THE VALERIAN PERSECUTION

A Study of the Relations between Church and State in the Third Century A. D.

BY

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PREFACE

RECENT investigation into the relations between the Christian Church and the Roman State during the first three centuries of our era has thrown much new light on the history of this long period of persecution, and has served to show that the opposition to Christianity on the part of the Roman authorities arose from a deep-seated adherence to time-honored state policy rather than from blind hatred for the followers of the new religion. This view of the subject does not tend to diminish belief in the intensity and bitterness of the struggle, while it brings into clearer light the herculean task which confronted the first Apostles of Christianity in promulgating doctrines which were to revolutionize all old ideas regarding the political, social, moral, and religious relations of mankind. Bearing in mind the peculiar character of pagan society in antiquity, its cohesiveness and absolutism, and its claims to complete domination over all human affairs, it will be manifest how easily a propaganda which aimed at disintegrating this autocratic exercise of power could be construed into treason to the state.

The persecution which took place during the reign of the Emperor Valerian was, in a sense, the most critical period in the history of the Church during the first three centuries. The policy of complete extermination formulated by the Emperor Decius, which was the first systematic attempt to destroy Christianity, was never adequately tested, as the premature death of that Emperor prevented the full carrying out of his plans. In the case of Valerian the same policy prevailed; it was in force for a longer period; and it was put into operation at a time when the Church was still staggering under the blows inflicted by Decius. The meagre list of martyrs whose names are known to us as victims of this persecution affords no indication as to the actual number of those who suffered death, banishment, or confiscation at the hands of the Roman authorities. There is no complete history in English of these three centuries of Christian trial. In fact, outside the pages of M. Paul Allard's monumental work on the Persecutions there is no systematic presentation of the subject in any language. The author takes this opportunity to acknowledge his indebtedness to M. Allard for the help and guidance afforded by his works in treating a subject which would otherwise have offered insuperable difficulties. Realizing very thoroughly the many imperfections of the work, the author is loath

to mention the names of those from whom he received aid and advice; but justice no less than thankfulness compels him to acknowledge the many obligations which he is under to Doctor Shahan, Professor of Church History at the Catholic University, without whose aid, never failing kindness, and ever ready advice and encouragement the achievement, slight as it is, would not have been possible.

The work was in typewritten manuscript before the author had an opportunity to examine some of the more recent publications dealing with this portion of history, such as Harnack's "Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten," and especially Lécrivain's "Etudes sur l'Histoire Auguste;" but a close examination of these and some other works on the same subject has convinced him that they contain nothing which would call for modification or change in any of the conclusions at which he has arrived.

PATRICK J. HEALY.

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THE VALERIAN PERSECUTION

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH AND THE EMPIRE

Christianity and the old order incompatible — Causes of persecution — Religious conditions in the Roman Empire — Eclecticism — Multiplication of gods — Adoption of foreign cults — Paganism inclusive, Christianity exclusive — Pagan creeds national, Christianity universal — Paganism external and formal, Christianity internal and spiritual — Attempts to fuse Christianity with paganism — Christianity a social revolution — Christians confounded with Jews — Nero persecuted the Christians — Accusations against the Christians — Persecutions under Titus and Domitian.

A SURVEY of the history of primitive Christianity brings to light two considerations of the utmost importance for a thorough understanding of the relations which subsisted between the Christian Church and the Roman State during the first three centuries of our era. In the first place, it was impossible that any system of belief and morality such as that taught by the Christians could coexist with the Roman Empire as then constituted, or that the social revolution which Christianity aimed at could be accomplished without arousing the most determined opposition on the part of the Roman authorities. In

the second place, since Christianity struck at the very existence of the pagan creeds and cults and sapped the foundations of political and social life, the hostility it provoked came from such causes and was of such a nature that it could never cease until such time as Christianity had triumphed over the established order or had itself been annihilated.

Christianity and Heathenism were too widely different in essentials to allow of any compromise. Toleration was equally impossible: the old polytheistic religion had become so much a part of the life of the people that the acceptance of the new creed, even by some, implied a complete transformation of the old order and a profound upheaval of existing conditions.

The struggle for supremacy which this incompatibility engendered is without parallel in the history of mankind. On the one side was all the strength and power of a magnificent empire, identified with a system of religion dear to the hearts of its patriotic citizens and closely interwoven with their history and traditions; on the other was this new creed, destitute of earthly grandeur and possessing neither temples nor history. It is doubtful if any conflict was ever waged in which the contending parties were so unequally equipped, and certainly no struggle was ever carried on with so much bitterness. For two centuries and a half all the resources at the

command of the citizens of a vast empire were directed against a body of men whose only weapons were the doctrines they preached, and whose strongholds were the virtues they inculcated and practised. No means at the disposal of a people skilled in the arts and refinements of all the civilizations of antiquity were left untried to win the Christians from their adherence to the teachings of the obscure Founder of their religion. The wit of poets and rhetoricians, the arguments of philosophers and statesmen, the jeers of the mob, scorn, contempt, and social ostracism were all in turn directed against the Christian sectaries. More potent than these, however, and more important in a historical sense, was the enactment of laws which made Christianity a felony and its punishment death.

The general causes underlying this strife always remained the same; but a closer acquaintance with Christianity and a fuller comprehension of its antagonism to the existing order not only suggested new methods of repression to the pagan authorities, but also changed completely the spirit of the contestants. A struggle lasting for more than two centuries and fought out over such a wide area necessarily changed its character and assumed new features as time went on. The bloody persecutions which were the acute manifestation of the irreconcilable opposition between Christianity and Heathenism mark

the steps in this progression. Time and progress, while they served to make the contestants better acquainted, were powerless to eliminate the many points of contention which existed, and tended only to intensify the bitterness and to render compromise more hopeless. The persecutions which took place in the reigns of Decius and Valerian are the high-water mark of the antagonism between Christianity and the religious forms of pagan Rome. Each side seemed to have attained to a full realization of the fact that it contained in it qualities destructive of vital elements in the other, and that, notwithstanding the changes time had wrought, no lasting peace could be hoped for until one side or the other was completely eradicated. The struggle under Valerian paved the way for the final adjustment under Diocletian. It was not a decisive encounter, nor was it merely a preliminary skirmish. It was a combat which taxed the entire strength of the opposing forces. When a truce was declared, it contained no assurance of ultimate peace, but seemed rather to promise a sterner and more conclusive struggle. In order to understand fully the character of the war waged by Valerian against the Christians, it will be necessary both to consider briefly the main causes which produced this contention and to take a summary glance at the history of the persecutions during the two preceding centuries.

From the very outset the political and religious conditions which prevailed in the Roman Empire were, on the whole, decidedly unfavorable to the spread of Christian ideas. In fact, the Roman Empire as then constituted could scarcely coexist with any considerable organization of Christians. The territory embraced by this Empire was naturally the scene of the first labors of the Christian Apostles. Within its boundaries was comprised almost the entire civilized world, and under its sway were nearly all the peoples of antiquity distinguished for culture or refinement. Extending from the Rhine and the Danube to the deserts of Africa, and from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, the vast possessions of the Caesars were a unit in their opposition to the reforms which Christianity implied. Brought under the sway of the Romans by a series of gradually extended conquests, this vast domain was not a mere physical union of different nations and different peoples living under one centralized government and held in check by the power of the legions. It was a closely knit, well-compacted union of peoples with one mind, common aspirations, and a common culture. Many causes had contributed to bring about this unity and cohesion. There was the universal understanding of the two leading languages, Latin and Greek, common law, common interests, and rapid and easy means of com-

munication throughout the whole Empire. With the political and administrative unity of the Empire the influence of the Romans ceased. They could subjugate nations, break down the barriers which separated tribes and peoples, but in the presence of the older civilizations of Greece and the Orient they were powerless. If the march of the legions was irresistible, not less so was the tide of manners and customs which flowed back on Rome from the conquered peoples. Hence it was that the culture of the period was not merely Roman: it was something broader and deeper; it was a blending of Greek, Roman, and Oriental elements. From the continuous and universal clash of manners and mind, inseparable from such a condition of affairs, there had resulted a tendency towards eclecticism, which was nowhere more strongly manifested than in matters of religion. With the absorption of so many nationalities into the Empire the old national or sectarian spirit had very largely passed away.[1] To this change the primitive religion of the Romans lent itself very readily.[2] From the beginning it was a dry, cold, formal, matter-of-fact worship of the personified forces of nature.[3] Its gods were abstractions having neither traditions nor history.[4] This

[1] Marquardt-Mommsen, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, vi, pp. 56 seq.

[2] Boissier, *La Religion Romaine*, vol. i, pp. 37 seq.

[3] Döllinger, *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, p. 468.

[4] Bouché-Leclercq, *Manuel des Institutions Romaines*, pp. 461 seq.

lack of poetical and legendary endowment[1] was fully compensated for by the number and variety of the deities to whom the Romans paid their adoration.[2] If it were permissible to judge of the piety of a people by the multitude of their gods, the Romans were undoubtedly the most religious of the peoples of antiquity.[3] They had gods for all the different phases of human life and activity[4] and for all the phenomena of nature.[5] They had found deities for each condition and each occupation in life,[6] and they were careful that each new need in the life of the individual or the development of society should receive its guardian deity.[7] So numerous

[1] Elle n'a ni cosmogonie, ni mythologie proprement dite, ni enseignement metaphysique ou moral d'aucune sort. Bouché-Leclerq, *loc. cit.* p. 459.

[2] The names of the Roman deities were kept in special lists called *Indigitamenta. Ibid.* p. 437; Marquardt-Mommsen, *loc. cit.* p. 7.

[3] Nostri majores, religiosissimi mortales. Sallust, *Cat.* 12.

[4] Varro commemorare et enumerare deos coepit a conceptione hominis . . . deinde coepit deos alios ostendere qui pertinerent non ad ipsum hominem, sed ad ea quae sunt hominis, sicuti est victus, vestitus et quaecumque alia quae huic vitae sunt necessaria. St. Angustine, *De Civ. Dei*, vi, 9.

[5] Vaticanus watched over the child's first cry; Fahulinus taught it to speak; Educa to eat; Potina to drink, etc.

[6] Annona was the goddess of the wheat crop; Insitor the god of sowing; Oharator covered the grain; Occator harrowed the ground, etc.

[7] Pecunia was the goddess of money, while cattle were the medium of exchange. With the introduction of copper coins came Aesculanus; afterwards, when silver was introduced, a new god, Argentinus, the son of Aesculanus, was found. Döllinger, *loc. cit.* p. 469; Marquardt-Mommsen, *loc. cit.* p. 31.

were these gods that the country was like an Olympus,[1] so peopled with gods that it was easier to find a god than a man.[2]

Besides this adaptation of their theology to the new needs of every-day life, the Romans extended their religion by the forcible naturalization of strange gods,[3] or pretended that the deities of the peoples they conquered were identical with those of Rome.[4] The extensive journeys undertaken by some Romans and the general craving for travel made known many new deities.[5] The provincials who flocked to Rome introduced strange gods;[6] and the slaves from all parts of the world not only practised their native rites, but initiated many of their pupils and charges;[7] while the legionaries from Rome and the provinces habitually worshipped the gods and performed the ceremonies of the countries in which they were stationed.[8] The character of the Roman religion was in itself a powerful incentive to the adoption of new creeds and strange rites. Dry, narrow, formal, and based on the scrupulous per-

[1] Varro, in St. Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, iv, 22.

[2] Petronius, *Sat.* 17.

[3] Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxviii, 4, 18. In oppugnationibus ante omnia solitum a Romanis sacerdotibus evocari deum in cujus tutela id oppidum esset, promittique illi eumdem aut ampliorem apud Romanos cultum. The Form of Evocation is given by Macrobius, *Sat.* iii, 9, 7.

[4] Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, vi, 17; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* vi, 22.

[5] Boissier, *loc. cit.* pp. 350 seq.

[6] Tacitus, *Ann.* xv, 44.

[7] Döllinger, p. 481.

[8] C. I. L. ii, 3386; iii, 75.

formance of a multiplicity of minute observances, it was utterly unsuited to satisfy the emotional side of human nature.[1] This deficiency was abundantly supplied by the religions of Egypt and the Orient. As early as the days of the republic, Egyptian rites were practised in all the cities along the Mediterranean, while some of the gods and goddesses of the East had been solemnly transported to Rome.[2] In the midst of this spiritual and religious chaos it is possible to discern two distinct and well-defined tendencies. In the first place, there was a craving for closer personal union with the deity; in the second, a general drift towards a vague monotheism or pantheism.[3] This trend towards belief in the unity of the deity was fostered by statesmen[4] and philosophers,[5] and reached its culmination in the deification of the Emperors. To accord divine honors to a man yet living was at first rather repugnant to some classes in the Empire, but as time went on Emperor-worship lost its peculiar personal character, and the reigning prince came to be considered as the personification of Roman power rather than as being a divinity himself.[6]

[1] Boissier, *loc. cit.* pp. 20 seq.

[2] Lafaye, *Histoire du Culte des Divinités d'Alexandrie hors de l'Egypte*, chap. 1.

[3] Döllinger, *loc. cit.* p. 469.

[4] Boissier, *loc. cit.* p. 351.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 339 seq.

[6] Beurlier, *Essai sur le culte rendu aux Empereurs Romains*, p. 36; Boissier, *loc. cit.* i, pp. 117–208.

At first sight it might appear that this lack of definite conviction in matters of religion, coupled with the unusual craving for new creeds, would naturally pave the way for the spread of Christianity. Such, however, was not the case. The reason for this lay with Christianity itself. The new religion ran directly counter to the prevailing tone and tendency of the age. It was a time when the widest liberty consistent with any fixed belief in the supernatural was permitted in the selection and worship of new deities.[1] Paganism was running its logical course, and no contradiction or impossibility appeared in the amalgamation and absorption of innumerable rites.[2] To this development and syncretism Christianity was utterly foreign. Whereas a pagan might acquire new gods every day without failing in his allegiance to the old, a Christian was expressly taught to look on all Gentile creeds as mere superstitions. The exclusiveness to which Christianity laid claim put it in the position of denying and repelling all existing forms of worship, and thus multiplying indefinitely the difficulties and opposition it was likely to encounter. Paganism was in possession, and would not be likely to cede its position without a determined struggle. The double onus, therefore, rested on the Christian

[1] Uhlhorn, *The Conflict of Christianity and Paganism*, pp. 26 seq.
[2] Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, vi, 7, Civitas omnium numinum cultrix.

teachers of making good their claims before a highly prejudiced public, and of dislodging a system of religion which had twined itself so closely round ancient life and manners that they had grown together. All human affairs were pervaded with the spirit of paganism. Its symbols were everywhere. Its influence was as potent in public matters as in the affairs of private and family life.[1] The Emperor was the supreme pontiff; the magistrates were priests; the worship of the state gods was the touchstone of loyalty.[2] A system so elaborate and all-embracing required for its maintenance an organization correspondingly large and well equipped.[3] This was provided for by the colleges of priests,[4] augurs,[5] and haruspices,[6] whose principal duties were the superintendence of the ritual, the preservation of the lists of the gods, and the interpretation of the will of the higher powers.[7] Inseparably bound together as were the state and its religion, the power of the one was reflected in the splendid processions, costly sacrifices, and magnificent temples which ministered to the glory of the other.[8] From this it will appear how hopeless must have

[1] Marquardt-Mommsen, *loc. cit.* p. 119 ssq.
[2] Bouché-Leclercq, pp. 481 seq.
[3] Marquardt-Mommsen, *loc. cit.* pp. 119–225.
[4] *Ibid.* pp. 227–380.
[5] *Ibid.* pp. 381–390.
[6] *Ibid.* pp. 393–398. [7] Döllinger, p. 517.
[8] Döllinger, p. 483; Marquardt-Mommsen, *loc. cit.* pp. 184–207.

seemed the task of the first Christian teachers. With no weapons but those of the soul they entered a new land, the citadels of which were held by their enemies, with the express purpose of disseminating doctrines so revolutionary that no pagan could accept them except at the cost of being a renegade to the immemorial beliefs and traditions of his race.

If we would measure how revolutionary of old ideas was Christianity, it will be sufficient to keep in mind the peculiar national character which attached to the religions of antiquity.[1] In those times the state and religion were coextensive and synonymous. The principle of unity in the political as well as the social order was derived from the worship of the same deity.[2] As the members of a family were those who grouped themselves around a domestic altar, the citizens were those who worshipped the state gods and performed acts of religion at the state altars.[3] The entire scheme of life was based on the theory that each god protected exclusively some state or family and took no interest in any other.[4] Such contracted ideas

[1] Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, pp. 131 seq.

[2] Cicero, *De Legibus*, ii, 8. Separatim nemo habessit deos: neve novos sive advenas, nisi publice adscitos, privatim colunto.

[3] Fustel de Coulanges, *loc. cit.* pp. 166 seq.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 173 seq. Si l'on veut définir le citoyen des temps antiques par son attribut le plus essential, il faut dire que ce'st l'homme qui possède la religion de la cité ; c'est celui qui honore les mêmes dieux qu'elle. *Ibid.* p. 227.

of the functions of the higher powers necessarily precluded the possibility that citizens of different states would worship the same god.[1] As a consequence of this, it did not enter in to the plan of the ancients to win converts to their religion. Such a thing would, of course, in the circumstances, have been an absurdity, and hence it is that proselytism was utterly unknown among them.[2] If they had to travel through what might be called the jurisdiction of a strange god, it is true they took pains to propitiate him; but even then they never showed any missionary spirit.[3] Christianity was the antithesis of paganism in this. It was not the religion of any caste or tribe, and came on the scene with neither political nor national affiliations.[4] It ignored the barriers of race and nationality, and entering the conflict as a divine revelation, it required but one condition for admission to its fold, namely, that of a common humanity.[5] A doctrine so extraordinary and so repugnant to the ideas and customs of the time must have appeared to all who cherished the old custom as a thing contrary to nature and threatening the dissolution of all existing order.[6] If the Christians had claimed that

[1] Fustel de Coulanges, *loc. cit.*

[2] Boissier, *loc. cit.* p. 337.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Fustel de Coulanges, *loc. cit.* p. 459.

[5] St. Matthew xxviii, 19, 20.

[6] Döllinger, *The First Age of the Church*, Eng. tr. p. 379.

theirs was the religion of some tribe or people, or that a nation had grown up around the worship of their God, their claims would have found acceptance more readily; but a new religion neither of the Jews nor any other people was an unheard of innovation.[1] The declaration that there was no difference between Jew and Greek, between slave and freeman, cut at the root of society and threatened the stability of all government.[2] So contrary was this to current opinion that we are not surprised it aroused at first derision, afterwards fear: for to base religion on humanity alone necessarily meant the disintegration of the established order and a thorough readjustment of the relations between the individual and the state.[3]

The peculiar position which the state occupied in the economy of ancient life and the functions it arrogated to itself were extremely burdensome to the individual. The state was founded on religion. The gods it worshipped were part of itself. For a citizen of these times the maintenance of this composite of human and divine elements was a duty at once human and divine. This was the purpose of life, the goal of all effort. In a society established on such a basis it is not to be wondered at that human

[1] Unde hoc tertium genus. Tertull. *Scor.* 10; *Ad Nat.* 1, 8, 20; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vi, 39, 41.

[2] St. Paul, *Gal.* iii, 28. Cf. Mommsen, *Expositor*, 1893, p. 4.

[3] Fustel de Coulanges, *loc. cit.* p. 459.

life was absorbed in civic duties, that the personal unit was lost in the political unit. That this conception of the relations between the citizen and the state was not a mere speculative theory, but the practical principle of every-day life, is seen from the system which held sway.[1] The state enjoyed full jurisdiction over the lives and possessions of its citizens. It regulated marriage, destroyed weak and deformed children, supervised education, and all with a view to its own ultimate benefit. Nor did its authority stop short at a man's physical being; it extended to his thoughts and beliefs, and prescribed for him his religion. It was the duty of every citizen to believe in and worship the state gods, to be present at the sacred banquets, and to join in the processions. In a word, all the elements of human life were fused together, and the conglomerate resulting therefrom was known as the state. The application of the solvent contained in the words "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's," must have meant to the pagan mind inextricable confusion and direst calamity. Never before had such words been heard.[2] They were anarchistic. For the first time human intelligence was fully awakened to the fact that while men had certain duties towards the body politic,

[1] Cicero, *Pro Domo*, i; Fustel de Coulanges, *loc. cit.* pp. 265 seq.
[2] De Coulanges, *loc. cit.* p. 461.

there were spheres of thought and activity to which the power of the state did not extend.

In the sphere of man's relations to God equally important changes were introduced. Under the influence of Christianity the whole nature and scope of religion were transformed. Hitherto, for the Romans especially, religion had meant nothing but a dry ritualism, from which sentiment and intention were altogether lacking.[1] Men kept their accounts with the gods with business-like fidelity.[2] The essence of religion consisted in the punctilious performance of certain rites,[3] whereas the state of the soul while performing those acts was a matter of no importance.[4] The most religious were those who were best acquainted with the ritual and who most closely and exactly followed its prescriptions.[5] Theirs was a religion of fear, consisting of endless expiations and propitiations, in which there was no thought of purifying or elevating man, but of using the most efficacious means to avert the anger of the gods or to enlist their aid for some future undertaking.[6] From the first, Christianity was a reversal of this system. Men were exhorted not to employ

[1] Boissier, *loc. cit.* p. 13.

[2] Plautus, iv, 2, 25.

[3] Est enim pietas justitia adversus deos; sanctitas autem scientia colendorum sacrorum. Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum*, i.

[4] Döllinger, *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, p. 367.

[5] Boissier, *loc. cit.* p. 15.

[6] Servius, *Aen.* ii, 715. Connexa enim sunt timor et religio.

frequent repetitions of prayer,[1] but to seek for a closer union with God by the elevation of the soul and the purification of life. Instead of the manifold and minute external observances of paganism, God was to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.[2]

The differences between Christianity and Paganism were too numerous and too essential, and the attitude of aloofness incumbent on Christians too noticeable, to escape observation in the Roman Empire. In a community so largely given to religious observances no considerable number of citizens could hold themselves apart from the public worship and practice a strange cult without exciting suspicion and incurring censure.[3]

In the case of the Christians these difficulties and dangers were increased by their resistance to the syncretistic tendencies of the times, and by their refusal to have their religion united with the other religions of the Empire. Impossible as this union was, several Emperors are said to have desired it. The first attempt was that made by Tiberius. Moved by the account given by Pilate of events which had "clearly shown the truth of Christ's

[1] St. Matthew vi, 7, 8. [2] St. John iv, 23, 24.

[3] All the incidents of public and social life, both civil and popular, were thoroughly interpenetrated by heathen customs, and colored by the prevalent worship; its symbols met the Christian at every step, and he was often entangled in religious acts before he recollected himself or could draw back. Döllinger, *The First Age of the Church*, p. 377.

Divinity," he is said to have made a formal proposition to the Senate that Christ be received among the Roman gods. The Senate, however, rejected the proposal.[1] The apocryphal writers and Malalas testify that Nero wished to be informed of the new religion, and from the beginning was favorable to it: a fact in substance quite credible, attested by Paul's appeal to Rome, the sentence of liberation he received, and his subsequent relations with the faithful of the house of Caesar.[2] Lampridius, a pagan, is witness for the fact that Hadrian wished to erect a temple to Christ and to give Him a place among the gods. He was diverted from his purpose by the complaint that if he did this everybody would become a Christian and all the other temples would be deserted.[3] While these accounts are vague and conjectural and open to doubt, it is certain that in the third century the palace of the Caesars was the scene of more than one attempt to fuse Christianity with pagan superstitions. Elagabalus, in order to make his god (Heliogabalus) the only deity of the Romans, constructed a temple on the Palatine near the imperial residence which was to be the centre

[1] Tertull. *Apol.* c. 5, 29.

[2] Cf. De Rossi, *Bullettino*, January 15, 1867.

[3] Christo templum facere voluit eumque inter deos recipere, quod et Hadrianus cogitasse fertur . . . sed prohibitus est ab is qui consulentes sacra reppererant omnes Christianos futuros, si id fecisset, et templa reliqua deserenda. *Vita Alex. Severi*, c. 43.

of the new cult. He transferred thither the altar of Vesta, the Palladium, and the sacred bucklers. He intended also to have the rites of the Jews and Samaritans observed there, and even the ceremonies of the Christian Church, so that the priests of Heliogabalus might possess the secrets of all religions.[1] His cousin and successor, Alexander Severus, went still farther. He showed the greatest favor to the Christians,[2] was an open admirer of the Church discipline,[3] and in his *lararium* he kept the image of Christ, together with those of Abraham, Orpheus, and Apollonius.[4] He had conceived so much admiration for the Founder of the Christian religion that at one time he intended to build a temple in His honor.[5] He frequently repeated the sentence, "Do not to others what you do not wish to be done to you." This he had learned from the Jews or Christians, and such was his love for it that he had it inscribed on the walls of his palace and other places.[6]

This desire on the part of the Roman Emperors to amalgamate Christianity with the other religions of the State was but one phase of the prevailing reli-

[1] Dicebat praeterea Judaeorum et Samaritanorum religiones et Christianam devotionem illuc transferendam, nt omnium culturarum secretum Heliogabali sacerdotium teneret. Lampridius, *Vita Heliog.* 3.

[2] Lampridius, *Vita Alex. Severi*, c. 49.

[3] *Ibid.* 45. [4] *Ibid.* 29. [5] *Ibid.* 43. [6] *Ibid.* 51.

gious syncretism which manifested itself in the attempts made by the early heresiarchs to effect an intellectual union between the tenets of Christianity and the teachings of various philosophical systems.[1] The latter was as unsuccessful as the former. As long as the Christians were insignificant numerically, the exclusiveness which kept them separate from the rest of the people, and the fact that they worshipped a new deity, was a matter of perfect indifference to the great mass of the pagans.[2] Outside of the Jewish communities the new worship was looked on if not with favor, at least with complete unconcern. One more god added to the populous pantheon could attract little notice. But Christianity was something more than the worship of a new god. It was a new scheme of life. It was a revolution of the social order. Long before men in some places had commenced to take even a passing intellectual interest in the new religion, their attention was drawn to it not as a religious innovation, but as a disturbing element in commercial and business affairs. The discovery that Christianity was a menace to social order and to the established religion " was made in a homely way familiar to us all; viz. through the pocket." [3] In Philippi the

[1] Cf. Neander, *Church History*, vol. i, p. 469.

[2] Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A. D. 170*, p. 130.

[3] *Ibid.*

cure of a girl possessed by a spirit of divination caused an outbreak against Paul and Silas. When the masters of the girl saw "that their hope of gain was gone," they denounced Paul and his companion as Jews who had disturbed the city by their preaching and by inciting people to violate the Roman laws.[1] Similarly at Ephesus,[2] when the silversmiths and other tradesmen engaged in the manufacture of shrines, to be used as dedicatory offerings in the temple of Artemis, saw their business decreasing, they broke into tumult and denounced Paul as a seducer of the people.[3] The opposition to Christianity thus engendered does not, however, by any means explain the intense hatred afterwards felt for the Christians by all classes in the Empire, especially in view of the fact that the Christians were not then regarded as a distinct body.

For a long time the pagans were in the habit of considering the Christians as a mere Jewish sect.[4] Suetonius relates that Claudius, in the last years of his reign, expelled the Jews from Rome because of the numerous tumults which had taken place at the instigation of a certain Chrestus.[5] There can be no

[1] Acts xvi, 19. [2] Acts xix, 24–40.

[3] See Ramsay, *loc. cit.* p. 134, on the subject of silver shrines as dedicatory offerings.

[4] Mommsen, *Expositor*, 1893, p. 2.

[5] Judaeos, impulsore Chresto, adsidue tumultuantes Roma expulit. Suetonius, *Vita Claudi*, c. 25.

doubt that this Chrestus is none other than Christ, whose name, occurring frequently in the disputes between the orthodox Jews and the Jewish Christians, led the Roman police to mistake Him for the leader of the tumult.[1] While the error of confounding the Christians with the Jews diverted for a time the attention of the public from Christianity as a separate religion, it nevertheless made the Christians heirs of all the hatred and contempt long felt for the Children of Israel by the people of the Occident. The confusion, however, did not last long. It could not do so in Rome. The edict of Claudius directed against the Jews, showed clearly that the Gentile converts who remained in Rome after the expulsion of the Jews, and who practised "Jewish customs," were not Jews. St. Paul's open disavowal of any connection with the synagogue was proof positive of the same fact.[2] The Jews themselves, under the ban because of their refusal to live peaceably with the believers in the New Messiah, could be relied upon when occasion arose to denounce Christianity as a troublesome and dangerous organization.[3]

The complete separation of Christianity from Judaism could have only one result — increased

[1] Batiffol, "L'Eglise Naissante," *Revue Biblique*, 1894, pp. 503 seq.

[2] Acts xxv, 10.

[3] St. Justin, *Dial. cum Trypho*, 10, 18.

hatred and animosity for the Christians. How rapidly the feeling of hostility developed among the people, and how well it served the purposes of Nero, was proved in the first fierce outbreak, which, strangely enough, took place in the metropolis of the world.[1]

Popular rumor made Nero the author of the conflagration which destroyed the greater part of the city of Rome in July, A. D. 64. To divert from himself the anger of the people, Nero caused the blame for this crime to be laid on the Christians. An immense number of them were seized and put to death with unheard-of cruelty. For the amusement of the excited and wrathful populace their punishment was turned into a spectacle. Some were crucified, others were sewn in the skins of wild beasts to be torn to pieces by wild dogs, while others were reserved for tragic rôles in the dramatic representations, the dreadful realism of which required that Ixion should really be broken on the wheel; that Icarus should drop from the clouds; and that Hercules should die in the flames.[2] At night Christians attached to crosses and covered with some inflammable stuff were set on fire and used as torches to illuminate the gardens of Nero on the Vatican,

[1] Tacitus, *Annals*, xv, 44.

[2] Cf. Allard, *Histoire des Persécutions pendant les deux premiers Siècles*, p. 28; Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 232 seq.

in which the festivities were held. This carnival of murder did not placate the excited populace nor allay the suspicion that Nero was the real incendiary. Tired with the slaughter, the people commenced to have compassion on the wretched victims who were executed rather to satisfy the cruelty of one man than through zeal for the public welfare.[1] The change in public feeling necessitated a change in the accusations brought against the Christians. The hatred against them arising from the crimes of which they were supposed to be guilty was all summed up in the charge of hatred for the human race (odium humani generis).[2] For the Romans, the *humanum genus* meant not humanity at large, but the Roman people; the Christians, therefore, were public enemies, hostile to the State and civilization.[3]

In the excited state of public feeling at the time such a charge would be sure to find ready credence. It was not necessary, however, that a new accusation should be made to turn the minds of the people against the Christians. Tacitus says they were always hated because of the horrible crimes which they committed.[4] To the pagan,

[1] Unde quamquam adversus sontes et novissima exempla meritos miseratio oriebatur, tamquam non utilitate publica sed in saevitiam unius absumerentur. Tacitus, *Annals*, xv, 44.

[2] *Ibid.* [3] Cf. Ramsay, *loc. cit.*

[4] Quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos adpellabat. Tacitus, *loc. cit.*

Christianity and crime seem to have been synonymous. It must be conceded that the revolutionary character of Christianity and the method of life followed by its votaries gave ample ground for misconception and suspicion. Strange and inexplicable must have appeared the influence which could effect such a reformation as that wrought in its converts by Christianity, and dangerous to public safety any organization which could inspire such enthusiastic devotion and unswerving resolution.[1] Christianity, moreover, put a new value on human life, and by the reforms it instituted in human affairs gave color to the suspicion that society was in danger. The consequence of this misunderstanding was that for three centuries a constant stream of vituperation was directed against the followers of the new religion.

By withdrawing from public life and abstaining from the pleasures of the heathen, the Christians appeared as a people "skulking and shunning the light, silent in public but garrulous in corners.[2] They were despised as ignorant[3] and the outcasts of society.[4] They led gloomy and joyless lives.[5] They took no part in the public banquets; they did not visit the shows and were never present in the

[1] Döllinger, *The First Age of the Church*, p. 394.
[2] Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, c. 8.
[3] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, vi, 14.
[4] Tertull. *Ad Nationes*, c. ii. [5] Min. Fel. c. 8.

solemn processions.[1] "Wretched, they pity, if they are allowed, the priests: half naked themselves, they despise honors and purple robes."[2] The language they used was barbarous.[3] They were the enemies of science and knowledge.[4] They had no respect for the dead, whose sepulchres they never crowned with flowers;[5] and, useless members of society, they bore none of the duties and obligations of citizenship.[6]

The religion of the Christians seemed to the pleasure-loving pagans an anomaly. It had neither altars, temples, nor sacrifices:[7] therefore it had no god, and its votaries were atheists.[8] Their pretended belief in an invisible omnipresent deity was an absurdity.[9] Instead of this troublesome inquisitive god of their imagination[10] the Christians as an offshoot of Judaism were rather the adorers of the head of an ass.[11] It was inconceivable to the pagans that such a body of fanatics could remain together except on the supposition that they practised magical rites.[12] They were accused of taking dreadful oaths, and of being initiated by the slaughter and blood of an infant.[13] Their meetings were said

[1] Min. Fel. c. 12. [2] *Ibid.* c. 8. [3] *Ad Autoly.* c. i.
[4] *Contra Celsum*, iii, 75. [5] Min. Fel. c. 12.
[6] *Contra Celsum*, viii, 64. [7] Athenagoras, *Legatio*, c. xiii.
[8] St. Justin, *Apol.* c. vi. [9] Min. Fel. 10. [10] *Ibid.*
[11] Tacitus, *Hist.* v, 3; Tertullian, *Apol.* c. 16.
[12] Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* c. xxix.
[13] Min. Fel. c. 9.

to be conventicles of lewdness, the scenes of Oedipodean orgies and Thyestean feasts.[1]

The greatest danger to the Christians lay in the fact that many of the slanders circulated against them were political in character and made them appear as transgressors of the laws of the Empire. They were accused of being enemies of the State and the people, of being guilty of treason and sacrilege, and of striving to overthrow the republic.[2] They were branded as conspirators who met in secret to plot the destruction of the State and its religion.[3] Afterwards, commencing with the reign of Domitian, the refusal of the Christians to comply with the established worship of the Empire, which was the touchstone of loyalty, became the basis of persecution and proscription.

Nero's action in bringing the Christians to trial gave official sanction to these slanders and at the same time inaugurated a new era in the relations between Christianity and the State. The general principle had been affirmed that certain acts of which all Christians were supposed to be guilty merited death. Henceforth there was no course open to a magistrate in the Roman dominions but to follow the precedent laid down by the Emperor, whose action was necessarily the official guide in such cases.[4]

[1] Tertull. *Apol.* c. 3.
[2] *Ibid.* c. 42.
[3] *Ibid.* c. 3.
[4] Cf. Ramsay, *loc. cit.* p. 334.

The confusion and anarchy which filled the Empire after Nero's death naturally diverted the attention of the rival emperors from Christianity. The old hostility, however, manifested itself as soon as the Flavian dynasty was firmly established in power. Titus destroyed the temple of Jerusalem in order that the religion of the Jews and Christians might be completely eradicated; for these two religions, although opposed to one another, had the same origin. The Christians had sprung from the Jews, and if the root was destroyed the stem would quickly perish.[1]

The fact that Christianity remained intact and continued to flourish after the fall of Jerusalem ought to have shown that it was independent of all connection with Judaism, yet we find that this fact escaped the notice of Domitian, or was purposely overlooked by him. In order to replenish the treasury exhausted by his extravagance, he decreed that all who lived after the manner of the Jews should pay the Jewish poll-tax, which had been collected for the benefit of the imperial treasury since the time of the Jewish war.[2] There can be no doubt that this edict was aimed at the Christians as well as the Jews.[3] Their persistent refusal to comply

[1] Sulpicius Severus, ii, 30, who reproduces a lost page of Tacitus.

[2] Dion Cassius, lxvii, c. 14.

[3] Cf. Neumann, *Der Römische Staat und die Allgemeine Kirche*, p. 27.

with the provisions of this enactment could leave no doubts in the official mind that they constituted a separate religion, nevertheless it brought on them a persecution so fierce that it merited for Domitian the name of a second Nero in cruelty.[1]

[1] Tertull. c. 5.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH AND THE EMPIRE (*Continued*).

End of persecution under Domitian — Church in the second century — Reign of Trajan — Christians in Bithynia-Pontus — Letter of Pliny — Trajan's reply — Legal procedure settled — Laws against Christians — Mommsen's view — Contrary opinion — Nero author of first edict — Text of this edict — Rapid spread of Christianity — Hadrian's rescript — Attitude of Hadrian towards Christianity — Popular outbreaks against Christians in the reign of Antoninus Pius — Christians punished illegally during the entire second century — Instances of leniency on the part of some provincial governors — Christian apologists — Literary persecution — Era of the Antonines favorable to such a movement — Christians blamed for all the calamities and misfortunes in the Empire — Christians under Commodus — Marcia — Social and political upheaval in the third century — Changes beneficial to Christianity — Septimius Severus — New edict of persecution — Burial clubs — Were the Christians enrolled as a *Collegium Funeraticium?* — Caracalla follows the policy of his father — Elagabalus — Syncretism of Alexander Severus — Maximinus the Thracian — The Gordians and Philip — Long peace intensifies opposition between Church and State — Foreign cults popular in Rome — Christianity becomes a social and intellectual factor in Roman life — Paganism, though imitating many Christian forms, becomes more hostile — Political cataclysm in Rome — Illyrian Emperors — Decius issues edict which defines clearly the absolute incompatibility of Christianity and the heathen Roman State — The Church itself, not individuals, aimed at — Death of Decius — End of persecution — Gallus.

A REVULSION of feeling similar to the change in popular sentiment under Nero brought the persecu-

tion of Domitian to a sudden stop.[1] The Emperor himself, before his death, experienced such a change of heart that he suspended hostilities against the Christians,[2] and granted full pardon to those who had been condemned to exile.[3] With Domitian the Flavian line ended. His successor, the wise and prudent Nerva, a man far advanced in years when he ascended the throne, set himself the task of correcting the abuses and irregularities which had crept in under Domitian. Among his reforms was an act of the Senate granting full amnesty to all who were in banishment, and putting an end to proceedings in the case of those who were charged with the crime of sacrilege.[4]

At the beginning of the second century a marked change had already taken place in the situation of the Christian Church. With the complete separation from Judaism and the ever increasing accessions of Gentile converts, Christianity had taken its place as an independent religion. In some places a generation of Christians born in the faith belonged to the Church. All these things tended to bring

[1] Juvenal, *Sat.* iv, 151–153, says of Domitian: —

> Tempora saevitiae, claras quibus abstulit urbi
> Illustresque animas impune, et vindice nullo,
> Sed periit, postquam cerdonibus esse timendus
> Coeperat.

[2] Hegesippus in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iii, 20.

[3] Restitutis etiam quos relegaverat. Tertull. *Apol.* c. 5.

[4] Eusebius, *loc. cit.*; Dion Cassius, lxviii, c. 1.

the new religion into closer touch with the pagan world, and to infuse into it some touches of the culture of the Graeco-Roman civilization. This century, too, was the culminating point in Roman greatness. With Nerva the imperial power passed into the hands of men who represented all that was best in the national character, a fact which had a very important bearing on the growth and development of Christianity. From Nerva to Marcus Aurelius the sceptre was held by rulers who were strongly attached to the old order, and whose only ideal was the rigid enforcement of law and discipline. For them the majesty of the law was as dominant in the realm of thought as in that of action, as binding on the worshipper as on the soldier.[1]

Trajan the adopted son and successor of Nerva was a man eminently qualified by education and experience to carry out the plans inaugurated during the preceding reign and to restore the Roman State to its former greatness and power. His schemes of reorganization and reform naturally revealed to him the extent and influence of Christianity, and though he was a man more inclined to clemency than to harshness, he allowed no opposition to the laws to go unpunished. He is the first emperor to whom we can attribute with absolute certainty any special legislation on the subject of Christianity.

[1] Ampère, *L'Empire Romain à Rome*, vol. ii, p. 196.

By a rescript given in the year 112,[1] he settled definitely the procedure to be followed by magistrates in dealing with the followers of Christ. The occasion of this rescript was a letter[2] addressed to Trajan by the younger Pliny, who had been sent on a special mission as direct representative of the Emperor to restore order in the province of Bithynia-Pontus,[3] which was sadly disorganized by the maladministration and corruption of the proconsuls who had formerly governed it.

Appreciating the difficulties of the task to which he was somewhat unwillingly assigned, Pliny obtained from the Emperor permission to consult him frequently in regard to the details of his administration.[4] Among the many difficulties which he submitted to the judgment of the Emperor, there was none which caused him graver anxiety than how to deal with the Christians, who were numerous not only in the cities but even in the villages and country districts,[5] and by mere force of numbers had already become a very troublesome element in social

[1] Goyau, *Chronologie de l'Empire Romain*, p. 185.

[2] The anthenticity of this letter is now incontestable. Vide Boissier, *Revue Archéologique*, 1876, pp. 114–126.

[3] "The province which Pliny governed, officially entitled 'Bithynia et Pontus,' was of very wide extent, reaching from the river Rhyndacos on the West to beyond Amisos on the East." Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 224.

[4] Pliny, *Epistle* 32, bk. x.

[5] Neque civitates tantum, sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est. Pliny, *Epistle* 96, bk. x.

matters and a disturbing influence in some branches of trade. The temples of the gods were abandoned, the solemnities of the pagan cult were not observed, and the sale of fodder for the victims in the temples, from which a considerable revenue was derived, had almost ceased.[1] Accusations were brought against the Christians as the authors of this state of things, and Pliny at once took steps to repress them. When they were brought before him for a trial, he first asked each one separately whether he was a Christian, repeating this question three times and threatening severe punishment.[2] All who remained unshaken in their declarations were put to death, unless they enjoyed the benefits of Roman citizenship and the right of appeal to Caesar, of which some availed themselves.[3] In the course of the proceedings difficulties arose because of some new phases which the cases offered, and because of an anonymous document which the legate received denouncing many persons as Christians.[4] Some of

[1] Prope jam desolata templa . . . sacra solemnia diu inter missa . . . pastumque victimarum cujus adhuc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur. Pliny, *Epistle* 96, bk. x.

[2] Interim in iis, qui ad me tamquam Christiani deferebantur, hunc sum secutus modum. Interrogavi ipsos an essent Christiani. Confitentes iterum ac tertio interrogavi, supplicium minatus: perseverantes duci jussi. *Ibid.*

[3] Fuerunt alii similis amentiae quos quia cives Romani erant, adnotavi in urbem remittendos. *Ibid.*

[4] Propositus est libellus sine auctore multorum nomina continens. *Ibid.*

those who were accused denied the charge; others at first acknowledged their guilt, but through fear and because of the threats of the governor they afterwards contradicted themselves and said they had been Christians at one time, but had recanted many years before. All these gave earnest of the sincerity of their denial by offering libations and burning incense before the statues of the Emperor, and by conforming to the pagan ritual.[1]

These latter cases puzzled the legate. As long as the culprits openly acknowledged their faith he knew how to proceed, but when they recanted he was at a loss as to what course he should follow. Though he was a lawyer, and had been consul and praetor, and taken part in many famous trials,[2] his practice had all been before the Decemviral courts,[3] and he knew nothing of the methods followed in dealing with the Christians.[4] In his perplexity he addressed a letter to the Emperor asking for instructions on three separate heads: whether the age of the culprits should be considered; whether abjuration merited pardon; and whether the crime of the Christians consisted of merely the "name," or the criminality implied in the name.[5]

[1] Pliny, *Epistle* 96, bk. x.

[2] Egi magnas et graves causas. *Epistle* 89, bk. v.

[3] In arena nostra, id est apud centumviros. *Epistle* 12, bk. v.

[4] Cognitionibus de Christianis interfu inunqnam. *Epistle* 96, bk. x.

[5] Sitne aliquod discrimen aetatum an quamlibet teneri nihil a

Trajan's reply did not contain a specific answer to each of these three queries, and though evasive in its tenor, it was sufficient to settle the doubts which had been set forth by Pliny. The Emperor approved fully of the methods followed by Pliny, and though he affirmed that no general principle is applicable to all cases, he laid down the rule that no search was to be made for the Christians, but when any of them were brought before the tribunals and accused openly, not anonymously, they were to be punished.[1] An exception, however, was to be made in the case of those who recanted and proved their sincerity by offering worship to the gods.[2]

This edict settled definitely the jurisprudence and procedure in regard to Christianity, and was the principle and rule of action followed by all magistrates in their treatment of the Christians during the whole of the second century. The offence and its punishment were clearly defined. The action of the legate in Bithynia prior to the receipt of the rescript and the subsequent action of the

robustioribus differant, detur paenitentiae venia an ei, qui omnino Christianus fuit, desisse non prosit, nomen ipsum, si flagitiis careat, an flagitia cohaerentia nomini puniantur. *Epistle* 96, bk. x.

[1] Conquirendi non sunt; si deferantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt. Sine auctore vero propositi libelli nullo crimine locum habere debent. Trajan to Pliny, *Epistle* 97, bk. x.

[2] Qui negaverit se Christianum esse idque re ipsa manifestum fecerit, id est supplicando diis nostris . . . veniam ex paenitentia impetrat. *Ibid.*

authorities in all parts of the empire showed that there was no vagueness in the command *Puniendi sunt.* Henceforth no course was open to a judge in any tribunal in the Empire but to inflict the death penalty whenever any one, accused according to due form of law, refused to abjure the Christian religion.[1]

Here arises the important question whether any law directly and explicitly proscribing Christianity as a capital offence existed prior to the time of Trajan. Of late this subject has received a great deal of attention and study. Mommsen and many others have taken the position that before the edict of Decius no direct legislation existed on the subject of Christianity,[2] and that the plenary powers possessed by all Roman governors to take whatever steps they deemed necessary to maintain order and to safeguard religion entitled them to adopt harsh methods in suppressing it. This right, the *jus coercitionis*, was, according to Mommsen, the basis of all the actions against the Christians, who were thus simply dealt with according to the ordinary

[1] Duchesne, *Les Origines Chrétiennes*, p. 109.

[2] Mommsen, "Der Religionsfrevel nach Römischen Recht," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 1890, t. lxiv, pp. 389–429.

The same article, "Christianity in the Roman Empire," *Expositor*, 1890, t. viii.

Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 207–210; *Expositor*, 1893, p. 5, and Hardy, *Christianity and the Roman Government*, passim, substantially agree with Mommsen.

police regulations, which entitled the heads of provinces to adopt harsh measures, whenever good order or the public peace seemed to be in danger.

In the opinion of many other writers on this subject[1] Mommsen's view is altogether too broad, and while in the main it is correct, it goes back to a period in Roman law when there was no Jewish question and no Christian question.[2] It is by no means improbable that at some time prior to the reign of Trajan, perhaps in the days of Nero, special edicts were issued against the Christians, who, it was decreed, were to be treated as dangerous outlaws, and deserving only of complete extermination. Sulpicius Severus makes express mention of the fact that Nero passed laws against the Christians during the time he was persecuting them.[3] Melito of Sardis speaks of decrees of the governors of provinces

[1] Duchesne, *Bulletin Critique*, Nov. 15, 1890; Allard, *Histoire des Persécutions pendant les Deux Premiers Siècles*, pp. 164–167; Kneller, "Hat der Römische Staat das Christenthum verfolgt?" *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, vol. lv, pp. 1 seq.; Theodor Mommsen, "Ueber die Christenverfolgungen," *Ibid.* pp. 276 seq.; "Die Martyrer und das Römische Recht," *Ibid.* pp. 34–39 seq.; Batifoll, "L'Eglise Naissante," *Revue Biblique*, 1894, pp. 503 seq.; Callewaert, "Les Premiers Chrétiens, furent-ils persecutés par édits Généraux ou par Mesures de Police," *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, Oct. 15, 1901, and January 15, 1902. All these are authorities for the belief that special laws existed on the subject of Christianity from the time of Nero.

[2] Duchesne, *loc. cit.*

[3] Post etiam datis legibus religio vetahatur, palamque edictis propositis Christianos esse non licet. *Chron.* ii, 29.

which could be nothing but instructions or interpretations of existing laws.[1] Tertullian in several passages of his works insists strongly on the iniquitous character of the laws which oppressed his coreligionists.[2] Lactantius relates that the jurisconsult Ulpian, prime minister of Alexander Severus, collected and codified those laws in the seventh book of his treatise "De Officio Proconsulis."[3] Origen defends the Christians accused by Celsus as violators of the laws by saying the laws they transgressed were "Scythian" in their harshness.

The text and tenor of the laws to which these authors refer will probably never be known with absolute certainty. It is remarkable, however, that Severus,[5] Tertullian,[6] and Origen[7] when referring to them use precisely the same expression, *Non licet esse Christianos*. The pagan author Lampridius, speaking of the toleration shown to the Christians by Alexander Severus, says, *Christianos esse*

[1] Melito, in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iv, 26.

[2] M. Callewaert, *loc. cit.*, has submitted Tertullian's works to a profound and critical study on this point.

[3] Domitius (Ulpian), *De officio proconsulis*, libro septimo, rescripta principum nefaria collegit ut doceret quibus poenis affici oporteret eos qui se cultores Dei confiterentur. Lactantius, *Instit. Div.* v. 2.

[4] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, i, 1.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Jam primum cum jure definitis non licet esse vos. *Apol.* 4.

[7] Decreverunt legibus suis ut non sint Christiani. *Hom.* 9, *in Josue.*

passus est.[1] A strong reason for holding that this was official language is found in the fact that the decree of Galerius putting an end to the persecutions against the Christians began with the words, *Denuo sint Christiani.*[2] The similarity of the language employed by so many writers of different periods leads to the conviction that they all borrowed from a common source. The use of exactly the same terms can scarcely be a mere coincidence. It allows of no alternative but the supposition that they were all acquainted with the law couched in Roman brevity, *Non licet esse Christianos.*[3] The vague and general character of such a law neither fully defining the crime nor indicating any regular procedure will readily explain the difficulty which Pliny experienced in executing it.[4]

Neither the fear of death nor the incentive to apostasy in Trajan's legislation seemed to have had any appreciable effect on the rapid spread of Christianity, or to have caused any diminution in the number of martyrs. Nor did Pliny's letter exculpating the Christians from all suspicion of wrongdoing[5]

[1] Judaeis privilegia reservavit, Christianos esse passus est. *Alex. Sev.* 22.

[2] Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persec.* 34.

[3] Cf. Gaston Boissier, "La Lettre de Pline au sujet des Chrétiens," *Revue Archéologique*, 1876, pp. 114–126, for the matter of this whole passage.

[4] La réponse de Trajan n'était pas une loi, mais elle supposait des lois et en fixait l'interprétation. Renan, *Les Evangiles*, p. 483.

[5] Adfirmabant (Christiani) . . . se sacramento non in scelus ali-

put a stop to the calumnies directed against them.[1] As the church gained in numbers and influence the hatred of the pagans became more intense and their slanders more virulent. The pagans banded themselves together to resist the encroachments of the new religion. The worst passions of the populace were aroused. Mob violence took the place of legal repression and tumults broke out every day in all parts of the Empire. Riotous crowds assailed the proconsuls of the different provinces, demanding that the Christians be put to death and their religion extirpated. The Emperor Hadrian was apprised of this state of things by the reports sent him by the proconsuls. One of these, Licinius Granianus, the governor of Asia, deploring the injustice done the Christians and regretting the violence to which they had been subjected, went almost as far as suggesting the revocation of all laws against them.[2]

St. Justin has preserved Hadrian's rescript in answer to this report. For some reason the Emperor delayed his reply, and it was addressed not to Granianus but to his successor, Minicius Fundanus.[3]

quod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent. — Nihil aliud inveni quam superstitionem pravam, immodicam. *Epistle* 96, bk. x.

[1] Compare the works of the Apologists, Justin, etc.

[2] Vide, Eusebius, *Chronicon*, *Olymp. 226.*

[3] St Justin, *Apol.* i, 68.

The new rescript was substantially the same as that of Trajan and added nothing to the existing legislation. While studiously avoiding all mention of what constituted the crime in the case, the Emperor declared it was his intention that innocent persons should not be molested and that informers should have no opportunities to exercise their villainy.

If the provincials wished to bring charges against the Christians, they must do so in the open courts, and not by petitions and tumultuous outbreaks which the governors were charged to suppress. In the courts proof should be given that the Christians had violated the laws. If it was not forthcoming, and if the accuser failed to establish his case, he must be punished for calumny. The sole concern of the Emperor was that public order should be preserved and the laws strictly enforced.[1] He desired to confine judicial action on the subject of Christianity within the limits laid down by his predecessor, but strangely enough, and perhaps advertently, his rescript makes no allusion to the subject of religion. This is quite in keeping with what we know of the religious temper of the Emperor and his attitude towards Christianity. His interest in the religions of the Empire arose solely from political motives. These two were so closely linked that he knew they would stand or fall together. Personally he had

[1] Allard, *Le Christianisme et l'Empire Romain*, p. 42.

the profoundest contempt for the national gods. In his roamings back and forth through the Empire he constructed those inscriptionless temples without images which, because they were dedicated to no divinity, and for want of a better name, were known as Hadrianic.[1] He despised all religions, and saw in the conflicts of the sects nothing but a subject for mirth and raillery. In a biting, epigrammatic letter written in a fit of pique from Alexandria to his brother-in-law Servianus he showed his contempt for Paganism and Christianity alike. "Here," he says, "the worshippers of Serapis are Christians, and they who call themselves bishops of Christ worship Serapis. Every archisynagogus of the Jews, every Samaritan, and every Christian presbyter is an astrologer, a soothsayer, or a quack doctor."[2] He saw no danger to the stability of the State in Christianity itself, and with lofty disdain he sneered at all the religions, saying, "They have one god, Money, worshipped alike by Christian, Jew, and Gentile."[3]

[1] Qui (Hadrianus) templa in omnibus civitatibus sine simulacris jusserat fieri, quae hodieque idcirco, quia non habent numina, dicuntur Hadriani. Lampridius, *Vita Alex. Sever.* c. 43.

[2] Illic qui Serapem colunt, Christiani sunt et devoti sunt Serapi, qui se Christi episcopos dicunt, nemo illic archisynagogus Judaeorum, nemo Samarites, nemo Christianorum presbyter non mathematicus, non haruspex, non aliptes. Vopiscus, *Vita Saturnini*, c. 8.

[3] Unus illis deus nummus est, hunc Christiani, hunc Judaei, hunc omnes venerantur et gentes. *Ibid.*

The popular outbreaks which marked the reign of Hadrian continued during the reign of his successor, Antoninus Pius,[1] and occasioned fresh rescripts on the subject of Christianity. Antoninus introduced no change in the laws, and contented himself with maintaining the procedure inaugurated by Trajan. In the letters he addressed to the Larissaeans, Thessalonians, Athenians, and the Greek cities in general [2] he condemned strongly the riotous action of the people and refused to allow it to take the place of regular legal proceedings. This ordinance, simply a confirmation of Hadrian's rescript requiring legal proof of the guilt alleged against the Christians, shows that in the mind of the Emperor, the judicial system of persecution still in force was a sufficient guarantee against the dangers and encroachments of Christianity.[3]

In spite of the comparative leniency of these Emperors, and the formal legal procedure which they insisted on, the situation of the Christians during the entire period was one of extreme danger. The risk of being denounced and dragged before the tribunals hung over their heads at all times,

[1] For the causes of these outbreaks, cf. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A. D. 170*, pp. 326, 327, 332.

[2] These letters are mentioned by Melito in an apology addressed to Marcus Aurelius, a fragment of which is preserved by Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iv, 26.

[3] Cf. Ramsay, *loc. cit.* p. 331.

and the death penalty awaited them in case they persevered in the profession of their faith. Though the law required that whoever accused a Christian should substantiate his charge by proof in the courts, the whole course of the proceedings in the second century shows that this ordinance was constantly violated. The existence of such a statute, however, had a tendency to check the wholesale denunciation of the Christians and to repress the activity of informers. For, besides the popular hatred for *delatores* in general, and the fear which the Christians inspired in many places by mere numbers, the informer ran the risk of severe punishment if he failed to make good his accusation. This danger was especially to be feared in cases brought against the Christians, to whom recantation always offered a loophole for escape.

Instances are not wanting to show that the governors of some provinces found the execution of the laws against the Christians extremely difficult or distasteful. In a letter written to Scapula, proconsul of Africa, demanding that he should exercise less cruelty in his dealings with the Christians, Tertullian mentions several cases of this kind. Among them is that of Arrius Antoninus, proconsul of Asia, whose severity aroused the Christians to such a pitch of desperation that they presented themselves in a body before his tribunal one day, asking that

they should all instantly be executed. The proconsul sentenced some of them and dismissed the others saying, "Wretched men, if you wish to die, you have precipices and halters." Quite different is the case of Cincius Severus, who suggested such answers to the Christian prisoners as would lead to their acquittal. Asper openly expressed his disgust with such cases, and refused to compel a Christian prisoner who had recanted under torture to offer sacrifice. Others resisted the clamors of the mob, as Vespronius Candidus, who declared such tumults illegal, and Pudens, who refused to try a case without the presence of a formal accuser, as to do so would be a violation of the commands of the Emperor.[1]

Isolated cases such as these, however, extending over a whole century, do not prove that the laws were allowed to fall into abeyance as a general rule, or that the position of the Christians was more secure because of the reluctance of some governors to execute the will of the mob. The Christians themselves were keenly alive to the precarious position they held in the eyes of the law. Time after time they protested against the injustice to which they were subjected. Commencing with the reign of Hadrian, a long line of apologists addressed letters to the Emperors in their defence, pleading for some

[1] Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, cc. iv, v.

mitigation of the burdens under which they labored. The aim of the apologists, from Quadratus and Aristides[1] to Tertullian, was not to obtain any change in the legislation. They demanded that such modifications be introduced into the procedure followed by the magistrates as would ensure for the Christians a fair trial on specific charges, and constantly complained that the Christians were condemned for the mere name without any proof that they were guilty of crime or wrongdoing. To strengthen their plea for justice, the apologists did not confine themselves to the legal aspects of the case. They repelled the accusations made against Christianity, and refuted the calumnies and slanders so industriously circulated among the people, by explaining the teaching of the Church, and showing its high moral tone and the loyalty of all its members to the State and Emperors.

What impression these apologies made on the Emperors, and whether they affected public opinion in any way, will perhaps always remain a matter of conjecture. The action of the Antonines in refusing to have the charges against the Christians investigated and in adhering to the rule laid down by Trajan might be considered a proof that they placed no credence in the accusations to which they were

[1] Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iv, 3; Harris, *The Apology of Aristides*, Cambridge, 1891.

forced to listen. It is significant, however, that an active literary and intellectual opposition to Christianity manifested itself at this epoch. The prevalence of Christian ideas rendered it impossible for the pagans to ignore any longer the intellectual force in the Christian teaching. Crescens, the philosopher, disputed openly with St. Justin in Rome;[1] Fronto, the rhetorician and preceptor of Marcus Aurelius, attacked the Christians in a public discourse;[2] Lucian, the satirist, held them up to ridicule as a set of credulous fanatics;[3] and Celsus, in a lengthy work entitled the True Word,[4] showing a most intimate acquaintance with Christianity, employed all his skill as a dialectician in gathering together the calumnies and arguments which he hoped would make the acceptance of Christianity by his fellow-pagans, or the toleration of it by the Roman authorities, an impossibility.

The era of the Antonines was especially favorable to a literary propaganda against a new religion. Greek philosophy, notwithstanding the prejudice and opposition it encountered in the days of Cicero and Seneca, had gradually extended its sway over the best minds in the Empire, until it finally

[1] Justin, *Second Apology*, chap. 3.

[2] Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, cc. 9, 31.

[3] *Dialogues*, especially.

[4] Origen, *Contra Celsum*. Keim, *Celsus Wahres Wort*, Zurich, 1873, has attempted a reconstruction of this work.

reached the throne in the person of Marcus Aurelius.[1] There was too, at this time, a revival of old Roman customs, a Renaissance political as well as literary, but the long peace from the death of Domitian to the reign of Marcus, which made this period the most happy and prosperous in the history of the world,[2] had introduced a taste for ease and luxury which unfitted men for the serious occupations of life. The heathen themselves were conscious of the degeneracy of the age, and the attempted restoration was a failure. Superstition and scepticism took the place of religion, while philosophy gave way to rhetoric.[3] The widespread corruption and licentiousness were gradually undermining the last vestiges of ancient virtue and morality. The reign of Marcus Aurelius marks the end of the old Roman world.[4] The long period of tranquillity which the State had enjoyed was ended by a series of unprecedented calamities and disasters.[5] Foreign and civil wars, earthquakes, inundations, famine, and pestilence brought sorrow and suffering to every part of the Empire and filled the public mind

[1] Boissier, *La Religion Romaine*, vol. ii, p. 93.

[2] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. iii.

[3] Boissier, *loc. cit.* p. 105.

[4] Renan, *Marc-Aurèle et la fin du Monde Antique*, Preface, p. ii. La mort de Marc-Aurèle peut d'ailleurs être considérée comme marquant la fin de la civilization antique.

[5] Julius Capitolinus, *Vita Marci Antonii*, cc. 8, 11, 13, 17, 21, 22, 24.

with terror and foreboding. The terrified and superstitious masses saw in these misfortunes a manifestation of the anger of their gods, whose favor had been alienated by the Christian atheists.[1] These open and avowed enemies of the national deities were the authors of all the calamities the people suffered, and the fanatic terror of the mob dictated they should be offered as victims to appease and propitiate the outraged deities. *Christianos ad leones* seemed to promise relief from all evils and became the cry of the fear-stricken pagans. The philosopher Emperor was not superior to popular superstition. Yielding to the clamors of the people, he issued new rescripts, which reversed the policy of his predecessors and inaugurated a new era in the persecutions.[2] The text of this rescript no longer exists. Sufficient evidence is found in contemporary writings, however, to prove what its tenor was.[3] The Christians, it was commanded, should be sought out and punished. In order to make the pursuit more active and effective, it was decreed that the informers should be rewarded from the property of the condemned. The stimulus

[1] Tertullian, *Apology*, 40; *Ad Nationes*, 1, 9.

[2] Melito, in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iv, 26.

[3] Celsus; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, viii, 69; Melito, *loc. cit.;* Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis*, c. 1, says the Christians were harassed, plundered, and persecuted. The Acts of the martyrs (Lyons and Vienne, and Justin) show that the Christians were "sought out."

offered to violence and rapacity by this decree made the persecution under Marcus more severe than any that had preceded it. At this time the apologist Justin, and the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, whose sufferings are told in the touching letter addressed to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, became victims of pagan malice and barbarity.

When Marcus Aurelius, dying of the plague, reproached his friends for weeping for him instead of thinking about the pestilence and the general misery,[1] there was nothing, perhaps, that caused him greater anguish of spirit than the character of the man who was to succeed him on the throne. It is recorded that he wished for the death of Commodus, in whom he saw traits that promised a return of the worst days of Nero, Caligula, and Domitian.[2] The dire forebodings of the dying Emperor were fulfilled. The brutal and degenerate Commodus so disgraced the imperial purple that one is inclined to believe the historian who calls this child of the wayward Faustina the son of a gladiator.[3]

[1] Capitolinus, *Vita Marci Aur.* ch. 28. Quid de me fletis et non magis de pestilentia et communi morte cogitatis ?

When he was asked to whom he would commend his son, he answered, "Vobis si dignus fuerit et diis immortalibus." *Ibid.*

[2] Fertur filium mori voluisse, cum eum talem videret futurum, qualis exstitit post ejus mortem, ne, ut ipse dicebat, similis Neroni, Caligulae et Domitiano esset. *Ibid.*

[3] Aiunt quidam, quod et verisimile videtur, Commodum Antoninum . . . non esse de eo natum sed de adulterio. *Ibid.*, ch. 19.

Wholly immersed in the degrading sports of the arena, and caring nothing for the national gods, he was incapable of devoting himself to delicate questions either of state or of religion. No new edicts were issued, but the laws enacted in previous reigns were still in force, and the Christians were as much as ever exposed to persecution by hostile governors. The Emperor himself does not seem to have been personally hostile to the Christians, and tolerated the presence of large numbers of them at his court.[1] His favorite Marcia obtained from Pope Victor a list of the Christians condemned to exile in the mines of Sardinia, and so influenced Commodus in their favor that he gave orders for their liberation.[2]

The civil wars, caused by the conflicts among the claimants for the throne after the death of Commodus, transformed completely the social and political condition of the Roman world. The narrow aristocratic spirit of the ruling class disappeared entirely before the growing sense of union and equality among the different peoples in the Empire. Caracalla broke down the distinction between Roman and barbarian, between conquered and rulers, by extending the rights of Roman citizenship to all the free inhabitants of the Roman

[1] Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* iv, 30.
[2] *Philosophumena*, ix, 7.

dominions.[1] The changed tone of the period is most noticeable in the wearers of the purple. During the whole of the third century the destinies of Rome were controlled by men who owed their elevation to the throne to military genius or the capricious will of the soldiers. Dynasties changed as frequently as rulers. None of the many adventurers who attained imperial honors succeeded in establishing an hereditary succession. In this condition of things there was no possibility of any continuity of policy in regard to the internal affairs of the State. After the Senate, the one element of conservatism, had been shorn of its authority by Septimius Severus, all the power in the Empire centred in the man who retained the good will of the legions.[2]

For the Christians the turmoil in the Empire and the frequent changes of dynasty were a source of security and strength. The Africans, Syrians, Arabs, and Thracians, who successively wielded the sceptre, had no sympathy with the traditions nor reverence for the gods of Rome. For some of them it would have been as easy and natural to accept the teaching of the gospel as to become worshippers at the shrine of Jupiter or Janus. Septimius Severus was the first of these military despots. In the

[1] Ulpian, *Digest*, i, 5, 17.
[2] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. v.

beginning of his reign he was favorably disposed towards Christianity, and is even said to have been its defender and protector.[1] His son Caracalla had a Christian nurse, while the Emperor himself owed his life to a Christian slave, Proculus, who cured him of some malady by anointing him with oil.[2] A further reason for treating the Christians with leniency may be found in the fact that during the conflicts for the throne they wisely abstained from taking sides with either Claudius, Niger, or Albinus.[3] The good will of the Emperor, however, did not lead him to revoke the laws against the Christians, or to discountenance the circulation of the most atrocious slanders against them. Severus spent little time in Rome.[4] The greater part of his life as emperor was passed in the East. During a visit to Palestine in the year 202 he promulgated a new edict, which forbade any one to become a Jew under severe penalties, a prohibition which he also extended to Christian converts.

[1] Sed et clarissimas feminas et clarissimos viros Severus sciens hujus sectæ esse, non modo non laesit verum et testimonio exornavit, et populo furenti in nos palam restitit. Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam*, iv.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Tertullian, *Apol.* o. 35; *De Idololatria*, 15.

[4] Schiller, *Geschichte der Römischen Kaiserzeit*, vol. i, pt. 2, pp. 705 seq.

[5] In itinere Palaestinis plurima jura fundavit. Judaeos fieri sub gravi poena vetuit, idem etiam de Christianis sanxit. Spartianus, *Vita Severi*, c. 16.

Many reasons can be assigned for the change of attitude on the part of Severus: the rapid spread of Christianity counteracting the work of the unification of the Empire;[1] the influence of the Emperor's Syrian wife, Julia Domna;[2] or more probably the maledictory and threatening tone noticeable in the apocalyptic literature which emanated so abundantly from Christian and Jewish sources at this time.[3] The belief in the millennium still prevailed, and consequently many Christians were not averse to looking on the disasters and the confusion of the times as forerunners of the abolition of paganism and the dissolution of the Roman Empire. Besides, the Christians themselves were beginning to chafe under the severities practised against them, and notwithstanding the frequent protestations of loyalty which Tertullian makes, there is evident in some parts of his writing a tone of menace which leads to the conclusion that in some quarters the doctrine of passivity was losing force.[4]

According to a theory proposed by De Rossi, which for a long time met with general approval, none of the reforms introduced by the successors of the Antonines had a more important bearing on

[1] Duchesne, *Les Origines Chrétiennes*, chap. 23.

[2] Philostratus, who attempted to set up a heathen Christ, was one of her protégés.

[3] Cf. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, chap. vii.

[4] *Apol.* c. 37; *Ad Scapulam*, c. 5.

the developing and strengthening of Christianity than the decree of Septimius Severus, which extended to the people of the provinces the right possessed by the inhabitants of Rome under a law of the first century to form funeral societies or burial clubs.[1] Through this law people of the poorer classes were allowed to organize such clubs without special authorization from the Senate, in order to secure for themselves by small monthly contributions a decent funeral and a final resting-place.[2] By the same law, those who organized such a society had the right to hold property in common, to have a common treasury, to be represented by an *actor* or syndic, and to receive gifts and legacies.[3] In the opinion of De Rossi the Christians took this opportunity of acquiring a legal corporate existence by being enrolled as a funeral society.[4] There was

[1] Permittitur tenuibus stipem menstruam, conferre dum tamen semel in mense coëant conferendi causa; sed religionis causa coire non prohibentur, dum tamen per hoc non fiat contra Senatus consultum quo illicita collegia arcentur . . . quod non tantum in Urbe sed in Italia et in provinciis locum habere divus quoque Severus rescripsit. *Digest*, xlvii, 22, 1.

[2] By the *Lex Julia* Augustus suppressed the *collegia* and laid down new conditions for the formation of burial clubs, among which was the express permission of the Senate, C. I. L. vi, 2193. Compare Waltzing, *Etude Historique sur les Corporations Professionnelles chez les Romains*, tom. i, p. 267.

[3] *Digest*, iii, 4, 1.

[4] De Rossi, *Bull. di Arch. Cris.* 1864, pp. 57 seq.; 1865, p. 90; 1866, pp. 11, 22; 1870, pp. 35–36; 1877, p. 25; 1885, pp. 83–84; *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, pp. 161, 209, 210; tom. ii, pp. 8 seq., 370

no reason why they should not do so. Such a simple way of avoiding conflict with the laws and of protecting their burial places would very naturally commend itself to the persecuted followers of Christ. The many striking resemblances between these *collegia tenuiorum*[1] and the Christian Church would make this legal fiction less objectionable. Like the pagan societies, the Christians had a common fund supported by monthly contributions,[2] out of which they provided for the decent interment of their dead associates[3] and the construction and maintenance of their cemeteries. In one case as in the other the society was largely recruited from among the ranks of the poor and lowly, from artisans and slaves. The custom in the *collegia tenuiorum* of electing the leaders by general suffrage prevailed also to a certain extent among the Christians.[4] The holding of meetings

seq. See, also, Northcote and Brownlow, *Rom. Sott.* vol. i; Allard, *Histoire des Persécutions*, vol. ii, c. i; *Le Christianisme et l'Empire Romain*, pp. 76–89; Boissier, "Les Chrétiens devant la législation Romaine," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, April 15, 1876; *Religion Romaine*, tom. ii, pp. 300–306; Waltzing, *loc. cit.* tom. i, pp. 149–153; Neumann, *Der Römische Staat und die Allgemeine Kirche*, vol. i, p. 101.

[1] Called by Mommsen, "funeraticia," a name unknown to the ancients. Waltzing, *loc. cit.* tom. i, 143.

[2] Modicam unusquisque stipem menstrua die, vel cum velit; et si modo velit et si modo possit apponit. Tertullian, *Apol.* c. 39.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Praesident probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio, sed testimonio adepti. *Ibid.*

on certain anniversaries and of congregating frequently for religious purposes was common to both.[1] The pagans honored their dead by feasts and banquets,[2] the Christians celebrated the *agape* in their assemblies. The first deacon among the Christians corresponded to the syndic among the pagans in that both were charged with the administration of the temporal affairs of their respective societies.[3]

There would of course be something repugnant to the Christians in the pagan name *collegium*, and hence they preferred to be known as the Ecclesia Fratrum, Fratres, Fraternitas, Sodales Fratres, Ἀδελφοί, Ἀδελφότης, names which are found on inscriptions dating from a period earlier than the time of Constantine.[4] Presumably in imitation of the pagan custom of forming clubs under the patronage of some deity, the members of which were known as Cultores Jovis, Cultores Herculis, etc.,[5] a certain Christian who founded a cemetery for his brethren at Caesarea called himself a CULTOR VERBI.[6] The description of the Church given by

[1] Waltzing, tom. i, p. 295.

[2] *Ibid.* tom. i, p. 488; tom. iv, p. 675.

[3] *Ibid.* tom. i, p. 395; tom. ii, pp. 446, 468.

[4] De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. iii, pp. 37–42, 507, 573; *Bulletino*, 1877, pp. 47–49. Compare Waltzing, *loc. cit.* tom. i, p. 151.

[5] Waltzing, *loc. cit.* tom. i, pp. 37, 47, 260–265.

[6] Aream ad sepulchra cultor Verbi contulit et cellam struxit suis cunctis sumptibus. Ecclesiae Sanctae hanc reliquit memoriam. Ecclesia fratrum hunc restituit titulum. Vide De Rossi,

Tertullian, showing its resemblance in many salient features to the burial clubs of the pagans, was, it was conjectured, drawn with a view to proving that the Church had a legal right to existence under the form of a burial society.[1] These striking analogies, taken in connection with the fact that the Church first appears as the corporate owner of property precisely at the time when funeral associations were being multiplied in the Roman world under the wider liberty granted by Severus, convinced De Rossi that the Christians took advantage of this act to obtain a legal footing in the Empire.[2] Another argument in support of this theory was found in the fact that the names of the Popes in the Philocalian Catalogue, drawn up about 336, and the lists of the "depositions" of bishops and martyrs added to this catalogue, must have been borrowed in great part from the records of the urban prefect rather than from the Church archives, thus proving that there existed in the prefecture a register in which it was thought the popes had been enrolled as heads (*actores*, *syndici*) of the *ecclesia fratrum* in Rome.[3] Recent writers,

Bulletino, 1864, p. 28; *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, pp. 96, 107; Waltzing, *loc. cit.* tom. i, 213.

[1] *Apol.* c. 39.

[2] Waltzing, *loc. cit.* vol. i, p. 151; Duchesne, *Les Origines Chrétiennes*, *loc. cit.*; Allard, *Hist. des Persécutions*, vol. ii, p. 9; Boissier, *La Religion Romaine*, vol. ii, p. 300.

[3] *Rom. Sott.* tom. ii, pp. 6–9; Duchesne, *loc. cit.*

however, following in the wake of Duchesne, have abandoned this theory altogether, or content themselves with regarding it as an unproved hypothesis. In the first place, it is pointed out that the right which the Christians undoubtedly possessed at the beginning of the third century of holding property in common may with equal plausibility be regarded as a concession due to the tolerance of such an emperor as Commodus. And in the second place, if the Christians had accepted this legal fiction, it is difficult to understand the attitude of Tertullian [1] and St. Cyprian [2] towards such societies, or to explain how the police would have shut their eyes to such manifest evasion or perversion of the law. More difficult still is it to understand how the Christians of Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, or Carthage, whose numbers in these cities must have been between thirty and fifty thousand, could have prevailed on the public authorities to permit them to enroll themselves as a burial club when such clubs usually consisted of a small number of poor persons. "Is it possible to imagine St. Fabian, St. Cyprian, or St. Denis of Alexandria, presenting himself at the prefecture to be registered as the head of a college of Cultores Verbi, consisting of 50,000 members banded together to procure proper interment? It is more easy to believe that if the

[1] *Apol.* v. 39. [2] *Ep.* 67.

Church enjoyed a long interval of peace after the death of Marcus Aurelius, and was allowed to hold property apparent to everybody and of considerable value, it was because it was tolerated or even openly recognized without any legal fiction as a church or religious society." If the names of the Popes were enrolled in the public registers, this merely proves that they were recognized as the heads of the Church, but by no means that they were regarded as chiefs or syndics of burial clubs. This negative view is still further strengthened by the fact that no written records contain any suspicion or evidence of legal fictions, titles to property, or burial societies.[1]

The policy pursued by Septimius Severus for the repression of Christianity was continued by his successor Caracalla for about two years, after which the persecution came to an end.[2] From this time until the reign of Decius, a period of nearly forty years, the Church enjoyed peace broken only by a short outbreak during the reign of Maximin. These were years of chaos for the Roman State. Caesarism and militarism had destroyed public spirit, and the last vestiges of national pride vanished when Elagabalus, a priest of the Syrian Sun-

[1] Duchesne, *Les Origines Chrétiennes*, chap. 23, sec. 4; Lowrie, *Monuments of the Early Church*, pp. 58–61.

[2] Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, chap. viii.

god, was raised to the throne.[1] The black conical stone worshipped at Emesa as a symbol of the sun was transferred in solemn procession to Rome and installed in a magnificent temple on the Palatine.[2] It is not to be wondered at, that popular antipathy to the Christians diminished when the Emperor attempted to make the worship of this god the centre of all religions, and when, in furtherance of his scheme for a universal religion which included Jews, Samaritans, and even Christians, he transferred to the temple of Heliogabalus the most sacred symbols of the gods of Rome.[3]

The syncretism of the next Emperor, Alexander Severus, took a somewhat different form. While he honored and respected all the gods of the Empire, domestic[4] and foreign,[5] his *lararium*, in which he offered his private devotions, contained, together with the statues of Abraham, Orpheus, and Apollonius of Tyana, a bust of the Founder of the Christian religion.[6] The devotion and rectitude of Alexander, and certainly the success of his reign, were due in large measure to the influence of his mother,

[1] Aelius Lampridius, *Vita Antonini Heliogabali*, c. 1.

[2] *Ibid.* c. 2. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] Aelius Lampridius, *Vita Alexandri*, c. 43: Capitolium septimo quoque die, cum in urbe esset, ascendit, templa frequentavit.

[5] *Ibid.* c. 26. Isium et Serapium decenter ornavit additis signis et deliacis et omnibus mysticis.

[6] *Ibid.* c. 29.

Mammaea,[1] who, during a sojourn in Antioch, had conversed with and received instructions from the great Origen.[2] Notwithstanding the fact that the laws against Christianity were codified during his reign,[3] Alexander showed the greatest toleration to the followers of Christ,[4] large numbers of whom were ever present at his court.[5] He evinced his admiration for the Christian custom of publicly proposing the names of candidates for ordination by insisting that the same method should be followed in appointing provincial governors,[6] and he went so far as to recognize the right of the Christians to hold property by awarding to them a piece of land to which a body of victuallers laid claim, saying that it was "better that this land should be devoted to the worship of God in any form than that it should be diverted to profane uses."[7]

[1] Lampridius, *loc. cit.* c. 26. In matrem Mammaeam unice pius fuit.

[2] Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vi, 21.

[3] Lact. bk. v, c. 2. Ut doceret, quibus oportet eos poenis affici, qui se cultores Dei confiterentnr.

[4] Lampridius, *loc. cit.* c. 22, Judaeis privilegia reservavit, Christianos esse passus est.

[5] Eusebius, *loc. cit.* vi, 28.

[6] Lampridius, *loc. cit.* c. 45. Dicebat grave esse, cum id Christiani et Judaei facerent in praedicandis sacerdotibus, qui ordinandi sunt, non fieri in provinciarum rectoribus, quibus et fortunae hominum committerentur et capita.

[7] *Ibid.* c. 49. Cum Christiani quemdam locum, qui publicus fuerat occupassent, contra popinarii dicerent sibi eum deberi, rescripsit melius esse, ut quemadmodumcumque illic deus colatur quam popinariis dedatur.

The peace which the Church enjoyed under Alexander Severus was rudely interrupted by his successor, Maximinus, a rude barbarian from Thrace whom the soldiers elevated to the purple. The fact that the Christians had enjoyed the friendship of his predecessor afforded Maximinus sufficient reason for persecuting them.[1] In order quickly and effectively to destroy Christianity, he directed his attacks against the heads of the Church; but death intervened to prevent more than the partial accomplishment of his purpose. Under the Gordians there was a return to the policy of Alexander Severus, and the Christians once more tasted the sweets of tranquillity. The reign of Philip the Arab, who is said to have been the first Christian Emperor,[2] was uneventful for the Christians, and remarkable in Roman annals principally from the celebration of the Saecular Games in commemoration of the thousandth anniversary of the foundation of Rome.

This long peace could end only in a violent storm. With the uninterrupted growth and thor-

[1] Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vi, 28.

[2] Eusebius, vi, 34; *Chron. Olymp. 256.* Primus omnium ex Romanis imperatoribus Christianus fuit. Among modern historians this is still an open question; Allard (*Hist. de Persée.* vol. ii, chap. 6) and Duchesne (*Les Origines Chrétiennes*, chap. 23, sec. i), maintain the affirmative; Neumann, *Der Römische Staat und die Allegemeine Kirche*, vol. i, pp. 246–260, the negative.

ough organization of the Church all its latent hostility to the old order was fully developed. Although the interaction between Paganism and Christianity during more than two centuries of contact had produced a certain approximation of doctrine and ritual, the line of demarcation between them was still too plainly marked, and the opposition too intense, to offer any hope that the day of final reckoning could be long deferred. The tendency to religious syncretism, which was a necessary outgrowth of the formation of the Empire, had by the middle of the third century reached its culmination, and the national deities were almost entirely superseded by foreign gods. The last blow to the predominance of the purely Roman cultus was administered by the Oriental emperors. It is probable that the world never saw such a flood of superstition, never so many soothsayers, charlatans, astrologers, sellers of charms, philtres, and amulets as appeared at this time. Men lived in constant dread of the demons and hobgoblins which filled the earth and air, and which could be prevented from exercising their malicious tricks only by the use of constant incantations and the wearing of charms and amulets.[1] All this extravagance and folly was merely a sign of the spiritual unrest of the period and the desire

[1] Cf. Gasguet, "Le Culte et les Mystères de Mithra," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, April, 1899.

to satisfy the acute craving of a newly aroused religious consciousness. The soul was a prey to the torments of the unknown; it suffered from the bitterness of guilt and aspired for salvation. Hence the widespread popularity of the various mysteries, and the lustrations and expiations of the dread Taurobolia and Kriobolia.[1] The Egyptian and Oriental religions profited most by this spiritual ferment. Serapis, Osiris, and Anubis, whose statues had been broken and whose altars had been thrown down by the Consul Gabinius in the last days of the Republic, gradually received new adherents until they were adored wherever the Romans set up their standards.[2] The worship of the Persian god of light, Mithra, whose name was hardly known in Italy before the end of the first century,[3] took such a hold on the minds

[1] The Taurobolium and Kriobolium were common to the mysteries of Mithra and Cybele. This rite was a kind of pagan baptism, in which the novice, dressed in symbolic garments and placed in a sort of trench covered with boards, was purified through the blood of bulls or rams. These animals were sacrificed on the boards which covered the trench or vault, and the novice received as much as he could of the blood which dropped through the cracks and holes, stretching out his arms and receiving the saving drops in his eyes, ears, and mouth. He had to wear his bloody garments for some time afterwards, and considered himself eternally regenerated, *in aeternum renatus*, and restored to the condition of primitive purity. The words *in aeternum renatus* occur in inscription C. I. L. vi, 510. Cf. Gasguet, *loc. cit.*; Sayou, "Le Taurobole," *Rev. de l'Hist. des Religions*, 1887.

[2] Vide Lafaye, *Histoire du Culte des Divinités d'Alexandrie hors de l'Egypte*, pp. 45, 162.

[3] Cumont, "La Propagation des Mystères de Mithra dans l'Em-

of the people that in the opinion of Harnack it became in the third century the most powerful rival of Christianity.[1] The growing importance of Christianity as a religious factor is evident from the extent to which it penetrated the thought and life of the Empire and the influence it exercised on Paganism itself. This power manifested itself first in the growth and spread of Gnosticism, which, if it was a "Hellenizing of Christianity," was not the less an acute Christianizing of Hellenic and Oriental speculations.[2] The same influence is shown in the rise and growth of Neo-Platonism, which was, as Schaff says, "a direct attempt of the more intelligent and earnest heathenism to rally all its nobler energies, especially the forces of Hellenic and Oriental mysticism, and to found a universal religion, a pagan counterpart of Christianity."[3] Not less dominant was the power which Christianity exercised over the rites and ceremonies of the newer heathenism. There were curious resemblances to the Christian sacraments which the early Fathers considered to be a caricature suggested by the demons to perplex the faithful and to throw

pire Romain," *Revue d'Histoire et de Littérature Réligieuses*, vol. ii, 1897; *Les Mystères de Mithra*, Paris, 1902.

[1] *History of Dogma*, Eng. tr. vol. i, p. 118, note.

[2] Orr, *Neglected Factors in the Study of the Early Progress of Christianity*, p. 196.

[3] *Church History*, vol. i, p. 99.

confusion over the divinely revealed things of God.[1]

All the fundamental concepts of Christian theology, mediation, sacrifice, baptism, immortality, resurrection, expiation, were now to be met with in the pagan system, which tended more and more to monotheism, and even inculcated the necessity of a divine Redeemer.[2] There was a heathen Heaven, a heathen Bible,[3] and even a heathen Christ, Apollonius of Tyana, whose life was written by Philostratus with the purpose of setting up a rival and counterpart of the Founder of Christianity.[4]

This imitation, unconscious perhaps, of Christian ideas and practices was by no means an indication that the pagans were growing more friendly, or that their intense hatred for Christianity as a body of doctrine, was diminishing. On the contrary, the newer heathenism, which was a synthesis of all the forces, intellectual, moral, and religious, offered by

[1] Tertullian, *De Praescriptione*, c. 40, *De Corona Militis*, c. 15; Justin, *Dial. cum Trypho*, c. 66.

[2] Harnack, *Hist. Dogma*, vol. i, Eng. tr. pp. 116 seq.

[3] The terms "Heathen Heaven" and "Heathen Bible" are borrowed from Uhlhorn, *Conflict of Christianity and Paganism*, pp. 321, 380, Eng. tr., who justifies the first name by the sentiments expressed in inscriptions on the tombs which he cites, and the second by references to Porphyry's *Book of Oracles and Divine Utterances.*

[4] Newman, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana — Historical Sketches*, vol. i; Wallace, "The Apollonius of Philostratus," *Westminster Review*, October, 1902.

the complex life and wide intercourse among the peoples of the Empire, was actuated by fresh philosophical and historical motives to eradicate the only system of thought or religion which resisted the prevailing syncretism, and for the first time Christianity, the thing, came under the ban. This unification of forces, which was fostered by the intellectual and social conditions, was made absolutely imperative by the deplorable political state of the Empire. Within, everything was in disorder, and without, the imminent danger from the attacks of the barbarians was causing graver fears every day. The crisis gave rise to a concerted movement, which, perhaps owing to the recent celebration of the Millennial under Philip, or to a general consciousness of degeneracy, was towards a restoration of the old Roman virtues and customs, a return to the order of things when the State and its religion were one. In response to this general tendency, or perhaps in accordance with the law of supply and demand, the leaders of the movement came from the only place in which the old manners and discipline were to be found, that is, in the army. The efficiency of the legions, unimpaired by the universal corruption, was maintained by the custom of drawing on the provinces for recruits, while the necessity of being constantly in action against the barbarians preserved the army from the general deterioration and

made it the nursery not only of great generals but of very competent emperors. Bringing to the throne the same qualities which had made them preëminent in the field, these soldier-emperors had the merit of staying, if they did not avert, the total ruin of the Empire.[1]

Decius, the first of the Illyrian line, although a provincial by birth, had received his training in the camp and was imbued with a thoroughly Roman spirit. Filled with the desire of restoring all the ancient power and prestige of Rome, he boldly faced the double task with which he was confronted, and as soon as he reached the purple set about effecting the necessary internal reforms and repelling the enemies on the frontiers. It seemed to him that the salvation of the Empire lay in the restoration of old customs and old governmental methods, which had very largely falleu into abeyance. Christianity of course was an obstacle to the realization of such an ideal, and Decius at once took the resolution of extirpating it and gave orders for a general persecution.[2]

The text of the edict containing this bloody message has not been preserved, but to judge by the

[1] Vide Freeman's essay on "The Illyrian Emperors and their Land," *Historical Essays*, third series, p. 22.

[2] Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vi, 39, says that Decius persecuted the Christians in consequence of his hatred for his predecessor, Philip. Vide Allard, *Histoire des Persécutions pendant la Première Moitié du Troisième Siècle*, p. 275.

manner in which it was executed, it would seem that all who belonged to the Christian Church were commanded to offer sacrifice to the gods, or to give proof of their willingness to conform to the national cultus. The provincial governors and the heads of the different municipalities were made responsible for the execution of the edict. In the beginning, except in the case of bishops, capital punishment was not inflicted, as the object of the Emperor seemed to be to force the Christians to recant rather than to punish them for the profession of their faith. The property of those who were known to be Christians was at once confiscated; they were dragged before the tribunals and threatened with the direst penalties; they were racked and tortured and then cast into vile prisons, where many died. These vigorous measures caused consternation among the Christians, many of whom held high offices and were possessed of great wealth. During the long peace an appalling amount of corruption and laxity had crept into the Church, so that to some the persecution seemed to be a judgment on the shameful lives led by both laity and clergy.[1] The effect which this new out-

[1] Dominus probari familiam suam voluit, et quia traditam nobis divinitus disciplinam pax longa corruperat, jacentem fidem et paene dixeram dormientem censura coelestis erexit, cumque nos peccatis nostris amplius mereremur, clementissimus Dominus sic cuncta moderatus est ut hoc omne quod gestum est exploratio potius quam persecutio videretur. St. Cyprian, *De Lapsis*, 5.

break of hostilities produced on the Christians, and the disgraceful scenes which took place before the tribunals in Carthage and Alexandria, are eloquently described by Denis of Alexandria and St. Cyprian. Numbers of Christians did not wait to be summoned, but presented themselves voluntarily and burned incense or ate of the meat of the victims. Others yielded to the solicitations of their friends and crept, pale and trembling, to the altars, as if they were not to sacrifice but to become victims themselves. Some weakened under torture and recanted; while others resorted to the expedient of buying certificates from the magistrates attesting that they had complied with the edict. Numerous as were the defections, there were not wanting examples of the most heroic Christian virtue; and Rome, Antioch, Carthage, Alexandria, Jerusalem,—in fact, every city and village in the Empire, witnessed the perseverance and sufferings of countless martyrs. The constancy and endurance of the Christians provoked the pagans to greater atrocities, and the persecution continued with unabated violence until the spring of 251, when the campaigns of the Goths in Thrace and the danger of losing all the Danubian provinces compelled the Emperor to put himself at the head of the legions. In November of the same year Decius lost his life in an ambuscade or through treachery, and with his death the persecution ceased. It

was renewed the following year by Gallus, when the Christians refused to take part in the great sacrifices which were offered to appease the gods because of the famine and plague which were devastating the Empire.

The persecution of Decius was the severest trial which the Church had yet undergone. Besides the multitudes of Christians who had been put to death, large numbers had apostatized, and when peace was restored, the problem of deciding the conditions on which the *lapsed* should be readmitted to membership plunged the whole Christian body into dissension and resulted in two dangerous schisms. The issue, however, had been clearly defined. With an instinct of self-preservation common to peoples as well as individuals, inherent in races and institutions as in those who compose them, it was plainly set forth that the coexistence of the pagan Roman State with Christianity was an impossibility. Mutually exclusive, one or the other should be eliminated, and the final struggle was merely a question of time and opportunity. No concerted policy was possible in the years immediately following the death of Decius. The struggles among the numerous claimants for the throne brought the Empire to the verge of disintegration, and rendered ineffective all attempts at internal reforms. It was necessary that the differ-

ent factions should be placated, and that the supreme power should be lodged in the hands of some man acceptable to all parties, before the work inaugurated by Decius could be taken up again with any prospect of a successful issue. The murder of Gallus placed on the throne an old man, Valerian, whose life and reign, and whose attempts to deal with the complex question of Christianity, will form the subject of the remaining chapters.

CHAPTER III

VALERIAN

Family — Holds important places in civil and military affairs — Elected censor — Duties of censor — Decius lauds Valerian — Practically colleague of Emperor — Loyalty of Valerian — Gallus — Valerian made Emperor — Acceptable to all factions — Character — Fitness for position — Gallienus made co-regent — Empire in disorder, invasions, famine, pestilence — Plague decimates population — Measures proposed for relief of panic-stricken people inadequate — Disorganization of army — Invasions by barbarians assume new character — Gallienus intrusted with defence of western portion of the Empire — Valerian assumes command in the East — Franks — Alemanni — Goths — Internal reforms — Restoration of national religion.

PUBLIUS LICINIUS VALERIANUS became ruler of the Roman Empire in August, A. D. 253. As far as can be judged from the scanty historical materials we possess concerning Valerian, he was a man of ample fortune and noble birth.[1] When he was born and consequently at what age he assumed the purple are matters which are shrouded in obscurity

[1] Parentibus ortus splendidissimis — Aur. Vic. *Epitome*, c. 32; Genere satis claro — *De Caes.* c. 32. Valerian was related to Valerius Flaccinus, whom Probus rescued from the Quadi, — Quo quidem tempore Valerium Flaccinum, adulescentem nobilem, parentem Valeriani, e Quadorum liberavit manu. Vopiscus, *Vita Probi*, c. 6. Tillemont, by a curious mistake regarding the word "parens," makes this Valerius the father of Valerian. See Forcellini, *sub verbo.*

and uncertainty. A passage in Trebellius Pollio speaks of his "praiseworthy life during seventy years." While this passage scarcely admits of more than one interpretation, Tillemont and other historians are inclined to think that those seventy years embrace the life of Valerian up to the time of his captivity, not to that of his accession to the throne.[1] On the other hand, Aurelius Victor says he was in the prime of life when he fell into the hands of the Persians, a statement which could scarcely be made of a man beyond the age of seventy.[2] There can be no doubt, however, if we bear in mind some other facts which history has left us regarding Valerian, that he was far advanced in years when the legionaries forced him to shoulder the cares of the Empire.

None but the most meagre details are available regarding the early history and family life of Valerian. Zosimus declares that he had enjoyed the honor of the consulship before 237.[3] Aurelius Victor says that his high station did not prevent him from leading the life of a soldier,[4] and it was with a great deal of pride that Valerian himself re-

[1] Haec sunt digna cognitu de Valeriano, cujus per annos septuaginta vita laudabilis in eam conscenderat gloriam, ut post omnes honores et magistratus insigniter gestos imperator fieret. *Vita Valeriani*, c. 5. Cf. Tillemont, *Hist. des Emper.*, note 1 on Valerian, vol. iii, p. 685.

[2] *Loc. cit.* aetate robustiore.

[3] *History*, book i, chap. 14.

[4] *Loc. cit.*

ferred to the fact that his hair was already white before he received command of the Third Legion Felix.[1]

Military affairs, however, did not absorb all the energies of Valerian, or unfit him for a high place in civil life. As early as the days of Maximinus Thrax, we find him chosen from the large body of senators to occupy the place of Princeps Senatus.[2] While the gradual change in the Roman Constitution, because of the centralization of power in the hands of the Emperor, had doubtless deprived this office of much of its significance and had detracted somewhat from its original high character, yet even in the last days of the Empire, the chief of the Senate enjoyed the unique distinction of being the first to give his opinion on matters which were brought before this august body, and possessed the right of being the first to register his vote.[3]

Valerian was twice married. The name of his first wife, the mother of the Emperor Gallienus, is not known. The second wife, conjectured by some to have been Mariniana, also left one son, Valerian II.[4] The younger Valerian was a man gifted with striking qualities of body and mind. He received the

[1] Vopiscus, *Vita Probi*, c. 5.
[2] Capitolinus, *Vita Gordiani*, c. 9.
[3] Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, p. 269.
[4] Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* p. 390.

title of Caesar from his brother while Valerian the Emperor was absent from the city, but beyond this, as the historian informs us, there was nothing noteworthy in his life except his noble birth, his solid education, and his miserable end.[1]

The capable manner in which Valerian discharged his duties in the many exalted offices he held merited for him the highest honors.[2] Nothing, however, reflected so much glory on him and indicated so well the deep esteem entertained for his character and virtues as the manner in which he was elected censor. From small and insignificant beginnings, this office, instituted about 443 B. C. to relieve the consuls of some of their onerous duties, or rather, perhaps, as a means of excluding the plebeians from a share in the supreme power of the State, had grown in importance until in the last days of the Republic it became the most venerable magistracy in Rome, the "apex of a political career." Although Augustus twice assumed the title without performing the duties of censor, the "occasional" nature of the office and its peculiarly republican character did not accord with his ambitions, and he allowed the censorship to lapse. It was afterwards revived, in its old temporary form, by Claudius and Vespasian, but lost its distinctive character when Domitian, in order to obtain complete control of the Senate,

[1] Pollio, *Vita Valeriani*, c. 8. [2] *Ibid.* c. 5.

assumed the position of censor for life (*Censor Perpetuus*).[1]

Under the Roman Constitution the character and scope of the censorship, on which depended in large measure the success of the public administration and the tone of national life, raised it to a position of unique importance. Besides the census, which included the registration of citizens and the valuation of property, the censors enjoyed the right of drawing up the list of those who were to constitute the Senate (*Lectio Senatus*), and of deciding the question of membership in the Equestrian Order (*Recognitio Equitum*); they exercised a general supervision over the morals of the people (*Regimen morum*), with a view, principally, to determine who were fit to hold public office; and were the guardians of the national and traditional customs of the people (*Mos Majorum*). Their edicts had the force of laws, and inasmuch as they farmed the public revenues and were charged with the care and maintenance of public property, they were vested with certain administrative powers.

Possessed of such extraordinary functions, the censorship was hedged round with statutory restrictions which alone prevented it from becoming

[1] Vide Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, pp. 216 seq., 347–374; Taylor, *A Constitutional and Political History of Rome*, pp. 99, 428, 482, 487, 488.

an intolerable despotism. The censors were elected at intervals of five years, and though they held office for only eighteen months, their ordinances were valid during the entire lustrum. No censor was eligible for reëlection. Simultaneous election and joint tenure were essential requisites of the office, and it was furthermore insisted that the action of a censor had no force unless concurred in by his colleague.[1]

Such was the office which to the mind of Decius seemed adequate to counteract the flood of disorder and corruption which had spread over the Empire, and which was obliterating the last vestiges of public virtue and ancient tradition.[2] The project of reviving the censorship was long in forming; for it was not until the last year of his reign that the Emperor decided on it. The necessity of being away with the army so frequently, doubtless aroused him to the fact that no schemes of internal reform could be successful unless some one endowed with plenary powers could be in a position to give them all his time and energy. In the autumn of 251 A. D., Decius was engaged with the army driving back the Gothic forces which had passed the Rhine and devastated nearly all of Moesia and

[1] Vide Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, pp. 216 seq., 347–374; Taylor, *A Constitutional and Political History of Rome*, pp. 99, 428, 482, 487, 488.

[2] Trebellius Pollio, *Fragmentum Vitae Valeriani*, c. 5.

Thrace.[1] From there he wrote letters to the Senate apprising them of his determination, and probably as a concession to popular sentiment he relinquished his imperial prerogative and left the choice of censor to the will of the Senate.

The letters of the Emperor were sent to the praetor, who, on the 27th day of October, convoked the Senate in the temple of Castor and Pollux and read the instructions he had received. Following the usual custom, he declared the matter open for discussion,[2] and turning to the "chief of the Senate" (*Princeps Senatus*), for Valerian, to whom this position belonged, was away with the army, he asked, "What do you advise?"[3] Weighty as were the consequences implied in this question, and knowing the dangers to which a hasty decision would expose the Republic, there was no time allowed for debate. No opinions would be listened to, and the customary order of voting had to be suspended. From all sides of the chamber came cries and acclamations, designating Valerian for the coveted position. "The life of Valerian is a perpetual censorship. Let him be judge of all who is best of all. Let him be arbiter of the Senate who is free from guilt. Va-

[1] For the date of these events see Goyau, *Chronologie de l'Empire Romain*, p. 301.

[2] Quid vobis videtur, Patres Conscripti, de Censore deligendo? Pollio, *loc. cit.*

[3] Quid censes? Vide Greenidge, p. 269.

lerian by his blameless life is already censor, a man above reproach and competent to pass sentence on our lives. He is a modest, grave, and prudent senator, the friend of the good and an enemy of tyrants. He is a hater of crime and wickedness. We shall willingly receive him as censor and strive to imitate him. A man of noble race, unblemished life, singular probity, and sound judgment, he is a living example of the best virtues of antiquity."

The high encomiums passed on Valerian by his colleagues and the honor of being unanimously elected to a position of such importance seem to have met with the cordial approval of Decius. When the resolution (*Senatus consultum*) containing the will of the Senate reached the Emperor, he assembled the chiefs of the army and the members of his suite and in their presence notified Valerian of his appointment, and outlined the duties and difficulties of his office. "Happy Valerian," said the Emperor, "happy in the approbation of the whole Senate, happy in the love and esteem of the whole world. Receive the censorship conferred on you by the Roman Republic, which you alone deserve, and judge of the morals of all and of our manners. You will select those who ought to continue members of the Senate; you will restore the Equestrian Order to its old place. The census will be made under your direction. It will be your duty to im-

prove the revenue and to see that financial burdens are equitably imposed; all the public property will be under your charge. Everything you decree shall have the force of a written law. The army, the palace, the ministers of justice, and the prefects are all subject to your tribunal. None are exempted, except the Prefect of the city of Rome, the ordinary consuls, the King of the Sacrifices, and (unless for unchastity) the Eldest of the Vestal Virgins. Even those who are not under your jurisdiction will strive to merit your approval."

This episode brings into prominence not less the high respect felt for Valerian as a citizen than the merits and courage of Decius as an emperor. It was a bold and patriotic move to invest a subject with such extraordinary powers at a time when the security of the throne depended not so much on public prosperity and morality as on the caprice of a turbulent soldiery. The readiness of the Senate to conform to the will of the reigning prince arose probably from subserviency rather than from a desire to adopt radical measures of reform. The list of duties imposed on Valerian is a sufficient indication of the difficulty of his task, the futility of attempting which is evident from the impossibility of applying measures feasible in republican Rome, still strong with the vigor of youth and conflict, to an effete non-Roman Empire grown old with

ease and luxury. It was with a mind filled with thoughts of the difficulty as well as the danger of being elevated to a rank which made him practically the colleague of the Emperor that Valerian deprecated his fitness for the censorship and questioned the advisability of such a departure. "Do not, I beseech you, Most Sacred Emperor," he pleaded, "lay me under the necessity of being judge of the people, the soldiers, and the Senate, of everybody, even judges, tribunes, and generals. These duties are inseparable from the imperial dignity, and because of them you bear the exalted title Augustus. They transcend the capability of a feeble subject; therefore I beg to be exempted because my life does not fit me for burdens which I lack confidence to undertake. The times are not suitable for such an innovation, and the office of censor cannot change the corrupt nature of man."[1]

Such remonstrances could avail little with a man of Decius' inflexible temperament. It is probable, however, that the project was never put into execution. Decius died before the end of the year in an attempt to inflict a crushing blow on the Goths, and was succeeded by the dissolute and

[1] These speeches and remarks are all reported by Pollio, who adds: Poteram multa alia et Senatus consulta et judicia principum de Valeriano proferre, nisi ut vobis pleraque nota essent, et puderet altius virum extollere, qui fatali quadam necessitate superatus est. *Loc. cit.*

careless Gallus, under whom the office of censor would have been an anomaly.

Loyalty to constituted authority was a marked trait of the character of Valerian, in consequence of which he enjoyed the favor and confidence of more than one prince during his long career. He was sent as special envoy by the Gordians to announce to the Senate in Rome that they had taken the sceptre in opposition to the brutal Maximin.[1] He was in thorough accord with the plans of Decius, whose downfall does not seem to have affected in any way his standing at court, and indeed the trust reposed in him by Gallus contributed indirectly to his elevation to the purple. The apathy and pusillanimity of Gallus were in such striking contrast to the sterling qualities of his predecessor that the soldiers soon tired of him and proclaimed Aemilian, the successful general of the Pannonian legions, emperor in his stead. This revolt aroused Gallus to a sense of danger, and he despatched Valerian to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany to his assistance. Aemilian forestalled this movement by leading his troops di-

[1] Capitolinus, *Gordiani Tres*, c. 9. Missa deinceps legatio Romam est cum litteris Gordianorum haec, quae gesta fuerant in Africa, indicans quae, per Valerianum . . . gratanter accepta est.

Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* tom. iii. p. 685, note, shows that Valerian was the bearer of this message, and not, as Capitolinus' words might indicate, the one by whom the delegation was received.

rectly to Rome. Gallus and his son advanced from Rome as far as Umbria to meet the pretender. When the armies came in sight of each other it was seen that the numerical advantage rested with Aemilian. The Emperor was slain by his own followers, who were disgusted with him and passed over to his rival.[1]

The death of Gallus and his son Volusian gave Aemilian a brief triumph. The Senate conferred on him the name Augustus with the other titles of imperial dignity, and his authority was recognized in many parts of the Empire. His reign, however, lasted only four months, for the legions which Valerian had assembled refused to acknowledge his supremacy and declared Valerian Emperor. The two armies met at Spoleto. The soldiers of Aemilian, never sincerely attached to his person, and dreading the result of a conflict with the superior forces of Valerian, slew their leader and threw down their arms.[2] By singular good fortune the strength of all the various factions was now united under the banner of Valerian, who, though his

[1] Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* pp. 383 et seq.

[2] Aurelius Victor gives a different account of the death of Aemilian, in *De Caesaribus*, c. xxxi. Aemilianus tres menses usus modesto imperio, morbo absumptus est; quum proceres primo hostem, dein, exstinctis superioribus, pro fortuna, ut solet, Augustum appellavissent.

We have followed here the narrative of Tillemont, which is based principally on Zonaras and Zosimus.

way to the throne had been marked by revolutions, was in no sense guilty of disloyalty to the man whom he supplanted.

The circumstances surrounding Valerian's accession were extremely auspicious. He possessed the sincere attachment of all orders in the State, and reached his high position not through popular tumults, or by the clamors of the soldiers, but by the unanimous will of the whole Roman world. If all men, Pollio adds, had been allowed to choose an emperor, they would have selected no one but Valerian.[1]

So very little is known about the character of Valerian that there seems to be a disposition among historians to measure his capabilities by the calamities which happened during his reign, and to attribute the failure of his administration to incompetency. Aurelius Victor says he was stupid and sluggish, and lacking in the prudence and executive talent necessary for public offices.[2] Eutropius considered that the reign of Valerian and his son was disastrous, and almost the ruin of the State, either because of untoward circumstances or by reason of the worthlessness of the rulers themselves.[3] Pollio,

[1] Si data esset omnibus potestas promendi arbitrii, quem imperatorem vellent, alter non esset electus. *Vita Valeriani*, c. 5.

[2] Stolidus tamen, et multum iners, neque ad usum aliquem publici officii consilio seu gestis accomodatus. *Epit.* c. 32.

[3] Horum imperium Romano nomini perniciosum et paene exitiabile fuit vel infelicitate principum vel ignavia. *Breviarium*, lib ix, c. 7.

on the contrary, either of himself, or when reporting the sayings of contemporaries, says he was "full of bravery but most unfortunate,"[1] and that no one could fill his place; and Vopiscus, when enumerating the small number of worthy emperors who had occupied the Roman throne, says that Valerian, the best of all, was prevented by misfortune from ranking with Augustus, Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Alexander Severus, Claudius, and the divine Aurelian.[2] Crevier[3] applies to Valerian what Tacitus said of Galba: "Major privato visus dum privatus fuit, et omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset,"[4] and Gibbon says: "Perhaps the merit of the Emperor was inadequate to his reputation; perhaps his abilities, or at least his spirit, were affected by the languor and coldness of old age."[5]

In the face of such contradictory testimony and such unsatisfactory estimates by later writers, it is extremely difficult to arrive at any definite conclusion regarding Valerian's ability as a ruler. To judge by his acts, however, one is more inclined to follow the opinion of Pollio, and to consider Valerian as a man whose failure arose from circumstances which were beyond his control. He was a conscien-

[1] *Trig. Tyr.* xii, 1.
[2] Vopiscus, *Vita Aureliani*, c. 42.
[3] *Hist. des Emp.* tom. v, p. 420.
[4] *Hist.* i, 49.
[5] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. x.

tious ruler with a fine sense of the responsibilities of his office, who attained his ends less through brilliancy and genius than by a painstaking adherence to duty. Notwithstanding the small measure of success that attended his efforts, he was possessed of many qualities that go to make the competent leader and thorough administrator. He was prompt to recognize and reward merit, and, contrary to the usual custom, he promoted young men to positions of trust in the army. Because of their marked ability he made the two sons of Macrianus tribunes,[1] and promoted Probus while yet a beardless youth to the same position and subsequently placed him at the head of a legion.[2] With uncommon wisdom and disinterestedness he chose as his chief lieutenants the ablest and most talented men in the Empire, among whom were Regilianus, Claudius, Aurelianus, Ingenuus, Macrianus, Posthumus, and Aureolus, "who all merited the purple and died in it, for it was an extraordinary thing," as Pollio observes, "that all those whom Valerian made generals were afterwards raised to the throne by the soldiers, which shows that the old Emperor in the choice of his leaders was what the prosperity of the State demanded."[3] His high office and auto-

[1] Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 12.
[2] Vopiscus, *Vita Probi*, cc. 3, 4, 5.
[3] Pollio, *loc. cit.* c. 10.

cratic powers did not prevent Valerian from readily receiving good advice whenever it was offered;[1] but while this quality in a man of independent spirit is very commendable, it lays one enfeebled by age and oppressed with unaccustomed responsibilities open to the influence of designing and vicious courtiers.

One of the first acts of Valerian after he became emperor was to raise his son Gallienus to the position of co-regent and to confer on him the title of Augustus.[2] The government of the Empire was divided between them, Valerian going to the East, and Gallienus remaining in control of the Western section. While no actual partition of the Roman dominions took place, this was practically the inception of the policy which Diocletian found it necessary to adopt in order to preserve the Empire, which was already commencing to break up of its own weight.[3] There was, besides, at that period a growing conviction that the Emperor should be a general as well as an administrator, and that his place was as much the field as the cabinet. Macrianus considered that his advanced years and feeble health were a sufficient reason for declining the purple after the death of

[1] Pollio, *loc. cit.* c. 18. [2] Zosimus, bk. i, c. 30.

[3] The same policy was advocated in the reign of Maximin by one of the senators, who pleaded the necessity of having an emperor at home and one in the field. Cf. Duruy, *History*, vol. vii, p. 228.

Valerian ;[1] and the Senator Tacitus pleaded his unfitness for the throne because a man whose arms were no longer able to wield the javelin and to strike the shield was unworthy of the sceptre.[2] The judiciousness of Valerian's selection, which Gibbon regrets,[3] was in accord with the general custom of the period, when all those who reached the throne conferred on their children honors and titles which were not theirs by birth. Gallienus was then a youth of not more than twenty years,[4] and leaving out of sight his vices and his indifference to the fate of the Empire, which he had scarcely had a chance to manifest, there was no one better fitted by talent and education to hold the supreme power.[5]

That the Roman power did not disappear and the whole Empire become a prey to the hordes of barbarians who beset it at this epoch, from causes that were beyond the reach of administrative remedies, is a tribute to the enduring qualities of Roman

[1] Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 12.

[2] Vopiscus, *Vita Taciti*, c. 4.

[3] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. x.

Duruy says: "Instead of taking as his colleague one of the many valiant and experienced generals at this time in the Roman army, Valerian chose his son Gallienus, who was too young to possess authority and too effeminate to employ it well if he had had it." *History*, vol. vii, sec. 1, p. 235.

[4] Cf. Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* tom. iii, p. 989, note 8.

[5] The character of Gallienus is excellently depicted by Benson, *Life of St. Cyprian*, p. 458.

institutions and the power of organization possessed by Valerian. At the time he assumed the supreme control the whole Empire was plague-stricken. About the year 250 this frightful pestilence commenced its ravages in Numidia, and descending thence to the cities of Egypt and Africa, it was carried to other cities and spread death and desolation from east to west.[1] For upwards of twenty years it wasted the flower of the Roman legions, and in its destructive path spared neither high nor low.[2] It carried off the young Hostilianus, only surviving son of the Emperor Decius, in 251,[3] and as late as 270 the Emperor Claudius died of it in the full flush of his victories over the Goths.[4] It proved more effective against the army of Valerian than the swords of the Persians, and checked the inroads of the Goths more effectively than the Roman legions. For a time the number of victims in Rome and Achaia reached the appalling total of five thousand a day.[5] In Alexandria it has been computed by Gibbon that more than half the inhabitants died

[1] Zonaras, *Annals*, tom. iv, sub. Volusiano.

[2] Zonaras says it lasted only fifteen years; *loc. cit.*

[3] Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 30.

Zosimus says that Hostilianus was put to death by Gallus, who feared that the people would revolt in his favor. *Ibid.* c. 25.

[4] Pollio, *Vita Claudii*, c. 12.

[5] Pollio, *Gallieni Duo*, c. 5. The passage in Pollio is very obscure: Nam et pestilentia tanta extiterat vel Romae vel Achaicis urbibus, ut uno die quinque milia hominum pari morbo perirent.

of plague, and, adds the same author, "could we extend the analogy to the other provinces we might compute that war, famine, and pestilence had consumed in a few years the moiety of the human species."[1]

It is difficult to state precisely the nature of this disease. The name "plague" or "pestilence" was usually given to any epidemic in antiquity, such as that which attacked the Greeks at the siege of Troy, or which wrought such havoc in Rome and the Grecian states during the fifth century before Christ. The neglect of proper hygienic and quarantine measures was no doubt responsible for the large mortality during these visitations, and contributed in large measure to their frequent recurrence. Plagues occurred in Rome in 363 B. C., 295 B. C., 175 B. C., during the reigns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, all of which were doubtless of the same nature as that of the third century. That which occurred during the reign of Justinian received the name of *pestis inguinaria* or *glandularia* by which it was known until the seventeenth century. From the im-

[1] Gibbon's estimate is based on a passage in Denis of Alexandria, who, speaking of the plague, says: "This great city no longer contains as many inhabitants, from tender infants to those most advanced in life, as it formerly contained of those whom it called hearty old men. But the men from forty to seventy years of age were then so much more numerous that their number cannot now be filled out, even when those from fourteen to eighty years are enrolled and registered for the public allowance of food." Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vii, 21.

perfect diagnosis and the faulty descriptions given by contemporary authors, and the fact that Eutropius [1] says it was accompanied with a multiplicity of diseases, it is extremely difficult to decide whether the pest of which we are treating was malignant typhoid fever, cholera, smallpox, or bubonic plague. The course of the disease was rapid, and generally fatal.[2] Those who were attacked suffered at first from nervous depression and ulceration of different parts of the body, especially the mouth and throat.[3] The next stage was one of incessant sickness accompanied by diarrhoea, constant vomiting, and high fever. Any who survived the assaults of this malady generally bore permanent traces of its severity either in the loss of one or more members, in blindness, or in total deafness.[4]

[1] Sola pestilentia et morbis atque aegritudinibus notus eorum principatus fuit. *Breviarium*, lib. ix, c. 5.

[2] Innumeros per diem populos ad suam quemque sedem abrupto impetu rapiens, continuatas per ordinem domos vulgi trementis invasit. Pontius, *Vita Cypriani*, c. 9.

[3] "But when a grievous pestilence raged at Rome, so great was the violence of this distemper and its effects so dreadful on Plotinus, as Eustochius informed Porphyry, who was then absent, that through a very great hoarseness all the clear and sonorous vigor of his musical voice was lost; and what was still worse, his eyes were darkened, and his hands and feet were covered with ulcers." Translated and abridged from Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* by Taylor, Introduction to Select Works of Plotinus, p. xliv.

[4] Hoc quod nunc corporis vires solutus in fluxum venter eviscerat, quod in faucium vulnera conceptus medullitus ignis exaestuat, quod adsiduo vomitu intestina quatiuntur, quod oculi vi sanguinis inardescunt, quod quorundam vel pedes vel aliquæ membrorum

The fear of contagion and death produced the most abject terror and consternation among the pagans.[1] Descriptions of what took place in Carthage and Alexandria will, without any abuse of historic parallel, apply to other cities and other portions of the Roman dominions. There the ties of kindred and friendship seem to have been entirely forgotten, and the plague-sufferers, when the first symptoms of disease manifested themselves, were cast out of doors by their relatives and allowed to die in the street without comfort or attention. In this condition of affairs public order ceased, and though the streets were cumbered with dead bodies and the air was heavy with the stench of putrefaction, and though there was not a home where there was not one dead, robbery and violence were of daily and hourly occurrence.[2]

The period was, besides, one of violent physical

partes contagio morbidæ putredinis amputantur, quod per jacturas et damna corporum prorumpente languore vel debilitatur incessus, vel auditus obstrnitur, vel caecatur aspectus. Cyprian, *De Mortalitate*, c. 14.

[1] Cf. Benson, *Life of Cyprian*, pp. 240 seq.

[2] Horrere omnes, fugere, vitare contagium: exponere suos impie: quasi cum illo peste morituro etiam mortem ipsam posset aliquis excludere. Jacebant interim in tota civitate, non jam corpora, sed cadavera plurimorum et misericordiam in se euntium contemplatione sortis mutuae flagitabant. Nemo respexit aliud praeterquam lucra crndelia. Nemo similis eventus recordatione trepidavit: nemo fecit alteri, quod pati voluit. Pontius, *Vita Cyp.* c. 9. See, also, Denis of Alexandria, in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. vii, 21 and 22.

disturbances, which occur so frequently in connection with plague. There were seasons of protracted drought followed by terrific hailstorms and tornadoes, which ruined the crops, killed the vines, and uprooted the olive groves.[1] In the train of these evils came famine, which carried off thousands.[2] While these visitations were not continuous, they were not confined to any one part of the Empire. At Rome the Tiber overflowed its banks, and doubtless produced misery such as that which happened in the days of Marcus Aurelius.[3] Earthquakes hurled down buildings in many cities and buried the inhabitants in the ruins. While the shocks were most severe in the Orient, they were felt at Rome and even in distant Libya. Many who had escaped death by falling buildings died from fear of the horrid rumblings of the earth. Great fissures filled with salt water appeared in places, and some coast towns were overwhelmed with enormous tidal waves.[4]

[1] Et tu miraris aut quaereris in hac obstinatione et contemptu vestro, si rara desuper pluvia descendat, si terra situ pulveris squaleat, si vix jejunas et pallidas herbas sterilis gleba producat, si vineam debilitet grando caedens, si oleam detruncet turbo subvertens, si fontem siccitas statuat, aerem pestilens aura corrumpat. Cyprian, *Ad Dem.* c. 7.

[2] De sterilitate ac fame quaereris, quasi famem majorem siccitas quam rapacitas faciat. C. 10; vide c. 2, *ibid.*

[3] Statimque Tiberis adulta aestate diluvii facie inundavit. Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 32.

[4] Trebellius Pollio, *Duo Gallieni*, c. 5.

The measures adopted to bring relief to the terrified and plague-stricken masses make manifest the utter inability of the Roman government to deal with great crises. Besides decreeing enormous sacrifices and issuing new coins dedicated to Apollo Salutaris and Jupiter Salutaris,[1] nothing was done, as far as history records, with the exception of the humane efforts of Gallus and Volusian, who took steps that all victims of the plague should be properly interred.[2] In the present instance, however, concerted action of any kind was an impossibility. The army, the only organized and disciplined body in the Empire, was in a state of complete disorder.

The changes in the military regulations introduced by Septimius Severus and continued under his successors had deprived the army of much of its old-time efficiency. Numerically it was far below its normal standard. The frequent civil wars and the desire to reduce the strain on the treasury had crippled the legions, and taken from the army strength and resources which the present chaotic condition of public affairs required. While the duties along the frontiers were daily multiplied, the legions in the German provinces were reduced from eight to four, which, with a few thousand auxiliaries, brought the total number of men fit for active service to not

[1] Cyprian, *Ep.* lix.
[2] Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 30.

more than 20,000.[1] The discipline and loyalty of the army had also in large measure disappeared. In Africa a revolt of the troops in 253 assumed such alarming proportions that the safety of the whole province was seriously endangered.[2] The system of local recruiting and permanent camps made the soldiers sedentary and effeminate, and utterly destroyed the mobility so necessary in time of danger. This concentration of troops, added to the fact that the Romans were badly supplied with cavalry, rendered their operations futile against an enemy who fought in guerrilla bands along an extended frontier.

At this juncture, however, the nature of the expeditions undertaken by the barbarians assumed a new and more dangerous character.[3] The withdrawal of the Gallic and Rhenish legions after the death of Decius to support the claims of the many usurpers gave the Teutonic tribes an opportunity for movements which originated more in necessity than from choice.[4] The pressure from other tribes and peoples, and the growing consciousness of power derived

[1] Ernest Lavisse, *Histoire de France depuis les Origines jusqu'à la Révolution*, fasc. i, p. 257.

[2] This is the revolt mentioned by Cyprian in his letter to the Bishops of Numidia, in which he deplores the captivity of the Christians seized by the barbarians, and for whose ransom he sent 100,000 sesterces. *Ep.* lxii.

Vide Cagnat, *L'Armée Romaine d'Afrique*, pp. 53–54.

[3] Mommsen, *Roman Provinces*, vol. i, p. 264; Lavisse, *loc. cit.* p. 249.

[4] Lavisse, *ibid.*

from contact with the Romans, made the Germans desirous of seizing new territory within the Roman Empire in order to establish themselves in new homes. The period of piratical raids and marauding expeditions for plunder or revenge had passed, and the Roman Empire was just commencing to feel the first effects of the great migratory movements among the Teutonic people which were to result in its overthrow. In no other way is it possible to explain the simultaneous movement of all the enemies of Rome across her frontiers. The Franks, the Alemanni, the Marcomanni, and the Goths poured into the rich territory south of the Rhine and Danube, and pillaged the cities of Europe and Asia Minor. In the East the Persians, peaceful since the time of Philip, took up arms and laid waste the provinces near the Euphrates. The struggle with these numerous enemies made the reign of Valerian and Gallienus one continued scene of warfare and strife; but the details and order of their various campaigns are hidden in confusion and obscurity because of the unsatisfactory records which we possess. Gallienus, who was entrusted with the defence of the western portion of the Empire, found that the most dangerous enemies of the Roman power in the provinces bounded by the Rhine and upper Danube were the Franks and Alemanni. The former are first mentioned in the reign of Cara-

calla,[1] while the latter do not appear for more than thirty years, when they assume great importance in the days of Gordian II.[2] The Franks occupied the territory which stretched along the right bank of the Rhine from the North Sea to the river Main, and the Alemanni the region situated between the Main and the Alps. A great deal of uncertainty exists as to the origin and character of these two groups of people. Some are inclined to consider them as confederations of various German tribes:[3] others see in them neither a new tribe nor a confederation of tribes, but an association of soldiers and warriors which had become through various causes an ethnic unit, such as that composed of the followers of Ariovistus. Based on a passage in Tacitus of doubtful interpretation, this theory explains the names of these organizations: Alemanni, or men of all nations; Franks, an epithet alluding either to their vagabond courses or to their valor.[4]

These two peoples had been a standing menace to the power of the Romans for several years. The armies of Alexander and Maximinus, of Philip and

[1] 213 A. D. See Goyau, *Chronologie de l'Empire Romain*, p. 261.

[2] 241 A. D. Lavisse, *loc. cit.*

[3] Sie waren die Nachkommen der Sugambern und Chamaven, unter welchen seit dem Ende des 2 Jahrhunderts auch die Chatten aufgegangen waren und zu denen sich Amsivarier, Chattuarier und Teile der Brukterer gesellt hatten. Schiller, *Geschichte der Römischen Kaiserzeit*, p. 813.

[4] Lavisse, *loc. cit.* p. 250.

Decius, had vanquished but not subdued them; and it was against them that Gallienus had directed his first efforts. In the beginning he gained many victories, with the result that in 257 he had established the supremacy of Rome in the Rhenish provinces.[1] His success, however, was more in the nature of a compromise than a victory. He allowed a large number of Marcomanni to settle in a portion of Pannonia, and, to bind the treaty by which these new settlers engaged themselves to repel all invaders, Gallienus married Pipa, or Pipara, the daughter of one of their chiefs.[2]

While the Franks and Alemanni were overrunning the Rhenish provinces, the Goths and Marcomanni were devastating the region along the lower Danube.[3] Valerian himself in all probability personally conducted the campaigns against these marauders. Nothing is known as to the details and

[1] This is the date assigned by Schiller (*Geschichte*, p. 814), who bases his opinion on the fact that the medals of Gallienus for this year bear the title Restitutor Galliarum, Germanicus Maximus, Germanicus Maximus ter et v, etc. Eckhel vii, 401 seq.; Cohen, 181–191, 562–576.

[2] Gallienus quidem in loco Cornelii filii sui Solonianum alterum filium subrogavit, amori diverso pellicum deditus, Saloninae conjugis et concubinae, quam per pactionem, concessa parte superioris Pannoniae, a patre Marcomannorum rege, matrimonii specie susceperat, Pipam nomine. Aurelius Victor, *Epitome*, c. 33; *De Caes.* xxxiii, 6.

Perdite dilexit, Piparam nomine, barbaram regis filiam. Pollio, *Gall.* 21.

[3] Schiller, *loc. cit.* p. 816.

chronology of his movements before the year 256. It seems likely, however, that the Teutons and their allies were forced to abandon Roman territory, for in a letter which Valerian addressed to the Prefect of the City of Rome in 256, Aurelian, who afterwards became Emperor, is styled the Liberator of Illyria and Restorer of Gaul.[1]

Valerian's manifold duties as general in command of the legions did not prevent him from making some attempts at reform within the State itself. Though few instances of his activity in this respect have been preserved, there can be little doubt that he aimed constantly at restoring the army to its old-time efficiency. In the year 256 he sent letters to Albinus, the prefect of Rome, in which he announced that the inflexible Aurelian, whose severity the Emperor himself feared,[2] in recognition of the signal services he rendered as general, had been appointed inspector-general of the army, and that inasmuch as he would at once enter on his duties by inspecting all the camps, proper provision should be made for his reception in Rome.[3] The famous Third Legion, for many years the bulwark of Roman power in Africa, which had been ordered to Italy and separated into various detachments

[1] Liberator Illyrici, Restitutor Galliarum. *Aurel.* c. 9.
[2] Me etiam timuisse. Vopiscus, *Vita Aurel.* c. 8.
[3] *Ibid.* c. 9.

during the struggle with Aurelian, was restored to its former standing and sent back to its old camp at Lambesa.[1] Acting on the advice of Ballista, Valerian ordered the provincial governors to quarter troops only in places where their presence would not be a hardship to the inhabitants, and to exact as tribute only those things which the various provinces produced in abundance.[2] As a result of these regulations, Valerian was able to boast of the efficiency and high standing of his soldiers, "among whom there was not a man who was not a fighter."[3]

These instances are indications, at least, that Valerian was determined to follow the policy of his predecessor, Decius, and that he was thoroughly convinced of the necessity of effecting some radical changes in the internal affairs of the State. In such circumstances, questions regarding the national religion could not be overlooked, and it is not surprising that shortly after he found an opportunity to undertake the reorganization of the army, Vale-

[1] Cagnat, *L'Armée Romaine d'Afrique*, p. 171.

[2] Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 18. Provinciales non gravet. . . . Nec est ulla alia provisio melior, quam ut in locis suis erogentur quae nascuntur, ne aut vehiculis aut sumptibus rem p. gravent.

[3] This is contained in a letter of Valerian, in which he acknowledges his indebtedness to Ballista for sound advice: Gaudens quod ejus consilio nullum adscripticium, id est vacantem, haberet et nullum stipatorem, qui non vere aliquid ageret, nullum militem qui non vero pugnaret. *Ibid.*

rian should be brought into contact with the large body of citizens composing the Christian congregations, whose persistent refusal to acknowledge the state gods was an insuperable obstacle to state unity.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIANITY IN THE FIRST YEARS OF VALERIAN'S REIGN

Laws of Decius still in force — Not executed — Schisms in the Church — Novatus — Novatian — Christians at the court of Valerian — Valerian favors them — Valerian changes his attitude towards the Church — Macrianus — Aubé's opinion of Macrianus — Denis of Alexandria — Is Aubé's opinion the correct one? — Why Macrianus was proclaimed Emperor by his troops — His character — Was he a believer in magic? — Veneration of Macrian family for Alexander the Great — This was an Egyptian cult, hence a religion of magic — Valerian was influenced by Macrianus — Human sacrifices not unknown in Rome — Condition of public affairs led to renewed superstitions — Legal, political, and religious motives for persecuting the Christians — Economic condition of the Empire led to the same result — Financial prosperity of the Church — The Greek martyrs — Chrysanthus and Daria.

THOUGH the laws against the Christians which were framed by Decius remained in force after his death, there was no opportunity to put them into execution. The struggles among the rival claimants for the throne, the internal suffering and disorder, and the necessity for constant vigilance against the many enemies along the frontiers rendered it impossible to carry on any fixed policy of repression or persecution. To draw order from chaos was the first duty of Valerian, but in the face of so many dangers from outside he could find little time for internal

reforms. During the first years of his reign the Church was never molested. A spirit of insubordination, however, within the Church itself gave rise just then to two dangerous schisms, which threatened the disruption of the entire Christian organization. At Carthage a party of priests who had opposed Cyprian's advancement to the episcopate took advantage of the troubles arising out of the Decian persecution to renew the old discussion in regard to the penitential discipline of the Church. They accused Cyprian of undue severity in his treatment of those who had abjured Christ during the persecution. In accordance with the well-established custom in the Church, Cyprian refused to allow the "lapsed" to return to the fold before they had performed the prescribed penance. Not even those who had received "libelli" from the martyrs and confessors were exempt from this decree. Under the leadership of Novatus a strong party was formed in opposition to Cyprian. In defiance of Cyprian Novatus and his followers received the "lapsed" without imposing the customary penances. In a council of the African bishops Cyprian excommunicated the schismatics, who in retaliation proceeded to have one of their number, Fortunatus, consecrated as head of the See of Carthage.[1] With a view to

[1] Hergenröther, *Kirchengeschichte,* vol. i, pp. 280 seq.; Blanc, *Cours d'Histoire Ecclesiastique*, vol. i, p. 303; Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, vol. i, p. 111.

enlisting as much aid as possible, Novatus went to Rome, where a similar schism was in existence, with the difference that there the schismatics accused the bishop of undue laxity. Headed by Novatian, this party had attempted to prevent the election of Pope Cornelius on the ground that he had shown himself too lenient to the apostates. The learning and blameless life of Novatian had drawn many priests to his standard, and by the dissemination of calumnies regarding Cornelius he finally induced three Italian bishops to consecrate him Bishop of Rome. By a strange perversity, Novatus threw in his lot with the Novatians. The schism assumed such alarming proportions that Synods were held, encyclical letters exchanged, and various other means adopted to check the growing disorder.[1] A reversal of Valerian's policy, however, soon put an end to the strife. After years of toleration the Emperor had decided to take up the unfinished work of Decius and uproot Christianity from his dominions. In the face of greater dangers the Christians forgot their differences. The ban of proscription must have found them unprepared. "It is wonderful," says Denis of Alexandria, "what took place in Valerian, and especially when we consider the condition of the man before this, how kind and friendly he was

[1] Hergenröther, *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. i, pp. 280 seq.; Blanc, *Cours d'Histoire Ecclesiastique*, vol. i, p. 303; Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, vol. i, p. 111.

towards the pious. For never was there any of the Emperors before him so favorably and benevolently disposed towards them; not even those who were openly said to be Christians, so plainly received them, with such excessive civility and friendship as he did in the commencement of his reign. All his house was likewise filled with pious persons, and was indeed a congregation of the Lord." [1]

This account fits in admirably with what we know of the character of Valerian. A man of high moral purpose and blameless life, what more natural than that he should be attracted by the virtues and irreproachable conduct so strikingly manifested by the Christians. The instinctive regard for personal worth which led him to promote none but the deserving would also guide him in the selection of those who were to compose his household, among whom it is not astonishing that there were many Christians. Valerian, though he wished to decline the office of censor, was doubtless in sympathy with the plan of Decius, and must have felt that the first step in the restoration of the old Roman glory was to abolish the vice and corruption which were destroying private virtue and public honor. Besides these, other influences may have been at work. His court was the home of the eclectic philosophy of the period, and if his daughter-in-law was a Christian,

[1] *Ep. ad Hermammon;* Euseb., *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vii, 10.

she was doubtless also a Christian advocate.[1] The very wording of his decree against the Christians when he undertook to persecute them, the fact that the *Caesariani* are expressly mentioned, is proof positive that the Christians of Caesar's household were at least numerous enough to deserve the designation of a church.[2]

A question very naturally arises here. If Valerian was brought into such intimate relations with the Christians and had extended to them such signal marks of favor, what could have induced him to proscribe them? The answer is furnished by Denis of Alexandria, who says: "But the master and chief ruler of the Egyptian Magi (Macrianus) persuaded him to abandon this course, exhorting him to persecute and slay these pure and holy men as enemies and obstacles to their wicked and detestable incantations. For there were and still are men who, by their very presence or when seen, and only breathing and speaking, are able to dissipate the artifices of wicked demons. But he suggested to him to study rites of initiation, and abominable arts of sorcery, to perform execrable sacrifices, to slay unhappy infants, and to sacrifice the children of wretched fathers, and to search the bowels of newborn babes, and to mutilate and dismember the

[1] Allard, *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, p. 36.

[2] ἐκκλησία is the word used by Denis, *loc. cit.*

creatures of God as if by doing this they should obtain great felicity." [1]

This explanation of Valerian's change of attitude towards the Christians has met with scorn and ridicule from many later writers. M. Aubé, in particular, has taken great pains to show that it is worthy of no credence, and utterly incompatible with the general tone of Roman life and inconsistent with the character of Macrianus. In the opinion of M. Aubé, "Macrianus was one of the principal men in the entourage of Valerian. He was a man important as well by his rank and his enormous wealth as by his notable services to the State. His courage had merited for him the highest honors in the army, and his reputation was that of an honest and brave man. When Valerian set out for the war with the Persians, he wrote to the Senate that he had entrusted the care of the Republic to Macrianus. After 260, when Valerian was taken prisoner, Macrianus took the purple on the invitation of Ballista, one of the few honest men of the time. His soldiers cried out that there was no one more fit to govern the Empire on which Gallienus had brought dishonor. This is the arch-magician of whom Denis speaks, — the pretended immolator of infants." [2]

This summary of the character and achievements

[1] Denis, *loc. cit.*

[2] *L'Eglise et l'Etat dans la Seconde Moitié du Troisième Siècle*, p. 337.

of Macrianus, which M. Aubé considers sufficient reason for branding the account of a contemporary witness as a collection of "the sayings of the terrified and angry Christians, who hid in caves and regaled themselves with the most ridiculous and most foolish rumors,"[1] is taken from the Augustan History. In his zeal to exonerate Macrianus, M. Aubé has altogether mistaken or misunderstood the words of Pollio.

In the first place great stress is laid on the fact that Macrianus received from the soldiers under his command the honor of a nomination to the throne. This was not an extraordinary occurrence at that time, and gives no indication whatsoever as to his character. The way to the throne was easy when the supreme power was in the hands of a man whose manifest unfitness for affairs of state had merited for him the contempt and hatred of all classes in the Empire.[2] The desire to supplant Gallienus after the capture of his father was so widespread that revolts took place wherever there were large bodies of troops. So many were advanced at this time that the names of all are not known to history.[3] The rapidity with which some

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Gallienum non solum viri sed etiam mulieres contemptui haberent. Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 1.

[3] Tanta obscuritas eorum hominum fuit, qui ex diversis orbis partibus ad imperium convolabant . . . uti eorum nec nomina frequententur. *Ibid.* c. 1.

of these ephemeral rulers were deprived of life by the men who conferred on them the imperial insignia would even indicate that in many cases the soldiers selected their leaders from the office as a protest against Gallienus rather than from the desire to see those leaders occupy the throne. Victorinus Junior was no sooner hailed as Caesar than he was put to death.[1] Marius the blacksmith was so contemptible in the eyes of his own soldiers by reason of his humble origin that one of them slew him after he had enjoyed the purple for three days with the remark, — "And this sword he made himself."[2] The excellent Saturninus, on the day he received the imperial peplum, warned his followers that they had spoiled a good soldier to make a wretched Emperor, and in a few days he was slain because he attempted to exercise the privileges of his office.[3] In such circumstances it is not extraordinary that Macrianus was among the number of those who were proclaimed Emperor. Pollio, the only author who speaks of that event, has nothing but contempt for Macrianus' actions on that occasion. From him we learn that after Valerian had fallen into the hands of the Persians, the disloyalty of the soldiers to his son Gallienus and the fact

[1] Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 7.
[2] Hic est gladius quem ipse fecit. *Ibid.* c. 8.
[3] *Ibid.* c. 23.

that a usurper had already appeared in the person of Aureolus rendered it imperative that some one should be selected for the throne who would be acceptable to the people and capable of carrying on the administration. The choice lay between Ballista, who held the position of prefect under Valerian, and Macrianus, who was the first among the *duces*.[1] Ballista, in a speech which has been preserved by one of his auditors,[2] deprecated his fitness for the position, saying to Macrianus: "My age, training, and my desires compel me to refuse the office, because I cannot deny I desire a good ruler, who is capable of taking the place of Valerian, a man such as you are, brave, constant, honorable, well tried in state affairs, and, what is of more importance, rich. Take the place which you have deserved, and as long as you wish it let me be your prefect." In his reply Macrianus agreed with Ballista as to the qualifications which an emperor should possess at the time, but pleaded that his age and infirmities and the enjoyment of riches, which had long before withdrawn him from the career of a soldier, proved his unfitness for such arduous duties. Younger men must be selected, he said, not one, but two, or even three, who would restore the republic which Valerian through fate, and Gallienus by his

[1] Primus Ducum. Pollio, *loc cit.* c. 12.

[2] Maeonius Astyanax qui concilio interfuit. *Ibid.*

dissolute life, had lost. The hint was not lost on Ballista.[1] "Give us your sons, Macrianus and Quietus," he said; "they were made tribunes by Valerian, and because of their worth they will never be safe as long as Gallienus rules." Seeing that he had been understood, Macrianus acceded, and ordered that the soldiers should receive double wages, to be paid out of his private purse. The safety of the Empire no longer troubled him. He left the East in a state of confusion to take issue with Gallienus, but was slain together with his sons in Illyricum or Thrace, where he encountered the forces of Aureolus. This episode is in itself scarcely sufficient to exonerate Macrianus from the charges made against him by the Bishop of Alexandria, and proves nothing more than that Macrianus was possessed of a large amount of duplicity, and that in the circumstances it would be extraordinary if a man of his disposition was not made emperor. The encomiums of Macrianus came from one who did not possess the most essential requisite for the office, namely wealth, and who doubtless knew how short his tenure would be when a rival such as Macrianus was to be reckoned with.

Of the charge that Macrianus was chief of the

[1] Intellexit eum Ballista sic agere, ut de filiis suis videretur cogitare. Pollio, *loc cit.* The account of his advancement to the throne given by Denis agrees admirably with Pollio's narrative. Eusebius, *loc. cit.* vii, 10.

magicians of Egypt, M. Aubé has this to say: "This means nothing more than that Macrianus belonged to the little body of enraged conservatives of the time, who were very much attached to the old manners and customs of the Empire, and especially to the religious customs of their ancestors, which he saw, not without anger, attacked and destroyed by the encroachments and the progress of Christianity. He could have been chief of the magicians in no sense except that he was a pagan, zealous to fanaticism, and ready to shed blood in the defence of law and order. . . . If Macrianus had anything to do with the matter, as appears from the testimony of Denis, which can be interpreted but not rejected, it was by his private conversations, by his advice, by the influence he possessed over Valerian. Magic had nothing to do with it."[1]

This summary disposal of the testimony of a contemporary is not in accord with some well-known facts of history, which, inasmuch as they tend to confirm the truth of what Denis says, as well as for the light they cast on the religious tone of the age, are worth examination. Trebellius Pollio in his "Life of Quietus the Son of Macrianus" says: "In speaking of the Macrian family, which still flourishes, it would be improper to pass over

[1] Aubé, *loc. cit.*

in silence a custom which is peculiar to the members of this family, and which they have constantly observed. The men always have their rings and silverware, and the women their rings, bracelets, and all their adornments engraved with the image of Alexander the Great, and even at this date the tunics, girdles, and mantles of the matrons bear the image of Alexander in embroidery of different colored threads. We ourselves saw Cornelius Marcus, a man of this family, on one occasion when he was giving a supper in the temple of Hercules, set before the Pontifex an amber dish containing the image of Alexander in the centre and his history in small characters around the border. He ordered that the dish should be shown to all present who were interested in the great commander. I mention these things, because it is believed that all who carry an image of Alexander in gold or silver will be aided in whatever they do."[1]

At first sight it may appear that there is very little connection between this passage and the statement of Denis of Alexandria that Macrianus was the chief of the magicians of Egypt. The veneration in which Alexander was held, however, could arise from no cause but a belief in his divinity. Kinship with the gods Alexander found essential to his scheme of a world-empire embracing

[1] *Trig. Tyr.* c. 14.

Greece, Asia, and Egypt.[1] These latter countries were ruled by men who were popularly supposed to be descended from the national gods.[2] Seeing the impossibility of supplanting rulers with such exalted antecedents, Alexander conceived the idea of establishing divine paternity for himself and thus becoming the equal of those whose thrones he usurped.[3] This object he attained in Egypt. He visited the oracle and temple of Ammon in the oasis of Siwah in the Libyan desert, and was declared the son of Ammon-Ra by the priests, after the oracle had spoken and proclaimed his celestial descent.[4] Even during his lifetime Alexander received divine honors, and when he died he was worshipped throughout the whole Empire which he had founded.[5] Among the Greeks he was accorded a place in high Olympus. His statues were placed

[1] Cf. Beurlier, *De Divinis Honoribus quos acceperunt Alexander et successores ejus*, p. 25.

[2] La noblesse de chaque membre d'une maison pharaonique et ses titres à la couronne se mesuraient sur la quantité de sang divin qu'il pouvait prouver. G. Maspero, "Comment Alexandre devint Dieu en Egypte," *Annuaire de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes*, p. 19, Paris, 1897; Beurlier, *loc. cit.*

[3] Prudentis sane viri erat et in arte imperandi exercitatissimi, se illis parem præstare quorum in locum succedebat. Beurlier, *ibid.* p. 26.

[4] The account of this expedition is found in two contemporaneous writers, Ptolemy and Callisthenes. Vide Muller-Didot, *Scriptores Rerum Alexandri Magni;* Maspero, *loc. cit.*, for literature and description of the journey and Apotheosis of Alexander.

[5] Beurlier, *loc cit.* pp. 7 et seq.; pp. 27 et seq.

in the temples, groves were dedicated to him, festival days were appointed, and sacred games instituted in his honor. The Seleucidae, Ptolemies, and the kings of Pergamus and Bactria all looked to Alexander as the founder of their dynasties, and numbered him among their national deities.[1] In Egypt, especially, the most vigorous efforts were made to place the worship of Alexander at the head of the national cult. During the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus a priest was appointed for the purpose of offering sacrifices to Alexander.[2] The institution thus established was continued in the succeeding reigns. These priests of Alexander were accorded the first place in the kingdom. They wore golden crowns and purple garments, and their persons were inviolable. Their signature was necessary to give authority to the decrees of the Egyptian priests or for the validity of private contracts. The Roman conquests necessarily robbed this priesthood of its authority, but it is not by any means improbable that Macrianus may have been de-

[1] In the monograph already cited M. Beurlier has collected all the references in early authors bearing on the subject of Alexander's divinity. He shows that this worship was as wide as the kingdom founded by Alexander, and that it was maintained by his successors in the various divisions into which the empire fell: Macedonia, p. 36; Ptolemies, pp. 46 seq.; Seleucidae, p. 86; Attali, p. 89; Commageni, pp. 108 seq.; Bactriani, Parthiani, pp. 117 seq.

[2] Beurlier, *loc. cit.* p. 59.

scended from a man who once held the position of priest of Alexander, or that he may have been the head of the then existing cult. This latter supposition is strengthened by the similarity between the title so frequently given to the priests of Alexander, ἀρχιερεύς, and the epithet which Denis applies to Macrianus, ἀρχισυνάγωγος.[1]

The worship of a god of Egypt and the observance of Egyptian rites is in itself sufficient proof that Macrianus was addicted to magic.[2] The curved ram's horns which marked the coins of Alexander show that he had adopted the symbols of his pretended ancestor Ammon, and the title Macedo, which these coins bear, may have some connection with the Egyptian god Macedo, whose jackal-head is also seen together with the other symbolic device of the horn.[3] The wearing of amulets bearing an image of Alexander, which Pollio attributes to the Macrian family, was a magical practice which St. John Chrysostom found it necessary to reprobate among the Christians of Antioch at the end of the fourth century.[4]

[1] Beurlier, *loc. cit.* pp. 60 seq. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, iv, 25, relates that Constantine abolished the priesthood of Egypt because of their abominable practices.

[2] Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient Classique.*

[3] Rawlinson, *History of Ancient Egypt*, vol. i, p. 340; Birch, *Manners and Customs of Ancient Egypt*, vol. iii, p. 161.

[4] *Ad Illumin. Catech.* 2, Migne, P. G. vol. xlix, p. 240.

The high estimate of Macrianus' character shown by Valerian in the letter which he addressed to the Senate when setting out for the Persian war proves conclusively that at this time the Emperor was completely under the control of his favorite.[1] It would be easy in these circumstances to induce the old Emperor to offer sacrifices to the god whom the Greeks had invoked five centuries before when their country was being overrun by the Gauls.[2] If human sacrifices were necessary, there was nothing in this repugnant to the Caesars. At the suggestion of Chaldean magicians, the philosopher Marcus Aurelius slew a gladiator in order that the erring Faustina might be cured of her infatuation by bathing in his blood.[3] Elagabalus surrounded himself with magicians of all kinds, and encouraged their brutal rites to the extent of slaughtering children for purposes of augury. By a refinement of cruelty he sacrificed none but children of noble birth, whose fathers and mothers were alive, in order that the

[1] Ego, p. c., bellum Persicum gerens Macriano totam rem p. credidi et quidem a parte militari. Ille vobis fidelis, ille mihi devotus, illum et amat et timet miles, ille utcumque res exegerit, cum exercitibus agit. Nec, p. c., nova vel inopina nobis sunt: pueri ejus virtus in Italia, adulescentis in Gallia, juvenis in Thracia, in Africa jam provecti, senescentis denique in Illyrico et Dalmatia conprobata est, cum in diversis proeliis ad exemplum fortiter faceret. Huc accedit quod habet juvenes filios, Romano dignus collegio, nostra dignus amicitia. Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 12.

[2] Cf. Beurlier, *loc. cit.* p. 29; Justin, xxiv, 5, 10.

[3] Julius Capitolinus, *Vita Marci Anton. Philos.* c. 19.

death of the children might cause the greater grief.[1] A few years after the time of Valerian one of his successors, Aurelian, during a war with the Marcomanni, ordered that the Sibylline books should be consulted, and promised that, if sacrifices were necessary to propitiate the angry deities, he would supply prisoners of war for the purpose.[2] The horrid rites practised under Diocletian, when the augurs cut open living Christian women and children to find out the will of the fates, are too well known to need more than a passing mention.[3]

These considerations enable us to understand why it was that Denis of Alexandria could make such grave charges against the quondam friend of his co-religionists, and prove that, revolting as these charges are, they were in keeping with the times and the people.

The deplorable state of ruin and disorder into

[1] Cecidit et humanas hostias, lectis ad hoc pueris nobilibus et decoris per omnem Italian patrimis et matrimis, credo ut major esset utrique parenti dolor. Omne denique magorum genus aderat illi operabaturque cottidie, hortante illo et gratias dis agente, quod amicos eorum invenisset, cum inspiceret exta puerilia, et excruciaret hostias ad ritum gentilem suum. Lampridius, *Vita Heliogab.* c. 8.

[2] Miror vos, patres sancti, tamdiu de aperiendis Sibyllinis dubitasse libris, proinde quasi in Christianorum ecclesia, non in templo deorum omnium tractaretis. . . . Inspiciantur libri; si quae facienda fuerint, celebrentur: quemlibet sumptum, cujuslibet gentis captos, quaelibet animalia regia non abnuo sed libens offero. Vopiscus, *Vita Aureliani*, c. 20.

[3] Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, viii, 14.

which the Empire was daily sinking would naturally make a man of Valerian's temperament more susceptible to the influence of such persons as Macrianus. Chaos reigned everywhere. Each new calamity or fresh attack by the barbarians was regarded as signal proof of the anger of the guardian deities of Rome, who withdrew their aid and sent these visitations as a punishment for the dereliction of the Christians.[1] These superstitious ideas were strengthened by the conviction that Christianity was incompatible with the old order and inimical to the permanence of Roman institutions. This conviction, which had years before found expression in the codification of the laws against the Christians by Ulpian, reached its culmination in the sweeping edict which came from the hands of Decius, and which aimed at the complete eradication of the Christian religion. Decius himself expressed the opinion that he would rather see a rival Emperor in the field than another Pope in Rome.[2] With the new needs forced on the attention of the Roman authorities by the general decay, a new factor entered into the relations between

[1] Cum dicas plurimos conqueri et quod bella crebrius surgant, quod lues, quod fames saeviant, quodque imbres et pluvias serena longa suspendant nobis imputari. Cyprian, *Ad Demet.* 2. Dixisti per nos fieri, et quod nobis debeant imputari omnia ista quibus nunc mundus quatitur et urguetur, quod dii vestri a nobis non colantur. *Ibid.* 3.

[2] St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 52.

Christianity and the State.[1] Political expediency clamored for reform, for a restoration of the old "mores" as the only means of salvation for the Empire. To all schemes of reform, Christianity was an insuperable barrier. The old theocratic ideas of government were still in force, and though the Christians might not be compelled to renounce their own God, they could never be anything but outlaws as long as they refused homage to the gods of Rome.[2]

In addition to these legal, religious, and political motives for the extinction of Christianity, the persecution of the Church and the confiscation of her property seemed to promise relief from the financial burden which was threatening the ruin of the Empire.[3] The mass of the people were paupers and the government bankrupt. False economic principles, civil wars, the spoliation of whole provinces by invaders, and the debasing of the currency[4] had

[1] Schiller is of opinion that this policy originated with Maximinus. Die bewusste und politisch geplante Verfolgung beginnt erst mit dem Kaiser, der die stärkste Reaktion gegen das Senatskaisertum und die Kompromisspolitik seines Vorgangers herbeiführte, unter Maximinus. *Geschichte der Römischen Kaiserzeit*, vol. i, pt. 2, p. 902.

[2] Cf. Allard, *Hist. des Persécutions pendant la Première Moitié du Troisième Siècle*, pp. 273–291.

[3] Schiller, *loc. cit.* vol. i, p. 890.

[4] Der aureus, die Goldmünze, welche eigentlich 6, 55 Gramm fein Gold enthalten sollte, wurde eine Ware und enthielt nur 5–6 Gramm; die Silbermünze sank um das Jahr 256 in ihrem Feinge-

ruined commerce and agriculture, impoverished the people, and had thus cut off all sources of revenue. The prodigality and luxury of the court and the incessant demands made on the public treasury had long since exhausted whatever reserve funds the government could command, and inasmuch as the custom of borrowing money on the national credit had never been adopted, there were no resources at hand for the prosecution of the many wars which the salvation of the Empire demanded.

In striking contrast to this state of public insolvency was the apparent prosperity of the Church. It was always possessed of sufficient means to support the clergy, to defray the expenses of services in the churches, and to maintain the cemeteries. Large sums were needed to carry on the manifