they were left to exercise their industry for the profit of their new prince, while their old sovereign would have abandoned them to perish from want. Under such circumstances, it is not remarkable that the commerce and the manufactures of Greece were transferred in the course of another century to Sicily and Italy.

Though Manuel has been blamed with justice for his conduct to the Crusaders, it would be wrong to give credit to all the accusations of the Latin writers, who frequently attribute to his conduct disasters which arose solely from the rashness and incapacity of the Franks. The Crusaders, ashamed of their defeats, indulged their national and ecclesiastical antipathies by attributing all their misfortunes to Manuel, forgetting that every accusation brought against him could with equal truth be made against the Latin princes and nobles of Syria, in whose conduct the crimes assumed a blacker dye. The truth is, that all the Christian princes in the East, whether Greek, Latin, or Armenian, watched with fear and jealousy the conduct of the great Western monarchs who took the cross. Princes were not then amenable to the tribunal of public opinion, and the powerful, consequently, generally regarded it as a glorious exploit to seize every country of which they could hope to retain possession. When, therefore, the crusading monarchs were unable to conquer the Mohammedans, they were too apt to conquer the Christians.

#### CONRAD III, EMPEROR OF GERMANY.

The second crusade commenced in 1147. Conrad III, emperor of Germany, was the first prince who marched eastward; and he took the route through Hungary which had been followed by the first Crusaders. His army was numerous and well furnished; but it was embarrassed by an immense crowd of pilgrims, over whom the military chiefs could exercise very little control. It had, however, the advantage of being attended by a numerous body of workmen, to make roads and construct bridges; for the army feared nothing but delay. The agents of the Emperor Manuel, who were sent to count these troops as they crossed the Danube, reported that the number exceeded ninety thousand; and if we may trust the report of contemporary chronicles, seventy thousand of these were horsemen. During their progress through the Eastern Empire, they were accompanied by a strong body of Byzantine troops, under the command of Prosuch, who advanced parallel to their line of march, and endeavoured to restrain the plundering propensities of the pilgrims, who thought they were entitled to help themselves to everything they desired, as they had received ample absolutions for every crime they might commit. The precautions of Conrad and the prudence of Manuel were insufficient to preserve order. The Greek sutlers, accustomed to cheat and to be cheated by their own government, defrauded the German soldiers; and the bands of robbers, whom the false piety of the Papal Church had allowed to take the cross, plundered the open country as a hostile district. The Bulgarians and Greeks took up arms to revenge themselves. A relation of Conrad, falling sick, rested in a monastery at Adrianople, where some Byzantine soldiers murdered him, and plundered his effects. The news reached the German emperor when he was already two days' march beyond Adrianople; but he immediately sent back his nephew, the celebrated Frederic Barbarossa, to punish this act of treachery. Frederic, naturally more violent than his uncle, set fire to the monastery, and attacked the Byzantine troops in the vicinity; but after some slaughter, Prosuch succeeded in appeasing his anger and preventing a battle.

The Emperors Manuel and Conrad had married sisters; but pride and etiquette prevented their meeting, and they became engaged in disputes which produced various acts of hostility between their armies. The Germans destroyed many of the splendid villas round Constantinople, and thereby ruined one of the greatest ornaments of that capital. But as Conrad was eager to pursue his route before Louis VII of France could witness the disorder which already began to manifest itself in his army, and as Manuel was anxious to transport one army into Asia before the other reached the Bosphorus, the two emperors arranged their quarrels, and the Byzantine navy transported the Germans into Asia. Manuel also supplied Conrad with guides for his march to Antioch; and to his treachery in furnishing guides instructed to mislead the army, the Crusaders attributed all their subsequent misfortunes, forgetting that the road from Constantinople to Antioch was quite as well-known as that from Vienna to Constantinople, and

that the real cause of their disasters was to be found in their own rashness, and in the natural difficulty of finding provisions for a large army, whose flanks were infested with brigands in the guise of pilgrims, whom the Emperor Conrad could not venture to hang, as they were the chosen sheep of the Pope. Conrad had unfortunately selected the summer as the season for marching through the arid plains of Phrygia. It is not surprising, therefore, that the men died of fever, and the horses from want of forage. But it cannot be denied that the envious and malignant policy which marked the proceedings of the Byzantine court in its communications with Western Europe did much to increase the unavoidable difficulties of the Crusaders. It was undoubtedly a measure of prudence to exclude them from all walled towns; but it was an act of the basest infamy to mix chalk with the flour that was sold to them, and to coin false money to defraud them when they exchanged their gold and silver. Yet Nicetas tells us that Manuel was guilty of these meannesses. The Turkish cavalry attacked the German army when it was weakened by disease, and Conrad, with the portion of his cavalry still capable of service, was compelled to retreat. After meeting Louis VII at Nicaea, he again advanced with the French monarch as far as Ephesus; but sickness compelled him to return to Constantinople, where Manuel gave him the kindest welcome as soon as he had ceased to be an object of fear.

Louis conducted his march with more prudence than Conrad. He possessed more control over his troops, and he was not attended by so many idle followers and disorderly brigands. But Louis found even the European provinces of the Byzantine Empire on his line of march so hostile, that he had to force his way through the country up to the walls of Constantinople. Manuel received Louis with demonstrations of friendship; but while the French army was encamped before Constantinople, it became known that the Byzantine emperor had concluded a truce with the Sultan of Iconium. A council was held in the French camp, and the Bishop of Langres proposed that the Crusaders should commence their military operations for the deliverance of Christ's sepulchre by conquering the heretics of Constantinople. He employed all his eloquence to incite his countrymen to attack the Greeks; but the French nobles declared that they had taken the cross to fight with infidels and defend Jerusalem, not to destroy Christian cities or punish heretics. The King of France was so anxious to preserve amicable relations with the Byzantine government, and so eager to march forward, that he permitted his barons to do homage to Manuel, in order to remove all jealousy on the part of that emperor, and gave him the fullest assurance of the good faith of the French army. Louis also enforced the strictest discipline possible in his age, and punished any soldiers who committed acts of brigandage with as much cruelty as they had exercised in their depredations; some had their hands and feet cut off.

In Asia the French army kept nearer the coast than the Germans, which enabled them to proceed farther in the Byzantine territory. But when they entered the Turkish dominions they soon began to suffer the same evils as their predecessors, and only a small part gained Attalia in an efficient state. With these troops Louis embarked for Antioch, leaving upwards of seven thousand men behind. These soldiers, abandoned by their leaders and ill-treated by the inhabitants of the country, perished in attempting to force their way to Syria by land. At Antioch, Louis found the Frank princes of Syria no better disposed to favour his expedition than he had found the Greek emperor at Constantinople. Every intrigue was employed to delay his march to Jerusalem; and when at last Conrad returned, and he and Louis united their forces with the troops of Baldwin III, king of Jerusalem, and laid siege to Damascus, the enterprise failed in consequence of the jealousy or treachery of the Syrian barons, the Templars, and the Prince of Antioch. But in western Europe every failure, whether it was caused by the folly of the Crusaders, the perfidy of the Latin Christians in Syria, or the jealousy of the Byzantine government, equally tended to increase the outcry against the treachery of the Greeks.

The destruction of the crusading armies left at liberty to turn all his attention to Corfu; but the Patzinaks having availed themselves of the opportunity afforded by the passage of the Crusaders to plunder in Bulgaria, it was first necessary to clear the country of this enemy. The whole summer of 1148 was employed in this task. In the following year the Byzantine forces

invested Corfu by sea and land. The position of the citadel is extremely strong, occupying the base of a bold rocky promontory which rises abruptly out of the sea with a double head. The city itself was strongly fortified by art as well as by its natural position. When the emperor had assembled all his forces before the place, he ordered a general assault under the cover of showers of missiles from all the military machines then in use, which were planted in his ships and along the shore so as to enfilade the points which were assailed; but the advantage of their position enabled the Sicilian garrison to repulse the attack, and the Grand-duke Koutostephanos, who commanded the fleet was slain as he encouraged his men to plant a ladder against the walls. In spite of this defeat Manuel continued to press on his attacks at a considerable sacrifice of men without gaining any advantage, until an unexpected circumstance had nearly rendered him master of the citadel. It was observed that a gully in the rock would admit the assailants into the body of the place, if they could gain possession of a single wall that covered it towards the sea. A lofty tower was constructed on the hulls of several transports, which were bound firmly together, and on this tower a ladder was fixed which reached the ramparts. Pupakes, a Turkish officer of the guard of Axouchos, and four brothers of Frank descent named Petraliphas, led a body of four hundred chosen troops to the assault. Pupakes mounted the ladder and reached the rampart with a few followers; but while the rest of the forlorn hope were mounting, the ladder broke with their weight, and many were precipitated into the sea or dashed to pieces on the rocks of the citadel. Pupakes, and those who had gained a firm footing, cleared for themselves a space on the wall; but when they saw there was no hope of receiving further aid, they availed themselves of the confusion into which they had thrown the garrison, and with singular audacity and presence of mind they descended from the ramparts and escaped by a wicket to the Byzantine army. Manuel, undismayed by this failure, continued to direct his attacks against the place with great courage, but with a degree of impatience which often proves injurious to the military operations of sovereigns who command their own armies. At length a quarrel occurred between the Byzantine troops and the Venetian marines, in the large naval force which the republic had sent to act against the Normans in conjunction with the emperor. The tumult threatened to become a general engagement, when Axouchos, unable to appease the combatants, determined at least to separate them. By ordering his guards to charge the Venetians, he forced them to retire to their ships. The republicans, furious at their discomfiture, immediately weighed anchor and sailed to attack a division of the Greek fleet which was stationed in the channel between Cephalonia and Ithaca, to prevent the Sicilians from throwing supplies into Corfu on that side. The Venetians burned several of the Greek ships and captured the emperor's own galley, in which they placed a negro clad in the imperial robes with a crown on his head; and having seated him on a throne placed under a canopy, they paraded before the Byzantine camp at Corfu, saluting their black pageant of an emperor with all the multifarious and servile prostrations practised at the Constantinopolitan court. The Emperor Manuel, however, had the good sense to smile at this buffoonery, in which his dark complexion was ridiculed; and by his prudence he succeeded in bringing the Venetians back to their duty. A fleet sent by Roger to relieve Corfu was defeated, and the garrison, being cut off from all hope of succour, at length capitulated. The Norman and Sicilian troops were allowed to retire with their arms; but Theodore Capellan, their commander, fearing to encounter the indignation of Roger, or satisfied that his courage and military skill would be better appreciated by Manuel, entered the Byzantine service.

The emperor resolved to make the recovery of Corfu a step to the invasion of Sicily. A division of the Byzantine fleet ravaged the coast of Sicily, and Manuel twice attempted to invade the island, but was driven back to Avlona by storms; and the damage his ships sustained compelled him to abandon the undertaking for the time, nor did future wars ever allow him to resume this enterprise. His officers, however, were ordered to persist in a vain struggle to restore the Byzantine domination in southern Italy, in order to form a base for operations against Sicily. The war was prolonged for several years. On one occasion a Sicilian fleet of forty sail passed the Hellespont, and appeared unexpectedly before Constantinople while the emperor was absent; but the city was too well fortified to be exposed to any danger from such a force. The Sicilian admiral, after proclaiming his sovereign master of the sea, shooting a flight of gilded

arrows at the walls of the great palace, and plundering some houses at Damalis on the Asiatic coast, retired. The Byzantine generals enrolled considerable bodies of mercenaries at Ancona and Venice, and obtained some success in Apulia; but at last Alexius Comnenus, the son of the Princess Anna the historian, having been defeated and taken prisoner, and Constantine Angelos, who was sent to regain the superiority with a powerful fleet, having met with the same fate, Manuel became inclined to peace. The terms of the treaty satisfied the vanity of the Byzantine emperor, and served the policy of the Sicilian king. The Byzantine officers and soldiers who were prisoners in Sicily were released without ransom; but Manuel, with that indifference to useful industry, and to the feelings of his peaceful subjects, and with the ignorance of the true sources of national strength, as well as riches, which is so common among princes, left the artisans of Thebes and Corinth to pass their lives in bondage under the Norman king. The fact that they were well treated, and settled as freemen with their families around them, reflects honour on Roger and additional disgrace on Manuel. As they were living in a climate similar to that of their native cities, and in the midst of a population speaking the Greek language, they probably were happier in their favoured exile than they could have been under the fiscal oppression that reigned in Byzantine Greece. The peace between Manuel and William the Bad, Roger's son and successor, was concluded in the year 1155.

The appearance of the crusading monarchs of Germany and France, and the events of the war with the King of Sicily, gave Manuel a more correct knowledge of the resources and wealth of Western Europe than he had previously possessed. He began to fear their power as well as to esteem their valour, and during the remainder of his reign he watched the politics of a Italy with great attention. On more than one occasion he assisted the Italian cities in their struggle for liberty against Frederic Barbarossa, both with troops and money. He feared lest a general pacification of the Western states should enable some crusading monarch to employ an irresistible force against the Byzantine Empire and the Greek Church.

For about twenty years, from 1148 to 1168, the chief field of Manuel's personal exploits was on the northern frontier of his empire. His first campaign, after the fall of Corfu, was against the Slavonian princes who ruled in Servia and Dalmatia, whom the Byzantine emperors always affected to consider as vassals, and who had been really dependent on the empire as long as the state of the roads enabled the population of these mountainous districts to transport their produce with profit to the markets of the populous cities in Macedonia and Thrace. But the decay of communications by land had depopulated and barbarized the mountain districts, while the inhabitants of the sea-coast began to be more closely connected with Italy, by their commercial interests, than with the Byzantine Empire. During the Sicilian war, the Prince of Servia had leagued himself with Roger; Manuel now marched into his country in order to punish him. The Hungarians sent a powerful army to his assistance, and the united forces encountered the emperor on the banks of the Drin, not far from its junction with the Save. Manuel led his own troops to the attack, and behaved in the battle rather as a valiant knight than as a prudent general. At the head of his noble guard, he charged Bachin, the Servian archzupan, with his lance; but the Servian general was a man of immense size, and his heavy armour turned aside the imperial lance. Bachin rushed at Manuel with his drawn sword, and cut away the linked veil that hung before the emperor's face as a visor. The broken clasps wounded Manuel's cheek, yet he instantly closed with his antagonist, and, seizing him by the sword arm, secured him as a prisoner. The result of this combat decided the victory in favour of the imperial troops. Peace followed; for the Servian prince, abandoning all hope of resistance after the defeat of the archzupan, swore fidelity to the emperor as a vassal, engaging to furnish a contingent of two thousand men to the Byzantine army whenever it took the field in Europe, and five hundred when the Servian auxiliaries were required to pass over into Asia. This treaty, after subsisting some years, was violated by Primislas, prince of Servia, on which Manuel again invaded the country, dethroned Primislas, and conferred the government on his younger brothers Beluses and Deses. The latter, entering into secret alliances with Frederic Barbarossa and Stephen III of Hungary, prepared to revolt; but he was arrested by Manuel as a perfidious vassal, tried, condemned, and imprisoned at Constantinople. His successor Neeman continued to give the

emperor as much trouble as his predecessors, planning rebellion when an opportunity presented itself and making the humblest submissions whenever the emperor was prepared to invade Servia. All the wars which Manuel carried on in Europe were of secondary importance to his contest with the kings of Hungary, though by prudence and policy he might easily have avoided the necessity of wasting so large a portion of the military resources of his empire on this unnecessary and unprofitable war. His pretext for commencing hostilities was the circumstance that Geïsa II had afforded assistance to the Prince of Servia at the battle of the Drin; but the real cause of his engaging in this ill-judged enterprise was a hope that he should be able to conquer a part of Hungary, in consequence of the continual disputes in that country concerning the succession to the crown. Manuel coveted the possession of the country between the Save and the Danube. This district was the centre of a rapidly increasing commerce. In order to avoid the oppressive duties and fiscal severity of the Byzantine government, a very considerable portion of the trade which had once taken the routes by Cherson and Trebizond to Constantinople now avoided the empire, and passed along the northern shores of the Caspian and Black Seas, through the territory of the Patzinaks, until it reached Zeugmin. The commerce of the Greeks was thus declining in the north as well as the south. The Patzinaks, Russians, and Hungarians became their rivals in the carrying trade by land, as the Venetians, Pisans, and Genoese were by sea; while the Jews and Lombards were beginning to supplant them as capitalists.

#### HUNGARIAN WAR. A.D. 1151.

Manuel invaded Hungary in the year 1151, when Geïsa II was carrying on war in Russia. Zeugmin was taken. The emperor abandoned the place to be pillaged by his troops, making a merit of sparing the lives of the inhabitants. This mode of commencing the war naturally rendered all the mercantile classes his determined enemies, in a country where traders were men accustomed to encounter danger, and frequently possessed both military skill and influence. The Byzantine army, after laying waste the province between the Save and Danube, crossed the latter river, stormed several cities, and spread its ravages far and wide. Geïsa, on returning from the war in Russia, found that his forces were insufficient to encounter Manuel in the field. He therefore solicited a truce, which the emperor readily granted, that the Byzantine army might carry off the immense booty it had collected without molestation. These spoils were exhibited with great triumph at Constantinople. In the following year Geïsa commenced hostilities by laying siege to Branisova, the command of which Manuel had imprudently intrusted to his unprincipled cousin Andronicus, who was suspected of inviting the Hungarians to recommence the war, hoping that their movement would aid his own treasonable plots. But the promptitude of the emperor saved Branisova and deranged the projects of Andronicus. In the following year (1153) peace was concluded with Hungary, which lasted until the death of Geïsa II in 1161.

On Geïsa's death, Manuel made the Hungarian law of succession to the throne a pretext for attacking the kingdom. As in many of the European monarchies of the time, the brother of the last monarch was preferred to his son. But Geïsa II had done everything in his power to change this order of succession in Hungary, and to secure the succession to his son Stephen III. The great majority of the Hungarians supported his views and ratified his choice; for they feared lest the brothers of Geïsa, who had resided long at the Byzantine court, should sacrifice the independence of Hungary. Manuel, deeming the time favourable for his own schemes of conquest, supplied Ladislas, the elder of the two brothers of Geïsa II, with liberal aid. Stephen III was driven from the throne, but Ladislas died after a reign of six months. Stephen, the youngest brother of Geïsa, who had married Maria Comnena, the daughter of Isaac, the emperor's eldest brother, succeeded Ladislas. The exactions of Stephen soon rendered his government so unpopular that the Hungarians took up arms, expelled him from the kingdom,



and replaced his nephew Stephen III on the throne. Manuel sent a Byzantine army into Hungary to assist the husband of his niece, and the elder Stephen again recovered his crown; but the Byzantine troops had hardly crossed the Danube on their return before their royal client was compelled to follow them, and present himself once more as an exile at the imperial court. Manuel, perceiving that his endeavours to force a worthless monarch on the Hungarians would only lead to an interminable war, consented to treat with Stephen III, whom he acknowledged King of Hungary, on condition that Bela, his younger brother, should be recognised as heir to the Hungarian crown; Bela engaging to adopt the Greek church, and marry Maria, the only child of Manuel. A treaty of peace was concluded on this basis in 1163, and the ceremony of the betrothal of Maria and Bela (whose name was changed to Alexios by the Greeks) was performed in the church of Blachern. Manuel conferred the title of Despot on the Hungarian prince, and looked forward to the union of Hungary with the Byzantine Empire as an achievement which would reflect immortal glory on his reign, and raise the Eastern Empire to the highest degree of power among the states of Europe.

This peace proved of short duration, for Manuel not only refused to disarm the elder Stephen, but even permitted him to enrol troops, and invade Hungary from the Byzantine territory. Stephen III, who justly held the emperor responsible for these hostilities, sequestered the appanage of Bela in order to indemnify Hungary for the losses it suffered, and Manuel recommenced the war. He entered Hungary in person at the head of a large army, and, bearing down all opposition, marched to Peterwardein; but as his object was to conciliate the Hungarian people, he, on this occasion, prevented his troops from plundering, and offered to conclude peace if Stephen III would restore Bela's appanage. Stephen III preferred the chance of war, for he was on the eve of effecting his junction with his ally Uladislas, king of Bohemia, who had brought a powerful army to his assistance. The Hungarian and Bohemian armies effected their junction, but Manuel was not deterred by their numbers from advancing to attack them. He crossed the Danube, and encamped at Titul on the banks of the Teisse, in front of the two kings. The brilliant appearance of the Byzantine army after its rapid movements, the order with which it had marched, the high military reputation of the emperor, the moderation of his demands, and the justice of the King of Bohemia, prevented a battle. He persuaded Stephen III to surrender Bela's appanage, and Manuel immediately retired. But the emperor, not having engaged to disarm the elder Stephen, still allowed him to assemble troops within the frontiers of the empire, and make plundering incursions into Hungary. The King of Hungary, finding that he had been deceived, reassembled his army, and, laying siege to Zeugmin, took that important city before it could receive assistance. His uncle Stephen was taken prisoner soon after, and, falling ill, is reported to have been murdered by a physician, who was suborned to bleed him with a poisoned lancet.

The capture of Zeugmin enraged Manuel, who now resolved to dethrone Stephen, and place his son-in-law Bela on the throne. To effect this he formed alliances with the Emperor of Germany, Frederic Barbarossa, with the Venetians, and with several of the princes who then governed different parts of Russia. In 1166 he assembled a powerful army at Sardica, and marched to Zeugmin. Attacking the place with his ordinary impetuosity, he soon carried it by storm. The King of Hungary, seeing that he could offer no resistance in the field, sent an embassy to the emperor to demand peace, offering to cede Zeugmin, Sirmium, and Dalmatia to Manuel. To these offers Manuel replied by asking the Hungarian envoys, with a sneer, if their king possessed other cities named Zeugmin and Sirmium, and a second province called Dalmatia, for his troops were already in possession of the places usually known by those names. In this campaign, the Byzantine army, under the immediate command of the emperor, conquered all the country between the Save and the Danube; while a second army, under the command of John Dukas, subdued all Hungarian Dalmatia, a province which then contained fifty-seven towns, among which were the cities of Trau, Sebenico, Spalatro, Dioclea, Scardona, Salona, and Ostrourypitza.

Next year (1167) the Byzantine army in Hungary was commanded through two Byzantine nobles, Gabras and Branás, by whose cowardice it was completely defeated.

(Michael Gabras was the husband of Eudocia Comnena, the paramour of Andronicus. The two historians of Manuel's reign, Cinnamus and Nicetas, both record an anecdote which reveals the corruption of the Byzantine court. The defeated generals were accused of ruining the army by their misconduct, before they made the final exhibition of their cowardice on the field of battle. In spite of former jealousies, they agreed to stand by one another in their defence. When Gabras was examined by the emperor in council, he referred to Branás as a man who could give disinterested evidence concerning his behaviour as commander-in-chief. Branás was in consequence brought before the emperor to be examined; but he requested that Gabras, as his superior officer, might bear testimony to his conduct, as second in command, in order that he might speak more freely concerning Gabras. On this appeal, Gabras praised the personal valour of Branás, particularly in covering the retreat. When he concluded, Branás coolly observed, "I am surprised you know so well what I performed, for I swear by the head of the emperor, that when I turned myself, I hardly got a glimpse of you galloping off in the distance".)

The Hungarian general, Dionysius, was an officer of great military talent. To repair the losses caused by this disaster, the emperor took the field in person in 1168; but the state of his health prevented his accompanying all the movements of the army, the immediate command of which he intrusted to his nephew, Andronicus Koutostephanos. The Hungarians had a well-appointed and numerous army under the command of Dionysius. The Byzantine council of war decided that Koutostephanos should engage the enemy without loss of time; and the emperor, who was extremely superstitious, was delighted with his decision when he learned that, just as the council rose, a Hungarian, who was galloping towards the Byzantine camp, had fallen from his horse. This trifling accident he viewed as a lucky omen, and Koutostephanos was ordered to hasten forward. But the astrologers who accompanied the emperor, being anxious to avoid falling into neglect, assured Manuel that he should himself suffer some misfortune if the engagement took place next day. Manuel was weak enough to send a courier to his general at their suggestion, ordering him to suspend the attack for twenty-four hours. Koutostephanos had already made his dispositions for battle when the imperial order reached him, and he thought there would be more danger in withdrawing his troops from their positions, and passing a whole day inactively, than in despising the predictions of the astrologers, for he had no confidence in the tactics of the stars. He knew well that nothing but a complete victory would serve as his apology for disobeying the imperial order; and as delay seemed to him likely to diminish his chances, the order was instantly given for attacking the Hungarians. The battle was long and bloody. Dionysius had drawn up his best troops in one solid mass, at the head of which he expected to break through the ranks of the Byzantine army, and then destroy its divisions in detail. He himself fought beside the national standard of Hungary, which was displayed on a tall mast fixed in an immense waggon, and elevated high above the field, that it might serve both as a guide for the attacks and a rallying-point for the repulses of the Hungarian squadrons. The plan of Dionysius was foiled by the dispositions of Koutostephanos. The cavalry, which composed the best part of the Hungarian army, was broken by the Byzantine horse, and after a desperate struggle driven from the field. The great standard was taken; Dionysius saved himself with difficulty; two thousand suits of complete armour were collected from the slain, against which the lances of the Byzantine cavalry had been shivered in vain, and whose wearers had only perished when their helmets were crushed by the weight of the terrible mace-of-arms. Only eight hundred prisoners were taken, for the imperial cavalry was too much exhausted to continue the pursuit; but these prisoners were the heaviest-armed and bravest knights in the enemy's army: among their number were many of the highest nobility, and five Bans.

This battle, which was fought near Zeugmin, put an end to the war. Peace was concluded in 1168, Stephen III ceding to the empire Zeugmin, Sirmium, and Dalmatia, so that Manuel only gained the same terms after the victory of Koutostephanos which he might have obtained in the year 1166. When Manuel returned to Constantinople, he made a triumphal entry into the city,

riding on horseback, with Andronicus Koutostephanos by his side. The imperial cavalcade was preceded by a chariot of silver gilt, drawn by four white horses, in which a picture of the Virgin Mary was displayed to the superstitious inhabitants, who considered the protection of the Virgin as a surer defence for the empire than either a well-disciplined army or a wise administration. This was Manuel's last triumph, and the battle of Zeugmin was one of the last great victories gained by the Byzantine arms. The splendour of the Eastern Empire now began to wane, and was rapidly obscured, never to recover its brightness.

#### WAR WITH VENICE, A.D. 1171.

Though Manuel had suppressed his anger, and overlooked at the time the insolence of the Venetians during the siege of Corfu, he never forgot it; nor was he prudent enough to conceal the jealousy he felt at the increasing power and wealth of the republic. His ill-will was displayed in the strictness with which he interpreted every clause of the treaties and charters conceding to them their commercial privileges and immunities in the Byzantine Empire. It was natural, therefore, that the conquest of the southern part of Dalmatia by John Ducas in 1166, and the negotiations of Manuel with Frederic Barbarossa, should alarm the Venetian senate, and render war with the Eastern Empire an event which it might soon be impossible to avoid. In this state of feeling, Manuel availed himself of some tumults between the Venetians and Lombards settled at Constantinople to impose new restrictions on the Venetians. Ever since the time of Alexius I the Venetians had possessed a street or quarter of their own, where their warehouses were situated. This quarter possessed its own quay, and enjoyed the privileges of a free port. All Venetian subjects were bound to reside within its limits, and justice was there administered, in the differences of Venetian subjects, according to the laws of Venice. But the numbers of the Venetians established in the empire soon increased, and many resided beyond the limits of the privileged quarter. Their wealth and character obtained for them matrimonial alliances with many respectable native families. It seems, at first sight, a strange fact that so many of the foreign races which took up their residence within the limits of the Byzantine empire should have increased more rapidly than the Greeks, and that relic of the Roman conquerors which still formed the dominant portion of Byzantine society; but a little attention to the history of the empire reveals the fact that fiscal oppression deprived the natives of all hope of bettering their condition, and compelled them to rest contented if they could preserve the possessions they had inherited from their ancestors unimpaired, while among the higher ranks social corruption and pride of caste prevented all increase of numbers. On the other hand, the condition of foreign settlers, and particularly of the Venetians, was very different: they escaped the worst effects of imperial rapacity, and their social manners still rendered a numerous family a greater enjoyment, and a surer means of obtaining consideration in the decline of life, than a large house and a gallery of pictures and statues. But though the moral and political state of Venetian society was superior to that of Greek, it had also great defects. The spirit of personal independence, which gave strength and dignity to the republic, too often degenerated in the individual Venetian into disorderly conduct and insolence to others. They frequently raised tumults in the streets of Constantinople, and set the imperial officers and the laws of the empire at defiance.

Manuel determined to make the great party-quarrel of the Venetians and Lombards the pretext for increasing his power over the Venetians settled in his empire. Every Venetian was ordered to reside within the quarter set apart for their habitation; all who continued to dwell without those limits were commanded to take the oath of allegiance as subjects of the emperor, in order to secure for themselves and their property the protection of the Byzantine laws. Many Venetians complied with this ordinance rather than sacrifice the landed property they possessed; but they could not so readily lay aside their disorderly habits, and forget their party contests.

The Venetians repeated their attacks on the Lombards, overpowered their opponents, and plundered their warehouses. The Emperor Manuel was justly enraged at the insolent contempt shown for his authority in his own capital. To avenge the injured laws of his empire, and, as was generally thought, to gratify at the same time his own avarice, he ordered all the Venetians in his dominions to be arrested, and their property to be sequestered, (A.D. 1171.)

The government of Venice regarded the emperors conduct in this affair as a direct violation of their treaty; they held that he was only authorized to arrest those who had taken part in the tumult, and that any claim for pecuniary indemnification ought to have been addressed to the Venetian senate, whose refusal to pay the demand could alone authorize the sequestration of private property. The republic, therefore, fitted out a fleet to exact reparation from Manuel; and in the spring of 1172 the Doge Vital Michieli II sailed with one hundred galleys and twenty carracks to attack the recent conquests of John Dukas in Dalmatia. Trau and Kagusa were besieged and taken, and the Byzantine forces were soon expelled from all Dalmatia. The doge then sailed to the Archipelago, where, however, he was not so fortunate as he had been in the Adriatic. After losing some time in a vain attempt to render himself master of Chalcis in Euboea, he took possession of the island of Chios, where he passed the winter. The Greeks everywhere showed the greatest animosity to the Venetians, whose commercial immunities had robbed them of a considerable portion of their trade, a. d. and the doge became sensible that he had no chance of making any permanent conquest in the Aegean. The merchants of Venice already felt the loss of their commerce with Constantinople, and the senate began to fear lest the privileges which the Venetians had previously enjoyed should be conferred on the Pisans or the Genoese. An embassy was dispatched to solicit peace with the Byzantine Empire, but the terms offered were rejected by Manuel.

In the meantime a dreadful pestilence broke out in the Venetian fleet at Chios; while the imperial fleet, which had been almost entirely destroyed in an unsuccessful invasion of Egypt during the year 1170, was again ready for sea. In the spring of 1173, one hundred and fifty Byzantine galleys issued from the Hellespont to attack the Venetians. The republican force was so enfeebled by the ravages of the plague that the doge abandoned Chios on the approach of the enemy, and retired successively to Lesbos, Lemnos, and Skyros, gradually abandoning numbers of his ships, as the crews were thinned by disease. At last he quitted the Archipelago altogether, and returned to Venice with seventeen ships; the rest had either been abandoned from want of hands to navigate them, or they had been captured by the Greeks.

Before quitting the Grecian seas the doge sent a second embassy to the Emperor Manuel. One of the ambassadors was Henry Dandolo, a man whose name will live for ever in the annals of the Byzantine Empire and in the history of the Greek race. Thirty years after this he again visited Constantinople, and was the principal agent in destroying the Eastern Empire and enslaving the Greek people. The propositions of the doge were again rejected, and the ambassadors had perhaps reason to complain of the rudeness of their reception. The Doge Vital Michieli was held to be responsible for misfortunes he could not prevent, and the Venetians, being as ungovernable in their passions at home as abroad, assassinated him in a public assembly. The social condition of the republic evidently called for reform. It was universally admitted that there was a necessity for adding to the vigour of the law. The ruling men in the senate made this necessity a pretext for changing the old aristocratic democracy into an administrative oligarchy.

To revenge themselves for their losses in the East the Venetians resolved to destroy the city of Ancona, which was their rival in the trade of the Adriatic, and might, through the protection of the Emperor of Constantinople, supplant them in their commerce with the East. The Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, who was anxious to gain possession of Ancona for himself, joined the republic; and while the Venetian fleet blockaded the port, a German army besieged the city by land. The inhabitants defended themselves most valiantly, and all the attacks of the besiegers were repulsed; but towards the end of autumn their provisions failed, and hunger

compelled to demand a capitulation. The Archbishop of Mayence, who commanded the German army, insisted that they should surrender at discretion, when the people of Ancona, who hesitated to accept such hard terms, were saved from the dangerous experiment of trusting to the mercy of the warlike ecclesiastic by the patriotism of an Italian lady and of a wealthy citizen of Ferrara. An Italian army, levied by their exertions, advanced to Ancona and defeated the Germans. The ships in the port, elated with the victory of their allies, sailed out, and by their sudden attack threw the Venetians into confusion, so that the siege and blockade were both raised. William Adelard, the patriotic citizen of Ferrara, carried the news of this success to the Emperor Manuel, who received him with honour. The expenses of the Italian army were repaid, rich presents were sent to the noble Italian lady, whose name the Greek historian refuses to record, but which from other sources we learn was Aldruda, countess of Bertinoro.

The repeated losses which the Venetians had sustained disposed them to seek peace with the Byzantine Empire on the best terms they could procure, while Manuel was equally desirous to terminate his unprofitable contest with the republic, in order to devote all his forces to arrest the progress of the Turks, who were daily increasing their power in Asia Minor. A treaty of peace was concluded about the end of the year 1174, which restored the Venetians to the position they occupied in 1171, before the war broke out. Their ancient privileges were confirmed, and Manuel engaged to pay fifteen hundred pounds' weight of gold in a fixed number of instalments as an indemnity for the property of the Venetian merchants which had been confiscated.

#### WAR WITH ANTIOCH AND ARMENIAN CILICIA.

The Asiatic wars of Manuel were generally commenced and conducted with the same indifference to the dictates of sound policy and the real interest of his empire as the European. Instead of forming a firm alliance with the Armenian sovereigns of Cilicia and the Frank princes of Antioch, and directing the united forces of the confederacy to break the power of the sultans of Iconium, and to expel the Turks from Phrygia and Bithynia, the emperor wasted the resources of the Christians and aided the growth of the Turkish power by his repeated attacks on Cilicia and Antioch, and his constant endeavours to force their princes to acknowledge a temporary vassalage to the Byzantine crown. Success unfortunately favoured his arms in the projects least conducive to his interests. Raymond of Poitiers, prince of Antioch, was defeated, and compelled to own himself a vassal of the imperial throne, as he had done during the life of the Emperor John. This was Manuel's first warlike exploit as emperor, and it took place in the year 1144, during the summer which preceded the conquest of the Christian principality of Edessa by Zengui. Raymond perished in a battle with Noureddin, sultan of Aleppo, in 1149. Reynold of Chatillon married Constance of Antioch, his widow, and conducted the government of the principality more like a leader of robbers than a civilized prince. He renewed the war with Manuel by invading Cyprus, which he plundered in the most barbarous manner. Manuel, however, could not find time to punish Reynold until the year 1155, but he then imposed on him the deepest humiliation. The emperor advanced to Mopsuestia with an army which Reynold was unable to resist. The Patriarch of Antioch, who had been grossly insulted by the Frank prince, would have either admitted the Byzantine troops into the city or betrayed Reynold into the emperor's hands, had Manuel not been more desirous to chastise his enemy than to occupy his principality. The Prince of Antioch was also in reality only the regent of his wife's dominions. He was allowed to retain his authority on presenting himself at the emperor's court in Mopsuestia with a rope round his neck, after marching barefooted and bareheaded through the streets to the imperial residence. When he entered the emperor's presence he fell on his knees, and implored mercy with uplifted hands. After long solicitation he received his pardon, on binding himself to furnish a contingent of troops to the Byzantine armies, and engaging to treat

the Greek patriarch with the respect due to his rank in the Orthodox Church, and to furnish him with an official residence within the walls of Antioch, (A.D. 1155.)

Armenian Cilicia was at this time governed by Thoros, an able prince and gallant soldier, whose position exposed him to be attacked on every side. The Byzantine emperors regarded the Armenian principality as a portion of their dominions; and the prosperity it enjoyed, from being usually governed in a less oppressive manner than the provinces of the empire, excited their rapacity. The Byzantine emperors, the sultans of Iconium, and the princes of Antioch, were all eager to make conquests from the Armenians, so that Thoros was compelled either to fight with these powerful neighbours or form alliances with one against the others as circumstances dictated. Manuel had twice entrusted his cousin Andronicus with the command of armies destined to subdue Thoros, but the folly and rashness of that debauched prince led to their complete defeat, A.D. 1145 and 1152. At length, in the year 1155, Manuel led an army in person through the denies of Mount Taurus, and compelled Thoros to become his vassal and receive the investiture of his dominions by a golden bull, with the title of Pansevastos, to mark his subjection.

While Manuel remained at Mopsuestia, his court was visited by Baldwin III, king of Jerusalem, (who subsequently married his niece Theodora), by Reynold of Antioch—in a very humble manner, as we have already narrated—and by Thoros, the sovereign of Armenian Cilicia. All were solicitous of gaining the emperor's favour, but Manuel derived little advantage either from his own brilliant military exploits or from the public submission of these proud and warlike princes. He had, nevertheless, the gratification of making a triumphal entry into Antioch in the midst of his Varangian guard—a pageant which greatly flattered his pride, because it appeared to elevate his power above that of his father. He had also the pleasure of exhibiting his skill in all the exercises of chivalry at a grand tournament, where he unhorsed every antagonist, and left the Frank knights amazed at his skill, strength, and daring. Even Nouredin, the Sultan of Aleppo, who was as politic as he was valiant, sought to avoid war with so powerful an enemy, and purchased peace by releasing Bertrand, the Grand Master of the Templars, with six thousand French and German prisoners, the remains of the armies of Louis VII and Conrad III, who were languishing in hopeless slavery. Manuel returned to Constantinople covered with personal renown.

In 1161 Manuel married the beautiful Maria, daughter of Raymond of Poitiers and Constance princess of Antioch. Raymond, count of Tripoli, who had been led to believe that the emperor was on the eve of espousing his sister Melisenda, considered this marriage to be an insult which he was bound to avenge. In order to obtain what was held to be honourable satisfaction, he sent the twelve galleys he had prepared to conduct his sister to Constantinople to plunder the islands of the Archipelago. The Saracen pirates never committed greater cruelties than the Christians in Raymond's ships. They spared neither age nor sex; monasteries and churches were pillaged, towns and villages were burned to the ground, and no inconsiderable portion of the inhabitants in many islands were exterminated. Yet Manuel was so occupied with his marriage festivities that he paid no attention to the sufferings of his subjects; and when the Byzantine fleet had chased the galleys of Raymond out of the Grecian seas, their ravages were forgotten by the government.

The lavish and wasteful administration of Manuel caused him to adopt many ill-judged schemes for recruiting his finances. Before his unjust sequestration of the property of the Venetian merchants, he had expected to fill his exhausted treasury by the spoils of Egypt. After the termination of the Hungarian war, he joined Amaury I, king of Jerusalem, in a project for the subjugation of Egypt, which was then in a state of anarchy. An imperial fleet, consisting of one hundred and fifty galleys, sixty cavalry transports, in which a well-appointed army was embarked, attended by ten dromons laden with provisions and engines of war, sailed for Egypt under the command of Andronicus Koutostephanos. Ten galleys of this fleet were fitted out by the city of Dyrrachium, and six by the island of Euboea; for Manuel had not yet confiscated the

municipal revenues of the commercial cities in the empire to fill the central treasury at Constantinople, and be wasted on the pageantry of the imperial court. When Amaury beheld the strength of the Byzantine expedition, his avarice induced him to delay his own preparations, and it was near the end of October 1170 before he joined Koutostephanos under the walls of Damietta. The Byzantine general pushed the siege with vigour, and conducted himself in a manner worthy of the victor of Zeugmin; but the Franks of Jerusalem afforded him little assistance, and after remaining before the place fifty days, provisions began to fail, and Koutostephanos was compelled to conclude a truce with the Egyptians, in order to retire with his army by land into Syria. The fleet, on its return, was dispersed by a succession of storms, and few of the ships reached Constantinople in safety. Amaury had thwarted, and perhaps betrayed, the Egyptian expedition; but next year (1171) he was so alarmed at the progress of Saladin that he visited Constantinople to solicit assistance from Manuel. He was treated by the emperor with great magnificence; and during the three months he remained, as much money was spent in pageants, festivals, and tournaments, as would have raised a powerful army. Manuel seized any pretext for magnificent display; but the disasters of the Byzantine forces before Damietta deprived him of the wish, and weakened his power, to afford the King of Jerusalem any effective assistance.

#### WAR WITH THE SULTAN OF ICONIUM.

We must now review Manuel's conduct and policy in his relations with the Seljouk Turks, who possessed the greater part of Asia Minor, and counted a numerous population of Greek Christians among their subjects. The Sultan of Iconium was the nearest and most dangerous enemy of the Byzantine Empire. Prudence required Manuel to devote his unwearied attention to oppose the progress of a power hostile to the civilization and the laws of the Christians, as well as to their political government. The emperor had seen that his father, even towards the end of his reign, after he had gained many victories over the Turks, was compelled to struggle hard to prevent their establishing themselves on the banks of the Rhyndacus, and had great difficulty in driving them from the plains of Bithynia. At the commencement of his own reign, Manuel appears, indeed, to have been fully persuaded of the necessity of circumscribing the Turkish dominions; and after he had arranged his differences with Raymond of Antioch, he led the well-disciplined army he had inherited from his father against the Sultan of Iconium. The Turkish troops were defeated whenever they could be brought to risk an engagement; yet, in this campaign of 1145, the Byzantine army was unable to advance beyond Philomelium, and in the following year it only reached the shores of the lake Pasgusa, which his father had depopulated. Manuel was, nevertheless, preparing an army to besiege Iconium, when the expedition of Roger of Sicily against Greece, and the movements of the leaders of the second crusade, compelled him to concentrate his best troops for the defence of Constantinople. He therefore concluded a treaty of peace with Massoud, the Sultan of Iconium, a measure of common prudence, which the Crusaders regarded as an act of signal treachery to the Christian cause. This peace endured without interruption until the death of Sultan Massoud

Had Manuel been able to appreciate the full extent of the alarming changes which were going on during his reign in the social condition of the various races that peopled his empire, he must have been struck with the necessity of making great exertions to increase the resources, the numbers, and the strength of the Greek population in the provinces nearest to the Turks; but no measures having this object in view are noticed by the historians of his reign. It appears, therefore, that neither the emperor nor his ministers attached sufficient importance to the decline which was taking place in the numbers of the Christian population of the Byzantine provinces in Asia Minor, while, perhaps, they neglected to contrast it with the steady increase of the Mohammedan population in the dominions of the Sultan of Iconium. The corruption of

Byzantine society was certainly not entirely unobserved by Manuel; but his education taught him to believe that ecclesiastical formulas and strict orthodoxy were sufficient to cure every evil. The church, however, proved as ineffectual to oppose the progress of Mohammedanism, under the Seljouks, as it had proved in earlier times to arrest its advance under the Saracens; while, on the other hand, Manuel and his contemporaries were destitute of the enlightened views and the freedom from orthodox prejudices which had rendered Leo the Isaurian and his Iconoclast supporters capable of infusing new vigour into society by an equitable administration of the law. An increase of the Greek population in the Asiatic provinces could alone have enabled the Byzantine government to resist the progress of the Turks; but to produce this increase, a great change would have been required both in the conduct of the administration and the condition of the people. Manuel must have diminished the expenses of his court, lightened the weight of taxation, improved the civil and judicial administration, enlarged the sphere of municipal activity, and facilitated the means of intercourse by land and sea; while the Greek people must have adopted habits of industry, self-reliance, and truth, from which they had been long weaned by the fiscal oppression of their masters; and they must have learned to regard the commandments of God as more binding than the superstitions, traditions, or canons of the church.

The Sultan Massoud, at his death, divided his dominions among his children, and his eldest son, Kilidy-Arslan II, succeeded to the sovereignty of Iconium. As Manuel was marching carelessly through the Turkish territory on his return from Antioch in the early part of the year 1157, his troops were attacked by the Turks. The war was renewed; but the new sultan, finding himself too weak to encounter the Byzantine army in the field, endeavoured to avert hostilities with the Christians until he had regained possession of the territories ceded to his brothers. Manuel, having induced many of the bands of Crusaders, who were in the habit of touching at Rhodes on their passage to Palestine, to join his army by the high pay he offered, collected an immense number of chariots and oxen in the Thraekian theme to transport his military stores, and threatened to attack Iconium. Kilidy-Arslan, however, succeeded in averting the attack by consenting to surrender every place the Turks had occupied since the death of John II, by engaging to maintain an auxiliary corps of Turkish cavalry in the emperor's service, and by promising to prevent any hostile inroads of the nomadic Turkmans into the Byzantine territory. These conditions prove that the Greeks had been losing ground during the reign of Manuel; and that, in spite of the great force he had assembled for the conquest of Iconium, he felt the difficulty of retaining possession of that city, even if he succeeded in taking it. Shortly after the conclusion of this treaty, Kilidy-Arslan visited Constantinople, where he was received with great pomp. This visit had a bad effect on the fortunes of the empire. Manuel despised the sultan on account of his mean appearance and submissive behaviour; while the astute Mussulman, who concealed his envious and daring character, perceived many of the weak points of the Byzantine power, and became eager to acquire a share of the wealth which he saw so ill defended.

The peace between the emperor and the sultan was in reality only a truce, during which both parties were ready to avail themselves of any opportunity of renewing the war with advantage. Both sovereigns found themselves ready for action about the same time. Kilidy-Arslan, having subdued all his brothers, reunited all the central provinces of Asia Minor under his dominion. Manuel, who had seen all his schemes of distant conquest, and all his labour for the acquisition of military glory prove delusive, now, when it was already too late, turned his attention to what ought to have been his first military duty as Emperor of Constantinople. He resolved to devote all his energies to driving back the tide of Turkish emigration. For this purpose he re-peopled and fortified Dorylaeum, and a place at the most distant sources of the Maeander called Subleon. The sultan complained of the construction of these works as an infringement of the treaty; for both Dorylaeum and Subleon were situated in the midst of districts occupied by Turkish settlers. Manuel, however, whose object was to stop the constant encroachments of the Turkish nomads, persisted in completing these fortresses as the only means of expelling the Turks from the country round.



The war recommenced in the year 1176. The sultan had obtained large reinforcements from the Turks of Mesopotamia, who were accustomed to engage the chivalry of Europe on the plains of Syria, where they had begun to show themselves superior to the Franks. The emperor, besides assembling all his veterans from the frontiers of Hungary, enrolled new corps of Franks and Patzinaks. He collected large supplies of cattle for provisioning the army, and prepared a train of three thousand waggons for the transport of the stores and military engines necessary for the siege of Iconium. In the month of September, the army advanced, under the immediate command of Manuel, by Laodicea to Chonae (then a large and populous town), the birthplace of the historian Nicetas, who has left us a minute account of the events that followed. The emperor advanced, occupying Lampe Celaense, to Choma, and to a ruined fortress called Myriokephalon, which has become memorable by the total defeat of the Byzantine army. At this place Manuel received an embassy from Kilidy-Arslan, offering to conclude peace on the conditions of their former treaty; but the emperor replied that he would give an answer at Iconium, and immediately marched forward from Myriokephalon into the pass of Tzyvritze. The Turks had already begun to hang about the army, carrying away all the forage, and destroying the wells and springs, so that fatigue and bad water had already spread disease among the Christians.

Everything indicated the necessity of marching with caution; and the fate of the armies of Conrad of Germany and Louis of France ought to have served as an additional warning to Manuel. Yet Manuel pushed forward without adopting the commonest precautions. Without sending forward his cavalry to clear the defiles and protect his flanks, he entered the valley of Tzyvritze, a long pass, over the southern side of which the mountains protrude in bold precipitous rocks, while to the north the hills which bound it open into several wide ravines. Into this dangerous defile the Byzantine army plunged with such carelessness that its different divisions were ten miles apart, separated by the long trains of waggons and cattle which accompanied their march. The Turks, who watched all the movements of the Christians from their ambuscades, began the attack as soon as the baggage reached the middle of the pass. The front and rear of the Byzantine army were assailed at the same time; but the advanced guard, driving back the Turkish cavalry that attempted to dispute their passage, secured the command of the summits which overlooked the exit, and formed a camp. In the meantime, other corps of Infidels had issued from concealment, and manned the summits on the southern side of the valley wherever the road compelled the Christians to approach the rocks. The right wing of the Byzantine army, commanded by Baldwin, the brother of the empress, was attacked in unfavourable ground, where it was cut off from the rest of the army by the long train of baggage-waggons, and, unable either to draw out its ranks to retreat or to receive any assistance, it was overwhelmed by the Turks, who descended from the heights: Baldwin and the bravest officers were slain, and the whole corps destroyed. Encouraged by this success, the victorious Turks seized the baggage-waggons, and employed them to close up the road, while they opened a communication with their countrymen placed in ambuscade among the ravines on the north side of the valley. The Turks then attacked the central division of the army, where the emperor commanded in person, surrounded by the imperial guard. The officers in vain attempted to form their troops, for they could find no space to charge the enemy. The narrow valley was blocked up by the sudden stoppage of the line of march. Waggons, cattle, cavalry, and infantry were soon crowded together in the wildest confusion. The heavy-armed Byzantine lancers, which in an open field could have swept the Turkish hordes before them, stood useless amidst the overturned carriages and slaughtered oxen. The rear was now vigorously assailed, and fresh squadrons of the Mohammedans issued from the branches of the great valley to attack the flanks. Defence and flight were equally hopeless; the slaughter was immense, and the emperor, perplexed by the extent of the calamity, ceased to give any farther orders, but fought to deliver himself with his own sword like a common soldier. Some faithful followers kept close to him, and at last, by a desperate charge, he opened a passage through the enemy, and escaped with a few attendants. He had been recognised by the Turks, who eagerly sought to make him prisoner, and his armour was deeply stained with blood, and bore the mark of many a blow, before he gained the camp of his advanced guard at the issue of the defile.

When Manuel's bodily exertions ceased, his mental sufferings commenced. On calling for a drink of water, he could only obtain it from the stream in the valley, which was stained with blood: he turned away with loathing, and as he poured it on the ground, exclaimed, "This is horrible! it is the blood of Christians"; but an officer standing near, to whom the recent disaster seemed a natural consequence of the emperor's inconsiderate rashness, coolly observed, "Never mind, O emperor! you have often drained Christian blood while you were expending the treasures extorted from your subjects". Shortly after, a party of mules, laden with treasure, was overtaken by the Turks within sight of the camp; and as the Infidels deliberately cut open the money-bags, and began to divide the spoil, Manuel called to the troops to sally out and divide the treasure among themselves. But he was again rebuked for thus endangering the safety of his remaining soldiers. The same officer rudely exclaimed, "Your majesty would have done well to leave this treasure in the possession of your subjects; but it is better the Turks should now carry it off and retire with it, than that it should be recovered by the blood of your surviving troops, merely to excite them to assail us with greater vigour". The emperor felt the justice of the rebuke, and the Turks carried off the treasure.

The rear of the army was commanded by Andronicus Koutostephanos, and that experienced general, with a small body of men whom he had rallied round him, succeeded, by a well-combined series of attacks on the Turks, in forcing his way through the whole length of the valley, and reached the camp of the advanced guard in the evening. His success afforded the strongest proof that the terrible disaster of the army was caused by the incapacity of Manuel as a general, rather than by the superior tactics of the Turkish force, or the insuperable difficulties of the ground. The conduct of Manuel, after the defeat, was as disgraceful as his military ignorance during the battle. He proposed to save his own person by flight, leaving the generals to conduct the retreat of the remains of his army as they should think fit. But Koutostephanos boldly opposed this arrangement, which had probably been suggested by some of the courtiers who would have accompanied the emperor, and who therefore persuaded Manuel that it was his duty to preserve the person of a Roman emperor from death or captivity at any sacrifice. There was as much sound policy as cowardice in the advice, for as Manuel had only an infant son, the danger of anarchy in the empire would have been great had he fallen. But it was now too late to make such reflections, and the remonstrances of Koutostephanos, who pointed out that the emperor's departure would cause the immediate dissolution of the army, and allow the Turks to advance to the shores of the Bosphorus without opposition, induced Manuel to abandon his disgraceful project.

The condition of the Byzantine troops proved to be much better than it appeared at the moment of the defeat. A considerable army of veterans had reached the camp in safety, and though they were far inferior in numbers to the Turkish squadrons that surrounded them, they felt themselves still superior to their enemy in a fair field of battle. They were no longer encumbered with a train of baggage to impede their movements, and they were consequently enabled to choose their point of attack. On the other hand, the Turkish army was disorganized by its victory, which had put the auxiliaries and nomad tribes in possession of so much booty that they were too much occupied in securing their own gains to pay attention to the Byzantine army. The wary sultan, who saw the numbers of his troops rapidly decreasing, determined to treat of peace with the emperor while his enemies were still under the influence of the panic caused by their disaster. On the day after the battle he sent an envoy to the imperial camp, and Manuel readily agreed to all the terms proposed by Kilidy-Arslan. He engaged to destroy the fortifications he had recently erected at Dorylaeum and Subleon, and to cede to the Turks all the country they had colonized during his reign. The Byzantine army then commenced its retreat, but many independent bands of Turkomans hung on its flanks, and molested it by desultory attacks. The first day's march led the army over the field of slaughter, where the extent of Manuel's folly was forced on his attention by the most revolting aspect of heaps of unburied bodies. The surviving troops were soon placed in good quarters at Chonae and Philadelphia. Subleon, which was in the neighbourhood, was immediately dismantled and abandoned; but in a short time the emperor gained sufficient courage to act a dishonourable part and violate the

engagements he had entered into to save himself and his army. He refused to destroy the fortifications of Dorylaeum. This caused the renewal of the war.

The sultan opened the campaign of 1177 by sending an army of twenty-four thousand men into the Byzantine territory, with orders to lay waste the country as far as the sea, and bring back from the coast some salt-water, some sea-sand, and the oars of an imperial galley. This army spread over the rich valley of the Meander, gained possession of Tralles and Antiocheia by capitulation, took Louma and Pentecheira by storm, and laid waste the country to the sea-shore. But as it was returning, laden with other booty besides the saltwater, the sea-sand, and the oars which the sultan was so anxious to see, it was attacked on the banks of the Maeander by John Vatatzes, and completely defeated. This victory restored the character and courage of the Byzantine troops.

The last military exploit of Manuel was a rapid march to relieve Claudiopolis, which was closely besieged by another Turkish army. His approach caused the enemy to raise the siege. Both the emperor and sultan being now satisfied that they were wasting the resources of their dominions in unprofitable hostilities, they entered into negotiations which soon led to the conclusion of peace.

The mind of Manuel never recovered from the shock his pride had received at the battle of Myriokephalon. The wounds and bruises appeared to affect his body in a very trifling degree, but he became melancholy, and his health gradually declined. His family affairs now forced themselves on his attention, and he was surprised to find that he had allowed his beautiful daughter Maria to attain the age of thirty without celebrating her marriage, though she had been betrothed to Bela III king of Hungary, and asked in marriage by the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa as a wife for his son Henry. In the month of March 1078, her marriage was celebrated with Rayner, son of the Marquess of Montferrat, a youth only seventeen years old; and at the same time Alexius, the emperor's son by Mary of Antioch, who was in his eleventh year, was married to Agnes, daughter of Louis VII of France, who was only seven years old. Alexius and Agnes received the imperial crown, and were proclaimed emperor and empress.

Manuel displayed during his last illness all the deficiencies of an ill-regulated and undisciplined mind. Though confident in his faith and orthodoxy, he placed great dependence on the predictions of astrologers, and while his strength was rapidly declining he allowed these impostors to persuade him that the stars announced that he should still reign with glory for fourteen years. But in the month of September he became suddenly aware that his end was near: feeling his own pulse, he sighed deeply, struck his thigh with his hand, and ordered his attendants to bring him instantly the habit of a monk. In a few minutes he was divested of the imperial robes, and clad in a monachal garb which proved much too short for his tall figure. He expired, on the 24th of September 1180, at the age of fifty-eight, after a reign of thirty-seven years, and with him the power and glory of the Byzantine Empire perished. No sovereign of the Eastern Empire had possessed more absolute power. His reign was undisturbed by rebellion, and the circumstances of the age allowed the greatest latitude for social and political reforms. Men's minds were in a state of fermentation in Western Europe; and though Roman political self-sufficiency and Greek ecclesiastical orthodoxy kept the population of the Eastern Empire in a comparatively torpid state, the necessity of making some great changes to prevent the decline of society was generally felt. Yet, while the Latin Christians were actively advancing in their progressive improvements, the Greeks remained stationary and conservative. In the West, the Crusades produced a revolution in ideas as well as in property. The popes made a bold attempt to constitute themselves the centre of all dominion in Europe, under the pretext of restraining the tyranny of kings. Liberty, not yet trammelled by the prejudices of Roman law nor overpowered by the authority of despotic centralization, made a noble effort in the north of Italy to unite municipal independence with political order. There can, therefore, be no doubt that, if the Emperor Manuel had possessed a mind capable of understanding the events which were passing before his eyes, without allowing his judgment to be obscured by traditions founded on

social contingencies that no longer existed, he might have reformed the administration and laws of his empire, and laid the foundation of social improvements sufficiently extensive to have awakened the Greeks from the civil and ecclesiastical torpor into which their minds had fallen. By vigorous reforms, such as Leo III had adopted at the commencement of the eighth century, Manuel could, in all probability, have restored vital power to the Byzantine Empire, but he clung with conservative prejudices to a political and ecclesiastical order of things from which the life had departed. The consequence was that the crisis during which reform was practicable passed away, and the empire putrefied into a mass of political corruption.

#### Sect.IV

#### Reigns of Alexius II and Andronicus I

A.D. 1180-1185

The latter years of Manuel's life effaced the lessons of prudence inculcated by his father. Following the guidance of his passions instead of his judgment, he had selected subservient courtiers to act as his ministers of state, so that, on his deathbed, it was not in his power to place his son under the guardianship of an independent-minded counsellor like his father's friend Axouchos. As soon as Manuel was dead, every member of the imperial family, which was very numerous, aspired at the office of prime-minister; the court was thrown into a state of revolution, and the administration became a scene of anarchy. Unfortunately, no individual, who from his rank could pretend to the regency during the minority of Alexius II, possessed that moral rectitude of character which commands universal respect. Everyone knew that his rivals were as worthless as himself. All history testifies the importance of moral character in political contests; yet, strange to say, politicians and statesmen appear rarely to have fully appreciated its practical value.

Alexius was only thirteen years old at his father's death. His education was from that moment utterly neglected. His mother, Maria of Antioch, in the first paroxysms of her grief was so alarmed at her unprotected position, amidst an unprincipled nobility, that she retired into a monastery, and took the name of Xene. Alexius Comnenus, a grandson of the Emperor John II, who held the rank of protosevastos, secured to himself the office of prime-minister; and in order to strengthen his influence he persuaded the empress to quit her retirement and appear again at court, where her beauty, gaiety of heart, and sweetness of manner, gave her considerable power over the young nobility. Her steady support of the protosevastos, whose arrogance rendered him extremely unpopular, exposed Maria to many calumnies; and in spite of his age, personal defects, and disgusting effeminacy, it was generally believed that a criminal attachment induced her to maintain him in office. We must call to mind the prevalence of calumny in Byzantine history, the proneness of courtiers to employ calumny as an efficient weapon in their party contests, the readiness of the Greeks to hate Maria for her Latin descent, and the universal disposition of the people in a despotic government to speak evil of their superiors, before we admit the corruption that reigned in the court of Constantinople as a presumption of Maria's immorality.

Though the protosevastos held the reins of government, he was unable to repress the seditious movements of the aristocracy: some nobles intrigued to drive him from his post; others threatened to oppose him unless he silenced their opposition by bestowing on them high rank and lucrative offices. The citizens of Constantinople, being without a political organization that

entitled them to declare their opinions in public, were a mere mob, led away by every prejudice and rumour of the moment. The lowest of the population, consisting of men collected from every province of the empire, and every trading city of the East, were always eager for sedition as a means of pillage. Such a society, vibrating between servility and rebellion, and guided by personal ambition and individual avarice, was utterly deaf to the voice of patriotism.

For about a year and a half the young emperor was allowed to amuse himself with hunting and gambling, while the whole court was occupied with plots and party intrigues. At last the Princess Maria, the emperor's sister, thought the moment favourable for driving the protosevastos from power by a popular sedition. But Alexius had taken care to secure the support of the numerous corps of foreign mercenaries in the capital; and Maria was compelled to retreat, with her young husband, the Caesar, and her armed partisans, into the precincts of St Sophia's. Many, however, rallied to her standard, and a bloody battle was fought in the streets of Constantinople. The protosevastos feared to pursue the sister of his sovereign to extremity; and the Patriarch effected a compromise between the hostile parties, leaving matters as they were before the insurrection. This state of things could not continue long, and a darker storm was now gathering. All the discontented turned their eyes towards Andronicus, the adventurous and unprincipled cousin of the Emperor Manuel, whose strange personal exploits gave him a degree of fame he little deserved, but whose vices were now forgotten in consequence of his long absence from court. He had passed the latter years of Manuel's life as an exile in Paphlagonia; his reputation for courage and ability was great; time was supposed to have moderated the violence of his passions; and his hypocritical piety imposed on the superstitious Greeks, who thought that the saints and holy images he adored could efface, even from his conscience, the black stains of murder and incest. All ranks concurred in soliciting his presence at Constantinople; and he soon approached the capital, declaring that his object was to deliver the young emperor from the hands of the evil counsellors who surrounded him. His march met with little opposition on the part of the government; and the protosevastos Alexius was easily driven from power, and condemned to lose his sight. The Latins in Constantinople, who were attached to his interests through the support given him by the Empress Maria of Antioch, were massacred by the Greek populace with circumstances of the greatest cruelty; nor did Andronicus make any effort to put a stop to these murders. The property of all the Latins was pillaged, their houses destroyed; and men, women, children, and priests, torn from the sanctuaries to which they had fled, were barbarously slain. Many of the Franks, nevertheless, escaped to their ships in the port, and endeavoured to repay themselves for the losses they had sustained by plundering the coasts of the Propontis and the islands of Greece. This bloody tumult greatly widened the breach between the Latins and the Greeks, and inflamed the western nations of Europe with a thirst for revenge that soon filled the Aegean Sea with Frank pirates. It was avenged twenty years after by the Latin conquest of Constantinople.

It is needless to give a detailed account of the crimes of Andronicus; he used his unlimited power as all prudent persons must have foreseen that he would use it. The Princess Maria and her husband the Caesar were poisoned. The Empress Maria of Antioch was condemned to death for what was termed treasonable correspondence with her brother-in-law, Bela III, king of Hungary, and strangled. Andronicus Koutostephanos, the best general in the empire, was deprived of sight. John Vatatzes, who defeated the Turks at the Maeander, died shortly after raising the standard of revolt. The Patriarch Theodosius was removed from office, and Basilios Kamateros placed at the head of the Greek church, on his promising to do everything that Andronicus might desire. Andronicus then ordered himself to be proclaimed emperor, and immediately took precedence of Alexius II, who was soon after deposed, on the pretext that a single emperor was necessary in order to re-establish order in the empire. The unfortunate youth, who was not yet fifteen years old, was strangled with a bowstring in the prison to which he had been committed; and when Andronicus examined the corpse in order to be assured of his death, he kicked it carelessly, and exclaimed, "Thy father was a villain, thy mother a prostitute, and thou a fool".

The corrupted state of society had brought the Byzantine Empire to the verge of ruin; Andronicus, who was no incorrect type of the higher classes in the nation over which he reigned, accelerated its destruction. The nobility and the higher clergy were the partners of his guilt, and often the agents of his crimes; while the citizens of Constantinople were generally the delighted spectators of his greatest cruelties.

Andronicus was the grandson of the Emperor Alexius I; Isaac, the younger brother of the Emperor John II, was his father. It has been noticed that Isaac's rash and unsteady temper induced him to quit his brother's court, and reside for a time with the Sultan of Iconium. His children were more violent and vicious than their father. The manner in which his eldest son John joined the Turks, and abjured the Christian religion, has also been recounted. The vanity of the Greeks, at a later period, sought consolation for their actual sufferings by forging a tale concerning the marriage of this Byzantine renegade with a daughter of the Seljouk sultan of Iconium; and from the offspring of this imaginary alliance it was pretended that the Ottoman dynasty was descended. Andronicus was Isaac's second son; his expressive countenance, handsome figure, and tall robust frame were rendered doubly attractive by a singularly sweet and powerful voice, an easy-flowing elocution, and a graceful manner. These advantages, joined to daring courage and great skill in military exercises, made him for some time a favourite with his cousin the Emperor Manuel. His unprincipled conduct at last estranged them; and his life was subsequently marked by a series of the strangest adventures. No wandering Crusader nor nomad Turk ever lived a wilder or more romantic life than the princely Andronicus.

Early in the reign of Manuel he was taken prisoner by the Turks, as he had wandered from the emperor's escort on a hunting party while crossing the Turkish territory in Phrygia. During the time he remained a captive at the court of Sultan Massoud he cultivated the acquaintance of the leading Turks, into whose society he was introduced by his Mussulman brother; and he learned the Turkish language, which was often useful to him in his future adventures. Manuel was accused of having neglected to pay his ransom, from jealousy of his skill in military exercises; but after his return, he saved his life by interposing his own arm to ward off a blow aimed at his cousin's head. Andronicus was twice entrusted by the Emperor Manuel with the command of the army in Cilicia; on both occasions he was shamefully defeated by the Armenian prince Thoros. Subsequently he was appointed governor of Belgrade and Branisova, the two principal Byzantine fortresses on the Hungarian frontier; and either his negligence or treachery exposed the empire to serious danger. His public conduct at last completely alienated the affection of Manuel.

Though addicted to pleasure, and leading a life of the most shameless profligacy, Andronicus kept aloof from the rest of the court, and always assumed a marked superiority. Though no one was more eager in the chase, he never mixed in the noisy revels of the nobility, and showed himself an enemy to the pleasures of the table. He was a sober and abstemious profligate: his dinner was generally a single dish of roast meat; and after the fatigues of the longest day his supper frequently consisted of a crust of bread and a goblet of wine. But he indulged his two favourite passions, love and ambition, without respect for Divine or human laws. No principle of duty, and no bond of gratitude, restrained him when he thought power was within his grasp; and when inflamed by lust, he knew no ties of morality or religion. His amours were often carried on in the circle of his nearest relatives; and in the opinion of his countrymen, he, as well as the Emperor Manuel, was stained with the crime of incest. Eudocia, the daughter of Manuel's elder brother Andronicus, was the paramour of his youth, while her sister Theodora was the mistress of her uncle the emperor. Another Theodora, also the emperor's niece, being the daughter of his brother Isaac, became his mistress at a later period, when she was the widow of Baldwin III, king of Jerusalem. Both these ladies shared his company with his lawful wife, and divided his affections with a crowd of actresses and dancing girls. The loves of Eudocia and Andronicus excited more anger in her family than the incestuous intercourse of her sister with the emperor; the rank of the sinner hid the crime of the blacker dye. After vainly endeavouring to separate the criminals, John, the brother of Eudocia, and Cantacuzenos, her brother-in-law,

resolved to avenge their family by assassinating Andronicus. The court was encamped at Pelagonia in palaces of canvass, like those which may be still seen when an Oriental sovereign takes the field in state. As Andronicus was in the habit of visiting his cousin at unseasonable hours, a band of armed men was stationed to murder him as he quitted Eudocia. The lady's spies warned her of the danger; and while her female attendants were making a noise to bring in lights, Andronicus cut a small passage with his sword in the back of the tent, and, creeping between the ropes and pegs, gained the canvass wall that enclosed Eudocia's tents. This he also cut through, and crept away unobserved.

The political conduct of Andronicus, on several occasions, excited just suspicions. He was accused of holding treasonable intercourse with the King of Jerusalem, with the Sultan of Iconium, and with the King of Hungary; and there can be little doubt that he was only prevented from making an attempt to dethrone Manuel, by the superior political ability and the systematic energy of the emperor. Andronicus was so convinced of Manuel's personal superiority that he appears to have designed assassinating him. At an imperial hunting-party he presented himself, uninvited, with the numerous train of armed followers which the great nobles of the Byzantine Empire maintained in their palaces; the emperor's escort was too strong for any attempt at open violence; but during the night Andronicus was found disguised in an Italian dress, armed with a dagger, lurking near the tent of Manuel. His suspicious behaviour, scandalous conduct, and bitterly satirical expressions, gave his enemies an opportunity of bringing so many charges against him that the emperor at length committed him to prison.

Andronicus passed nine years of his life in confinement; his escapes from imprisonment and his captures were as singular as his crimes, and mark the restless activity of his mind, his self-possession, and his rashness. During his first imprisonment, chance led him to discover a secret recess in the tower where he was confined. After laying up a store of provisions, he withdrew into this retreat, and every search was made for him in vain. At last his wife was arrested as privy to his escape, and confined in the tower from which it was supposed he had escaped. On retiring into her bedchamber, the spectre of her husband made its appearance. He soon informed her how matters stood, and made arrangements with her for continuing his concealment, and obtaining a supply of provisions. The two prisoners lived most affectionately together, and their son John was the fruit of this period of domestic felicity. The guards were careless in watching the princess, whom they believed was their only prisoner, so that Andronicus at last found means of escaping. He was, however, soon recognised, arrested at Melangia in Bithynia, and again committed to prison, where he was loaded with chains. He was fortunate enough to escape a second time, by procuring an impression of the keys of his dungeon in wax. His son Manuel contrived to get new keys made from these models, and to convey them to his father, with a coil of ropes, in an amphora of wine. On a dark and rainy night Andronicus opened his prison doors unobserved, and reached the garden of the imperial palace, from the outer walls of which he descended at the place where John Zimiskes had mounted to murder Nicephorus; there he found a boat waiting to receive him. He reached Anchialus in safety, and Pupakes, whose gallant conduct at the siege of Corfu has been already mentioned, owing him gratitude for some personal obligations, furnished him with the means of continuing his flight. Andronicus was again tantalized with the fear of returning to a worse captivity than that from which he had escaped. He was recognised by a party of Vallachians, who resolved to deliver him up to the emperor. From their hands he escaped by stratagem. Counterfeiting a violent diarrhoea and excessive weakness, he persuaded his guards to make frequent halts; and when evening approached, and he was allowed to retire for a short distance from the road, he fixed his cloak and hat on the stick with which he had apparently supported himself with difficulty, and plunged into a neighbouring forest, from whence he ultimately reached the Russian principality of Halicz or Galicia.

The share Pupakes took in aiding the flight of his benefactor was discovered, and Manuel, forgetting the former services of the valiant Turk, ordered him to be publicly scourged, and led through the streets of Constantinople with a rope round his neck, preceded by a crier, who

proclaimed at intervals, "This man is disgraced and punished for having aided the enemies of the emperor". To which Pupakes himself always added, "There is no dishonour in the punishment, for it was incurred in assisting a benefactor instead of betraying him". After this indignity Pupakes quitted the empire, and returned to the possessions of his uncle, who was an emir in the Seljouk Empire of Iconium, where Manuel met him once again charged with Andronicus, who could neither command his temper nor restrain his tongue in prosperity, was good-humoured and fair-spoken in adversity. At the court of Yaroslaf the prince of Galicia he became a great favourite, and was soon the constant companion of the prince. They hunted the urus together, and formed plans for invading the Byzantine Empire. Manuel at last considered that there was so much danger to be apprehended from the continuance of his cousin's residence in Galicia, that he granted him a full pardon, and induced him to return to Constantinople.

It was after this flight that Andronicus was entrusted with the chief command in Cilicia for the second time. His conduct was that of a madman, and he marched to attack the Armenian prince Thoros with his army drawn up in a new and ill-judged manner. The experienced Armenian took immediate advantage of his folly, and broke his troops in many places, scattering the Byzantine army in utter confusion. Nicetas pretends that when Andronicus saw the defeat of his army, he conceived the hope of redeeming his blunders by an act of daring valour. He charged Thoros with his lance, though he was surrounded by a numerous staff, and the Armenian had barely time to interpose his shield between his breast and his enemy's lance when he was hurled from his horse. Andronicus, abandoning his lance, which he believed was quivering in the heart of Thoros instead of being only fixed in his shield, burst through the Armenian guards, striking every man who encountered him to the ground with his mace. But before he could rally his own fugitive battalions, Thoros, who had risen from the ground unhurt, resumed the direction of the pursuit, prevented the scattered divisions of the Byzantine army from attempting a junction, and compelled Andronicus to seek safety in precipitate flight.

After this disgraceful defeat, it is probable that Andronicus was immediately superseded; but as both his liberty and his eyesight were in danger had he returned to Constantinople, he collected all the money he was able, and, quitting Cilicia with a splendid suite before the arrival of his successor, he presented himself at the court of Reynold of Antioch. Here he soon fell in love with the Princess Philippa, the sister of the Empress Maria, and inspired her with a passion so violent that she set at naught the counsels of her family, and consented to a marriage with her debauched lover. It is not easy to say how long Andronicus remained at Antioch, but he became at last alarmed lest he should be arrested by order of the Emperor Manuel in that vassal principality, and he fled to Jerusalem, where his passions soon involved him in new difficulties. At Jerusalem he met Theodora, the daughter of his cousin Isaac, whom he had not seen since her childhood. She was now the widow of Baldwin III of Jerusalem, and enjoyed the admiration and esteem of all the Frank nobles on account of her beauty, talents, and prudence. Andronicus became deeply enamoured with his fair cousin, and she returned his passion with equal violence. The state of society among the Latin Christians in Jerusalem was as debauched as at the court of Constantinople, so that the lovers carried on their amours with little affectation of secrecy. But when Manuel heard of this new insult to his brother's family, he sent messages to the Syrian barons, offering great rewards to anyone who should seize Andronicus and put out his eyes; at the same time he requested Amaury, king of Jerusalem, with whom he had a close alliance, to arrest the fugitive. Theodora obtained information of these communications in time to warn Andronicus of his danger, and as there was no longer any hope of safety among the Christians, she consented to fly with him to the Turks. After visiting Damascus, and wandering for some time in Mesopotamia and Iberia, they settled at Koloneia, in Chaldea, where Andronicus, assembling a band of Turkish mercenaries, of renegades and refugees, formed a camp for making incursions into the empire, and carrying off Christians to sell as slaves. From this brigand life he derived a considerable revenue, and it is strange to find that the wretch who had maintained himself for years as a slave-dealer was subsequently invited to ascend the throne of Constantinople. In this infamous exile Theodora bore him two sons. The Greek church, it is true, excommunicated him for living with his cousin's daughter, and making slaves of its flock;



but Andronicus, who despised Divine laws, had no fear of ecclesiastical censures, from which either the possession of political power or the payment of a large sum of money could at any time release him.

The evils he inflicted on the Byzantine territory were so great, that Manuel repeatedly sent troops with orders to pursue him incessantly and capture his strongholds; but these operations were attended with little result until Nicephorus Paleologos, the governor of Trebizond, succeeded in capturing the fortress in which Theodora had sought safety. Her captivity induced Andronicus to negotiate his own pardon, and he received permission to present himself to the emperor. As he was now seriously alarmed for his future safety, he adopted every artifice his crafty mind suggested for flattering the vanity of Manuel. At a public audience, as soon as he entered the hall of reception, he fell on his knees, and drew from under his clothes a heavy iron chain, made fast to a collar round his neck; then, holding up his hands, he implored pardon from the emperor, weeping, protesting his repentance, and quoting passages from Scripture. Though a bitter sneerer, he was a profound hypocrite and an admirable actor; so that, in spite of his previous conduct, he more than once in his life persuaded everyone who beheld him that he had become an altered man. The Emperor Manuel, on seeing his cousin's abasement, requested him to stand, and assured him of full pardon; but Andronicus continued his hypocritical wailings until he induced one of the courtiers to drag him by the chain to the emperor's footstool. Some years later, when Andronicus was dragged through the streets of Constantinople, to perish in a frightful manner, men remembered that Isaac Angelos, his successor, had been the courtier who dragged him to Manuel's feet. After receiving his pardon, Andronicus was ordered to reside at Oenaion in Pontus.

From this place of exile he had watched the progress of the intrigues in the Byzantine court after Manuel's death, and he easily found partisans among the dissatisfied courtiers, who demanded his presence in the capital. His agents, however, were also employed in gaining the people; for wicked and worthless as Andronicus was, he perceived that the unprincipled behaviour of the court had excited a deep-rooted aversion to the whole family of Comnenos, and that, unless the people of the capital should declare boldly in his favour, the mercenary troops of the government might defeat his attacks. He therefore affected to pay the greatest attention to the last oath he had publicly taken in the Byzantine court, in which he had promised never to conceal from the emperor anything contrary to the interests of the empire, but as soon as such a thing might come to his knowledge to oppose it with all his power. This oath was now made a pretext for writing to the young emperor, and censuring the measures of the protosevastos; and the letters were of course composed rather with reference to the effect they were likely to produce on the public than on the court. His remonstrances were of course useless, so he resolved to save the empire by force. The treachery of Andronicus Angelos, the general of the imperial army, and of Andronicus Koutostephanos, the grand admiral, rendered him master of Constantinople.

Prosperity soon revived all the evil passions which age was supposed to have eradicated from the heart of Andronicus. The innate cruelty of his disposition, and the unforgiving malice of his depraved feelings, soon revealed themselves in his treatment of the most influential nobles. The aristocracy saw its leaders put to death on account of the influence they possessed, or merely to confiscate their wealth; while the people, whose burdens Andronicus lightened, and whose vengeance he gratified, loudly applauded his conduct. Angelos and Koutostephanos now saw their error, and conspired to drive Andronicus from the post of prime-minister, to which their treachery had raised him. The plot was discovered, and the brave Koutostephanos was arrested with his four sons, and other conspirators, all of whom were deprived of sight. The cowardly Angelos and his sons escaped. From that time the servility of the Byzantine nobles became greater than ever, and it only increased the contempt of Andronicus for their persons, while, by exciting his distrust, it increased his cruelty. John Cantacuzenos, in order to ingratiate himself with the tyrannical regent, ill-treated one of the eunuchs of the young emperor, who had attempted to warn his sovereign of the dangerous position of public affairs, and to persuade the

prince to devote some attention to serious business, instead of publicly trifling away his time in idle, expensive, and vicious amusements, which were sure to render him unpopular. Cantacuzenos struck the eunuch on the face in the presence of Andronicus; but the wily old villain, suspecting that this enthusiastic meanness covered evil intentions, ordered the eyes of Cantacuzenos to be put out on hearing that he held some slight communication with his brother-in-law Constantine Angelos, who was in confinement on a charge of treason.

As soon as Andronicus had put to death all those who he thought possessed the power of resisting his schemes, and accumulated as much wealth in the public treasury as would enable him to diminish the public burdens, he ascended the throne, and put the young Alexius to death. He now looked forward to the tranquil enjoyment of power, and indulged his cruelty by putting to death the wealthiest members of the aristocracy. Yet so perverted was his character, that he could not refrain from insulting the universal feelings of mankind by outrages which no class could pardon. The Patriarch Theodosios was compelled to quit his office, because he refused to sanction the marriage of Alexius and Irene, the incestuous offspring of himself and Manuel with the two Theodoras; but the Greek church was at this time in the same demoralized condition as the Byzantine court, and the marriage ceremony was performed by the Archbishop or Patriarch of Bulgaria.

The nobility were not inclined to submit tamely to be decimated; some were eager to obtain power, some were burning to revenge their relations, and some, perhaps, were impelled by the duty of avenging the murder of their lawful prince. Various nobles took up arms at Nicaea, Prusa, and Lopadion before the murder of the young Alexius; but for a time, fortune smiled on the enterprises of the tyrant, and all these rebels were subdued and punished with unheard-of cruelty: numbers were hanged on the largest trees, and few were dismissed without losing a hand or a foot; even the Bishop of Prusa was deprived of his sight. Andronicus Lapardas, one of the generals of the army on the frontiers of Hungary who attempted to avenge the death of Alexius II, was also taken prisoner and deprived of sight.

Andronicus appears to have formed some general plan of improving the civil administration, and reforming the judicial system, by which he expected to render himself popular, and secure the support of the great body of the population. He reduced the expenditure of the court; but in rendering it less brilliant, he did not render it less vicious. He was too old to find pleasure in tournaments and fêtes. He had learned moderation in exile, and his habits of self-indulgence led him to live in a retired manner, even after he obtained the throne. This mode of life, however, made him neglect the amusements of the populace of Constantinople; and he soon became unpopular with the mob, who accused him of avarice in plundering the nobles for his own solitary gratification; while, in their opinion, it was one of the principal duties of the emperor to preside at the games of the hippodrome, and to plan a succession of fêtes for the public gratification. Old age had rendered Andronicus inactive, and his intense selfishness and domineering insolence of disposition persuaded him that all mankind would bend to his opinions. His first care, as emperor, was to prepare for lightening the public burdens by making extensive fiscal reforms. He abolished the practice of selling official charges, a measure which enabled him to suppress many useless offices. He selected able and experienced lawyers to act as judges, on whom he conferred ample salaries from the public treasury, prohibiting them, at the same time, under the severest penalties, from extorting money from the people. Indeed, it is possible that, if he had been able to control the malicious violence of his temper, and if his reign had been prolonged, the cultivators of the soil throughout the empire might have derived some permanent advantage from his government.

(Nicetas gives Andronicus great praise for his exertions to abolish the practice of plundering shipwrecked vessels which prevailed among the Greeks, and which preceding emperors had vainly endeavoured to suppress. The Emperor Manuel I, as well as his successors, had inserted a clause in the commercial treaties with the Italian republics to put an end to this

barbarous custom. Andronicus himself would have been astonished at the system of salvage exacted by our law in favour of the British navy)

But his personal conduct inflamed the hatred of every class at Constantinople, where he was very soon regarded as a monster, in whose death all would rejoice. The seclusion in which he lived concealed from him the change that had taken place in the popular mind, and he continued to pursue his old course of cruelty, living shut up in his palace. His strange behaviour kept the attention of the capital fixed on his actions. The memory of the murdered Alexius seemed to haunt every man's mind but his own. To calm the superstitious scruples of his instruments, he induced the Greek clergy to grant absolution to himself and his partisans for having violated their oaths of allegiance to Alexius II, thus allowing the church to assume the power of pardoning treason and murder. Heretics might well say that the Greek Church was now more corrupt and degraded than the imperial government; for the emperor committed his crimes to gain some definite object, but the clergy gratuitously assailed the principles of morality and religion. As an additional insult to the feelings of mankind, Andronicus, who had reached the age of seventy, though he still retained the appearance of a man of middle age, thought fit to marry Agnes of France, the child-widow of his murdered sovereign. The young empress was only eleven years old when she was led to the imperial palace by the hoary sinner, and placed among a crowd of actresses and dancing girls to complete her education.

#### REBELLION OF CYPRUS, A.D. 1184.

The vicious condition of every class of society had now undermined the political fabric of the empire. Few acknowledged the restraints of duty and religion, and the few who did so retired from public life. The successful rebellion of a man, almost as depraved, and far less able than Andronicus, revealed the facility with which the empire might be dismembered. Isaac, whose father's name is unknown, but who was the nephew of Theodora, queen of Jerusalem, and who adopted the name of Comnenus, had been appointed governor of Tarsus in the reign of Manuel; and having been taken prisoner by the Armenians of Cilicia, was delivered from captivity by Andronicus, who authorized him to draw sixty thousand byzants from the revenues of Cyprus in order to pay his ransom. Reuben, the Prince of Armenian Cilicia, had made over his captive to Bohemund III, prince of Antioch, who, on receiving payment of half the ransom, allowed Isaac to visit Cyprus in order to expedite the collection of the remainder. Isaac, on reaching the island, availed himself of the authority he had received from Andronicus to dispose of the revenue, to act as governor, and, as soon as he could collect together a body of troops, he proclaimed himself emperor, as the only means of retaining his power. He equalled the cruelty of Andronicus in his public administration. This rebellion filled the heart of the tyrant with fear and rage.

A prediction declared that a man, whose name commenced with the letter I, was destined to deprive him of his crown and his life; and this prediction now alarmed him, for he had no fleet which he could immediately dispatch with a force sufficient to suppress the rebellion. The island of Cyprus was completely separated from the Byzantine Empire. It was shortly after conquered by Richard, king of England, and its Greek inhabitants have ever since been subjected to foreign domination.

Constantine Makrodukas and Andronikos Dukas, two of the worst agents of the emperor's cruelty, had become sureties for the good conduct of Isaac when Andronicus granted him the money necessary to pay his ransom. Undeterred by any feelings of political prudence, the tyrant determined to gratify his revenge by a public exhibition of his rage. On Ascension Day it was usual for the whole court to pay their respects to the sovereign. Andronicus was

residing at the palace of Philopation, and thither the two sureties of the rebel Isaac repaired as suppliants, waiting in the inner court, lifting up their hands as petitioners, and seeking to be judged by a tribunal in order to prove their innocence. Even the tyrant's most intimate friends thought the culprits would escape severe punishment. One man alone was entrusted with the order for their execution, and instructed how it was to be carried into effect. Stephen Aghiochristophorites, the agent of many murders, entered the assembly, and, taking up a large stone, struck Makrodukas with it, calling, at the same time, to all the nobles present who honoured the emperor to take stones from a pile placed purposely in the court of the palace, and put the enemies of their sovereign to death. The imperial guards stood by to watch their behaviour, so that none dared to appear dilatory. In this strange and barbarous manner the sureties of the rebel emperor of Cyprus were murdered by the servile nobles of Constantinople. Worthless as the Byzantine nobility had become, they could not conceal their indignation at this insult, and Alexius, the incestuous offspring of Manuel, whom Andronicus had married to his own illegitimate child Irene, conceived the monstrous idea of mounting the throne. His plot was discovered—his fellow-conspirators were put to death in the cruellest manner—his secretary was burned alive in the hippodrome—his own eyes were put out—and Irene was banished from her father's presence for weeping over the misfortune of her husband.

The mad career of Andronicus was now drawing to an end. Alexius Comnenos, one of the grand-nephews of Manuel, had escaped to the court of William II, king of Sicily, where his account of the state of the Byzantine empire agreed so well with the reports which were daily brought by recent fugitives, that the Sicilian monarch resolved to support Alexius' pretensions to the throne, in the hope of making some valuable conquests for himself. A Sicilian fleet, under the command of Tancred, the cousin and successor of William II, and the Admiral Margaritone, with an army commanded by the Counts Richard d'Acerra and Aldoin, entered the Adriatic, and took Dyrrachium by assault, after a siege of a few days. The troops marched thence by land to attack Thessalonica, while the fleet circumnavigated the Peloponnesus. Andronicus seemed to feel little alarm when he heard of this attempt to drive him from the throne; he thought that the danger could not be great, as his rival's name did not begin with I. His second son, John, who had been invested with the imperial title, was sent to assemble an army to relieve Thessalonica; and David Comnenos, who commanded in the place, was ordered to defend it to the last. The incapacity of David, the disorder that reigned in the garrison, and the discontent of the inhabitants, enabled the Norman troops to take Thessalonica on the 15th of August 1185, after a siege of ten days.

The cruelties committed by the Sicilians after they gained possession of Thessalonica, roused the indignation of the Byzantine population, and did more to arrest their further progress than the troops of Andronicus. The Latins and Greeks now regarded one another as heretics as well as political enemies; and their hostilities were marked by horrors of which we may estimate the fearful violence by reflecting on the cruelty of the government and populace of Constantinople, and remembering that it affords the best type of the feelings of society in the East. Nicetas furnishes us with a dreadful picture of the proceedings of the Sicilian army. Nineteen years after, he was himself a spectator of similar scenes acted by a Latin army in Constantinople. Many of the inhabitants of Thessalonica were expelled from their houses; people of rank were tortured to compel them to deliver up the treasures they were supposed to have concealed; some were hung up by the feet and suffocated by burning straw beneath them. Insult was added to cruelty: the altars in the Greek churches were denied; the religious ceremonies of the Greeks were ridiculed; and when the priests chanted their service in the nasal melody prevalent in the East, the Norman soldiers howled out a chorus in imitation of beaten hounds. At last, however, Eustathius, the celebrated Archbishop of Thessalonica, by his prudent conduct succeeded in conciliating the Sicilian generals, and inducing them to restrain the license of their troops, which they had too long tolerated.

The Sicilian army at last quitted Thessalonica to march to Constantinople; but all ranks were so eager for plunder that its progress was slow. Andronicus made some dispositions for the

defence of his capital; and it was reported that he proposed to put every person to death who was imprisoned on a charge of treason. The report filled the population of Constantinople with alarm, for almost every family of any standing had one of its members in prison; the nobles were rendered desperate by a sense of danger—the people were indignant at the dismemberment of the empire, and at the conquests of the Latins. The tyrant, having given his orders to the agents of his cruelty, considered that the tranquillity of the capital was assured, and retired to enjoy himself with a crowd of parasites and courtesans at the palace of Meludion, on the shores of the Bosphorus.

### INSURRECTION IN CONSTANTINOPLE

The storm that drove him from the throne, and terminated his existence, burst suddenly on his head from a quarter whence it was least expected. Aghiochristophorites deemed it necessary to arrest Isaac Angelos, though the emperor had such a contempt for his incapacity and cowardice that he refused to sign an order for his condemnation. The minister was therefore obliged to make the arrest in person, on his own responsibility. When Isaac heard that the terrible Aghiochristophorites, who was universally known to be the agent of the emperor's greatest cruelties, was in the court of his palace, his very cowardice rendered him courageous, for he derived fury from despair. Instead of submitting tamely, he mounted his horse, and, rushing at Aghiochristophorites with his drawn sword, slew him on the spot. But he had neither the ability nor the courage to take any farther measures for his defence, and he sought an asylum in St Sophia's. The absence of the emperor and the death of the minister allowed Isaac Angelos to remain unmolested. His friends ventured to join him; and the people, hearing that Aghiochristophorites was slain, rose in rebellion. The prisons were broken open, armed bands were formed, and Isaac was proclaimed emperor. All the nobility now assembled in the church of St Sophia, and the crown of Constantine, which stood on the high altar, was taken down in order to perform the ceremony of coronation; but the timidity of Isaac was so great that he sought to decline the dangerous honour. His uncle, John Dukas, stepped forward and offered his bald head to receive the crown his nephew feared to accept; but the people, thinking that he bore some resemblance to Andronicus, shouted loudly, "We will have no more old men to rule us, and no man with a forked beard shall be emperor". Isaac was therefore compelled to receive the crown. It is remarkable that the coins of Andronicus distinctly portray the forked beard which excited the antipathy of the populace.

Andronicus hastened to Constantinople as soon as he was informed of the insurrection, and attempted to defend himself in the great palace; but his guards refused to attack the people, even though he himself mounted one of the towers and shot a few arrows against the crowd. The assailants, meeting with no opposition, burst open the gate Karea; and Andronicus, throwing off the imperial robes, and disguising himself in a pointed Russian bonnet, embarked in the galley which had brought him from the palace of Meludion, accompanied by his young empress Agnes of France, a favourite concubine named Maraptika, remarkable for her musical skill, and a few personal attendants. His object was to escape into Russia, but contrary winds kept him on the Bithynian coast, and he was captured by the agents of Isaac, brought back to Constantinople, and imprisoned in the tower of Anemas, with a heavy chain round his neck, and irons on his limbs.

We have not ventured to describe the torments Andronicus had often inflicted on his victims when he made a public display of his worst acts of cruelty, but the people now showed that they had been apt scholars. Isaac allowed the old emperor to be dragged by the chain from his prison, to be conducted through the streets of the capital, undergoing every insult, and then to be tortured in the most inhuman manner. The populace, headed by the relations of those

whom he had put to death, among whom the women were conspicuous, beat the old man in the cruellest way, tore his hair from his head and his beard from his face. The Emperor Isaac insulted him when he was brought into his presence, and ordered his right hand to be cut off and his right eye to be put out. After this treatment he was thrust back into prison, where he remained more than a day without food or attendance. At last he was led out, and abandoned to the people for execution, who put out his remaining eye, and conducted him to the place where he was to suffer, mounted on a lean camel. Crowds followed throwing stones at him, beating him with long poles, and pricking him with spears. Hot water was thrown from the windows on his head, and he was compelled for hours to suffer tortures which nature recoils from recording. At last he was taken to the hippodrome, and hung up by the feet between two columns, near a group of ancient sculpture representing a she-wolf and a hyaena, where his sufferings were terminated by two Latin soldiers, who plunged their swords into his heart. Andronicus had borne all his torments with the greatest fortitude, exclaiming only at intervals, "Lord have mercy upon me, and bruise not a broken reed".

(The reign of Andronicus lasted only a year, from September 1184 to September 1185; and his administration as guardian of Alexius II commenced about a year earlier. Nicetas gives a minute account of this period, and he is our only authority of any value. He records many curious anecdotes concerning Andronicus, which show that he was a man of sense when not governed by his passions. One anecdote is worth recording, as it relates to the historian John Cinnamus, who has so often been our guide in the preceding pages. Andronicus overheard the Bishop of New Patras (Hypate) and John Cinnamus disputing concerning the words of Christ, "My Father is greater than I",—and though he was well reading Greek theology, his anger was so much excited by the sophistical distinctions and quibbles of the ecclesiastical disputants, that he threatened to throw the divine and the historian into the river Rhyndacus, which was flowing near, unless they ceased their cavils concerning the Divine words, which he deemed sufficiently explicit).

## CHAPTER III

## THE FALL OF THE BYZANTINE EMIRE

## Sect. I

## The Reign of Isaac II (Angelos), A.D. 1185-1195.

The Byzantine Empire was now hurrying rapidly to its end, and little is left to record except the progress of its dismemberment and destruction. The despotic power of the emperors was so firmly established, that every executive act emanated directly from the imperial cabinet. But, in perfecting this system of centralization, every tie of interest which had once attached the provincials to the imperial authority had been broken. The adhesion of the distant countries and various nations which composed the empire was destroyed; while, at the same time, the vital energy of the Greek population, which had grown to be the dominant race, was weakened by the immorality which, under the house of Comnenus, had spread through every rank of society. The defensive powers of the empire were consequently rapidly diminishing. The lavish expenditure of the imperial court impelled the government to carry its fiscal exactions so far, that the whole annual profits of the people's industry were absorbed by taxation, and only the inferior classes of the cultivators of the soil and the day-labourers were able to retain the scanty surplus of wealth necessary to perpetuate their existence. Indeed, it is evident that encroachments were constantly made on the vested capital accumulated in past ages; and the funds appropriated in preceding times to uphold the most indispensable adjuncts of civilization were either annihilated or diverted from their destination. Ports, bridges, roads, aqueducts, and fortifications were seen falling to ruin in every province. Court spectacles and ecclesiastical ceremonies at the capital absorbed the funds which had been accumulated in distant municipalities for local improvements, hospitals, and schools. Everything that could inspire the people with zeal to defend their national independence had disappeared, or was rapidly disappearing, to aid in increasing the intensity of ecclesiastical bigotry.

Political despotism, national demoralization, ecclesiastical corruption, fiscal oppression, and habitual misgovernment, must therefore be considered responsible for the anarchical and disorderly state of Constantinople at the accession of Isaac Angelos; and the circumstance that a man so incapable and worthless was raised to the throne by the popular voice, fully testifies the degradation of the inhabitants of the capital.

After the people forced their way into the great palace, and established Isaac there as emperor, they remained for several days in possession of the greater part of the buildings which were enclosed within the circuit of its fortified walls. The residence of the emperors of the East was plundered like a sacked city; the furniture was carried away; the chapel was robbed of its plate, ornaments, images, and relics; the casket containing the letters said to have been written by our Saviour to Abgarus, king of Edessa, was stolen.

The private treasury of the emperor was broken into, and eighty-six thousand byzants in gold coin, thirty *centners* in silver coin, and two hundred of copper, were carried off, besides a considerable quantity of bullion. The new emperor did not venture to arrest the devastation going on before his eyes while his rival was still living. He removed to the palace of Blachern before Andronicus was taken; and it was only after the populace was gratified with the tyrant's

death, and their rapacity exhausted with plundering the residences of his partisans, that Isaac attempted to re-establish order.

The family of Comnenus had been distinguished for talent and courage. Isaac I, Alexius I, John II, and Manuel, were all men of great natural ability. The family of Angelos affords a strong contrast. The founder of the house was Constantine Angelos, a noble of Philadelphia, who married Theodora, the youngest daughter of Alexius I. In consequence of his incapacity the Byzantine fleet was defeated by the Sicilians in 1152. His son Andronicus was entrusted by Manuel with a high command in Asia Minor after the disastrous battle of Myriokephalon, and he conducted himself with so much cowardice during the campaign of 1178 that the emperor threatened to send him in procession through the streets of Constantinople clad in a female dress. The Emperors Isaac II and Alexius III were the children of this cowardly general.

Isaac Angelos may, nevertheless, be considered as a fair specimen of the Byzantine nobility in his age; and his government may be taken as a correct type of the society he ruled. A wise sovereign is as rarely found in a corrupt people as a virtuous population is seen groaning for any great length of time under a native tyrant. The vices of Isaac II were certainly those of his subjects; he was weak and presumptuous, cowardly and insolent, mean and rapacious, superstitious and vicious. The wonder is, not that his administration accelerated the ruin of the empire, but that the inhabitants of so many provinces submitted tamely to his government. No preceding emperor had paid less attention to public business; he seemed to consider the throne merely as a means of gratifying his passion for pompous dresses and unbounded luxury. The court was filled with an innumerable train of pages, mistresses, clowns, musicians, and comedians. The emperor made himself contemptible by strutting about publicly in gorgeous robes like a peacock; and hateful, by sharing the bribes which his courtiers and ministers openly exacted. The Emperor Isaac II had also a taste for building. New apartments were added to the old palaces, and new villas were constructed. Churches were pulled down, not only to rebuild others, but even to strengthen the palace of Blachern with their materials; and new hospitals were erected. The rapacity of Isaac was so great that it overcame his superstition. When he was besieged in Constantinople by Branas, he borrowed large sums of money from the churches, placing the imperial plate and jewels in deposit as security. But as soon as he was delivered from danger he sent for the plate, which the clergy were compelled to restore, and never repaid the money. Yet no emperor ever did more for ornamenting churches or for filling the public squares and street-corners with gilded pictures of the Virgin than Isaac. When reproached with his inconsistency, he replied that all things were permitted to the emperor, who represented the Divine Power; and to authorize his appropriation of church property to his own use, he quoted the example of Constantine the Great, who converted one of the nails of the holy cross into a bit for his charger, and put another in the front of his helmet. Authorized by this example, he plundered the richest churches in the provinces of their paintings and mosaics; and among these he carried off from Monemvasia a celebrated representation of our Saviour led out to be crucified, which was considered one of the finest works of art embodying Christ's sufferings. His exactions and injustice might possibly have affected only some particular classes of society; but he rendered himself universally unpopular by adulterating the imperial coinage.

The reign of Isaac opened with victory over the Sicilian invaders. After the conquest of Thessalonica they had divided their forces; and while the troops were wasting their time in pillaging the villages of Thrace, the fleet under the command of Tancred entered the Propontis and advanced within sight of Constantinople. Weak as Isaac was, he saw that the empire was exposed to serious danger from the operations of the Sicilians; and he exerted himself to furnish the Byzantine army with the means of attacking the enemy. To prove the interest he took in the welfare of the troops, he dispatched a sum of four thousand pounds' weight of gold to the military chest, in order to discharge arrears and furnish a donative. The first successes of the Sicilians had inspired their generals with unbounded presumption, and they viewed with contempt the assembly of a Byzantine army in their vicinity. Alexis Branas, who was an experienced officer, availed himself of their carelessness to drive in their advanced guards, and



defeat one division of their army which had reached Mosynopolis. The remaining Sicilians concentrated their forces at Amphipolis, where another battle was fought on the 7th November 1185, at a place called Demerize, in which the Byzantine army was again victorious. This victory decided the fate of the expedition. The generals of the land forces, Counts Aldoin and Richard d'Acerra, were both made prisoners; and the fugitives who gained Thessalonica immediately embarked and put to sea, without any attempt to defend the place. As soon as Tancred heard of these disasters he abandoned the Propontis, and, collecting the shattered remains of the expedition, returned to Sicily. Dyrrachium was the only conquest retained; but King William II, considering the expense of guarding that fortress incommensurate with its political importance to Sicily, soon after ordered his garrison to abandon it. About four thousand Sicilian prisoners were sent by Branas to Constantinople. These unfortunate men were treated with the greatest cruelty by the worthless emperor, who ordered them to be thrown into dungeons, where they were left destitute of every succor, so that they owed the preservation of their lives to private charity. Isaac ought now to have directed all his attention, and devoted the whole force of the empire, to repel the incursions of the Turks, who were annually extending their ravages farther into the Asiatic provinces.

Kilidy-Arslan II, though more than seventy years of age, took advantage of the disorders that attended the death of Andronicus to send the Emir Sami into the Thraekian theme, where he laid waste the district of Celbiane and the plain of the Caister, from whence he carried off an immense booty in slaves and cattle, leaving whole villages desolate. The emperor, instead of forming garrisons on the frontier, and establishing squadrons of light cavalry to protect the exposed districts by vigorous opposition, considered that he should be able to retain more money for his private pleasures by paying an annual tribute to the sultan, and distributing presents among the chiefs of the nomadic hordes. The reign of Isaac II is filled with a series of revolts, caused by his incapable administration and financial rapacity. The most important of these was the great rebellion of the Vallachian and Bulgarian population which occupied the country between Mount Haemus and the Danube. The immense population of this extensive country now separated itself finally from the government of the Eastern Empire, and its political destinies ceased to be united with those of the Greeks. A new European monarchy, called the Vallachian, or second Bulgarian kingdom, was formed, which for some time acted an important part in the affairs of the Byzantine Empire, and contributed powerfully to the depression of the Greek race. The sudden importance assumed by the Vallachian population in this revolution, and the great extent of country then occupied by a people who had previously acted no prominent part in the political events of the East, render it necessary to give some account of their previous history. Four different countries are spoken of under the name of Vallachia by the Byzantine writers: Great Vallachia, which was the country round the plain of Thessaly, particularly the southern and south-western part; White Vallachia, or the modern Bulgaria, which formed the Vallacho-Bulgarian kingdom that revolted from Isaac II; Black Vallachia, Mavrovallachia, or Kara-bogdon, which is Moldavia; and Hungarovallachia, or the Vallachia of the present day, comprising a part of Transylvania.

There is no subject connected with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, both in the East and West, of greater importance for tracing accurately the political and social progress of the inhabitants of Europe, than the history of the diminution, extinction, and modification of the population in the various nations subjected to the Roman domination. In the preceding pages I have pointed out that every class of society raised somewhat above the ranks of poverty was exposed to such constant fiscal extortion, and bound with so many local and social fetters, that in the latter days of the empire the middling classes lost the means of perpetuating their existence; and, consequently, the bulk of the inhabitants actually disappeared in many provinces, which were then easily occupied and colonized by the northern nations—as happened in the case of Serbia and Bulgaria. But it is more difficult to trace the modifications which gradually change a nation than to note the final extinction of a numerous class, though, in truth, we can rarely be assured that the extinction of any race of mankind is anything more than a modification of its elements. It is therefore necessary to distinguish accurately how far the

causes which tended to extinguish the population operated on the different classes of society, without reference to their ethnological differences; and to inquire whether the causes which modified the civilization and language of the races that have survived the Roman domination had any direct connection with the increase or decrease of their numbers. No historical facts seem more evident than these two, that the Thracian race—which during the first century of the Christian era formed the most numerous ethnological division of the inhabitants of the eastern part of the Roman empire—has long ceased to exist; nor, on the other hand, that the modern Greeks are a modification of the ancient Achaian, Dorian, Ionian, Aeolian, and Hellenic population. And yet there are those who consider that the Albanians and Vallachians have quite as much right to be considered as the descendants of the ancient Thracians, who instructed the Greeks in the first elements of civilization, as the modern Greeks have to be regarded as the progeny of the Hellenes who were conquered by the Romans.

The universality of the causes which operated under the iron sway of Rome, both in diminishing the numbers of mankind, and in modifying national elements, renders it difficult to determine the limits of their separate effects. There is no doubt, however, that the inhabitants of the extensive plains and pastoral mountains of Thrace were more exposed to the material oppression of the Roman administration than the inhabitants of the narrow coasts and rocky mountains of Greece. While fiscal extortion and military operations exterminated the majority of the free Thracians, moral influences only modified the customs and language of Greece. In every province of her empire Rome planted colonies in which her usages, laws, and language were as completely national as they were in Rome itself. In Greece, Corinth, Patras, and Nicopolis were Latin cities; and for many ages they were almost the only flourishing cities in the country. The provincial administration, and particularly the fiscal, was everywhere carried on in Latin; the proconsular tribunals acknowledged the existence of no other language, and thus even the Greeks were bent from their original ideas, and compelled to adopt new habits, new thoughts, and new expressions. In the West, Gaul and Spain were modified according to a Roman type, of which they bear the impress to the present day; in the East, the same causes produced an effect on the more civilized inhabitants of Greece, though the change was of a modified nature. Similar influences, bearing powerfully on the whole Greek people wherever they might be scattered, effected the same ethnological change on the whole race. The rude mountaineers of Laconia could not well become less civilized than they had been before the Roman conquest, but they yielded to the same circumstances which affected Athens and Alexandria, Syracuse and Byzantium. The moral power of the Roman administration changed the ancient Hellenes into modern Greeks, according to the impress of one unvarying type; and of that change into Romaioi, or subjects of the Roman Empire, the Greek language bears ineffaceable marks. As the institutions of the great Transatlantic republic moulded English, Irish, Celts, Dutch, Germans, French, and Spaniards who settle under its sway into one people, so the great empire of the ancient world moulded the Spartan, Athenian, Dorian, Ionian, and Aeolian into a homogeneous mass. There can be no doubt that a change similar to that which took place among the Greeks was wrought about the same time on the Thracian race, but a dark veil covers the history of the native proprietors of the soil in the countries between the Aegean Sea and the Danube for many centuries.

The Vallachian population of Thrace began to acquire some degree of importance during the reign of Alexius I, though the passages in which it is mentioned are vague. The number of the same race which then inhabited the countries north of the Danube is also recorded to have been considerable. We have already had occasion to notice that in the reign of Manuel I they were the masters of a considerable part of Thessaly, which was subsequently known by the name of Great Vallachia; and people were so struck by the resemblance which their language bore to Latin that they were generally pronounced to be the descendants of Italian colonists. Like the modern Greeks, they called themselves Romans, from having, like the Greeks, acquired the rights of Roman citizenship by the decree of Caracalla; and the name of Vlachs, or Vallachians, appears to have been first given them by the Slavonians who colonized their depopulated plains. It may be observed that the Slavonians gave the Italians the same name,

struck apparently by their general similarity, and that the name has always been repudiated by the Vallachians.

No portion of the Roman Empire was more rapidly changed or earlier depopulated by the severity of the government than the Thracian provinces, though they were among the last which were subjected to fiscal oppression. Several Roman legions were constantly quartered in these provinces, and numerous Roman colonies were founded in them. Roman veterans settled in the country, and young Thracians departed annually as recruits to distant legions. The Latin language appears also to have amalgamated more readily with the Thracian than with the Greek. We are informed by a Greek writer, who was himself a Roman ambassador, that in the middle of the fifth century the Greek language was unknown in the countries between the Adriatic, the Aegean, the Black Sea, and the Danube, except in the commercial towns on the coasts of Thrace and Illyria; but that Latin was the ordinary medium of communication among foreign races, both for commercial and political intercourse. In the sixth century, the Thracian dialect bore a strong resemblance to corrupt Latin, and to the Vallachian language spoken at the present day. This Vallachian language, too, like the modern Greek, bears strong marks of having been formed by the operation of one overwhelming influence, affecting every portion of the nation at the same time. And accordingly, as in the case of the Greeks, we find every distant and isolated tribe speaking the same language which is spoken on Mount Pindus by the last survivors of the population of Great Vallachia, as well as by the Romans beyond the Danube and the Carpathian Mountains, in the Bannat, and in Transylvania. But, after all this, the question remains undecided whether these Vallachians are the lineal descendants of the Thracian race, who Strabo tells us extended as far south as Thessaly, and as far north as to the borders of Pannonia; for of the Thracian language we know nothing.

From some causes which cannot now be traced, it is certain that the Vallachian population in the Byzantine Empire increased greatly in wealth and numbers during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Benjamin of Tudela gives a romantic account of the complete independence of those who inhabited Thessaly; but the general fact, that they were governed according to their own usages by a tributary prince—as the Sclavonians of the Peloponnesus had been in the ninth and tenth centuries—is confirmed by Nicetas, who informs us that they were able to defend their independence against the Crusaders, who conquered the Byzantine empire. Though the Vallachians of Mount Haemus had not, like their countrymen in Thessaly, aspired at self-legislation and independence, they had been gradually thrown more and more on their national resources by the oppressions of Manuel, by the disorders that prevailed in the central administration after his death, and by the invasion of the Sicilians. The immediate cause of their rebellion against the empire was the imposition of an additional tax by the Emperor Isaac in the year 1186, to defray the expenses of his marriage with Margaret, the daughter of Bela III, king of Hungary.

Three brothers, Peter, Asan, and John, placed themselves at the head of the insurrection, and claimed to be descended from the elder line of the Bulgarian monarchs, though they were Vallachians in their nurture and early associations. The Bulgarian and Sclavonian population, from Mount Haemus to the Danube, suffered from the same oppression as the Vallachian, and detested the Byzantine government and their Greek rulers with equal hatred. The hope of throwing off the domination of their oppressors, induced all to take up arms with enthusiasm; and as superstition was a feeling more deeply rooted in the human breast at this period than patriotism, it was announced, and generally believed, that Saint Demetrius, the favourite saint of the Vallachians, Bulgarians, and Sclavonians of these provinces, had forsaken the city of Thessalonica, of which he had hitherto been the patron, and had removed his sanctuary to a church lately erected to his honour by Peter. The fanatics considered it their duty to put every Greek to death who fell into their hands; and the people had suffered so much from the exactions of the fiscal officers of the Byzantine government, that they were incited to take part in these cruelties.

Peter having assembled an army in Mount Haemus, and assumed the imperial title, marched into the districts of Thrace, which were inhabited by the Greeks, and laid everything waste; but his first operations were unsuccessful. He was defeated, and compelled to seek refuge in the Patzinak territory, beyond the Danube. In the year 1187 the rebels were again defeated by the emperor's uncle, John the Sevastokrator; but the jealousy of Isaac inducing him to remove his uncle from the command of the army, he sent John Cantacuzenos, who had been deprived of his sight, to take the command of the troops. The rebels now proved victorious; and, to arrest their progress, the emperor was compelled to entrust Alexis Branas with the conduct of the war. Branas drove the Vallachians beyond Mount Haemus; but as soon as he had driven the rebels out of Thrace, he left them to consolidate their power in Bulgaria, and marched his army to Adrianople. Seeing that rebellion was to a certain degree successful both in Bulgaria and Cyprus, and foreseeing that new insurrections would soon follow, he thought that it would be easy to turn the general discontent to his own profit. He therefore assumed the title of Emperor, and appeared before Constantinople at the head of a well-appointed force, not expecting to meet with any serious resistance.

But the persons connected with the general administration, and the people within the walls of the capital, entertained the greatest aversion to receive an emperor raised to the throne by the army. They feared that he would be compelled to effect a financial revolution, and make numerous personal changes in order to reward his followers. Alexis Branas, therefore, met with a more determined opposition than he had expected. But Isaac, in place of aiding the troops, consumed his time in prayers and processions, so that Branas, manning a number of fishing-boats which he had collected in the islands of the Propontis, rendered himself master of the imperial fleet. The capital seemed on the eve of falling into his hands, when it was saved by Conrad of Montferrat. That distinguished Crusader, who has transmitted the vain title of King of Jerusalem to the reigning family of Sardinia, had visited Constantinople on his way to Palestine. Having married Theodora, the sister of the Emperor Isaac, and received the rank of Caesar, he felt himself authorized to reproach his brother-in-law with his misconduct, and point out to him that, unless he exerted himself, he was likely to lose his crown. The alarming position of Constantinople rendered the Greeks willing to submit to the superior military skill of Conrad. His satirical observations at last roused Isaac to activity. He told him that things were in such a state, that swords and lances were the means Heaven would use if Isaac's crown was to be saved, not priests and processions. When he found the emperor occupied in planning feasts, he coolly remarked that it would be time enough to think of the enjoyments of the table when he should be assured of the future; but, for the moment, the defence of Constantinople demanded all his care. Conrad fortunately found two hundred and fifty Latin knights and five hundred veteran infantry at Constantinople, who ranged themselves under his orders. All the Turkish and Georgian merchants who resided in the city, and whose expeditions had accustomed them to war, formed themselves into corps to defend their property. Isaac himself at last enrolled all the native soldiers in the capital, and roused the spirit of the troops by a donative, which he procured by pledging the imperial plate, and borrowing money from the church funds.

At the head of these forces Conrad took the field, accompanied by the emperor. Branas had encamped his army before Constantinople without attempting to form a regular siege. The two armies spent several hours in skirmishing; but Branas having examined the strength of the imperial army, at last drew together his best troops and prepared for a decisive attack. Conrad, who had closely watched his operations, and kept his Latin knights ready for some daring exploit, boldly anticipated the enemy's movement. His defensive armour was a red linen body-coat of numerous folds, soddened together into a substance impenetrable to lance or sword; and with this light covering, and his small triangular shield, which made him appear to the Greeks almost defenseless, he led his cavalry to charge the center of the rebel army. The shock bore down every opposition; and the cavalry of Branas were soon scattered in irretrievable confusion. Branas, attempting to rally them, was dashed from his saddle by Conrad's lance; and when he demanded quarter on the ground, Conrad exclaimed—"You must pay your treason with your life". His attendants immediately decapitated the prostrate general.

This victory was celebrated by Isaac as if it had been achieved by his own military prowess. He passed through Constantinople in triumph before the army, with the head of Branas borne before him on the point of a lance; and when he reached the imperial palace, he had the inhumanity to send this bloody trophy to Maria Comnena, the widow of Branas, whom the Emperor Manuel, her uncle, had called, for her virtues, an honor to the imperial family. The populace of the capital was allowed to make expeditions for the purpose of plundering the inhabitants of the islands of the Propontis who had declared in favour of Branas; and houses and villages were seen in flames on every side of Constantinople. The Latins availed themselves of the general anarchy to plunder the houses of many of the wealthy nobles who were considered hostile to the emperor's policy; and at last a regular battle was fought by the Greeks and Latins in the streets, which the imperial officers had the greatest difficulty in terminating. Much blood was shed on both sides; and the hatred between the two races and religions became every day more bitter. Conrad finding that the state of affairs was not favourable to his ambition, his wife Theodora dying, and the news arriving that his father, the Marquis William, had been taken prisoner by Saladin at the battle of Tiberias, quitted Constantinople and arrived in Palestine, where he immediately increased his fame by defeating Saladin under the walls of Tyre.

The Vallachian war was resumed after the death of Branas, and Isaac took the field against the rebels; but though Peter and Asan were unable, with their Vallachian, Bulgarian, and Sclavonian levies, to encounter the imperial army, they prevented the campaign from producing any decided results. After besieging Lobitza for three months, the Byzantine army was compelled to retire, A.D. 1188.

### THIRD CRUSADE, A.D. 1189

While the Vallachians were thus gradually forming an independent kingdom, a new crusade threatened the Byzantine Empire with fresh dangers. Fortunately for the Greeks, the only leader of the third crusade who passed through the dominions of Isaac was Frederic I (Barbarossa), Emperor of Germany, an experienced and prudent monarch, who wished to avoid all collision with the Byzantine government; and who, having passed through the empire with his uncle Conrad during the second crusade, knew how to adopt the most effectual measures for preserving order. He allowed no pilgrim to join his standard who did not possess three marks of silver to defray his expenses on the road. Never did a finer army, or a nobler and abler commander, leave Europe for the East; yet, in spite of the valour and discipline of the troops, and the experience of the general, fortune declared against this expedition, and it was as fruitless as the wildest enterprises of preceding Crusaders.

Before Frederic Barbarossa quitted Germany, he dispatched an embassy to Constantinople to ask permission to pass through the Byzantine empire, and Isaac sent Dukas, the intendant of posts, to arrange the articles of a treaty by which all disorders might be prevented during the march of the Crusaders, and a sufficient supply of provisions and forage might be furnished to them at reasonable prices. Frederic made all his dispositions with prudence; but he had not proceeded far on his march before the inconstancy of Isaac, who, like most of the Byzantine courtiers and the Greek clergy, heartily detested the Franks, induced him to send orders to throw obstacles in the way of the advance of the German army, and stop their supplies of provisions. Nicetas the historian was then governor of Philippopolis; and he informed us that he received from day to day the most contradictory orders from the court. By one dispatch he was ordered to repair the fortifications, by another to dismantle the place. Attempts were made to render the roads impracticable; large trees were cut down to block up the passes, and other measures were taken which only delayed and irritated the Germans, who punished the subjects of Isaac for obeying the orders of their emperor. Frederic reached

Philippopolis on the 23d of August 1189, and entered the city without opposition. The Armenians, who had been for ages established in this city and its neighbourhood, and whose heretical opinions rendered them ill-disposed towards the Greeks, who treated them often with great injustice, welcomed the Latins, and afforded them exact information concerning the state of the empire, and the movements of the Byzantine troops.

The insolence of Isaac at last involved the two emperors in war; but the Greek troops were unable to resist the Germans, and were soon defeated. In their flight they plundered the inhabitants of the country far more cruelly than the Crusaders. The opposition he had met with, and the advanced time of the year, induced Frederic to take up his winter-quarters in Thrace. He felt that the proceedings of Isaac might force him to attack Constantinople; and he therefore made arrangements for assembling a fleet of Genoese, Pisan, and Venetian ships, which he could employ either against the Byzantine Empire, or for transporting his army to Asia, as circumstances might require.

As Isaac persisted in his hostile conduct, Frederic marched to Adrianople in the month of February 1190. He then took Didymoteichos by storm, and occupied Arcadiopolis. Isaac, who had trusted for success rather to the prophecies which the bigoted members of the Greek clergy had repeated to him than to his military arrangements, was now seriously alarmed, and sent to solicit peace on any terms. The conduct of the German emperor was in accordance with his previous declarations. He asked nothing but what Isaac had promised by their first treaty. Frederic had also afforded a proof of his generosity which ought to have made a deep impression even on a fool like Isaac, and on a herd of such knaves as composed the Byzantine court. Peter and Asan had offered to join the Crusaders with an army of forty thousand Vallachians and Bulgarians, on condition that the German emperor would invest one of the brothers with the crown of Bulgaria; but Frederic refused to intermeddle in the affairs of another Christian state, further than was necessary to remove the obstacles thrown in the way of his march to the Holy Land. The Byzantine government renewed its promises to supply the Crusaders with provisions as long as they remained in the imperial dominions, engaged to furnish them with vessels to convey them from Gallipoli to Asia, and gave hostages to Frederic, who were to be released when he reached Philadelphia. Frederic also insisted that the Emperor Isaac and five hundred of the principal officers of the empire should publicly take an oath to fulfil the articles of the treaty to his ambassadors in the Church of St Sophia, and in the presence of the Patriarch; and to this the Byzantine emperor was compelled to submit.

On the 28th of March 1190, Frederic passed over into Asia Minor with the last division of his army, and marched by Thyatira, Philadelphia, and Laodicea into the dominions of the Sultan of Iconium. He was generally received with as much ill-will as the Byzantine authorities ventured to show; but at Laodicea he found an independent Greek population accustomed to continual war with the Turks, and who trusted to their own exertions, not to the imperial court and the central government, for safety. These free citizens gave the Crusaders a sincere welcome, and afforded them every assistance in their power. Frederic was so touched by their conduct that he knelt down in the plain before his camp, and prayed that God would recompense the people of Laodicea.

The Sultan of Iconium had promised to allow the Crusaders to pass through his dominions without molestation, and permit them to purchase provisions; but, like the Emperor Isaac, he endeavoured to throw obstacles in their way. Frederic, however, used little ceremony with the Mohammedans; he defeated their army at Philomelium, and marched direct to Iconium, which the Emperors Alexius I, John II, and Manuel I had vainly endeavoured to reach. The capital of the sultan was taken by storm, and ample supplies of provisions were obtained for the army; but the sultan was allowed to remain quietly in the citadel of his capital, as he offered no further opposition. Frederic then pursued his march through the territories of the Armenians of Cilicia. The delivery of the Holy Land was now supposed by the Christians to be certain. A numerous and well-disciplined army, led by a general experienced in all the difficulties of

Eastern warfare, was about to enter Syria, when death arrested the progress of Frederic Barbarossa. He died of a cold caught by bathing in the limpid stream of the Calycadnus, near Seleucia, the waters of which were chilled by the melted snow descending from Mount Taurus. The enemies of Frederic acknowledge that he was a valiant and noble prince.

The evils inflicted on the Greek race by the third crusade were rendered permanent by fortuitous circumstances, and fell heaviest on the island of Cyprus, which was already separated from the Byzantine Empire. Isaac Comnenos, who had assumed the title of Emperor in Cyprus during the reign of Andronicus, contracted an alliance with William II, king of Sicily. Isaac II of Constantinople, elated with his victory over the Sicilians, expected to reconquer Cyprus without difficulty. In the year 1186 he sent a fleet of seventy galleys with a numerous army to perform this service, but his jealousy of his best officers induced him to entrust the command to men incapable of performing military duty, as a security against their mounting the throne. One was an old man, named John Koutostephanos, and the other Alexis Comnenos, the natural son of Manuel, whom Andronicus had deprived of sight. The expedition reached Cyprus in safety, and the army was landed. But the King of Sicily sent a fleet to the assistance of his ally, under the command of the Admiral Margaritone, the ablest naval officer of the time, who surprised the Byzantine fleet, and captured most of the transports and galleys. In the meantime the land forces were also defeated, and the two generals, falling into the hands of the Sicilian admiral, were carried prisoners to Palermo. Isaac of Cyprus, after this victory, which he owed to the valour of foreigners, treated most of the prisoners with horrid cruelty. Those whom he did not wish to enrol in his own service were put to death with inhuman tortures. This victory secured the throne of Cyprus to Isaac, who showed that he was a worthless and rapacious tyrant; but as his political government favoured the trade of the Cypriots with Sicily, Syria, and Armenia, they submitted to his sway; and had he possessed ordinary prudence, he might have enjoyed his usurpation without danger. A wanton display of insolence caused his ruin. In the year 1191, as the fleet of Richard lion-hearted was proceeding from Messina to Palestine, it was assailed by a tempest, and three ships were wrecked on the coast of Cyprus. Isaac, who felt all the dislike to the Crusaders generally entertained by the Greeks, and who was ignorant of the power of the King of England, seized the opportunity of gratifying his own cruel disposition, and of proving his friendship for Saladin, with whom he had recently formed an alliance. He took possession of the property which was saved from the shipwrecked vessels, and imprisoned all the English who escaped the waves. Perhaps Isaac might have escaped with impunity had he only plundered the English, but he ventured to insult the king. The vessel which carried Joanna of Sicily, Richard's sister, and Berengaria of Navarre, to whom he was betrothed, sought shelter from the storm in the port of Amathus (Limissol), but was refused entrance. The storm, however, had already abated, and this ship had joined Richard at Rhodes. The King of England immediately sailed to Cyprus; and when Isaac refused to deliver up the shipwrecked crusaders, and to restore their property, Richard landed his army and commenced a series of operations, which ended in his conquering the whole island, in which he abolished the administrative institutions of the Eastern Empire, enslaving the Greek race, introducing the feudal system, by which he riveted the chains of a foreign domination, and then gave it as a present to Guy of Lusignan, the titular King of Jerusalem, who became the founder of a dynasty of Frank kings in Cyprus. From that time to the present day the Greeks of Cyprus have suffered every misery that can be inflicted by foreign masters; and the island, which at the time of its conquest by Richard was the richest and most populous in the Mediterranean, is now almost uncultivated, and very thinly inhabited.

Isaac Angelos, who occupied the throne of Constantinople, was in constant danger of being precipitated from his elevation, like his namesake of Cyprus. When accident had placed the crown on a head so weak and incapable, every man of ambition hoped to be able to transfer it to his own, and rebellion succeeded rebellion. One of the most dangerous pretenders to the throne was a young man of Constantinople, who assumed the name of Alexius II, and whose singular resemblance to that prince and to his father Manuel induced many to credit his assertions. He visited Iconium while Kilidy-Arslan reigned; and the old sultan, struck with his resemblance to Manuel, allowed him to enrol troops, but he refused to break the treaty he had

concluded with Isaac, and lose the tribute he received from the Byzantine Empire. The false Alexius assembled an army of eight thousand men, and ravaged the vale of the Meander, storming several cities in order to gratify his followers with plunder: among others he took the rich city of Chonae. Isaac sent his brother Alexius to encounter the pretender, but the imperial troops met with little success. The career of the rebel was, however, suddenly arrested by a priest, by whom he was assassinated, as a just vengeance for his alliance with the Infidels, by whose assistance he had plundered the richest cities of Asia Minor, and who under his banner had desecrated the churches in these cities. The assassin carried his head to Alexius the sevastokrator, who was so struck by its resemblance to the well-known features of Manuel, that he exclaimed, "Those who followed him may indeed be innocent!" After his death several persons assumed the name of Alexius II; one was taken in Paphlagonia, and put to death, and another at Nicomedia, who was deprived of sight.

Theodore Mankaphas, a noble of Philadelphia, also assumed the title of Emperor, and attempted to dethrone Isaac; but his historical importance is derived rather from the fact that he is recorded to have coined silver money with his effigy than from the importance of his rebellion. In the year 1189 he rendered himself master of the country round Philadelphia, and his progress alarmed Isaac to such a degree that he marched against him in person. The approach of Frederic Barbarossa made the emperor anxious to terminate the war, and he agreed to pardon Mankaphas, on the rebel making his submission, and laying aside the imperial ensigns. The pardoned rebel soon after fled to Iconium, where Gaiasheddin Kaikhosrou allowed him to enrol troops among the nomad tribes, and with these bands he ravaged the frontiers of the Byzantine Wmpire with the same barbarity as the false Alexius. At last Isaac bribed the sultan to deliver him up, on condition that his life should be spared, and his punishment should not exceed perpetual imprisonment. New claimants to the throne, however, continued to take the field, and the suspicions of Isaac induced him to punish many nobles of the highest rank for real or imaginary conspiracies.

The Vallachian insurrection in the meantime kept the northern provinces of the empire in a state of anarchy. In the year 1192 the emperor hoped to crush it by conducting in person a well-disciplined army against the half-disciplined bands of Vallachians, Bulgarians, and Sclavonians, who had taken up arms. But he led his army into the mountain-passes without taking any precautions, where it was attacked and its ranks broken. The valour of the imperial guard saved the emperor by breaking through the Vallachians, carrying with them Isaac, helpless and bareheaded. In the following year the Vallachians stormed Anchialus, Varna, Nyssa, and Stupion, and burned part of Triaditza (Sardica). The emperor boasted of a glorious campaign when he recovered possession of the plundered ruins of these cities. He, however, defeated the Zupan of Servia, who had invaded the empire and plundered Skupia. Subsequently he marched to the banks of the Save, and after an idle procession to meet his father-in-law, the King of Hungary, he returned to Constantinople. In 1194 the Byzantine army, under the command of the generals of the European and Asiatic native troops, was completely defeated by the Vallachians near Arcadiopolis; and the country round Philippopolis, Sardica, and Adrianople was laid waste by the insurgents.

The Emperor Isaac now felt the necessity of making some extraordinary exertions to terminate this war, which was daily approaching nearer to the walls of the capital. New levies were made in the empire, the foreign mercenaries were assembled from their different stations, and great numbers of Hungarian auxiliaries were brought into the field. Fifteen hundred pounds' weight of gold and six thousand of silver were expended in equipping the troops and forming the necessary magazines; and in the month of March 1195, Isaac quitted Constantinople, accompanied by his brother Alexius, in whom he placed implicit confidence. But natural affection, as well as honor and truth, appears to have been banished from Byzantine society; and this brother had already formed a plot to seize the throne, which he carried into execution when the court reached Kypsela. While the Emperor Isaac was engaged in hunting, Alexius occupied his tent, and was proclaimed emperor by the nobles and troops he had gained to support his



usurpation. The army, who despised Isaac, readily transferred their allegiance to Alexius, whose vices were then less known. The dethroned emperor, when informed of the catastrophe, turned his horse's head from the camp and fled, he knew not whither. At Stagyra, then called Makri, he was overtaken by his brother's agents, who immediately deprived him of sight. He was transported directly to Constantinople, where he was imprisoned in a dungeon, and supplied with rations of bread and water like a criminal.

Isaac II reigned nine years and seven months. He was middle-sized, of a healthy constitution, with a florid complexion and red hair. When dethroned, he was not forty years of age, (April 1195).

## Sect. II

### Reign of Alexius III (Angelos Comnenos)

A.D. 1196-1203.

During the reign of Andronicus, Alexius Angelos, who was older than his brother Isaac II, fled for safety to the court of Saladin, where he was residing when he heard of his brother's elevation to the throne. On his way to Constantinople he was arrested by the Prince of Antioch, and owed his release from captivity to his brother's affection. This, and many other acts of kindness, he repaid with the basest treachery. Even the corrupt society of Constantinople required that some attempt should be made to throw a veil over the ingratitude of the new emperor. To effect this Alexius III assumed the name of Comnenus, insinuating thereby that his adoption into that imperial house had dissolved his connection with the humbler family of Angelos, and that duty compelled him to dethrone a worthless sovereign like Isaac. Alexius, being tall and well made, and possessing an agreeable and dignified manner, as well as more natural talent, a better education, and more command over his temper, appeared very much superior to his brother until he mounted the throne. As emperor, however, he laid aside his hypocrisy, and was as careless of public business, as lavish in his expenditure, as ignorant of military affairs, and as great a coward as Isaac. The first act of Alexius III was to reward the officers and troops who had shared his treason, by distributing among them the money his brother had collected for carrying on the war against the Vallachians. He then sent the army back to its usual quarters, and returned to the capital, leaving Thrace and Macedonia exposed to the incursions of the rebels. His wife Euphrosyne had prepared the senate and people to give him a favourable reception by a liberal distribution of bribes and promises of promotion; and his coronation was performed in St Sophia's by the obsequious Patriarch. The behaviour of his horse alone caused some to reflect on the injustice of his conduct and the instability of his power. As he was about to mount on horseback at the steps of the great church, after the ceremony was finished, and return in procession to the palace, according to the immemorial usage of the Roman empire, his horse for a long time refused to allow him to mount; and when at last he had gained his seat, it reared and plunged until the emperor's crown fell from his head, and was broken by the fall. It then completed the disaster by throwing the emperor himself on the ground. Alexius, however, escaped unhurt.

The public treasury was quickly emptied by the lavish expenditure of Alexius and Euphrosyne; and every species of extortion, injustice, and fraud, was then employed to collect money. When it was no longer possible to bestow money, places, pensions, and estates belonging to the imperial domain, were conferred on some favoured courtiers; and the right of collecting particular branches of the revenue in the provinces was granted to others. Nicetas sarcastically observes that Alexius III would have granted golden bulls to plough the sea or pile

Athos on Olympus, had any courtier presented himself to solicit such gifts. This conduct completed the destruction of that wonderful financial and governmental mechanism which the Byzantine government had inherited from the Roman Empire.

Euphrosyne, who was better acquainted with her husband's idle disposition than others, assumed a large share in conducting the business of the empire, and no minister dared to take any step without her approval. Her beauty, her talents, and her aptitude for business, gave her immense influence among the nobility; but her pride, extravagance, and licentiousness, often produced scandalous quarrels with Alexius. Nothing is generally supposed to mark more strongly the degraded condition of the proudest nobles of the Byzantine empire, at this time, than the fact that members of the celebrated families of Comnenos, Dukas, Paleologos, and Cantacuzenos contended for the honour of carrying Euphrosyne in her litter at public ceremonies; yet British peers now contend to be lords-in-waiting, their wives to be ladies of the bedchamber, and their daughters to be bedchamber-women. The insolence and license of Euphrosyne at last roused the anger and jealousy of the emperor. Alexius ordered her paramour, Vatatzes, to be assassinated, and her female slaves and the eunuchs of her household to be put to the torture. The beautiful and accomplished Euphrosyne herself was expelled from the palace, clad in the dress of a menial, and immured in the convent of Nematorea, near the entrance of the Black Sea, with only two foreign slaves as her attendants. Six months' absence from court, however, taught her worthless husband the value of her talents and energy. Everything fell into disorder; even Alexius was alarmed at the peculations of the courtiers; and Euphrosyne was reinstated in all her former power, which she abused with all her former insolence. Her political energy, her superstitious follies, and her magnificent hunting parties excited the wonder of the inhabitants of Constantinople; and as she rode along with a falcon perched on her gold-embroidered glove, and encouraged the dogs with her voice, and the curvetings of her horse, the crowd enjoyed the splendid spectacle, and only grave men like Nicetas thought that she was wasting the revenues which were required to defend the empire.

(The belief in magic and the power of incantations was so general that it excited little surprise at Constantinople when Euphrosyne, in order to insure the happy issue of some of her divinations, thought fit to order a bronze boar about to engage a lion, which formed one of the finest groups of ancient sculpture in the hippodrome, to be mutilated by cutting off its snout, and many other works of ancient art to be broken in pieces. Thus the Greeks began to destroy the most precious remains of Hellenic taste before the Latins entered Constantinople).

The venality and oppression of the imperial officers had caused so much discontent, that Alexius III, on ascending the throne, deemed it necessary to promise publicly that no official charge should be sold, but that all employments should be bestowed according to merit. This proclamation remained without effect. The emperor paid no attention to business, Euphrosyne cared nothing for the people, the courtiers persisted in profiting by their influence, and public employments continued to be an object of traffic. The empress, however, at length perceived the danger of these proceedings, and attempted to effect some reforms. Before her disgrace she persuaded Alexius to appoint Constantine Mesopotamites prime-minister, and this statesman succeeded in suppressing much venality and flagrant jobbing. But it required purer hands to root out inveterate corruption of Byzantine society. Mesopotamites, while calling on others to respect the laws, violated them himself. He thought that he could render his power more secure against the factions of the court, and at the same time extend his influence and patronage, by entering the church. But as the ecclesiastical canons of the Eastern Church forbade the clergy to hold civil offices, Mesopotamites, on becoming a priest, obtained a dispensation from the Patriarch to violate the law. In order to secure an independent position, he got himself appointed Archbishop of Thessalonica; but by this step he lost the emperor's favour, and his enemies induced the Patriarch Xiphilinos to hold a synod, in which Mesopotamites was condemned for various crimes, and deposed from the archiepiscopal dignity, without being allowed an opportunity of refuting the charges brought against him. This contempt of justice on the part of the ecclesiastical dignitaries nourished the aversion felt by the people to the highest authorities

both in the church and state; and though no popular cry was heard demanding reform either in church or state, the inhabitants began to feel as little inclined to defend the throne of their patriarch as the crown of their emperor.

The utter neglect of the moral and religious condition of the people by the hierarchy of the Eastern Church, during the twelfth century, proved a severe blow to the Greek nation. The provincial Greek saw no authority to which he could address himself in order to obtain justice against the violence and rapacity of the imperial officers, and consequently every friendly link which had once connected him with Constantinople was now broken. The apostasy of the prelates from the cause of the people, and the ignorance and selfishness of the monks, left the Greeks, as a nation, exposed to greater oppression and injustice than any other portion of the inhabitants of the empire; for they were less accustomed to bear arms, and their municipal institutions had been rendered completely subservient to the central administration. There is, perhaps, no feature in the history of the Christian church which suggests more melancholy reflections than the prostitution of the Greek clergy to the imperial power during this century. When we behold a priesthood which founded the hierarchy of the church, gave laws to the Christian world, and curbed the political presumption of the Popes of Rome, perverting an influence it had justly gained to serve the vices of a corrupt court, we learn how small is the measure of irresponsible power which can be entrusted to individuals, however sanctified their occupations may appear

The anarchy that prevailed in the Byzantine administration increased daily. Michael Stryphnos, the admiral of the fleet, being sure of impunity, as he had married a sister of the Empress Euphrosyne, sold the stores from the naval arsenal, and thought only of making as much profit as possible from his office. The seas round the empire were filled with pirates, and their profits appeared so considerable that the Emperor Alexius himself at last turned pirate. He sent six galleys into the Euxine, under the pretext of saving the cargo of a vessel wrecked near Kerasunt, but he gave the admiral secret orders to make prizes of all ships bound for Amisos. This infamous expedition proved extremely profitable to the court. Many merchants who were captured lost their whole fortunes, and some, whose complaints it was feared might excite dangerous inquiries, were murdered: others were put on shore, and found their way to Constantinople, where they vainly presented themselves at the courts of law and at the imperial palace, to demand justice. They carried their petitions to the staircase of the palace as suppliants, with wax tapers in their hands, and stood to receive the emperor in the vestibule of St Sophia's: but all their endeavours were fruitless; it was a time when justice slept. Those merchants only who were subjects of Rokneddin, the sultan of Iconium, obtained an indemnity. The emperor, to avoid war, threw the whole blame of the piracies on his admiral, Constantine Francopulo, paid an indemnity to the merchants of Iconium, and promised to pay Rokneddin an annual tribute.

The conduct of the emperor on the high seas was imitated by the nobles in the capital. A rich banker named Kalomodios was envied by those who often borrowed his money, and who for some time attempted to cheat or rob him without success. At length a party of courtiers entered his house and made him prisoner, declaring that they would not release him until he paid them a large ransom. The merchants of Constantinople, hearing of this insolent assault, repaired in a body to the residence of the Patriarch John Kamateros, the brother of the Empress Euphrosyne, but found him not inclined to assist them by active interference. In the meantime, however, the populace became aware of the conduct of their superiors, and determined to use the same license to enforce justice. They assembled before the Patriarch's palace, and informed him that they would plunder his residence and precipitate his holiness from the window, unless he obtained the liberation of Kalomodios. These threats opened the mind of the Patriarch to the claims of justice, and Kalomodios was released.

The foreigners in Constantinople conducted themselves in the same lawless manner as the natives. The Venetians and Pisans engaged in bloody battles in the streets, which the Greeks

viewed with pleasure, and the imperial authorities with indifference. Rebellions in the provinces were also as common as seditions in the capital.

Fortunately for the Byzantine Empire, the Seljouk Empire of Roum or Iconium had been divided among the numerous sons of Kilidy-Arslan II, or the Turks, by forming an alliance with the rebel Vallachian, Bulgarian, and Sclavonian population in Europe, might have succeeded in taking Constantinople before the arrival of the Crusaders and Venetians. But Moeddin, the sultan of Angora, availed himself of the disorders in the Byzantine provinces to invade Paphlagonia and take the city of Dabyra. Alexius, after carrying on the war feebly for a year and a-half, purchased peace (A.D. 1197) by paying Moeddin five hundred pounds' weight of coined silver, by presenting him with forty pieces of the rich brocaded silk which was manufactured at Thebes for the emperor's especial use, and by engaging to remit to Angora an annual tribute of three hundred pounds' weight of silver. In the following year Alexius involved himself in war with Gaiaseddin Kaikhosrou I, who then reigned at Iconium, in consequence of the detention of two Arabian horses by the Turk. In one of his thoughtless fits of passion, the emperor ordered all the Turkish merchants at Constantinople to be imprisoned and their property to be sequestered. The sultan's revenge was prompt and terrible. He broke into the vale of the Maeander, and ravaged the country to the walls of Antioch of Phrygia. Numbers of the inhabitants were carried away into slavery, but an agricultural colony of five thousand families was settled at Philomelium. They were furnished with good farmhouses, and everything necessary for cultivating the land; they were exempt from all taxation for five years, and after that period they were assured that a fixed contribution would be required without the arbitrary additions levied in the Byzantine Empire to cover the expense of collecting the public revenues. This humane policy inflicted a more serious wound on the empire than the devastations of the Turkish armies; for many Christian families, worn out by the financial exactions of the imperial officers, emigrated into the Turkish dominions; and Nicetas informs us that whole towns were abandoned by the Greek inhabitants. Rokneddin subsequently expelled his brother Kaikhosrou from Iconium, and compelled Alexius to purchase peace by the payment of a tribute. Kaikhosrou, after wandering from the court of Aleppo to that of Leo, king of Armenian Cilicia, reached Constantinople as a suppliant, where he was well treated, and remained until the death of Rokneddin, in 1202, enabled him again to mount the throne of Iconium. He had afterwards an opportunity of repaying the obligation he had received as an exile when Alexius III appeared as a fugitive at Iconium.

The whole Vallachian, Bulgarian, and Sclavonian population between Mount Haemus and the Danube was now in arms to secure their independence; and as society was in very much the same condition in these provinces as in the other parts of the Byzantine Empire, many of the native nobles aspired to the throne, or endeavoured to render themselves independent princes. The three Vallachian brothers, Peter, Asan, and John, however, maintained their position as the leaders of the rebellion, and Asan was considered the real founder of the Vallachian or second Bulgarian kingdom, though he was assassinated in the year 1196. His murderer was Ivan, a Bulgarian noble of great military talent, who expected to mount the throne; but both the Bulgarians and Vallachians recognised Peter as king and successor to his brother. Ivan was compelled to seek safety in the Byzantine Empire. Shortly after Peter was assassinated, but his youngest brother John, commonly called Joannice, who had escaped from Constantinople, where he was detained as a hostage, was acknowledged King of Bulgaria. Alexius entrusted the command of the passes of Mount Haemus to Ivan, who for three years (1197-1200) effectually protected Thrace and Macedonia from the incursions of the Vallachians.

During this time, a Vallachian officer in the Byzantine army, named Chryses, who had refused to join his rebellious countrymen, was entrusted with the command of the fortress of Strumitza. The anarchy he saw prevailing round him induced Chryses to declare himself independent; and the Emperor Alexius III, hoping to obtain an easy victory over so weak an enemy, took the field against him in person. In the second campaign, A.D. 1199, the emperor besieged Chryses in the fort of Prosakon, which was situated on high rocks overhanging the

Axios (Vardar). The Byzantine troops stormed the outer enclosure of Prosakon, and attacked the citadel with such vigour that their showers of missiles drove the enemy behind the ramparts. But the emperor had no scaling-ladders, tools, or machines for an assault ready; the plate, provisions, wine, and baggage of the imperial household had been brought forward with the main body of the army, and the artillery and warlike stores had been left behind until fresh means of transport should be collected. After a vain attack, in which many of the bravest soldiers and officers perished, the troops were repulsed. Alexius, finding that it would require more time and labour to take Prosakon than he had expected, concluded a treaty with Chryses, leaving him in possession of Prosakon and Strumitza, on condition that he acknowledged himself a subject, and held his command as an officer named by the emperor.

The weak conduct of Alexius induced Ivan to aspire at forming an independent principality in Thrace and Macedonia. In 1200 he threw off his allegiance to the Byzantine Empire, defeated an army commanded by the protostrator Manuel Kamytzes, whom he took prisoner, and, descending the valley of the Nestos, roused all the Bulgarian and Sclavonian population to revolt, from Mosynopolis to Xantheia, Mount Pangaeum, and Abdera.

Alexius took the field against Ivan in person, but the campaign was almost immediately terminated by a treaty. The emperor, after taking possession of the fort of Stenimachos, agreed to allow Ivan to remain as governor of the country he occupied, promised him his granddaughter in marriage, and allowed him to assume the ensigns of a member of the imperial family. Ivan, deceived by these proofs of amity, visited Constantinople, where he was thrown into prison, Alexius perverting a passage of the psalmist as an excuse for his treachery.

As soon as Ivan began to treat with Alexius, the Bulgarian guards of Manuel Kamytzes carried their prisoner into the dominions of Joannice, king of Bulgaria. Chryses, however, paid his ransom, and Kamytzes was brought to Strumitza. Alexius, with his usual rapacity and injustice, had sequestered the immense private fortune of Kamytzes as soon as he heard of his defeat; and he now refused to repay Chryses 200 lb. of gold from the treasures he had so unjustly seized. Kamytzes, enraged at this act of injustice, formed an alliance with Chryses, and determined to raise the ransom by plundering the empire. The two generals invaded Pelagonia, and took Prilapos. Kamytzes then marched into Thessaly, and extended his ravages over all Greece, exciting considerable commotion in the Peloponnesus by his intrigues. In the meantime, a Cypriot of low rank, who was governor of Smolena, also raised the standard of revolt; and the Patzinaks and Komans plundered the empire. Joannice, king of Bulgaria, availed himself of the general confusion to take possession of the important commercial cities of Constantina and Varna.

The empire seemed on the eve of dissolution; but the danger roused the ministers to activity, and the central government still exercised great power through the existing remains of the old Roman administrative system. A powerful army was brought into the field. Peace was concluded with the King of Bulgaria, by sacrificing Constantina and Varna. Order was in some degree restored in the Peloponnesus and continental Greece. Kamytzes was driven from all his conquests. The Cypriot was compelled to abandon Smolena, and escape into Bulgaria; and Chryses himself surrendered Strumitza to purchase pardon.

#### RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE

The preceding review of the internal condition of the dominions of Alexius III, and of the conduct of his government, renders it by no means surprising that the Byzantine Empire was destroyed by the first energetic attack made on the capital, in spite of the great resources of

which the central administration could still dispose. The insolence with which the Crusaders had been generally treated was deeply resented by the nobility and clergy throughout Western Europe. The Venetians had never forgotten the injustice they had suffered when the Emperor Manuel confiscated the property of their merchants, and they sought an opportunity for revenge; and the weakness of Alexius III now invited every enemy of the Greeks to assail the empire.

The Emperor Henry VI of Germany, son of Frederic Barbarossa, having effected the conquest of Sicily by means of the ransom he had extorted from Richard, king of England, formed the project of invading the Byzantine empire. His ambition, which knew no bounds, easily furnished him with a pretext for war. He claimed all the country from Dyrrachium to Thessalonica as having belonged to the Sicilian crown, and from which Isaac II had driven the troops of William II. Alexius III, on mounting the throne, had purchased peace by promising to pay the German emperor sixteen hundred pounds' weight of gold. A considerable part of this treasure was collected, when the death of Henry VI (A.D. 1197) relieved Alexius from all further alarm on the side of Germany and Sicily; and the money was soon wasted in idle expenditure, and in the foolish war with the Sultan of Iconium about the two Arabian horses which has been mentioned. Philip, who succeeded his brother Henry V, was the son-in-law of Isaac; but he was involved in too many difficulties in Germany to attempt anything against Alexius. The dethroned emperor and his son Alexius were consequently guarded with little care, and at last the young Alexius escaped to Italy in a Pisan ship.

In the meantime the Venetians—who had sought in vain, by several embassies to Constantinople, to obtain payment of the sums which remained due to them under the treaty of indemnity concluded with the Emperor Manuel in 1174—found it prudent, after the death of Henry VI, to conclude a commercial treaty with Alexius III, which was ratified by a golden bull of the emperor in 1199. Though the emperor granted them extensive commercial privileges and immunity from many duties paid by his Greek subjects, he treated them as vassals of the empire; and the treaty, whether because it failed to secure payment of the indemnity, or because its provisions were not fairly carried into execution, seems to have increased rather than allayed the hostile feelings of the Venetians. Venice soon found allies to join her in seeking to obtain revenge by open war.

When the leaders of the fourth crusade assembled at Venice to embark for Palestine, they were unable to pay the stipulated sum for transport. Thirty-four thousand marks of silver were wanting to complete their contract. The Doge of Venice, Henry Dandolo, a blind hero of ninety years of age, then proposed that the republic should defer the claim, and allow the fleet to depart immediately, on condition that the Crusaders joined the Venetians in reducing the city of Zara, which had lately rebelled, and admitted a Hungarian garrison. In vain the greatest of the popes, Innocent III, menaced the Crusaders with excommunication if they dared to attack a city belonging to a monarch who, like Andrew of Hungary, had taken the cross. Dandolo, who was as able a statesman as Innocent, and a man of a firmer mind, set the threats of the Papal See at defiance, and persuaded the superstitious barons that the Pope was acting from motives of policy, not religion. He succeeded in conducting the greater part of the Crusaders to Zara, which was soon taken; and this unholy crusade commenced by plundering a Christian city, defended by the troops of a crusading king.

While the Crusaders were passing the winter at Zara, ambassadors from the Emperor Philip of Germany solicited their assistance to restore his nephew, the young Alexius Angelos, and his father, Isaac II, to the throne of Constantinople. In spite of the opposition of many French nobles, the Belgians, Venetians, and Lombards determined to attack the Byzantine Empire. A treaty was signed, by which the Crusaders and Venetians engaged to replace Isaac II and his son Alexius on the throne, and the young Alexius bound himself to pay them the sum of two hundred thousand marks of silver, and to furnish the whole expedition with provisions for a year. He engaged, also, to acknowledge the papal supremacy, to accompany the Crusaders in person to Egypt, or else to furnish a contingent of ten thousand men to their army, with pay for a

year; and he promised to maintain during his life a corps of five hundred cavalry in Palestine for the defence of the Latin possessions. Thus, says Nicetas, Alexius, who was as young in mind as in years, consented to change the ancient usages of the Romans.

The storm that was gathering in the Adriatic seems to have caused Alexius III very little alarm. He wrote to Pope Innocent III, who was regarded as the head of this crusade, requesting him to prevent the expedition from visiting the Byzantine Empire, as such a proceeding would frustrate his plans for the deliverance of the Holy Land. To this letter Innocent returned an evasive answer, assuming the right of deciding to whom the Byzantine crown really belonged.

The fleet sailed from Zara in the month of April 1203, accompanied by the young Alexius, who joined the Crusaders with a numerous suite of German knights. It stopped at Dyrrachium, where the governor presented the keys to Alexius as the representative of his father, Isaac II. Corfu followed the example; and Andros and Euboea, at which the expedition touched, changed their allegiance with equal readiness. No one showed any disposition to defend the rights of Alexius III. A prosperous voyage conducted the fleet within sight of Constantinople on the 23d June, and the troops were soon landed near Chalcedon, which they occupied, as well as Chrysopolis (Scutari).

Constantinople was as ill prepared to receive the enemy as when it was saved by the valour of Conrad of Montferrat, whose younger brother, Boniface, now commanded the army that had arrived to attack it. The imperial fleet had been so neglected that only twenty galleys could be rendered fit for service; the discipline of the troops had been neglected; and in spite of the great wealth and population of the city, few of the citizens were inclined to take up arms to defend the empire. Alexius III endeavoured to negotiate, but all his offers were rejected, and the Crusaders transported their cavalry across the Bosphorus. The emperor had sent troops to prevent their landing; but when the Venetian transports approached close to the shore above Galata, and let down the bridges which opened in the sides of the vessels, the cavalry bounded on shore, and mounted with such order and rapidity that the Greek troops were immediately put to flight, and the imperial tent formed part of the first spoils of the empire. Galata was protected by fortifications, of which the line may be traced in some parts of the existing walls. Towards the sea they were flanked by a great tower, to which one end of the immense chain that closed the entrance of the port was secured. The other end was made fast in the citadel within the walls of the great palace. The besiegers prepared to attack the tower, the fleet to force the chain, when an unfortunate sortie of the Greeks enabled the Latin troops to render themselves masters of the tower by entering it along with the fugitives. The chain was soon after broken by one of the heaviest of the transports, armed with an immense pair of shears, which enabled the Venetians to bring the whole weight of the ship, impelled by a strong wind, to press on the chain. It broke in two, and the fleet ranged itself in the port near the present dockyard.

It now remained to storm Constantinople, which had once enjoyed the reputation of being impregnable, and which had, on eleven great occasions, repulsed the attacks of powerful armies. But Alexius I had destroyed the charm of its impregnability, and its walls were in a neglected state. The Emperor Manuel, during the second crusade, had found it prudent to strengthen the fortifications near the palace of Blachern at the northern angle. It was on this side that the Crusaders determined to attack the city, while the Venetians assailed it near the center of the port. The army, formed into six divisions, encamped on the hill above the modern suburb of Eyoub, with the powerful engines they had brought for the attack of Jerusalem. The young Alexius summoned the people of Constantinople to open their gates and replace his father on the throne; but the people, who considered him an apostate from the Orthodox Church, treated his propositions with scorn. The Crusaders, not being in sufficient force to occupy the whole line of the land wall from the port to the Propontis, contented themselves with guarding the gate near the palace of Blachern, and left the others open to the Greeks to make their sorties—convinced that, whenever they could meet the enemy in a fair field, they were sure of victory. But the garden walls and enclosures often enabled the besieged to harass the Crusaders with

sudden attacks, in which they lost many men. At last, on the 17th of July, the Crusaders having effected a breach in one of the towers opposite their camp, a general attack was simultaneously made on the city both by sea and land.

The Crusaders assaulted the breach with desperate courage, but after a long and bloody struggle they were repulsed by the English and Danish guards, whose battle-axes were well adapted for defending the walls. The Pisan auxiliaries also distinguished themselves by their valour. The Emperor Alexius III viewed the defeat of the Crusaders from a tower in the palace of Blachern, and he was urged by the officers of his suite to put himself at the head of the Varangian guard and attack the disordered Franks. A vigorous attack of the Byzantine army, under the command of his son-in-law, Theodore Lascaris, who was then at his side ready for action, might at this moment have saved Constantinople. But Alexius was incapable of any exertion. The Byzantine army was nevertheless drawn out in order of battle without the walls.

While the Crusaders suffered a defeat by land, the Venetians were completely successful by sea. They had constructed high towers of woodwork in some of their vessels, and these towers were furnished with bridges which could be let down on the walls of the city. Many other galleys, whose tops were filled with archers and crossbowmen, supported the attack, and swept the defenders from the fortifications. The old doge, in complete armour on the deck of his galley, encouraged his countrymen; and when he gave the signal for the grand assault, he ordered the crew of his ship to press forward, in order to be the first to touch the walls. In a few minutes many bridges were firmly fixed on the battlements, and after a short and desperate struggle the banner of Saint Mark was seen waving on a lofty tower overlooking the center of the port. Twenty-five towers and the connecting line of wall were soon in possession of the Venetians. But the narrow streets of the city, and the vigorous defence of the Greeks, who defended their property with more valour than they had defended the walls, arrested the progress of the Venetians. In order to penetrate into the center of the city, and at the same time to keep open their communications with the port, they set fire to the houses before them. The conflagration soon extended from the foot of the hill of Blachern to the monastery of Evergetes, and as far as the Devteron. At this critical moment the news reached Dandolo that the attack of the Crusaders had failed, and that the Byzantine army was issuing from Constantinople to assail their camp. He immediately abandoned all his conquests, and hastened with the whole Venetian force to support his allies. But when he reached the camp the danger was already past. The Emperor Alexius, after examining the Crusaders for some time, ordered his troops to reenter Constantinople.

During the following night he assembled a few of his confidential creatures, and, carrying off as much of the imperial treasures and jewels as he was able to transport, he abandoned Constantinople, and escaped to Debeltos.

### Sect. III

#### The Conquest of Constantinople and the Partition of the Byzantine Empire

A.D. 1203-1204.

Before any of the ambitious nobles, who were usually watching for a revolution in order to place the imperial crown on their own heads, could take advantage of the cowardice and flight of Alexius III, the intendant of the imperial treasury, a eunuch named Constantine, contrived to induce the Varangian guard to replace Isaac II on the throne, by promising them a liberal donative. The blind emperor was immediately conducted from the monastery where he



had been latterly confined, to the palace, and proclaimed emperor, with his son Alexius IV as his colleague. The administration underwent no change, and only those courtiers were driven from their places who were attached to the personal interests of the late emperor. Most of the Byzantine statesmen were satisfied with this arrangement. It purchased peace for the moment; and it might, in their opinion, afford the Greeks, who prided themselves on their intellectual superiority over the Latins, an opportunity of obtaining some diplomatic advantage over their enemies. The presumptuous vanity of Greeks made them overlook the profound knowledge of Eastern affairs possessed by the Venetians, who equalled their enemies in cunning, and far surpassed them in daring. Even the Crusaders, though incapable of steady counsels, had their suspicions fully awakened, and distrusted the intrigues of the Greeks.

As soon, therefore, as it was known in the Latin camp that Isaac II was restored to the throne, they were prepared to meet with chicane in place of open hostilities. Alexius IV was retained as a hostage until envoys of their own should bring back a report of the real state of affairs within the walls of Constantinople, and obtain from Isaac the ratification of the treaty concluded by his son at Zara. Isaac, on hearing the concessions made by his son, frankly informed the Crusaders that he saw no possibility of carrying the stipulations of the treaty into effect; but with his accustomed weakness he immediately consented to ratify it, in order to have the pleasure of embracing his son. Alexius IV then made his solemn entry into the capital on horseback, between Baldwin, count of Flanders, and the doge, Henry Dandolo, and on the 1st of August he was crowned as his father's colleague. The long imprisonment of Isaac II, and the loss of his eyesight, had weakened his feeble mind; while Alexius, an idle and ill-educated youth, destitute of natural talent, having contracted the habits and vices of the Franks, was incompetent to supply the deficiencies of his father. Both emperors, however, were sensible of the insurmountable difficulties of their position; they felt that they could not trust their own subjects, and they perceived the danger of relying on the Latins. The blindness of Isaac, and his constant attacks of gout, made him pay more attention to his own sufferings than to the dangers of the empire. As human aid promised no relief in either case, he sought consolation from monks and astrologers, who flattered him with imaginary prophetic revelations, and the supposed results of divination. These cursed monks, as Nicetas calls them, dined at the imperial table, where they consumed the finest fish of the Bosphorus, and the richest wines of the Archipelago, which they paid for by persuading Isaac that he was destined to recover his sight and health at the very time he was visibly sinking into the grave. The conduct of Alexius was as foolish as that of Isaac, and he was equally inattentive to public business. His thoughtless behavior rendered him contemptible both to the Greeks and Latins. He spent whole days in the tents of the Crusaders, feasting and gambling with the young nobles, who, in their revels, sometimes took the imperial bonnet, ornamented with precious stones, from his head, and replaced it with the woollen cap commonly worn by the Latins.

It soon became evident that the Byzantine government was unable to satisfy the demands of the Crusaders; but the army and fleet were regularly supplied with provisions, and from time to time their leaders were furnished with such sums of money as the emperors were able to collect. These instalments were obtained from the money in the imperial treasury which had escaped Alexius III and his courtiers, from sums raised by confiscating the private wealth accumulated by the Empress Euphrosyne and some of her relations, and by collecting the gold and silver plate, and the jewels in the imperial palaces, the monasteries, and even the churches. But all was inadequate to discharge the debt, while the feelings of irritation between the Greeks and Latins were daily increasing. To avoid a collision, the Latin army was encamped close to Galata, and the soldiers were only allowed to visit Constantinople during the day in small numbers.

The 29th of September, St Michael's Day, was nevertheless fixed for the departure of the Crusaders; and Alexius IV, in order to extend his power in the provinces, and collect additional sums of money, left Constantinople, accompanied by a considerable body of Latin troops under the command of the Marquis of Montferrat, a selfish intriguer, who increased the general

difficulties by seeking to obtain clandestine profits for himself. He cheated Alexius with as little delicacy as knavish associates usually display in their dealings with foolish spendthrifts. Before Alexius mounted the throne, the marquis obtained a promise of the investiture of Crete; and he now exacted an engagement for the payment of one thousand six hundred pounds' weight of gold before accompanying the young emperor. The movements of the dethroned Alexius rendered it absolutely necessary to attack him without delay; for, finding that he was not pursued, he had collected a considerable body of troops at Debeltos, occupied Adrianople, and secured his authority over the greater part of Thrace. The young Alexius IV soon drove him out of Adrianople, and took possession of Philippopolis and Kypsela; but it was found that no money could be hastily collected in a province exhausted by continual hostilities, beyond what was required for supplying the immediate wants of the troops in the field. The marquis and his followers, who thought more of securing payment of their subsidies than of assisting the empire, soon compelled Alexius IV to return to Constantinople, though their precipitate retreat left Alexius III in possession of Mosynopolis and all Macedonia, and allowed Joannice, king of Bulgaria, who had crossed Mount Haemus in order to profit by the disturbed state of the Byzantine empire, to conquer many places in Thrace.

The relations between the Byzantine government and the Crusaders were thus rendered every day more complicated and less friendly. The Crusaders insisted on the immediate fulfilment of all the stipulations of the treaty; the emperors complained that the Crusaders left the provinces from which great part of the revenues were derived in the hands of the usurper, while they employed themselves in plundering the property of the friendly population in the vicinity of Constantinople. As the emperors were unable to pay the immense sums they had promised, and the Crusaders had really only fulfilled a part of what they had engaged to perform, nothing but mutual concessions could prevent a quarrel. The complicated nature of the obligations between the Byzantine government and the Crusaders and Venetians on one side, and between the feudal barons and the Venetians on the other, rendered a peaceful termination of the expedition almost impossible. Things were in that peculiar state, when nothing but great talents and great moderation on the part of three different powers could insure tranquillity. One man alone possessed the talents and the authority capable of preserving order; and this very man, Henry Dandolo, was eagerly watching for every event tending to hasten the collision which he looked forward to as inevitable.

An accidental calamity tended greatly to increase the hatred of the Greeks to the Latins. On the 19th of August, while young Alexius was absent on his Thracian expedition, a dreadful fire destroyed a considerable part of Constantinople, adding greatly to the sufferings of the population, and to the embarrassments of the government. This conflagration originated in the wilful act of a few Flemish soldiers, who had crossed the port to visit some of their countrymen established as merchants in the empire. After drinking together until they were nearly drunk, the Crusaders proposed attacking a Turkish mosque in the neighbourhood, and plundering the rich warehouses of the Turkish merchants who traded with Persia and Egypt. Their pillage was interrupted by the Greeks, who drove them back, and pursued them so hotly towards the port, that the Flemings, in order to save themselves, set fire to some houses in their rear. A strong wind caused the conflagration to spread with frightful rapidity, and it burned for the space of two days. The entire breadth of the city, from the port to the Propontis, was laid in ashes, forming a belt of cinders a mile and a half in extent, over which it was necessary to pass from one part of the town to the other. The fire passed close to the Church of St Sophia, destroying the richest quarter of the city. Splendid palaces, filled with works of ancient art and antique classic manuscripts, as well as warehouses stored with immense wealth, were destroyed by this conflagration, from the calamitous effects of which Constantinople never recovered. About fifteen thousand Latins had hitherto continued to reside in Constantinople as traders and artisans. The fury of the populace and the ruin of their houses now compelled them to seek refuge at Galata, under the protection of the Crusaders.

The losses caused by this fire, and the hostile disposition it caused in the breasts of the Greeks both against the emperors and the Latins, rendered it impossible to make the pecuniary payments required by the Crusaders. But their threats compelled the Byzantine government to seize the golden ornaments and immense silver candelabra that ornamented St Sophia's and other churches in the capital. The golden shrines that enclosed the relics of saints and martyrs, and the silver frames of holy pictures, were melted down and handed over to the Venetian commissaries. A new treaty was negotiated with the Crusaders, for the prolongation of their stay until the following Easter. The emperors engaged to defray the whole expenses of the army and fleet during the interval, though the Venetians exacted an additional freight for their ships. The young Alexius IV promised to oblige the Patriarch to proclaim Innocent III head of the whole Christian church, and wrote to that ambitious pontiff an assurance that he was labouring to reunite the Eastern Church under papal supremacy. Many of the Crusaders were extremely unwilling to remain, and their army showed signs of discontent. The Greeks, on the other hand, enraged at their sufferings, and the insults offered to their Church, began to think of resistance. They remembered that they had repulsed the attack of the land troops, and their behaviour indicated an approaching insurrection. Alexius IV thought at times of placing himself at the head of the national party, and formed a friendship with Alexius Dukas Murtzuphlos, who was the most daring leader of the war party; but his father warned him of the danger, and convinced him that, without the assistance of the Crusaders, it would be impossible to defend the throne.

The monks and astrologers who surrounded Isaac II persuaded him to transport the bronze boar, which Euphrosyne had mutilated, from the hippodrome into the palace, as an effectual means of taming the fury of the populace of Constantinople, of which they said this boar was the type. The populace really resembled the emperor in superstition so closely that they emulated his astrological follies. They conceived a fancy that a splendid bronze statue of Minerva, thirty feet high, was the genius of the Latins, whom its attitude appeared to invite. This noble work of Hellenic art the Greeks destroyed.

Things at last reached a crisis. The Crusaders sent a formal declaration of war to the emperors, in case they failed to fulfill the conditions of the new treaty and pay the money due. The people of Constantinople rose in rebellion, and declared that they would no longer submit to be governed by emperors who had sold the empire and the church to the Latins. On the 25th of January 1204 the people assembled in St Sophia's, and compelled the members of the senate, the clergy, and the principal nobles of the capital, to attend in order to elect a new emperor.

But as every man of rank knew that the Latins would support the cause of Alexius IV, as a pretext for attacking the city, no one was found who would accept the proffered sovereignty. For three days the confusion continued, until a young man named Nikolas Kanavos was anointed emperor against his will. Isaac II died during this period of anarchy. Alexius IV sent to the Marquis of Montferrat, and made arrangements for introducing the Crusaders into Constantinople; but Alexius Murtzuphlos, hearing of this, placed himself at the head of his military partisans, and, having obtained admittance to the Emperor Alexius late in the evening, frightened him with dreadful accounts of the conduct of the enraged populace. The shouts of the followers of Murtzuphlos were heard at the palace gates. The fate of Andronicus presented itself to the imagination of Alexius, who begged Murtzuphlos to assist him in escaping to the Latins. The traitor, after receiving the ensigns of the imperial rank from the hands of the confiding prince, led him by long galleries to the dungeons of the palace. Alexius Murtzuphlos then returned to his followers, by whom he was proclaimed emperor; and the choice was ratified by all the troops. Kanavos was compelled to descend from the throne; and Alexius IV was strangled in the dungeon to which he had been conducted, after a reign of six months and eight days.

## ALEXIUS V (MURTZUPHLOS), A.D. 1204.

Alexius V, who placed himself on the throne by this daring act of rebellion and assassination, was a member of the great family of Dukas, which had given two emperors to the East, and was closely allied with the families of Comnenos and Angelos. He had received the by-name of Murtzuphlos from his school companions on account of his large overhanging eye-brows. At this time he was generally looked up to by his countrymen as the bravest soldier among the nobility, and he had given proofs of his valour in several skirmishes with the Crusaders. His enemies admit that he was indefatigable in his exertions to re-establish order, and put the fortifications in a state of defence. He restored the discipline of the troops by appearing constantly at their exercises. He preserved tranquillity among the populace by traversing the city frequently on horseback, by night as well as by day, with his mace-of-arms in his hand, he repaired the walls, strengthened the towers, improved the machines for throwing missiles, and formed scaffolds for new engines on the towers most exposed to attack from the side of the port, in order that they might command the decks of the Venetian ships.

As the military energy of the Byzantine empire, like that of modern states, depended in a great measure on its financial resources, and the circumstances under which Murtzuphlos mounted the throne rendered it impossible for him to think of imposing any new tax, even though it was well known that the treasury was empty, he took measures for raising the supplies necessary for the preparations he was carrying on, and for the payment of the mercenary troops, by sequestrating the fortunes of all who had acted as intendants of finance, as collectors of the imperial revenue, or as government contractors, whose property was generally confiscated on the ground that they were deeply indebted to the public. This mode of raising money was popular in the Roman Empire in every age, from the time of Augustus Caesar to that of Dukas Murtzuphlos. But it was impossible to infuse a warlike spirit into the breasts of the Greeks of Constantinople. Both nobles and citizens were equally disgusted with the severe military discipline introduced by the new emperor, who compelled every Greek who was unfit to perform the duties of an officer, or to serve in the cavalry, to range himself in the infantry and do duty on the walls. The merchants and shopkeepers were averse to serve in person, because they paid exorbitant taxes in order that government might find mercenary troops for their defence; and they were ashamed of the ridicule to which they exposed themselves by their awkwardness in military array beside the English, Danes, and Pisans of the imperial guard, who moved in complete armour as easily as the citizens in their holiday garments. Many Greeks, too, of every class, detested the imperial government, and had lost their attachment to the hierarchy of the church. Some looked forward to their destruction as a necessary reform; many viewed it with indifference, and some with pleasure.

For two months the new emperor and the Crusaders prepared themselves with all their energy for the struggle which was to decide the fate of the Byzantine Empire. Murtzuphlos, by repeated skirmishes, ably conducted, succeeded in circumscribing the foraging parties of the Crusaders in the immediate vicinity of the capital, and Henry of Flanders was obliged to march with a large body of cavalry as far as Philea on the Black Sea, in order to collect a supply of provisions. The emperor attempted to surprise this division on its return; but the Belgian soldiers of Henry, though suddenly attacked, closed their ranks without confusion, and completely defeated the Greeks. Twenty of the bravest horsemen of the imperial guard were slain in the first charge; and the grand standard of the Virgin, which always accompanied the emperor when he took the field in person, and which was regarded by the people as the talisman of the empire, was taken by Henry. The Byzantine troops suffered so severely in this encounter that Murtzuphlos did not again venture to lead them without the walls.

The Crusaders and Venetians had prepared everything for a new assault by the end of March 1204. A council was then held to arrange the manner in which the plunder of

Constantinople was to be divided, and to settle the partition of the Byzantine Empire. The treaty then signed put an end to the Eastern Roman Empire; for neither the Latin empire of Romania, established by the conquerors, nor the Greek empires of Nicaea and of Constantinople which succeeded, have a just claim to be considered the legitimate representatives either of the policy or of the dignity of the Byzantine government.

This treaty was concluded by the Doge Henry Dandolo on the part of the Venetians, and by Boniface, marquis of Montferrat, Baldwin, count of Flanders, Louis, count of Blois, and Henry, count of St Pol, on the part of the Crusaders, in order to avoid all disputes, should it please God, for His honour and glory, to grant them the victory over their enemies. The Venetians very naturally considered that the freight of the expedition was the first debt which it was the duty of the Crusaders to discharge. But to prevent the whole booty from being absorbed by this claim, it was provided that the Venetians were to receive three quarters of the plunder, and the Crusaders one, until the whole sum due to Venice was discharged. In every case the rations necessary for the whole expedition were to be issued from the common stock according to the established rule. The Venetians were to enjoy all the privileges in the conquered territory which they possessed in their own country, and were to be governed by their own laws. Twelve electors were to be chosen as soon as Constantinople was taken, who were to elect an emperor; and they were to choose the man best able to govern the new conquests for the glory of God and the advantage of the Holy Roman Church: six of these electors were to be named by the barons, and six by the Venetians. The emperor was to possess as his immediate domain the palaces of Blachern and Bucoleon, with one quarter of the Byzantine empire; the remaining three quarters were to be equally divided between the Crusaders and the Venetians. The clergy of the party to which the emperor did not belong were to elect the patriarch of the Eastern Church, and the ecclesiastics of the two parties were to occupy the benefices in the territories assigned to their respective nations. The two parties bound themselves to remain united for another year—that is, until the 31st of March 1205; and all who then established themselves in the empire were to take an oath of fealty, and do homage to the emperor. Twelve commissioners were to be chosen by each party, in order to divide the conquered territory into fiefs, and determine the service due by the crown vassals to the emperor. No person belonging to any nation at war with the parties to the treaty was to be received in the empire as long as hostilities lasted. This stipulation was evidently inserted by the Venetians, and directed against their great commercial and political rivals, the Genoese. Both parties were to exert all their influence to induce the Pope to ratify and confirm the treaty, and excommunicate any who should refuse to execute its stipulations. The emperor was to swear to observe the treaty; and in case it should be found necessary to make any modifications in it before his election, the Doge of Venice and the Marquis of Montferrat, with the twelve electors, were empowered to make the change required. The doge, Henry Dandolo, as a personal honour, was dispensed from taking an oath of fealty to the future emperor for any fief or office he might hold.

It appears that an act of partition, describing the territories comprised in the quarter of the empire assigned to the emperor, in the quarter and half quarter assigned to the Venetians, and in the quarter and half quarter assigned to the Crusaders, was drawn up at the same time as the treaty. But the imperfect copies of this act which have been preserved, the manner in which the geographical names are disfigured, and the modifications to which it was immediately subjected, in consequence of disputes, exchanges, and sales of the various lots, render the fragments we possess a doubtful authority for determining the original partition of the empire.

On the 9th of April everything was ready for the assault, and at daybreak the whole force of the expedition moved forward to attack the towers on the side of the port, for it seemed doubtful whether the diminished numbers of the land forces would be able to make any impression on the numerous mercenaries who manned the land wall under the eye of a leader like Murtzuphlos. On the other hand, the long line of wall towards the port offered no flank defences beyond the slight projection and elevation of its towers; while the assailants could take advantage of the quays for landing merchandise in making their attack with ordinary scaling-

ladders, and concentrate an overwhelming flight of missiles on any given point from three hundred engines planted on the decks of their ships. Murtzuphlos had, however, done much to strengthen this part of the fortifications, and it was found well prepared to offer a desperate resistance. The assault was commenced with the greatest fury, and persisted in with the fiercest perseverance. Many Crusaders landed on the quays, and planted their ladders against the walls, but every assailant who reached their summit was hurled down headlong. The machines of the defenders broke the yards of those ships that approached the towers, and swept the men from their decks. At length, after a contest of hours, and the loss of some of their bravest soldiers, the Crusaders were obliged to retire.

But the assailants were not men to be easily discouraged by danger, and they determined to renew the attack on the 12th of April. The interval was employed in preparing more powerful means of escalade. The largest ships of the fleet were bound together in pairs, their decks were protected by stronger bulwarks, and their tops were enlarged. The fleet, ranged in successive lines, was enabled to bring an overwhelming force against the defenders of any single tower. The attack commenced by an unremitted volley of missiles against the points which it was proposed to storm. When the defenders were compelled to conceal themselves from this volley, the ships destined for the assault were impelled rapidly to the wall, aided by a strong north wind, which carried the heaviest double ships with rapidity alongside the towers. The *Pilgrim* and the *Paradise* were the first to plant their platform on a Byzantine tower, and a band of Venetians and Crusaders sprang in eager emulation at the same instant on the hostile ramparts. The shout of victory spread instantaneously through the host, and four towers were immediately stormed. In a few minutes, three of the city gates were thrown open, and the knights began to land their horses from the ships in the rear. Murtzuphlos had pitched his tents and encamped the imperial guard at the monastery of Pantepoptes, in the open space left by the first conflagration. He saw the victory gained before it was in his power to send succours to the defenders; and when the hostile banners were already floating from the towers, his guards refused to march against the victorious enemy, and fled with their emperor to the palace of Bucoleon. The conquerors immediately occupied his encampment, and took possession of the neighbouring palace of Blachern; but the day was too far spent to do more than establish themselves firmly in the positions they had seized. The leaders deemed it imprudent to allow any part of their troops to advance into the streets of a city which had not yet capitulated, and to which the imperial palace formed a strong citadel, garrisoned by a numerous body of well-disciplined mercenaries. To increase the confusion among the Greeks, and prevent their attacking the camp during the night, the Crusaders set fire to the houses on their flank. This third conflagration destroyed the eastern part of the city beyond the monastery of Evergetes, and extended near the sea as far as the Drungarion. Villehardoin says that the three fires lighted by the Crusaders destroyed more houses than were contained in the three largest cities in France.

The Emperor Alexius V, finding no one disposed to defend his throne, embarked in a galley with the Empress Euphrosyne and her daughter Eudocia, whom he had married, and fled from the capital.

(The imperial families of Comnenos and Angeloe present us scenes as tragical as anything in the ancient drama “presenting Thebes and Pelops’ line”. Alexius II and his sister, the beautiful Maria, were murdered by Andronicus LI, whose horrid death was accompanied by the murder of his sons. Isaac, the tyrant of Cyprus, the blind Isaac II, the fugitive Alexius III, the murdered Alexius IV, and Eudocia, the daughter of Alexius III, all bore a part in fearful tragedies. Eudocia was married to Simeon, king of Servia, who retired into a monastery on Mount Papykes. His son Stephen, struck with the beauty of his young stepmother, married her, and had children by the marriage. A scandalous quarrel, however, arose; he divorced her, and expelled her from the palace, almost naked. As nobody dared to assist her, she would probably have perished, had not Fulk, the king’s brother, sent her to Constantinople. Murtzuphlos, who had already divorced two wives, married her; and after the execution of Murtzuphlos, she married Leo Sguros, the chief of Argos, Nauplia, and Corinth).

In the meantime, the people of every rank crowded to St Sophia's, and exhibited a strange example of the political weakness and demoralization caused by the complete centralization of all executive action. No one thought of taking advantage of the numerous means of defence which were still available. The election of a new emperor was necessary to secure obedience to any order, and even in this scene of anarchy two claimants presented themselves as pretenders to the throne. Fortune determined the election in favour of Theodore Lascaris; but after a vain attempt to rally the imperial guard, and excite the Greeks to active resistance, he found it necessary to escape to Asia as soon as morning dawned; adding a third to the fugitive emperors who were wandering the Byzantine provinces in search of their empire.

The Crusaders and Venetians met with no further resistance. The Marquess of Montferrat occupied the palace of Bucoleon, and Henry of Flanders that of Blachern. The Byzantine troops laid down their arms on receiving assurance of personal safety. Guards were then placed over the imperial treasury and the arsenal, but the troops and sailors were allowed to plunder the city without restraint. The insolence of victory was never more haughtily displayed; every crime was perpetrated without shame. The houses of the peaceful citizens were plundered, their wives dishonoured, and their children enslaved. Churches and monasteries were rifled; monuments of religious zeal were defaced; horses and mules were stabled in temples whose architectural magnificence was unequalled in the rest of Europe. The ceremonies of the Greeks were ridiculed; the priests were insulted; the sacred plate, the precious shrines in which the relics of martyrs and saints were preserved, the rich altar-cloths, and the jewelled ornaments, were carried off. The soldiers and their female companions made the Church of St Sophia the scene of licentious orgies; and Nicetas recounts with grief and indignation that "one of the priestesses of Satan" who accompanied the Crusaders seated herself on the Patriarch's throne, sang ribald songs before the high altar, and danced in the sacred edifice, to the delight of the infuriated soldiery. It is not necessary to detail all the miseries suffered by the unfortunate Greeks; Pope Innocent III has left a description of the scene so horrible that it will hardly bear a literal translation. The age was one of fierce wars and dreadful calamities; but the sack of Constantinople so far exceeded everything else that happened, both in its glory and shame, as to become the favourite theme of popular song and dramatic representation throughout the known world. Villehardoin says that every Crusader occupied the house that pleased his fancy; and men who the day before were in absolute poverty, suddenly found themselves possessed of wealth, and living in luxury.

Some of the Latin clergy vainly endeavoured to moderate the fury which their own bigoted precepts had instilled into the troops; but many thought only of collecting a rich booty of relics, and showed themselves as little scrupulous as the Venetians and soldiers in robbing churches and monasteries. Well might the Greeks contrast the conduct of this army of the soldiers of Christ under the especial care of its holy father the Pope, with the behaviour of the Mussulman troops under the command of Saladin, who conquered Jerusalem. The Christians had bound themselves by an oath not to shed the blood of Christians; they had made vows of abstinence and chastity. What attention they paid to these vows when they turned their arms against a Christian state, which for many centuries had formed the bulwark of Europe against the invasion of the Saracens, is recorded by the Pope himself.

The chiefs of the expedition at last determined to re-establish order; but before it was possible to restore the salutary restraint of military discipline, they were obliged to put several of their mutinous followers to death, and the Count of St Pol hung a French knight with his shield round his neck. This severe punishment was inflicted, not for an abuse of the rights of conquest towards the defenceless Greeks, but as an act of public vengeance against a traitor who had defrauded his companions by concealing a portion of the plunder. Thanks were then offered up to God with the greatest solemnity for the glorious conquest of a city containing half a million of inhabitants by an army composed of twenty thousand men; and "God wills it" was fervently shouted by the pious brigands.

A proclamation was published, ordering all the booty to be collected in three of the principal churches of the city, and promising personal protection to the inhabitants. Most of the Byzantine nobility availed themselves of this opportunity to escape from the city. Nicetas the historian, who for the last century has been our best guide in the Byzantine annals, has left us an account of his own adventures during the catastrophe of his country. The palace he occupied before the calamities commenced was situated in the quarter Sphoralrion, near St Sophia's, and was enriched with many treasures of ancient art and literature. It was destroyed in the second conflagration, and the historian then retired to a smaller dwelling in a narrow street. In this house many of his friends sought refuge; and a Venetian whom he had protected in the days of his official power now armed himself as a Crusader, and guarded the entrance as if it was his own quarters. This succeeded for some days; but as soon as the proclamation was known, Nicetas and his friends resolved to quit Constantinople, and abandon their property in order to escape from insult. On Saturday, the fifth day after the capture of the city, while a cold wind from the Black Sea gave the morning a wintry aspect, Nicetas, accompanied by his pregnant wife, and surrounded by his children and friends, walked through the streets of the capital to gain the Golden Gate, where some wretched conveyance might be obtained, by means of which they could reach Selymbria. Several of the party carried infants in their arms, for their servants and slaves had deserted them. The young women of rank and beauty were placed in the midst of the band of exiles, their faces disfigured with dust, and their figures concealed in unsightly dresses. In this way the fugitives passed many bands of soldiers without interruption, but when they reached the Church of St Mokios a soldier seized a beautiful girl, and carried her off by force. The father, feeble from sickness, was unable to pursue the ravisher, and he implored Nicetas to save his daughter. The historian followed the soldier, imploring all the Latins he met to protect the honour of an innocent family, and save a noble lady from insult and slavery. He appealed to the proclamation which it was their duty to respect, until his eloquent and pathetic gestures, rather than his words, awakened compassion. A party of Crusaders accompanied Nicetas to the house into which the maiden had been carried, where they found the robber standing at the door. He denied all knowledge of the transaction; but when the house was searched, the young lady was found, and conducted back to her father. The sad procession soon after reached the Golden Gate, and gained the road to Selymbria. It was joined by the Patriarch, now travelling forth, like a true apostle, without attendants and sumpter-mules, and as destitute as the rest of his companions. The exiles reached Selymbria in safety; but the people generally treated their sufferings with derision, by which they were more galled than by the insolence of the Franks.

The financial oppression of the Byzantine government, the vices of the court, and the crimes of the recent emperors, were attributed by the people to the meanness and rapacity of the nobility and dignified clergy, who were supposed to have upheld the vicious fabric of the imperial administration for their own profit. The people, therefore, expressed their satisfaction in rude terms when they saw princes, patriarchs, and senators, reduced to the state of poverty in which they were themselves living. The calamity appeared to them an equitable dispensation of Divine justice. Nor was this judgment confined to the lower classes; on the contrary, it was the deliberate opinion of many Greeks throughout the provinces that the ruin of the Byzantine empire was caused by the base complicity of the senate and the clergy in all the abuses and rapacity which has disgraced the public administration since the death of Manuel I. Nicetas complains bitterly of the injustice of this opinion, and endeavours to throw the blame of the taking of Constantinople on the cowardice of the troops and the worthlessness of their officers; but it is certain that the civil government was more to blame than the troops for the fall of the empire.

The first care of the victors was to divide the plunder accumulated in the three churches they had selected for magazines. Sacred plate, golden crowns, images of saints, shrines of relics, candelabra of precious metals, statues of ancient gods, precious ornaments of Hellenic art and of Byzantine jewellery, were heaped up with coined money from the imperial treasury, and with silk, velvet, embroidered tissues, and jewels, collected from the warehouses of merchants, from



the shops of goldsmiths, and by domestic spoliation. The booty, in spite of fraud, concealment, waste, and conflagration, amounted to three hundred thousand marks of silver, besides ten thousand horses and mules which had belonged to the cavalry or the imperial stables. Baldwin of Flanders, the future emperor, declares that the riches of Constantinople equalled the accumulated wealth of all Western Europe. The spoil was first divided into two equal parts, and the Crusaders then paid the Venetians from their portion the sum of fifty thousand marks, according to the original convention concluded at Venice. The remaining one hundred thousand marks were divided in the following proportion: each horseman received double the share of a foot-soldier, and each knight double the share of a horseman. The small difference between the shares of a common soldier and a knight proves that the feudal militia of this expedition, which was a fair type of the military force of the age in Western Europe, consisted of men in a higher social rank than those who form our modern armies. It was necessary to be born a gentleman in order to be a soldier in the twelfth century; and as great physical powers and long practice alone could enable a man to move with activity under the weight of the armour then worn, the power of raising recruits was restricted to a much smaller proportion of the population than it is in our days, when scientific manoeuvres and distant artillery do much of the work formerly achieved by the personal courage and the strong arm of the combatants.

On the 9th of May, Baldwin, count of Flanders, was elected Emperor of the East, and the sceptre passed into the hands of the Belgians. The personal character of Baldwin, his military accomplishments, his youth, power, and virtue, all pointed him out as the leader most likely to enjoy a long and prosperous reign. His piety and the purity of his private life commanded the respect of the Greeks, who vainly hoped to enjoy peace under his government. He was one of the few Crusaders who paid strict attention to his vows of abstinence; and a singular proclamation, which he thought it necessary to repeat twice a-week, forbidding all who were guilty of incontinency to sleep within the walls of his palace, shows that he knew the majority of his countrymen easily forgot their vows. The connection of the Belgians with the French, and the little jealousy entertained by the Venetians of a sovereign whose hereditary dominions were so far distant from the possessions of the republic, contributed to the preference of Baldwin.

The two fugitive Byzantine emperors, Alexius III and Alexius Murtzuphlos, wandered about in Macedonia, with little hope of finding partisans disposed to join their cause. Murtzuphlos joined his father-in-law, hoping by their united influence to assemble an army capable of preventing the Crusaders from reaching Thessalonica. But Alexius III feared his son-in-law on account of his military talents, and contrived to seize him, and have his eyes put out. The unfortunate Murtzuphlos was soon taken prisoner by the Crusaders, who carried him to Constantinople, where they tried him for the murder of Alexius IV. Murtzuphlos pleaded that the young Alexius had been deposed and condemned as a traitor by a lawful assembly; but the Crusaders found him guilty, and ordered him to be executed in a singular manner. The last of the Byzantine emperors was precipitated from the top of a column in the Tauros, one of the principal squares in the capital, and was dashed to pieces on the pavement of the city. Alexius III fled as the Crusaders advanced. To gain a new ally, he bestowed the accommodating Eudocia in marriage on Leo Sgueros, who had occupied a great part of Greece; but when that chief was defeated by the Marquess of Montferrat, Alexius submitted to the conqueror, and received a pension. He soon fled to Michael, despot of Epirus; thence he repaired as a suppliant to the court of Gaiaseddin Kaikhosrou II sultan of Iconium, whom he had received with kindness when an exile. The power which Theodore Lascaris had acquired at Nicaea excited the envy of Alexius, though Theodore was the husband of his daughter Anna, and, with the aid of the Turks, he endeavoured to seize his throne. Theodore Lascaris defeated the sultan, and took Alexius prisoner. The dethroned and restless monarch was shut up in a monastery, where he passed the remainder of his life, universally despised as a worthless and cowardly emperor, and detested as an envious and cruel man, utterly void of every feeling of natural affection, honour, or gratitude.

## CONCLUSION

### **End of the Byzantine Empire**

Such was the termination of the Byzantine phase of the Eastern Roman Empire. Many new states were formed from its disjointed members, as had formerly happened at the fall of the Empire of the West. Three of these assumed the rank of empires, and the Belgian Emperor of Constantinople found himself compelled to dispute for the honour of representing the Roman Empire of the East with two Greek sovereigns, who assumed the imperial title at Nicaea and at Trebizond. Most of the European provinces were subjected to a new code of laws, and were forced to adopt new habits and manners. The feudal system was imposed on Greece by its conquerors, and a considerable portion of the Hellenic race never again recovered its independence; but when the power of its feudal princes and of its other masters, the Venetians, the Genoese, and the Knights of St John, declined, it passed under the dominion of the Ottoman Turks. The Greek emperor of Nicaea, even after he had expelled the Belgian emperor from Constantinople, never extended his power over more than a moiety of the Greek nation. The Greek empire of Constantinople was only a counterfeit representation of its Byzantine predecessor, in the same manner as the empire of Charlemagne formed a mere nominal revival of that of Rome. But more instruction would be derived by making the difference in the state of society at the fall of the empires of the East and West, than in tracing analogies which naturally occurred at the dissolution of two states long governed by the same principles of policy and jurisprudence.

The task here assumed is confined to a more restricted field. It will be enough to recapitulate the principal causes which produced the ruin of the Byzantine empire, and to indicate the various influences that operated in transforming the spirit of universality, which characterised the government of the Iconoclast emperors, into the confined Greek nationality that displayed itself under the houses of Comnenos and Angelos. A great modification in the official establishment of the empire took place by the consolidation of arbitrary power in the hands of the Basilian dynasty. The arbitrary nature of the executive power, as then exercised, circumscribed the class from which the higher officials in the administration were selected, and robbed intellectual cultivation, scientific knowledge, and long experience, of the guarantees they previously possessed for attaining high rank in the public service. Courtly privileges, political ignorance, decreased communications, restricted ideas, the decay of internal trade, and a stationary condition of the people, soon proclaimed the decline of society. We are apt to feel surprised that ancient nations submitted tamely to the severe oppression under which they are recorded to have bowed for many successive generations. A careful consideration of the constitution of society, that arose out of the existence of slavery, explains the difficulty. The slaves at Constantinople, as in ancient Rome, were very numerous; many were as well educated as their masters, and mingled habitually with the highest ranks of society. To a large body of these slaves, therefore, the feelings of every class, the extent of popular grievances, the strength of rival factions, and the resources of the central executive power, were as well-known as to the greater part of the free population. The mass of slaves lived in perpetual hostility to the existing order of things, ready to seize any opportunity that might present itself for effecting a social revolution; nor would leaders have been wanting among the slaves themselves, had a favourable moment been found. The free citizens knew the danger in which they lived, and hence their political conduct was fettered by perpetual bonds: they feared an insurrection of their slaves more than the arbitrary power of their emperors.

It may be asserted without hesitation, that the first irremediable injury inflicted on the Byzantine government was the corruption of the administration of justice by ignorant and venal courtiers, whom the Basilian emperors intrusted with the exercise of arbitrary power. The immense influence of the Byzantine judicial system, in maintaining order and activity throughout all ranks of society, is apt to be overlooked, because it was never fully appreciated by contemporary historians. Its social power may be justly estimated by reflecting that the Byzantine law approached much nearer to the principles of equity than the Eastern Church did to the principles of Christianity. As soon as judicial functions were ill performed, general civilization declined. The people, finding that justice was prostituted, and that there was no hope of reforming the administration, ceased to respect the central authority. The great moral tie which had attached the inhabitants of the provinces to the emperors was then broken. A practical separation of the interests of different nations and territories ensued; and a marked change in the relations of those provinces which possessed a national character to the central government was the first manifest sign of the weakness of the empire. The operation of fiscal oppression in accelerating the revolution, and in separating every subject race except the Greek from the government, has been fully treated in the preceding pages. The Armenians, Cappadocians, Cilicians, Bulgarians, Sclavonians, Vallachians, and Albanians were, one after the other, driven to assert their independence; and the supremacy of the Hellenic race in the Byzantine empire, which may be dated from the extinction of the Basilian dynasty, prepared the way for internal revolutions and foreign conquest. The other nations struggled to preserve their independence; the Greeks bartered theirs for official and ecclesiastical power.

The decline of the Byzantine Empire must also be considered as closely connected with the identification of the Greek Church with the Roman administration. This union of the ecclesiastical with the civil government may be also dated from the last years of the Basilian dynasty. It was consummated after the complete schism of the Greek and Latin churches in 1053, which was unfortunately effected by the Patriarch Michael Keroularios, with a degree of violence that implanted a deep hatred in the breasts of the priesthood of the rival sects. By this union of the ecclesiastical with the political administration, the power and influence of the Greek aristocracy was greatly extended and strengthened, but the spirit of the government was rendered more exclusive and bigoted. The Byzantine emperors, as they identified the ecclesiastical with the civil administration, always held the Eastern clergy in a state of abject dependence on the imperial power. They used the church as a ministerial department of government for the religious affairs and the education of the people. So that, when the loss of Sicily and Italy and the hostility of Armenia had excluded men of education belonging to these countries from the higher ecclesiastical charges at Constantinople, the general ignorance of the other subject-races threw every ecclesiastical office into the hands of the Greeks, who converted the oriental church into a national monopoly. From that period the administration of public affairs displayed an excess of bigotry from which it had been generally free in preceding ages. The union of the church and state grew constantly more intimate, and the Greeks, having no rivals in official power, became more blindly prepossessed in favour of their own national prejudices and ecclesiastical practices. This exclusive national spirit, combining religion with politics, has ever since proved a misfortune to the Greek race. During the latter years of the Byzantine Empire it prevented the people from learning those new social and religious ideas which were then beginning to enlarge the intelligence and the energies of the people in Western Europe. The religious hatred with which the Greeks regarded every nation that acknowledged the papal supremacy led them to reject many social, political, and ecclesiastical reforms that originated in Catholic countries. The twelfth century did much to improve the condition of the Western nations, but nothing to improve that of the Greeks. The consequence was that the arbitrary power of the Byzantine emperors was exercised without any civil or ecclesiastical restraint; for the Greeks repudiated every principle of civil liberty, and every ecclesiastical declaration in favour of the rights of humanity, as heretical and revolutionary innovations introduced by the popes to further their own ambitious projects. It must be remembered that the papal church was at this time often actively engaged in defending freedom, in establishing a machinery for the systematic administration of justice to the people, and in impressing men with

the full value of fixed laws for the purpose of restraining the abuses of the temporal power of princes. In short, the papal church was then the great teacher of social and political reform, and those who scorned to listen to its words and study its policy could hardly perceive the changes which time was producing in the Christian world. The Byzantine Greeks immediately rejected the idea of progress; the papal church would have fain arrested the progressive impulse it had given to society a century or two later. The Greeks prided themselves on their conservative, or, as they called it, their Roman spirit. By clinging superstitiously to antiquated formulas, they rejected the means of alleviating the evils of a ruinous political fabric, and refused to better their condition by entering on paths of reform indicated by the Western nations, who were already emerging from their social degradation. While the rest of Europe was actively striving to attain a happier future, the Greeks were gazing backward on what they considered a more glorious past. This habit of appropriating to themselves the vanished glories of the Roman empire, or of ancient Greece, created a feeling of self-sufficiency which repudiated reform in the latter days of the Byzantine empire, and which has ever since retarded the progress of the modern Greeks in the career of European civilization.

BOOK FOURTH  
GREEK EMPIRE OF NICAIA AND CONSTANTINOPLE  
A.D.1204-145

CHAPTER I

EMPIRE OF NICAIA, AD. 1204-1261

Sect. I

REIGN OF THEODORE I. (LASCARIS), A.D. 1204-1222.

The taking of Constantinople filled the Greek population in all the provinces of the Byzantine Empire with wonder and alarm. The national existence was bound up with the central government, so that a vacancy on the throne seemed to imply the ruin of all the institutions under which they had hitherto lived. The future threatened them with individual ruin as well as political anarchy, even if they escaped foreign conquest. Yet even at this crisis of the national fate the people made no exertions to reform the vices which degraded their character and paralysed their exertions. No attempt was made to circumscribe the arbitrary conduct of the court, and restore vigour to the old scheme of systematic administration; nothing was done to correct ecclesiastical abuses in the church, to improve the courts of law, to abolish the monopolies that ruined native industry, or to invigorate the municipal institutions which could alone give energy to the mass of the population. The news that a Belgian emperor ruled in Constantinople spread from Dyrrachium to Trebizond without rousing a single Greek citizen to step forward as the defender of the rights of the nation. Much political disorder was caused by the avarice and ambition of the Greek nobles, but no anarchy occurred from the populace endeavouring to deprive the official agents of the central government of any of the powers which for several generations these agents had grossly abused. So completely had the court, the administration, the clergy, and the lawyers perverted the judgment and feelings of the whole Greek population, that the fabric of the imperial government continued to stand though its foundations were destroyed, its vitality decayed, and its judicial efficacy corrupted. The civil and military governors of provinces, the judges, intendants, and collectors of taxes in cities, continued to pursue their ordinary course of action, in alliance with the bishops and clergy, until they were driven from their posts by the conquering Latins, or summoned to yield their places to the representatives of a new emperor. Never was the national imbecility which arises from the want of municipal institutions and executive activity in local spheres more apparent. Had the

towns, cities, corporations, districts, and provinces, inhabited by a Greek population, possessed magistrates responsible both to the people and the emperor, but accustomed to independent action, there can be no doubt that thousands of Greek citizens would have rushed forward to defend their country against the Crusaders and the Venetians; and that they would have soon reformed the abuses which rendered the empires of Constantinople and Trebizond fearful examples of the degraded condition into which a civilized Christian society may sink. A sense of national independence and spirit of liberty might have infused themselves into the hearts of the Greek people, and the empire of Constantinople might then have shared with the Western nations the task of advancing the progress of Christian civilization. But the Greeks at this critical conjuncture proved incapable of making any intellectual exertion; their municipal institutions had been rendered so subservient to the central power that they had long ceased to reason on politics; national feeling and political intelligence were dormant in their souls, and they submitted blindly to any sovereign who seized the reins of government, whether a foreigner or a native.

The great catastrophe, which had fallen alike on every class of society, ought certainly to have suggested to the Greek statesmen of the period the importance of identifying the feelings and interests of the whole free population with the cause of the government. We know that these men were in the habit of reading Thucydides and Plato. In the works they have left us, we find them so often aping the style of the ancients that we feel disgusted when we discover they paid little attention to their thoughts. The value of the study of the classics to form or even to improve the mind was then, as it is now, very much overrated. Experience shows that it is almost as likely to produce learned pedants as accomplished scholars; for unless there be a basis of mental education very different from that which is acquired through books, learning cannot produce statesmen. The Greeks are not the only people among whom the study of classical literature has produced no practical improvement in political knowledge. Yet everyone must admit that the study of the republican literature of the ancients bears that deep impression of truth which cannot fail to enlarge the intellectual vision and purify the taste of those who examine its records with minds already familiar with the principles of civil liberty and political order. Men who might have distinguished themselves in official life only as useful labourers at the task of the hour, attain to higher views by classical studies. New combinations of free principles of government in various conditions of society, differing from everything around them, are presented to their view, and give them a profounder experience of human nature. England certainly ought never to forget that many of her best patriots and greatest statesmen have been indebted to the study of classic literature for those liberal and philanthropic ideas which enabled them to improve the prospects of the human race while they served their country's cause; and their names, whether they belong to the seventeenth or the nineteenth century, will go down to future ages with as pure and as great a fame as the greatest in the annals of Greece and Rome. But the minds of these men were formed by their domestic education and native institutions; they were only improved and matured by classic studies.

Unfortunately for the Greek race, their teachers and their rulers never felt that the people had an inalienable right to the impartial administration of justice. The government of the Byzantine Empire considered that the very basis of its existence was the absolute submission of the people; it regarded all popular rights and municipal authority as incompatible with a strong central power.

There was also a material obstacle to any general action of the Greek nation at the time of the conquest of Constantinople. Civilization had already declined to such a degree that communications between distant portions of the nation were becoming rare. Monopolies and privileges had thrown commerce into the hands of strangers. No ties of common interests or feelings bound distant localities together, unless with the fetters of political despotism and ecclesiastical bigotry. Little was to be gained or hoped for by the people beyond the narrow sphere in which they lived, so that local prejudices and individual interests outweighed national patriotism. The emperors were prompt to avail themselves of this state of things, and easily

attached the wealthiest members of the aristocracy in each separate district to their service. The profits of imperial oppression were shared with these provincial nobles and archons, while the clergy gave to every patriotic aspiration the form of orthodox bigotry. Such was the state of society when the foundations of the empire of Nicaea were laid; and they explain in some degree how the weakest despotism the world ever saw could succeed in expanding itself into the Greek empire of Constantinople.

The rebellion of powerful nobles was a chronic disease of the Byzantine empire. It is not surprising, therefore, that the members of the aristocracy, even amidst the calamities of their country, thought more of their own habitual projects of ambition than of their duties to their country. The provinces were consequently soon filled with pretenders to the empire. The two fugitive emperors, whose fates have been recorded at the close of the preceding book, Alexius III and Alexius V, attempted to preserve some power in Macedonia. Theodore Lascaris, who had been acknowledged emperor after the flight of Alexius V, escaped to Bithynia, where he assumed the direction of the central government, contenting himself for the moment with the title of Despot, and appearing as the representative or colleague of his worthless father-in-law Alexius III. As the news of the taking of Constantinople spread, fresh pretenders to the throne appeared, and many nobles who had been preparing to render themselves independent from the first appearance of the Crusaders, assumed the rank of sovereign princes without claiming the title of Emperor. In Europe, Leo Sguros, the governor of Nauplia and Argos, endeavoured to render himself master of all Greece; but his career of ambition was soon terminated by the conquests of the Crusaders. On the other hand, Michael Angelos Comnenos laid the foundations of an independent principality in Epirus, which successfully resisted the Crusaders, and defended its independence against the Greek emperors of Nicaea and Constantinople for several generations. In Asia Minor, Theodore Mankaphas, who had assumed the title of Emperor during the reign of Isaac II, again claimed the empire at Philadelphia, and Manuel Maurozomes rendered himself master of the upper valley of the Meander. But the great rival who disputed the empire of the East with Theodore Lascaris was Alexios Comnenos, the founder of the empire of Trebizond. He claimed the throne as the legal heir of the house of Comnenos. The tyranny of his grandfather, Andronicus I., was perhaps forgotten in the provinces. His father's life had been sacrificed to confer the throne on the worthless family of Angelos, and the memory of Manuel's moderation and orthodoxy had doubtless been loudly celebrated by the partisans of his son. The calamities of the empire afforded the young Alexios a fair opportunity for stepping forward in its defence, as no one could advance a more legitimate claim to the vacant throne. With the assistance of a corps of Iberian mercenaries he occupied Trebizond, and all the coast of Pontus and Paphlagonia soon acknowledged his authority.

Future events could alone determine to whom the empire would ultimately fall. The good fortune of Theodore I, joined to his prudence and valour, contributed much more than his election in the Church of St Sophia to fix the crown on his head. When he fled from Constantinople, he presented himself at the gates of Nicaea, into which he demanded admittance as the representative of his father-in-law, the dethroned Emperor Alexius III. The inhabitants, who hated Alexius, refused to admit Theodore within their walls, but allowed his wife Anna to seek shelter in their city. They were perhaps doubtful whether it would not be more for their advantage to submit to the Crusaders than to acknowledge a cowardly and rapacious emperor like Alexius III. Theodore retired to the fastnesses of Mount Olympus, where he assembled a considerable body of troops, and rallied many of the fugitives who had fled from Constantinople. Several fortified towns in Bithynia submitted to his authority; and when the extent of the confiscations of Greek property by the Latins became known, the inhabitants of Asia Minor willingly placed themselves under his protection.

Theodore I fought his way to the crown by his indefatigable exertions in opposing the progress of the Latins in Asia Minor. Before the end of the year 1204, Louis, count of Blois, who had been created Duke of Nicaea, and received Bithynia as his share in the partition of the empire, sent an army, headed by one hundred knights, to take possession of his duchy. This

force landed at Peges, occupied Panormus, and marched into the interior until it encountered the troops of Theodore at Poimanenos. The Greeks, however, were still incapable of sustaining the charge of the Western cavalry, and the Crusaders gained a complete victory. Poimanenos and Lopadion were taken, and Prusa was besieged. The position of Prusa (of which the walls may still be seen on a rocky ridge overlooking the romantic Turkish city of Brusa) was then strong; and as it was defended with constancy, the assailants were compelled to retire with loss. But another division of the Crusaders occupied the strong, rich, and important city of Nicomedia, which the Greeks did not attempt to defend, but of which their active enemies immediately repaired the ruined and dismantled fortifications.

During the same autumn, Henry of Flanders, the Emperor Baldwin's brother, landed with his Belgian knights at Abydos, and occupied all the Troad. In this operation he was assisted by a colony of Armenians, established in this district by the Byzantine emperors. These Armenians were treated by the Greek civil and military authorities with that spirit of bigotry and oppression which had driven most of the subjects of the Byzantine Empire, not of the Greek race, into open rebellion. They now submitted to the Crusaders, in the hope of escaping from the sufferings under which they had long groaned. From Abydos, Henry marched to Adramyttum, where he met with no resistance, and the conquest of the Troad and the whole of the rich province between the Hellespont and the Adramyttum gulf was completed without loss. Theodore Mankaphas, who had assumed the imperial title at Philadelphia, however, deemed it his duty to oppose the progress of the Belgian chiefs. He led a body of Asiatic troops to encounter the lances of the Crusaders, but he was easily defeated by Henry of Flanders.

Henry's career of conquest was suddenly cut short by an order to join his brother, the Emperor Baldwin, at Adrianople, with all his disposable force, in order to encounter Joannice, king of Bulgaria. The Armenians of the Troad, fearing the vengeance of the Greeks after the departure of the Belgian troops, emigrated, under the protection of Henry's army, with the intention of settling among their countrymen who were established at Philippopolis. A colony of twenty thousand souls crossed the Hellespont; but Henry, receiving the news of his brother's defeat and captivity, hastened forward with his cavalry to assemble and protect the fugitives who had escaped from the battle of Adrianople. A body of Armenian infantry remained to escort the long train of waggons, loaded with the families and goods of the emigrants. The Greek troops and the armed bands of countrymen, who were kept in constant agitation by the disturbed condition of the district on the line of march, soon found themselves sufficiently numerous to form a plan for plundering the property of the Armenians. A general attack was made on the colonists; the escort was separated from the baggage, and the waggons were pillaged. The women and children were reduced to slavery, the unarmed emigrants were slaughtered, and this industrious colony was utterly exterminated, sharing the fate of everything practically useful in the Eastern Empire. Thus the Greeks and Crusaders emulated one another in exterminating the inhabitants of the country they aspired to rule; and the numbers of mankind in all the provinces they governed diminished as rapidly as the wealth and civilization of the people declined.

The valour and prudence displayed by Theodore Lascaris induced the authorities of Nicaea to acknowledge him as their sovereign, and that city became the point where all the most eminent of the Greek aristocracy and clergy assembled to oppose the progress of the Latin domination. The primary step towards re-establishing the unity of the imperial administration was to ratify the election of Theodore in the most solemn manner, and thus give him a decided pre-eminence over all his rivals. To do this, it was necessary that he should be the first to receive the imperial crown from the hands of the Patriarch. Alexius V had been slain by the Crusaders; Alexius III was a prisoner in the kingdom of Thessalonica. The Patriarch John Kamateros, who retired with Nicetas to Selymbria, had settled at Didymoteichos; and when he was now requested to visit Nicaea, in order to resume his patriarchal functions, and place the crown on the head of Theodore Lascaris, he preferred resigning his office to quitting his retirement. A new patriarch, Michael Autorianos, was elected his successor about two years after the taking of Constantinople, and one of his first public acts was to place the imperial



crown on the head of Theodore I with as much pomp and ceremony as if the scene had been acted in St Sophia's, (A.D. 1206).

The enemies of Theodore continued to attack his little empire with vigour, though the victory of the King of Bulgaria over the Emperor of Constantinople had relieved him for a time from his greatest danger. David Comnenos, the brother of Alexius, emperor of Trebizond, invaded Bithynia, captured Heracleia, and was so elated with his success that he sent forward his army under Synadenos to occupy Nicaea and drive Theodore from the throne. Lascaris encountered Synadenos on the banks of the Sangarius, and completely defeated the Iberians of Comnenos. He was equally successful in the south-west. Gaiaseddin Kaikhosrou, who was under great obligations to Alexius III, had recovered possession of the throne of Iconium; and while Lascaris acted only as despot in the name of his father-in-law, the sultan favoured his progress. The power of the Seljouks, indeed, appeared to be threatened both by the conquests of the Crusaders and the rapid progress of the young Emperor of Trebizond. But as soon as Theodore was firmly established on the throne, Kaikhosrou sought for a weaker ally among the Greeks. He gave his daughter in marriage to Manuel Maurozomes, and supplied him with Turkish auxiliaries to attack Lascaris. The Turks of Maurozomes were defeated as well as the Iberians of Comnenos. Theodore Mankaphas was also compelled to lay aside the imperial title for the second time, and Sabas, the governor of Amisos, who had defended his independence against the Emperor of Trebizond, acknowledged the nominal supremacy of the Emperor of Nicaea. Theodore I was consequently enabled to re-establish the administration of the whole country, from the mouth of the Sangarius to the sources of the Rhyndacus and the Maeander, on the old imperial system.

The difficulties in which the empire of Nicaea was placed by its geographical position were very great. It was open to the invasion of all its enemies; hostile princes occupied all its frontiers, and its friends and allies were far distant. David Comnenos, after the defeat of his army on the banks of the Sangarius, concluded a treaty of alliance with Henry, the Latin Emperor of Constantinople, from whom he received a body of knights and men-at-arms. For this succour he engaged to become a vassal of the Latin empire for a part of the territory he had previously governed in the name of his brother Alexios, the Emperor of Trebizond. No step could have proved more advantageous to Theodore than this close alliance of his principal rival with the detested Latins. Nicaea was now the residence of the Greek Patriarch, and all the most distinguished members of the Greek Church had already attached themselves to the cause of Theodore I. The whole of the clergy in the western part of Asia Minor were driven, from fear of the extension of the Latin power through the desertion of David Comnenos, to rally round their Patriarch; and the authority of the bishops, which was not inconsiderable in civil affairs, was universally employed to maintain a political connection with the empire of Nicaea as the centre of orthodoxy. The auxiliary force sent to the aid of David enabled him to take the offensive; but Theodore proved again victorious. A chosen body of three hundred Latin cavalry, with all its followers, was cut to pieces in the forests near the Sangarius, and David was compelled to shut himself up in Heracleia. Theodore even hoped to revenge himself on the Latins, for the assistance they had granted to Comnenos, by conquering Peges. He gained possession of that fortress; but it was recovered by the Latins, who then invaded Bithynia at several points, in order to complete the subjugation of the fiefs which had been assigned to them in that province at the partition of the Byzantine empire. Their forces were led by one hundred and forty knights, each of whom expected to gain a barony. One division occupied Cyzicus, and, by repairing its ruined walls, converted it into a citadel for storing provisions and plunder. Another division fortified the Church of St Sophia, built by Constantine the Great near Nicomedia, in order that it might serve as a fort to command the rich adjacent plain; from which we may infer that the citadel and town could not be rendered defensible on account of their extent. A third division seized the castle of Charax, on the southern coast of the Gulf of Nicomedia, from which there was a direct road to Nicaea; while the remainder of the expedition established itself at Kivotos, a port which afforded easy communications both with Nicaea and Prusa. (Kivotos, the ancient Kios or Cius, is called Givivot by the Latin historians of the Crusaders. Its modern name is

Ghiumlek. It was repaired by Alexius I, who established in it a colony of Anglo-Danes, driven from England by the Normans). Theodore, alarmed at these preparations for assailing his power at its centre simultaneously from various points of attack, concluded an alliance with the King of Bulgaria, who, as soon as he was informed that the greater part of the Latin troops had passed over into Asia, laid siege to Adrianople, while his allies, the Romans, ravaged the open country to the neighbourhood of Constantinople.

This invasion compelled Henry to recall a strong body of troops from Asia, and Theodore availed himself of the weakness of the garrisons of Cyzicus and Kivotos to attack both places at the same time. He already possessed a fleet of sixty vessels, so that he was able to press the attack on Kivotos with vigour both by sea and land. The place was defended by forty knights, with their followers, but its walls were in a ruinous condition, and it was ill supplied with provisions. The Emperor Henry was sitting at dinner in the great hall of the palace of Blachern, when a courier suddenly entered, and exclaimed—"Sire, unless the knights at Kivotos receive immediate assistance, the place will be taken, and they will all be slain!" The Belgian emperor, with that promptitude which enabled him to sustain with glory the ill-constructed fabric of the Latin empire of Constantinople, rose from table and instantly embarked with all the troops who were ready, and put to sea. Heralds were left to proclaim that Kivotos required immediate succour, and that every vassal of the empire must follow the emperor's banner. When the sun rose, Henry was sailing up the gulf to Kivotos, attended by the Marshal Villehardoin, Miles of Brabant, and seventeen Venetian and Pisan galleys. The Greek fleet was more numerous, but the Latins advanced to attack it; and the Greeks manoeuvred so long, in order to gain an advantage of wind which would enable them to prevent their enemy reaching Kivotos, that fresh ships joined the emperor, and they at last declined an engagement. Henry, however, found the fortifications of Kivotos in such a dilapidated condition that he thought it prudent to dismantle the place entirely, and carry off the garrison.

Theodore, having thus driven the Latins from Kivotos, distracted their attention by attacking Cyzicus and Nicomedia. Thierry de Los, a knight of high reputation, was defeated and taken prisoner near Nicomedia by Constantine Lascaris, the emperor's brother; and Henry was again compelled to appear in person in the field, though his presence was equally necessary in the north in order to save Adrianople from the Bulgarians. Four times he had been on the eve of his departure for that city, and four times his march had been adjourned by disasters of the Latin arms in different quarters. Theodore, well informed of all his enemy's difficulties, proposed to conclude a truce for two years, on condition that the fortifications of Cyzicus and St Sophia's of Nicomedia should be destroyed, and in return he offered to release all his prisoners, among whom were some knights of high rank. The necessity of hastening with all his troops to save Adrianople compelled Henry and his barons to accept these terms, and Theodore was put in possession of Cyzicus and Nicomedia, (A.D. 1207)

Theodore had still much to complain of and much to fear from the valour and restlessness of the Western nations. It was therefore for his interest to obtain a treaty of peace of a permanent and general character, and such a treaty could only be obtained by the influence of the Pope. Theodore addressed a letter to Pope Innocent III for this purpose, and it contains as strong a proof of the power enjoyed by that celebrated pontiff as any of the acts of arbitration he exercised in the West. Many Latin adventurers paid no attention to the truce concluded with the Emperor Henry. They arrogated to themselves the right of private war, and plundered the Greek territories wherever the country offered a defenceless prey to their avarice. The Latin emperor had no power to restrain these disorders, for all the Greeks who adhered to their national church had been declared to be in a state of perpetual vassalage by papal authority, so that every adventurer was entitled to constitute himself their immediate superior under the Pope as lord paramount. In this state of things, Theodore invited the Pope to conclude a permanent peace, on the basis that the Latins should possess all the European provinces of the Byzantine Empire, and recognise the right of the Greeks to the undisturbed dominion over those in Asia.

The Emperor Henry refused to conclude a permanent treaty on this basis, as it would have given the Emperor of Nicaea a decided superiority over all his Greek rivals; and there could be no doubt that, as soon as he had consolidated a strong power, no stipulations would have any effect in preventing the Greeks from attempting to regain possession of all the country conquered by the Crusaders. Henry considered, likewise, that it was a duty he owed to the Catholic faith, to the Pope as the spiritual suzerain of the Christian world, to his own fame, and to his position as Emperor of Constantinople, to complete the conquest of the Eastern Empire. Theodore must, consequently, have been well aware of the small chance of deriving any assistance from the Pope, as the conclusion of a permanent treaty could not fail to oppose a barrier against the extension of the papal power in the East. The reply of Innocent informed Theodore that the Pope was more hostile than he had supposed. The letter was addressed to the honourable Theodore Lascaris, and thus commenced with a denial of his claim to the title of Emperor. It is a curious document, inasmuch as it proves how little influence pure morality and true religion exercised on the political views of this celebrated Pope. Innocent does not pretend to deny the atrocities committed by his Crusaders at Constantinople; and as he felt it was his duty to establish peace, he promised to send a legate into the East for that purpose; but he requires Theodore to take the cross and join the Crusaders in Palestine, while he insults him with the demand that he should acknowledge himself the vassal of the Latin empire of Romania. The great Pope continues, in a style of bigotry which it is the fashion to ridicule when employed by more vulgar fanatics: "The Greeks having rent asunder the garment of Christ, God has doubtless made use of the Latins as an instrument to punish them for their crime. The judgments of God are always just, and he frequently punishes evil by the agency of wicked men". The solicitations of the Greek emperor to obtain peace through the mediation of the high priest of the Western Christians produced no result but a recommendation to become the vassal of a Belgian count.

Theodore employed the leisure afforded him by the truce more profitably in extending his dominions in Asia, where his prudence gave his subjects a degree of security which induced many voluntarily to acknowledge his authority, and enabled him to extend his empire from Paphlagonia to Caria. His prosperity excited the jealousy of Kaikhosrou, the sultan of Iconium, whose court was visited by Alexius III, as has been already noticed; and that envious and restless prince was as eager to dethrone his son-in-law as the sultan was to gain possession of the Greek dominions. The truce with the Latin empire had expired; and the sultan, who feared the energy and activity of Theodore, strengthened himself by an alliance with the Catholic Emperor of Constantinople. Though the Latins made it a standing reproach to the Greeks, that the Eastern Christians were ever ready to become the allies of the Turks, they showed no aversion to the practice themselves whenever it served their interest. We owe our knowledge of the present treaty between the Crusaders and the Mohammedans to the Emperor Henry, who, in a public manifesto addressed to the Christian world, speaks of his alliance with the Turkish sultan against the Christian Emperor of Nicaea as an act honourable to a good Catholic.

The sultan, before declaring war, sent an embassy to require Theodore to yield the empire to his father-in-law, threatening, in case of refusal, to place Alexius III on the throne by force of arms. The threat was despised, and the sultan invaded the Greek territory, accompanied by his friend and tool Alexius. Theodore was prepared to meet his enemy. He had engaged a chosen corps of eight hundred Latin cavalry in his service; and after placing a garrison in Philadelphia, he crossed the Gaister on the eleventh day of his march. He pushed rapidly forward into the valley of the Meander, hoping to surprise the Turkish army while it was occupied in besieging the city of Antiocheia. The rashness of the Latin cavalry favoured his plan, though it nearly caused his defeat. They hurried forward and attacked the Turks without counting the numbers of their enemy; but in spite of the fury of their charge and the weight of their armour, they were overpowered and broken by the squadrons that assailed them on the flanks and in the rear. The greater part were slain, and their defeat spread terror through the ranks of the Greeks. Theodore was compelled in this crisis to cover the retreat of his army at the head of his best soldiers. He was attacked by the sultan in person; and if we can credit the romantic description of the

Byzantine historians, a single combat took place between the two sovereigns. Kaikhosrou galloped up to Theodore, and gave him a blow with his sabre on the helmet, which struck him from his saddle to the earth, though it failed to wound him. The sultan shouted to his followers to secure the prisoner; but the emperor, springing up, cut the legs of the sultan's horse so severely that it fell, and threw its master at Theodore's feet, who instantly stabbed him to the heart. The Greek officers who rushed forward to save their sovereign cut off the sultan's head, and exposed it to the view of the Turkish army, while the retreat of the sultan's guard at the same time spread the news of his death through its ranks. The Turks abandoned the contest, and the emperor entered Antiocheia in triumph, A.D. 1210. Alexius, who fell into the hands of his son-in-law, was confined for the remainder of his life in a monastery, as we have already mentioned. The Empress Euphrosyne, whom he had left behind in Epirus, died shortly after at Arta.

Fortunately for Theodore, the Latin empire of Constantinople was disturbed by the violent conduct of the papal legate Pelagius, who commenced a persecution of all the Greeks who refused to acknowledge the papal supremacy. The Emperor Henry interfered to protect those who had entered his service; but many of the clergy and some men of rank fled to Nicaea, where they were kindly received by the Greek emperor, and the animosity of the two churches was greatly increased.

In the year 1214, the war between Henry and Theodore was renewed. Henry crossed the Hellespont at the head of a numerous army, and occupied Poimanenos without resistance; but he was compelled to besiege Lentianes with his whole force, which was courageously defended by the inhabitants, as well as by a regular garrison. The defence was conducted by one of the emperor's brothers, by his son-in-law Andronicos Paleologos, and by Dermokaites, the commander of the garrison. The place was closely invested for forty days, and repeated assaults were made under the eye of Henry. It was not until the water was cut off and a breach effected in the walls that the besiegers were able to force their entrance into the town. Henry was so enraged at the delay he had met with, and the loss he had suffered before this insignificant fortress, that he disgraced himself by an act of infamous cruelty. After taking Lentianes, he ordered its brave defenders, Lascaris, Paleologos, and Dermokaites to be put to death. He persuaded the garrison to enter his service, and united it with the corps of George Theophilopoulos, a Greek general who had joined the Latins. Henry then advanced as far as Nymphaeum; but Theodore, who was sensible of the inferiority of the Greeks in a regular battle, carefully declined an engagement and confined his operations to the defensive. The campaign ended without any great success on the part of the Latins; and the Greek emperor, hearing that the Despot of Epirus was assailing the European possessions of the Crusaders with great vigour, sent an embassy to Henry to propose a treaty of peace. As the Latin emperor considered his presence necessary in Europe, the terms were easily arranged. The peninsula opposite Constantinople, bounded by a line drawn from the head of the gulf of Nicomedia to the Black Sea, and all the country from the Hellespont as far as the district of Kamina, were to remain in possession of the Latins. The town of Kalamos, which lay between the territory of the Crusaders and the theme of Neokastron, was to remain uninhabited, to mark the frontier of the two empires. The boundaries of the empire of Nicaea now extended from Heracleia on the Black Sea to the head of the Gulf of Nicomedia; from thence it embraced the coast of the Opsikian theme as far as Cyzicus; and then descending to the south, included Pergamus, and joined the coast of the Aegean. Theodore had already extended his power over the valleys of the Hermus, the Caister, and the Meander.

The bad success of all attempts to force the Greeks to conform to the Latin church induced Innocent III to change his policy. The fourth Lateran council was held in the year 1215, and by it the Latin bishops in the East were authorized to appoint Greek priests to celebrate Divine service and administer the sacraments in the Greek language; but these priests were to teach the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and to inculcate the papal supremacy. This concession produced more effect than the previous persecution. Many Greeks, who probably

considered both the Patriarch and the Pope as having arrogated to themselves a degree of power in ecclesiastical affairs to which they had no valid title, conformed to the Latin rites when they heard the liturgy in Greek; but, on the other hand, the opposition and hatred of the Greek clergy were greatly increased by this insidious attack on their authority. Whenever they regained possession of a church in which a Latin priest had performed mass, they washed the altar and purified the building; and before they would admit a Latin Christian into their church, they required that he should be baptized a second time. There is an act of the fourth council of the Lateran which reveals the ruinous effect of the feudal government introduced by the Crusaders into a society so differently organized as that in the Byzantine empire. When Richard I of England conquered the rich island of Cyprus, and converted it into a feudal kingdom, it contained fourteen cities, which were bishops' sees; but so many of these had already fallen into decay during the short space of four-and-twenty years, and the position of a Latin bishop was so much more aristocratic than that of a Greek, that the number was now reduced to four.

The peace between the Greek and Latin empires lasted several years. After the death of Henry in 1216, the Empress Yolande, wife of Peter of Courtenay, acting as regent, gave her third daughter Maria in marriage to the Emperor Theodore, hoping to secure a permanent peace by this close alliance. But when the death of Peter of Courtenay, followed by that of Yolande, threw the affairs of Constantinople into disorder, Theodore laid claim to a portion of the Latin empire as the heritage of his wife. This pretension served as a pretext for attacking the Latin possessions in Asia, but the arrival of Robert with fresh forces caused the peace to be renewed. Theodore offered his daughter Eudocia to the Emperor Robert in marriage, though they were already brothers-in-law. In vain the Greek Patriarch and the majority of the Greeks reprobated the marriage, both on religious and political ground; the emperors seemed determined to celebrate it, when a sudden illness put an end to the life of Theodore, in the year 1222, after he had reigned eighteen years. All thoughts of the marriage were then laid aside.

Theodore Lascaris, the saviour of the Greek empire, though not a man of enlarged political views or of great capacity, seems to have far exceeded in activity and courage the rest of the Byzantine aristocracy. He was passionate, and addicted to gallantry, but he had many qualities which suited him for a popular leader in difficult circumstances. Though of small stature, he was skilful in the use of arms, and he was rash, generous, and lavish of money even to imprudence. We must recollect that it required no ordinary valour and perseverance to arrest the progress of so accomplished a warrior as Henry of Flanders at the head of his redoubted Belgian cavalry, and that the overthrow of Theodore would, in all probability, have enabled the Crusaders to complete the subjugation of the whole Greek race.

## Sect. II

### REIGN OF JOHN III (DUKAS VATATZES)

A.D. 1222-1254.

Theodore I left no son. It was, therefore, necessary to elect a new emperor; for though the feeling in favour of hereditary succession was gaining ground among the Greeks, still the constitution of the empire recognized no rule of succession which would create a positive title to the crown without some form of election. The eminent qualities of John Dukas Vatatzes, who married Irene, the eldest daughter of Theodore I, after her first husband, Andronicus Paleologos, had been put to death by the Emperor Henry, united the suffrages of the civil and military authorities as well as the clergy in his favour; and though the late emperor left four brothers who had served with distinction in the army, John III was saluted emperor without any

opposition. But his coronation excited the jealousy of Alexis and Isaac Lascaris to such a degree that they not only retired from Nicaea, but even attempted to carry off their niece Eudocia, who had been promised to the Latin emperor Robert. Failing in this attempt, they deserted to the Latins, and distinguished themselves at the court of Constantinople by their eagerness to commence hostilities against their countrymen.

The military power of the Latin empire was constantly declining. The army which effected its conquest was soon dispersed over its surface with the feudal chiefs among whom it had been partitioned, or its warriors proceeded to Palestine to complete their vows, in order to return to their hereditary possessions in their native lands. No Latin army of equal strength could ever again be assembled under the walls of Constantinople. Nevertheless, for a short time, the reports which spread through Western Europe of the immense plunder and rich fiefs which the conquerors of the Byzantine Empire had acquired, attracted an ample supply of fresh recruits to the East. But in a few years, defeats and misfortunes on one side, and the improving condition of European society on the other, arrested emigration. The prudence and valour of the Emperor Henry could with difficulty efface the impression produced by the terrible and romantic tales that were circulated concerning the murder of Baldwin by the King of Bulgaria; and before the melancholy end of the first Belgian emperor was forgotten, men were appalled by the news that his brother-in-law, Peter of Courtenay, the third emperor, had perished by a similar untimely end. In attempting to march from Dyrrachium to Constantinople, Peter of Courtenay was defeated and taken prisoner by Theodore, the despot of Epirus, and for some time his fate was shrouded in the same mystery as that of Baldwin. The world was long unwilling to believe that both the imperial brothers-in-law had perished in prison. Yolande, the wife of Peter, who had administered the government of Constantinople as regent with great prudence, did not long survive her husband; and Robert, the second son of Peter, who succeeded to the throne of the Latin empire, was a weak and incapable prince. The kingdom of Saloniki was governed by an Italian regency, acting in the name of Demetrius, the second son of the king, Marquess Boniface of Montferrat. It was soon evident that neither the empire nor the kingdom could resist the attacks of the Greeks, Epirots, and Bulgarians, without assistance from Western Europe. The solicitations for aid were generally addressed to the popes, who possessed the power of rendering the contest a holy war, by granting indulgences to every Catholic who attacked the Greek heretics. The popes consequently became the arbiters of the Latin empire, and supported its cause with fervour. As a matter of course, they regarded the Greeks as more dangerous enemies of papal influence than the Mohammedans. Pope Honorius III was so eager to establish the predominance of the Latins in the East (as it appeared to him the only means of placing the supremacy of the popes on a firm foundation), that he invited the princes of Europe to undertake a crusade, for the purpose of delivering Peter of Courtenay from captivity. The threat of a crusade was then no idle menace, and Theodore, the despot of Epirus, employed every art to pacify Honorius, and turn aside the storm. He released the papal legate, who had fallen into his hands with the Emperor Peter, with the most solemn assurances that he was willing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, and to labour to convert his subjects. The legate, who informed the Pope that Peter of Courtenay was really dead, appears to have convinced the Court of Rome that there was little chance of compelling the Greeks and Albanians to change their religion by force. The wily despot persuaded both the legate and the Pope of his sincere desire to join the Catholic Church; and Honorius, hoping to gain a new and powerful vassal, began to forbid the crusade he had lately preached. He prohibited the Venetians from attacking the territories of Theodore under pain of excommunication. The fate of Peter of Courtenay, who died of grief and ill-usage in the prisons of the despot, was no longer mentioned. The republic of Venice concluded a truce for five years with Theodore. Goffrey, prince of Achaia, and Otho, sovereign of Athens, quarrelled with the Pope, and incurred excommunication by appropriating to their own use a portion of the estates of the Greek Church which were claimed by the papal clergy, and the confederacy against the Greeks was completely broken up.

This change in the affairs of the Latins rendered it unnecessary for Theodore to persevere in his hypocritical negotiations. He invaded the kingdom of Saloniki, and soon conquered it, for the officers of the young King Demetrius possessed no army capable of resisting his attack. The Pope, enraged at finding he had been used as a political tool by the cunning Greek, fulminated his excommunications against Theodore; but as Honorius had himself dissolved the confederation of the Latin powers, the despot laughed at the thunders of the Vatican. The success of Theodore now opened to him a more extensive field of ambition. He aspired at the honour of restoring the Greek empire in Europe, and declared himself the rival of the Emperor of Nicaea by assuming the imperial crown at Thessalonica, which was placed on his head by the Patriarch of Bulgaria, who, as he possessed an independent ecclesiastical jurisdiction, had the power of anointing sovereigns, (A.D. 1222.)

Fortunately for the Greeks, the temporal policy of the Court of Rome often placed the popes in direct opposition to the interests of the Latin princes, nobles, and proprietors, who had settled in the Eastern Empire, and thus all its endeavours to gain the same degree of power in the East which it enjoyed in the West proved vain. At this time, however, the hope of compelling the Greeks to acknowledge the papal supremacy by force of arms was strong; and Honorius III exerted himself with so much vigour to furnish the emperor, Robert of Courtenay, with troops and money, that a considerable army accompanied the young emperor to Constantinople. Theodore I was still emperor of Nicaea when Robert arrived in the East; but, as has been already mentioned, the Latin and Greek emperors concluded a treaty of peace, which enabled Robert to employ all his forces against Theodore of Epirus, whose rapid progress alarmed the Latins. The armies of Constantinople and Epirus met before the walls of Serres. The Latins were defeated in their attempt to take the city; their generals, Valincourt, and Mainvaut, the marshal of Romania, were both taken prisoners during their retreat; and the Emperor of Thessalonica was enabled to pursue his conquests and organize his new dominions without opposition.

Such was the state of affairs at the commencement of the reign of John III. The warlike Latins soon reassembled a force which they considered sufficient to protect the immediate domain of the Emperor of Constantinople from any encroachment on the part of Theodore of Thessalonica; and as they were eager to increase their territories and gain new fiefs, the Emperor of Nicaea felt that his dominions offered too many assailable points for the peace concluded by his predecessor to be of long duration. John III, therefore, devoted his attention to preparing for war without imposing any additional burdens on his subjects. All the Greeks felt that, unless the Latins were expelled from Constantinople, there could be no permanent peace; and it was now evident that if any other orthodox prince gained possession of the imperial city, the Emperor of Nicaea would be unable to maintain his position as the political head of the Greek nation. While John III increased the numbers and improved the discipline of his army, he attached his subjects to his government by the economy he introduced into the financial administration, and by his strict attention to the administration of justice.

The Emperor Robert at last declared war; and the Latins invaded the territory of Nicaea, where they found John III prepared to receive them. Their army debarked at Lampsacus. It was commanded by St Menehould, who was assisted by the two Lascaris. A decisive battle was fought near Poimanenos, in which the victory was well contested. St Menehould was one of the first conquerors of Constantinople, and the Latin knights had hitherto proved victorious wherever they could manfully assert the prowess of the lance. But the Greek emperor was a skillful general as well as a valiant soldier; and when his cavalry yielded to the shock of the Frank chivalry, he rallied them, and renewed the combat by a series of well-combined attacks, which at length broke the line of his enemies. The cavalry, once broken, was in destroying the rest of the army. St Menehould, and many noble knights, perished on the field; the two Lascaris were taken prisoners, and lost their sight as a punishment for their treason. John III followed up his victory with indefatigable energy. During the winter of 1224 he captured Poimanenos, Lentianes, Charioros, Veerveniakon, and every other fortress the Latins possessed on the Asiatic

side of the Hellespont, except Peges. He sent a part of his army into Europe to lay waste the country round Madytos and Callipolis, while his fleet expelled the Latins from the island of Lesbos.

These successes roused the Greeks of Adrianople to attempt delivering themselves from the Latin domination. They solicited aid from John III; and as soon as a body of Greek troops approached their neighbourhood they flew to arms and expelled the Frank garrison. But Theodore, emperor of Thessalonica, advancing shortly after to Didymoteichos, placed himself between Adrianople and the empire of Nicaea, and effectually cut off the troops of John III from receiving any reinforcements. Theodore was eager to gain possession of Adrianople, as an important step to the conquest of Constantinople, and to securing his ultimate supremacy as orthodox Emperor of the East. By means of bribes and promises he persuaded the leading men in Adrianople to espouse his cause, for he really seemed better able to defend them against the Bulgarians on one side, and the Latins on the other, than the Emperor of Nicaea, whose resources were far distant. The general of John III, unable to resist the army of Theodore and the wishes of the inhabitants, agreed to evacuate the place on being allowed to march out with the honours of war. The Emperor of Thessalonica attempted to take advantage of the retreat of the troops of Nicaea to arrogate a superiority to which he was not entitled. He ordered the garrison, in marching out of Adrianople, to defile before him, and placed himself, with the imperial ensigns, to receive their salute. But John Kamytzes, the Nicaean general, was a man of sense and firmness, and when he rode past the rival of his sovereign he affected to watch the proceedings of his own troops, and never turned his head to regard Theodore. The Epirot emperor was furious at the slight, and lost all command of his temper. At first he was with difficulty withheld from arresting, and even from striking Kamytzes, but he afterwards allowed him to continue his march. The Emperor John rewarded the cool intrepidity of his general by appointing Kamytzes Grand Heteriarch. Though the possession of Adrianople enabled Theodore to lay waste the Latin territory as far as Bizya, he was unable to make any attempt on Constantinople. In the year 1230 his restless ambition involved him in war with John Asan, king of Bulgaria, by whom he was defeated and taken prisoner. Engaging in a conspiracy, he was punished by his conqueror with the loss of sight. In the meantime, the King of Bulgaria had conquered a considerable number of the cities which Theodore had governed. He gained possession of Didymoteichos, Boleros, Serres, Pelagonia, and Prilapos, and extended his conquests as far as Albanopolis to the west, and to the frontier of Great Vlachia to the south.

The Franks, finding that their possessions in the vicinity of Constantinople were ravaged by the troops of Theodore, became anxious to conclude peace with the Emperor of Nicaea, in order to concentrate all their forces for their defence; and John III, displeased at the insolent and hostile disposition which the Emperor of Thessalonica had displayed in the affair of Adrianople, was willing that the Latins and Theodore should exhaust their strength, while he remained a calm spectator of their contest. The terms of peace were soon arranged; the Latins withdrew their garrison from Peges, which they surrendered to the Greek emperor, and they retained possession of no spot on the Asiatic coast, except the peninsula opposite Constantinople as far as Nicomedia, (A.D. 1225). This peace was observed by both parties for several years—1225 to 1233.

The aristocratic element of Greek society was as little inclined to respect political order and established law, while living in exile in the petty empire of Nicaea, as the proud Byzantine nobles, who boasted a Roman or Armenian origin, had ever been to weigh the interests of the people against their own schemes of personal ambition during the period of their greatest power and splendour at Constantinople. The throne of John III, and all his schemes for the improvement of the Greek empire, were at this time placed in considerable danger by a conspiracy of his own cousin, Andronicus Nestongos, who engaged many men of rank in a plot to place the crown on his own head. The conspiracy was fortunately discovered, and the traitors were punished. Nestongos escaped from confinement, and passed the remainder of his life among the Seljouk Turks. The emperor, having established order and insured submission at



court, pursued his plans for improving the condition of his subjects and augmenting the efficiency of his military establishments with steady perseverance for several years. In his civil government, and especially in strengthening the moral influence of the imperial authority over every rank of society, he was assisted by the great talents and singular prudence of his wife, the Empress Irene, whose authority was the greater in consequence of her never laying aside her modest domestic manner of life, or appearing eager to exert political influence.

In the year 1233, John III was engaged in hostilities with a rebellious subject, in order to secure his dominion over Rhodes. The government of that rich island was held by Leo Gavalas, whom John III had honoured with the rank of Caesar. Gavalas raised the standard of revolt, and a number of the emperor's bravest troops were slain in civil war before the rebel could be compelled even to acknowledge the imperial supremacy; and peace was not re-established until John consented to confirm Gavalas in the government of the island, a command he retained until his death. The authority of the central administration of the Greek empire being no longer systematically exerted to protect and advance the material interests of the population at a distance from the capital, a general tendency towards local independence began to be formed in the outlying provincial communities in the empires of Nicaea, Thessalonica, and Trebizond, which was in some degree strengthened by the principles of feudal society, which the great vassals of the Latin empire of Romania introduced among their Greek subjects. The decline in the numbers, wealth, and intelligence of the middle classes, which followed the ruin of intercommunications and the decay of commerce, enabled the aristocracy to turn this tendency of society to their own exclusive profit. Examples of aristocratic rapacity become gradually more and more prominent as one of the evils that demoralized Greek society. The history of Rhodes illustrates these observations. The brother of Gavalas succeeded to his power as if it had been a family inheritance; and though he only pretended to act as the emperor's representative, John was compelled to confirm him in his vice-royalty to avoid recommencing a civil war.

The Emperor Robert of Courtenay died in the Peloponnesus in the year 1228, as he was returning from Rome, which he had visited to solicit succours from the Pope. His brother, Baldwin II, who was only eleven years of age, was recognized as his successor; but the exigencies of the administration required a chief capable of directing the counsels and leading the armies of the empire. John de Brienne, titular king of Jerusalem, and commander-in-chief of the papal army, was supposed by all having an interest in the prosperity of the Latin empire to be a man capable of restoring its glory and re-establishing its power. He was elected the guardian and colleague of Baldwin II, and crowned emperor for life. A treaty was concluded between John de Brienne and the ambassadors of Romania, in which it was stipulated that the young emperor, Baldwin II, was to marry Agnes, the daughter of his guardian; and that, on his attaining the age of twenty, he was to be invested with the sovereignty of Nicaea, and the Latin possessions in Asia beyond Nicomedia as an independent kingdom. After the death of John de Brienne, the empire reverted to Baldwin as his hereditary dominion. This treaty was confirmed by the Pope, Gregory IX, at Perugia in 1229; but John de Brienne was detained in Italy for two years before he could collect a sufficient force to visit his empire. During this time the regency was directed by Narjot de Toucy.

The treaty of Perugia, which disposed of the empire Nicaea as a Latin possession, was an insult which policy induced the Emperor John III to overlook; but he feared that a vigorous attack on the Latin empire might enable Theodore, emperor of Thessalonica, or John Asan, king of Bulgaria, to gain possession of Constantinople before he could prevent them. The war which broke out between these two princes in the following year, 1230, delivered him from this danger, yet he was still willing to gain time; and when John de Brienne arrived at Constantinople in 1231, he entered into negotiations for a union of the Greek and Latin Churches, which was conducted with wisdom and moderation on the part of the Greek Patriarch, Germanos Nauplios, but was rendered abortive by the servile submission required by the Papal Court. In the month of April 1233 the Emperor of Nicaea assembled a council of the Greek church at Nymphaeum, in which, as usual, nothing could be determined. The negotiations

were broken off, and the Latin emperor invaded the Greek territory, expecting to profit by the rebellion of Gavalas in Rhodes. A powerful army landed at Lampsacus; and the Greek emperor, having formed a fortified camp at Sigrenes, watched the operations of his enemy, and circumscribed his movements. John de Brienne was now upwards of eighty years of age, his military reputation stood high, and his force was superior to that of his opponent; but age rendered him inactive. All his plans of conquest were foiled by the superior tactics of the Greek emperor; and a four months' campaign was terminated by the Latins gaining possession of Keramidi, a fort near Cyzicus, and by their recovering Peges.

Alarm at the number of the recruits who about this time arrived at Constantinople from western Europe, induced the Emperor of Nicaea and the King of Bulgaria to form a close alliance. Theodore, the son of John III, who was only eleven years of age, was betrothed to Helen, the daughter of John Asan, who was in her ninth year; and the young princess was committed to the charge of the Empress Irene to be educated. The two sovereigns prosecuted the war in concert. The emperor took Lampsacus, crossed the Hellespont, and captured Gallipolis, and all the cities of the Thracian Chersonesus. He then extended his conquests to the westward as far as the Hebrus, and to the north as far as Tzurulos, which he secured by a strong garrison. The king pushed his incursions almost to the very walls of Constantinople, and ravaged the possessions of the Latin seigneurs. The united armies even approached the imperial city; and if we believe the Latin writers, they suffered severely from a well-arranged sortie led by John de Brienne in person. About the same time the Greeks sustained a defeat at sea, A.D. 1235. In the following year, Constantinople was relieved from all danger by the succours it received from the Venetians and from Goffrey, prince of Achaia. But the death of John de Brienne in 1237, and the absence of the young Emperor Baldwin II, who was wandering about to solicit aid from the Catholic princes, placed Constantinople suddenly in such danger of falling into the hands of the Emperor of Nicaea, that the King of Bulgaria resolved to prolong the existence of an empire from which he had now nothing to fear. He suddenly concluded a separate peace, and formed an alliance with the Latins. Sound policy certainly required John Asan at this moment to keep all his forces ready for action on his northern frontier. The conquests of Genghis Khan and his sons alarmed all the princes of the East with reasonable apprehension of calamity, though the ignorance of the Latins prevented the nations of Western Europe from perceiving the greatness of the danger which then threatened the whole civilized world. From the shores of the Atlantic to the Chinese seas, every country seemed on the eve of being reduced to serve as pasture-grounds for tribes of nomads, and hunting-fields for Mogul princes.

About the time John Asan abandoned the Greek alliance, the Romans were driven over the Danube by the Moguls who had invaded Russia. The King of Bulgaria allowed these fugitives to pass through his dominions in order to enter the service of the Latin empire, and joined them in attacking the Greek possessions in Thrace. John III had now to defend his recent conquests against an overwhelming force composed of the heavy cavalry of the Franks, the light horse of the Romans, and the organized infantry of the Bulgarians. The united army besieged Tzurulos, which was bravely defended by Nicephorus Tarchaniotes. It was saved by John Asan receiving the news of the sudden death of his wife and son. This double misfortune presented itself to his mind as a judgment of Heaven for violating his faith with the Greek emperor. He withdrew his army, hastened back to Bulgaria, a. d. broke off his alliance with the Latins, and renewed his treaty with John III.

#### AFFAIRS OF THESSALONICA.

The death of Asan's wife produced important changes in the government of the Greeks in Macedonia. John Asan married Irene, the daughter of his prisoner Theodore, emperor of

Thessalonica, whom he had deprived of sight for his plots. He now released her father. Theodore repaired secretly to Thessalonica, from which he soon contrived to expel his brother Manuel, who had usurped the imperial title; and he then caused his own son John to be elected emperor, for the loss of his sight rendered it impossible for him to direct the details of the administration. Manuel escaped to Attalia, and visited the court of Nicaea. The Emperor John III furnished him with a naval force of six galleys, and money to enrol troops; for he feared the restless ambition of Theodore, and was anxious to find employment for him at home. Manuel landed at Demetrias, and rendered himself master of the country from Pharsalus and Larissa to Platamona. A third brother, named Constantine, had already gained possession of that part of Thessaly called Great Vlachia. The blind Theodore, who guided the counsels of his son John, the Emperor of Thessalonica, immediately entered into communications with his brothers, and convinced them of the necessity of forming a close family alliance, in order to preserve their independence. Manuel abandoned the cause of John III, and the three brothers, with the Emperor of Thessalonica, concluded a treaty for mutual defence and offence with the Latin princes of Athens, Euboea, and Achaia. John III was too much occupied with other affairs to bestow particular attention on these hostile demonstrations at the time, (A.D. 1238).

The wealth, resources, and population of the Latin empire of Constantinople were now rapidly declining. No taxes could be levied, for the Greeks, who had cultivated the fields and acted as traders in the towns, finding their pursuits interrupted by hostile invasions, had emigrated into the empire of Nicaea, which enjoyed uninterrupted internal tranquillity. The Latin government was reduced to such financial difficulties that it was obliged to strip the copper roofs from the public buildings, and melt down every ornament of bronze that remained in Constantinople, in order to coin money. The precious metals were borrowed from the churches, and the relics of the saints were pledged or sold. Still the supplies of warriors, whom the influence of the Pope diverted from the legitimate object of the Crusades, which was to recover possession of the Holy Sepulchre, in order to war against the Greek heretics, often rendered the armies of the Latins for a time superior to any force the Emperor of Nicaea could bring into the field. The zeal of Pope Gregory IX, and the pecuniary assistance furnished by Louis IX of France, enabled Baldwin II to return to Constantinople in the year 1239 at the head of a considerable army, which the Greeks magnified to sixty thousand men. This force he increased by engaging in his service the whole military population of the Roman tribes who had settled within the limits of the Latin territory.

Baldwin II opened the campaign of 1240 by besieging Tzurulos, which was compelled to surrender at discretion. The governor Petraliphas and the garrison were carried to Constantinople, in order to raise money by the ransom of those who had wealth or wealthy friends. The Greek emperor, unable to relieve Tzurulos, attacked the Latin possessions between Nicomedia and the Bosphorus, and took Charax and Dakibyza; so that nothing was left them in Asia except Chalcedon, Skutarion, the shores of the Bosphorus, and Daskyllium. After the end of this campaign the Latin auxiliaries, being left without regular pay, soon retired from Constantinople; and John Asan, king of Bulgaria, dying in the following year (1241), the Emperor of Nicaea considered it most advantageous for his political interests to establish his supremacy over Thessalonica.

John, emperor of Thessalonica, was a pious and just prince, not destitute of ability, but submitting entirely to the guidance of his father, the unquiet and ambitious Theodore. Manuel was already dead, and his dominions were occupied by Michael, son of Michael, the elder brother of Theodore, and founder of the despotat of Epirus. The Emperor of Nicaea felt that his title to the sovereignty of the Eastern Empire would not be recognized by the European Greeks until he gained possession of Thessalonica, and he knew that this would prove a difficult task as long as the various princes of the house of Angelos Comnenos maintained a strict alliance. His first step, in preparing for war, was to gain over the Roman light cavalry, as, by commanding a considerable extent of country round his army, they secured him from surprise, and enabled him to conceal his movements. He found the Roman cavalry so useful in Europe that he transported

colonies of this people into Asia Minor, where he settled them in Phrygia, and in the valley of the Meander; but the similarity of their nomadic habits and of their language probably induced them very soon to form connections with the Seljouk Turks. To insure still further the success of his plans, John III committed one of those acts of the basest treachery which Byzantine political morality considered as a venial display of diplomatic ability. He invited the blind Theodore to visit his court for the purpose of consulting him on a common plan of action among the Greek princes against the Franks and Bulgarians; but when Theodore visited the imperial camp, he was detained as a prisoner, and the Emperor of Nicaea marched forward with his army from the shores of the Hellespont to form the siege of Thessalonica. His treachery was apparently useless, for while he was pressing the siege with every prospect of a speedy surrender, a courier arrived from his son, Theodore Lascaris, informing him that the Moguls had gained a great victory over Gaiaseddin, sultan of Iconium, and were overrunning all Asia Minor. The immediate return of the emperor with the whole army was therefore necessary to protect the Greek dominions. John III had treated his prisoner Theodore with all the honour due to his high rank, and had carefully sought to gain his goodwill. He now proposed to him the office of mediating a treaty of peace with his son. John III engaged to restore Theodore to liberty, and to raise the siege of Thessalonica, on condition that John, the son of Theodore, should lay aside the title of Emperor, but that he should retain the sovereignty of Thessalonica, with the title of Despot, on acknowledging the imperial supremacy of the throne of Nicaea as the true representative of the empire of Constantinople. These terms were accepted; for old Theodore had seen that the power of the Emperor of Nicaea was based on a well-filled treasury, a prosperous country, and a well-disciplined army, so that resistance was hopeless; while his own power was likely to remain equally great, whether his son was styled despot or emperor. As soon as the treaty was concluded, John III hastened back to Asia, where he found all the Greeks in the greatest alarm. The Moguls seemed on the eve of completing the conquest of the world. One division of their mighty army had subdued Russia and laid waste Poland and Hungary; another had now destroyed the Seljouk Empire in Asia. As soon as the emperor returned to Nymphaeum, he sent to the Sultan of Iconium, who had collected some troops from the relics of his army, and the terms of an offensive and defensive alliance were arranged between the Greek and Turkish empires. John III then devoted all his energies to make the preparations necessary for resisting the overwhelming armies of the Moguls; but, fortunately for the Christians, the attention of these conquerors was at this time diverted to other enterprises.

When no further danger was to be apprehended in Asia, the Emperor of Nicaea again recommenced his conquests in Europe. The young Caloman, king of Bulgaria, died or was poisoned in the year 1245, leaving an infant brother, Michael, as his successor. John III availed himself of the opportunity to reconquer the ancient dominions of the Byzantine emperors in Thrace. Serres soon fell into his hands; the fortress of Melenikon was betrayed to him by the Greek inhabitants, and he then subdued in succession Skupes, Prosakon, and Pelagonia. About this time an opportunity presented itself of gaining possession of Thessalonica. The Despot John died in 1244, and was succeeded by his brother Demetrius, a debauched youth. His own folly, and the treachery of his counsellors, involved him in war with the emperor, who, in the year 1246, took possession of Thessalonica, and sent Demetrius a prisoner to Lentianes. In the same year while Baldwin II, the Latin emperor of Constantinople, was begging aid from the courts of France and England to enable him to attack the Greeks, John III weakened the resources of the Franks by capturing their frontier fortresses of Tzurulos and Bizya.

This career of success was interrupted by the danger of losing the valuable island of Rhodes. While John Gavalas was absent from the city on some temporary business, a Genoese fleet which happened to be cruising in the Archipelago treacherously surprised the place, though the republic of Genoa was then an ally of the Emperor of Nicaea, and enjoyed some commercial privileges in his dominions. Soon after the Genoese gained possession of Rhodes, it was visited by William, prince of Achaia, and the Duke of Burgundy, who were on their way to join the crusade of St Louis in Cyprus. These princes left one hundred knights with their followers to assist in defending the place against the Greek emperor, on condition that they were to share in

the profits to be obtained by the piracy of the Genoese. The Emperor John III invested Rhodes without delay; and three hundred Asiatic cavalry having defeated the Frank knights before the walls of the city, the Genoese were compelled to surrender the place on being allowed to quit the island. The dissatisfaction of the Genoese, which led to this act of hostility, was caused by some regulations of the Emperor John III, which circumscribed the privileges conceded to the Genoese merchants by Theodore I. Though the existence of these privileges was found to be injurious to the trade of his Greek subjects, the emperor was compelled to cancel his new regulations in order to avoid the danger of being involved at the same time in war with both Genoa and Venice.

#### WAR WITH MICHAEL II OF EPIRUS, A.D. 1251.

The active career of John III was drawing to a close. His last military expedition was against Michael II, despot of Epirus. This prince had concluded a treaty with the empire, and his eldest son, Nicephorus, was engaged to marry Maria, the emperor's grand-daughter. The intrigues of Michael's uncle, the blind Theodore, disturbed this arrangement. After the death of his son John, the emperor of Thessalonica, Theodore resided at Vodhena, which he had made the capital of a small semi-independent principality. He now induced Michael to break off his connection with John III, and attack the possessions of the Greek emperor in Macedonia. The emperor hastened to Thessalonica, and Theodore flying at his approach, the imperial army occupied Vodhena, and advanced to the lake of Astrovos. The army was put into winter-quarters in the plain of Sarighioli. Its supplies were drawn in great part from Berroea, and long trains of mules and camels were incessantly employed to fill the magazines formed to facilitate its future movements. In the meantime, Petraliphas, who commanded the troops of Epirus at Kastoria, deserted to the emperor, and placed him in possession of the upper valley of the Haliacmon, now called Anaselitzas, by which he was able to render himself master of the passes over Mount Pindus at Deabolis, and secure an entry into Epirus by the valley of the Apsus.

The Despot Michael, seeing the heart of his dominions laid open to invasion, purchased peace by ceding to the emperor the fortress of Prilapos, which he still held, as well as Velesos and Albanopolis (Croia), with all the country he possessed north of the road between Dyrrachium and Thessalonica. Nicephorus, the despot's eldest son, was also delivered up as a hostage, but was honoured with the title of Despot. The blind Theodore, whose restless intrigues had caused the ruin of his family and relations, was confined to a monastery for the rest of his life.

A man destined to occupy an important place in the history of the decline of the Greek race now makes his first appearance in the annals of the empire. The Emperor John, after passing the winter at Vodhena, spent the following summer moving about in order to establish regularity in the administration of his new conquests. While in the camp at Astrovos, Michael Paleologos, a young and distinguished officer, high in the emperor's favour, and connected with several of the great Byzantine families, was accused of treason by Nikolas Manglabites, a noble of Melenikon. The emperor remitted the investigation of the affair until he reached Philippi. A court of inquiry, composed of the ablest judges in the senate and the courts of law, was then formed to examine the evidence produced by the accuser. Two officers of the imperial army were examined as witnesses: one declared that the other had made treasonable overtures to him on the part of Paleologos; the other admitted that he had held some conversation on the subject with the first witness, but declared that he had never communicated with Paleologos. As no further evidence could be procured, a duel was ordered. The first witness was victorious, but the vanquished persisted in denying all communication with Paleologos, even at the block where he was decapitated. The court now called on Paleologos to prove his innocence by the ordeal, and

receive in his hands a red-hot globe of iron. To this proposal he replied that he was willing to meet his accuser in battle, but as he could not expect Heaven to work a miracle for a sinner like himself, he had no doubt hot iron would burn his hands. The Bishop of Philadelphia reproved his levity, and preached confidence in faith and innocence. Paleologos listened with great deference to his sermon, and meekly observed, at its conclusion, "Holy father, as you know so well the power of faith and innocence in a holy trial, I pray you to take the glowing iron from the furnace, and will receive it in my hands with faith and submission". This judicious rebuke produced a favourable impression both on the judges and the emperor. Paleologos was restored to favour, and John endeavoured to attach him sincerely to the throne by marrying him in the following year to his niece Theodora. Michael Paleologos may have been innocent on this occasion, but when we consider that he was already twenty-seven years old, and that unbounded ambition and profound hypocrisy were the prominent features of his character, it is enough to praise his ability when accused, while the honourable conduct of the emperor excites a feeling of respect.

The personal character of John Vatatzes is so intimately connected with the prosperity of his reign that every trait of his private life has a historical interest. He had a noble simplicity of mind, and a degree of candour rarely found in union with great talents among the Byzantine Greeks. He was attentive to every branch of the public administration, and viewed with deep regret the neglected state of agriculture throughout his dominions. He felt that to increase the productions of the earth was the surest basis of national prosperity; and though his attainments in political science were too limited to enable him to see that increased production can only be sustained by increased facilities of transport and more extended markets, he nevertheless did much to encourage agriculture. Instead of wasting the public money on theoretical lectures and model farms, he devoted his private revenues to the improvement of his estates, and thus set an example to the large landed proprietors in the empire. He fought bravely as a soldier in the field of battle; but in times of peace, instead of amusing himself with tournaments and festivities, he overlooked his farms, examined his flocks and herds, improved the cultivation of his fields and the dwellings of his farmers. His example soon brought agriculture into fashion, for it was seen that it was not only a way to gain the emperor's approbation, but also to augment the value of property. The economy of John III was entirely free from avarice, for when he was able to restrict the expenditure of the imperial household to the sum yielded by his private property, he relieved the public treasure from the burden, without in any degree diminishing the splendour of his establishments. His liberality was further attested by the foundation of hospitals and almshouses, and his piety by the endowment of monasteries and the decoration of churches.

A popular story, current during his lifetime, deserves to be recorded. He ordered the money collected exclusively by the sale of eggs on his property to be employed in purchasing a coronet, ornamented with jewels, which he presented to the empress, as a testimony of the effects produced by prudent economy in trifling matters. The general attention which the Greeks paid to agriculture in consequence of the emperor's exhortations and example proved extremely profitable, from the extensive demand for cattle and provisions which prevailed for several years in the territories of the Seljouk Turks—the empire of Nicaea being almost the only portion of Asia Minor that escaped all injury from the invasions of the Moguls.

Some of the emperor's commercial laws, though at variance with the true principles of political science, may have been of temporary advantage when all commercial intercourse was misdirected by restrictions, protections, and monopolies. A government which cannot venture to force its nobles to abandon a life of idleness and luxury may nevertheless turn a considerable portion of their expenditure into the public treasury, when it is possible, from the aristocratic constitution of society, to tax those articles of luxury which are only consumed by the wealthy. But when the luxuries of the rich are consumed even in a small quantity by the poorer classes, then both financial science and political prudence command nations to make the truths of economical science the guide of their commercial legislation, and to adopt free trade as far as it is practicable. From these considerations it is possible that the sumptuary laws of John III were

productive of more good in restraining the extravagance of the nobility, and in filling the treasury, than they produced evil by diminishing trade. He promulgated a law prohibiting his subjects from wearing Persian, Syrian, and Italian silks and brocades, compelling them to use only the produce of Greek industry, under the pain of being dismissed from all honourable employments, excluded from court, and deprived of every social distinction. It must be observed that various treaties regulated the import duties on foreign silk, which the emperor could not increase, while taxation fell heavy on the mulberry trees and on the raw silk of the Greek manufacturers. The anxiety of John to banish extravagance from his court is attested by a severe rebuke which he gave his son Theodore, forgoing out hunting in a magnificent dress. He told him that the expenditure of a prince was too closely connected with the blood of his subjects to allow him to waste his wealth in idle pomp.

The popularity of John III was greatly increased by the amiable character, domestic virtues, and great talents of the Empress Irene. John Asan, king of Bulgaria, sent his daughter Helena, who was betrothed to her son Theodore, to be educated under her care; but when he determined to break off his alliance with the empire, he sent for his daughter. The king's object was evident, but the emperor scorned to retain his son's bride as a hostage; and the Princess Helena, who was only ten years old, was sent back to her father. As soon as all the Greeks who escorted her to her father's camp departed, and she understood that she was not to return to her dear mother, the empress, she was inconsolable. Her tears, lamentations, and praises at last excited her father's displeasure. As the court was crossing Mount Haemus on horseback, the king lost his usual good temper, and, taking his daughter in his arms, seated her on his riding-cloak in front of his saddle, and threatened her with punishment if she did not cease to weep and praise her Greek mother. But the love of Irene was stronger than the fear of punishment; the little Helena continued her lamentations, and it was remarked with amaze that her affectionate father became so angry as to give the child a slap on the cheek.

The Empress Irene died in 1241, and, two years after her death, the emperor married Anna, the natural daughter of the Emperor Frederic II of Germany. Anna was extremely young; and an Italian lady, called Marchesina, accompanied her as directress of her court and mistress of the robes, according to our English phraseology. The Emperor John fell passionately in love with this lady, who soon received the honours conferred in courts on the mistress of the sovereign, and was allowed to wear the dress reserved for members of the imperial family. The emperor was severely blamed for his conduct; and the force of public opinion supporting the religious authority of the Greek clergy, enabled Nicephorus Blemmidas to give Marchesina a severe rebuke. Blemmidas had decorated the church of the monastery of which he was abbot so richly that it was generally visited by the courtiers. One day, while the abbot was performing divine service, the imperial mistress passed with her attendants and resolved to view the church; but Blemmidas, informed of her approach, ordered the doors to be closed, declaring that with his permission an adulteress should never enter the church. Marchesina, enraged at so severe a rebuke, inflicted so publicly, hastened to the palace, threw herself at her lover's feet, and begged him to avenge the insult. John's love had not obscured his reason, and he felt the reproof was deserved: his only reply was, "The abbot would have respected me had I respected myself". Blemmidas was the tutor of Theodore, the emperor's son; and to the unfortunate connection with Marchesina we may perhaps attribute the circumstance that Theodore, contrary to the usual custom in the Eastern Empire, did not receive the imperial title during his father's life.

The character of John, and his political administration, deserve much praise; but his public administration was marked with some defects as well as his conduct. The gold coinage of the Byzantine empire, as we have had occasion to observe, presents the longest series of coins, possessing the same weight and purity, which the world has yet beheld; and the degradation of the political institutions of the empire, the corruption of society, and adulteration of the coinage, are contemporary events. John III, had fallen on a debased age, in which the faith due by the sovereign to the public was neither understood nor appreciated. He found the standard of the imperial mint already debased, and he carried the adulteration of the coin still further, issuing

money of which only two parts were of pure gold, and the remaining third of alloy. His son persevered in the same standard; but Michael VIII, after the reconquest of Constantinople, coined money of which fifteen parts only were gold and nine alloy. At last, Andronicus II, after issuing a coinage of fourteen parts of gold and ten of alloy, carried the depreciation of the standard so far as to make the gold byzant consist of equal parts of gold and alloy.

John III died at Nymphaeum on the 30th October 1254, after a reign of thirty-three years.

### Sect. III

#### FROM THE DEATH OF JOHN III TO THE RECOVERY OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY THE GREEKS. A.D. 1254-1261.

Theodore Lascaris II, the only son of John III and Irene, was thirty-three years old at his father's death. His first care was to hasten the election of a patriarch; and when Nicephorus Blemmidas declined the honour, the dignity was conferred on Arsenios, who, at the time of his election, was a lay brother in a monastery near the lake Apolloniades. In a single week he was consecrated deacon, priest, and patriarch. The coronation of Theodore was performed in the city of Nicaea, the new Patriarch placing the imperial crown on his head.

Theodore II was a man of considerable talent, and of a cultivated mind; but his health was ruined, and his intellect affected, by repeated attacks of epilepsy. Participating in the common opinions of his age, the emperor sometimes believed that his malady was a Divine judgment, and at others considered that it was the effect of the incantations of his enemies. At times he sunk into profound melancholy; at times he broke out in uncontrollable fits of anger. But his public conduct was generally marked by judgment and determination. He commanded his armies with ability; and he filled the administration with men of talent, in defiance of the nobility, who pretended an exclusive title to all offices which conferred profit and patronage.

The historian George Acropolita, who held the high charge of grand logothet or chancellor, has been induced, by wounded pride and affection, to record an anecdote which offers a truer and more graphic picture of the Emperor Theodore II than is usually found in the pedantic pages of the Byzantine writers. The conditions of a treaty with Bulgaria had been arranged by the intermediation of Ouros, a Russian prince, father-in-law of Michael, king of Bulgaria. Theodore had bestowed on the Russian presents to the value of twenty thousand byzants. Before the ratification of the treaty was exchanged, a report prevailed that it would not be ratified; and the emperor was induced to distrust the Russian by the insinuations of some intriguing courtiers, who said that the negotiations had been entered into to gain time, and would of course be disavowed.

On the Feast of the Transfiguration (6th August 1256), after the short sleep which invariably follows dinner during the summer heats throughout the East, the emperor mounted his horse to ride round his camp, which embraced a circumference of five miles. Theodore prided himself on the discipline of his army, and called his camp the movable city, which was the guardian of all the immovable cities of the empire. As he galloped off at a rapid pace, attended by his military staff, the chancellor, spurring his mule, attempted to keep his post of honour at his master's side; but neither his own flowing robes, nor the amble of his well-fed mule, were suited to the rapid movements of the emperor, and Theodore turned to the panting Acropolita and said, "Moderate your pace, and join us at your leisure".



The inspection of the camp terminated at a level eminence, to which Acropolita hastened by a direct road, in order to take his place in the circle round the emperor. The malicious suggestions of the discontented courtiers dwelt on the mind of Theodore; and he soon asked several of the great officers of his court if they had received information that the Russian was a deceiver, and that the treaty would not be ratified. The ministers of state replied that no such news had reached them, and it seemed to them impossible, for no Christian prince could be guilty of such baseness. But to this the emperor observed, that Christian princes had often been found capable of performing strange actions to obtain large presents. He then turned to Acropolita, and asked him what he had to say.

The chancellor replied, "I agree with my colleagues in thinking the report destitute of all foundation; but if Ouros has deceived us, and perjured himself, then Heaven will avenge the just cause by giving us the victory".

This reply satisfied the emperor, who shortly after mounted his horse and returned towards his tent. The moon had already risen, and as Theodore rode slowly on, he renewed the conversation. Observing that Acropolita kept silence, he called to him. "Well, grand logothet! tell us your opinion; the business concerns you especially".

To this the chancellor, with some display of dissatisfaction, answered, "How does it concern me particularly? If I had neglected to see the treaty properly drawn up, or omitted any requisite formality in receiving the oath of the Russian, it would be a criminal neglect; but as this was done in due form, I cannot see how the business concerns me especially".

The emperor was falling into one of his fits of ill-humour. The demure aspect of the chancellor on his sleek mule contrasting with the parade of armed nobles and prancing war-horses, and perhaps the pedantic manner and dogmatic tone of his reply, exercised more influence on his master's uncertain temper than the historian suspected. The emperor repeated, "Tell us what you think about the matter".

The chancellor replied, "I believe there is more falsehood than truth in the report that the treaty will not be ratified; but I cannot pretend to form a decided opinion on a matter that is uncertain".

Theodore angrily exclaimed, "It is precisely in uncertain matters that a correct judgment is wanted; every ass can give a decided opinion about what is evident".

To this Acropolita testily replied, "So I have lived to be ranked as an ass".

Theodore then added, "Yes, you were always a fool, and now you are doating".

The luckless chancellor, not yet sensible of his danger in bandying words with a passionate despot, or recollecting only his habits of intercourse with his youthful playfellow, again replied, "Then it is better for a fool to be silent : let the wise speak".

Here the emperor lost all command over his temper. Acropolita says he put his hand to his sword; at all events, he turned to Andronicus Muzalon, the grand domestikos, and said, "Dismount him". Muzalon approached Acropolita, who immediately dismounted, and was seized by two of the club-bearers of the guard, and bastinadoed with the rods they carried in their hands for the punishment of meaner offenders. The chancellor endured the blows for some time in silence, while the emperor and the great officers of state sat on their horses round; but at last, moved by the pain and the disgrace, he said aloud, "Lord Christ, why hast thou preserved my life in the hour of sickness to suffer this misery?". The tones of a voice so long endeared to him by friendship restored the emperor's judgment. Acropolita had been one of the few friends who displayed a sincere attachment to Theodore, when the influence of Marchesina had brought

him into trouble with his father. The emperor now turned away, saying to one of his officers, "Take him with you".

This officer asked the chancellor where he wished to go; but considering himself a prisoner, he recommended the officer to carry him to the tents of the Vardariot guards. When it appeared that the primikerios of the Vardariots received no orders to retain him prisoner, Acropolita retired to his own tent, where he shut himself up in the closest seclusion. He pretends that the emperor placed a guard to watch his movements, privately fearing that he might desert to Bulgaria, or fly to the Despot of Epirus. He remained in his tent a month, resisting the suggestions of his friends, and of many prelates and dignitaries of the court, that he should ask a private audience of the emperor. He had determined not to serve a prince who could treat his most devoted servants in such an unworthy manner. In the meantime, the treaty was ratified by the King of Bulgaria, the imperial camp was removed to Thessalonica, and negotiations were opened with the Despot of Epirus. Manuel Lascaris, the emperor's grand-uncle, and George Muzalon, the protovestiarios, now visited Acropolita, and carried him, by the emperor's order, to a council of ministers. When the emperor arrived to take his place on the throne, Acropolita saluted him in the usual form, but stood behind the members of the council. The emperor, observing this, said to him, "Take your place as usual"; and as Acropolita had neither resigned the office of chancellor, nor been removed from it, he placed himself by the emperor's side. Theodore then stated the relations of the empire with the Despot of Epirus, and gave his official orders to the chancellor as if nothing had occurred. Both shut up their feelings in their own breasts, and our interest in the personal relations of Theodore Lascaris and George Acropolita is lost in the stream of history.

The military administration of Theodore II was able and successful. His wars with Bulgaria and Epirus extended the power of the empire, and prepared the Greeks for the recovery of Constantinople. He was hardly seated on the throne when Michael, king of Bulgaria, thinking that his seclusion from public business during the latter years of his father's reign would paralyse his activity, invaded Thrace, and overran all the country inhabited by a Bulgarian, Sclavonian, and Vallachian population. The colonists were all willing to throw off the Greek yoke, and unite with their independent countrymen. The fortresses of Stenimachos, Prestitza, Krytzimos, and Tzepaina, with all the forts in the province called Achridos, on Mount Rhodope, were captured almost without resistance.

At the commencement of the year 1255, in the middle of winter, when the Bulgarians thought no Greek army would take the field, the Emperor Theodore II marched to Adrianople, and after remaining a single night pushed forward to attack the Bulgarian camp on the banks of the Hebrus. The enemy, apprised of his approach, abandoned their entrenchments, and left all their stores to the Greeks. A heavy fall of snow, rendering the passage of Mount Haemus impracticable, compelled the emperor to lead his army back to Adrianople. From thence he detached a considerable force to clear the province of Achridos of the enemy's troops. This corps was ordered to join another body advancing from Serres, and then to effect a junction with the main army at Tzepaina. The body of troops which had been sent to Serres, under the command of Alexius Strategopoulos, suffered a disgraceful defeat from a small body of Bulgarians; and the news of this disaster caused Dragotas, who had previously betrayed Melenikon to the Greeks, to surrender that important fortress to the Bulgarians. But the emperor had in the meantime, with wonderful rapidity, retaken Pristitza, Stenimachos, Krytzimos, and the towns on the northern slopes of Rhodope, between the valleys of the Hebrus and the Mestos; so that, on hearing of the defeat at Serres, he was able, without a moment's delay, to march on that place. He continued his advance to the pass of Roupelion, where the Strymon forces its way between precipitous rocks. The Bulgarians had fortified this strong position, but as soon as they were assailed by a corps of light troops, which occupied the summits overlooking the pass, they retreated. Their main body was overtaken and defeated. Dragotas was slain, and the emperor entered Melenikon in triumph on the following day. From Melenikon, Theodore removed his headquarters to Thessalonica, and subsequently to Vodhena, where he was detained some time

by illness. On his recovery, he again placed himself at the head of the army, and took Prilapos and Velesos, after which he returned by Nevstapolis through an arid and rocky district, in which the horses of the cavalry passed two days without water, to Strumitza, Melenikon, and Serres, where he encamped. All the conquests of the Bulgarians had been recovered in this long campaign, except the small fort of Patmon, in Achridos, and the frontier fortress of Tzepaina. Patmon was taken by one of the imperial generals; but at Makrolivada, about four days' march from Adrianople, the emperor, who proposed to besiege Tzepaina in person, was overtaken by a snow-storm, and compelled to put his army into winter-quarters.

Theodore returned to Asia, and passed the winter at Nymphaion, directing the civil administration of the empire with the same activity he had displayed in the conduct of its military affairs. The headquarters of the army was at Didymoteichos, and the chief command was intrusted to Manuel Lascaris and Constantinos Margarites. These generals, in the spring of 1256, allowed themselves to be drawn into an engagement by the Bulgarians, who had enrolled in their service a strong body of Romans, and the Greeks were defeated. Margarites was taken prisoner, but Lascaris escaped to Adrianople. Theodore immediately hastened to Europe, and his presence soon restored discipline and confidence among the troops. The Romans were defeated with great loss, and the Bulgarian king, astonished at the ease with which the emperor converted his defeated soldiers into an attacking army, sent his father-in-law, the Russian prince Ouros, to treat for peace, as has been already mentioned. The treaty was concluded on the condition that the king of Bulgaria should withdraw all his troops to the north of Mount Haemus, and cede to the emperor the fortress of Tzepaina.

As soon as the affairs of Bulgaria were settled, the Emperor Theodore directed his attention to Epirus. The Despot Michael II, who had violated the treaty by which his son Nicephorus had engaged to marry the emperor's daughter Maria, now sent his wife and son Nicephorus to sue for peace on such terms as Theodore might think fit to dictate. The marriage of Nicephorus and Maria was celebrated at Thessalonica; but the emperor insisted on the cession of the city of Servia on the Haliacmon, and of Dyrrachium, before he would conclude a treaty of peace. Michael, finding that his wife and son were retained as hostages at the imperial court, consented to the cession of these valuable frontier fortresses.

The emperor returned to Asia with his army, leaving only small garrisons in a few fortresses in Europe. The inspection of the civil and military administration in the country between Berrhoea and Dyrrachium was intrusted to George Acropolita who, the emperor observed, had laid aside the frankness of their former intercourse. He hoped that a short absence would efface entirely the memory of the chancellor's punishment; but Acropolita and Theodore never met again. Acropolita left Berrhoea on his tour of inspection in the month of December 1256. When he reached Prilapos, he found that the Albanian chiefs had revolted in the neighbouring mountains, and he was soon closely besieged, for the troops of the Despot Michael joined the insurgents; and the despot, having declared war with the empire, took Berrhoea and Vodhena, and shut up Michael Lascaris in Thessalonica.

Michael Paleologos, a restless intriguer, but an able officer, was now sent to take the command at Dyrrachium. He had been governor of Nicaea during the Bulgarian war; but, hearing that his uncle had been arrested on a charge of treason, he abandoned his high office, and fled to the Turks. This conduct might have been considered a proof that he had been connected with treasonable intrigues by a sovereign less suspicious than Theodore; but Paleologos contrived to produce a feeling in his favour, by despatching a circular before his flight to all the officers under his orders, ordering them to pay the strictest attention to their duty, for he had only withdrawn himself to gain time, and he hoped to be able to prove to the emperor the injustice of the accusations which had been brought against him by his enemies. These letters, and the good offices of the Bishop of Iconium, obtained his pardon. On returning to court, he took a solemn oath, confirmed by terrible imprecations, that he would preserve

inviolable fidelity to the emperor and his infant son. He was then sent to command the troops at Dyrrachium.

The arrival of Paleologos at Thessalonica revived the courage of the Greeks. He led the troops out to meet the enemy; and in a skirmish near Vodhena dismounted Theodore, the natural son of the Despot Michael, who commanded the Epirots. The young Theodore was slain by a Turk in the imperial service before he was recognised. This success opened the road to Dyrrachium, to which Paleologos marched with the greatest haste, visiting Prilapos, and affording Acropolita some temporary relief on his way. But as soon as he quitted the neighbourhood, the Despot Michael again occupied the passes; and the inhabitants of Prilapos, cut off from all communication with Thessalonica and Dyrrachium, became tired of a war in which they had no direct interest, and opened their gates to the Epirot troops. Acropolita, unable to defend the citadel, capitulated on condition that he should be allowed to retire with the garrison to Thessalonica; but the despot, in violation of this capitulation, detained him a prisoner, and even confined him for some time chained in a dungeon. The campaign of 1257 proved extremely unfavourable to the Greeks; and the illness of the emperor prevented his taking the field in person, in the year 1258, to recover the ground lost by his generals.

The latter days of Theodore were afflicted by fearful attacks of epilepsy, which produced such an effect on his temper that he appeared at times to be affected with temporary insanity. Participating in the prejudices of his age, he suspected that his malady was increased by the sortileges of his enemies; and this suspicion opened a door for many intrigues at his court, and for the most iniquitous accusations. The only way to escape condemnation, when a charge of this nature was made, consisted in undergoing the ordeal of holding red-hot iron in the hand; and the historian Pachymeres declares that he saw this trial undergone without injury. At this time, Michael Paleologos was the most popular man among the nobility. The failing health of the emperor, and the youth of the emperor's son, prepared men for a revolution in the order of succession; and many already spoke of the title of Paleologos to the imperial crown as better founded than that of the reigning family, for Michael was descended from the eldest daughter of Alexius III. It was fortunate for Michael Paleologos that he was absent from the court. He was an accomplished hypocrite, and his apparent frankness of manner seemed so incompatible with the falsehood and dissimulation which formed the basis of his character, that he deceived the prudence of John III, and concealed his unprincipled ambition even from the suspicious Theodore. But had Michael Paleologos been near the court, he would in all probability have lost his eyesight during one of the emperor's fits of passion. As it was, the emperor committed an unpardonable outrage on his family. Martha, the sister of Michael, had a beautiful daughter, whom the emperor ordered the family to bestow in marriage on one of his pages, named Valanidiotes. The young man gained the affections of the high-born damsel, when the emperor, changing his mind, forced her to marry a man of her own rank. A report that this marriage was not consummated, induced Theodore to suspect that both this event and a violent attack of his disease was caused by some charm the mother had used. He became furious, and ordered Martha, though she was allied to the imperial family, to be enclosed in a sack with a number of cats, which were pricked with javelins, that they might torture the unfortunate lady. She was brought into court with the sack fastened at her neck, and examined concerning her supposed incantations, but nothing could be extracted from her by this infamous tyranny. The emperor, however, fearing that Michael Paleologos, on hearing how his sister had been treated, might join the Despot of Epirus, or raise the standard of revolt, sent an officer to arrest him before the news could reach Dyrrachium. Michael was brought to Magnesia as a prisoner; but he contrived, by his insinuating manners, again to allay the suspicions of Theodore, who, finding that his end was fast approaching, was anxious to secure the services of Michael for his infant son. The emperor believed that he had destroyed the most dangerous enemies of his house by depriving Constantine Strategopoulos and Theodore Philes of sight, and cutting out the tongue of Nicephorus Alyattes.

Theodore Lascaris II died at Magnesia in the month of August 1258, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, and was buried in the monastery of Sosander by the side of his father. With all his faults, Theodore II had many generous feelings, and he was a liberal prince to his people. Though he accumulated a considerable treasure in the fort of Astyza on the Scamander, as his father had done in the citadel of Magnesia, his government was nevertheless more free from financial oppression than that of the Greek emperors generally. His military arrangements for the protection of his dominions were extremely judicious. The mountain fortresses that covered the plains of Asia from the incursions of the Turks and Turkmans were carefully garrisoned, and the highland population that furnished the local guards for the mountain passes was freed from the payment of the land-tax. Theodore also displayed a sincere love of learning, though his attention was exclusively directed to theology and legendary history. He was unpopular among the Greek nobility, because he conferred official appointments with reference to the merits of the candidates, making small account of the aristocratic pretensions of the Byzantine families, who would fain have reserved every place of honour and emolument in the court and public administration to themselves and their connections. This pretension of the Constantinopolitan nobles naturally became more offensive to the other Greeks when the capital was removed from Byzantium. The piety of Theodore was irreproachable, but he steadily excluded the patriarch and clergy from all interference in politics; and this circumstance generally marks a period of prosperity in the administration of the Eastern Empire.

John IV was eight years old at his father's death. George Muzalon, his father's prime-minister, was appointed tutor to the young emperor, and regent during his minority. The Patriarch Arsenios was joined with him as a colleague. Muzalon, knowing that a powerful party among the nobility was hostile to his administration, feared an insurrection; he therefore assembled a council of all the officers of state and leading nobles, and offered to resign the regency, proposing that the assembly should immediately elect his successor. Muzalon appears not to have fathomed the ambition or suspected the hypocrisy of Michael Paleologos, who was his wife's uncle; but Michael had already determined to make the unpopularity of Muzalon the means for usurping the throne; and he perceived that if another regent should be named, and Muzalon remain tutor to the young emperor, all immediate hope of effecting a revolution would be annihilated for the time. He therefore used all his influence to induce the council to ratify the choice of the late emperor, and Muzalon was easily persuaded to assume the office of regent when he saw his authority thus confirmed.

In the meantime, a powerful party was plotting the ruin of the regent, whom the nobles regarded as the principal author of the cruelties of Theodore. The immense wealth and numerous households of a few families enabled them to make the people of Magnesia their partisans. The troops alone were exempt from their influence, but the military were in general attached to Michael Paleologos, and hostile to Muzalon. Numerous predictions were circulated, which foretold that Michael Paleologos was destined to reign. As grand constable he commanded the foreign auxiliaries, and these troops displayed a seditious spirit, on the ground that they were deprived of a donative which the late emperor was about to confer on them. The conspirators also spread a report that Muzalon had caused the death of Theodore II by his sorileges, in order to act as regent. The memory of Theodore was popular both among the soldiers and the citizens, and it was therefore necessary to separate the cause of the regent from that of the young emperor in order to secure success. The plan of a revolution was soon organized, and the regent was assassinated by the nobles, under the cover of a popular tumult. While the clergy, the officers of state, and the ladies of the court were performing the funeral ceremonies appropriated to the ninth day after Theodore's death, at the monastery of Sosander, a band of soldiers burst into the church and murdered Muzalon, his two brothers, his son-in-law, and his secretary. The regent was stabbed at the altar; the dead bodies were hewed in pieces by the mob; the palace of the Muzalons was burned, and their property plundered; yet no civil or military authority attempted to check the disorders of the mob until its fury was satiated.

Michael Paleologos was only one of the conspirators who had plotted the murder of Muzalon, but he resolved to be the principal gainer by the crime. The pretensions that might have been advanced to the regency by the families of Lascaris, Vatatzes, Nestongos, Tornikes, Strategopoulos, Philes, Kavallarios, Philanthropenos, Cantacuzenos, Aprenos, and Livadarios, were withdrawn. The popularity of Paleologos with the military, and his superior talents, pointed him out as the fittest man to conduct the government; but he declined the office until he had secured the approbation of the Patriarch Arsenios, the surviving tutor of the young emperor, and the Patriarch was then absent at Nicaea. In the meantime, Paleologos was named Grand-duke, an office which gave him no direct control over the finances. The treasury was under the guard of a special body of Varangians and could only be opened by certain officers on the presentation of warrants duly countersigned by the heads of the various departments in the imperial administration. Paleologos, nevertheless, contrived by his intrigues and frauds to obtain the issue of money, unauthorized by the strict rules and immediate exigencies of the public service; and this money was employed in gaining the nobility, the military, and the clergy to support his party. His liberality to others, and his personal indifference to money, greatly increased his popularity. While others were enriched by his favour, his own fortune remained small, and his household was conducted with the greatest simplicity, and its expense was limited to three byzants a-day. When the Patriarch returned to Magnesia, Michael Paleologos was, by universal consent, and at the particular suggestion of the clergy, invested with the office of tutor to the Emperor John IV. He was soon after honoured with the rank of Despot, second only to that of Basileus, and became invested with absolute control over every branch of the administration.

But the throne was always considered the only safe resting-place for political intriguers of the highest rank in the Eastern Empire, and Paleologos was determined to keep the power he had obtained. His partisans were therefore instructed to declaim in favour of an elective monarchy, and of the necessity of giving the young emperor an able colleague, as the only chance of avoiding, or, at all events, of crushing rebellion. The plans of Paleologos were also furthered by the news of a coalition, formed by the Despot of Epirus, the King of Sicily, and the Prince of Achaia, for the conquest of Thessalonica and the European provinces of the empire. The military and the partisans of Paleologos loudly demanded the election of an emperor capable of averting the danger, and succeeded in obtaining the proclamation of Michael VIII on the 1st January 1259. The election was conducted with unusual formalities. Michael was publicly raised on a shield, supported on one side by bishops, and on the other by nobles; while the people, the native legions, and the Latin and Slavonian mercenaries, hailed him with acclamations. Before the ceremony he had signed a written certificate of his having sworn, in presence of the Patriarch, to restore the full sovereignty to the young emperor, John IV, on his attaining his majority, and not to advance any claim to the imperial dignity in favour of his heirs. In consequence of this oath, the prelates of the Greek Church, who were generally servile instruments of the court, pronounced a sentence declaring that Michael Paleologos did not violate the oaths he had taken to John III and Theodore II by accepting the crown on these conditions. The Patriarch Arsenios disapproved of this evasion, and refused to take any part in the election; but his suspicions and distrust were allayed by the hypocritical assurances and modest demeanour of Michael.

At the coronation the usurper dropped his mask, and yet the Patriarch was weak enough to betray the trust imposed on him as tutor to the Emperor John IV. It was understood that the ceremony of the coronation of the two emperors was to take place at the same time in the cathedral of Nicaea. The coronation of the young emperor must in that case have preceded that of his colleague. To avoid this, Michael concerted with a number of bishops that the coronation of John IV should be deferred, but without allowing the Patriarch to hear anything of their plan. When the moment arrived to receive the crown, Michael stepped forward alone. The Patriarch called for John IV, and refused to proceed with the ceremony: but neither law, honour, morality, nor religion were then predominant in the Greek mind; and the majority of the bishops present having been previously gained, the Patriarch, finding himself unsupported by the clergy, was so

compliant as to perform the ceremony. The only prelate who made a long resistance was the Archbishop of Thessalonica. He refused to sign the coronation act, though he was reproached with having predicted that Michael was destined to reign, and he only yielded when the tumultuous cries of the populace and the threats of the Varangian guards backed the instances of the senators, and made him fear that little respect would be shown for his episcopal sanctity by an assembly engaged in violating the law and constitution of the empire.

The first orders given by Michael VIII, after his coronation, were intended to allay all suspicions concerning his ulterior intentions. A clause was inserted in the oath of allegiance which was administered to all the subjects of the empire, binding them to take up arms against either of the emperors who should attempt any enterprise against the other. This measure was probably forced on Michael by the Patriarch's opposition. But he purchased supporters of his usurpation by lavishing the public money. To gain new friends and reward his partisans, the pay of the senators was increased, large donations were bestowed on the troops, great promotions were made among the officers, the state debtors were released, and many new pensions were granted. The mob was bribed by largesses, the people were flattered by public harangues, and the nobles were entertained by festivals. In short, Michael Paleologos commenced his reign by wasting the public wealth, corrupting the people, and weakening both the national character and the national resources; by acting the part of an unprincipled demagogue, he became a successful usurper. He lived to reap the bitter fruits of his criminal conduct. The lavish expenditure by which he had gained the nobles, the clergy, and the populace, became a permanent burden on the finances; to defend his crown he was compelled to oppress his subjects with new exactions, and the powerful armies which the popularity of John III and Theodore II had enabled them to bring into the field against foreign enemies, were, during the latter years of the reign of Michael, dispersed to repress the rebellious disposition of the Greeks.

The position of the empire at the period of Michael's election was extremely favourable to the extension of the power of the Greeks; and had the new emperor been able to diminish the weight of the public burdens, and pursue the domestic policy traced out by his two predecessors, a great increase in the population and resources of the Greeks in Asia Minor must have followed. The imperial armies were numerous and well organized, the inhabitants of the mountainous districts of Phrygia and Bithynia formed a bold and active militia, which not only garrisoned a line of forts that commanded all the roads, bridges, and mountain passes, but also furnished an efficient body of infantry for foreign service. The bowmen from the country round Nicaea occupied at this time a prominent place in the Greek armies, and in general the courage and quality of the native troops showed great improvement. This arose in part from the advance which had taken place in the social position of the Greek peasantry after the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders. The cultivators of the soil were now the proprietors of the lands they tilled, and they fought like men who possessed rights and privileges which they would sacrifice their lives to defend.

While the Greek empire had been gradually recovering strength, the neighbouring states had rapidly declined. The empires of the Seljouk Turks of Iconium, and of the Belgians at Constantinople, which had successively threatened the Greek nation with extinction, were both humbled. The Turkish Empire was rent into fragments by civil wars, in which fathers, sons, and brothers of the line of Seljouk were arrayed in arms against one another. Tyranny ruined its resources, and the invasions of the Moguls completed its ruin. Gsuaseddin Kaikhosrou II, who died in 1247, was a weak and luxurious prince. His son, Azeddin Kaikous II, after sustaining several defeats from the Tartar armies, was driven from his dominions by his brother, Rokneddin Kilidy-Arslan IV, and sought safety from the fraternal discord which seemed the inheritance of his race, by retiring into the Greek empire.

Baldwin II, emperor of Constantinople, after begging succours over all Europe, and wasting the supplies he received from the ambition of the Pope and the generosity of St Louis in maintaining an imperial court, lived by tearing the copper from the domes of the public

buildings erected by the Byzantine emperors, which he coined into money, and by borrowing gold from Venetian bankers, in whose hands he placed his eldest son Philip as a pledge. To such a miserable condition was the empire of the Crusaders now reduced, and so great was the diminution of the military class in the Latin population, that the only efficient guard at Constantinople was maintained by Venetian merchants, and the existence of the empire was dependent on foreign succours.

## BULGARIA

The kingdom of Bulgaria was a principal object of attention in conducting the foreign affairs of the Greek empire, both on account of its power and the contiguity of its frontier. A considerable part of the imperial territory in Europe was, moreover, inhabited by Bulgarians and Slavonians, who were now almost amalgamated into one people. While John Asan reigned in Bulgaria, he had maintained the balance between the Latin and Greek empires; but his death, the youth of his sons, the independent position of the great Bulgarian nobles, and the low state of civilization in the country, combined to render the kingdom a scene of anarchy, and to destroy its influence abroad. Constantine Tech at length rendered himself master of the throne, by expelling Mytzes, the last sovereign of the family of Asan. Constantine had allied himself with Theodore II, and espoused his daughter Irene, but he was not in condition to engage in war with Michael VIII. But as Michael was anxious to secure peace on the northern frontier in order to direct his forces against the Latins, he sent Acropolita, who had been released from his captivity in Epirus, as ambassador to the court of Constantine, king of Bulgaria, in 1260.

The only frontier power that possessed the internal strength and energy necessary for disputing the progress of the Greek empire, at this time, was Epirus. But the territories ruled by the Despot Michael were inhabited by a population consisting of various races, which showed no disposition to amalgamate into one nation. Slavonians, Vallachians, Albanians, and Greeks occupied considerable territories, in which they were separately governed by their respective usages, institutions, and laws, and each defended its local administration both against its neighbours and the prince. The power of the Despot of Epirus was consequently less despotic than that of most contemporary princes; but the warlike disposition of a great portion of his subjects rendered him a dangerous neighbour.

Michael VIII, as soon as he acquired the direction of the government, had endeavoured to conclude peace with the Despot of Epirus, who had already extended his conquests to the banks of the Vardar. The emperor offered to allow him to retain his conquests, on condition that he released his two prisoners, Acropolita and Chavaron; but the despot, having formed an alliance with Manfred, king of Sicily, and William, prince of Achaia, expected by their assistance to become master of Thessalonica, and indulged in the hope of expelling the emperor's troops from Europe. When Michael Paleologos found that war was inevitable, he sent his brother John with a considerable army to oppose the despot, (A.D. 1259). The Epirot camp was established at Kastoria; but John Paleologos, penetrating suddenly into upper Macedonia by the pass of Vodhena, compelled the despot to abandon his position in great haste. The Greeks regained possession of Achrida, Deavolis, Prespa, Pelagonia, and Soskos, while the despot, retiring behind the chain of Pindus, waited for the arrival of four hundred knights, who had been sent to his aid by Manfred, king of Sicily, and of a considerable body of Latin troops under the command of William, prince of Achaia. When he was joined by these auxiliaries, his army was much stronger than that of the Greeks, and he resumed the offensive. Advancing by the pass of Vorilas, he recovered possession of Stanou, Soskos, and Molykos, and pressed forward to relieve Prilapos, which the Greeks had invested. The best troops in the army of John Paleologos consisted of light cavalry from the Turkish tribes at the mouth of the Danube, and from the



nomad hordes in Asia Minor. This cavalry was supported by a body of the famous archers of Bithynia, and both were under the command of experienced officers, trained under the firm discipline of the Emperors John III and Theodore II. This force retired before the Despot Michael in perfect order, cutting off the foraging parties, and harassing the advance of the Latin heavy-armed cavalry, until an opportunity presented itself of attacking the main body of the Epirot army in the plain of Pelagonia. The attack was said to have been favoured by secret communications with John Dukas, the natural son of the Despot Michael, who, in right of his wife, was Prince of the Vallachians of Thessaly. John Dukas is said to have been grossly insulted by some French knights. It is certain that, whether there was treachery or not, the Epirot army was completely defeated, and William, prince of Achaia, with many Latin nobles, was taken prisoner. John Paleologos, with one division of the victorious army, advanced into Greece and plundered Livadea; the other, under Alexius Strategopoulos, took Joannina and Arta, and delivered Acropolita.

The Despot of Epirus fled to Leucadia, where he assembled new forces. The imperial generals hastened to pass the winter at the court of Michael VIII, in order to secure their portion of the rewards which were there distributed with a lavish hand. In the following year (1260) Alexis Strategopoulos, who remained in Epirus to conduct the war, was defeated and taken prisoner at Tricorythos by Nicephorus, the eldest son of the Despot Michael. The best part of the Bithynian archers perished in this battle; but Strategopoulos was fortunate enough to be soon released from captivity, and he was immediately intrusted with the command of the army in Thrace, where accident gave him the glory of being the conqueror of Constantinople. The war continued in Epirus, sustained by the national aversion of the Albanians and Vallachians to the imperial government, but without being productive of any important results.

The successful campaign of 1259, and the captivity of the Prince of Achaia, deprived the Latin empire of its most useful allies. Michael VIII resolved to avail himself of the moment to make an attempt for the reconquest of Constantinople. The Emperor Baldwin II was too weak to defend his capital, if left to his own resources; and the Venetians no longer possessed that command of the sea which insured their being able to introduce succours into the place during a siege, for the republics of Venice and Genoa were then engaged in a war remarkable for the fierce animosity of the combatants, and distinguished by a succession of well-contested and bloody naval battles. The Emperor Michael, in the year 1260, took the command of the Greek army in Thrace, and, after storming Selymbria, advanced to the walls of Constantinople. As he advanced without a sufficiency of military stores for forming a permanent camp, and without engines for commencing a regular siege, there seems no doubt that he counted on aid from secret friends within the walls. The traitor was said to be a French noble named Anseau; but he proved apparently unable or unwilling to complete his treason; and Michael, after waiting in vain for the concerted aid, made several attempts to carry the suburb of Galata by storm. These attacks being repulsed, he concluded a truce for a year with the Emperor Baldwin.

Michael determined to renew his attack on Constantinople as soon as the truce expired. He felt that the conquest of the imperial city could alone throw a veil over his usurpation; and that, as the restorer of the Byzantine Empire, he might pretend a new claim to the homage of the Greeks. In the spring of 1261 he signed a treaty with the republic of Genoa, by which he granted the Genoese various commercial privileges, and renewed all the concessions made to them by the Emperor Manuel. Both parties bound themselves to carry on war with Venice, and not to conclude either truce or peace, unless by mutual consent. The emperor, in the event of his conquering Constantinople, promised to put the Genoese in possession of the palace, castle, church, and domain, held by the Venetians; and the Genoese promised to furnish the emperor with a fleet to aid his conquest. By this treaty the convention—concluded under the auspices of Pope Gregory IX in 1238, binding the republics of Genoa and Venice not to ally themselves with the Greek emperor, except by mutual consent—was annulled, and the foundation was laid of the great commercial ascendancy which the Genoese acquired in the Black Sea.

While the Emperor Michael was waiting for the expiry of the truce and the arrival of the Genoese fleet, he sent Alexis Strategopoulos, who had just returned from his captivity in Epirus, to take the command of the troops in Thrace, ordering him to collect a force on the Latin frontier, and enter their territory as soon as the truce expired, in order that no time might be lost in forming the siege of Constantinople on the arrival of the Genoese fleet, when Michael proposed assuming the command of his army in person.

The Latin seigneurs had found their property, even in the immediate vicinity of Constantinople, so insecure, that they had sold it to the Greek cultivators of the soil. The Greeks had also established themselves as farmers of the imperial possessions confiscated at the foundation of the Latin empire. They were thus the only inhabitants of the district protected by the vicinity of Constantinople from the ravages of the Greek and Bulgarian armies; and their position had enabled them, during the increasing weakness of the Latin government, to acquire a certain independence in their communal organization. In a feudal empire, they lived exempt from feudal ties; and in order to defend their property, they formed themselves into an armed militia, called Voluntaries, which pretended to maintain a kind of neutrality in the war between the Latins and the Greeks. Strategopoulos opened communications with the chiefs of the voluntaries, whose national feelings induced them to favour the Greek cause, and he found them willing to aid in gaining immediate possession of Constantinople. Their daily communications with the city enabled them to give him accurate information of all that passed among the Latins.

As soon as the truce expired, Strategopoulos led the troops under his command into the neighbourhood of Constantinople; but the Latins took no immediate precautions for defence, knowing that the force under his command was inadequate to besiege the city. Elated by their successful resistance during the preceding year, and by the arrival of Marc Gradenigo, a new Venetian podestat, with a few galleys, they determined to mark the expiry of the truce by striking the first blow; and their object was to recover possession of Daphnusia or Sozopolis on the Black Sea. Marc Gradenigo was anxious to secure a port of refuge for the Venetian vessels when pursued by the Genoese, and cut off by adverse winds from entering the Bosphorus. He persuaded the Emperor Baldwin to allow him to embark the best part of the garrison in the fleet, which consisted of thirty galleys and a Sicilian galleon of great size; so that the force embarked may have exceeded six thousand men. The moment was now considered favourable for executing the plan which had been formed by the Greeks for surprising Constantinople. A leader of the voluntaries, named Koutritzakes, had secured the assistance of some Greeks within the walls; Strategopoulos gradually brought his army close to the city, and everything was prepared for the execution of the enterprise. As soon as it was midnight, Strategopoulos and Koutritzakes, with a chosen body of soldiers, approached the walls at a spot concerted with their friends in the city. The scaling-ladders were planted, and the enemy entered Constantinople without opposition. The guard at the Gate of the Fountain was surprised, and the gate, which had been built up for greater security, was broken open before any alarm could be given. The imperial troops then marched into the city, and took possession of the land wall. In this position things remained until the dawn of day enabled the Greek general to advance. The troops who attempted to dispute his passage to the imperial palace were defeated; and the Emperor Baldwin, finding that the enemy was rapidly approaching, instead of seizing some post near the port, which he could have defended until the expedition returned from Daphnusia, basely abandoned his empire, embarked in a vessel at anchor in the port, and fled to Euboea. His crown, sceptre, and sword, all equally useless to such a mean-spirited coward, were found by the Greek soldiers who entered his deserted palace, and carried in triumph through the streets.

The Frank and Venetian inhabitants were numerous and brave. They soon formed a force capable of defending that portion of the city in which their ware-houses were situated, and of preserving the command of the port. Strategopoulos saw their preparations for defence with some anxiety, for the sudden return of the fleet from Daphnusia might have exposed him to be driven from his conquest, or have entailed on him the necessity of destroying the city. By the advice of a Greek, named Phylax, who had served in the household of Baldwin, he now set fire

to the houses in the Frank and Venetian quarters, leaving their communications with their ships unmolested. By this manoeuvre they were compelled to turn all their attention to embarking their wives and children, with their jewels and money, leaving the Greeks to occupy the whole line of the fortifications, and secure every post of strength.

When the news that the Greeks had entered Constantinople reached the troops at Daphnusia, they returned with all speed to the capital; but they found the ramparts manned by the Greek army, with the exception of a small portion towards the port, which was separated from the city by a mass of burning houses or impassable ruins. Only a small part of the Latin families had embarked, so that both sides were ready to conclude a truce. Under the guarantee of this cessation of hostilities, the Latins carried their families and much of their wealth on board the ships in the port; but the crowd was so great that, before they could reach Euboea or the islands in the Archipelago, many perished from want of food and water.

## CHAPTER II.

GREEK EMPIRE OF CONSTANTINOPLE UNDER THE DYNASTY OF  
PALEOLOGOS, A.D. 1261-1453.

## Sect. I

## MICHAEL VIII, A.D. 1261-1282.

The conquest of Constantinople restored the Greeks to a dominant position in the East; but the national character of the people, the political constitution of the imperial government, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Orthodox Church, were all equally destitute of the enlightened theory and energetic practice necessary for advancing in a career of improvement. The Greek nation made no use of this favourable crisis in its history for developing its material resources, augmenting its moral influence, and increasing its wealth and population. The first idea of the emperor, of the people, of the government, and of the clergy, was to constitute the New Greek Empire of Constantinople on the old standard of that Roman legislation and political orthodoxy which had perished when the Crusaders destroyed the Byzantine Empire. This vain attempt to inspire dead forms with life, impressed on the Greek empire of Constantinople the marks of premature decrepitude. The Emperor Michael, the imperial court, the Orthodox Church, and the Greek nation, suddenly assume the characteristics of a torpid and stubborn old age; and the history of the empire takes the monotonous type which it retained for nearly two centuries, until the Ottoman Turks put an end to its existence. There is little interest, but there is much instruction, in the records of this torpid society, which, while it was visibly declining to the eyes of others, boasted that its wisdom and experience had brought its political government, its civil laws, and its ecclesiastical dogmas, to a state of perfection. Conservatism is constantly deluding the minds of political philosophers with the hope of giving a permanent duration to some cherished virtue in society. It becomes frequently a disease of statesmen in long-established despotisms. The condition of mankind in China and Hindostan has been influenced for many centuries by this delusion of the human mind; and in the first page of this work it was observed that the institutions of imperial Rome displayed the same tendency to fix society in immutable forms and classes by legislative enactments. The same idea now pervaded not only the government and the church of the Greek empire, but was also transfused into the national mind. History offers no other example of a people possessing a rich and noble literature, imbued with sentiments of liberty and truth, turning a deaf ear to the voice of reason, sacrificing all independence of thought, and all desire of improvement, to the maintenance of national pride. The causes of this strange phenomenon appear to have been partly religious bigotry, and partly a wish to maintain political union among the Greek race. The Greeks hated the Catholics with a fervour which obscured their intellectual vision; and they were justly alarmed at the danger which their nation incurred, both from its geographical location and from the power of its enemies, of being broken up into a number of dependent and insignificant states. The opinion that this evil could be averted by the principle of conservatism was generally embraced; and every existing relic of a state of things which had long passed away was carefully preserved. The Greeks gloried in the name of Romans; they clung to the forms of the imperial government without its military power; they retained the Roman code without the systematic administration of justice, and prided themselves on the orthodoxy of a church in which the clergy were deprived of all ecclesiastical independence, and lived in a state of vassalage to the imperial court. Such a society could only wither, though it might wither slowly.

On the other hand, it may perhaps be doubtful whether the state of society would have enabled the Greek nation to revive its national energy, and secure to itself a dominant position in the East, by reforming its central administration according to the actual exigencies of the present, instead of modelling it on theories of the past. The progress of the people required that the system of municipal institutions should be ameliorated and extended, in order to avert the tendency of local interests to produce political separation. But, above all things, it was necessary that the Greeks should voluntarily concede to their own countrymen that religious liberty which the Genoese and the Turks were compelled, by the force of circumstances, to grant to strangers, and allow the Greek Catholics to worship according to their own forms, and to build churches for themselves. To increase the national wealth, it was necessary that commercial freedom should be secured to native merchants, and that the imperial government and the city of Constantinople should be deprived of the power of selling monopolies, or granting exclusive privileges of trade to the Italian republics, in order to purchase political and military assistance. To do all this would have been extremely difficult, for many interests and prejudices would have opposed the necessary reforms.

Michael Paleologos was encamped at Meteorion with the troops he had assembled to form the siege of Constantinople, when a report reached him in the dead of night that the city was taken. At daybreak a courier arrived from Strategopoulos, bringing the ensigns of the imperial dignity, which Baldwin had abandoned in his precipitate retreat. Michael now felt that he was really emperor of the Greeks, and he marched to take possession of the ancient capital of the Christian world with no ordinary hopes; but Byzantine formalism and Greek vanity required so much preparation for every court ceremony that the emperor's entrance into Constantinople did not take place until the 15th of August. The Archbishop of Cyzicus, bearing one of the pictures of the Virgin said to have been painted by St Luke, of which the orthodox pretend to possess several originals, passed first through the Golden Gate. The emperor followed, clad in a simple dress, and followed by a long procession on foot. After visiting the monastery of Studium, the train proceeded to the palace of Bukoleon, for that of Blachern had been left by the Franks in such a state of filth and dilapidation as to be scarcely habitable. At the great palace the emperor mounted his horse and rode in the usual state to the Church of St Sophia, to perform his devotions in that venerated temple of the Greeks. Alexis Strategopoulos was subsequently permitted to make a triumphal procession through the city, like a Roman conqueror of old; and Michael determined to repeat the ceremony of his own coronation in the capital of what was still called the Roman Empire, at the central shrine of orthodox piety. The Patriarch Arsenics had been removed from office for opposing his usurpation. His successor soon died, and he was now replaced at the head of the church, for his deposition was generally regarded as illegal, and Michael VIII feared to commence his reign in Constantinople by creating a schism in the Greek Church. The well-intentioned but weak-minded Arsenios was persuaded to repeat the ceremony of Michael's coronation in the Church of St Sophia, while the lawful emperor, John IV, was left forgotten and neglected at Nicaea.

Constantinople had fallen greatly in wealth and splendour under the feudal government of the Latins; and it was not destined to recover its former population and rank as the empress of Christian cities under the sway of the family of Paleologos. The capital of the Greek empire was a very different city from the capital of the Byzantine empire. The Crusaders and Venetians had destroyed as well as plundered the ancient Constantinople and the Greek city of the Paleologoi declined so much that it could hardly bear comparison with Genoa and Venice. Before its conquest by the Crusaders, Constantinople had astonished strangers by the splendour of its numerous palaces, monasteries, churches, and hospitals, which had been constructed and adorned during nine centuries of inviolable supremacy. But now, on regaining its liberty, instead of displaying at every step proofs that it concentrated within its walls the wealth of many provinces—instead of containing the richest commercial port and the most industrious population on the globe—it was everywhere encumbered with the rubbish of repeated conflagrations, disfigured by dilapidated palaces, abandoned monasteries, and ruined churches, and inhabited by a diminished, idle, and impoverished people. The blackened ashes of the last

fire, by which the Greeks had expelled the Venetians, had not yet been washed from the walls by a winter's rain. In all directions the squares and porticoes, which had once been the ornaments of the city, were encumbered with filth; for the Franks were ignorant of the police regulations which the Byzantine government had inherited from the earlier Roman emperors, and which it had not allowed to remain entirely without improvement. The state of the city attested the barbarism of the Western nobles, and the insufficiency of the feudal organization to direct the complicated machine of civil administration in accordance with the exigencies of a civilized and motley population.

Michael VIII was eager to efface the marks of foreign domination from the capital of the empire, and to repair the injuries of time; but his plans were injudicious, and his success extremely limited. He aspired to be the second founder of the city of Constantinople, as well as of the Eastern Roman Empire. The nobility of his dominions were invited to inhabit the capital by the gift of places and pensions; traders were attracted by monopolies and privileges. The wealth that ought to have been expended in restoring communications between the dispersed and dissevered portions of the Greek nation, in repairing roads and bridges, was wasted in building palaces and adorning churches in the capital, where they were no longer required for a diminished and impoverished population. Crowds of imperial princes and princesses, Despots and Caesars, officers of state and courtiers, consumed the revenues which ought to have covered the frontier with impregnable fortresses, and maintained a disciplined standing army and a well-exercised fleet. Yet, while lavishing the public revenues to gratify his pride and acquire popularity, he sacrificed the general interests of the middle classes to a selfish and rapacious fiscal policy. All the property within the walls of Constantinople, whether it belonged to Greeks or Latins, was adjudged to the imperial government by the right of conquest; but their ancient possessions were restored to the great families whose power he feared, and to those individuals whose services he wished to secure. Sites for building were then leased to the citizens for a fixed rent; yet the Greek government was so despotic, and Michael was so arbitrary in his administration, that twelve years later he pretended that the concessions he had granted to private individuals were merely acts of personal favour, and he demanded the payment of the rent for the past twelve years, the collection of which he enforced with much severity. Michael used other frauds to bring the property of his subjects into the public treasury, or to deprive them of a portion of the money justly due to them by the state. Under the pretext of changing the type of the gold coinage, and commemorating the recovery of Constantinople by impressing an image of its walls on the byzants, he debased the standard of the mint, and issued coins containing only fifteen parts of gold and nine of alloy. While on one hand he rendered property insecure and impoverished his subjects, he was striving by other arrangements to increase the Greek population of the capital, in order to counterbalance the wealth and influence of foreign traders. Numbers were drawn from the islands of the Archipelago, and a colony of Tzakonians or Lakonians from Monemvasia and the neighbouring districts was settled in the capital, which supplied the imperial fleet with its best sailors. But war, not commerce, was the object of Michael's care; and while he was endeavouring to increase the means of recruiting his army and navy, he allowed the Genoese to profit by his political errors, and render themselves masters of the commerce of the Black Sea, and of great part of the carrying trade of the Greek empire. In the meantime, the fortifications of Constantinople were repaired; and when Charles of Anjou threatened to invade the East, a second line of wall was added to the fortifications on the land side, and the defences already existing towards the sea were strengthened. The port of Vlanka, anciently called the Theodosian port, was improved by the addition of two new moles, constructed with immense blocks of stone, and it was deepened with great art.

But it was no longer in the power of Michael, nor in the spirit of Greek society, to restore the vigour of the Roman legal administration, which had long been the bulwark of Byzantine society. Foreign conquest and internal revolutions had broken up the central government. Provincial dislocation and individual independence had in many districts proceeded so far that imperial fiscality was more feared than imperial protection was sought. The Greeks of Trebizond and Epirus, and even of Naxos, Athens, and Achaia enjoyed as great a degree of

prosperity, and as much security of property, under their local usages or foreign laws, as the Greeks of Constantinople, who pretended to preserve the judicial system of Rome and the code of the Basilika.

Michael VIII fulfilled all the stipulations of the treaty he had concluded with the Genoese. The public property of the republic of Venice was confiscated, and the Genoese were put in possession of the palace previously occupied by the Bailly of the Venetians. This building was immediately pulled down, and the marble of which it was composed was transported to Genoa, in order to be employed in the construction of the Church of St George, where it formed a lasting memorial of this triumph of the republic. In the meantime, the war between Venice and Genoa continued to rage with extreme violence, and in this contest Michael's interests were deeply involved. When he regained possession of Constantinople, he found that a considerable part of the trading population consisted of Venetians established in the East as permanent colonists. These traders readily transferred their allegiance from the Latin to the Greek emperor; and Michael, who knew the value of such subjects, granted them all legal protection in the pursuit of their commercial occupations, as he did also to the Pisans. But the Genoese, who had hastened to the East in great numbers in order to profit by the overthrow of the domination of the Crusaders and Venetians, considered that the emperor ought to expel every Venetian from his dominions. The democratic state of the Genoese republic at this period increased the insolence of individuals. The merchants who owned and the officers who commanded the Genoese galleys that visited the Greek empire, attacked the Venetians who had taken the oath of allegiance to the Emperor Michael, and plundered their property as if they were enemies. The neutrality of the Greek territory was violated, and the streets of the capital were often a scene of bloodshed by the contests of the hostile republicans. The turbulent conduct of his allies had already created dissatisfaction on the mind of Michael, when their defeat by the Venetians before Monemvasia, and the fall of Baccanegra, who had concluded the treaty of Nymphaeum in 1261 by placing a party adverse to the Greek alliance in power, induced him to doubt the fidelity of their services, and he dismissed sixty Genoese galleys which he had taken into his pay. Charles of Anjou soon after effected the conquest of the kingdom of Naples, and the Genoese government became more anxious to cultivate his friendship than that of the Greek emperor.

The character and conduct of Michael VIII typifies the spirit of Greek society from the recovery of Constantinople to the fall of the empire. It displays a strange ignorance of the value of frankness and honesty in public business, a constant suspicion of every friend, restless intrigues to deceive every ally, and a wavering policy to conciliate every powerful enemy. The consequence of this suspicion, plotting, and weakness was that very soon no one trusted either the emperor or the Greeks. The invasion of Italy by Charles of Anjou, and the pretensions of the Pope to dispose of crowns, alarmed both Venice and Michael, and induced them to forget all former grounds of hostility, and conclude a closer alliance than the Greek emperor had concluded with Genoa, with which he now declared war. This treaty is dated in June 1265, about a month before Charles of Anjou received the crown of the Two Sicilies from the Pope in the Lateran. The stipulations are remarkable both in a political and commercial light. The emperor engaged to expel the Genoese from Constantinople, and not to conclude peace with them except in concert with the republic. The Venetians engaged to hire their galleys to the emperor to serve even against the Pope, the King of France, and Charles of Anjou, as well as against the republics of Genoa, Pisa, and Ancona, and any prince or community that might attack the Greek empire. It is worthy of observation that when the Genoese concluded their alliance with the Greeks, in 1261, they had so far yielded to the public opinion of the West as to insert a clause in the treaty exempting their galleys in the imperial pay from serving against the Pope, the Emperor of Germany, the kings of France, Castile, England, and Sicily, the Prince of Achaia, and several other kings and princes, and yet they had incurred excommunication. The Venetians now engaged to serve even against the Pope, and his vassal, Charles of Anjou; but his Holiness did not venture to excommunicate Venice as lightly as he excommunicated Genoa, its power on the continent of Italy was so much greater. The republic also bound itself to exact an

oath from all Crusaders who embarked in Venetian transports, that they would not invade the dominions of Michael VIII.

The articles of the treaty which relate to commerce prove that Roman prejudices and Byzantine pride still induced the diplomatists of Constantinople to view trade as a matter beneath the attention of monarchs. The change already visible in European society, which began to place a larger share of wealth, knowledge, and power in the hands of traders, and which had rendered the merchant-nobles of Venice and the trading citizens of Lombardy a match for the chosen mercenaries of Constantinople and the German chivalry of the house of Hohenstauffen, escaped the notice of Michael and his counsellors. The emperor consequently neglected the commercial interests of the Greeks; and while he made great concessions to foreigners, he only stipulated that his own subjects should have free intercourse with Venice on paying the usual duties, and that they might import and export whatever merchandise they pleased. On the other hand, the Venetians obtained a long series of concessions in their favour, and as these concessions formed the basis of all the commercial treaties concluded by the emperors of Constantinople until the Turkish conquest, and exercised some influence in diminishing the trade of the Greeks and weakening the empire, it is important to notice their extent. The Venetians were exempted from the ordinary control of the revenue officers, and allowed to carry on their commerce under especial privileges, for which, as well as to guard against frauds on the imperial revenue, a separate quarter or a single warehouse, as the exigency require, was granted to them, according to the extent of their trade, in most of the principal ports in his dominions. Within these factories the Venetians were governed by the laws of Venice and their own magistrates. They had full liberty to transport their goods by land as well as by sea to any part of the Greek empire without paying any duty, being only required to furnish the imperial collectors of customs with exact statements of the amount, in order that the duty might be levied from the purchaser. They were also allowed to export grain from the empire until the price at Constantinople rose to fifty byzants for one hundred measures. They had, of course, the right to erect Catholic churches within the precincts of their factories.

The close political alliance which this treaty established between the empire and the republic was not of long duration. The intrigues of Charles of Anjou in Tuscany, where he arrayed Florence and Lucca against Sienna and Pisa, affected the interests of Genoa, and enabled the opposition to gain strength, while the victories of the Venetians, and the overtures of peace which were made to them by Pope Clement IV, appear to have awakened some distrust of his new allies in the suspicious mind of Michael VIII. These circumstances induced the emperor and the republic to conclude a new treaty in 1268, which modified the offensive and defensive stipulations of the earlier treaty with regard to Genoa, the island of Euboea, the principality of Achaia and the duchy of the Archipelago. In the year 1270, a change in the government of Genoa placed the administration in the hands of the families of Doria and Spinola, who were opposed to Charles of Anjou, and a truce was subsequently concluded by the Genoese both with the Byzantine empire and with Venice, while the Greeks and Venetians became engaged in war. Hostilities were nevertheless renewed, until at length, in the year 1275, the Emperor Michael formed a new alliance with the Genoese; but, in order to prevent their making the streets of Constantinople again the scene of their disorders, he obliged them to establish their factory at Heracleia, on the Propontis. Some years later, they were allowed to transfer their settlement to Galata, where they laid the foundation of a colony which soon deprived the Greeks of the greater part of their trade in the Black Sea.

The morbid ambition of Michael Paleologos was not satisfied until he was sole emperor. In defiance, therefore, of the repeated oaths by which he had sworn to respect the rights of his ward, his colleague and his sovereign, he availed himself of the first favourable moment to dethrone the unfortunate boy, who had been left neglected at Nicaea. On Christmas-day, 1261, the agents of Michael deprived John IV of his sight, though he had not attained the age of ten, and he was declared to have forfeited the throne. The cruel and perjured emperor then ordered him to be immured in the fort of Dakybizia, where he remained neglected, and almost forgotten,



for eight-and-twenty years, when his solitude was broken in upon by Andronicus, the bigoted son of the hypocritical Michael. The conscience of the bigot was uneasy on account of his father's crimes, of which he was enjoying the fruit; so by a few kind words he easily induced his imprisoned victim to make what was falsely termed a voluntary cession of all his rights to the imperial crown. The evil consequences of this crime were deeply felt in the empire; for the clergy, the nobility, and the people, had all participated in the system of corruption and peculation by which Michael VIII had smoothed the way for his usurpation. The violation of every sentiment of honour, patriotism, and virtue, was so iniquitous, that the public character of the Greek nation was degraded by its obsequiousness on this occasion; and the feelings of the people in the provinces of the east, as well as in Western Europe, avenged the misfortunes of John. Michael Paleologos had hitherto been regarded as a bold, frank, and generous prince; he henceforward showed himself a timid, hypocritical, and cruel tyrant.

The Patriarch Arsenios, who was one of the guardians of the dethroned emperor, considered himself bound to protest against the injustice and perjury of Michael. He convoked an assembly of the prelates resident in Constantinople, and proposed that the reigning emperor should be excommunicated by the synod; but too many of the clergy had been participators in the intrigues of Michael, and were enjoying the rewards of their subserviency, for such a measure to meet with any support. Arsenios, therefore, on his own authority as Patriarch, interdicted Michael from all religious rites; but he did not venture to pronounce the usual form of words, which deprived him of the prayers of the orthodox. The Greek Church, under the Paleologoi, was tainted with the same spirit of half-measures and base tergiversation which marks the imperial administration. The emperor accepted the modified censure of the church as just, and hypocritically requested that his penance might be assigned. By obtaining his dispensation in this manner, he expected that public opinion would render the church an accessory after the fact, while he secured to himself an additional guarantee for the enjoyment of the fruits of his crime. Confident in his power, he punished with cruelty all who ventured to express publicly their compassion for their dethroned emperor.

Though the family of Vatatzes had been unpopular among the nobility, it was beloved by the Asiatic Greeks, and especially by the mountaineers of Bithynia. The people in the vicinity of Nicaea took up arms to avenge John IV, and their insurrection was suppressed with great difficulty. A blind boy, who was found wandering in the neighbourhood, was supposed to be their legitimate sovereign, the victim of Michael's treachery. The warlike peasantry flew to arms, and rendered themselves masters of the forts and mountain passes. The advance of the imperial troops sent to suppress the revolt was impeded by those famous archers who had previously formed one of the most effective bodies in the emperor's army. Every ravine was contested, and every advantage dearly purchased. The imperial troops at last subdued the country by adopting the policy by which the Turks extended their conquests. The habitations were destroyed, and the forests were burned down, so that the native population had no means of obtaining subsistence, while the soldiers of Michael became masters of the country, under the cover of their widespread conflagrations. The province was pacified by gaining over the chiefs, pardoning the people, and proving that John IV was a prisoner in Dakybiza. The poor blind boy was then conveyed into the Turkish territory, and no cause of war existed. Many of the mountaineers, whose property was destroyed, still resisted, and, when taken, they were treated with the greatest cruelty. The municipal organization and the privileges of the mountaineers of Bithynia were abolished, and mercenary troops were quartered on the inhabitants. The resources of this flourishing province were ruined, and its population was so diminished that, when the Ottoman Turks attacked the empire, the renowned archers of Bithynia and the mountain militia had ceased to exist.

The change which is visible in the condition of the Asiatic provinces of the empire towards the end of the reign of Michael VIII must be attentively observed. When he mounted the throne, the power of the Seljouk Empire was so broken by the conquests of the Moguls, and the energy of the Greek population was so great, in consequence of the wise government of

John III and Theodore II, that the Greeks under the Turkish dominion seemed on the eve of regaining their independence. Azeddin Kaikous II, sultan of Iconium, was an exile; his brother Rokneddin ruled only a small part of the Seljouk Empire of Roum; for Houlagon, the brother of the great khans Mangou and Kublai, possessed the greater part of Asia Minor, and many Turkish tribes lived in a state of independence. The cruelty and rapacity of Michael's government, and the venality and extortion which he tolerated among the imperial officers and administrators, arrested the progress of the Greek nation, and prepared the way for its rapid decline. The jealousy which Michael showed of all marks of national independence, and the fear he entertained of opposition, are strong characteristics of his policy. His governors in Asia Minor were instructed to weaken the power of the local chiefs, while the fiscal officers were ordered to find pretexts for confiscating the estates of the wealthy. Indeed, all the proprietors of wealth in the mountain districts of Bithynia were deprived of their possessions, and pensioned by the grant of a sum of forty byzants to each, as an annual allowance for subsistence. Both rich and poor, finding that they were plundered with impunity, and that it was vain to seek redress from the emperor, often emigrated with the remains of their property into the Turkish territories. So rapacious was the imperial treasury that the historian Pachymeres, though a courtier, believed that the Emperor Michael systematically weakened the power of the Greek population from his fear of rebellion. The consequence was that the whole country beyond the Sangarius, and the mountains which give rise to the Rhyrdakos and Makestos, was occupied by the Turks, who were often invited by the inhabitants to take possession of the small towns. The communications between Nicaea and Heracleia on the Euxine were interrupted by land; and the cities of Kromna, Amastris, and Tios relapsed into the position of Greek colonies surrounded by a foreign population. Even the valley of the Meander, one of the richest portions of the Greek empire, was invaded; and unfortunately the great possessions of the monasteries and nobles in this fertile district placed it in a similar social condition to that which had facilitated the ravages of the Normans in France under the Carolingians, and in England under the Saxons. Immense wealth invited the invasions of the Turkish nomads, while the population consisted only of monks, or the agents of absent proprietors, and unarmed peasants. When John Paleologos, the emperor's brother, attempted to expel the Turks from their conquests, he found them already so well fortified in the monasteries of Strobilos and Stradiotrachia that he could not attempt to dislodge them, (A.D. 1266-1268). Perhaps the violent opposition of the monks to Michael's schemes for uniting the Greek and Latin churches may at last have rendered the emperor indifferent to the fate of the monasteries.

As the reign of Michael VIII advanced, the encroachments of the nomad Turks became more daring. John Paleologos, who had for some time restrained their incursions, was by his brother's jealousy deprived of all military command; and Andronicus, the emperor's eldest son, was sent to the frontier as commander-in-chief. In the year 1280 the incapacity of the young prince threw all the imperial provinces open to invasion. Nestongos, who commanded in the city of Nyssa, was defeated and taken prisoner. Nyssa was taken, and the Turks then laid siege to Tralles, which had been recently rebuilt and re-peopled. This city contained a population of thirty-six thousand inhabitants, but it was ill supplied both with provisions and water. Yet its inhabitants made a brave defence, and had Andronicus possessed either military talents, activity, or courage, Tralles might have been saved. The Turks at last formed a breach in the walls by sapping, and then carried the city by storm. The inhabitants who escaped the massacre were reduced to slavery.

#### ADVANCE OF THE TURKS

About the time Michael VIII usurped his place on the throne of the Greek empire, a small Turkish tribe made its first appearance in the Seljouk Empire. Othman, who gave his name to

this new band of immigrants, is said to have been born in the year 1258, and his father Ertogrul entered the Seljouk Empire as the chief of only four hundred families; yet Orkhan the son of Othman laid the foundations of the institutions and power of the Ottoman Empire. No nation ever increased so rapidly from such small beginnings, and no government ever constituted itself with greater sagacity than the Ottoman; but no force or prudence could have enabled this small tribe of nomads to rise with such rapidity to power, had it not been that the Emperor Michael and the Greek nation were paralysed by political and moral corruption, and both left behind them descendants equally weak and worthless. When history records that Michael Paleologos recovered possession of Constantinople by accident, it ought also to proclaim that, by his deliberate policy, he prepared the way for the ruin of the Greek race and the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. There is no other instance in history of a nation so numerous, so wealthy, and so civilized, as the Greeks were in the fourteenth century, having been permanently subdued by an enemy so inferior in political and military resources. The circumstance becomes the more disgraceful, as its explanation must be sought in social and moral causes.

The rebellion of his subjects in Asia made Michael anxious to secure peace in Europe. In order to counterbalance the successes of the Despot of Epirus, and dispose him to conclude a treaty, Michael resolved to release the Prince of Achaia, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Pelagonia in 1259. William Villehardoin, prince of Achaia, was freed, by the destruction of the Latin empire of Romania, from those feudal ties which connected him with the throne of Baldwin II. To obtain his liberty, he consented to become a vassal of the Greek empire, and he re-established the imperial power in the Peloponnesus, by delivering up to Michael the fortresses of Monemvasia, Misithra, and Maina. On swearing fidelity to Michael VIII he was released from captivity, after having remained a prisoner for three years. The Pope, however, was so much alarmed at this example of a Catholic prince becoming a vassal of the Greek emperor, that as soon as the Prince of Achaia was firmly settled in his principality, his Holiness absolved him from all his oaths and obligations to the Greek emperor. Pope Urban IV even went so far as to proclaim a crusade against Michael, and to invite St Louis to take the command; but the King of France, who was much more deeply imbued with the Christian spirit than the Pope, declined the office. The crusade ended in a partisan warfare between the Prince of Achaia and the governors Michael had placed in the fortresses of which he had gained possession in the Peloponnesus.

The conquest of Naples by Charles of Anjou threatened the Greek empire with a new invasion. Under the auspices of Clement IV a treaty was concluded between the dethroned emperor Baldwin, Charles of Anjou, and William, prince of Achaia, by which Baldwin ceded to Charles the suzerainty of Achaia, and the prince agreed to transfer his allegiance from the titular Emperor to the King of Naples, who had already obtained the absolute sovereignty of Corfu, and of the cities of Epirus, given by the Despot Michael II as dowry to his daughter, who married Manfred, king of Sicily. In return, Charles of Anjou engaged to furnish Baldwin with a force of two thousand knights and their followers, to enable him to invade the Greek empire. This treaty was concluded at Viterbo on the 27th of May 1267. Its stipulations alarmed Michael Paleologos, who had already involved himself in ecclesiastical quarrels with his subjects; and in order to delay an attack on Constantinople, he sent an embassy to Pope Clement IV, proposing measures for effecting a union of the Greek and Latin churches. On this occasion Michael was relieved from fear by Conradin's invasion of the kingdom of Naples, which enabled him to conclude a truce with the Prince of Achaia. He then neglected his overtures to the Pope, and turned all his attention to fitting out a fleet, which he manned with Gasmouls, Tzakonians, and Greeks of the Archipelago. The insincere negotiations of Michael for a union with the Roman church were often renewed under the pressure of fear of invasion from abroad, and dread of insurrection at home. The weakness caused by the opposition of the Greek clergy and people to his authority, encouraged the enterprises of his foreign enemies, while the entangled web of his diplomacy, taking a new form at every change of his personal interests, at last involved him so

inextricably in its meshes that he had no means of concealing his bad faith, cruelty, and hypocrisy.

In the year 1271 the treachery of Andronikos Tarchaniotes, the emperor's nephew, reanimated the war in Thessaly. Having invited the Tartars to invade the empire from the north, he abandoned Mount Haemus, of which he was governor, to their ravages, and fled to John Dukas, prince of Vlakkia, his father-in-law, whom he persuaded to invade Thessaly. The emperor sent his brother, John Paleologos, with an army of forty thousand men and a fleet of sixty-three galleys, to re-establish the imperial supremacy. John Dukas was besieged in his capital, Neopatras, and the place was reduced to the last extremity, when the prince passed through the hostile camp in the disguise of a groom, to seek assistance from his Latin allies. Leading a horse by the bridle he walked along, crying out that his master had lost another horse, and would reward the finder. When he reached the plain of the Sperchius he mounted his horse, and gained the territory of the Frank Marquess of Boudonitza. The Duke of Athens furnished him with a band of three hundred knights, and he returned to Neopatras with such celerity that he surprised the imperial camp, and completely dispersed the army. John Paleologos escaped to Demetriades (Volo), where his fleet was stationed. A squadron composed of Venetian ships, and galleys of the Duke of Naxos and of the Barons of Negropont, was watching the imperial fleet. On hearing of the total defeat of the army they attacked the admiral Alexios Philanthropenos in the port, and were on the point of carrying the whole Greek fleet by boarding, when John Paleologos reached the scene of action with a part of the fugitive troops. He immediately conveyed a large body of soldiers to the ships, and reanimated the sailors. The Latins were compelled to retire with the loss of some of their own ships, but they succeeded in carrying off\* several of the Greek galleys.

In the following year the imperial fleet, under the command of Zacharia, the Genoese signeur of Thasos, defeated the Franks near Oreos in Euboea, and took John de la Roche, duke of Athens, prisoner. But, on the other hand, John Dukas again routed the army in Thessaly, and by his activity and military skill rendered himself the most redoubted enemy of Michael; so that, when the majority of the Greek population declared openly against the emperor's project for a union with the Latin church, the Prince of Vallachian Thessaly became the champion of the orthodox church, and assembled a synod which excommunicated Michael VIII. (A.D. 1277).

In the year 1278 Charles of Anjou would in all probability have besieged Constantinople, had he not been prevented by the express commands of his suzerain. Pope Nicholas III, who was gained over by Michael's submission to expect the immediate union of the Greek with the Papal church,. But the elevation of Martin IV to the See of Rome changed its policy. The Emperor Michael was excommunicated, and, to render the excommunication more insulting, he was reproached with persecuting the Greeks who consistently abstained from his own delusive compliances. Michael revenged himself by ceasing to pray for the Pope in the Eastern churches. A league was now formed between the Pope, the King of Naples, and the republic of Venice, for the conquest of the Greek empire, and a treaty was signed at Orvieto on the 3d July 1281. The danger was serious. Charles of Anjou promised to furnish eight thousand cavalry, and the Venetians engaged to arm forty galleys, in order to commence operations in the spring of 1283. In the meantime a body of troops, under the command of Solimon Rossi, was despatched to occupy Dyrrachium and assist the Albanians, who had recently revolted against Michael. This expedition proved unsuccessful; Rossi was taken prisoner while besieging Belgrade (Berat), and the Neapolitans and Albanians were completely defeated. But the Greek emperor could only intrigue to avert the great storm with which he was threatened by the treaty of Orvieto, and in the end he was saved by the deeds of others. The Sicilian Vespers delivered the Greeks from all further fear of Charles of Anjou and of a French invasion, and Michael was able to smile at the impotent rage of Martin IV, and despise his excommunications.

## AFFAIRS OF BULGARIA

The vicinity of the Bulgarians, joined to their national power and influence over the numbers of their countrymen settled in the Greek empire, gave Michael some uneasiness at the commencement of his reign. Constantine, king of Bulgaria, had married a sister of the dethroned Emperor John IV, and he was induced, by the feelings of his wife, by the intrigues of the fugitive Sultan of Iconium, and by the hopes of assistance from the Mogul emperor, Houlagon, to attack the Greek empire. Michael took the field against the Bulgarians, and in the year 1265 drove them beyond Mount Haemus; but as he was returning to Constantinople he had nearly fallen into the hands of a body of Bulgarian and Tartar cavalry, through the treachery of Kaikous, the fugitive Sultan of Iconium, who had informed the enemy of his movements. Constantine, king of Bulgaria, having lost his wife Irene Lascaris, married Maria, the second daughter of Michael's sister Eulogia, and the emperor promised to cede Mesembria and Anchialos to Bulgaria as the dowry of his niece. But this promise was given in the year 1272, when the danger of Charles of Anjou invading the empire appeared imminent. As soon, therefore, as the influence of the Pope and the crusade of St Louis to Tunis had secured Michael from all fear, with his usual treachery he found a pretext for declining to fulfill his promise. A treaty which the emperor concluded with a powerful Tartar chief named Nogay, and civil dissension among the Bulgarians, relieved Michael from all serious danger on his northern frontier during the remainder of his reign.

The affairs of Servia, also, gave the emperor very little trouble.

The period of Greek history embraced in the present chapter of this work, extending through the century and a-half during which the empire of Constantinople was ruled with despotic sway by the dynasty of Paleologos, is the most degrading portion of the national annals. Literary taste, political honesty, patriotic feeling, military honour, civil liberty, and judicial purity, seem all to have abandoned the Greek race, and public opinion would, in all probability, have had no existence—it would certainly have found no mode of expression—had not the Greek church placed itself in opposition to the imperial government, and awakened in the breasts of the Greek people a spirit of partisanship on ecclesiastical questions, which prepared the way for the open expression of the popular will, if not for the actual formation of public opinion. The church was converted into an arena where political and social discontent of every kind arrayed their forces under the banners of orthodoxy, heresy, or schism, as accident or passion might determine. In spite of the mental torpidity of the Greeks, during this period, the church is full of heresy and schism. Yet, strange to say, no political, moral, or religious improvements resulted from the innumerable discussions and disputes which formed the principal occupation of the Constantinopolitan Greeks for a hundred and fifty years. The cause of this is evident; the right of exercising private judgment, both in political and ecclesiastical affairs, was denied to the Greeks: they might range them as partisans of Barlaam or Palamas; they might believe that the mind perceived a divine light when the eyes remained long fixed on the stomach; and they might dispute concerning the essence and the active energy of the Divinity, but they dared not introduce common sense and truth to influence the decision of the point at issue. Public discussion being prohibited, no real public opinion could be formed in the nation. Each different section of the people only heard the opinions of its own leaders, and formed its ideas of the doctrines of its opponents from their misrepresentations. Instead of some general convictions, which ought to have been impressed on the mind of every Greek, what appeared to be public opinion was nothing but the temporary expression of the popular will, uttered in moments of excitement and passion.

Such was the mental condition of the Greeks from the recovery of Constantinople until its conquest by the Ottomans. Justice was dormant in the state; Christianity was torpid in the church. Orthodoxy performed the duties of civil liberty, and the priesthood became the focus of

political opposition. Financial oppression was often local; judicial iniquities affected a small number, and national feelings were unconnected with material interests. Ecclesiastical formulas and religious doctrines were the only facts with which the Greek people were generally acquainted, and on which every man felt called upon to pronounce an opinion. The mob of Constantinople had once made the colours of the jockey-clubs of the hippodrome a bond of party union; the Greek nation now made theology a medium for expressing its defiance of the emperor, and its hatred of the imperial administration. This fact sufficiently explains how matters in themselves not very intelligible to ordinary intellects acquired a real political importance, and questions apparently little calculated to excite popular interest drew forth the liveliest expressions of sympathy. We understand why the Greeks, who showed little national energy in defending their political independence against the Crusaders and the Turks, displayed the greatest enthusiasm in defending their church against their own emperors and patriarchs, as well as against the Pope. The social organization of the Greeks has its seat at the family hearth, and the nation has only moved in a body when some individual impulse has animated every rank of society.

The anxiety of the Emperor Michael VIII to be relieved from the ecclesiastical censures pronounced by the Patriarch Arsenios against him, for his treachery to his pupil and sovereign John IV, was the commencement of his disputes with the Greek Church, and of his negotiations with the Popes. Michael solicited the Patriarch to impose some penance on him which might expiate his crime, but Arsenios could suggest nothing but reparation. The emperor considered this tantamount to a sentence of dethronement, and he determined to depose Arsenios. The Patriarch was accused before a synod of having omitted a prayer for the emperor in performing the church service, of having allowed the exiled Sultan of Iconium, Kaikous, to join in the celebration of divine service on Easter Sunday, and of allowing the sultan's children to receive the holy communion from the hands of his chaplain without any proof that they were Christians. To these accusations Arsenios replied, that he only omitted one prayer for the emperor and used another, and that he had treated the sultan and his children as Christians, because he had been assured by the Bishop of Pisidia that they had received baptism. While this synod was pursuing its inquiry, the Emperor Michael attempted to gain his object by one of the diplomatic tricks to which he was strangely attached; but his subterfuge was detected, and he received a rebuke from the Patriarch which inflamed his animosity. When the Patriarch was proceeding to the Church of St Sophia the Emperor joined him, having previously sent forward an order to the clergy to commence high mass the moment the Patriarch should enter. On approaching the door of the cathedral the Emperor laid hold of the Patriarch's robe, in order to enter the church as if he had received absolution; but Arsenios hastily withdrew his robe from Michael's hand, and exclaimed, "It was an unbecoming trick; could you expect to deceive God, and obtain pardon by fraud?" This scene, acted in public, in the vestibule of St Sophia's, left no further hope of reconciliation. Arsenios was deposed, and exiled to Proconnesus. Germanos, the bishop of Adrianople, a mild and learned prelate, was named his successor.

Even in his banishment Arsenios was considered to be the lawful Patriarch by the majority of the orthodox, and he was visited by thousands who were anxious to hear his words and receive his blessing. The emperor was eager to punish him, but his popularity rendered it dangerous to attempt doing so in an arbitrary way. A conspiracy was discovered against the emperor's life, and some of the accused, when put to the torture, declared that Arsenios was implicated in the plot. The examination of the affair was remitted to a synod, which gratified the emperor by excommunicating Arsenios without waiting for his conviction. Four deputies were despatched to Proconnesus, to communicate this sentence to the deposed Patriarch, and to examine him on the accusation. Of these the historian Pachymeres, then an ecclesiastical official in the patriarchate, was one. As soon as the deputation entered on business, Arsenios interrupted the speaker with great warmth, saying, "What have I done to the emperor to be thus persecuted? I found him in a private station; I crowned him emperor, and he has rewarded me by driving me from the patriarchal palace to a rock where I live on common charity!" He then spoke of the new Patriarch as a "phratriarc" and glanced at his blessing (eulogia) as being rather temporal

than spiritual This was an allusion to the emperor's sister Eulogia, the protectress of Germanos, to whose influence over her brother Arsenios attributed the cruel treatment of John IV. The deputies then began to read the sentence of excommunication, but Arsenios rose from his seat, covered his ears with his hands, and walked about the room mumbling what we must suppose to have been prayers. The deputies followed, raising their voices as they walked. Arsenios then interrupted them in a passion, calling Heaven to witness that he was treated with injustice; but when the deputies threatened him with the Divine vengeance for despising the deputies of the church, he grew calmer, and said, with more moderation, "It seems I am accused of having made my patriarchal duties the means of conspiring against the emperor's life. The accusation is false. He has left me to die of hunger, but I have never ceased to pray for him." But his whole discourse was filled with bitterness against Michael, and he made no scruple of condemning his usurpation.

The deputies, having executed their commission, sailed for Constantinople, but a storm overtook them, and they were in danger of shipwreck. They attributed their danger to the circumstance of their having sailed from Proconnesus without asking the blessing of Arsenios, whom all appear to have considered as the true Patriarch. Pachymeres relates that each of the deputies owned afterwards that he was anxious at parting to obtain the blessing of Arsenios, but was afraid of rendering himself an object of suspicion and persecution at court. The report of the deputies induced Germanos to intercede for his predecessor. Arsenios was absolved from the accusation, and a pension of three hundred byzants was allowed him for his subsistence, granted from the privy purse of the empress—for it was believed that Arsenios would accept nothing from the excommunicated emperor.

The courtiers of Michael were as active in their intrigues as the emperor. A party in the church declared that the election of Germanos was invalid, for he had been removed from the See of Adrianople in violation of the canon which prohibits the translation of a bishop from one see to another. The emperor's confessor, Joseph, pronounced that the new Patriarch could not grant a legal absolution to the emperor, in consequence of this defect in his title to the patriarchal throne. Germanos soon perceived that both Michael and Joseph were encouraging opposition to his authority. He immediately resigned, and Joseph was named his successor. The emperor received his absolution as a matter of course. The ceremony was performed at the gates of St Sophia's. Michael, kneeling at the Patriarch's feet, made his confession, and implored pardon. The Patriarch read the form of absolution. This form was repeated by every bishop in succession, and the emperor knelt before each in turn and received his pardon. He was then admitted into the church, and partook of the Holy Communion. By this idle and pompous ceremony the Greeks believed that their church could pardon perjury and legitimize usurpation.

About this time the treaty of Viterbo drew the attention of Michael from the schism of the Arsenites to foreign policy, and his grand object being to detach the Pope from the alliance with Charles of Anjou, he began to form intrigues, by means of which he hoped to delude the Pope into the persuasion that he was anxious and able to establish papal supremacy in the Greek Church; while, on the other hand, he expected to cheat the Eastern clergy into making those concessions which he considered necessary for the success of his plans, on the ground that their compliance was a mere matter of diplomacy. Gregory X knew that it would be easier to effect the union of the Greek and Latin Churches by the instrumentality of a Greek emperor than of a foreign conqueror. He therefore prohibited Charles of Anjou, who held the crown of Naples as his vassal, from invading the empire; but he forced Michael, by fear of invasion, to assemble a synod at Constantinople, in which, by cruelty and violence, the emperor succeeded in obtaining an acknowledgment of the papal supremacy. The severest persecution was necessary to compel the Greeks to sign the articles of union, and many families emigrated to Vallachian Thessaly and to the empire of Trebizond.

The union of the Greek and Latin Churches was completed in the year 1274 at the Council of Lyons. On the 6th of July, at the fourth session of the Council, Germanos, who had resigned the patriarchal throne, George Acropolita the historian, and some other Greek clergy and nobles, presented themselves and repeated the creed in the Latin form, with the addition of the words, "proceeding from the father and the son". They then swore to conform to the faith of the Roman Church, to pay obedience to its orders, and to recognize the supremacy of the Pope,—Acropolita, as grand logothetes, repeating the oaths in the name of the Emperor Michael. When the news of this submission reached Constantinople there was a general expression of indignation. The Patriarch Joseph, who opposed the union, was deposed, and Vekkos, an ecclesiastic of eminence, who had recently become a convert to the Latin creed, was named in his place. The schisms in the Greek Church were now multiplied, for Joseph, became the head of a new party. Vekkos, however, assembled a synod, and excommunicated those members of the Greek clergy who refused to recognize the Pope as the head of the Church of Christ. Nicephorus, despot of Epirus, and his brother, John Dukas, the prince of Vlaskia, protected the orthodox. Both were excommunicated; and the emperor sent an army against John Dukas, whose position in Thessaly threatened the tranquillity of Macedonia; but the imperial officers and troops showed no activity in a cause which they considered treason to their religion, and many of the emperor's own relations deserted.

By a series of intrigues, tergiversation, meanness, and cruelty, Michael succeeded in gaining his immediate object. Nicholas III, who ascended the papal throne in 1277, formally refused Charles of Anjou permission to invade the Greek empire, and sent four nuncios to Constantinople to complete the union of the churches. The papal instructions are curious as an exposition of the political views of the Court of Rome, and display astute diplomacy, acting at the suggestions of grasping ambition, but blinded by ecclesiastical bigotry. The first object was to induce all the dignitaries of the Greek Church to sign the Roman formulary of doctrine, and to persuade them to accept absolution for having lived separate from the Roman communion; the second, to prevail on the emperor to receive a cardinal legate at Constantinople. Before the arrival of the Pope's ambassadors, the arbitrary conduct of Michael had involved him in a quarrel with his new patriarch, Vekkos, whom he was on the point of deposing. All Michael's talents for intrigue were called into requisition, to prevent the Greek clergy from breaking out into open rebellion during the stay of the Pope's ambassadors, and conceal the state of his relations with Vekkos, who stood high at the Court of Rome. Bribes, cajolery, and meanness on his part, and selfishness and subserviency on the part of the Eastern clergy, enabled him to succeed. But the death of Nicholas III in 1280 rendered his intrigues unavailing. Martin IV, a Frenchman, devoted to the interests of Charles of Anjou, became Pope. He openly displayed his hatred of the Greeks, and excommunicated Michael as a hypocrite, who concealed his heresy. While Martin IV openly negotiated the treaty of Orvieto, Michael secretly aided the conspiracy of Procida. The condition of the Greek emperor was almost desperate. He was universally detested for his exactions and persecutions, and a numerous and bigoted party was ready to make any foreign attack the signal for a domestic revolution. The storm was about to burst on Michael's head, when the fearful tragedy of the Sicilian Vespers broke the power of Charles of Anjou.

Michael then quitted his capital to punish John Dukas, whom he considered almost as a rival; but death arrested his progress at Pachomion, near Lysimachia in Thrace, on the 11th December 1282, after a reign of twenty-four years. He was a type of the Constantinopolitan Greek nobles and officials in the empire he re-established and transmitted to his descendants. He was selfish, hypocritical, able and accomplished, an in-born liar, vain, meddling, ambitious, cruel, and rapacious. He is renowned in history as the restorer of the Eastern Empire; he ought to be execrated as the corrupter of the Greek race, for his reign affords a signal example of the extent to which a nation may be degraded by the misconduct of its sovereign, when it intrusts him with despotic power.



## Sect. II

## REIGN OF ANDRONICUS II, A.D. 1282-1828.

Andronicus the Second ascended the throne at the age of twenty-four, having been born about the time his father received the imperial crown at Nicaea. He had most of the defects of his father's character, without his personal dignity and military talents. In youth he was destitute of vigour, in old age of prudence. His administration was marked by the same habits of cunning and falsehood which had distinguished his father's conduct; and the consequence was, that, towards the end of his long reign, he was as generally despised as his father had been hated. In his private character he was arbitrary, peevish, and religious; in his public administration despotic, fond of meddling industrious and inconsequent. Every evil that had taken root during Michael's reign extended itself through his incapacity, for, though always engaged with public affairs, he could neither transact business himself with due promptitude, nor would he allow his ministers to perform the duties he neglected. He was personally frugal, but he ruined the Greek empire by increasing the expenditure of the court, and rendering offices and pensions the only objects of Greek ambition.

The ecclesiastical policy of Andronicus was as arbitrary and tyrannical as Michael's, but his religious opinions were sincerely and strictly orthodox. To him the addition to the creed and the use of unleavened bread in the communion were matters touching man's salvation; he was therefore eager to destroy his father's work. The court, headed by the emperor's aunt Eulogia, instead of weeping for the death of Michael, wept only that his soul was in danger of eternal perdition; and the clergy attacked his memory before his remains were committed to the earth. Andronicus, eager to efface the stain of his own sinful compliance with the union of the churches, allowed the body of his father to be deprived of the usual funeral honours and public prayers. The Empress Michael's widow was compelled to abjure the union, and to approve of the indignities to his memory, before her own name was inserted in the public prayers for the imperial family. The Patriarch Vekkos was forced to resign, and his predecessor Joseph was reinstated on the patriarchal throne.

It is necessary to give some account of the ecclesiastical disputes and clerical intrigues in the Greek Church at this period, as they were for many years the principal object of the emperor's attention and the central pivot of his policy. The restoration of Joseph introduced additional troubles and abuses into the Greek Church, which was already distracted by schisms. Yet even in its confused and corrupted state, the Greeks looked up to their ecclesiastical establishment as their guiding institution through the misconduct of the civil government and the defects of the judicial administration. It has been already noticed that the administrative and judicial authority of the bishops increased greatly after the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders. Theodore II had viewed the increase of their authority with distrust, but Michael VIII had favoured their assumption of administrative power, as he found he could easily fill the church with prelates subservient to his will; while the nobles and local magistrates began in every distant province to display feelings of feudal independence which they had imbibed from their intercourse with the Western nations. Andronicus II found the prelates in possession of great judicial power: they were the judges as well as the priests of the Greek nation. We need therefore feel no surprise at finding the clergy commanding the people and synods assuming the characteristics of national assemblies. The vice of the system was that the clergy was an irresponsible body as far as their civil duties were concerned, and the bishops had interests different from the people even in matters of law and justice. Their power consequently followed the usual course of all irresponsible institutions. As it was founded on what was deemed an indisputable and sacred right, it admitted of no improvement, nor of any reform, so that,

according to an invariable law of man's corrupt nature, its immutability soon filled it with abuses. Of these, simony was the most prominent. The political condition which society assumed in the Greek empire of Constantinople, under this exorbitant influence of the church, was one of corruption and decline. It deserves to be contrasted with the vigorous impulse which popular action displayed in the Byzantine Empire under the Iconoclast emperors, when the civil power and the legal administration disputed for their independence against the efforts of the Orthodox Church to enslave society. The uncontested supremacy of the clergy has ever been a political evil of fearful magnitude.

The bigotry of Andronicus induced him to sanction the establishment of a tribunal, consisting chiefly of monks, which was empowered to fix the penance to be performed by those who desired to obtain absolution from a general sentence of excommunication, launched against all who had communicated with the Latin Church. As nearly the whole population of the empire had fallen under this sentence of excommunication, the power of the tribunal was unlimited. The rich were mulcted according to the sensibility of their consciences and the malice of their enemies, while ecclesiastics obnoxious to the bigots were suspended from the exercise of their functions. The facility with which Michael VIII had persuaded the majority of the Orthodox Church to adopt the heterodox doctrines of union and charity, persuaded the hyperorthodox that violent measures were required to guard against any future reaction. It was determined to make the deposed Patriarch Vekkos the scapegoat of the church. A synod was assembled, in which he was condemned; but this synod was so notoriously under the influence of fanatical monks, that Theoktistos, the bishop of Adrianople, sarcastically observed, "It seems the bishops are to be used as wooden spits to roast Vekkos; and when the dish is served they will be thrown into the fire to make a blaze". Vekkos, however, was not more inclined to seek the crown of martyrdom than his contemporaries in the Greek Church. He signed a written renunciation of the patriarchate and an orthodox profession of faith.

The Patriarch Joseph had a short period of triumph; he died in 1283. The partisans of Arsenios, who had never recognized any subsequent election, now claimed the church as being alone orthodox. The emperor so far acknowledged their pretensions as to put them in possession of the great church of All-Saints, which, having remained closed ever since the reconquest of Constantinople, on account of the diminished numbers of the Greek population, had escaped profanation by the Josephites and the Unionists. The Emperor Andronicus selected a layman of considerable learning, George of Cyprus, to be the new Patriarch, who received his consecration from the Bishop of Debron, a prelate who had taken no part in the ecclesiastical disputes which followed the deposition of Arsenios. George of Cyprus assumed the name of Gregorios as Patriarch. The bigoted party now gained the ascendancy. A council was held in the church of Blachern; all the bishops who had advocated papal supremacy were expelled from their sees, and many were imprisoned. The partisans of Arsenios and Joseph were then left alone to contend for absolute power in the church, and an immediate collision ensued. The violence of the Arsenites alarmed both the emperor and the patriarch; they were led on by Andronikos, the Bishop of Sardes, and supported by the monks and the people.

The emperor was unable to decide between the disputants; and in order to settle his own opinions, as well as those of his subjects, he ordered a council of the Greek Church to assemble at Adramyttum. The whole attention of the imperial administration was directed to the business of this assembly. An army of monks marched to attend its meetings; for, in the Greek empire at that period, monks were almost as numerous an element of the population as the military now are in the empires of France, Austria, and Russia. To preserve order, the government found it necessary to issue regular rations to these ecclesiastical troops, among whom were crowds of blind and mutilated victims of the persecutions of the late emperor. Incidental disputes soon rendered all agreement among the members of the assembly impossible; and at last both parties consented to remit the decision to the judgment of God. They expected Heaven to pronounce whether the Arsenites or Josephites were most worthy to rule the Greek Church, and to reveal its sentence by a miracle. Two scrolls, inscribed with the adverse opinions, were cast into the

flames in presence of the assembled clergy, and both were instantly reduced to ashes. The emperor and the people were satisfied; and the Arsenites, feeling themselves condemned, consented to receive the communion from the hands of the Patriarch Gregorios. Next day, however, their murmurs revived, and they recommenced their intrigues. The emperor summoned their leaders to his presence, and asked them if they recognized Gregorios as lawful Patriarch; which they were compelled to admit that they did, as they had communicated with him the day before. Gregorios, who was concealed to overhear their admission, then entered the room, and, after upbraiding them for their intrigues, pronounced an excommunication against all who should venture to disobey his orders. This trick awakened new passions. The Divine condemnation of their disputes was forgotten by both parties, and the ecclesiastical warfare recommenced with redoubled violence.

Andronikos, bishop of Sardes, the emperor's confessor, though the leader of the Arsenites, had contrived to remain at Constantinople, where he awaited the deposition of Gregorios, whose place he expected to occupy. He had quitted the cloister to intrigue at court. He was now accused of treasonable discourse, and degraded from the episcopal rank. When he was brought up to receive his sentence, one of the bishops, expelled from his see by the council of Blachern, dropped a monk's cowl on his head. The deposed bishop seized it with such vivacity that, in throwing it away, he pulled off his skull-cap, and left his head bare. The people, who were in the habit of attending every ecclesiastical assembly as a species of public amusement, enjoyed the comic scene, and shouted, in allusion to his intrigues, that Andronikos had now his head ready for the patriarchal crown.

The emperor, who could never follow any line of conduct steadily, again revived the spirit of the Arsenites, by allowing them to transport the body of Arsenios from Cyzicus to Constantinople, while, at the same time, he determined to allow Vekkos an impartial hearing. A new council was assembled at Blachern, A. D. 1284. Vekkos could neither moderate his presumption nor conceal his envy, and his defence degenerated into a virulent attack on the Patriarch Gregorios, which disgusted everybody; and he was sent back to his exile at Brusa.

The Patriarch Gregorios, who was as fond of polemics as Vekkos, and as proud of his eloquence, indulged his taste, until one of his tracts was condemned as heterodox, which compelled him to resign in 1289.

Athanasios, a hermit of the most rigid principles, was raised to the patriarchal throne that he might reform the church, and he retained at court all the inflexibility of the ascete. The bishops who resided at Constantinople, immersed in political intrigues, were ordered to retire to their sees. The monks, who acted as confessors and political agents for the nobles, and who might be seen, at all hours of the day and night, ambling on their sleek and richly-caparisoned mules from palace to palace, were sent back to their monasteries. Bishops and nobles, monks and court ladies, soon rose in rebellion against the reforms of Athanasios; and the Emperor Andronicus, who wished a patriarch to act as a minister of his own intrigues, to govern the church, not as an ecclesiastical reformer, to augment its power, joining the opposition, Athanasios was forced to resign, after he governed the church four years.

Some curious proceedings are connected with the resignation of Athanasios. Christian charity was not a virtue prevalent in the Greek Church at any time, and Athanasios had even less than other priests. Before resigning the patriarchate, he prepared a writing, justifying his conduct, and anathematizing all his calumniators, and all who had assisted in procuring his resignation. To this document he affixed the leaden seal of the patriarchate, and having deposited it in an earthen jar, he concealed it in the ornamental work above the galleries of St Sophia's. Four years after his resignation, it was found by some boys who were seeking for young pigeons, which were then as numerous about the churches of Constantinople as they now are about the mosques. The paper was carried to the reigning Patriarch, Joannes, and the whole body of the orthodox was thrown into a state of consternation by the discovery; for the empire

appeared to be placed under an interdict, from which there was no possibility of obtaining canonical relief. Many of the sincere bigots began to fancy that they were already suffering the pains of the damned. Tranquillity was at last restored by the Emperor Andronicus, who obtained from Athanasios a written declaration that he had revoked the anathema before his resignation, on his mind becoming more tranquil, and that it was only from inadvertency that he had forgotten to destroy the writing.

The next patriarch was Joannes, a monk of Sozopolis, (A.D. 1294-1303). Like all his predecessors, he became involved in differences with the emperor, who was incessantly meddling in ecclesiastical affairs. Joannes signed an act of abdication; but a question arose concerning its validity, and his name continued to be mentioned as patriarch in the public prayers. The emperor was eager to terminate the business, in order to reinstate Athanasios in the government of the church; the Patriarch Joannes was as eager to retain his place. While matters stood thus, Andronicus paid Joannes a visit, at which the Patriarch made a bold attempt to intimidate the ecclesiastical conscience of the scrupulous emperor. As Andronicus entered the hall, he asked a benediction. Joannes replied, "God will grant you his blessing; but do you recognize me as Patriarch?" The unsuspecting emperor answered, "Certainly". "Then", exclaimed the ambitious pontiff, "as Patriarch I excommunicate all who endeavour to reinstate Athanasios on the patriarchal throne". The emperor was so confounded at this bold reception that he retired without uttering a word on the subject. But Joannes was, nevertheless compelled to sign a formal act of abdication, and make way for the restoration of Athanasios.

Athanasios resumed his schemes of reform, which he pursued with undiminished energy and little effect for eight years. His headstrong temper and violent disposition are said to have caused his second resignation. A caricature, representing the Emperor Andronicus with a bridle in his mouth, while Athanasios, in his usual state of excitement, with violent gestures, was goading him forward to an image of Christ, appeared painted on the patriarchal footstool. Some persons, who observed the painting, accused Athanasios of impiety; but the emperor, suspecting that they were the real authors of the caricature, ordered them to be arrested, and they were condemned to perpetual imprisonment for calumniating the Patriarch. Athanasios, however, demanded a more signal satisfaction, and, being unable to obtain it, resigned the patriarchate.

Niphon, bishop of Cyzicus, a man of talents, versed in public business, but not remarkable for theological learning, was the next Patriarch. He succeeded to the throne after a vacancy of more than two years, and ruled the church little more than a year, (a.C. 1313-1314). He had displayed judgment and energy in defending his see against the incursions of the Seljouk Turks; and by repairing the ancient fortifications on the isthmus of Cyzicus, he had rendered the whole peninsula a safe place of refuge for the inhabitants of the neighbouring continent. As Patriarch he distinguished himself by his magnificence, luxury, and cupidity. His table and his stud were superior to those of the emperor; but as he affected extraordinary eagerness to accomplish the emperor's favourite scheme of uniting the schismatic Arsenites with the orthodox, his faults were overlooked. Accusations of simony at last caused his deposition. His successor was John Glykys, a layman of high character, whom bad health caused to abdicate after he had governed the church four years.

The Emperor Andronicus then determined to govern the church himself, and, in order to meet with no opposition, he placed an old deaf and ignorant monk named Gerasimos, on the patriarchal throne. Of the eight patriarchs who ruled the church during the reign of Andronicus, he was the first who was not compelled to resign, unless we add Joseph, who died as Patriarch in the reign of Andronicus, after having been compelled to resign his throne to Vekkos during the reign of Michael VIII. Gerasimos occupied the patriarchal throne about a year, (1320-1321).

The last Patriarch named by Andronicus XI was Isaiah, a monk of Mount Athos, whom he had expected to find as docile as Gerasimos. He was disappointed; but the quarrel which

ensued requires to be noticed in connection with the civil wars that ended in the dethronement of Andronicus.

This short abstract of the ecclesiastical events that occurred in the Greek empire during the reign of Andronicus II, is sufficient to give the reader some idea of the occupations for which the emperor neglected the civil administration and military defence of his empire.

The state of the Seljuks Empire invited Andronicus to regain possession of those districts in Asia Minor which were still inhabited by a majority of Greeks. Theodore Lascaris I, even while pressed on one side by the Crusaders, had, nevertheless, defeated the whole forces of the Seljouks when united under a warlike sultan. Andronicus II was now unable to resist the attacks of the petty chiefs, who acted as independent princes under the nominal sovereignty of Alaeddin III, the last of the Seljouk sultans of Iconium. The provincial governors who dismembered this Turkish Empire are usually said to have founded ten principalities or emirats; for some of the independent chiefs who ruled only a few cities were not ranked in the list of emirs. These emirats are known in history by the names of their founders; but their boundaries can only be approximately determined, as they undergoing continual change. Their extent corresponded neither with that of the Byzantine themes into which the country had been divided when it was conquered by the Seljouk Turks, nor with the ancient geographical divisions of which the Greek writers make use in describing the relations of the emirs with the empire of Constantinople.

During the earlier years of the reign of Andronicus, the power of the Turks excited no alarm. The garrisons in the frontier fortresses were reduced, the number of the legions was diminished, and many of the ships kept ready for service by Michael VIII were laid up in the arsenal. Andronicus required all the money he could divert from the military and naval services for the court and the church. The officers could only gain advancement by becoming courtiers; the soldiers could only avoid neglect by becoming monks. The system adopted for maintaining the troops in garrison and in winter-quarters reveals the full extent to which disorder and peculation might proceed. The imperial authorities announced to the municipal magistrates the number of troops to be quartered in the town, and the reparation was then made to each house according to the census of the proprietor. The householder was then obliged to furnish the soldier with a daily ration of provisions and wine at a price fixed by a commission, and for these he was only paid at distant intervals when the soldiers received their pay. As the troops were always in arrears, they were generally deeply indebted to their landlords. A door was thus opened for every species of fraud on the part of the officers, who granted leave of absence to the soldiers to pocket their pay; and on the part of the soldiers, who indulged in recklessness and pillage. The local authorities participated in the frauds committed by the officers, so that neither the proprietors nor the soldiers could ever obtain redress from the central government. The emperor preferred foreign troops, as they were generally found more willing to defraud their landlords and march out of their winter-quarters before receiving the full amount of their pay. The native troops were also more inclined to take part with the people in seditions caused by financial oppression. The army of Andronicus consisted principally of Alans, Gasmuls, Turks, Turkopuls, and refugee Cretans. The Alans received double the pay of the best native troops. The armies with which the Emperors of Nicaea had defeated the Turkish sultans, the Latin emperors, the kings of Bulgaria, and the French knights of Achaia and Athens, were now disbanded and neglected. The state maxim of imperial Rome, that no man who paid the land-tax should be allowed to bear arms, was again revived, and mercenaries and Turks plundered the Greek empire as the Goths and Huns had plundered the Roman.

The Greek empire of Constantinople, at the accession of Andronicus II, embraced the whole coast of Asia Minor, from the mouth of the Sangarius to the Rhodian Peraia; but the nomad tribes who lived under the Seljouk dominion were daily pushing their incursions farther and farther into the Greek territories. In the year 1296, the regular army of the empire continued to maintain a decided superiority in the field over any force the Turks could bring into action; but the carelessness of the emperor, who left the troops in Asia without pay, caused this

neglected army to break out into rebellion. The Turkish mercenaries in its ranks plundered the Greek landlords; the Cretans sold their services to the highest bidder. Alexios Philanthropenos, who had successfully resisted the Seljouk tribes, was proclaimed emperor by his rebellious troops, but allowed himself to be taken prisoner, and was deprived of sight. His successor, John Tarchaniotes, vainly attempted to reform the abuses, which rendered the army more oppressive to the emperor's subjects than dangerous to his enemies. The anarchy that prevailed in the civil, military, and ecclesiastical administration, rendered his powers less, and he was compelled to abandon the undertaking.

In the year 1301, Michael, the eldest son of Andronicus, who had received the imperial title from his father in 1295, took the command of the army in Asia, and about the same time a body of veteran warriors entered the imperial service, who, under an able general, would have secured victory to the Greeks. Andronicus allowed a colony of Alans to settle in his dominions, and about eight thousand who had served in the Tartar wars beyond the Danube were enrolled in the Byzantine service. To furnish these foreigners with well-broken horses, Andronicus dismounted the best cohorts of his native cavalry. It was already known that the emperor distrusted his Greek troops. Henceforth it was evident that no confidence could be placed in men whom he had so openly insulted by his preference for foreign mercenaries. The Alans, though brave and experienced soldiers, united many of the wild habits of their original nomadic life with the worst vices of mercenaries. They required to be kept constantly under the strictest discipline, and to be ruled with a strong hand. Michael, who had no military talent, could neither employ their valour with effect against the Turks, nor restrain their disorders. After a short term of service, they mutinied, deserted the camp, and marched to the Hellespont, plundering the Greek inhabitants of the country they passed through. The young emperor then broke up his own camp, and, abandoning his headquarters at Magnesia on the Hermus, retired to Pergamus, leaving the Turkish tribes to extend their plundering expeditions as far as Adramyttum, Lampsacus, and Cyzicus.

About the same time the Venetians and Genoese, who were carrying on war, were so emboldened by the weakness of the Greek empire and the neglected state of its marine that they pursued their hostilities in the port of Constantinople, while private vessels plundered the islands of the Propontis within sight of the palace of Andronicus, and compelled him to ransom the captive inhabitants by parading them before the walls of the capital, suspended from the rigging of their ships.

Rapid conquests were now made by the Seljouk emirs, and a destructive warfare against the Greek race was carried on by the nomad tribes, who were more anxious to exterminate the agricultural population than to subdue them. The valley of the Meander was overrun by Mentshé and Aïdin; Philadelphia and Magnesia were threatened by Kermian and Saroukhan. The citadel of Sardes was divided into two forts, and the troops of Sultan Alaeddin III, the last of the Seljouk emperors of Roum, were put in possession of one, as it was hoped that the emirs and nomads would respect a city that paid tribute to their sultan. Michael, distracted by the number rather than by the force of his enemies, abandoned his headquarters at Pergamus, where he found himself straitened for provisions by the ravages of Karasi, and retired to the maritime fortress of Peges. The Greeks were everywhere in despair. In the empire of Trebizond, matters were not much better than in the empire of Constantinople. But it was in the provinces between Nicomedia and Smyrna, along the Propontis and the Aegean, that the greatest confusion reigned. The roads to the coast were covered with fugitives from the interior, endeavouring to save their property and families. Thousands were left to perish from want, and thousands died from suffering. Whole provinces were deserted by their inhabitants, and became pasture-lands for hordes of Turkmans. In the course of a single generation, the Greek race and language disappeared from countries in which it had been spoken for two thousand years, and Turkish colonies took possession of Aeolis and Ionia. Andronicus II witnessed these dreadful calamities with feelings benumbed by piety: even the extermination of the orthodox failed to animate his energy.

The Byzantine and Seljouk empires, and the Greek and Turkish people, displayed unequivocal signs of a state of society in which the ties of interest, and the common feelings that had once connected the various ranks of the population with the central government, were broken or dissolved. The conquests of the Crusaders and Moguls had weakened the imperial authority both at Constantinople and Iconium, and it had been replaced by no bond of union between the sovereign and the people. In this state of civil and political disorder in Christian and Mohammedan society throughout western Asia and eastern Europe, a tribe of nomad Turks, who had recently entered the Seljouk dominions and whose education and feelings were not yet corrupted by artificial moral relations, began to lay the foundations of an empire which advanced to greatness more rapidly than that of Rome, and whose power has proved more durable than the empire of Alexander. Othman, whose tribe consisted of only four hundred tents, was invested with the government of Karadjahissar (Melangeia) in the year 1289, by the Sultan Alaeddin III. The education of Othman had taught him that the impartial administration of justice is a powerful instrument of ambition, and he adopted systematic arrangements for securing it both to Christians and Mohammedans in his territory. The market held on Friday at Karadjahissar was celebrated for its security. A judge sat constantly to decide every difference that might arise on the spot, and Othman frequently occupied the judgment-seat. It happened that, as he was presiding, a dispute arose between a Christian of Belokoma (Biledjik), in the Greek empire, and a Turk of Kermian. The decision was in favour of the Christian, and the justice of the sentence raised the fame of Othman and the commercial importance of Karadjahissar. Yet Othman is represented as just only when justice aided his ambition; when injustice was profitable, he acknowledged no law. He plundered the Greek territories when he could do so with impunity; and he is said to have murdered his uncle, Dundar, who was ninety years of age, because he advised him to remain at peace with the Byzantine empire. The city of Tarakli (Yenidje-Tarakdji), from the manufactories of which the Greeks supplied all western Asia and the east of Europe with combs and spoons, and the town of Modreni, the great seat of the manufactory of knives and needles, were both plundered.

After twelve years of preparation, Othman ventured to attack the regular army of the Greek empire, in the year 1301. The action took place at Baphaeon, near Nicomedia. Pachymeres estimates the number of the imperial troops commanded by Muzalon at only two thousand, while the forces of Othman consisted of five thousand. The Greek infantry fled, and their misconduct was attributed to the dissatisfaction caused by the manner in which they had been deprived of their horses. The Alans fought bravely, and covered the retreat to Nicomedia. Othman now laid waste the whole of Bithynia, from Nicomedia to Lopadion. The Greeks could hardly venture out of the gates of Nicaea; and the communications of that city with Constantinople were kept up by means of boats on the lake Askanios. Even the road from the end of the lake to Kios was usually travelled in the night. The suburbs of the towns on the Asiatic shores of the Bosphorus were burned by the Ottomans, whose foraging parties were sometimes visible from the towers of the imperial palace in Constantinople.

The disgraceful retreat of his son Michael to Peges, induced Andronicus to change the military governors in Asia, instead of teaching him the necessity of reforming the military system. The command of Nicomedia was intrusted to a Tartar chief who had recently embraced Christianity; and by the marriage of this Tartar's daughter with Suleiman, a Turkish emir, peace was restored to a small district, and a barrier was formed against the incursions of Othman. But the unemployed Turkish troops transferred their services to other leaders, and carried on their incursions in more distant provinces. This preference of a Tartar general indicates a deep-rooted distrust of the courage and fidelity of the Greek nobles, as well as contempt for their military skill; and, indeed, a factious spirit, directed to personal interest, could alone have caused the insensibility to national honour which made the nobles and the troops submit tamely to the insults they received from their emperor. Well might the brave old Spaniard Muntaner declare that God had stricken the Greek race with His curse, for every one could trample them down.

A new crisis in the fate of the Byzantine Empire suddenly presented itself by the arrival of an army of Spaniards, composed chiefly of Catalans and men of Aragon; but this race of strangers, hitherto unknown in the East, soon disappeared from the scene. They came and departed as if they were under the guidance of the destroying angel. In daring courage, steady discipline, and military skill, they were not surpassed by any Greek or Roman army. Their warlike deeds entitle them to rank as a host of heroes; their individual acts made them appear a band of demons. They had proved invincible on every field of battle. They had broken the lances of the chivalry of France in many a well-fought action; and they were firmly convinced that no troops on earth could encounter their shock. Guided by a sovereign like Leo III, or like Basil II, they might have conquered the Seljouk Turks, strangled the Ottoman power in its cradle, and carried the double-headed eagle of Byzantium victorious to the foot of Mount Taurus, and to the banks of the Danube; but Andronicus could neither make use of their valour, nor secure their obedience. His own senseless intrigues roused their hostile feelings; and after they had made every tribe in the Seljouk empire tremble for a moment, they turned on the Greek empire, where they carried on their inhuman ravages with a degree of cruelty and rapacity which history cannot attempt to portray. They laid both the empire and the Greek nation prostrate in the dust, bleeding with wounds from which they never recovered.

The Catalan Grand Company—for that is the name by which this Spanish army is known in Eastern history—consisted of troops formed in the twenty years' war that followed the Sicilian Vespers. The kings of Aragon for some time supported the people of Sicily in their courageous defence of their independence against the French kings of Naples; but at last Jayme II of Aragon abandoned their cause. The Sicilians then conferred their crown on Frederic, the brother of Jayme XI, and carried on the war gallantly against the combined forces of Naples, Aragon, and France, supported by the temporal and spiritual power of the popes. In this war the Spanish leaders saw the necessity of forming a mercenary army, of which every individual soldier should be a match in military exercises for the best knights of France. Spain was filled with a poor and proud nobility. High pay and great license drew the best sinews in Catalonia and Aragon into the mercenary battalions of Sicily, and induced them to submit to the severest discipline. The spirit which long after astonished the world in the followers of Cortes and Pizarro, then animated every Spanish soldier with an enthusiastic desire to encounter the most renowned knight in France; and the great admiral, Roger de Lauria, well expressed their feelings when he said to the Count de Foix, "Let the King of France arm three hundred galleys; I will sweep the sea with one hundred, and no ship shall sail without a pass from the king of Aragon".

In the year 1302, peace was at last concluded between the kings of Naples and Sicily. The marriage of Charles of Valois with Catherine of Courtenay, made the kings of France and Naples eager to enforce their claims on the empire of Constantinople. The kings of Aragon and Sicily, on the other hand, had much to fear from any increase of French influence in the Mediterranean; but Frederic of Sicily had bound himself by treaty not to conclude any alliance with the Greek emperor. It was known at Constantinople that Pope Boniface VIII eagerly supported the pretensions of Charles of Valois to the Eastern Empire; yet the bigoted Andronicus took no measures to avert the storm, by creating a diversion against the French princes in the West. Frederic was anxious to free Sicily from the presence of the Spanish troops who had carried on the war in Calabria. He had no longer the means of paying them, and he feared lest they should plunder the island. The important service of inducing them to seek a new career of action in the East, was performed for Frederic by Roger de Flor.

This adventurer was a type of a new race of generals, who were rapidly diminishing the importance of the nobles in military affairs. He was the second son of a German falconer in the service of the Emperor Frederic II, named Robert Blum, who adopted the Italian name of Flor, and married an heiress of Brindisi. The commander of a galley belonging to the order of the Temple, pleased with his intelligence as a child, took him to sea when only eight years old. In due time he entered the order, distinguished himself by his attention to naval tactics and military discipline, and received the command of a galley. But when Acre was taken by the



Mohammedans in 1291, brother Roger was accused of employing his galley only to save those who paid him large sums of money. Certain it is, he neglected to join the rest of the templars, who, even after the Grand-master, Guichard de Beaujeu, was slain, prolonged the defence of their quarter under his successor Gaudini. For absenting himself from this desperate struggle, Roger was degraded from his rank, and compelled to seek refuge at Genoa, in order to escape imprisonment. He soon fitted out a private galley, and sought his fortune as a mercenary or a pirate. He first offered his services to the French in Naples, but the Duke of Calabria treated him with neglect; he then sought Frederic, whose affairs seemed desperate, and entered the Sicilian service. The King of Sicily perceived his talents, and honoured him with the rank of Vice-admiral of Sicily. Roger extended the sphere of his naval expeditions along the coasts of Italy, France, and Spain. In hostile countries he carried off everything he could embark in his ships; in friendly districts he levied contributions, and gave receipts for the amount, payable by the Sicilian treasury at the end of the war. In this way he not only enriched himself and his followers, but brought large sums into the exhausted treasury of Frederic. But when peace was concluded, the Grand-master of the Temple urged the Pope to insist that Frederic should surrender the recreant templar. The danger was serious and before the demand was made, Roger offered his service to the Emperor of Constantinople, promising to bring with him a body of Spanish troops to serve against the Turks. His enterprise had the air of a crusade; he was known at Constantinople from having rendered assistance to several Greek vessels, when he commanded the galley of the Temple; and in addition to his military qualities, he spoke Greek fluently. Andronicus accepted his offer; but, with the perverseness which marks every administrative act of his life, he made no arrangements for fixing the number of mercenaries he was about to hire. No quarters were prepared for them; no magazines were formed to insure their immediate employment against the enemy; and no care was taken that their pay should be issued with regularity.

In the month of September 1303, Roger de Flor arrived at Constantinople with a fleet of thirty-six sail, and an army of six thousand men. Seven galleys, one thousand cavalry, and one thousand infantry, carried his own private standard. There were several generals in this army, equal in rank and superior in birth to Roger, who submitted voluntarily to his command, without being bound to serve under his orders. The supreme authority in the Grand Company was supposed to reside in the army itself; Roger was only its elected chief. The first idea that struck the Greeks, always more ready to intrigue against their allies than to act energetically with them, was, that it would be possible to separate the interests of the generals of the Grand Company from the interests of their men, and thus render both dependent. Andronicus adopted this policy, without reflecting that it was likely to end in an appeal to the sword. As a means of securing the unbounded gratitude of Roger de Flor, he was adopted into the imperial family, and married to Maria, daughter of Asan, the exiled King of Bulgaria, and granddaughter of the Emperor Andronicus II. He was invested also with the rank of Grand-duke, and was named commander-in-chief of the army and fleet in Asia Minor and on the Asiatic coast. In the meantime, Andronicus lavished immense sums on fêtes, and in presents to the Catalan leaders, whom he wished to gain. To the troops he issued four months' pay before he had taught them to obey his orders. During these amusements and intrigues the Turks continued to ravage Asia Minor, and the Spaniards lounged idly through the streets of Constantinople. The sailors of Barcelona were soon involved in bloody quarrels with the Genoese of Galata. Both parties despised the imperial police, and the grand drungary was slain at the head of the Greek troops while he was attempting to separate the combatants in one of their battles. The Spaniards were at last transferred to Asia, where they employed the last months of 1303 in clearing the immediate neighbourhood of Cyzicus and Peges of the troops of Karasi and Othman.

The Catalans were placed in winter-quarters at Cyzicus. According to the usage of the Byzantine Empire, the soldiers were dispersed in the houses of the citizens, who were obliged to furnish them with rations of bread, wine, cheese, salt meat, vegetables, and provender for their horses. Fresh meat and any condiments they might require, were to be paid for. The money due to the citizens for rations and extra supplies was to be paid in March, when government was to

liquidate all accounts before the troops took the field. A commission, consisting of six Spanish officers and six Greek privates, fixed the price of provisions. Roger brought the grand-duchess to Cyzicus; and Muntaner, the historian of the army, and one of its leaders, says that the winter was passed in joyfulness and pleasance. The natural insolence of the Spaniards, increased by the republican organization of the Grand Company, the weakness of the Greek army, and the corruption and inefficiency of the Byzantine administration, exposed the defenceless population of Cyzicus to every species of extortion. When the time arrived for paying the army, it was found that many Spaniards had incurred debts far exceeding the pay due to them. Muntaner pretends that these debts were discharged by the grand-duke; but Pachymeres, with more probability, asserts that the citizens of Cyzicus were plundered of great part of their property. The inhabitants of Cyzicus were the victims of foreign mercenaries, but those of Peges suffered equal injustice at the hands of the cowardly young emperor, Michael. When Roger de Flor assumed the command in Asia Minor, Michael quitted Peges full of hatred against the Catalans, leaving an order which proclaimed his hostility, and sowed the seeds of distrust in the breasts of Roger and his followers. This order commanded that the Catalans were not to be admitted into Peges, though he knew that the inhabitants would be guilty of high treason if they resisted the authority of the grand-duke; and when they opened their gates to a Catalan garrison, he compelled them to pay a fine of several thousand byzants. Such was the treachery, avarice, and meanness of the heir-apparent of the Greek empire.

The military operations of the Catalans were delayed in the spring of 1304 by a quarrel with the Alans, and the streets of Cyzicus became the scene of a bloodier battle than had been fought with the Genoese in the streets of Constantinople. The son of George, the general of the Alans, was slain, and a deep debt of vengeance incurred. It was the middle of May before Roger took the field. The Turks in the meantime, despising the renown of warriors who were so slow in their movements, had surprised Tripolis and closely invested Philadelphia, then the largest city in Asia Minor, which was reduced to such extremities by famine that the blood of a sheep or a pig was sold for a byzant; and it must be remembered that the Greeks, in ordinary circumstances, have always observed the apostolic command to restrain from things strangled and blood. The Catalans at last arrived. One division of the Turkish army stationed at Germe was routed, its camp stormed, and its baggage plundered. The grand army, under the command of Alishir Kermian, still attempted to cover the siege. Roger advanced by Chliara, and an engagement took place at Avlaka; but Kermian retired as soon as he could draw off the troops occupied in the siege, and Roger entered Philadelphia in triumph. The grand-duke occupied himself more with the measures necessary to advance his own ambitious projects than with carrying on the war actively for the interests of the empire. The Turks were allowed to retain possession of Tripolis and Tralles, though without these cities the rich valley of the Meander could not be secured against their incursions, Roger even neglected the offers of the Greeks of Tripolis to cooperate with the Catalans if he would advance to their walls, and moved in the opposite direction to regulate the pecuniary contributions and supplies of provisions which he could levy from the cities which still belonged to the emperor. The Catalans advanced no farther east than Kula. They then visited Nymphaeum, Magnesia on the Hermus, Tyrria on the Caister, Ephesus and the seaport of Anaia, whence they marched as far south as the Iron Gates on the frontiers of Lycia, defeating successively the troops of Saroukhan and Aïdin. They boasted that the scene of their last victory over Aïdin was in the mountains between Anatolia and the kingdom of Cilician Armenia. Roger placed his army in winter-quarters at Anaia, Ephesus, Pyrgion, and Philadelphia, while his fleet occupied Chios, Lesbos, and Lemnos. In all these places the insolence of the Catalans and the rapacity of the grand-duke knew no bounds.

Roger de Flor saw clearly that neither the Emperor Andronicus nor the Greek nation possessed the vigour necessary for defending Asia Minor against the Turks. This circumstance suggested to him the project of forming an independent principality for himself in the East, for which he was ready to do homage to the Emperor of Constantinople. His first step was to increase the strength of his own corps of personal followers. After the hostile display of feeling on the part of the Emperor Michael, he felt that wealth and power could alone protect him

against the intrigues of the court at Constantinople. He therefore used his power as grand-duke entirely to serve his own ends. The Byzantine troops who were attached to the government were severely punished for the slightest breach of discipline. The officers who had abandoned their posts while the Catalans and Roger were amusing themselves at Cyzicus, were hung without mercy. Governors of towns were condemned to pay exorbitant fines and some who were unable or unwilling to collect the sums demanded from them were put to death. Immense contributions were levied in Philadelphia, Pyrgos, and Ephesus, and in the islands on the Asiatic coast.

Several cities in Asia, when they found themselves abandoned by the Emperor Michael, had assumed a certain degree of independence, and repulsed both the Turks and the imperial tax-collectors from their walls. Of these cities, Magnesia on the Hermus was the most important. Attaleiotes, an equerry of the emperor, was elected the local governor, and he refused to allow a Byzantine prefect to enter the place. He repulsed the Turks, and by a timely submission to Roger de Flor conciliated his goodwill, and prevented him from sending Catalan troops to form the garrison. When the grand-duke began to prepare for asserting his independence, he fixed on Magnesia as the fortress in which he resolved to secure his treasures and the stores of the army. They were accordingly sent to Magnesia under the guard of a small body of Catalans who were ordered to remain, in order to strengthen the garrison. Attaleiotes saw that a Greek would have little chance of rising to power if the plans of Roger proved successful. Instigated by his councils, the inhabitants of Magnesia flew to arms, put the Catalans in the city to the sword, seized the treasures of Roger and the stores of the Grand Company and prepared to resist the fiercest assaults of the Spaniards. The grand-duke marched with his whole army to avenge an injury which touched the honour of his arms, and struck a dangerous blow at his military power. The siege of Magnesia was formed, but the Grand Company was as weak in siege-artillery and engineers as the army of Hannibal. Attaleiotes made a brave defence, and repulsed all the attacks of Roger. An attempt of the Catalans to destroy the aqueduct that supplied the city with water was defeated by a vigorous sortie.

In order to put an end to these disorders in Asia Minor, Andronicus ordered the grand-duke to join the army under the command of his son Michael at Adrianople; but Roger, hoping to recover his treasures, delayed his march. The Alans, who were mindful of the injuries they had received at Cyzicus, made the order a pretence for quitting the grand-duke's standard. Many small bands wandered about plundering the inhabitants or living at free quarters. Constantinople was filled with alarm, Asia Minor with misery, and the camp at Adrianople with indignation. The Greek army now demanded to be led against the Catalans; disorder spread through its ranks, and Michael, to gain popularity, issued a golden bull restricting the time of service of the native troops, and declaring that they should never be called upon to serve in company with the Catalans. Such was the military condition of the empire. The Greeks would only serve as long as suited their convenience; the Alans and the Catalans disobeyed the orders of the government with impunity. Roger, finding that he could not take Magnesia, at last raised the siege, in obedience, as he pretended, to the emperor's orders. He had now to provide pay for the Grand Company, as no money was sent to him by the imperial government, and he resolved to replace the treasures he had lost as rapidly as possible. For this purpose he led his army to the Hellespont, crossed into Europe, occupied the whole Thracian Chersonesus, and put his troops into winter-quarters in the towns of Gallipoli, Potamos, Sestos, and Madytos, at the end of 1305. Roger de Flor then visited Constantinople, to demand pay for the Grand Company. His claim amounted to the sum of three hundred thousand byzants, but his extortions had forestalled a large part of the imperial revenues, and the treasury was reduced so low that the Emperor Michael had sent his plate to the mint, and sold his wife's jewels, to raise the army with which he carried on war against the Bulgarians. Roger was only able to procure a small sum, consisting of an adulterated gold coinage. His return, under these circumstances, spread discontent among the Catalans, who commenced plundering the country in the vicinity of their quarters.

About this time Beranger d'Entenza, a Spanish noble-man of high rank and military renown, joined his countrymen with a fleet of nine ships, three hundred cavalry, and one thousand infantry; and it may be here mentioned that, during the preceding winter, another leader, Beranger de Rocafort, had brought them a reinforcement of two hundred cavalry and one thousand infantry. Andronicus, who hoped by his intrigues to be able to divide the Spaniards into two parties, and thus reduce them to subserviency, invited d'Entenza to Constantinople, and treated him with great honour. Roger de Flor, who feared his rivalry with the Grand Company much more than his favour with Andronicus, resigned the office of grand-duke, in order that the emperor might confer it on d'Entenza. The winter was passed in intrigues. Roger, to secure the attachment of the Grand Company, publicly advocated all their pretensions, while at the same time he secretly professed devotion to the emperor's service. No experience could teach the Greek statesmen of Constantinople the danger of too much artifice with men of the sword. Roger enjoyed intriguing as much as the Greeks. He was their equal in ability, and their superior in courage. Every day increased the difficulties of the imperial government. A new tax called *sitokrithon* was imposed on grain, and set apart for the payment of the Catalans. One-third of the pay of every Byzantine official was deducted, and every exertion was made to collect money, but all was insufficient to supply the demands of the Spaniards. The Emperor Andronicus, in order to show d'Entenza the injustice of his countrymen, produced accounts that proved they had exacted a million of byzants from the country, and bags of despatches filled with petitions against their enormities. D'Entenza saw the impossibility of appeasing the quarrel between the Greek government and the Grand Company, and immediately returned to Gallipoli.

The spring of 1306 was now far advanced. The Turks had again overrun great part of Asia Minor, and reinvaded Philadelphia. The Catalans were fortifying themselves at Gallipoli, and the Genoese reported at Constantinople that Fernand, infant of Majorca, was about to place himself at the head of the Spaniards, in order to conquer a kingdom for himself in the Greek empire. The Emperor Andronicus and Roger de Flor were both alarmed by the knowledge they appear to have obtained of the treaty which was then negotiating between Frederic of Sicily and Fernand of Majorca, and which was signed before the end of March. By this treaty Fernand was appointed commander-in-chief of the Spanish army in Romania, as lieutenant-general of the King of Sicily; he engaged to obey the orders of the king, and neither to conclude a treaty nor to marry without his consent. Every exertion was now made by the Greek emperor to gain over Roger de Flor to his interests. Roger was created Caesar, an honour which, though often degraded, was now, for the first time, conferred on a mercenary adventurer. He was offered twenty thousand byzants, three hundred thousand measures of corn, and the command over all Asia Minor, exclusive of the cities, if he would march to the relief of Philadelphia with his own corps. But Roger, who knew he could place no reliance on the promises of the Greeks, only urged the Catalans the more to prosecute their demands for payment. A deputation of the leaders of the Grand Company waited on the emperor, and were received by Andronicus with a long harangue, in which he rebuked the Catalans for their conduct, boasted of his own power, depreciated their services, and threatened to punish them if they disobeyed his orders. The discourse is so absurd from its bombast, and so ridiculous from its vanity, that it is more surprising to find it recorded by a historian than it is difficult to believe that it was uttered by an emperor. If the Catalans had really arrived at Constantinople half-starved and in rags, as the emperor told them was the case, he ought to have reflected that the change in their circumstances proved the worthlessness of the imperial government, and the cowardice of the Greek army. The emperor attempted to gain time by paying the Spaniards four months' arrears in his depreciated coinage. This money the Spaniards compelled the Greeks to receive at its nominal value. It was also arranged that Roger should immediately march to the relief of Philadelphia at the head of three thousand men, who were alone to remain permanently in Byzantine pay. But the whole Spanish army resolved to accompany Roger, being persuaded that he was about to take possession of Asia Minor as Caesar, in order to hold it as an imperial fief, and they expected to share it as the Crusader had partitioned Europe after the conquest of Constantinople.

Before quitting Europe, Roger visited Adrianople to pay his respects to the emperor Michael. As he entered the apartment of the empress, he was assassinated by George, the general of the Alans, whose son was slain in the tumult at Cyzicus. At the same time three hundred Catalan cavalry, who formed the escort of the Caesar, were massacred by the Alan troops. Three Spaniards alone escaped to carry the news to Gallipoli. The Emperor Michael acted as if he considered that George had taken a just revenge for the death of his son, and the Greeks who had participated in the assassination remained unpunished. It was evident that things were now at a crisis, where half measures were no longer possible, yet Michael had not the courage to attack the Grand Company before it had time to prepare for action and replace its leader. The news of the assassination of Roger de Flor filled the Catalans with rage, and they resolved to be signally revenged. Everything they did was undertaken with the solemn etiquette that marked unalterable determination. A deputation waited on the Emperor Andronicus, and announced to him that the treacherous assassination of Roger de Flor had broken the ties of their allegiance to the Greek empire. These merciless adventurers knew better how to guard the honour of Spain than the imperial court could guard the honour of the emperor. The Catalan envoys, after boldly performing their mission, and declaring war according to the forms of chivalry, quitted Constantinople with a safe-conduct of Andronicus, and were waylaid and murdered by the Greeks at Redestos. The people of the capital also massacred Fernand d'Aones, the admiral, and all the Spaniards in the capital. The cavalry of Michael swept the country round Gallipoli, and slew many Catalans before they could reach the camps of their countrymen.

The Grand Company immediately commenced war with the Greek empire, which it carried on as a war of extermination against the Greek race. Beranger d'Entenza, finding that Gallipoli was in no immediate danger, sailed with a division of the army to collect supplies of money and provisions. The city of Perinthos was stormed, and the cruelty with which the Greeks were everywhere treated exceeds belief, and cannot be recorded in detail; men were burned alive, women were violated and stabbed, and even children were impaled. On his return to Gallipoli, d'Entenza met a Genoese fleet on its way to Trebizond. With these ships he held some communication; but a Genoese fleet, hired by Andronicus to attack the Catalans, arriving soon after from Constantinople, the whole Genoese forces fell on d'Entenza, destroyed his squadron, and carried him prisoner to the emperor. But Andronicus not being able to pay the Genoese the sum they demanded as his ransom, he was taken to Trebizond, and thence to Genoa.

The loss of their fleet was a serious blow to the Catalans. Some proposed to abandon Gallipoli and establish themselves in Mitylene, until the arrival of the Infant Fernand of Majorca. This plan was nevertheless abandoned as dishonourable, and it was resolved to keep possession of Gallipoli, and defend it against the whole force of the Byzantine Empire. The death of Roger de Flor, and the captivity of Beranger d'Entenza, made it necessary to reorganize the government of the army. Rocafort was elected commander-in-chief, with a standing council of twelve officers. The seal of the army bore the inscription, "Seal of the Frank army in Macedonia". Four standards were borne before its ranks. One in honour of St Peter, which was planted on the ramparts of Gallipoli, others bearing the arms of the King of Sicily, the arms of Aragon, and the figure of St George, accompanied the troops in their expeditions to collect plunder. The few ships that remained were sunk off the entrance of the port, to obstruct an attack by sea, and a corps of Turkish light cavalry was hired to assist in foraging. The Emperor Michael had sent forward a body of troops to observe Gallipoli, until he arrived in person to besiege the Catalans. The first exploit of the Grand Company was to march out and attack this army of observation. But the Catalans, on account of their inferiority in numbers, abandoned the usual tactics of the age, and instead of dividing their army into an advanced guard, centre, and reserve, drew up their force in two bodies, placing the cavalry on the left wing, and the infantry on the right. The cavalry charged the Byzantine horse, and were met by the Greeks and Alans with a bold front; but they sustained the shock of the Spaniards only for a moment, and then fled in complete confusion, leaving their infantry exposed. The Catalan infantry then rushed forward to attack the main body of the Greeks, as they were drawn up on the slope of a hill, making a

gallant appearance with their well-dressed lines and glittering armour. Each Spanish soldier seemed to fear that his companion might be intimidated by the immense number of the enemy, though he felt no fear himself. A simultaneous cry of "Aragon! Aragon! St George! St George!" rose from the whole line as it quickened its step to close in combat. The Greeks made a feeble resistance; the Catalans took a bloody vengeance on their flying battalions until nightfall, when they returned and pillaged the Byzantine camp.

When the Turkish mercenaries were perfectly drilled into obeying the Catalan signals, the Grand Company marched to attack the imperial army under the command of the Emperor Michael. Three days' march brought them to Imeri, near Apros. The Catalans were rejoiced to hear that Apros was a strong fortress, for they said the battle would be short, since the Greeks would soon think of seeking safety within its walls. The Byzantine army consisted of Alan and Turkopul cavalry, of Macedonian and Thracian infantry, of Asiatic troops, of Vallachians, and mercenaries of other nations. It was drawn up in five divisions, and Michael placed himself at the head of the reserve. The Grand Company was formed in four divisions; the heavy cavalry occupied the centre, the Almogavars composed the main body and the reserve, while the auxiliary Turks were placed on the wings.

The battle was commenced by the Alans and Turkopuls, who formed the left wing of the imperial army. The terrible array of the chivalry of Aragon and Catalonia palsied the courage of these veteran mercenaries, and they retreated before its charge. Their retreat was ascribed by the Greeks to treachery, and was a pretext for every coward to think of his own safety. The fact is, that order and discipline did not, in the army of Michael, replace the want of a sense of honour and of the feelings of patriotism, while none had any confidence in the military talents of the emperor. The native legions could not be expected to fight better than the mercenaries, who had been honoured as the flower of the army. Squadron after squadron yielded to the Spanish lance, and battalion after battalion fled before the long swords of the Almogavars, until the battle was irretrievably lost. The Emperor Michael made a spirited attempt to stop the confusion. He led the reserve up bravely to meet the victorious Spaniards, and charged with his lance into the thickest ranks of the assailants. He was soon struck down by the pike of a powerful Catalan sailor, who had gained a splendid suit of armour and a superb charger in the preceding victory. Beranger, the Catalan, was himself nearly slain by the lance of Michael, whose attendants were thereby enabled to close round the emperor, carry him off the field, and transport him to Didymoteichos, where the native troops rallied round their prince. The Catalans, after their victory, made an attempt on Apros, but that fortress repulsed their attack, and they retired to Gallipoli, in order to place the immense plunder they had collected in the Byzantine camp in security.

The victory of Apros rendered the Catalans masters of all the open country on the Thracian shore of the Propontis. They inflicted a dreadful punishment on Redestos, because it had been the scene of the murder of their envoys. Muntaner confesses that they put to the sword men, women, and children, in indiscriminate massacre. The situation of Redestos being more central for the foraging operations of the Grand Company than Gallipoli, it was converted into their headquarters, while Gallipoli was held as their citadel. Muntaner, who acted as secretary-at-war, was appointed its commandant, and intrusted with the care of the treasures, magazines, and arsenal of the army. Rocafort now increased the number of Turks in his army, by obtaining a reinforcement of two thousand men from the tribes under Aïdin. He was subsequently joined by eight hundred cavalry and two thousand infantry, under Isaac Melek, a descendant of the Seljouk sultans, who was slain soon after; but his Turks remained the faithful allies of the Catalans in all the vicissitudes of their fortunes. The Byzantine government was now so unpopular among the Christians in Asia that many Greeks joined the Turks, and shaved their heads, in order to enter into the Catalan service as Turkopuls.

The Catalans burned with an inextinguishable desire to avenge the assassination of Roger de Flor. They learned with satisfaction that the Alans had separated themselves from the Greek

army, and were plundering on their own account; but a rumour soon arrived that the troops of George had resolved to transfer their services to the King of Bulgaria. No time was therefore to be lost. A body of Catalan cavalry, under the guidance of a corps of Turkopuls, set out to hunt down the Alans, whom they overtook near the Bulgarian frontier. A bloody battle ensued; George, the assassin of Roger de Flor, was slain, with the best part of his followers, and their wives and children were captured in their camp. This bold enterprise increased the reputation of the Catalan arms; for these Alans had long been regarded as the best soldiers in the East, and the two parties had met on equal terms.

The Grand Company plundered Thrace for two years without meeting any opposition in the field. The Emperor Michael occupied Didymoteichos, Tzurulos, and Adrianople, with strong garrisons, but made no attempt to defend the country near the Propontis. City after city was taken, plundered, and burned to the ground; the fruit-trees were cut down, and the vineyards destroyed; men, women, and children, were carried off to Gallipoli, which became one of the great slave-marts for Asia Minor. In one of these expeditions they massacred about five thousand cultivators of the soil in the immediate vicinity of Constantinople. For two years the Catalan host lived at free quarters, in the midst of wealth and plenty. They built no houses, they cultivated no private estates; what they wanted they seized where it was to be found, careless if they reduced the richest districts to the condition of a desert. They lived by the sword alone; and no volume could record all their valiant deeds, their devastating forays, or their infamous cruelties.

The Emperor Andronicus vainly attempted to negotiate the retreat of the Catalans; his untimely pretensions, and the penury of his treasury, rendered his negotiations abortive. The Grand Company insisted on payment of arrears, on the release of all prisoners without ransom, on the restoration of the ships captured with d'Entenza, and that the emperor should pay them for the booty which they were unable to carry away. Andronicus, finding his own negotiations and the military operations of his subjects equally unsuccessful, again hired a Genoese fleet to attack the Spaniards by sea; but the naval warfare produced no result, and the Genoese concluded a separate peace.

The fame of the Catalans resounded through all Europe. Frederic of Sicily became eager to revive the connection with them which he had been so anxious to dissolve some years before. Fernand, the Infant of Majorca, arrived at Gallipoli to take the command of the Grand Company as Lieutenant-general of the King of Sicily. The Spaniards were now divided into three parties, who formed separate bands. Rocafort, who had been elected commander-in-chief, was at the head of the most numerous division, including the Almogavars and the Turkish auxiliaries. D'Entenza, who had been released by the Genoese at the request of the King of Aragon, had returned to the army, and was now the leader of the Aragonese nobles; while a third body followed the standard of Ximenes d'Arenos. The Emperor Andronicus had laid waste the country between Selymbria and Constantinople. No man could venture to till the ground within range of the Catalan forays, so that it became necessary for the Grand Company to seek new quarters. The arrival of the Infant Fernand enabled the army to move without the three parties coining to open hostilities.

It was resolved to march into Macedonia and establish themselves in some rich district which the evils of war had not yet reached. The army, which consisted of about six thousand Spaniards and three thousand Turks, moved in two divisions. The main body, under Rocafort, marched a day's journey in advance of the second division under d'Entenza and Ximenes. The Infant Fernand placed himself in the second division. The march was pursued with order for several days, but one day the main body delayed moving from its quarters until noon; and the second division, having passed the night in a spot where nothing was to be found, reached the quarters of the main body before they were completely evacuated. A dispute took place between the rear-guard of Rocafort and the advanced guard of the second division; and d'Entenza, who hastened to the front to arrest the disorder, was attacked and slain by the brother of Rocafort.

Ximenes d'Arenos was compelled to fly for safety to a Greek fortress in the neighbourhood. Rocafort then persuaded the army to refuse acknowledging Fernand as lieutenant-general of the King of Sicily, but it offered to elect him commander-in-chief. Muntaner joined the army a short time after this revolution. He had embarked the stores of the army, with two thousand women, in the ships which had been collected for the expedition. Muntaner now resigned his command, and attached himself to the Infant Fernand, who refused to violate his engagements to the King of Sicily, and therefore quitted the Grand Company. Rocafort continued his march, but being unable to take the town of Christopolis, where the army had proposed to pass the winter, he was compelled to proceed and occupy the peninsula of Cassandria.

The operations of the Catalans in the year 1309 were not very successful. The fortifications of Thessalonica were found in good order, and manned by a strong garrison. They were repulsed in an attempt to storm the city, and when they would fain have retraced their steps in order to regain their old quarters in Thrace, they were unable to force the pass between the plain of Philippi and Christopolis, through which they had penetrated with considerable loss the preceding year. The position of the Grand Company was growing difficult; and Rocafort, who was a mere mercenary, began to open negotiations with the French admiral, Thibaut de Sipoy, in order to induce the Spaniards to recognize Charles of Valois, the hereditary enemy of their nation, as their chief. But the French admiral was meaner and more faithless than the treacherous mercenary. He seized Rocafort, sailed away to Italy, and delivered his prisoner to Robert, king of Naples, whom he had often defeated in the field. The house of Anjou was a revengeful race; Rocafort was cast into a dungeon and starved to death. When the perfidy of the French was known, and the Spaniards found they had lost their leader, they massacred all their colonels for having connived at the treachery of Sipoy. They elected new leaders, and, marching forward, passed the winter in Thessaly. In the year 1310 they quitted the Byzantine territory, and entered the service of the Duke of Athens. They found the Vallachians of Thessaly a very different race of men from the peasants of Thrace, and even the Byzantine officers in the mountain districts of Macedonia offered a firmer resistance than the Catalans had previously encountered.

Walter de Brienne, duke of Athens, quarrelled with the Catalans, and perished in the battle of the Cephissus on the 15th of March 1311. The conquest of Attica followed, which has been narrated in another volume. The Turkish auxiliaries returned home after the battle of Cephissus, in order to enjoy the wealth they had amassed in the expedition. The Emperor Andronicus allowed them to pass through the empire unmolested, on condition that they refrained from every act of pillage, and they reached the shore of the Hellespont, escorted by a corps of three thousand Greek cavalry. The imperial government could never act either with honesty or boldness. A plot was framed to disarm the Turks as they were waiting for vessels to transport them over to Asia; but the Greeks were now so universally distrusted that their plots had little chance of succeeding, for everybody suspected their treachery and watched their proceedings. The Turks learned their danger, surprised a neighbouring fort, and commenced plundering the country. The Emperor Michael attacked them with the Greek army, but defeat was his invariable companion. Khalil, the Turkish general, was a soldier formed in the severe discipline of the Catalan camp; his superior generalship and the perfect tactics of his troops gained a complete victory. The camp, baggage, and imperial crown of Michael became the spoil of the conquerors. Khalil gleaned the remains of the Catalan ravages.

Philes Paleologos, a man remarkable for his virtue, afflicted by the sufferings of his fellow-countrymen, solicited the emperor for permission to serve against the Turks. Andronicus, though he placed more confidence in his piety than in the military operations he proposed, conferred on him the office of Protostrator, and authorized him to levy an army. The success of Philes proves that the ruin of the empire was caused by the folly of Andronicus and the corruption of the government. Philes enrolled only veteran Greek soldiers, and selected officers of experience to birth and court favour.



The most important conquest of the time, however, was that of Rhodes, by the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem, both from its durability and from the renown of the conquerors. The knights had settled in Cyprus after they had been expelled from Acre, but they were soon discontented to remain as vassals of the King of Cyprus. They aspired to form a sovereign state, but it was not easy to make any conquests from the Infidels in a position which they could hope to maintain for any length of time. They therefore solicited permission from the Pope to turn their arms against the Greeks. His Holiness applauded their Christian zeal, and bestowed on them innumerable blessings and indulgences, besides nine thousand ducats to aid their enterprise. Under the pretext of a crusade for the recovery of Christ's tomb, the knights collected a force with which they besieged Rhodes. So great was their contempt for the Greek emperor that they sent an embassy to Constantinople, requiring Andronicus to withdraw his garrisons, and cede the island and its dependencies to them as feudatories, offering to supply him with a subsidiary force of three hundred cavalry. Andronicus dismissed the ambassadors, and sent an army to raise the siege; but his troops were defeated, and the knights took the city of Rhodes on the 15th August 1310. As sovereigns of this beautiful island, they were long the bulwark of Christian Europe against the Turkish power; and the memory of the chivalrous youth who for successive ages found an early tomb at this verge of the Christian world, will long shed a romantic colouring on the history of Rhodes. They sustained the declining glory of a state of society that was hastening to become a vision of the past; they were the heroes of a class of which the Norse sea-kings had been the demigods. The little realm they governed as an independent state consisted of Rhodes, with the neighbouring islands of Kos, Kalymnos, Syme, Leros, Nisyros, Telos, and Chalke; on the opposite continent they possessed the classic city of Halicarnassus, and several strong forts, of which the picturesque ruins still overhang the sea.

The Emperor Andronicus II displayed the same want of sound judgment and right feeling in his private that he did in his public conduct, and his latter days were embittered by family disputes caused by his own folly and injustice. His second wife, Irene of Montferrat, persecuted him with demands to dismember the empire, in order to form appanages for her children. Andronicus resisted her solicitations at the expense of a quarrel, and Irene long lived separated from him at Thessalonica. The Emperor Michael allowed his father to control the arrangements of his family and regulate his private actions. Michael's eldest son was named Andronicus. He was the third emperor of the name who occupied the Byzantine throne, but he is known in history generally as Andronicus the Younger. When a child, he was an especial favourite with his grandfather, who directed his education. That education was undoubtedly a mixture of unwise indulgence and capricious restraint. The young Andronicus grew up a dissipated youth, and his debauched habits produced a terrible tragedy in his family. He was informed that his favourite mistress admitted another lover, and he employed bravos to waylay his rival. It happened that on that very night his own brother Manuel hastened quickly to the lady's house, where he expected to find Andronicus. The assassins mistook the despot for the lover, and Manuel was murdered on the spot. The dreadful news reached their father Michael at Thessalonica, where he was residing in a declining state of health. Anguish soon terminated his life.

The young Andronicus was now heir-apparent to the empire, if the expression be admissible in a state without a fixed order of hereditary succession; but the murder of Manuel changed the affection of the old emperor into implacable hatred, and it was generally thought that the reigning sovereign had the power of naming his successor. The Emperor Michael VIII had introduced the custom, that a new oath of allegiance should be taken whenever a change occurred in the order of succession. When Michael, the son of Andronicus II, died, the new oath was administered in the name of Andronicus II alone, and did not contain that of Andronicus III, who was the direct heir. It also contained a clause promising implicit obedience to whomsoever he might declare emperor. These circumstances indicated that he intended to exclude his grand-son from the throne; nor was he long in selecting a favourite on whom it was supposed he intended to confer the imperial title. The choice was marked by the singular perverseness which characterized many of his most important acts. He had compelled his

second son Constantine to marry the daughter of his favourite minister, Muzalon. The incidents of this union were both ridiculous and disgraceful. The lady had been destined to be the bride of Theodore, the emperor's brother, when it was discovered that she had already indulged in illicit intercourse with one of her relations, and would have presented the imperial family very prematurely with an intruder. Theodore broke off the match; but the emperor, moved by his attachment to the father, and by the penitence of the fair sinner, subsequently compelled his own son Constantine to marry her. The young prince thought himself entitled to have a bastard as well as his wife. The youth was named Michael Katharos, and became so great a favourite with his grandfather, the Emperor Andronicus, that he showed a disposition to adopt him as the heir to the empire, but the representations of his ministers prevented this act of folly.

The government of the old emperor was now generally unpopular; and as he was suspected of being anxious to prevent his grandson Andronicus from succeeding to the throne, the cause of the prince was made the rallying-point of the discontented. The younger Andronicus was a lover of pleasure, extravagant in his expenses, careless in his disposition, but possessing a fund of good-humour that rendered him personally extremely popular. Nor was he by any means destitute of ability and courage. A party formed itself round the young prince, who was treated by his grandfather with unjust severity. He was prohibited from wearing the dress of the heir-apparent, and not allowed to visit the palace. The most distinguished partisans of Andronicus the younger were Cantacuzenos the historian, a man of the highest rank, of extensive connections among the Byzantine aristocracy, of great wealth, ability, and military as well as literary accomplishments, but devoured by ambition, and overflowing with cunning and self-conceit; Synadenos, a man of equal rank and talent; and Sir Janni, a man of superior boldness and ability, but with want of fixed principles and steady conduct that gave him the character of a political adventurer. With these it is necessary to mention Apokaukos, who was the ablest administrator and financier of the party. The intrigues of the partisans of the young prince did not escape the attention of the emperor's ministers, who would, doubtless, have maintained order by arresting the most dangerous, had not Andronicus been more anxious to punish his grandson, by depriving him of all chance of succeeding to the empire, than to prevent a rebellion. He now resolved to bring the prince to a public trial; and on Palm Sunday, 1321, the young Andronicus was unexpectedly summoned to the palace of Blachern. His partisans comprehended that the crisis of their own fate, as well as that of the prince, must be decided before sunset. Cantacuzenos and Synadenos accordingly assembled their followers, and filled the palace with a force that so completely intimidated both the judges and the emperor that the prince was pardoned, and a feigned reconciliation took place between the grandfather and the grandson. Andronicus II resolved to remove Cantacuzenos and Synadenos from his grandson's society, for he justly considered them as the authors of the plots against his government. Cantacuzenos was named governor of Thessaly, and Synadenos was sent to Prilapos. These officers collected as many troops as they were able, under the pretence of repairing to their posts; and when their levies were completed, they marched to Adrianople, where the young Andronicus joined them, and raised the standard of rebellion.

The prince was popular; he gained the people by proclaiming that the province of Thrace was exempt from some of the most onerous taxes, and his mercenaries enabled him to advance against Constantinople. But his soldiers, who cared little for political questions, pillaged the inhabitants wherever they passed; bands of robbers began to lay waste the villages which had escaped destruction from the Catalans and the Turks, and the collectors of the public revenue, availing themselves of these disorders, embezzled the money in their hands. Cantacuzenos says that the young Andronicus was averse to march against his grandfather, fearing lest his army should storm Constantinople. In order, therefore, to prevent his grandfather from being dethroned, he wrote secretly to the old emperor, to advise that measures might be concerted to turn aside the first ardour of his own troops. The double-dealing and treachery of the leaders of both parties render the circumstance not improbable, and nothing can be a better apology for the apathy of the Greeks concerning the fate of their government. But their cowardice in failing to assert their inalienable rights as citizens to a just administration of their civil and ecclesiastical

affairs is not so easily explained, for it proceeded from the complication of causes which had produced national degradation as well as weakness. The Emperor Andronicus II, seeing that it was not in his power to resist the military force his grandson had brought into the field, resolved to yield to the principal demands of the rebels, and recommence the contest by a war of intrigue. A treaty was concluded at Rhesion, where the prince had established his head-quarters, by which the rights of Andronicus the younger to the succession of the empire were recognized, and he was invested with the government of Thrace from Selymbria to Christopolis as his appanage.

This peace was of very short duration. The prince carried on his debaucheries at Adrianople, unrestrained either by prudence or decency. He was soon in want of money to supply his extravagance and reward his mercenaries, for he had freed the people in his appanage from the most profitable taxes to gain their support to his rebellion, and he did not now venture to annul his concession. An attempt which he made to seduce the wife of Sir Janni caused that able and daring leader to return to the service of the emperor, and point out to the revengeful grandfather the advantages he could derive from the immediate renewal of the war. The exactions of the prince's troops, and the intrigues of Sir Janni and the emperor, induced several cities of Thrace to desert the party of the young Andronicus. Heracleia received an imperial garrison, and the prince, finding that his cause was losing ground, assembled his army and laid siege to the city in November 1321. His troops had clamoured for the renewal of the war during the summer; they were averse to keep the field in winter, so that, when the attack on Heracleia was defeated, the prince marched up to the walls of Constantinople. He had now few partisans in the capital, and he was soon compelled to retire into winter-quarters at Didymoteichos. In the meantime Sir Janni re-established the emperor's authority in Apros, Garellas, Redestos, Bizya, and Sergentzion, and laid siege to Selymbria. The unpopularity and avarice of Andronicus did more for the rebels than the military talents of Cantacuzenos and Synadenos, or the courage of the prince. In the campaign of 1322 they recovered all they had lost during the winter, chiefly by the desertion of the emperor's troops. Thessalonica declared in favour of young Andronicus, and his uncle Constantine, whom the emperor was supposed to be on the point of declaring heir to the empire, and of investing with the imperial title, was made prisoner. The young Andronicus on this occasion showed that, with all his easy good-humour, there was some leaven of the malignant nature of the house of Paleologos in his heart. The Despot Constantine was treated with great cruelty. After submitting to many insults, he was let down into a cistern at Didymoteichos, and allowed to remain in this damp chamber, cut in the rock, for some time, before his nephew would order him to be transferred to a suitable place of confinement. Neither the emperor nor young Andronicus possessed the talents necessary for conducting the civil war; and while the ministers of the emperor were afraid of treason, the counsellors of the prince were embarrassed by the indiscipline of the rebel troops: both were more attentive to their own private interests than to those of their masters or of the empire. A new treaty of peace was concluded at Epibates in July 1322, which removed some of the causes of dissatisfaction to both parties. The troops of young Andronicus were provided for by a donative, and by the ratification of the grants of land they had received in Thrace. The prince was guaranteed an annual pension from the imperial treasury of thirty-six thousand byzants, and the emperor resumed the whole civil and fiscal administration of the appanage conceded to his grandson by the treaty of Rhesion.

This second peace existed for five years. It would have been difficult, even for prudent friends and honourable counsellors, to have established a sincere reconciliation between the elder and younger Andronicus, but both were in reality surrounded by selfish intriguers, and guided by bad passions. The apparent calm at court was marked by two events, which indicate the operation of different causes. On the 2d of February 1325, Andronicus the younger received the imperial crown. This may be considered a proof that the ministers of the old emperor had persuaded him to stifle all his resentment, and lay aside his schemes for excluding his grandson from the throne. But in the following year the two emperors allowed the city of Prusa to be taken by the Ottoman Turks, without either making an effort to relieve it. This fact seems to

prove that neither could allow his best officers and troops to succour this important city, lest his colleague should take advantage of their absence. Intrigues followed intrigues. The old emperor was ready to avail himself of the assistance either of the Servians or the Bulgarians against his grandson, though he made no exertions to defend the empire against the Turks. The young emperor, while he pretended to be eager to attack the Mohammedans, was really forming an alliance with the King of Bulgaria to oppose his grandfather.

The malignant old Andronicus could not learn that the coronation of his grandson had put an end to all chance of depriving him of the succession. The young man continued his extravagance and debauchery. After many acts of violence on both sides, the old emperor named a commission, consisting of eighteen ecclesiastics and six senators, who proceeded to Rhegion, where the younger Andronicus had taken up his temporary residence, to state articles of accusation against him, and hear his defence. These charges were, that he had unlawfully appropriated to his private use large sums of money belonging to the public treasury; that the expenses of his household were extravagant; that he had driven several governors named by the emperor from their posts, and replaced them by officers of his own nomination, in violation of all law; and that his debauchery and vicious conduct threatened society with dissolution, for he had assailed the honour of his aunt Simonida, the widow of the Krall of Servia, who had taken the veil. Cantacuzenos says much concerning the calumnies and perjuries, which owed their existence to the instigations of the elder Andronicus, but not a syllable concerning the accusation of incest that was officially brought forward against the younger. He omits entirely the charges which were made against his patron, though he mentions that they were read in the assembly at Rhegion; and he endeavours to confuse the judgment of his readers by recording the vague declamation of Andronicus the younger in praise of his own virtues. The violence and indecency with which the old emperor attacked his grandson threw discredit on his cause. The majority of the commissioners were anxious to avoid a civil war, which any attempt to change the order of succession was sure to produce, at a time when the Turks, Servians, and Bulgarians, were all ready to take advantage of any opportunity to dismember the empire. As the report of the commissioners was favourable to the younger Andronicus, the emperor refused to receive it. He ordered his grand-son's name to be omitted in the public prayers, and when the Patriarch Isaiah refused to transmit this order to the clergy, he was confined as a prisoner in the monastery of Mangana.

The young emperor could no longer avoid an appeal to arms. The civil war was renewed under circumstances extremely unfavourable to the old emperor, whose conduct rendered it inevitable. The people were universally disgusted with his despotism and injustice, and the young Andronicus seems to have expected that they would have immediately admitted him into Constantinople. Finding that this could not be effected, he hastened into Macedonia in the midst of winter, leaving the Protostrator Synadenos to blockade the capital. Liberal promises of reduced taxation, and the assurance that all arrears due to the imperial treasury should be cancelled, insured his entry into most of the towns, and rendered his march a triumph. Thessalonica, Edessa, Kastoria, Beroea, Pelagonia, Achrida, and Deabolis, opened their gates. The Krall of Servia, who consulted his own interest, refused to assist the officers of the reigning emperor, and took advantage of the confusion to gain possession of the frontier fortress of Prosakon. Strumbitza and Melenikon were the only strong places that remained in the possession of the partisans of Andronicus II.

While these events happened, Synadenos gained a complete victory over the garrison of Constantinople, on its making an attempt to raise the blockade. When the news of this victory reached young Andronicus, he hastened to the army before the walls of the capital. Treasonable assistance was soon secured, and on the night of Monday, 23d of May 1328, a party of soldiers scaled the walls; the garrison joined in proclaiming Andronicus III; the gates were thrown open, and the young emperor marched directly to the imperial palace to assure his grandfather, that though he had ceased to govern, he would be treated with all the honour due to a sovereign

prince. The young emperor then performed his devotions in the Church of St Sophia, and reinstated his friend, the Patriarch Isaiah, in the government of the church.

This conquest of Constantinople was attended with few disorders; the palace of the grand logothetes Metochites, the favourite minister of the dethroned emperor, was the only house that was pillaged. The old emperor continued to reside in the palace with a pension of twenty-four thousand byzants; but he was forsaken by all his flatterers, and few pitied him or regretted his fall. Two years after the taking of Constantinople, Andronicus III was attacked by a serious illness, and his ministers feared lest his grand-father might again recover the throne. To prevent the possibility of this event, Synadenos compelled the old man to become a monk, and to sign a declaration that he would never again mount the throne, nor pretend to dispose of the empire, in case of his grandson's death. Andronicus II had already lost the use of his eyes, and this, his last public act, was signed with two crosses, one in red ink as emperor, and another in black as a humble monk. The Patriarch Isaiah sent to congratulate him on his change of life : the petulant old man regarded the message as an insult, and sent back some violent and probably not unjust reproaches to the head of the church. His name continued to be mentioned in the public prayers as the most religious and most Christian basileus, the monk Antony. One evening, after a literary party at which his daughter Simonida was present, he was suddenly seized with an illness which soon terminated his life. He expired on the 13th of February 1332, in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

Andronicus II was a man who, with few personal vices, possessed many of the worst qualities of a sovereign. He had capacity enough to direct the whole civil and ecclesiastical business of the empire, but was destitute of the judgment necessary to direct it well. He rarely took a right step, and never at the proper time; so that his petulant pride and pedantic despotism proved more ruinous to the emperor than the worst vices of many of his predecessors. His ecclesiastical bigotry especially served as an instrument of Providence for effecting the ruin and degradation of the orthodox Eastern Church, and of the Greek race. That the Greeks allowed themselves to be so long misled and oppressed by so worthless and weak a sovereign, may perhaps be accepted as a proof that the nation was sunk in selfishness and bigotry like the emperor.

### Sect. III

#### REIGN OF ANDRONCUS III THE YOUNGER

A.D.1328-1341.

The private character of Andronicus III had some singular features, which excite our curiosity to learn more than history has preserved concerning his personal opinions. His health was weak, but he displayed a restless activity in his amusements; his talents were considerable, but he was indolent and careless in transacting public business; his thoughtless disposition and easy temper enabled him to banish from his mind the memory of the crimes with which his youthful passions had tortured his own family, and the misery they had inflicted on the whole empire. Instead of tormenting him with remorse, the fearful events of his life appeared to be the work of destiny, and he consoled himself alike for his crimes and his misfortunes by a faith that diminished his own personal responsibility. His indolence induced him to confide the direction of public business to his ministers; but his cynicism prevented his placing implicit trust even in his favourites, and his abilities enabled him to see through the selfish motives of his most obsequious partisans. The condition of Greek society, sinking into a state of political weakness, moral degradation, and military incapacity, and daily suffering every evil from all the

neighbouring nations, might have persuaded men, more virtuous and pious than Andronicus III, that the rapid diminution of the Greek race, which was taking place before his eyes, was to be directly attributed to a judgment of God.

The opinions as well as the indolence of Andronicus gave him a contempt for the ceremonials that formed an important part of the emperor's duty. He abolished many courtly pageants, and absented himself even from some ecclesiastical ceremonies that had been regarded by his predecessors as necessary exhibitions of imperial dignity. At the same time, he astonished the courtiers by mingling with the people, and by admitting every subject, without distinction, to his audience-chamber. In the opinion of the staunch conservatives of Constantinople, the changes he allowed in ceremonials, and the alterations he tolerated in dress, foreshadowed the ruin of the empire more surely than the lavish expenditure of the revenue, the incessant devastations of the Bulgarians, Servians, Moguls, Turks, and Albanians, and the corruption in the administration of justice. The only violent passion Andronicus appears to have retained on the throne was his love of hunting; the expense of his establishment was immense; and every suitor who had a boon to ask knew that the surest way of gaining his end was to present the emperor with a well-trained falcon, a noble hound, or an Arabian horse. His love of active exertion, and his eagerness for personal excitement, joined to his contempt for Byzantine etiquette, induced him to take part in the jousts and tournaments which the nobles of Savoy, who accompanied his second wife, the Empress Anne, had introduced at the court of Constantinople. To the amazement of the long-robed senators and courtiers, he rushed into the mêlée without a crown on his helmet, and exposed himself to his opponents without a sign to indicate that, if they respected the emperor, they must spare their blows. With his ministers of state he held little private intercourse. John Cantacuzenos became his prime-minister, and continued to be his personal friend; he alone enjoyed unreserved communication with his master; but Andronicus had discernment enough to perceive that a character so intriguing and false as that of Cantacuzenos could not be thoroughly honest, and he balanced his authority by the power he conferred on Synadenos, Apokaukos, and the Patriarch John of Apri.

The accession of Andronicus III put an end to the civil war; but it brought little relief to the inhabitants of the empire, nor did it arrest the decline of the Greek nation. The emperor was indolent, his prime-minister was vain and incapable, so that no systematic plan was adopted either for reforming the abuses of the internal government or for defending the frontiers. The whole Greek nation, civilians and ecclesiastics, must share the responsibility of the decay of the empire with Andronicus, who really made one great attempt to eradicate the worst social evil of his age. His judgment revealed to him more clearly than to his prime-minister, that the corruption in the administration of justice was the worm which secretly consumed all the national energy; and knowing that, until justice was equitably administered, it would be impossible to reform the public administration, he determined to put an end to the prevailing judicial iniquities. To effect this, he appointed four chief justices, of whom one was a bishop, and these judges were ordered to sit in open court in the Church of St Sophia, and decide all civil suits. The result of this measure affords a fearful picture of the incorrigible degradation of Greek society at this unhappy period. These judges were intrusted with great authority; they were rendered independent by large salaries, and they were compelled to give an oath that they would administer justice impartially, under the sanction of those fearful imprecations which the Greek Church makes use of in order to strengthen the moral feelings by ecclesiastical forms and terrors. Yet Andronicus was soon overwhelmed with proofs that three of his chief justices, including the bishop, made a shameless traffic of their judicial decisions. They were tried and convicted in a solemn tribunal which sate in the Church of St Sophia, from whence their corrupt sentences had issued. The bishop was degraded and incarcerated; and the real cause of the victories of the barbarians, and of the commercial superiority of the Italians, was thus rendered apparent to every reflecting man.

The intrigues of the court fill many pages of the works of Cantacuzenos and Gregoras, but they produced so little change in the troubled current of events, that it is only necessary to

notice that the reign of Andronicus was not free from those court conspiracies for seizing the throne which were an incurable intermittent disease of the Byzantine despotism. Sir Janni ended his many plots by a rebellion, which so alarmed the emperor and his prime-minister that they sent a courtier to assassinate him. The Despot Demetrius formed a plot to seize his nephew's throne, which proved abortive; and Phrantzes Paleologos, the assassin of Sir Janni, hatched another conspiracy, but he had not inherited the great talents and indefatigable activity of the man he had murdered. As Andronicus lived among a small circle, the ladies of his court exercised a degree of influence which might have proved highly injurious, as it certainly increased the number of party intrigues. But the chief ladies of the court seem to have possessed more virtue and quite as much talent as the men. Indeed, Theodore, the mother of Cantacuzenos, whose connections, rank, and wealth gave her great influence, was evidently superior in ability to her son.

Andronicus had little intercourse with the courts of Western Europe; but at the commencement of his reign an embassy from Louis of Bavaria, the Emperor of Germany, visited Constantinople to demand a sum of money which it would seem had been promised for some military operations against the house of Anjou. The greediness of the Bavarians astonished even the Greek courtiers, who were themselves insatiable; but the want of money in the imperial treasury was great, and the services of Louis the Bavarian were no longer wanted, so his ambassadors were dismissed with diplomatic evasions. Cantacuzenos boasts that he frustrated the demands of the Germans by offering to furnish their sovereign with a corps of auxiliary troops.

The first campaign of Andronicus was against his brother-in-law, Michael, king of Bulgaria, who invaded the empire and advanced as far as Didymoteichos, but was compelled to retire when the emperor took the field. The war was distinguished by no important action, and at the end of the following year hostilities were suspended and peace concluded under the mediation of Xenia, the mother of Andronicus, and of the Queen of Bulgaria. The war which took place after the death of Michael, and the hostilities which Andronicus carried on with Stephen Dushan and the Servians, do not require to be detailed.

The political importance of the reign of Andronicus III in European history can be more correctly appreciated by comparing it with that of Orkhan, the sovereign of the Ottoman Turks, than by reviewing all the events of his desultory wars. To his contemporaries Andronicus appeared as the powerful and wealthy emperor of an extensive but ill-organised state, and of a numerous but degenerated people; while Orkhan seemed nothing more than the able and active leader of a confederacy of nomad tribes, and the receiver of the tribute of a few recently-conquered Greek cities. To us Andronicus has dwindled into a mere name in Byzantine chronology, while Orkhan stands forward in the world's history as one of the few lawgivers who created a nation and founded an empire by his own legislative enactments. The legislation of Orkhan belongs to a later period of his reign; but the Ottoman Turks already displayed more systematic habits and a higher sense of the value of order as well as justice, than the Seljouk tribes.

The manner employed by the Ottomans to gain possession of the large, populous, and well-fortified cities, inhabited by wealthy but unwarlike Greeks, was not unlike that employed by the Dorians in the early ages of Greece. Indeed, it is almost the only way by which the courage and perseverance of a small force can conquer art and numbers. Instead of attempting to form a regular blockade of the city against which they directed their operations, and thereby compelling the inhabitants to exert all their unbroken power to deliver themselves from the attack, the Ottoman Turks established some strong posts in the vicinity of the city, ravaged the fields, carried off the cattle and slaves, and interrupted the commercial communications of the inhabitants. The devastation of the country and the insecurity of the roads gradually raised the price of provisions, and caused emigration and famine. In this way, Nicaea, the cradle of the Greek church, and which had been for two generations the capital of the Greek empire, was

closely blockaded; and in order to prevent its surrender, Andronicus must not only have thrown large supplies of provisions into the city, but have undertaken a military expedition to drive the besiegers from their fortified posts. This would not have been a very difficult operation, for it was easy to open communications between Constantinople and Nicaea by Kios and the lake Askanius, and in that way concentrate an overwhelming force at Nicaea. To prevent any military operation of this kind, Orkhan resolved to transfer the seat of war to the neighbourhood of Constantinople.

In the spring of 1329 the Ottomans had passed Nicomedia, and threatened to lay waste all the open country as far as the Asiatic suburbs of the capital. The people of Constantinople were alarmed for their property; the danger of Nicaea was forgotten, and the emperor was compelled to take the field in person, with some precipitation. Two thousand veteran troops could alone be spared from the garrison of the capital; the rest of the army was hastily collected from the militia in the Thracian cities, whose discipline had been relaxed during the civil wars, and who were now brigaded together without much skill. A numerous fleet of boats transported the troops over to Skutari, and attended their march as if to secure an easy mode of retreat. The emperor led his army by short marches along the gulf of Nicomedia, and on the morning of the third day he reached Pelekanon, where he found Orkhan encamped with about eight thousand men in a secure position on the hills. A council of war decided that it would be imprudent to advance farther, but advised the emperor to offer battle to the Turks next day.

Orkhan, who felt no desire to risk the success of his operations against Nicaea in a pitched battle, kept his station on the slopes of the Bithynian hills, where ravines and broken ground enabled his light cavalry to avoid the charge of the Byzantine men-at-arms, but from whence they could descend and skirmish with the Greeks. The position of Orkhan might have been turned without difficulty, and the emperor might have crossed the gulf with his fleet, and taken the shortest road to Nicaea, which he could have reached long before the Turks; but neither Andronicus nor his prime-minister Cantacuzenos were capable of planning or executing a combined series of military movements. After a day spent in desultory engagements, the emperor resolved to withdraw his army into the camp at Pelekanon; and Cantacuzenos recommended that, as there was no danger of the Turks advancing any farther, it would be as well to lead the army back to Constantinople. As the Greeks were retiring into their camp, the Turks pressed on their rear-guard, and the emperor, in repulsing their attack, received a wound in the thigh. Both armies then retired into their camps. Unfortunately there was no general capable of taking the emperor's place in the Greek camp. The soldiers had no confidence in Cantacuzenos, on whom the chief command devolved, and he was unable to preserve order during the night. A report was spread among the soldiers that the emperor's wound was dangerous, perhaps mortal; the recent levies attempted to escape on board the fleet; a body of Turks, stationed to watch the Greek army, perceived the confusion, and attacked the fugitives; a panic spread through the camp; the emperor was embarked in a small boat, and escaped to Philokrene, a maritime fort on the road to Constantinople. It was necessary to commence an immediate retreat, and the army was separated into four divisions, which marched towards the neighbouring forts of Niketiates, Dakybiza, Ritzion, and Philokrene. Morning showed the Turkish army the camp at Pelekanon completely deserted, and the time they spent in plundering it enabled three of the divisions of the flying army to effect their retreat in safety. A body of Ottoman cavalry, however, hung on the rear of the division that marched to Philokrene, which must have suffered severely in this disgraceful retreat, for two officers of high rank were slain. The Emperor Andronicus sailed to Constantinople without making an effort to repair the honour of his arms. He consoled himself for his disgrace by reflecting that the real loss of the imperial army in killed and wounded was inconsiderable, and that he would gain credit for having saved the property of the Constantinopolitans, as summer was now so far advanced that the nomad Turks would retire with their plunder to their pastoral encampments on the Bithynian Olympus, leaving Orkhan to watch the siege of Nicaea.



The battle of Pelekanon was the first engagement in which the Emperor of the Greeks had encountered the ottoman sultan. Insignificant as it really was, its moral effect was incalculable; the heavy-armed and disciplined Greeks had fled before the light-armed and irregular Turks; and the spirit of the Greek emperor and of the Greek nation was broken. The capitulation of Nicaea, which Cantacuzenos passes over in silence, took place in the following year (1330). Its conditions were remarkable. Every person who desired to quit the city was allowed to retire with all his movable property. Orkhan consented to allow the Greeks to transport their ecclesiastical archives and sacred relics to Constantinople, and adopted effectual means for insuring the execution of every article of the capitulation. The Greeks acquired confidence in the justice as well as the power of his administration, and few of the inhabitants of Nicaea availed themselves of the permission to emigrate. The municipal constitution of the city was again called into active operation as a principle of government, and the inhabitants were relieved from the oppressive centralisation of the Byzantine system which treated the empire as a fiscal domain, and every magistrate as little more than a fiscal agent. The Ottoman Turks were still few in number, simple in their habits, and restrained in their power by their rivalry with the neighbouring Seljouk princes; so that the condition of the Greeks under the government of Orkhan was better than under the imperial sway; their taxes were lighter, and they were secure from the ravages of hostile invaders.

After the taking of Nicaea, Orkhan besieged and captured Kios (Ghiumlek), which served as its port Nicomedia was closely watched, and the harvest of its inhabitants destroyed; but Andronicus in person supplied the city with provisions, and a treaty of peace, which he concluded with the sultan, delayed its fall. The principal object of this treaty appears to have been to secure the property of the citizens of Constantinople on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus from devastation. Cantacuzenos mentions that Orkhan engaged not to molest the few Greeks who were still subjects of the emperor in Asia Minor, but he omits to notice the concessions by which this boon was purchased. At all events, the peace was not of long duration, and Nicomedia surrendered to Orkhan about the commencement of the year 1338. Orkhan also made an attempt to commence his system of blockade by seizing forts in the vicinity of Constantinople, both in Europe and Asia, but he was not yet able to succeed in so great an enterprise.

The danger to which his capital was exposed induced Andronicus to pay some attention to his fleet; but the measures he adopted only increased the disorder in the imperial administration. Apokaukos was appointed grand-duke or high admiral, on condition that he expended one hundred thousand byzants in fitting out the fleet. That wily financier not only fulfilled his engagement, but also fortified Epibates, one of the fortresses in the vicinity of Constantinople best adapted to baffle the operations of the Ottomans, which he held as his own private castle.

During the whole reign of Andronicus, even the European provinces of his empire were infested by incessant invasions of the Turks. The neglect of the Greek navy by Andronicus II allowed the Turks to make piracy a profitable occupation. Andronicus III attempted to diminish the evil by forming alliances with the Seljouk emirs of Karasi, Saroukhan, and Aïdin, but he was unable to prevent the islands of the Aegean Sea and all the continent, from the walls of Constantinople to the rocks of Maina, from being plundered, and the inhabitants carried off into slavery. These unceasing devastations, and the constant demand for men, women, and children, in the slave-markets of the Turkish cities of Asia, caused a sensible diminution of the Greek race during a single generation. In the year 1329 or 1330, a fleet of seventy ships landed an army that ravaged the valley of the Hebrus as far as Trajanopolis. Fortunately the emperor was at Didymoteichos, and the force he was able to assemble arrested their devastations, and repulsed them with some loss. In the following year a body of Turkish cavalry crossed the Hellespont, but of these plunderers about fifteen hundred were cut in pieces by the imperial troops. In 1331, another army landed in Europe, and laid waste the country round Redestos, Kissos, Polyvoton, and Akonites, and the emperor again took the field to drive them back to

their ships. In 1332, an army landed in the gulf of Thessalonica, while the emperor was marching from Rhendina to Thessalonica. He overtook and defeated this expedition, and captured all the Turkish ships but two. In 1334, the Turkish corsairs committed terrible depredations in the Greek islands, and captured many merchant ships. As a proof of the naval power of the Seljouk emirs at this time, it may be mentioned that when Andronicus formed an alliance with the emirs of Saroukhan and Aïdin against the Genoese of Phocaea, he obtained a reinforcement of twenty-four vessels from Saroukhan, and of thirty from Amour, the son of Aïdin. Amour had previously invaded the empire with a fleet of seventy-five ships. In the year 1337, another enemy laid waste a great part of Thrace. A horde of Moguls crossed the Danube, and plundered the territory of the empire for upwards of six weeks. During this expedition they fell in with a band of Turks who crossed the sea from Asia, and were also engaged in plundering the country. The Moguls attacked and defeated the Turks, whom they carried off into slavery, mingled with the Greeks. Nicephorus Gregoras asserts that the Moguls carried away three hundred thousand captives from Thrace in this expedition. In the same year the troops of Orkhan were repulsed in an attack on Rhegion, after they had landed and set fire to the houses. The sudden arrival of the Byzantine fleet gave the Greeks a superiority, and a large part of the ottoman naval force was captured. Other expeditions are mentioned by Gregoras, who recounts that, in the year 1340, an army of eight thousand Turks, attended by a long train of pack-horses for transporting their plunder, overran all Thrace as far as the foot of Mount Haemus, and, after leisurely transporting their booty to their ships, returned to Asia without encountering any opposition.

Several Genoese nobles had acquired considerable possessions in the empire as vassals, but they really governed them as independent princes. Andronicus III resolved to reestablish the imperial authority. In the year 1329 he regained possession of Chios, which had been occupied by the family of Zaccaria, in the reign of Andronicus II, under the pretext that the island had been granted to them by Michael VIII. The recovery of Chios was effected by the treachery of Benedetto Zaccaria, the brother of the ruling noble, and by the assistance of the Greek inhabitants. As Chios then yielded an annual revenue of one hundred and twenty thousand byzants to the public treasury, it was a valuable if not a glorious conquest. Phocaea was held by the Genoese family of Cattaneo: and it was also reduced to obedience with the assistance of the Seljouk emirs of Saroukhan and Aïdin, but soon rebelled under Domenico Cattaneo, who formed an alliance with Nicholas, duke of the Archipelago, and the knights of Rhodes. A naval station was formed by the knights of Rhodes at Delos to protect the Archipelago from the piratical expeditions of the Turks. Domenico Cattaneo made an attempt to conquer Lesbos, but the Emperor Andronicus arriving with a fleet, and the allies of Domenico abandoning his cause, both Lesbos and Phocaea received Byzantine garrisons.

Andronicus sought to acquire glory by distant and desultory wars, in which victory was hardly doubtful, and temporary conquests were easily acquired. The defence of his own subjects, the permanent interests of his people, and the most necessary arrangements in the administration of the empire, were neglected to gratify the idle military vanity which was the fashionable vice of the age. In these expeditions the prime-minister Cantacuzenos had generally some private object of ambition to gain. He increased his influence, extended his party connections, and prepared to maintain himself in power after the death of Andronicus, whose health was rapidly declining.

While the Turks were continually ravaging Thrace and Macedonia, Andronicus made three expeditions into Epirus. The first expedition took place in the year 1334. Stephen Gabrielopoulos governed Thessaly for some time as an independent prince, but with the title of despot. On his death, Monomachos, the governor of Thessalonica, recovered possession of the towns of Golos, Kastri, and Lykostoma. At the same time John Dukas, despot of Epirus, and Count of Cephallenia, seized Stagos, Trikala, Phanari, Damasis, and Elasson. Andronicus, thinking the moment favourable for annexing the whole of Thessaly to the empire, took the field in person, and Recovered all the towns occupied by the Despot of Epirus. Three Albanian tribes,

the Malakasians, Bouians, and Mesarits, who could muster a force of twelve thousand men, made their submission, and tranquillity was established for some time.

In the year 1337, the news that the Turks and Moguls were ravaging Thrace appears to have induced the Albanians in the neighbourhood of the fortresses of Valagrita and Kanina to plunder the Greeks in their vicinity and lay siege to several towns. The emperor took the field against them in person, proposing to carry his arms afterwards southward against the despotat of Epirus. The Albanians had hoped to secure their plunder in their mountain fastnesses, but two thousand Turkish auxiliaries in the emperor's pay proved as active in mountain warfare as the Skipetars. Not only the booty recently taken was recovered, but the native fastnesses of the Albanians were stormed, and their wives and children reduced to slavery by the Turks. Cantacuzenos, on this occasion, indulges in a vain boast that the Greek troops in the imperial army were not allowed to enslave their fellow-Christians, but we must not forget that the imperial army was unable to subdue these fellow-Christians without the assistance of Turkish mercenaries, who were allowed to pay themselves by carrying away Christians as slaves. The Mohammedans took what they considered the most valuable part of the booty, and left the cattle to the emperor's troops. The number of slaves taken on this occasion is not recorded; but 5,000 horses, 300,000 oxen, and 1,200,000 sheep were captured.

The despotat of Epirus, which owed its independent existence to the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders, had now remained separated from the empire for a hundred and thirty years. It was formed by members of the family of Angelos, but passed by marriage and assassination into the allied family of the Counts of Cephallenia, who assumed the name of Dukas. The assassination of John Dukas by his wife Anne, daughter of the protovestiaros Andronikos Palaeologos, in the year 1337, enabled his murderess to govern as regent for her son Nicephorus II, a child of seven years of age. Anne, finding that she would be unable to maintain her authority, invited the Emperor Andronicus to take possession of the despotat, and succeeded in placing all its fortresses in his hands without opposition.

After the emperors return to Constantinople, a party in Epirus took up arms and gained possession of the three principal fortresses near the coast, Arta, Rogo, and Thomokastron (a.C. 1339). Andronicus again visited Epirus in person, though he was in a weak state of health. He recovered the fortresses from the rebels, and pacified the country, but did not long survive his return to Constantinople, dying on the 15th June 1341, and leaving his son John V., a child nine years of age, his successor.

#### Sect. IV

Reign of John V (Palaeologos), A.D. 1341-1391, including the Reigns of John Cantacuzenos, A.D. 1347- 1354, and of Andronicus, the son of John V, A.D. 1375-1376 and 1379-1381.

The Empress Anne of Savoy was, both by the nomination of the deceased emperor and by the custom of the empire, regent during the minority of her son John V (Palaeologos). Byzantine etiquette required her to weep for nine days beside the body of her husband, who expired in the habit of a monk in the monastery of the Guiding Virgin; but John Cantacuzenos, the grand domestikos, who directed the public administration as first minister of state, having immediately established himself in the imperial palace in order to constitute himself tutor to the young emperor, and having assumed a guard of five hundred men, the widowed empress deemed it necessary to return to the palace on the third day, that she might watch over the rights of her children. The absence of a strict rule of hereditary succession, and the contempt of the Greek

nobles for every principle of law and equity, rendered the imperial crown a prize for which party leaders and powerful ministers were constantly plotting. Cantacuzenos had worked for a long time with great activity to form a party in the public administration and in the provinces. He was vain, wealthy, and ambitious; but both his friends and enemies knew that his mind was destitute of that vigour which affords original suggestions and gives firmness of purpose. That he would assume the rank of emperor seemed certain; whether he would content himself with remaining the colleague of the young Palaeologos was more doubtful. Apokaukos, the ablest, boldest, and most unprincipled of the Byzantine statesmen, in order to gain the credit of being the first to urge the completion of an act which he supposed was unavoidable, recommended Cantacuzenos to lose no time in proclaiming himself emperor. The weak prime-minister listened to the treason without following the advice of the traitor; and Apokaukos, suspecting that the treason was to be executed without his being allowed to participate in its profits, became the enemy of Cantacuzenos, and determined to support the empress in the regency.

The Patriarch, John of Apri, who had been appointed tutor of the young emperor during the last expedition of Andronicus to Epirus, claimed both the tutorship of the emperor and the superintendence of public affairs. By the support of the party opposed to Cantacuzenos, and the jealousy of the empress, who feared the prime-minister's ambition, the Patriarch was appointed president of the ministerial council. A contest of intrigue then commenced between the two parties, in which neither was able to gain a decided superiority in the capital, for the empress-regent was as little inclined to trust implicitly in the good faith of the Patriarch and Apokaukos as in the loyalty of Cantacuzenos. It was necessary to assemble a considerable army in Thrace, as the empire was threatened with invasion by the Bulgarians, Albanians, and Turks, and the grand domestikos assumed the command of this force, for he feared to intrust it even to one of his own partisans. While he was absent from Constantinople, Apokaukos attempted to seize the direction of public affairs and render himself master of the young emperor's person. Failing in his attempt, he escaped to the castle of Epibates, which he had fortified so strongly that Cantacuzenos did not venture to attack it. On returning to the capital, Cantacuzenos made an abortive attempt to get himself declared emperor by means of a tumult in which his soldiers endeavored to force an entry for him into the imperial palace on horseback. This act would have been tantamount to declaring him emperor, and, if the plot had succeeded, would have been followed by a proclamation to that effect. He had already prepared for rebellion by fortifying Emphythion, near Didymoteichos, as Apokaukos had fortified Epibates; and as he was solicited by the Greeks in the Peloponnesus to attack the principality of Achaia, he quitted Constantinople at the end of September to make preparations for an expedition to reannex the Peloponnesus to the empire. Apokaukos then returned to the capital, and was appointed Prefect of Constantinople: in a popular sedition the houses of many of the partisans of Cantacuzenos were plundered; his friends were placed under arrest; but he himself, though satisfied that his intrigues were known, and believing that it was now necessary for his safety to mount the throne, still pretended to refuse the title of Emperor, which his partisans urged him to assume. This tortuous conduct made even his most violent supporters distrust his behaviour, for his indecision led every party to believe that he was carrying on some secret negotiation from which they were excluded. At length he was proclaimed emperor at Didymoteichos, about four months after the death of Andronicus III, and the ceremony of his coronation was performed on the feast of St. Demetrius. Cantacuzenos, in describing his coronation, would fain insinuate that the blunders and crimes of his rebellious reign must be attributed to the decrees of Providence, whose dissatisfaction was presaged by the blunder of the imperial tailor, who made the robe of state so small that Cantacuzenos could hardly squeeze himself into the embroidered vestment, while the mantle was so long that it hung round him like a horseman's cloak. The Bishop of Didymoteichos, seeing that the mind of the rebel emperor was affected by this omen, consoled him with a sneer, saying that those who eat figs while they are green are sure to have their lips blistered.

The weakness, indecision, and incapacity of Cantacuzenos became apparent when he mounted the throne. He was destitute of the energy necessary to command the factious chiefs of

his party, and his vanity prevented his selecting ministers who could perform the services required to keep his supporters closely united. The people, though discontented with the fiscal extortions and judicial corruption of the central government, knew well, from their experience in the civil wars of Andronicus, that the rebellion of a rival emperor would only add to their sufferings. Feudal usages had penetrated into Greek society; many provincial nobles had assimilated their authority to that of feudal barons, and the magistrates of many towns were striving to establish or defend their local independence. The whole state of society beyond the immediate sphere of the court and the imperial administration rendered the question whether John V should be replaced by Cantacuzenos or whether Apokaukos should govern as prime-minister, or Cantacuzenos as emperor, matters of secondary consideration. Every page of the dethroned rebel's memoirs, written after he had time to reflect on the past in the calm of monastic seclusion, proves that he was incapable of understanding the circumstances of his age or the general and popular feeling of his contemporaries. Both he and Gregoras are in an especial degree the historians of the court and church of Constantinople; of the interests and opinions of the people they took no account. Court intrigues, family alliances, party interests, personal hatreds, local prejudices, and religious bigotry, concealed the existence or stifled the growth of every national and patriotic sentiment.

The Regent Anne, under the guidance of the Patriarch and the Grand-duke Apokaukos, adopted prompt and effectual measures to intimidate the partisans of the rebels. Theodora, the mother of Cantacuzenos, a woman of more virtue and talent than her son, was thrown into prison, and treated with great cruelty until her death. The young emperor was solemnly crowned at Constantinople on the 19th of November; Apokaukos was then named Grand-duke, and the war against the rebels was prosecuted with a degree of promptitude and energy that confounded all their plans. Cantacuzenos had counted more on the effect of his intrigues than on his own military talents. The grand-duke had taken effectual measures to countermine these intrigues before he pushed Cantacuzenos into rebellion, and he now showed that he knew far better how to direct the operations of a campaign than the rebel emperor.

The desire of the people for the preservation of peace, and their aversion to the aristocratic pretensions of the partisans of Cantacuzenos, contributed probably to his failures at Adrianople and Thessalonica quite as much as the activity of the grand-duke. The authority of the regency was re-established in all the Thracian towns. The only fortress in Thrace of which the rebels retained possession was Didymoteichos; but Cantacuzenos and his followers, being cut off from all communication with this place, and unable to defend himself in Macedonia, fled into Servia, hoping to conquer the Greek empire by the assistance of the Slavonians. The wealth of Cantacuzenos and of his partisans was confiscated; but though the losses of the rebel emperor were immense, he still possessed considerable riches, with which he could pay his followers, bribe partisans and reward friends. The immense fortunes accumulated in the public service form a strong proof of the corruption of the administration; while, on the other hand, some traces of a healthy national feeling among the mass of the Greek population were rendered apparent by the attempt which the rebels made to awaken Hellenic traditions. Unfortunately, the decline of the empire soon caused both public and private wealth to disappear, and the Hellenic reminiscences of the people produced no love of liberty, nor respect for order; their operation was confined to rhetorical common-place.

Stephen Dushan, who had ascended the throne of Servia in the year 1333, and who was subsequently crowned emperor, was one of the most dangerous enemies of the Greeks. Active, brave, able, and perfidious, he was formed by nature to contend with the Byzantine court, over which he gained many advantages; and he laboured indefatigably to transfer the empire of the Greeks to the Servian nation. He had already established his residence at Skoupies, in order to watch every occasion for extending his dominions; and he availed himself of the pretensions and difficulties of Cantacuzenos to form an alliance with the rebel and invade the empire. The Servian auxiliaries enabled the rebel to lay siege to Serres, a city of great importance, from its command over a rich and extensive plain; but they were soon attacked with fevers in the plains

of Macedonia, and the siege was abandoned. About the same time, Didymoteichos was closely invested by the imperial troops, and was in great danger of being taken, when it was relieved by a Turkish army under Amour, the son of Aïdin, with whom Cantacuzenos had formed a strict alliance (January 1343). The failure of the attack on Serres, the retreat of the Servians, an insurrection of the peasantry against the partisans of Cantacuzenos in the neighbourhood of Didymoteichos, and the return of Amour with his Turks to Asia Minor, again reduced the rebels to the verge of ruin. In these circumstances, the support of the Vallachians of Thessaly was of the greatest importance to their cause. The inhabitants of Great Vlakia, it is true, were more anxious to secure the neutrality of their territory, and the enjoyment of their local usages and municipal laws, than to establish the supremacy of any emperor at Constantinople. It was probably rather to protect themselves against a Servian invasion, than from any preference for Cantacuzenos, that they now received John Angelos, a near relation of the rebel emperor, as their prince; and the charter, under the golden seal of the Emperor Cantacuzenos, conferring his office, ran in the name of the Emperor John V and the Empress-regent Anne, as well as in that of the rebels, Cantacuzenos and his wife Irene.

The support of the Thessalian Vallachians enabled Cantacuzenos to open the campaign of 1343 with an effective force. He gained possession of Berrhoea, Servia, Platamona, Petra, Soskos, and Staridola, and entertained hopes of being admitted into Thessalonica, which were disappointed by the activity of Apokaukos, who arrived to protect the city with a naval force of seventy Greek and thirty-two Turkish ships. Thus we find that, even in maritime warfare, the Turkish race was rapidly advancing to an equality with the Greeks. The return of Amour with a Turkish army subsequently re-established the ascendancy of Cantacuzenos. He invaded Thrace, seized the pass of Christopolis, and once more made Didymoteichos his headquarters. But his progress in Thrace was arrested by the return of his ally Amour to Asia, where the emir was detained by an attack on Smyrna by the Genoese and the Knights of Rhodes.

The assistance of the Turks alone enabled the rebels to maintain their ground during the year 1344. The imperial government had formed alliances with Alexander, king of Bulgaria, and Stephen Dushan, king of Servia, who both marched against the rebels. Apokaukos himself took the field, and though he failed in an attempt to take Didymoteichos, he detached a Bulgarian chief, named Momitzilos, from the party of Cantacuzenos. This warrior held the districts of Merope and Morrha, in the chain of Mount Rhodope, as an independent principality. The most fortunate event of this campaign for the rebels was the accidental defeat of the Servian army by the Turks, in which Cantacuzenos had no share. The ships belonging to a large body of Turks who had landed to plunder Thrace were destroyed at Pallene by the Knights of Rhodes. The Turks were therefore compelled to march by land to the Thracian Chersonesus; and as they passed through the Chalcidice they were attacked by the Servians, whom they completely defeated. This event enabled Cantacuzenos to gain possession of Gratianopolis, and to conclude treaties both with the Kings of Servia and of Bulgaria.

The most important event of the year 1345 was the murder of Apokaukos, which happened during the summer. Symptoms of discontent had manifested themselves at Constantinople, and other cities attached to the regent's cause, and an opposition to the government of Apokaukos was formed, both in the court and the administration. It is always the policy of the prime-minister in a despotism to treat even a moderate and legal opposition as rebellious sedition; and the grand-duke, who was as daring as he was ambitious, determined to strengthen his authority by getting rid of his most dangerous opponents. A proscription of all the men of wealth and influence who were either suspected or disliked by Apokaukos was commenced; numbers of rich and eminent persons were imprisoned in the building called the Palace of Constantine, of which the ruins, still rising over the walls of Constantinople, retain the same name at present. The official residence of the grand-duke, as admiral of the fleet, was situated not far from this palace and prison, overlooking the head of the port. There Apokaukos dwelt, surrounded by military guards, and by crowds of the rude Zakonians and insolent Gasmuls who served in the fleet; and at the nearest quay, an armed galley, fully manned,

constantly awaited his orders. His power, his boldness, his activity, his armed attendants, and his suspicions, all seemed to insure his safety. New dungeons were constructed within the precincts of the palace of Constantine, and many persons accused only of political offences were soon to be consigned to hopeless captivity by the cruelty of Apokaukos, who watched the completion of their prison with an inhuman interest. When the work was finished, the grand-duke resolved to inspect it, and, contrary to his usual habit, entered the court of the old palace without his guards. Many prisoners of rank were allowed to walk at large in this court; and for some time they had been in the habit of speaking of the death of the grand-duke as the only means of averting their perpetual imprisonment in the dungeons he had prepared to receive them. When he was seen to enter, followed by a single attendant, Heaven appeared to have delivered him into the hands of the men he had treated with the greatest injustice. One of the prisoners seized a block of wood and struck him to the ground; the rest, with the materials left by the workmen who had built the new prisons, killed him on the spot. His head was cut off with a carpenter's axe, and exhibited from the walls. The guards, who had remained by his orders at the outer gate, on seeing that their master was dead, retired without attempting to avenge his death. The prisoners, proud of having delivered the empire from a cruel master, made no attempt to escape. They expected thanks, if not rewards; but the empress-regent felt that she had lost the services of a man of energy and talent, whose place it would be difficult to supply from among the Greek nobles of her court, and she wished to see his murderers punished. The servants of Apokaukos, and the sailors about the arsenal, were allowed to take up arms, and fill the capital with bloodshed and pillage. All the political prisoners were massacred with the greatest cruelty, though only a few had any share in the death of the grand-duke. The murder of Apokaukos took place on the 11th of June 1345.

The civil war continued to lay waste all the country in the vicinity of Constantinople. The industrious citizens of the Thracian towns and the cultivators of the soil were plundered by military leaders, who frequently changed sides to prolong the contest. The Bulgarians, the Servians, the Albanians, the Genoese, and the Turks, were all encroaching on the empire of Constantinople. But the miseries inflicted on the Greek population by the mercenary troops of Cantacuzenos surpassed their other sufferings. The ranks of these mercenaries were filled with Slavonians, Vallachians, and Germans, whose rapacity was excited and their hearts hardened by great military vicissitudes and constant change of place. They plundered the cultivators of the soil without compassion, and compelled even friendly cities to pay extraordinary contributions. In vain the magistrates acknowledged the title of the rebel emperor, and offered to admit his garrisons within their walls; their offers of submission were refused, for the mercenaries could only be maintained by extorting from the people sums far exceeding the amount of the ordinary taxes; and as an excuse for practising such extortion, it was deemed necessary to treat a great proportion of the Greek cultivators of the soil in Thrace as if they had been a hostile population. The partisans of the Regent Anne were not less rapacious than those of Cantacuzenos; the property of the rebels, and of those who were accused of favouring their cause, both in the cities and the country, was plundered, and their houses and vineyards destroyed. Anarchy began to dissolve all political bonds. Some cities shut their gates against both the emperors. Some leaders declared themselves independent; and Momitzilos, at the head of a band of four thousand well-armed veterans, defied them both. Cantacuzenos admits that he consulted his own interests rather than those of the empire by distributing the command of the Thracian cities among his own relations and his noble partisans, in order to afford them the means of living according to their aristocratic rank. The insecurity of property was so great that all commercial intercourse was interrupted, and many articles previously manufactured to a considerable extent, for the consumption of the neighbouring provinces or for foreign exportation, ceased to be produced. The civil wars of Andronicus III and of Cantacuzenos, following one another at so short an interval, reduced the Greek population of Thrace and Macedonia to such a state of destitution that they were prepared to submit to any foreign invader. The people became as corrupted and unprincipled as their rulers. Selfishness, party passions, and religious schisms, inflamed their quarrels, and so completely absorbed their attention that they possessed neither courage nor patriotism sufficient to fight their own battles,

but remained torpid spectators of the contest which was to decide the existence of their empire, the orthodoxy of their church, and the fate of their nation. Even the schisms which rent the Greek church at this period, and the disputes of the Palamites and Barlaamites, which fill so many pages of the political history of Constantinople, never interested the whole Greek population, whose orthodoxy was satisfied with their doctrines concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost, the use of leavened bread in the eucharist, and an inveterate hatred of the Pope and the Latin church.

The first foreigner who took advantage of the paralysed state of the Greek nation was Stephen Dushan, the king of Servia, whom we have already seen changing sides more than once during the civil war. He was a man of great ambition, and was celebrated for his gigantic stature and personal courage. His subjects boasted of his liberality and success in war; his enemies reproached him with faithlessness and cruelty. He had driven his father, Stephen VII, from the throne, and the old man had been murdered in prison by the rebellious nobles of Servia, who feared lest a reconciliation should take place with his son. Stephen Dushan had passed seven years of his youth at Constantinople, where he had become acquainted with all the defects of the Byzantine government, and with all the vices of Greek society. The circumstances in which rival emperors were placed during the year 1345 were extremely favourable to the ambitious projects of the Servian prince. The attention of the rebels and of the regency was so constantly demanded to the changes at Constantinople that they were unable to defend the frontiers of the empire, and Stephen Dushan seized the opportunity to extend his conquests in every direction. To the east he rendered himself master of the whole valley of the Strymon, took the large and flourishing city of Serres, and garrisoned all the fortresses as far as the wall that defended the pass of Christopolis. To the west his dominions extended to the shores of the Adriatic; Achrida, Kastoria, and Joannina, were provincial cities of his new conquests. He subdued the Vallachians of Thessaly and the Albanians of southern Epirus, and formed the plan of depriving the Greeks of their political and orthodox supremacy. He assumed the imperial crown at Serres, where he established a court on the Roman or Byzantine model, and took the title of Emperor of Romania, Sclavonia, and Albania, conferring at the same time the title of King of Servia on his son. He promulgated a code of laws, which is now the oldest existing monument of the Servian language. His political sagacity is shown by his endeavours to modify the principles of slavery prevalent in Servia, and to encourage trade. Seeing how much the Greek emperors had lost by neglecting the commercial interests of their subjects, he secured the friendship of the Venetian republic, and inscribed his own name in the register of her nobility called the Golden Book. His arms were successful against the Bosnians and the Hungarians, as well as against the Greeks; and at his death in 1355 the Servian Empire extended from the Danube to the frontiers of Etolia. The dominions of the Servian emperor were partitioned after his death; but the Greeks have never since been able to recover their former preponderance in the provinces from the valley of the Strimon to the shores of the gulf of Arta. In that extensive district they no longer compose a decided majority of the population.

The success of Cantacuzenos was at last decided by the aid he received from the Turks, not by his own political intrigues and military exploits. His own history of the civil war presents the Greeks under the most unfavourable aspect, and far inferior both in morality and courage to the Turks. Amour, the Seljouk emir of Aïdin, is the noblest character of the age; Orkhan, the Othoman sultan, is the most sagacious statesman; and both these princes were the allies of the rebel at the end of the war. But the Regent Anne also relied more on the aid of Turkish mercenaries than on the courage of the imperial army, and it was the defection of Orkhan from her cause, and the desertion of the troops of the Emir of Saroukhan, which ruined her military position in the year 1346.

The manner in which both Cantacuzenos and the empress-regent generally paid their Mussulman allies was by allowing them to plunder the country and carry off the Greek population to be sold as slaves in Asia Minor. The friendship of the Emir Amour for Cantacuzenos may have been as disinterested as the rhetorical historian represents it; but the



Turkish mercenaries under his banner required to be maintained and rewarded. The rebel emperor was often unable to furnish them with provisions and money; and when this was the case they plundered both friend and foe, and carried off the wretched inhabitants into slavery wherever they could seize them. The historian Ducas, a warm partisan of Cantacuzenos, who wrote in the next century, declares that the treaty by which the Empress Anne purchased the aid of Orkhan contained a clause authorising the ottoman Turks to make slaves of the Christian subjects of the rebel emperor, and to transport them to the slave-markets in Asia by the way of Skutari; thus rendering the Asiatic suburb of Constantinople the principal depot of the trade in Greek slaves. When Orkhan subsequently changed sides, there can be no doubt that he enforced a clause of similar tenor against the Christian subjects of the Emperor John V with the approval or connivance of Cantacuzenos. Slaves were at this time the most marketable production throughout all western Asia.

Cantacuzenos perceived that the power of the ottoman Turks was fixed on firmer foundations than that of the other Turkish princes, and he felt that the alliance of the former would afford the surest guarantee of ultimate success to the rebel cause. He succeeded in detaching the sultan from the party of the regency, though, in order to create a permanent family alliance with the house of Othman, he was compelled to give his daughter Theodora in marriage to Orkhan, and send her to dwell at Brusa, as a tenant of the sultan's harem. The Tartar and Turkish princes had long attached great importance to marriages that introduced into their families the blood of the emperors of Constantinople; and when Cantacuzenos affected to reject the overtures of Orkhan, the sultan backed his negotiations with a threat that he would prosecute the war in favour of the empress-regent in a vigorous manner. The junction of the ottoman army with the rebels formed the crisis of the civil war. The campaign of 1346 rendered Cantacuzenos master of the greater part of Thrace, and enabled him to advance to the walls of the capital.

In this period of danger there was no person of talent to conduct the affairs of the young emperor. The Empress Anne quarrelled with the Patriarch, and became the protector of his enemies in the church. A council of bishops was assembled, and the orthodoxy of the head of the church was called in question, examined, and condemned. At this time the Greek Church was torn by schisms, and had fallen into the same state of anarchy as the rest of the empire. Indeed, the prevalent opinion that the Greek Church has been more free from heresies and schisms than other churches cannot be considered as true. On the contrary, the Greek church has been the prolific mother of heretical opinions, and has filled her household with the disputes of her children; but the power of the emperor over the temporalities of the ecclesiastical establishment, the simoniacal spirit of the higher clergy, the consequent torpidity of the public mind on purely religious questions, and the veil with which Byzantine history conceals the feelings of the people throughout the empire, prevent all knowledge of the extent to which mankind protested in each successive age against the oppression of the imperial government and the corruption of the Greek church. But we nevertheless discover proofs that in every age there were Greeks who advocated the cause of liberty and religion. The people of Constantinople at last became tired of the civil war; and as Cantacuzenos was evidently more inclined to grant a general amnesty than the regency, his cause rapidly gained ground after the murder of Apokaukos. Fortunately for the Greek empire, he was enabled to gain possession of Constantinople without the participation of his Turkish allies. His partisans within the walls organised a plan for admitting him within the city. While the attention of the government party was occupied in celebrating the deposition of the Patriarch John of Apri, the Golden Gate was thrown open, and the rebel emperor entered Constantinople without bloodshed. The empress-regent showed a determination to defend herself in the imperial palace; but her partisans were less courageous than their female chief, and she was compelled to submit to the victor.

The terms dictated by Cantacuzenos, as master of the capital, prove the real weakness of his party as much as his own moderation. He entered Constantinople on the 3d of February 1347, and it was not until the 8th that a treaty was concluded with the empress-regent, and the gates of the palace of Blachern were opened to receive the new emperor. By this treaty

Cantacuzenos was recognised as emperor, but his right to direct the administration of the empire was limited to ten years; and as soon as John V attained the age of twenty-five, he was to enjoy an equal share of the imperial power. A general amnesty was proclaimed; all landed property was restored to its original possessors; but movable property was left in the possession of those who had acquired it during the civil war. The termination of hostilities was evidently caused more by the general desire of the people for peace, and for security of property, than by the victorious arms of the rebels. The military forces of the victor were so utterly alien to all political feeling, that on this occasion a long period of anarchy was not, as usual in civil contests, terminated by the establishment of a military despotism. Cantacuzenos was a man of intrigues and stratagems, not of battles and strategy. His leading partisans were courtiers in armour, not soldiers; so that the interests of the middling classes, and the feelings of the mass of the people, in the end, warned those who were contending for power that they must hasten to make peace, though public opinion had not sufficient consistency to dictate the measures necessary for insuring permanent respect to the articles of the peace of Blachern.

The Emperor Cantacuzenos found the empire shrunk into a mere shadow of that which he had governed as the prime-minister of Andronicus III. Whole provinces were lost, and the treasury was empty; yet with that insatiable vanity which has ever been a curse of Greece, his first care was to exhibit himself to the people with an appearance of pomp and splendour. He had already been twice crowned, yet he was not satisfied until the ceremony was performed a third time. The exhibition was ill-timed. Custom required that the coronation of an emperor should take place in St Sophia's, but an earthquake in the preceding year (1346) had thrown down the great eastern semi-dome of that magnificent church, and covered the bema with ruins. It was therefore necessary that the rebel emperor should receive the imperial crown in the church of Blachern, and at the same time he conferred the imperial crown on his wife Irene. Eight days after the coronation of Cantacuzenos, on the 21st of May, which is the Feast of Constantine and Helena, the young emperor, John V, then fifteen years of age, married Helena, the daughter of Cantacuzenos, who was only thirteen. She received the imperial crown, and the people were entertained with the spectacle of two emperors and three empresses seated on their thrones. The strange spectacle delighted the gazers; but it was not viewed without some feeling of contempt; for it was generally known that the imperial crowns were bright with false pearls and diamonds; that the robes were stiffened with tinsel; that the vases were of brass, not gold; and instead of the rich brocade of Thebes, the hangings were of gilded leather.

A review of the limits into which the empire had now shrunk reveals the full extent of the injuries inflicted on the Greeks by the civil wars of Andronicus III and Cantacuzenos. Many provinces were lost for ever, and the Greek race, which had previously formed the dominant class, was expelled from many districts. The property of the Greeks was plundered, their landed estates were confiscated, and even their families were in danger of being reduced to slavery unless they emigrated. From this period we lose all trace of an independent class of Greek landed proprietors. In the empire, the Greek nobility was composed of titled officials, salaried courtiers, courtly abbots, and simoniacal bishops; in the conquered provinces the higher classes of Greeks sank into farmers of the public revenue, local tools of the government, and tax-gatherers. The landed property and the military power, with the social influence they conferred, passed into the hands of the Servians, the Albanians, the Genoese, and the ottoman Turks; and after the middle of the fourteenth century, we find foreign names occupying an important place in the history of Macedonia, Epirus, and Greece, and Servian and Albanian chiefs attaining a condition of almost entire independence.

The Greek Empire consisted of several detached pieces when Cantacuzenos seated himself on the throne; and the inhabitants of these different pieces could only communicate freely by sea. The direct intercourse by land, even between Constantinople and Thessalonica by the Egnatian Way, was interrupted, for the Servian emperor possessed Amphipolis and all the country about the mouth of the Strymon from Philippi to the lake Bolbé. The first portion of the empire, and the nucleus of the imperial power, consisted of the city of Constantinople and the

greater part of Thrace. On the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, the Greek possessions were confined to the suburb of Skutari, a few forts, and a narrow strip of coast extending from Chalcedon to the Black Sea. In Thrace, the frontier extended from Sozopolis along the mountains to the south-west, passing about a day's journey to the north of Adrianople, and descending to the Aegean Sea at the pass and fortress of Christopolis. It included the districts of Morrha and the Thracian Chalkidike. The second portion of the empire in importance consisted of the rich and populous city of Thessalonica, with the western part of the Macedonian Chalkidike, and its three peninsulas of Cassandra, Longos, and Aghionoros. By land it was entirely enclosed in the Servian Empire. The third detached portion of the empire consisted of a part of Vlachian Thessaly and of Albanian Epirus, which formed a small imperial province interposed between the Servian Empire and the Catalan duchy of Athens and Neopatras. The fourth piece consisted of the Greek province in the Peloponnesus, which obtained the name of the Despotat of Misithra, and embraced about one-third of the peninsula. Cantacuzenos conferred the government on his second son, Manuel, who preserved his place by force of arms after his father was driven from the throne. The remaining fragments of the empire consisted of a few islands in the Aegean Sea which had escaped the domination of the Venetians, the Genoese, and the Knights of St John, with the cities of Philadelphia and Phocaea, which still recognised the suzerainty of Constantinople, though surrounded by the territories of the emirs of Aidin and Saroukhan. Such were the relics of the Byzantine Empire, which were now burdened with the maintenance of two emperors, three empresses, and an augmented list of despots, sevastokrators, and salaried courtiers.

As Cantacuzenos gained the empire by a sudden revulsion of opinion in the inhabitants of Constantinople, it was evident that the stability of his power would depend in a great measure on the wisdom and success of his internal administration. Public opinion called him to the throne as the readiest means of establishing security of property and lessening the public burdens. The people consented to try his talents for administration without believing that he had any right to share the Byzantine throne. The new emperor soon showed himself unequal to the exigencies of his position, and his whole reign consists of a succession of temporary expedients. His first financial step was a gross blunder. Instead of endeavouring to revive the trade of the capital and restore the fortunes of the inhabitants, whose estates had been ravaged during the civil war by his mercenaries, he attempted to fill the imperial treasury. His object was to reward his partisans and surround himself with a foreign guard; but he did not venture to impose any new taxes on the people. He expected that his eloquence and power would induce all classes to grant him a voluntary contribution, and he convoked an assembly of the leading men of every class in Constantinople—merchants, manufacturers, shopkeepers, artisans, administrators of monasteries, and trustees of ecclesiastical property—to whom he proposed a contribution for the public service. The request was peremptorily refused, for the subjects of the Byzantine Empire had no idea of constituting an assembly that could control the appropriation of their money; and they feared with reason that their contributions would be expended in increasing the existing evils in the state. Their prudence was soon justified by the events that followed. The warmest partisans of Cantacuzenos were dissatisfied with the restraints imposed on his power of rewarding and enriching them by the partisans of Paleologos. Cantacuzenos was himself willing to set aside the clause of the treaty of pacification which excluded his family from the throne. Matthew Cantacuzenos, taking advantage of these feelings, placed himself at the head of the most violent adherents of his father's rebellion, and before the end of the year 1347 gained possession of Didymoteichos, Adrianople, and the surrounding country. His father allowed him to retain in his hands the government of a principality, which extended from Didymoteichos to Xantheion, on his restoring Adrianople to the imperial administration. The friends of John V naturally considered this rebellion as collusive, and availed themselves of the circumstance to alarm the young emperor at the proceedings of his father-in-law, and to engage in active opposition to the usurpations of Matthew. Every suspicion was confirmed when, in 1353, after open hostilities had taken place between John V and Matthew, the latter was proclaimed emperor by his father; and this step became the signal for a mortal strife between the houses of Paleologos and Cantacuzenos.

Cantacuzenos was a heretic, but as the church of Constantinople was during his reign a heretical church, his religious opinions in all probability facilitated his ecclesiastical administration. But he alienated the feelings of the Palamite clergy, and roused the indignation of all the orthodox, by an iniquitous misappropriation of the funds of the great cathedral of St Sophia. The church of Russia preserved its orthodoxy when that of Constantinople lapsed into the Palamite heresy; but the Russian clergy did not break off their communion with the mother church, and the orthodox patriarch of Russia continued to receive his investiture from the heretical Byzantine patriarch. The Russians continued to take the warmest interest in the misfortunes of the Greek ecclesiastics; and when they learned that the reconstruction of the portion of St Sophia's, which had been thrown down by the earthquake of 1346, was stopped from want of money, Simeon the Proud, and many of his nobles, remitted large sums to complete the repairs. The money arrived at Constantinople about the year 1350; and this sacred deposit was seized by the Emperor Cantacuzenos, and employed, with the connivance of the Greek patriarch Kallistos, to pay the ottoman mercenaries in his service.

Again, in the year 1352, Cantacuzenos found it necessary to employ twelve thousand Turks to oppose the Bulgarians and Servians, who aided his colleague, John V, in the civil war that had broken out between them. In order to pay these Infidels, Cantacuzenos laid his hands on the treasures of the church a second time. He seized all the gold, silver, and jewels in the treasuries of the churches and monasteries of Constantinople.

The financial operations of Cantacuzenos were not confined to soliciting contributions and plundering the church: he added to his unpopularity by imposing new burdens on the people. It appears that when he was anxious to prepare for war with the Genoese of Galata, he exempted his own subjects from some customs paid by foreigners, or put an end to some monopolies from which the Genoese had derived great profit. But the advantages obtained by the Greeks from this remission of duties was of short duration, for when the animosity of the Genoese at the loss of their previous gains induced them to attack Constantinople, the emperor made considerable additions both to the direct taxes and to the custom duties. The vineyards of the Greeks were then the most profitable portion of their landed property. There was an immense demand for wine, not only for the ships of all the Italian republics, but also for the supply of Russia and a part of western Europe, where the most esteemed qualities commanded high prices. The fiscal rapacity of Cantacuzenos could not omit taxing an article which promised to furnish him with a large sum with little trouble. A duty of two byzants was imposed on the merchant for every fifty measures, and an additional impost of one byzant on the grower. This tax must have inflicted a serious blow on the Greek landed proprietors, already burdened with the payment of a tenth of their produce, and exposed to have their crops destroyed by the ravages of foreign invaders. A duty of half a byzant was imposed on every measure of wheat imported into Constantinople, and the customs, which had hitherto amounted to ten per cent, were now increased by the addition of one-fiftieth, or two per cent. The people complained that they paid two hundred thousand byzants in consequence of these new taxes, of which, however, only fifty thousand reached the treasury. The whole maritime policy of Cantacuzenos was imperial, not commercial. His immediate object was to increase the navy of the state, and the measures which would have enabled his subjects to recover their proper share in the Black Sea trade were a secondary consideration in his policy. For the Greek people in general, and for the inhabitants of Constantinople in particular, he felt no affection. He fortified the Golden Gate as a citadel, in order to command the communications of the citizens with the districts to the east; and he surrounded his person and filled his palace with Turkish and Catalan guards.

In addition to these causes of unpopularity, it is necessary to add, that the accession of Cantacuzenos did not, as was expected, put an end to the invasions of the Turks, and relieve the Greeks from the burden of maintaining the ottoman troops. In all the wars the new emperor carried on, whether with the Servians, the Bulgarians, or with his son-in-law and colleague John V, the greater part of his army consisted of Infidels, whose cruelty and rapacity seemed to increase every year. His egregious self-conceit, his incurable habits of tergiversation, his

deficiency in administrative talent, and his want of personal determination, became apparent to all, and it seems probable that his abdication was a measure to which the increasing discontent of his subjects compelled him to look forward from the time his colleague John V took up arms against him in 1351.

The wars of Cantacuzenos were not undertaken on any political plan; and desultory hostilities with the Servians, Bulgarians, Genoese, and Turks, do not require to be narrated in detail. It is not easy to group the events of the reigns of Cantacuzenos and John V in such a way as to paint the anarchy that existed in the empire, or the momentary exigencies under which Cantacuzenos acted. He had not reigned a year before he was involved in hostilities with the Genoese colony of Galata, which had always contained many warm partisans of the house of Paleologos. This factory had grown into a flourishing town, and commanded a large portion of the Golden Horn. During the civil war the Genoese capitalists had supplied the regency with money, and they now farmed almost every branch of the revenue which the imperial government derived from the port. The duties they collected amounted to two hundred thousand byzants, and they paid for this only thirty thousand to the imperial treasury. The financial measures of the new emperor reduced their profits; and if he had persevered in his policy of lightening the burdens of his own subjects, the Greeks might soon have recovered some portion of the trade, which the insecurity of property, caused by the civil wars, had transferred to Galata. As it was, the increased industry of the Greeks, and the jealousy of the Genoese, led to open hostilities. The colonists of Galata commenced the war in a treacherous manner, without any authority from the republic of Genoa, (1348). With a fleet of only eight large and some small galleys they attacked Constantinople while Cantacuzenos was absent from the capital, and burned several buildings and the greater part of the fleet he was then constructing. The Empress Irene, who administered the government in the absence of her husband, behaved with great prudence and courage, and repulsed a bold attack of the Genoese. Cantacuzenos hastened to the capital, where he spent the winter in repairing the loss his fleet had sustained. As soon as it was ready for action, he engaged the Genoese in the port, where he hoped that their naval skill would be of no avail, and where the numerical superiority of his ships would insure him a victory. He expected, moreover, to gain possession of Galata itself by an attack on the land side while the Genoese were occupied at sea. The cowardly conduct of the Greeks, both by sea and land, rendered his plans abortive. The greater part of his ships were taken, and his army retreated without making a serious attack. Fortunately for Cantacuzenos, the colonists of Galata received an order from the senate of Genoa to conclude peace, even should they be compelled to make considerable concessions. Their victory enabled them to obtain favourable terms, and to keep possession of some land they had seized, and on which they soon completed the construction of a new citadel.

The friendly disposition manifested by the government of Genoa induced Cantacuzenos to send ambassadors to the senate to demand the restoration of the island of Chios, which had been conquered by a band of Genoese exiles in 1346. A treaty was concluded, by which the Genoese were to restore the island to the Emperor of Constantinople in ten years, and during that period they were to pay an annual tribute of twenty-two thousand byzants. But this treaty was never carried into execution, for the exiles at Chios set both the republic of Genoa and the Greek empire at defiance, and retained their conquest.

Thessalonica long refused to recognise Cantacuzenos as emperor; but the people became at last afraid that their leaders would enter into terms with the Servian emperor, and they consequently determined to renew their connection with the government of Constantinople. Cantacuzenos was invited to visit the city in person, and take measures for defending it against the intrigues and hostilities of Stephen Dushan.

The young emperor, John V, was now eighteen years of age, and his good temper, personal beauty, noble figure, and martial air, concealed the defects of his mind, and rendered him popular with all ranks. The jealousy of Cantacuzenos was increased by the attachment

generally shown to his young colleague; and in order to prevent the partisans of the house of Paleologos availing themselves of the public favour to emancipate the young emperor, he never allowed John V to quit his side. In 1350 he carried him in his train to Thessalonica. The two emperors left Constantinople with a fleet, while Matthew Cantacuzenos, with an auxiliary force of twenty thousand Turkish cavalry, under the command of Suleiman, the son of Orkhan, advanced by land against the Servians in order to reconquer the country between Christopolis and Thessalonica. But Suleiman, whose object was to enrich his followers and keep together a large army at the expense of others, felt no wish to see the Greeks gain any very decided advantage over the Servians. He now declared that his father had recalled him to Asia Minor; and, separating his troops from those of Matthew Cantacuzenos, he marched up the valley of the Hebrus into the Bulgarian territory, from whence he carried off immense booty in cattle and prisoners. With these spoils he crossed the Hellespont. Matthew, finding his troops insufficient to attack the Servians, disbanded his new levies, and sent back the veterans to the garrisons from which they had been drafted, remaining on the defensive behind the walls of Christopolis. In the meantime the fleet advanced to Anactoropolis (Eion), where a Bithynian named Alexios, who had been a partisan of Apokaukos, was established as an independent chief, and maintained a few piratical vessels, with which he levied contributions on the people of Lemnos, and incommoded the troops at Christopolis. Cantacuzenos made a fruitless attack on Anactoropolis, but he destroyed the ships of Alexios.

The retreat of his ottoman auxiliaries made Cantacuzenos afraid to trust himself within the walls of Thessalonica, where the partisans of Paleologos possessed the ascendancy. While he was in doubt how to act, he received the news that a fleet of twenty-two Turkish ships had anchored at the mouth of the Strymon on a plundering expedition. He immediately engaged these marauders in his service, and entered Thessalonica under the escort of these Mussulman robbers. Partly by their assistance, and partly in consequence of the dissatisfaction of the Greek population at the Servian yoke, he regained possession of several towns in Macedonia. But he failed in an attempt to conclude a treaty of peace with Stephen, emperor of the Servians. Cantacuzenos, finding himself obliged to return to Constantinople, left his colleague, John V, at Thessalonica, (1351). Whether jealousy induced him to take this step voluntarily, in order to exclude his son-in-law from the capital, or whether the power of the partisans of Paleologos in Thessalonica enabled John V to refuse quitting the place, the measure was a serious blow to the authority of Cantacuzenos, and soon caused a renewal of the civil war.

The ecclesiastical disputes of the period compelled Cantacuzenos to hurry back to Constantinople; but they are so devoid of practical interest, and so like a rehearsal of more important religious contests in the Greek church, that they may be left to be narrated by ecclesiastical historians. Those who take an interest in the history of the heresies which have ripened in the soil of the Greek church, will read with pleasure the passionate account of the controversy which has been transmitted to us by Nicephorus Gregoras, one of the orthodox. His opposition to the heretical emperor and patriarch drew on him a degree of persecution which he would fain magnify into a species of martyrdom.

Sound policy required the two emperors to combine their forces for recovering the country between Thessalonica and Christopolis; but Cantacuzenos felt that the expulsion of the Servians from this district would increase the power of John V. He therefore preferred adopting measures which he expected would enable him to annihilate the influence of the house of Paleologos at Constantinople. This could only be done by driving the Genoese out of Galata, and he hoped to effect this important conquest with the assistance of the Venetians, who were then carrying on the war with Genoa, called the war of Caffa.

The Genoese had drawn into their hands the greater part of the commerce of the Black Sea. The town of Tana or Azof was then a place of great commercial importance, as many of the productions of India and China found their way to western Europe from its warehouses. The Genoese, in consequence of a quarrel with the Tartars, had been compelled to suspend their

intercourse with Tana, and the Venetians, availing themselves of the opportunity, had extended their trade and increased their profits. The envy of the Genoese led them to obstruct the Venetian trade and capture Venetian ships, until at length the disputes of the two republics broke out in open war in 1348.

In the year 1351, Cantacuzenos entered into an alliance with Venice, and joined his forces to those of the Venetians, who had also concluded an alliance with Peter the Ceremonious, king of Aragon. Nicolas Pisani, one of the ablest admirals of the age, appeared before Constantinople with the Venetian fleet; but his ships had suffered severely from a storm, and his principal object was attained when he had convoyed the merchantmen of Venice safely into the Black Sea. Cantacuzenos, however, had no object but to take Galata; and, expecting to receive important aid from Pisani, he attacked the Genoese colony by sea and land. His assault was defeated in consequence of the weakness of the Greeks and the lukewarmness of the Venetians. Pisani retired to Negropont, to effect a junction with the Catalan fleet; and Pagano Doria, who had pursued him with a superior force, in returning to Galata to pass the winter, stormed the town of Heracleia on the sea of Marmora, where Cantacuzenos had collected large magazines of provisions, and carried off a rich booty, with many wealthy Greeks, who were compelled to ransom themselves by paying large sums to their captors. Cantacuzenos was now besieged in Constantinople, but his fleet was safe from the attacks of the Genoese in the port of Heptaskalon, which he had cleared out. The walls of the city were repaired on the land side, and strengthened by the addition of a deep ditch, extending from the Eugenic to the Wooden Gate, or Xyloporta. The Genoese, unable to make any impression on the city, indemnified themselves by ravaging the Greek territory on the Black Sea. They captured Sozopolis, which refused to allow the garrison sent by the emperor to enter its walls; and this city, which had previously been in possession of a flourishing trade, was now ruined. When the Genoese had carried away everything they could find, they threatened to reduce the houses to ashes, unless the inhabitants paid a large sum from their concealed treasures.

Early in the year 1352, Pisani returned to Constantinople with the Catalan fleet, under Ponzio da Santapace, and a great battle was fought between the allies and the Genoese, in full view of Constantinople and Galata. The scene of the combat was off the island of Prote, and it received the name of Vrachophagos from some sunken rocks, of which the Genoese availed themselves in their manoeuvres. The honour of a doubtful and bloody day rested with the Genoese. The Catalans displayed undaunted valour, but suffered severe loss from getting entangled among the rocks. The Greeks accused the Venetian admiral of timidity, and the Venetians asserted that the Greek fleet abandoned the action in the evening to shelter themselves in their own port. Pisani soon quitted the neighbourhood of Constantinople, and Cantacuzenos, having nothing more to hope from the Venetian alliance, and finding himself again involved in civil war with the partisans of the house of Paleologos, concluded a peace with the republic of Genoa. In this war he had exposed the weakness of the Greek empire, and the decline of the maritime force of Greece, to all the states of Europe. The treaty confirmed all the previous privileges and encroachments of the colony of Galata, and other Genoese establishments in the empire. Greek ships were only allowed to trade with Tana in company with the Genoese, and with a special licence from the republic.

As soon as John V, found himself surrounded by his partisans at Thessalonica, he began to take measures for emancipating himself completely from the authority of Cantacuzenos, and prepared for driving the usurper from the throne. He entered into a treaty with the Servian emperor, by which he engaged to divorce Helena, the daughter of Cantacuzenos, and espouse the sister of the Servian empress. This was not carried into effect; and it is not worth our pains to follow all the personal intrigues of the rival emperors. John V was the first to take up arms and involve his country in a new civil war, without having sufficiently weighed his strength or determined on his plans. He drove his brother-in-law, Matthew Cantacuzenos, from the appanage he had been allowed to occupy, and besieged him in the citadel of Adrianople. The Emperor Cantacuzenos marched from Constantinople with a body of Turks and Catalans to

relieve his son, recovered possession of the city of Adrianople, and allowed his mercenaries to plunder the place and make slaves of the inhabitants. John V called in the Servians and Bulgarians to his aid; Cantacuzenos, as usual, filled the empire with Turks. These allies plundered the people without mercy, but felt little inclined to put an end to a war from which they derived an assured profit. The military experience of Cantacuzenos, supported by the superiority of his Turkish troops, enabled him at last to drive the young emperor from the continent, and compel him to seek a refuge in the island of Tenedos. The moment seemed favourable for transferring the empire from the house of Paleologos to that of Cantacuzenos. Matthew was proclaimed emperor in 1353, but the opposition of the Patriarch Kallistos deferred his coronation. Kallistos was deposed, and his successor Philotheos performed the ceremony in 1354. But the memory of the treaty of Blachern, concluded in February 1347, by which Cantacuzenos had engaged to resign the government of the empire to its hereditary sovereign at the expiry of ten years, and not to raise any of his own family to the throne, had ever been fresh in the memory of the people of Constantinople. The Emperor Cantacuzenos was now generally hated by the Greeks; and his throne was only supported by his close alliance with his son-in-law, Orkhan, whose troops were allowed to use the Greek territories as a hunting-ground to supply their slave-markets. From every quarter John V was urged to make another attempt to dethrone the detested ally of the Infidels.

While John V was seeking for means to renew the war, Francesco Gattilusio, one of the merchant nobles of Genoa, and member of a family which had long possessed some influence in the Greek empire, chanced to anchor at Lesbos with a small fleet. His vessels were well armed, for every coast in the Levant was infested with Turkish pirates. Communications were opened with John V, who purchased the services of Gattilusio by a promise of bestowing on him one of his sisters in marriage, and investing him with the sovereignty of Lesbos as her dowry.

On a dark stormy night in December 1354, a large ship was driven by the wind towards the port of Heptaskalon. The sailors shouted from the deck to the guards of the tower at its entrance that their vessel was in danger of going to pieces; they said she carried a valuable cargo of oil and offered large rewards for assistance. The gates were thrown open, and the soldiers hastened to the spot towards which the ship was drifting. At this moment two galleys, following the great merchantman, landed a body of troops, who seized the open gates, and rendered themselves masters of the tower and all the fortifications that surrounded the port. It was soon known over all Constantinople that John V was within the walls; the partisans of the house of Paleologos filled the city with their acclamations, and the people everywhere declared in his favour. Cantacuzenos, who could rely only on his Turkish and Catalan guards, shut himself up in the palace of Blachern, and attempted to negotiate. He had more than once talked of resigning his power when no one could insist on his keeping his word: his object now was to gain time; yet, either from timidity, or a conviction that he would be able to overreach his enemies, he threw away his only chance of safety, and omitted to retire into his new citadel at the Golden Gate. The young emperor showed more talent and vigour than the veteran hypocrite. He cut off Cantacuzenos from his Turkish and Catalan guards, and gave him to understand that his life could only be preserved by abdicating, and taking the monastic vows. It is impossible to read the partial account which Cantacuzenos has left us of the events that attended his abdication without a feeling of contempt for the emperor, and a conviction of the falsity of the narration. Whatever may have been his virtues in private life and his literary merits, and both were considerable, he was nevertheless, as a man, vain and hypocritical; as a statesman, timid and intriguing; as a minister, treacherous; and as a general, incapable, though as a soldier he was brave. As emperor, he made allies of the most dangerous enemies of his nation and his religion; and as a historian, he laboured, like the imperial prisoner of St Helena, to falsify history in order to gratify his own egregious vanity.

Cantacuzenos remained at Constantinople as the Monk Joasaph until about the year 1358, when he visited his son Manuel, the despot, in the Peloponnesus. He was accompanied by his eldest son Matthew, who had been also compelled to abdicate. In 1360 Cantacuzenos returned



to Constantinople, where he resided in the monastery of Mangana, engaged with literary pursuits. He afterwards retired to the monastery of Vatopedhion on Mount Athos, of which he had been a great benefactor, to end his days. John V became sole emperor at the age of twenty-five, and he carelessly watched the decline of the empire for thirty-six years. Cantacuzenos had indeed left him little territory, dignity, or power to lose, and his own policy seemed to aspire only at making the empire last his own time, in order that he might draw from it the means of enjoying life. Yet in the earlier years of his reign he showed some personal activity : he was enabled by an accident to detach Sultan Orkhan from the interests of the house of Cantacuzenos, and thus relieve the empire from its most dangerous enemy.

Suleiman, the warlike son of Orkhan, made repeated encroachments on the empire, even while his father was in the closest alliance with Cantacuzenos; for the usurper was often unable or unwilling to pay the sums due on account of the services of his ottoman mercenaries. On one occasion Suleiman had taken possession of the fortress of Tzympe, for the restoration of which he exacted the payment of ten thousand byzants. In March 1354 a series of earthquakes threw down the walls of several cities in Thrace, and Suleiman, taking advantage of the confusion, occupied Callipolis, repaired the fortifications, and filled the abandoned houses within its walls with a colony of Turkish families. This was the first permanent establishment of the ottoman Turks in Europe. Cantacuzenos in vain called upon Orkhan to evacuate Callipolis, offering, when it was too late, to pay forty thousand byzants, which was probably the sum claimed as due for the service of the ottoman mercenaries.

There can be no doubt that the restoration of John V to his paternal throne was not pleasing to Orkhan, and that the Turk saw with pleasure that Matthew Cantacuzenos was able to continue the civil war. But, as we have already said, an accident induced the sultan to alter his policy, and form a friendly alliance with John. His son Khalil, while enjoying the freshness of the sea-breeze in a boat on the gulf of Nicomedia, in the summer of 1356, was captured by a pirate galley, which suddenly issued from its concealment in a neighbouring creek. The pirates were from Phocaea, and they carried their prisoner to that city, which was considered as a portion of the Greek empire. The governor, Kalothetes, however, being attached to the party of Cantacuzenos, held the place as an independent chief. Orkhan invited John to obtain his son's release, offering his alliance, and the remission of the debts due by the empire to the Turkish government, as a recompense for his success, and threatening him with vengeance in case of failure. Stimulated by the hope of detaching the ottoman sultan from the party of Matthew Cantacuzenos, the Emperor John collected a fleet, and besieged Kalothetes in Phocaea. The Greeks had lost the art of conducting sieges, so that any fortress of moderate strength baffled their skill. The siege dragged on slowly, and Kalothetes would probably have defeated the whole power of the Greek empire, had not the hopes of his party been annihilated by the defeat of Matthew Cantacuzenos. That rebel emperor was taken prisoner by the Servians in 1357, delivered up to John V., and compelled to abdicate. After this, Kalothetes consented to release Khalil on receiving a ransom of one hundred thousand byzants, and the grant of a high Byzantine title. During the following winter, Suleiman was killed by a fall from his horse; and about a year later (a.C. 1359) Sultan Orkhan died after a reign of thirty-three years. Orkhan was one of the greatest legislators of modern times; his institutions rendered an immense Christian population in Europe subject to the ottoman power, and made the ottoman armies superior to those of all other nations, at a period when their enemies in western Europe were rapidly advancing in civilization and force. But in the following chapter we must examine the progress of the ottoman power and the effect of Orkhan's institutions more particularly.

Murad I ascended the ottoman throne on the death of his father Orkhan. He soon recommenced that system of encroachment which a powerful government and increasing population invariably carries on against a feeble neighbour with a depopulated territory. Every year added some new cities to the ottoman dominions. The strong fortresses of Tzurulon and Didymoteichos received his garrisons, and in 1361 he became master of Adrianople. It must be observed that the country now so easily subdued by the Ottomans, was precisely that in which

the partisans of the house of Cantacuzenos were most numerous, so that we are warranted in surmising that party animosities persuaded the Greek nobles of these districts to prefer the government of Sultan Murad to that of the Emperor John. The voluntary submission of the people explains the silence of the Greek historians concerning the progress and the causes of these conquests. After the conquest of Adrianople, Murad turned his arms against the Bulgarians and Servians. In 1363 he took Philippopolis from the former, and in a short time Serres from the latter. The fame of Murad's justice, as well as of his power, induced the republic of Ragusa to conclude a commercial treaty with the ottoman government. The sultan granted the Ragusans the privilege of trading throughout his dominions; and as this concession was viewed in the light of the donation of a superior, the republic sent the sultan an annual present of five hundred pieces of gold. This treaty was concluded in 1365, and is said to have been the first which the Ottomans entered into with the Western nations. Murad, either because he found it troublesome to sign his name, or because there happened to be no reed for writing at hand, daubed the ink on his palm, and impressed it at the top of the treaty. This sign-manual has been imitated by every succeeding sultan, and figures in fantastic form at the head of their firmans and on the obverse of their coins.

The increasing power of Murad alarmed the emperor to such a degree that, instead of seeking to awaken the national spirit of the Greeks, he resolved to beg assistance from the Pope. He commenced a hypocritical endeavour to delude the Latins into fighting for his cause, by pretending that the Greeks were ready to sacrifice the only thing for which that nation had, during the preceding century, displayed any attachment—namely, its superstitions. Urban V did all in his power to revive the crusading spirit; but Peter, king of Cyprus, directed the operations of the crusading army to serve the interests of the Catholic powers in the Levant, not to fight for the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Servians. A force composed of the troops of the King of Cyprus, contingents from the Venetians and the Knights of Rhodes, with a band of English volunteers, stormed Alexandria on the 13th of October 1365; but as soon as they had plundered its rich warehouses, Peter considered it necessary to abandon his conquest.

The Greek emperor visited the Court of Rome in person in the year 1369, and carried his hypocrisy so far as to join the Latin communion. He delivered to Pope Urban V a written profession of faith, agreeable to the tenets of the Roman church, and declared verbally his conviction that the third person of the Trinity proceeds from the Father and the Son; that it is lawful to distribute the communion in unleavened bread; that the church of Rome is the mother church—that she alone has authority to decide questions of faith, and that she has the sole right of receiving appeals on ecclesiastical matters. All this was publicly pronounced in the Church of St Peter's; yet the emperor gained little by his servility : the Pope only supplied him with two galleys, three hundred soldiers, and a few thousand ducats; and on his way back to Constantinople he was arrested for debt at Venice. His eldest son, Andronicus, who acted as regent of the empire during his absence, pretended that he was unable to raise the money required to release his father; but his second son Manuel succeeded in raising the necessary funds at Thessalonica, of which he was governor, and John returned covered with disgrace to his palace, A.D. 1370.

Murad had watched this attempt to oppose a barrier to the ottoman power with prudent circumspection. In the meantime, he had consolidated his conquests in Thrace by subduing the Greek, Bulgarian, and Servian chiefs, who held independent districts in the chains of Haemus and Rhodope. But when the sultan saw the Greek emperor return to his capital as weak as ever, and far more unpopular with his orthodox subjects, hostilities were renewed. John, unable to form a generous resolution, consented to become the vassal of the sultan as he had already consented to become a servant of the Pope. He had hardly concluded his treaty with Murad when the imprudence of his son Manuel again exposed the empire to the attacks of the Ottomans. The position of Manuel enabled him to form a plot with the Greek inhabitants of Serres, by which he hoped to gain possession of that city. The conspiracy was revealed to Murad, and John V was compelled to disavow the conduct of his favourite son. Manuel

abandoned Thessalonica, and fled to Lesbos; but seeing little chance of escape, he resolved to trust to the known generosity of the sultan. He repaired to Adrianople, and begged for pardon at the feet of Murad, who treated him with clemency, and even kindness. But the ottoman sultan took advantage of the gratuitous violation of the recent treaty with the empire by the Greek prince to take possession of Thessalonica.

The historians who have narrated the events of the last century of the Greek empire often disagree both in the history and the chronology of the period. Many of the details, therefore, require to be illustrated by the publication of new official documents; but much may always remain to exercise the sagacity of the critics who may deem this unfortunate period of Greek history worthy of minute attention. It seems that, about the year 1375, the Emperor John V, being summoned to join the camp of Sultan Murad in Asia with his contingent of Greek troops, left his eldest son Andronicus to act as regent at Constantinople during his absence, as at the time of his visit to Italy. Andronicus formed a conspiracy to keep possession of the throne; and having united with Saoudgi, the eldest son of Sultan Murad, who had been intrusted with the direction of the government in the ottoman territories in Europe, the two rebel princes proclaimed themselves sovereigns. Murad at first suspected John V of being privy to his son's rebellion; but he was soon convinced that this was not the case. He hastened to Europe, the Turkish troops deserted his son's standard, and the two rebel princes were forced to throw themselves into Didymoteichos, where their leading partisans, who had no hope of pardon, made an obstinate defence. The place was compelled to surrender from want of provisions. Murad put out the eyes of his son Saoudgi, and sent Andronicus to his father, who had agreed to inflict on him the same punishment. The sultan treated his other prisoners with excessive cruelty: the soldiers were drowned in the river that flowed beneath the walls of the fortress, and the fathers of the rebel officers were compelled to become the executioners of their sons; for the sultan determined that as many of his subjects as possible should share his grief, (1376).

The blind Andronicus was imprisoned in the tower of Anemas, near the palace of Blachern, for two years, but he then succeeded in making his escape through the assistance of the Genoese of Galata. Andronicus had secured the friendship of the republic of Genoa during his rebellion, by bestowing on it the island of Tenedos. He soon succeeded in driving his father from the throne, which he held for two years and a half. He conferred the title of Emperor on his son John, and immured his own father, John V, in the prison from which he had himself escaped. But the protection the Genoese had accorded to the rebellious son rendered the Venetians anxious to reinstate the imprisoned father on his throne. Carlo Zeno, a Venetian noble, undertook to deliver John V on his signing a grant of the island of Tenedos to the republic of Venice. Zeno asserted that the timidity of the emperor alone prevented his escape. The plot for his release was discovered, and Zeno was obliged to quit Constantinople, carrying with him the emperor's deed ceding the island of Tenedos to Venice. Zeno fell in with a Venetian fleet under the command of Justiniani, his own father-in-law, whom he persuaded to seize the opportunity for gaining possession of an island which commanded the entrance of the Dardanelles. When the success of the Venetians was known at Constantinople, the rebel Emperor Andronicus and the Genoese made an attempt to regain possession of Tenedos. The city was closely invested, and it is said that mortars for throwing stone bullets were employed on board the Genoese fleet at this siege for the first time. The attack was nevertheless defeated.

John V at last effected his escape, and obtained the support of Murad, which rendered all resistance on the part of Andronicus hopeless. A treaty was concluded between the father on one side, and the son and grandson on the other, by which John V resumed the government of the empire, and took possession of Constantinople, but by which he recognized the right of Andronicus and his son John to the imperial title as the lawful heirs to the throne. The city of Selymbria became the residence of the Emperor Andronicus, and its revenues, with those of the towns of Daneion, Heracleia, Kedestos, and Panion, formed his appanage. The podestat and council of the Genoese colony of Galata engaged to assist in enforcing this treaty; yet it appears

to have been very soon violated, for in the year 1384, Manuel, the second son of John V, was crowned emperor at Constantinople, and proclaimed heir to the throne.

When John V escaped from prison in the year 1381, he concluded a treaty with Sultan Murad, acknowledging himself a vassal and tributary of the Ottoman Empire. Murad continued to pursue his career of conquest in Europe without troubling the despicable fragments of the imperial government, which still mock the researches of the historian under the proud title of the Roman Empire. The princes who pretended to share the throne were all equally contemptible, and the people was in no degree superior to its rulers. The selfish rapacity of the aristocracy and the clergy, and the bigotry and turbulence of the populace, cannot be described in all their mean details. Indeed, no description could convey a stronger impression of the degradation of Greek society, than the fact that the policy and courage of the merchants of Genoa and Venice was more effectual in deciding the fate of Constantinople than the feelings and interests of the Greek nation.

In the year 1389 the celebrated battle of Kossova was fought. The ottoman army gained a complete victory, and destroyed the power of the Servians; but Murad was stabbed by a Servian noble as he contemplated the scene of the bloody contest. His son, Sultan Bayezid, renewed his father's treaty with John V, but called on Manuel to take the personal command of the Greek contingent in the ottoman camp. This contingent, with the Emperor Manuel at its head, was directed against the city of Philadelphia, the last community of Greeks which had retained its independence in Asia Minor. The history of Philadelphia at this period excites our curiosity and sympathy, though unfortunately we know little of its political condition and civic government. For two generations we see it maintaining its independence in the midst of the Seljouk Turks. The Byzantine writers mention it as a provincial city of the empire in the year 1323, when it was besieged by the Seljouks, and reduced to the last extremity by famine. On that occasion it was relieved by Alexios Philanthropenos, one of the last patriotic warriors named in Byzantine history. A veil then covers its fate: it was cut off from the central administration of the Greek empire, and, being relieved from fiscal oppression and commercial monopolies, its resources appear immediately to have increased; local independence became of practical value, and the valour and prudence of the citizens protected their liberty. Philadelphia was of so much importance in the year 1336, when Andronicus III besieged Phocaea, that in his treaty with the Seljouk emirs of Aïdin and Saroukhan he inserted a clause binding these princes to treat the people of Philadelphia as friends and allies.

The commercial importance of a neutral city in the midst of the rival emirs, which afforded a regular market for all Turkish produce, and insured a constant communication with Greek and Italian merchants on the sea-coast, was generally felt. This circumstance contributed to maintain the independence of Philadelphia. But if its magistrates and citizens had been as worthless as those of Constantinople, its liberty could not have continued for two generations. Recent events had changed the state of Asia Minor. The rapid conquests of the Ottomans had swallowed up the neighbouring Seljouk principalities, and Sultan Bayezid, who possessed many seaports, no longer desired to see a neutral commercial city on the frontier of his dominions; on the contrary, he was eager to increase his power by its conquest. Philadelphia refused his summons to submit; but when the people saw the Emperor Manuel and the imperial standard in the hostile army, they perceived that the cause of Greek liberty and of the Orthodox Church was hopeless, and they capitulated. The terms conceded to their Greek subjects at this time by the ottoman sultans were not regarded as oppressive, for their fiscal burdens were lightened. The Emir of Aïdin was forced to cede Ephesus to Bayezid, and the principalities of Saroukhan and Monteshe were at the same time incorporated in the Ottoman Empire. These new conquests were formed into a government of which Philadelphia, called by the Turks Alashehr, was constituted the capital, and Ertogrul, the son of Sultan Bayezid, was appointed governor.

The haughty conduct of the young sultan alarmed John V, who now, when it was too late, began to strengthen the fortifications of Constantinople. Thirty six years had elapsed since he

had ordered the citadel constructed by Cantacuzenos at the Golden Gate to be destroyed. He now commenced repairing this stronghold, and proposed improving the defences of the Golden Gate itself by the addition of two towers. In order to complete the work with the greatest celerity, he employed the solid marble blocks that had been used in building the Church of the Holy Apostles and other sacred edifices, which were now little better than heaps of ruin; while, to hide the plan of his fortifications, he lavished architectural decorations on the outer walls. Bayezid, however, was no sooner informed of his proceedings, than he sent an order to his imperial vassal to level the work he had already completed with the ground, threatening that, in case of any delay, he would render the Emperor Manuel responsible. The miserable old emperor, who feared that his son might be deprived of sight, immediately destroyed his work, and shortly after sank into the grave.

The personal beauty of John V obtained for him the name of Kalojanni, which his subjects repeated as a contemptuous compliment, on account of his success in licentious amours.

It is difficult to convey any idea of the rapidity with which Constantinople declined during his long reign. The Greeks, who aspired only at remaining stationary, could not conceal from themselves that they were descending in the scale of nations. They imitated the dress and the manners of the Italians and the Turks, but they never attempted to emulate their activity and courage. The depopulation and poverty of the empire were exhibited in long ranges of dilapidated edifices, which now disfigured many of the principal streets of Constantinople, once adorned with palaces faced with the richest marbles. The government and the nobles had sold the architectural ornaments, variegated marbles, the columns, the tessellated pavements, and rich mosaics to the merchants of Genoa and Venice, who had transported them to the Adrian lagunes and Ligurian rocks, to decorate new palaces, and to ornament the temples and shrines of another church.

#### Sect. V

#### REIGN OF MANUEL II, A.D. 1391-1426.

Emperor Manuel was at Brusa when he heard of his father's death. He was generally esteemed, being neither destitute of talent nor personal courage, while his disposition was mild and conciliatory. Before Bayezid was informed of the death of John V the new emperor had made his escape, and reached Constantinople in safety; but the sultan treated him as a rebellious vassal in consequence of his secret departure. John Paleologos, the son of Andronicus, who had succeeded his father in the appanage of Selymbria, was encouraged to claim the empire in virtue of the treaty of 1381, by which the succession had been secured to his father and himself. A body of Turkish troops was instructed to ravage the Greek territory up to the very walls of Constantinople; but other matters calling for Bayezid's care, he accepted the submission of Manuel, and the Greek emperor again appeared as a vassal at the Sublime Porte.

The ambition of Bayezid was unbounded, and his love of war was inflamed by an inordinate confidence in his own military talents, and in the power of the ottoman army. He despised the Christians and considered it his first duty to reduce them to the condition of subjects, if not of slaves. The position of Manuel was therefore as dangerous as it was degrading; for although the spectacle of a Roman emperor standing as a suppliant before his throne soothed the pride of Bayezid, it was apparent that his vanity would readily yield to his ambition, if an opportunity presented itself of gaining possession of Constantinople.

For several years Bayezid was employed consolidating his dominions both in Europe and Asia and he was compelled to watch the movements of the Western powers, which threatened him with a new crusade. At last, when Sigismund, king of Hungary, was about to invade the ottoman dominions, the sultan convoked an assembly of the Christian princes who were then his vassals, in order to prevent their combining to assist the invaders. Manuel the Greek emperor, John despot of Selymbria, Theodore despot of the Peloponnesus, Stephen king of Servia, Constantine Dragazes, the son of Tzarko, prince of the valley of the Vardar, and several Greek, Servian, Bulgarian, and Albanian chiefs of less importance, who were already independent, appeared in the ottoman camp at Serres. Circumstances induced the Emperor Manuel and the Despot Theodore to believe that their correspondence with the Pope was known to the sultan, and that their lives were in danger. They both fled, and gained their own states in safety. John of Selymbria remained to profit by the flight of his uncles; but Bayezid could only attend to the Hungarian war. His brilliant victory at Nicopolis in 1396 taught all Europe that the discipline of the janizaries was more than a match for the valour of the chivalry of France, and left him at liberty to punish the Greek princes for their desertion. He immediately turned his arms against the Despot Theodore, and marched in person into Thessaly. The Bishop of Phocis was the first traitor who joined the Mussulmans, and urged them to conquer Greece. The Valachians of Thessaly and the widow of the Count of Galona submitted to the terms imposed on them; and the sultan, seeing that no resistance would be offered to his troops by the Greeks in the Peloponnesus, turned back to Thrace. His generals, Takoub and Evrenos, took Corinth and Argos; while Theodore shut himself up within the walls of Misithra, and contemplated the ruin of his subjects without making an effort to save them. The ottoman army, after ravaging great part of the peninsula retired, carrying away immense booty and thirty thousand prisoners, whom they sold as slaves.

As Bayezid was not master of a sufficient naval force to attempt blockading Constantinople, he resolved to undermine the power of Manuel in such a way as would be least likely to awaken the jealousy of the commercial republics of Italy. He fanned the flames of family discord, which shed their lurid light on the records of the house of Paleologos, by acknowledging John, despot of Selymbria, as the lawful Emperor of Constantinople, and supplying him with a Turkish army to blockade Manuel by land. In return for this assistance, John engaged to put the Ottomans in possession of a quarter in Constantinople, to be occupied by them with the same privileges as the Venetians, Pisans, and Genoese held their quarters; the sultan was to name a *cadi* to reside in the Ottoman quarter, as the legal judge of all Mohammedans, who were to build a mosque and celebrate their worship publicly. In order to render the blockade as troublesome as possible to the citizens of Constantinople, Bayezid prohibited all intercourse with his dominions, and cut off the supply of provisions from the coast of Asia. The necessaries of life soon rose to an enormous price; the people began to repine at their sufferings, and many escaped into the ottoman territory, leaving their houses to be destroyed for firewood. Ducas tells us that the modius of wheat was sold for twenty byzants. The Emperor Manuel, as soon as he saw that war with Bayezid was inevitable, had sent an ambassador to solicit assistance from Charles VI, king of France. The Marshal de Boucicault, who had already served with distinction in the East, and had been taken prisoner by Bayezid at Nicopolis, was appointed to command the forces which Charles VI sent to assist the Greek emperor. Boucicault sailed from Aiguesmortes, and after some delay effected his junction with a fleet composed of eight Genoese, eight Venetian, two Rhodian galleys, and one of Mitylene, and proceeded to Constantinople, where he arrived in 1398. The arrival of Boucicault and his little army, which consisted of six hundred men-at-arms, without horses, six hundred infantry soldiers, and one thousand archers and crossbowmen, revived the courage of the Greeks. The Genoese and Venetians were well acquainted with the ottoman coast, and under the direction of Boucicault the garrison of Constantinople carried on a succession of plundering incursions along the Asiatic coast, from the gulfs of Nicomedia and Mudania to the shores of the Black Sea. It was evident that this system of warfare could not long uphold the empire, and Boucicault, finding the Greeks incapable of making any exertions in their own defence, advised Manuel to seek assistance from the Western nations. This advice would have in all probability

arrived too late, had not the ottoman power at this moment been threatened by the great Tartar conqueror, Timor. The sultan was therefore as much inclined to conclude a temporary peace as the emperor. The pretensions of John of Selymbria were the only obstacle, and Manuel overcame this difficulty by a generous resolution. He opened communications with his nephew, whom he easily convinced that, if he entered Constantinople with Turkish troops, his reign would prove of short duration. He then offered to receive John as his colleague, and invest him with the government, while he himself visited Western Europe. The Marshal Boucicault guaranteed these arrangements, and a French force remained in the capital to protect the interests of Manuel during his absence. On the 4th of December 1399, John entered Constantinople, and was proclaimed emperor, and on the 10th Manuel quitted his capital with Boucicault, to present himself as a suppliant at the European courts.

We must now turn from contemplating the decline of the Greek empire and the debasement of the Hellenic race, to examine the causes which led to the rapid rise and solid organization of the Ottoman power. The state of society both in the Greek and Seljouk empires, after the middle of the thirteenth century, held out no hope of internal reform. All classes were imbued with those conservative prejudices, which, by attempting to fix mankind in a stationary position, become the heralds of a declining civilization. Mutability being a law of nature in the political as in the physical world, every community which ceases to be in a state of progress must soon begin to retrograde. The whole mass of the Christian and Turkish population between the Danube and Mount Taurus was smitten with a moral palsy, or absorbed in the selfish pursuit of individual interests. Differences of rank and the power of the aristocracy were declining in proportion as the moral degradation of the Greek nobles and of the Seljouk emirs increased ; while, on the other hand, order and discipline, reposing on no basis of duty and law, acquired little strength among the people when their adventitious bonds were loosened. Insecurity of property caused a rapid diminution of the population. The labour of rural slaves became of little value; their lives consequently were considered of less. Free labourers could not venture to seek employment at any distance from walled towns or fortified castles. The revenues of the central government failed, the administration of justice ceased in many provinces, and was corrupt in all, and even the influence of religion was powerless among the Christian clergy. Anarchy pervaded the whole fabric of society; yet both the Greeks and the Seljouk Turks talked only of their orthodoxy. Still they perceived and trembled at their own want of spirit. The conquest of the Seljouk Empire by the Tartars, and of the Greek empire by the Catalans or Franks, seemed probable events. The storm of conquest at last burst, but it desolated all around, leaving the Greek empire uninjured, but incapable of profiting by the respite. The Tartars broke the Seljouk power to pieces, and reduced the Russians to the condition of the most abject slaves. A new career was opened for the Greek race, but no Greek arose in any rank of society whose name deserves to be recorded among the great or the good; no individual arose who strove to make the sentiments of patriotism, of justice, and of truth predominate over the prejudices of orthodoxy in the breasts of his countrymen.

The Mohammedan world presented a different spectacle. A small nomadic tribe of Turks, which had recently quitted the deserts of Mesopotamia, suddenly became impressed with the noble ambition of excelling in morals and religion as much as in military virtues. It embraced a career of progressive improvement, which rapidly changed the face of the East. We have already noticed the history of Othman, who gave his name not only to his own tribe, but also to the empire which was founded by his son Orkhan. We must now record the institutions which entitle Orkhan to be regarded as the greatest legislator of modern times. The Code Napoleon is a mere mimicry of Roman law, and Napoleon himself was only "a kind of bastard Caesar". The institutions of Orkhan, on the contrary, were not composed of rules drawn from a different state of society by schoolmen; they were the expressions of native energy; they were modelled on the unexpected demands of a progressive society, and they were calculated to provide for future exigencies by organizing a conquering nation.

The establishment of the Ottoman Turks in Europe is the last example of the conquest of a numerous Christian population by a small number of Mussulman invaders, and of the colonization of civilized countries by a race ruder than the native population. The causes which produced these events were in some degree similar to those which had enabled small tribes of Goths and Germans to occupy and subdue the Western Roman Empire; but three particular causes demand especial attention. First, the superiority of the ottoman tribe over all contemporary nations in religious convictions and in moral and military conduct. Second, the number of different races which composed the population of the country between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, the Danube and the Aegean. Third, the weakness of the Greek empire, the degraded state of its judicial and civil administration, and the demoralisation of the Hellenic race.

*First:* The superiority of the ottoman tribe is proved by the respect with which Othman and his followers were treated in the Seljouk Empire, and the readiness with which both Mohammedans and Christians submitted to his government. He could utter the proud boast, that tribe after tribe quitted the Seljouk emirs to join his followers, and that city after city threw off the yoke of the Greek empire to admit his garrisons, but no tribe ever forsook his banner, and no city threw off his yoke. The virtues of the ottoman Turks would have soon yielded to the seductions of wealth and power, had not Orkhan laid the foundations of a new power by blending together his father's tribe—the Seljouks and the Turkomans who joined his banner, and the apostate Christian population which served in his armies—into one body by a framework of civil and military institutions. We must not, however, overlook the fact that, after the conquest of Constantinople, the legislation of Orkhan was smothered in new laws and ordinances borrowed from the Caliphate, from Persian law-books, and from Byzantine usages; and that the Kanun Namé, or laws of Suleiman the Magnificent, the only Ottoman code known in Europe, represents the original institutions of Orkhan, in the same way as the code of Justinian represents the laws of the Twelve Tables, or as the constitution of the United States of America represents the Magna Charta of England.

The establishment of the Ottoman Empire dates from the year 1329, as in that year Orkhan first assumed the power of coining money, and ordered his own name to be mentioned in the public prayers, to the exclusion of the Seljouk sultan. At the same time, his brother Aladdin, who acted as his vizier or prime-minister, advised him to reorganize his military force, and create an army of household slaves, who would remain for life members of his own family. This army, which for several centuries met no equal on the field of battle, and whose deeds rival the exploits of the Macedonians and the Romans, was composed of Christian children, who, if they had received as good an education from their parents and from orthodox priests as they did from the sultan and the Mohammedan moolahs, ought successfully to have resisted the power they established. Orkhan formed his army of regular cavalry and infantry. The cavalry was already called Gipahi; but it is doubtful whether the name Yenitsheri, or janissaries, was then applied to the infantry, or only adopted about thirty years later, when the dervish Hadji Bektash consecrated the corps for Murad I. Two important bodies of irregular militia were formed at the same time, consisting of light cavalry and infantry, or armed pioneers; and it is a proof both of the enlightened views of Orkhan, and of the comparative weakness of the ottoman tribe, that several squadrons of cavalry and regiments of infantry among these irregulars were formed of Christians, in order to secure the population from the oppression and insolence of the Seljouk Turks, who formed the bulk of these irregulars. Orkhan also regulated the relations of the leaders of the military forces established in his new conquests to the government, and laid the foundation of the military fiefs, or timars and siamets, which for a long period occupied an important position in the history of the Ottoman Empire. These fiefs were rendered hereditary by Murad I in 1376.

The nucleus of the Ottoman Empire was the house-hold of Orkhan; and the primary object of his legislation was to concentrate the whole strength of his government within his palace walls. He effected this in a most singular manner, by educating all the civil servants of



the administration, and the best officers and soldiers of his army, as members of his family, after having annihilated every other domestic tie which connected them with their natural parents and with the place of their birth. The object of Orkhan was to form the ablest and most energetic instruments of his will. His brother and vizier, Aladdin, attained the desired end by the organization of the tribute-children, whom he moulded into a community more obedient to the sultan than the Jesuits to the popes, and equally able as an instrument of authority, which knew no moral responsibility but to the will of its master. The portion of the tribute-children trained for service in the administration rivalled the Jesuits in intellectual superiority, as the corps of janissaries surpassed in deeds of arms the exploits of the military orders of Christian knights. To the education of the tribute-children we must ascribe the chief strength of the Ottoman Empire, in as far as it proved superior to all contemporary governments. By them, or rather by their organization, a vast variety of races both of Mohammedans and Christians were held together by as firm a grasp as that by which imperial Rome held her provinces, and the standard of the sultan was carried victoriously into the heart of Europe and Asia, and far along the shores of Africa. Never was such a power reared up so rapidly from such scanty means as were possessed by Orkhan and his vizier, when they conceived the bold idea of exterminating Christianity by educating Christian children.

The Mohammedan law expressly places one-fifth of the booty taken in war, and particularity of slaves—which then formed the most valuable portion of all booty—at the disposal of the sovereign. Besides this, every child without parents who falls into the hands of a Mussulman belongs to Islam, and his master is bound to bring him up in the religion of Mahomet, and even to force him to embrace the true faith. The wars of Orkhan, as an ally of Cantacuzenos, were therefore in a great measure undertaken to fill his palace with young slaves. But a sufficient number could hardly be obtained of the tender age at which they could be brought up as Mussulmans, for the Mohammedan law strictly prohibits the forced conversion of prisoners. The Othoman tribe was small, the Seljouks were disorderly, and no dependence could be placed on mercenary troops. Orkhan consequently felt the necessity of seeking for a permanent supply of well-disciplined recruits. In this difficulty, either his brother Aladdin, or his relation Kara Khalil Tchenderli, suggested that he should in future impose a tribute of children on every Christian district which he conquered. This singular tax met with little opposition from the Greek Christians, whose country had been laid waste by war, and whose families were often in danger of perishing from famine during the civil wars of their emperors. The tribute established by Orkhan was extended by Murad I, and was not legally abolished until the year 1685.

The tribute-children were generally collected about the age of eight. They were lodged in a portion of the sultan's palace, and instructed by able teachers selected by Orkhan and his counsellors. The history of the Ottoman empire proves the excellence of the system adopted in their education. As their talents and physical strength were developed, they were divided into two classes. One class was educated as men of the pen, and from these the officials of the civil and financial administration, the secretaries in the public departments, and even the ministers of state, were chosen. The other class was disciplined to form men of the sword, and formed the corps of janissaries. This college of conquerors was founded with one thousand neophytes; but as every year added to its numbers, the janissaries soon increased to an army of twelve thousand young men in the prime of youthful enthusiasm and manly vigour.

The ottoman princes were educated on the same system as the tribute-children, and for several generations the sultans were eminently men of progress as well as sagacious sovereigns. They were always ready to receive suggestions for the improvement of their army and their government. Each successive sultan embraced new schemes of conquest, and adopted new inventions in war and new ideas in administration. Intelligence was stimulated in every rank. New combinations daily presented themselves to every Ottoman officer in authority which called for a prompt decision, and he was compelled to report the reasons for his decision to an able and despotic master. Hence it was that the pashas of the Ottoman Empire formed a clear

conception of the object they wished to attain. The first modern school of statesmen and generals was formed under the early sultans. The preceding pages have furnished ample proofs of the great abilities and wise administration of Orkhan and Murad I. The bitterest enemies of the Ottomans bear testimony to the wisdom and talents of their successors. Even the fiery Bayezid was liberal and generous to his Christian subjects, and admitted them freely to his society, by which he rendered himself extremely popular. Sultan Mohammed I, who transferred the capital of his empire from Brusa to Adrianople, was a firm friend and liberal master to all his followers; but in his hostility to his enemies he was as persevering as a camel. Murad II distinguished himself by his attention to the administration of justice, and for his reforms of the abuses prevalent under the Greek emperors. If any of his pashas or judges oppressed his Christian subjects, they were punished without mercy. Such was the conduct of the five sultans who prepared the way for the conquest of the Greek race; it ought to be carefully contrasted with that of the contemporary Greek emperors.

The *second* cause which facilitated the conquest of the Ottomans in Europe was the number of different races of Christians who dwelt in the Greek Empire, and in the countries south of the Danube. The Sclavonians were probably then the most numerous body of the population, for they formed a portion of the population in every state, from the banks of the Save to the mountains of the Peloponnesus. The Greeks, who were next in number, were even more dispersed than the Sclavonians, and lived under as many different governments. Even the Bulgarians were not all united under the government of the King of Bulgaria. The Albanians were governed by many chieftains without any supreme head, and the power of the Prince of Great Vlachia, and the number of the Thessalian Vallachians, was rapidly diminishing. The geographical distribution of all these races being quite independent of the actual distribution of political power, the Greek emperors, the Servian and Bulgarian kings, the chieftains of the Albanians and Vallachians, and the Frank princes of Greece, were unable to awaken a national interest in opposition to the Ottoman government. The daily complaint of every Christian who dwelt to the south of the Danube was, that he was governed by a rapacious and unjust master, that his property and his life were insecure, and that no change could render his condition worse. The ottoman armies appeared, and the sultan promised security to the timid and justice to the oppressed. As the ottoman sovereigns respected their promises, we need not wonder at the rapidity of the conquests of the Mohammedans.

The *third* cause which facilitated the progress of the Ottoman power was the weakness of the Greek empire; and this weakness was caused by the degraded state of its judicial and civil administration, and the demoralized condition of its people. The preceding pages have treated this subject in detail, and marked the decay of the energy of the Byzantine empire, and its transformation into a petty Greek state, whose rulers were characterised by financial rapacity, whose church lost its sentiments of Christianity in its eagerness to maintain a national orthodoxy, and whose people became a type of ignorant and conceited immovability. The state of the civil and sanitary police affords a sad illustration of the demoralization of the Hellenic race, and the decay of Greek civilization. In the interval between the years 1348 and 1418 the Greek empire was visited by eight great pestilential disorders, and by a succession of famines.

Manuel II gained very little by his mendicant pilgrimage to Italy, France, and England. Some valuable presents were bestowed upon him by Visconti, the magnificent Duke of Milan, and Charles VI of France granted him a pension of thirty thousand crowns; but he was compelled to return to Constantinople at the end of two years, with a little money and a few volunteers collected from people poorer and not more numerous than the Greeks. He learned on his way home that his enemy Bayezid had been defeated by Timor, and that the Ottoman Empire was utterly ruined. On reaching Constantinople he deprived his nephew John, who had ruled during his absence, of the imperial title, and banished him to Lenmos. John had already placed the Greek empire in a state of vassalage to the Tartar conqueror; Manuel ratified the treaty, and paid to Timor the tribute which he had formerly paid to Bayezid.

Historians have indulged in the wildest fables when they have recounted the history of the defeat of Angora. The armies of Bayezid and Timor are said to have consisted of such numbers that it would have been impossible to feed them for a day without a month's preparation at every station. It is only necessary to expose the falsity of these accounts by citing one example. The Servian contingent in the army of Bayezid was only two thousand men at the opening of the campaign, yet after the losses which it must have sustained in its march from the Bosphorus, it is said to have amounted to twenty thousand at the battle of Angora. Every number appears to have been augmented in the same manner with as little foundation. Rarely, however, has the world seen a more total defeat than that sustained by the ottoman army. Bayezid died a captive in the hands of Timor. Brusa, the whole of the ottoman dominions in Asia Minor, the treasures and the harem of the sultan, all became the spoil of the Tartars, and the institutions of Orkhan seemed doomed to annihilation. Yet rarely has so great a victory produced so little effect on the fate of the vanquished. For a moment, indeed, the ottoman power was humbled, and an opening formed for the revival of the Greek empire; but no energy remained in the political organization of the Hellenic race beyond the confined sphere of local and individual interests; while the institutions of Orkhan, surviving the defeats and civil wars of the Ottomans, soon restored power to their central government, and rendered the sultan again the arbiter of the fate of Greece. Timor would have annihilated the ottoman power had it reposed only on the talents and dynastic position of the sultan; and when he held Bayezid a captive, and saw his sons disputing for the remnants of his succession, he very naturally believed that the ottoman power was utterly destroyed. He beheld the insignificance of the Ottomans as a people, but he could not see the living soul that survived in their political administration.

The civil wars among the sons of Bayezid had no small influence in prolonging the existence of the Greek empire. The ottoman historians reckon an interregnum of ten years after the battle of Angora, during which four of the sons of Bayezid contended for the sovereignty. Suleiman, Isa, and Mousa, successively perished, and the youngest of the family, Mohammed I, at last reunited all his father's dominions, and was regarded as his legitimate successor, and the fifth sultan of the Ottomans, including Othman, the founder of the dynasty.

After the battle of Angora, Suleiman sought safety in Constantinople, where he concluded a treaty with the Emperor Manuel in the year 1403, by which he yielded up Thessalonica, the valley of the Strymon, Thessaly, and the coast of the Black Sea, as far as Varna, to the Greeks. John of Selymbria was recalled from Lemnos, and established at Thessalonica, with the title of Emperor; but the control of the government was vested by Manuel in the hands of Demetrius Leontaris, a Byzantine noble. In return for the cession of these provinces, the emperor furnished Suleiman with money to collect an army, and to establish his authority over the remainder of the ottoman dominions in Europe.

Isa contrived to conceal himself in the neighbourhood of Brusa until Timor quitted Asia Minor. He then assembled an army, and recovered possession of Brusa, and all the early possessions of the house of Othman. He was subsequently attacked and defeated by his brother Mohammed, and is supposed to have perished in attempting to reach Karamania.

Mousa was taken prisoner with his father, and placed by Timor in the hands of the Sultan of Kermian, who afterwards released him. He then retired to Vallachia, and, obtaining assistance from its prince, Myrtshy, and from Stephen, king of Servia, he waged war with his brother Suleiman. The debauchery of Suleiman at last induced the janissaries to join Mousa, and Suleiman was slain in attempting to escape to Constantinople, A.D. 1410.

The close alliance which had existed between Suleiman and Manuel induced Mousa to turn his arms against the Greek empire. He reconquered all the towns in Macedonia and Thessaly which his brother had ceded to Manuel, with the exception of Thessalonica and Zeitounion. Mousa then laid siege to Constantinople; but his operations were paralyzed by the destruction of a naval armament he had fitted out. The emperor had strengthened the imperial

fleet, the command of which he had intrusted to his natural brother, named also Manuel, a man of courage and military talents. The admiral gained a complete victory over the ottoman fleet; but his brilliant success excited the jealousy of his imperial brother. On returning to receive the thanks of his country, he was thrown into prison on an accusation of treason, and remained a prisoner during the life of his brother. The siege of Constantinople was merely a succession of skirmishes under its walls, in which several Greek nobles were slain; and the attention of Mousa was soon exclusively occupied by the attacks of his brother Mohammed.

Mousa rendered his government as unpopular by his severity as Suleiman by his debauchery, and many of the Othoman officers in Europe invited Mohammed to seize the throne. The Emperor Manuel agreed to furnish transports to convey the Asiatic troops over the Bosphorus; but he refused to admit them into Constantinople, though he allowed them to form their camp under its walls. The first operations of Mohammed were unsuccessful; but at last he forced Mousa to retire to Adrianople, who, in the end, was deserted by all his and slain, a.C. 1413. Little more than ten years elapsed from the day that Mohammed, then a mere youth, fled from the field of Angora with only one faithful companion, until he reunited under his sway nearly all the extensive dominions which had been ruled by his father. Timor had not perceived the fact, that, the tribute of Christian children being the keystone on which the whole fabric of the ottoman power rested, its resources were really much greater in Europe than in Asia.

The energy displayed by the Ottomans in recovering all they had lost by Timor's victories is surprising, and the circumstance that this was effected amidst incessant and bloody civil wars requires some explanation. It seems strange that a powerful party was always found ready to embrace the cause of any one of Bayezid's sons who claimed the throne, and that the bloody wars they carried on in no degree weakened the Ottoman Empire. The origin of Othman and his tribe solves the mystery. From the son of a foreign emigrant he gained the rank of a Seljouk prince, and his new power made him the ruler of a numerous population of Seljouk landed proprietors, and of nomadic Turkomans, as well as chieftain of the few families which had composed his father's horde. When the Ottoman dominions extended, the sultan's court was crowded with haughty Seljouk beys and powerful Turkoman chieftains; and when these proud Mussulmans beheld the army and the administration filled with the tribute-children, who were devoted to the sultan as members of his family, their prejudices and their interests alike placed them in opposition to the ottoman government. The spirit of personal independence was as warmly cherished by the Seljouk and Turkoman beys as by the feudal barons of Western Europe. The civil wars in the Ottoman empire correspond with the wars between the crown and the nobility which took place in the feudal kingdoms; they were the struggle between a despotic sovereign and a powerful aristocracy. The Greek emperors, Manuel and his son John VI, availed themselves of this dissatisfaction in a powerful body of the Turkish population to create frequent troubles in the Ottoman Empire, by putting forward several claimants to the throne of the sultans, and every claimant found a party hostile to the central administration ready to take up arms. The love which the Greeks have always manifested for mental contests and diplomatic intrigues induced them to expect greater results from their manoeuvres than could ever result from the political combinations of a power destitute of military force. The vanity of the Byzantine court prevented its tracing the unquiet spirit of the Turkish population to its antipathy to the institutions of Orkhan.

The Greek empire enjoyed an uninterrupted peace during the reign of Mohammed I, which lasted until the year 1421; and Manuel devoted his attention during this period to restoring some order in the public administration, and to re-establishing the sway of the central authority in the distant provinces of the empire. After completing his reforms in the civil, financial, military and ecclesiastical departments at Constantinople, he found it necessary to visit the provinces in person, in order to reduce the local power of the Greek archonts within reasonable bounds. He quitted Constantinople in the month of July 1413, and commenced his operations by reducing the island of Thasos, the citadel of which resisted his little army for two months. The emperor then visited Thessalonica, where it appears that he remained more than a

year. His nephew John, who was governor of the city, assumed the monastic habit; but whether he was compelled by the emperor to adopt this step, in order to allow the new reforms to be carried into execution, is uncertain. The Despot Andronicus, the emperor's second son, was appointed governor of Thessalonica. After his father's death he sold the city to the Venetians for the sum of fifty thousand sequins.

In March 1415 Manuel visited the Peloponnesus. The Roman Empire of the East had shrunk to such pitiful dimensions that the Byzantine province, which only comprised about three-quarters of that peninsula, was now its most extensive province. The first care of the emperor was to strengthen the means of defending this territory by fortifying the Isthmus of Corinth. He then directed his attention to reforming the abuses which the feudal tyranny of the Franks and the unprincipled fiscal extortions of the Greek archonts had introduced into the administration. These abuses were rapidly exterminating the Greek agricultural population, and making way for the immigration of a ruder class of Albanian labourers.

When we compare the reforms of Manuel with the legislation of Orkhan, we are astonished at the great intellectual superiority displayed by the Ottomans at this period. The Greek emperor adopted only a few temporary devices to arrest the progress of social putrefaction in a diseased society. His own talents and the energies of his people were incompetent to make any bold efforts for extirpating the sources of the evil, and for infusing a spirit of honesty and patriotism into Greek society. Yet the fact that Greek society as well as the imperial government was rapidly decaying was generally acknowledged. The Despot Theodore, Manuel's brother, who died about the year 1407, had felt the task of undertaking the regeneration of Greece so hopeless, and had found the difficulty of governing the Peloponnesians so great, that he attempted to sell his province to the Knights of Rhodes, after he had introduced numerous colonies of Albanians to fill up the void caused by the decrease of the native population. The alarming disorders in Greek society induced George Gemistos Plethon, the Platonist, one of the Byzantine officials employed in the Peloponnesus, to propose plans of reform as radical but less practicable than those of Orkhan. The extent of the evils he wished to cure is shown by the violence of the remedies he proposed to use. He boldly declares that no reform was possible without a complete change in the whole frame of society, and to effect this he recommended the abolition of all individual rights of property in land, which were to be replaced by rights of occupancy alone, while the absolute property in the soil was to be vested in the state. His reforms with regard to persons were not less at variance with the feelings of his age and the feudal manners of the Peloponnesians. He proposed reviving the great Roman principle of imperial policy, that a complete separation ought to exist between the classes of soldiers and tax-payers. On these two maxims he formed the details of his reform, which were so adverse to every existing interest and prejudice that it would have been as easy to attempt restoring the laws of Lycurgus.

From a satirist of the time, we learn that while the Emperor Manuel was occupied in diminishing the power and checking the abuses of the archonts of the Peloponnesus and of the Constantinopolitan officials, many of the courtiers in his household made a traffic of creating new corruptions in the administration by selling imperial decrees and golden bulls. The character of the native Greeks he declares to be equally bad. He says, "They are formed of three parts; their tongue speaks one thing, their mind meditates another, and their actions accord with neither". There can be no good administration among an utterly demoralized people. When the emperor returned to Constantinople, he carried with him some of the most turbulent and intriguing of the Peloponnesian chiefs, who had, previous to his arrival, contrived to appropriate the greater part of the taxes levied on the people to their own use. Indeed, the most important result of Manuel's visit was the introduction of such a degree of order in the provincial administration, that a fixed sum could be regularly remitted to the imperial treasury at Constantinople. His son Theodore remained as his viceroy at Misithra.

The death of Sultan Mohammed I in 1421 involved the empire in a contest with his son, Murad II. The self-conceit of the Greeks persuaded them that they could guide the progress of the Ottomans by their superiority in diplomacy. No experience could teach them that rhetoric and scholastic learning are feeble arms against military discipline and national courage. A pretender to the Ottoman throne resided at Constantinople, named Mustapha, who asserted that he was a son of Bayezid. He was now acknowledged as lawful sultan, and Manuel concluded with him a treaty, by which Mustapha promised to restore Gallipoli, the Chalcidice of Macedonia, and the maritime cities on the Black Sea, while the emperor engaged to furnish money and military stores for the attack of young Murad. Manuel soon received a lesson which proved the imprudence of violating the peace with the Ottoman empire when the Greeks were incapable of carrying on the war themselves. Mustapha gained possession of Gallipoli, but refused to surrender it, saying that it was not in his power to yield up a city inhabited by Mussulmans to an infidel sovereign. Manuel would then willingly have made his peace with Murad II, but the Ottoman councils were guided by steadier principles than the Greek, and the terms they insisted on were such that the emperor preferred abiding the fortune of war. For some time the enterprise of Mustapha was successful; he subdued all the European provinces, and crossed the Hellespont to fight a decisive battle with Murad in Asia. But the Turks had discovered his unfitness for the throne. He was abandoned by his followers, taken prisoner by Murad II, and hanged, in order to convince the world that he was an impostor.

Murad resolved to punish Manuel for his intrigues. The emperor was now weakened by age, and the direction of public affairs was in a great measure intrusted to his son John, who endeavoured to appease the sultan with abject apologies. Murad gave the imperial ambassadors no answer until his preparations were completed. He then marched forward and formed the siege of Constantinople, establishing his own headquarters at the Church of the Fountain, and commencing his lines of circumvallation in the month of June 1422. Manuel now sent another ambassador to Murad. Korax, a Greek of Philadelphia, the official interpreter of the court, was charged with the mission. Like all Greek ministers, Korax was extremely unpopular, and his knowledge of the Turkish language, joined to the circumstance that he was not a born subject of the empire, made him the object of much malicious calumny. His diplomacy failed; he was accused of treachery, insulted by the people on his return from the Ottoman camp, and seized by the Cretan guards, who occupied the place of the Varangians of older times. The emperor was compelled to bring the obnoxious interpreter to trial on a charge of holding treasonable correspondence with the enemy. Writings of Korax were found which appeared to confirm the accusation. The gold and silver plate in his house was said to consist of the presents destined for the sultan. Korax was tried, but as his judges sat in fear of the Cretans and the populace, it is not surprising that he was found guilty, even though we suppose that he was innocent. Death was then rarely inflicted at Constantinople by a judicial sentence; Korax was therefore only sentenced to lose his eyesight; but the punishment was inflicted with such barbarity as to cause his death. His house was pillaged by the people, and burned to the ground. This occurrence paints the suspicious feelings of the inhabitants of the capital and the indiscipline of the troops too vividly to be passed over in recording the degradation of the empire.

Murad in the meantime carried on his operations with activity. His lines extended from the Golden Gate to the Wooden Gate; two movable towers were built to assist the storming of the wall, and cannon were employed by the Ottomans for the first time. This early artillery, however, was so ill-constructed and ill-served that it produced little effect. When everything was ready for the assault, the besiegers directed their principal attack against the wall near the gate of St Romanus, which crosses the low ground where the water-course Lykos enters the city. On the 24th of August a celebrated dervish, named Seid-Bokhari, led on the Ottoman troops to the assault. The Seid had prophesied that before nightfall the banner of the Prophet would wave on the ramparts of the imperial city. His followers, persuaded that to him Heaven had revealed its will, boldly rushed onward to fulfill his prediction. The sultan promised the whole plunder of the captured city to the victorious army. But the dervish proved a false prophet. The ladders of the assailants were broken; a thousand of the bravest janissaries fell

before the walls; while the Greeks, fighting under cover of their battlements, lost only a hundred and thirty, killed and wounded. The numerical loss of the Turkish army was not very serious, for when Mousa attacked Constantinople ten years earlier, the Emperor Manuel had observed that the loss of ten Greek soldiers was more difficult to replace than the loss of one hundred Turkish. Fortunately for the empire, Murad was compelled to raise the siege, in order to march against his brother Mustapha. This young prince had been furnished by the imperial government with the means of assembling an army. He was soon betrayed into Murad's power, and strangled by his order. Murad II did not renew his attack on Constantinople, and the last act of Manuel's reign was to sign a treaty of peace, by which Murad left the empire in possession of a few cities in Thrace, of Thessalonica, and a few forts near the mouth of the Strymon, Mount Athos, Zeitounion, and some places in Thessaly. Manuel also engaged to pay the sultan an annual tribute of 300,000 aspers.

Manuel adopted the monastic habit two years before his death, and took the name of Matthew, but he continued to give his advice on public affairs. He died in July 1425, at the age of seventy-seven, after a reign of thirty-four years.

## Sect. VI

### REIGN OF JOHN VI, A.D. 1425-1448.

John VI found the Eastern Roman Empire reduced to the city of Constantinople, a few neighbouring towns, Thessalonica, and a part of the Peloponnesus. His reign of twenty-three years passed in almost uninterrupted peace; yet this long period of tranquillity was productive of no improvement. The emperor did nothing to render the administration of justice more equitable, the clergy made no effort to improve the morality of the people, and the citizens used neither industry nor good faith to increase the commercial resources of their country. As far as the revenues both of the government and of the nation were concerned, the emperor and the people alike consumed, before the expiration of each year, all that the year had produced. The lethargy of the empire must be attributed quite as much to the insensibility of the Greek people as to John's weakness.

The diminution of the Greek population contrasted strangely with the rapid increase of the Ottomans, while their decline in wealth and industry offered a still more unfavourable point of comparison with the Genoese colony of Galata. The trade of the Greeks had passed into the hands of the Italians; the power of the Byzantine emperors was transferred to the Ottoman sultans. The loss of personal dignity and courage followed the loss of national honour and power. Plague and pestilence, as often happens, came as attendants on neglected police, bad government, and social disorder. In the year 1431 a contagious disease of fearful mortality decimated the population of Constantinople; and it was the ninth return of pestilence since the great plague of 1347. Nations, however, are rarely sensible of their own degradation, and at this time the Greeks looked on the Latins with contempt as well as hatred; they despised the western Europeans as heretics, and the Turks as barbarians. Court processions, religious ceremonies, and national vanity amused and consoled them as they hastened along the path of degradation and ruin. Dramatic representations of sacred subjects were performed in the Church of St Sophia, as musical exhibitions had been celebrated in earlier days. Exercises of archery and imitations of Turkish horsemanship replaced the military pageants and the games of the hippodrome, which had been the delight of the Byzantine populace of a nobler period. An interesting description of the aspect of Constantinople, and of the condition of the Greek territory in its vicinity, has been transmitted to us by a candid and judicious contemporary traveller, Bertrandon de la Brocquière, a Burgundian knight, who visited Constantinople at the end of the year 1432, on his return from

a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He describes the fortifications of Constantinople as strong and imposing; but within the walls there were so many open spaces that they equalled in extent the portion still covered with buildings; several of the palaces were in ruins, and part of the portico which had enclosed St Sophia's had already disappeared. Beyond the walls of the city, the country in every direction presented a desolate aspect. All the fortified posts had been destroyed by Murad II when he besieged Constantinople, and the country, as far as Selymbria, was inhabited only by a few Greeks engaged in agriculture, who dwelt in open villages. The Greek empire ended at Selymbria. The frontier territory of the Ottomans was a similar scene of devastation, the land being tilled by a few Christian peasants for their Turkish masters.

The conquest of Thessalonica by Sultan Murad in 1430, the quarrels of the despots Theodore, Constantine, and Thomas, in the Peloponnesus, and the insolence of the Genoese of Galata, who attacked Constantinople on account of some disputes relating to the Black Sea trade, warned the Emperor John VI that, unless he could secure some efficient military aid from strangers, the ottoman power would soon overwhelm the Greek empire. The Pope was the only sovereign who possessed sufficient power and influence to obtain effectual aid for the Eastern Empire; but there was no probability that he would exert that influence, unless the Emperor John consented to the union of the Greek and Latin churches, and recognised the papal supremacy. In this critical conjuncture the statesmen and ecclesiastics of rank at Constantinople decided that the political exigencies of their situation authorised their truckling even with the doctrines of their church.

In the year 1438 the Emperor John and the Greek Patriarch made their appearance at the council of Ferrara. In the following year the council was transferred to Florence, where, after long discussions, the Greek emperor, and all the members of the clergy who had attended the council, with the exception of the Bishop of Ephesus, adopted the doctrines of the Roman church concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost, the addition to the Nicene Creed, the nature of purgatory, the condition of the soul after its separation from the body until the day of judgment, the use of unleavened bread in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the papal supremacy. The union of the two churches was solemnly ratified in the magnificent cathedral of Florence on the 6th of July 1439, when the Greeks abjured their ancient faith in a vaster edifice and under a loftier dome than that of their own much-vaunted temple of St Sophia.

The Emperor John derived none of the advantages he had expected from the simulated union of the churches. Pope Eugenius, it is true, supplied him liberally with money, and bore all the expenses both of the Greek court and clergy during their absence from Constantinople; he also presented the emperor with two galleys, and furnished him with a guard of three hundred men, well equipped, and paid at the cost of the papal treasury; but his Holiness forgot his promise to send a fleet to defend Constantinople, and none of the Christian princes showed any disposition to fight the battles of the Greeks, though they took up the cross against the Turks.

On his return John found his subjects indignant at the manner in which the honour and doctrines of the Greek Church had been sacrificed in an unsuccessful diplomatic speculation. The bishops who had obsequiously signed the articles of union at Florence, now sought popularity by deserting the emperor, and making a parade of their repentance, lamenting their wickedness in falling off for a time from the pure doctrine of the orthodox church. The only permanent result of this abortive attempt at Christian union was to increase the bigotry of the orthodox, and to furnish the Latins with just grounds for condemning the perfidious dealings and bad faith of the Greeks. In both ways it assisted the progress of the ottoman power. The Emperor John, seeing public affairs in this hopeless state, became indifferent to the future fate of the empire, and thought only of keeping on good terms with the sultan. His brother Demetrius, however, who had accompanied him to Florence, shared his apostasy, and partaken of the papal bounty, now basely attempted to take advantage of the popular dissatisfaction with the union. He claimed the throne as being the first child of Manuel who was a Porphyrogenitus, but he trusted to gain his ends by the aid of Turkish troops rather than by the merits of his title



or the preference of the Greeks. Collecting a large force composed of the Turkish nomads, who were ready to join any standard that offered them an opportunity of plundering and enslaving the Christians, Demetrius marched to besiege his brother in Constantinople. Sultan Murad took no direct part in the contest, but he allowed Demetrius to enrol Turkish troops without opposition, and viewed with satisfaction a rebellion which tended to weaken the empire. When called upon to choose between the two brothers, the Greek people acknowledged the superiority of the reigning emperor. Demetrius, after plundering the suburbs of Constantinople, saw his army melt away, and was happy to find that his brother's moderation and love of peace was so great that he was allowed to retain his principality at Mesembria with the title of Despot.

The exploits of John Hunniades might have awakened the Greeks from their lethargy, had any warlike spirit survived in the nation. The victory of the Hungarian army at the pass of Isladi, and a war with the Sultan of Karamania, threatened the Ottoman Empire with serious danger; but the victory of Varna re-established the glory of the sultan's arms. Neither the successes of the Hungarians nor the presence of a papal force in the Hellespont, which at last made its appearance under the command of Cardinal Gondolmieri, could induce the Emperor John to unite his cause with that of the Western powers. He had obtained too many proofs of the instability and imprudence of their counsels. The moment he heard of the great victory of Sultan Murad at Varna, he sent an embassy to congratulate his suzerain, and solicit a renewal of their alliance, which the sultan immediately granted. John even contrived to avoid taking any part in the war carried on against the sultan by his brother Constantine in Greece, and succeeded in preserving uninterrupted peace until his death in 1448. During his inglorious reign of twenty-three years he never forgot that he was a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. Though a voluptuary, he appears to have been a man of considerable ability and judgment, of a kind disposition and a good heart; but he was deficient in all nobler qualities. It is said that the Emperor Manuel II had feared the enterprising character of his son John VI would bring ruin on the empire. The old man observed that the affairs of the government of the Eastern Roman Empire had fallen so low that Constantinople required an overseer, not a sovereign. John VI proved precisely the temporising manager of the state that circumstances required; and his pliancy averted, during his lifetime, the calamities which were ready to overwhelm the Greek empire.

## Sect. VII.

### REIGN OF CONSTANTINE XI

A.D. 1448- 1453

Constantine XI, the last of the Greek emperors, was residing in his despotat at Sparta when his brother John VI died. As he had been recently engaged in hostilities with the sultan, it was doubtful whether Murad would acknowledge him as emperor, and Demetrius availed himself of these doubts to make another attempt to occupy the throne. The deficiency of truth, honour, and patriotism among the Greek aristocracy during the last century of the Eastern Empire is almost without a parallel in history; but Demetrius was too well known and too generally despised to find a large party even in that worthless aristocracy disposed to espouse his cause. Constantine, on the other hand, was known to possess both candour and energy; and even though he was attached to the union of the churches, this taint of heresy did not prevent his being respected by all, except the most bigoted among the virulently orthodox Greeks. He was therefore formally proclaimed emperor; and the consent of the sultan having been obtained to his assumption of the imperial title, a deputation was sent to the Peloponnesus to carry him the insignia of empire. The ceremony of his coronation was performed at Sparta in the month of January 1449. On arriving at Constantinople he would not allow the ceremony to be repeated in

the Church of St Sophia, lest it should give rise to disputes between the unionists and the orthodox.

Sultan Murad II died in February 1451, after a prosperous reign of thirty years, and was succeeded by his son Mohammed II, who was only twenty-one years old. Mohammed II was a man of great ambition and great talents; he united with extraordinary activity and courage a degree of judgment rare in his high station, and still rarer at his early age. On ascending the throne his pride was soothed by the obsequious attentions of all the Christian powers in the East, whose ambassadors crowded to Adrianople to offer him their congratulations, their condolences, and their homage. The Emperors of Constantinople and of Trebizond, the Despots of the Peloponnesus, the Dukes of Athens and of Naxos, the Princes of Acamania, Lesbos, and Chios, the Podesta of Galata, and the Grand-master of Rhodes, all sent their envoys to solicit a continuance of the friendly intercourse they had maintained with Murad II. Mohammed sent all away pleased with their friendly reception. Phrantzes, the historian, who had often seen the young sultan when he visited the court of Murad II as an ambassador, has left us an interesting sketch of his character. He says that he united the enterprise and valour of youth with the prudence and wisdom of old age both in war and politics; that he was fond of reading. He spoke five languages correctly, besides his native Turkish —Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, and Slavonian.

The conquest of Constantinople was the first object of the ambition of Mohammed II. It was by nature the capital of his dominions, and as long as it remained in the hands of the Greeks the Ottoman empire lay open to the invasions of the western Christians. Having concluded a truce for three years with John Hunniades, the young sultan crossed over into Asia to suppress the hostile proceedings of Ibrahim, the sultan of Karamania. Constantine, who appears to have formed a very erroneous idea of the talents and character of Mohammed, took this opportunity of insulting him in the most sensitive manner, by sending an embassy to demand an augmentation of the pension of three hundred thousand aspers, which the Ottoman court had accorded to the Greek for the maintenance of Orkhan, the grandson of Suleiman. The ambassadors were instructed to insinuate that, if the demand were not granted, Orkhan might be allowed to lay claim to the Ottoman throne. Such an insult was not likely to be ever forgotten by a haughty and ambitious prince. The Grand-vizier Khalil, who had steadily favoured the Greeks, and was supposed to have received bribes to protect their cause, lost all patience at the folly of Constantine's ill-timed demand, and addressed the ambassadors in these words : — "Your madness will put Constantinople in the hands of the sultan. Proclaim Orkhan sultan in Europe, call in the Hungarians to your aid, retake what provinces you can, and you will speedily see the end of the Greek empire". The wary young sultan, however, dismissed the ambassadors with courtesy. But as soon as his Asiatic campaign was finished, he ordered the imperial agents to be expelled from the territory in the valley of the Strymon which had been assigned for the maintenance of Orkhan, and stopped all further payments. Shortly after, without informing Constantine of his intention, he constructed a fortress on the Greek territory at the narrowest part of the Bosphorus, opposite a fort which had been constructed by Bayezid I on the Asiatic shore. The distance between the two forts is about three-quarters of a mile, and a rapid current flows between. The sultan had made every preparation for completing the work with extraordinary celerity. An ample supply of materials had been collected before his object was known, and as soon as the plan of the fortress was marked out, a thousand masons and two thousand labourers worked incessantly to complete the walls. Constantine had good reason to consider the construction of this fortress on his territory, within five miles of his capital, and commanding its approach from the Black Sea, as an infraction of the treaty between the two empires, but he was too weak to resent this signal revenge for his own recent threats. He complained of the hostile invasion of the Greek territory, but Mohammed treated his reclamations with contempt, observing that the ground on which the fortress was built, having been purchased and paid for, was Turkish property, and the Emperor of Constantinople, being a vassal of the Porte, had no right to dispute the will of the sultan.

The first open resistance was offered by some Greeks, who endeavoured to prevent Mohammed's engineers from carrying off the marble columns from a church. These pious Christians were cut to pieces by the ottoman troops. As the work advanced the sultan's aggressions increased. His soldiers were allowed to plunder; quarrels ensued in which blood was shed, and then the Turks attacked the Greeks who were getting in the harvest and slew the reapers. Constantine in alarm closed the gates of Constantinople, cut off all communications between the Greeks and the Ottmans, and sent another embassy to the sultan to ask redress. Mohammed replied by a formal declaration of war.

Both parties now began to prepare for the mortal contest. The siege of Constantinople was to be the great event of the coming year. The sultan, in order to prevent the emperor's brothers in the Peloponnesus from sending any succours to the capital, ordered Tourakhan, the pasha of Thessaly, to invade the peninsula. He himself took up his residence at Adrianople, to collect warlike stores and siege-artillery. Constantine, on his part, made every preparation in his power for a vigorous defence. He formed large magazines of provisions, collected military stores, and enrolled all the soldiers he could muster among the Greek population of Constantinople. But the inhabitants of that city were either unable or unwilling to furnish recruits in proportion to their numbers. Bred up in peaceful occupation, they probably possessed neither the activity nor the habitual exercise which was required to move with ease under the weighty armour then in use. So few were found disposed to fight for their country, that not more than six thousand Greek troops appeared under arms during the whole siege. The numerical weakness of the Greek army rendered it incapable of defending so large a city as Constantinople, even with all the advantage to be derived from strong fortifications. The emperor was, therefore, anxious to obtain the assistance of the warlike citizens of the Italian republics, where good officers and experienced troops were then numerous. As he had no money to engage mercenaries, he could only hope to succeed by papal influence. An embassy was sent to Pope Nicholas V, begging immediate aid, and declaring the emperor's readiness to complete the union of the churches in any way the Pope should direct. Nicholas despatched Cardinal Isidore, the metropolitan of Kief, who had joined the Latin Church, as his legate. Isidore had represented the Russian church at the council of Florence; but on his return to Russia he was imprisoned as an apostate, and with difficulty escaped to Italy. He was by birth a Greek; and being a man of learning and conciliatory manners, it was expected that he would be favourably received at Constantinople.

The cardinal arrived at Constantinople in November 1452. He was accompanied by a small body of chosen troops, and brought some pecuniary aid, which he employed in repairing the most dilapidated part of the fortifications. Both the emperor and the cardinal deceived themselves in supposing that the dangers to which the Greek nation and the Christian church were exposed would induce the orthodox to yield something of their ecclesiastical forms and phrases. It was evident that foreign aid could alone save Constantinople, and it was absurd to imagine that the Latins would fight for those who treated them as heretics, and who would not fight for themselves. The crisis, therefore, compelled the Greeks to choose between union with the Church of Rome or submission to the Ottoman power. They had to decide whether the preservation of the Greek empire was worth the ecclesiastical sacrifices they were called upon to make in order to preserve their national independence.

In the meantime, the Emperor Constantine celebrated his union with the papal church, in the cathedral of St Sophia, on the 12th of December 1452. The court and the great body of the dignified clergy ratified the act by their presence; but the monks and the people repudiated the connection. In their opinion the Church of St Sophia was polluted by the ceremony, and from that day it was deserted by the orthodox. The historian Ducas declares that they looked upon it as a haunt of demons, and no better than a pagan shrine. The monks, the nuns, and the populace, publicly proclaimed their detestation of the union; and their opposition was inflamed by the bigotry of an ambitious pedant, who, under the name of Georgios Scholarios, acted as a warm partisan of the union at the council of Florence, and under the ecclesiastical name of Gennadios

is known in history as the subservient patriarch of Sultan Mohammed II. On returning from Italy, he made a great parade of his repentance for complying with the unionists at Florence. He shut himself up in the monastery of Pantokrator, where he assumed the monastic habit, and the name of Gennadios, under which he consummated the union between the Greek Church and the ottoman administration. At the present crisis he stepped forward as the leader of the most bigoted party, and excited his followers to the most furious opposition to measures which he had once advocated as salutary to the church, and indispensable for the preservation of the state. The unionists were now accused of sacrificing true religion to the delusions of human policy, of insulting God to serve the Pope, and of preferring the interests of their bodies to the care of their souls. In place of exhorting their countrymen to aid the emperor, who was straining every nerve to defend their country—in place of infusing into their minds the spirit of patriotism and religion, these teachers of the people were incessantly inveighing against the wickedness of the unionists and the apostasy of the emperor. So completely did their bigotry extinguish every feeling of patriotism that the Grand-duke Notaras declared he would rather see Constantinople subjected to the turban of the sultan than to the tiara of the Pope. His wish was gratified; but, in dying, he must have felt how fearfully he had erred in comparing the effects of papal arrogance with the cruelty of Mohammedan tyranny. The Emperor Constantine, who felt the importance of the approaching contest, showed great prudence and moderation in his difficult position. The spirit of Christian charity calmed his temper, and his determination not to survive the empire gave a deliberate coolness to his military conduct. Though his Greek subjects often raised seditions, and reviled him in the streets, the emperor took no notice of their behaviour. To induce the orthodox to fight for their country, by having a leader of their own party, he left the Grand-duke Notaras in office; yet he well knew that this bigot would never act cordially with the Latin auxiliaries, who were the best troops in the city; and the emperor had some reason to distrust the patriotism of Notaras, seeing that he hoarded his immense wealth, instead of expending a portion of it for his country.

The fortifications were not found to be in a good state of repair. Two monks who had been intrusted with a large sum for the purpose of repairing them, had executed their duty in an insufficient, and it was generally said in a fraudulent manner. The extreme dishonesty that prevailed among the Greek officials explains the selection of monks as treasurers for military objects; and it must lessen our surprise at finding men of their religious professions sharing in the general avarice, or tolerating the habitual peculation of others.

Cannon were beginning to be used in sieges, but stone balls were used in the larger pieces of artillery; and the larger the gun, the greater was the effect it was expected to produce. Even in Constantinople there were some artillery too large to be of much use, as the land wall had not been constructed to admit of their recoil, and the ramparts were so weak as to be shaken by their concussion. Constantine had also only a moderate supply of gunpowder. The machines of a past epoch in military science, but to the use of which the Greeks adhered with their conservative prejudices, were brought from the storehouses, and planted on the walls beside the modern artillery. Johann Grant, a German officer, who arrived with Justiniani, was the most experienced artilleryman and military engineer in the place.

A considerable number of Italians hastened to Constantinople as soon as they heard of its danger, eager to defend so important a depot of Eastern commerce. The spirit of enterprise and the love of military renown had become as much a characteristic of the merchant nobles of the commercial republics as they had been, in a preceding age, distinctions of the barons in feudal monarchies. All the nations who then traded with Constantinople furnished contingents to defend its walls. A short time before the siege commenced, John Justiniani arrived with two Genoese galleys and three hundred chosen troops, and the emperor valued his services so highly that he was appointed general of the guard. The resident bailo of the Venetians furnished three large galleasses and a body of troops for the defence of the port. The consul of the Catalans, with his countrymen and the Aragonese, undertook the defence of the great palace of Bukoleon and the port of Kontoskalion. The Cardinal Isidore, with the papal troops, defended the Kynegesion,

and the angle of the city at the head of the port down to St Demetrios. The importance of the aid which was afforded by the Latins is proved by the fact, that of twelve military divisions into which Constantine divided the fortifications, the commands of only two were intrusted to the exclusive direction of Greek officers. In the others, Greeks shared the command with foreigners, or else foreigners alone conducted the defence. When all Constantine's preparations for defence were completed, he found himself obliged to man a line of wall on the land side of about five miles in length, every point of which was exposed to a direct attack. The remainder of the wall towards the port and the Propontis exceeded nine miles in extent, and his whole garrison hardly amounted to nine thousand men. His fleet consisted of only twenty galleys and three Venetian galleasses, but the entry of the port was closed by a chain, the end of which, on the side of Galata, was secured in a strong fort of which the Greeks kept possession. During the winter the emperor sent out his fleet to ravage the coast of the Propontis as far as Cyzicus, and the spirit of the Greeks was roused by the booty they made in these expeditions.

Mohammed II spent the winter at Adrianople, preparing everything necessary for commencing the siege with vigour. His whole mind was absorbed by the glory of conquering the Roman Empire, and gaining possession of Constantinople, which for more than eleven hundred and fifty years had been the capital of the East. While the fever of ambition inflamed his soul, his cooler judgment also warned him that the ottoman power rested on a perilous basis as long as Constantinople, the true capital of his empire, remained in the hands of others. Mohammed could easily assemble a sufficient number of troops for his enterprise, but it required all his activity and power to collect the requisite supplies of provisions and stores for the immense military and naval force he had ordered to assemble, and to prepare the artillery and ammunition necessary to insure success. Early and late, in his court and in his cabinet, the young sultan could talk of nothing but the approaching siege. With the writing-reed and a scroll of paper in his hand, he was often seen tracing plans of the fortifications of Constantinople, and marking out positions for his own batteries. Every question relating to the extent and locality of the various magazines to be constructed in order to maintain the troops was discussed in his presence; he himself distributed the troops in their respective divisions and regulated the order of their march; he issued the orders relating to the equipment of the fleet, and discussed the various methods proposed for breaching, mining, and scaling the walls. His enthusiasm was the impulse of a hero, but the immense superiority of his force would have secured him the victory with any ordinary degree of perseverance.

The Ottomans were already familiar with the use of cannon. Murad II had employed them when he besieged Constantinople in 1422; but Mohammed now resolved on forming a more powerful battering-train than had previously existed. Neither the Greeks nor Turks possessed the art of casting large guns. Both were obliged to employ foreigners. An experienced artilleryman and founder, named Urban, by birth a Vallachian, carried into execution the sultan's wishes. He had passed sometime in the Greek service; but even the moderate pay he was allowed by the emperor having fallen in arrear, he resigned his place and transferred his services to the sultan, who knew better how to value warlike knowledge. He now gave Mohammed proof of his skill by casting the largest cannon which had ever been fabricated. He had already placed one of extraordinary size in the new castle of the Bosphorus, which carried a ball across the straits. The gun destined for the siege of Constantinople far exceeded in size this monster, and the diameter of its mouth must have been nearly two feet and a-half. Other cannon of great size, whose balls of stone weighed 150 lb., were also cast, as well as many guns of smaller calibre. All these, together with a number of ballists and other ancient engines still employed in sieges, were mounted on carriages in order to transport them to Constantinople. The conveyance of this formidable train of artillery, and of the immense quantity of ammunition required for its service, was by no means a trifling operation.

The first division of the Ottoman army moved from Adrianople in the month of February 1453. In the meantime a numerous corps of pioneers worked constantly at the road, in order to prepare it for the passage of the long train of artillery and baggage waggons. Temporary

bridges, capable of being taken to pieces, were erected by the engineers over every ravine and water-course, and the materials for the siege advanced steadily, though slowly, to their destination. The extreme difficulty of moving the monster cannon with its immense balls retarded the sultan's progress, and it was the beginning of April before the whole battering-train reached Constantinople, though the distance from Adrianople is barely a hundred miles. The division of the army under Karadja Pasha had already reduced Mesembria, Anchialos, Bizya, and the castle of St Stephanos. Selymbria alone defended itself and the fortifications were so strong that Mohammed ordered it to be closely blockaded, and left its fate to be determined by that of the capital.

On the 6th of April, Sultan Mohammed II encamped on the slope of the hill facing the quarter of Blachern, little beyond the ground occupied by the Crusaders in 1203, and immediately ordered the construction of lines, extending from the head of the port to the shore of the Propontis. These lines were formed of a mound of earth, and they served both to restrain the sorties of the besieged, and to cover the troops from the fire of the enemy's artillery and missiles. The batteries were then formed: the principal were erected against the gate Charsias, in the quarter of Blachern, and against the gate of St Romanos, near the centre of the city wall. It was against this last gate that the fire of the monster gun was directed and the chief attack was made.

The land forces of the Turks probably amounted to about seventy thousand men of all arms and qualities; but the real strength of the army lay in the corps of janissaries, then the best infantry in Europe, and their number did not exceed twelve thousand. At the same time, twenty thousand cavalry, mounted on the finest horses of the Turkoman breed, and hardened by long service, were ready to fight either on horseback or on foot under the eye of their young sultan. The fleet which had been collected along the Asiatic coast, from the ports of the Black Sea to those of the Aegean, brought additional supplies of men, provisions, and military stores. It consisted of three hundred and twenty vessels of various sizes and forms. The greater part were only half-decked coasters, and even the largest were far inferior in size to the galleys and galleasses of the Greeks and Italians.

The fortifications of Constantinople, towards the land side, vary so little from a straight line that they afford great facilities for attack. The defences had been originally constructed on a magnificent scale, and with great skill, according to the ancient art of war. Even though they were partly ruined by time, and weakened by careless reparations, they still offered a formidable obstacle to the imperfect science of the engineers in Mohammed's army. Two lines of wall, each flanked with its own towers, rose one above the other, overlooking a broad and deep ditch. The interval between these walls enabled the defenders to form in perfect security, and facilitated their operations in clearing the ditch and retarding the preparation for assault. The actual appearance of the low walls of Constantinople, with the ditch more than half-filled up, gives only an incorrect picture of their former state.

Mohammed had made his preparations for the siege with so much skill that his preliminary works advanced with unexpected rapidity. The numerical superiority of his army, and the precautions he had adopted for strengthening his lines, rendered the sorties of the garrison useless. The ultimate success of the defence depended on the arrival of assistance from abroad; but the numbers of the Ottoman fleet seemed to render even this hope almost desperate. An incident occurred that showed the immense advantage conferred by skill, when united with courage, over an apparently irresistible superiority of force in naval warfare. Four large ships, laden with grain and stores, one of which bore the Greek and the other the Genoese flag, had remained for some time wind-bound at Chios, and were anxiously expected at Constantinople. At daybreak these ships were perceived by the Turkish watchmen steering for Constantinople with a strong breeze in their favour. The war-galleys of the sultan, under the command of the Capitan-pasha Baltaoghlu, immediately got under way to capture them. The sultan himself rode down to the point of Tophané to witness a triumph which he considered certain, and which he

thought would reduce his enemy to despair. The Greeks crowded the walls of the city, offering up prayers for their friends, and trembling for their safety in the desperate struggle that awaited them. The Christians had several advantages which their nautical experience enabled them to turn to good account. The great size of their ships, the strength of their construction, their weight, and their high bulwarks, were all powerful means of defence when aided by a stiff breeze blowing directly in the teeth of their opponents. The Turks were compelled to row their galleys against this wind and the heavy sea it raised. In vain they attacked the Christians with reckless valour, fighting under the eye of their fiery sovereign. The skill of their enemy rendered all their attacks abortive. In vain one squadron attempted to impede the progress of the Christians, while another endeavoured to run along-side and carry them by boarding. Every Turkish galley that opposed their progress was crushed under the weight of their heavy hulls, while those that endeavoured to board had their oars shivered in the shock, and drifted helpless far astern. The few that succeeded for a moment in retaining their place alongside were either sunk by immense angular blocks of stone that were dropped on their frail timbers, or were filled with flames and smoke by the Greek fire that was poured upon them. The rapidity with which the best galleys were sunk or disabled appalled the bravest; and at last the Turks shrank from close combat, on an element where they saw that valour without experience was of no avail. The Christian ships, in the meantime, held steadily on their course, under all the canvass their masts could carry, until they rounded the point of St Demetrius and entered the port, where the chain was joyfully lowered to admit them.

The young sultan, on seeing the defeat of his galleys, lost all command over his temper. He could hardly be restrained from urging his horse into the sea, and in his frantic passion heaped every term of abuse and insult on his naval officers. He even talked of ordering his admiral, Baltaoghlu, to be impaled on the spot; but the janissaries present compelled even Mohammed to restrain his vengeance, by boldly demanding the pardon of the unfortunate capitan-pacha, when they saw the sultan strike him with the mace-at-arms in his hand. This check revealed to Mohammed the extent of the danger to which his naval force was exposed, should either the Genoese or Venetians send a powerful fleet to the assistance of the Emperor Constantine.

This naval discomfiture was also attended by some disasters on shore. The monster cannon burst before it had produced any serious impression on the walls. Its loss, however, was soon replaced; but the ottoman army was repulsed in a general attack. An immense tower of timber, mounted on many wheels, and constructed on the model used in sieges from the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans, was dragged up to the edge of the ditch. Under its cover, workmen were incessantly employed throwing materials into the ditch to enable the tower itself to approach the walls, while the fire of several guns, and the operations of a corps of miners, ruined the opposite tower of the city. The progress of the besiegers induced them to risk an assault, in which they were repulsed, after a hard-fought struggle; and during the following night, John Justiniani made a great sortie, during which his workmen cleared the ditch, and his soldiers filled the tower with combustible materials, and burned it to the ground. Its exterior, having been protected by a triple covering of buffaloes' hides, was found to be impervious even to Greek fire.

In order to counteract the effect of these defeats, which had depressed the courage of the Ottomans and raised the spirits of the Greeks, the sultan resolved to adopt measures for placing his fleet in security, and facilitating the communication between the army before Constantinople and the naval camp on the Bosphorus. The Venetians had recently transported a number of their galleys from the river Adige overland to the lake of Garda: this exploit, which had been loudly celebrated at the time, suggested to the sultan the idea of transporting a number of vessels from the Bosphorus into the port of Constantinople, where the smooth water and the command of the shore would secure to his ships the mastery of the upper half of that extensive harbor. The distance over which it was necessary to transport the galleys was only five miles, but a steep hill presented a formidable obstacle to the undertaking. Mohammed, nevertheless,

having witnessed the transport of his monster cannon over rivers and hills, was persuaded that his engineers would find no difficulty in moving his ships over the land. A road was accordingly made, and laid with strong planks and wooden rails, which were plastered over with tallow. It extended from the station occupied by the fleet at Dolma Baktshé to the summit of the ridge near the cemetery of Pera. On this inclined plane, with the assistance of windlasses and numerous yokes of oxen, the vessels were hauled up one after the other to the summit of the hill, from whence they descended without difficulty to the point beyond the present arsenal, where they were launched into the port under the protection of batteries prepared for their defence. Historians, wishing to give a dramatic character to their pages, have attributed marvellous difficulties to this daring exploit. It was certainly a well-conceived and well-executed undertaking, for a division of the ottoman fleet was conveyed into the port in a single night, where the Greeks, at the dawn of day, were amazed at beholding the hostile ships safe under the protection of inexpugnable batteries.

To establish an easy and rapid communication between the naval camp on the Bosphorus and the army before Constantinople, Mohammed ordered a floating bridge to be constructed across the port, from the point near the old foundery, on the side of Galata, to that near the angle of the city walls, near Haivan Serai, the ancient amphitheatre. The roadway of this bridge was supported on the enormous jars used for storing oil and wine, numbers of which were easily collected in the suburbs of Galata. These jars, when bound together with their mouth inverted in the water, formed admirable pontoons. Artillery was mounted on this bridge, and the galleys were brought up to the city walls, which were now assailed from a quarter hitherto safe from attack. The Genoese under Justiniani on one occasion, and the Venetians on another, were defeated in their attempts to bum the Turkish fleet and destroy the bridge. The fire of the artillery rendered the attacks of the Italians abortive, and their failure afforded a decisive proof that the defence of the city was becoming desperate. To avoid the admission of their inferiority in force, the defeated parties threw the blame on one another, and their dissensions became so violent that the emperor could hardly appease the quarrel.

During all the labours of the besiegers in other quarters, the approaches were pushed vigorously forward against the land wall. Though the activity in other and more novel operations might attract greater attention, the industry of those engaged in filling up the ditch, and the fire of the breaching batteries, never relaxed. Though all attempts to cross the ditch at the gate of St Romanos were long baffled by the Greeks, and the mining operations at Blachern were discovered and defeated by Johann Grant, still the superior number and indefatigable perseverance of the Othomans at last filled up the ditch, and the ceaseless fire of their guns ruined the walls. A visible change in the state of the fortifications encouraged the assailants, and showed the besieged that the enemy was gradually gaining a decided advantage. At the commencement of the siege, the ottoman engineers had displayed so little knowledge of the mode of using artillery to effect a breach, that a Hungarian envoy from John Hunniades, who visited Mohammed's camp, ridiculed the idea of their producing any effect on the walls of Constantinople. Tins stranger was said to have taught the Turks to fire in volleys, and to cut the wall in rectangular sections, in order to produce a practicable breach. The batteries at length effected a practicable breach at the gate of St Romanos. Before issuing his final orders for the assault, Mohammed II summoned the emperor to surrender the city, and offered him a considerable appanage as a vassal of the Porte elsewhere. Constantine rejected the insulting offer, and the sultan prepared to take Constantinople by storm. Four days were employed in the Ottoman camp making all the arrangements necessary for a simultaneous attack by land and sea along the whole line of the fortifications, from the modern quarter of Phanar to the Golden Gate. The Greeks and Latins within the walls were not less active in their exertions to meet the crisis. The Latins were sustained by their habits of military discipline, and their experiences of the chances of war; the Greeks placed great confidence in some popular prophecies which foretold the ultimate defeat of the Turks. They felt a pious conviction that the imperial and orthodox city would never fall into the hands of Infidels. But the Emperor Constantine was deceived by no vain hopes. He knew that human prudence and valour could do no more than had been done to



retard the progress of the besiegers. Time had been gained, but the Greeks showed no disposition to fight for a heretical emperor, and no succours arrived from the Pope and the Western princes. Constantine could now only hope to prolong the defence for a few hours, and, when the city fell, to bring his own life to a glorious termination by dying on the breach.

On the night before the assault the emperor rode round to all the posts occupied by the garrison, and encouraged the troops to expect victory by his cheerful demeanour. He then visited the Church of St Sophia, already deserted by the orthodox, where with his attendants he partook of the holy sacrament according to the Latin form. He returned for a short time to the imperial palace, and on quitting it to take his station at the great breach, he was so overcome by the certainty that he should never again behold those present that he turned to the members of his household, many of whom had been the companions of his youth, and solemnly asked them to pardon every offence he had ever given them. Tears burst from present as Constantine mounted his horse and rode slowly forward to meet his fate.

The contrast between the city of the Christians and the camp of the Mohammedans was not encouraging. Within the walls an emperor in the decline of life commanded a small and disunited force, with twenty leaders under his orders, each at the head of an almost independent band of Greek, Genoese, Venetian, or Catalan soldiers. So slight was the tie which bound these various chiefs together, that, even when they were preparing for the final assault, the emperor was obliged to use all his authority and personal influence to prevent Justiniani and the Grand-duke Notaras from coming to blows. Justiniani demanded to be supplied with some additional guns for the defence of the great breach, but Notaras, who had the official control over the artillery, peremptorily refused the demand.

In the Turkish camp, on the other hand, perfect unity prevailed, and a young, ardent, and able sovereign concentrated in his hands the most despotic authority over a numerous and well-disciplined army. To excite the energy of that army to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, the sultan proclaimed to his troops that he granted them the whole plunder of Constantinople, reserving to himself only the public buildings. The day of battle was regarded as a religious festival in the Ottoman camp, and on the previous night lamps were hung out before every tent, and fires were kindled on every eminence in or near the lines. Thousands of lanterns were suspended from the flag-staffs of the batteries, and from the masts and yards of the ships, and were reflected in the waters of the Propontis, the Golden Horn, and the Bosphorus. The whole Ottoman encampment was resplendent with the blaze of this illumination. Yet a deep silence prevailed during the whole night, except when the musical cadence of the solemn chant of the call to prayers showed the Greeks the immense numbers and the strict discipline of the host.

Before the dawn of day, on the morning of the 29th May 1453, the signal was given for the attack. Column after column marched forward, and took up their ground before the portions of the wall they were ordered to assail. The galleys, fitted with towers and scaling-platforms, advanced against the fortifications of the port protected by the guns on the bridge. But the principal attack was directed against the breach at the gate of St Romanos, where two flanking towers had fallen into the ditch and opened a passage into the interior of the city. The gate of Charsias and the quarter of Blachern were also assailed by chosen regiments of janissaries in overwhelming numbers. The attack was made with daring courage, but for more than two hours every point was successfully defended. In the port, the Italian and Greek ships opposed the Turkish galleys so effectually that the final result appeared to favour the besieged. But on the land side one column of troops followed the other in an incessant stream. The moment a division fell back from the assault new battalions occupied its place. The valour of the besieged was for some time successful, but they were at last fatigued by their exertions, and their scanty numbers were weakened by wounds and death. Unfortunately, Justiniani, the protostrator or marshal of the army, and the ablest officer in the place, received a wound which induced him to retire on board his ship to have it dressed. Until that moment he and the emperor had defended the great breach with advantage, but after his retreat Sagan Pasha, observing that the energy of

the defenders was relaxed, excited the bravest of the janissaries to mount to the assault. A chosen company led by Hassan of Ulubad (Lopadion), a man of gigantic frame, first crossed the ruins of the wall, and their leader gained the summit of the dilapidated tower which flanked the breach. The defenders, headed by the Emperor Constantine, made a desperate resistance. Hassan and many of his followers were slain, but the janissaries had secured the vantage-ground, and fresh troops pouring in to their aid, they surrounded the defenders of the breach. The emperor fell amidst a heap of slain, and a column of janissaries rushed into Constantinople over his lifeless body.

About the same time another corps of the Ottomans forced an entrance into the city at the Gate of the Circus, which had been left almost without defence, for the besieged were not sufficiently numerous to guard the whole line of the fortifications, and their best troops were drawn to the points where the attacks were fiercest. The corps that forced the Gate of the Circus took the defenders of the Gate Charsias in the rear, and overpowered all resistance in the quarter of Blachern.

Several gates were now thrown open, and the army entered Constantinople at several points. The cry that the enemy had stormed the walls preceded their march. Senators, priests, monks, and nuns; men, women, and children, all rushed to seek safety in St Sophia's. A prediction current among the Greeks flattered them with the vain hope that an angel would descend from heaven and destroy the Mohammedans, in order to reveal the extent of God's love for the orthodox. St Sophia's, which for some time they had forsaken, as a spot profaned by the emperor's attempt at a union of the Christian world, was again revered as the sanctuary of orthodoxy, and was crowded with the flower of the Greek nation, confident of a miraculous interposition in favour of their national pride and ecclesiastical prejudices.

The besiegers, when they first entered the city, fearing lest they might encounter serious resistance in the narrow streets, put every soul they encountered to the sword. But as soon as they were fully aware of the small number of the garrison, and the impossibility of any further opposition, they began to make prisoners. At length they reached St Sophia's, and, rushing into that magnificent temple, which could with ease contain about twenty thousand persons, they performed deeds of plunder and violence not unlike the scenes which the Crusaders had enacted in the same spot in the year 1204. The men, women, and children who had sought safety in the building were divided among the soldiers as slaves, without any reference to their rank or respect for their ties of blood, and hurried off to the camp, or placed under the guard of comrades, who formed a joint alliance for the security of their plunder. The ecclesiastical ornaments and church-plate were poor indeed when compared with the immense riches of the Byzantine cathedral in the time of the Crusaders; but whatever was movable was immediately divided among the soldiers with such celerity, that the mighty temple soon presented few traces of having been a Christian church.

While one division of the victorious army was engaged in plundering the southern side of the city, from the Gate of St Romanos to the Church of St Sophia, another, turning to the port, made itself master of the warehouses that were filled with merchandise, and surrounded the Greek troops under the Grand-duke Notaras. The Greeks were easily subdued, and Notaras surrendered himself a prisoner.

About midday the Turks were in possession of the whole city, and Mohammed II entered his new capital at the Gate of St Romanos, riding triumphantly past the body of the Emperor Constantine, which lay concealed among the slain in the breach he had defended. The sultan rode straight to the Church of St Sophia, where he gave the necessary orders for the preservation of all the public buildings. Even during the licence of the sack, the severe education and grave character of the Ottomans exerted a powerful influence on their conduct, and on this occasion there was no example of the wanton destruction and wilful conflagrations that had signalled the Latin conquest. To convince the Greeks that their orthodox empire was extinct, Mohammed

ordered a moolah to ascend the bema and address a sermon to the Mussulmans, announcing that St Sophia was now a mosque set apart for the prayers of the true believers. To put an end to all doubts concerning the death of the emperor, he ordered Constantine's head to be brought, and exposed to the people of the capital, from whence it was afterwards sent as a trophy to be seen by the Greeks of the principal cities in the Ottoman Empire.

It is not possible to describe the multifarious sufferings of the population of Constantinople. Though the storming of the city was attended with less disorder and bloodshed than the Latin conquest, it caused a greater degree of permanent misery, and sank the Greeks into a lower state of social degradation. Slaves were a much more negotiable article of commerce among the Turks than they had been among the Crusaders, and consequently private families were oftener dispersed, and a far larger proportion of the population was reduced to slavery. It is supposed that the calamities and emigrations which immediately preceded the siege, had reduced the Greek population of Constantinople to about one hundred thousand souls; of these forty thousand are said to have perished during the siege or in the sack of the city, and at least fifty thousand were reduced to the condition of slaves. Only the poorest and lowest class of labourers were allowed by the conquerors to retain their liberty, that they might perform the meanest and most laborious occupations necessary for preserving cleanliness in a large city. The lot of persons of the highest rank and education was no better than that of the poorest and most ignorant; youth, strength, and beauty, were the qualities valued by the victors, and these advantages insured their possessors the sad lot of hopeless slavery, accompanied often with a forced conversion to the Mohammedan faith.

It has been generally asserted that the retreat of Justiniani from the great breach on receiving his mortal wound was the immediate cause of the capture of Constantinople; but the Genoese volunteer has been made the scapegoat of the lukewarmness or cowardice of the orthodox, who ought to have crowded to the walls to support their emperor. The fall of the city ought to be entirely attributed to the superior numbers, steady discipline, powerful artillery, and unity of command in the Ottoman army. The fact is, that the breach was stormed about eight o'clock in the morning, and as the assailants had made their arrangements to renew the attacks until noon, there was no chance that any degree of valour or skill could have repulsed the fresh troops that were continually rushing forward. Indeed, the skill and valour of Justiniani and of Constantine prolonged the defence as long as human means could avail. Whether Justiniani deserves to be branded with disgrace for retiring when he did may be doubtful, but Phrantzes and Leonard of Chios, who are most violent in reproaching him, ought to have remembered that they themselves avoided seeking a glorious death on the ramparts of the city. The writers who mention Justiniani's wound differ concerning its nature. It is certain that during his whole life he was as distinguished for daring courage as for military skill. He was a gallant soldier, who lost his life fighting for the Greeks; and when he received his mortal wound, he doubtless deemed that he had honourably fulfilled his duties in this world, and turned his thoughts to prepare for another.

The proceedings of the sultan after the taking of Constantinople were marked by the sternest cruelty whenever the smallest object could be gained. The bailo of the Venetians and the consul of the Catalans were both put to death with all their children. The rest of the Latin prisoners only escaped with their lives when it was in their power to pay a liberal ransom to their captors; some nobles purchased safety by presenting Sagan Pasha with seventy thousand sequins. A few of the garrison gained the ships in the port, and, weighing anchor, forced their way through the Ottoman fleet. The Cardinal Isidore, who bravely kept his post on the walls, contrived to disguise himself in the dress of a dead soldier, and thus escaped recognition when he was taken prisoner. He was redeemed from slavery by a Genoese of Galata, and reached Italy in safety. A body of Cretans who bravely defended one of the towers was allowed by the sultan to capitulate and depart unmolested.

The fate of the Grand-duke Notaras and his family maybe cited as an example of the treatment of the Greeks of the highest rank, whose power and influence over the orthodox would probably have prevented them from becoming submissive instruments of the Ottoman power. In the first moment of triumph, Mohammed affected to treat Notaras and his family with favour; but he soon sent an order that his youngest son, a youth of fourteen years of age, should be sent to become a page in the imperial palace. In such circumstances, the mildest fate that could await him would be to become a Mussulman. The father feared that he was destined to a more degraded fate. The faith of Notaras was unchristian from the intensity of his bigotry, but it had the merit of sincerity, and it ennobled the last scene of his life. He boldly refused to comply with the demands of the conqueror, deeming it better that he and his house should perish than that his son should become a dishonoured renegade. Mohammed, thus finding a plausible pretext for destroying the grand-duke, ordered him and his sons to be immediately put to death. Many other Greek families were exterminated: the men were executed, the male children were sent into the schools of the janissaries among the tribute-children, and the females were shut up in the harems of the sultan and his courtiers.

The desolate aspect of Constantinople struck the observant mind of its young conqueror with a feeling of awe. Everything he saw within its walls attested that a long period of decline had preceded its fall. The deserted appearance of the imperial palace showed that, long before the accession of Constantine XI, it had been too vast for the diminished court by which it was tenanted, and its largest halls had evidently been long abandoned to solitude. The departed glory of an empire which had for ages ruled the richest provinces in the East, and often rendered the Cross triumphant over the Crescent, suggested to Mohammed a couplet of the Persian poet Firdousee on the instability of human grandeur: "The spider's curtain hangs before the portal of Caesar's palace; the owl is the sentinel on the watch-tower of Afrasiab". An empty palace affected the mind of Mohammed II, while he gazed immoved on mountains of dead men. The fall of Constantinople is a dark chapter in the annals of Christianity. The death of the unfortunate Constantine, neglected by the Catholics and deserted by the orthodox, alone gives dignity to the final catastrophe. The governments of western Europe, occupied with momentary interests, and the nations beginning to feel the impulses of new civil and political combinations in society, heeded little the destruction of an old and rotten edifice, incapable of receiving either internal repairs or external support; while on the part of the Greeks themselves no patriotic or religious enthusiasm has interwoven the struggle with the glories of their national history. No immortal band of martial youth crowding round their emperor, and dying in the breach the death of patriots, has left its exploits as a legacy of honour to the Hellenic race. The defence of Constantinople was intrusted to mercenary troops, and Constantine fell in their ranks.

The first step of Mohammed II, in settling the condition of his conquered subjects, was to secure the allegiance of the orthodox, by proclaiming himself the protector of the Greek Church. The hatred felt for the Latins by a numerous party among the Greeks facilitated the conclusion of this unholy alliance. George Scholarios, or Gennadios, accepted the dignity of Patriarch, and received the pastoral staff from the hands of the sultan. The ceremony of his installation was performed on the first of June, with the blood of the conquest still staining the pavements of the city. A charter of Mohammed was subsequently published securing to the Greeks the use of their churches, allowing them to celebrate their religious rites according to their own usages, to keep open the gates of the quarter in which the Patriarch resided for three nights at Easter, and authorising the Patriarch to decide questions of ecclesiastical law according to the practice of the Christians.

It was necessary for Mohammed II to repeople Constantinople, in order to render it the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The installation of an orthodox Patriarch calmed the minds of the Greeks, and many who had emigrated before the siege gradually returned, and were allowed to claim a portion of their property. But the slow increase of population, caused by a sense of security and the hope of gain, did not satisfy the sultan, who was determined to see his capital one of the greatest cities of the East, and who knew that it had formerly exceeded Damascus,

Bagdad, and Cairo, in wealth, extent, and population. From most of his subsequent conquests Mohammed compelled the wealthiest of the inhabitants to emigrate to Constantinople, where he granted them plots of land to build their houses. Five thousand families are said to have been immediately collected among the Turkish and Greek population of his dominions, who were induced by the concessions made to them to take up their residence in the new capital. Four thousand Servian prisoners, instead of being reduced to slavery, were established in the ruined villages without the walls as cultivators of the soil. When the Peloponnesus was conquered, thousands of Greek and Albanian families were removed to Constantinople. The same measures were adopted when Amastris, Sinope, Trebizond, Lesbos, Bosnia, Akserai (Gausaura), and Kaffa, were conquered. During his whole reign, Mohammed II continued to pour into the imperial city fresh streams of inhabitants. Turks, Greeks, Servians, Bulgarians, Albanians, and Lazes, followed one another in quick succession, and long before the end of his reign Constantinople was crowded by a numerous and active population, and presented a more flourishing aspect than it had done during the preceding century.

The embellishment of his capital was also the object of the sultan's attention. All the most skilful artisans and artists in the two principal cities of Karamania, Iconium and Laranda (Karaman), when that country was conquered, were transported to Constantinople. Mosques, minarets, fountains, and tombs, the great objects of architectural magnificence among the Mussulmans, were constructed in every quarter of the city. Upwards of forty Christian churches, too splendid in their appearance to be left in the hands of the conquered, were converted into mosques. Their original destination was concealed by the destruction of many ornaments, and their external form was modified by the addition of minarets. In the year 1477 the whole circuit of the walls underwent repair; but the sultan's object was rather to remove the aspect of dilapidation than to give strength to the fortifications, and he allowed the ditches to be in part filled up and the height of the battlements to be diminished.

Thus Constantinople, in becoming the capital of the Ottoman Empire, became a new city, and received a new race of Greek as well as of Turkish inhabitants. Its buildings and its population underwent as great a change as its political, moral, and religious condition. The picturesque beauty of the Stamboul of the present day owes most of its artificial features to the Ottoman conquest, and wears a Turkish aspect. The Constantinople of the Byzantine Empire disappeared with the last relics of the Greek empire. The traveller, who now desires to view the vestiges of a Byzantine capital, and examine the last relics of Byzantine architecture and art, must continue his travels eastward to Trebizond.

END THE HISTORY OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE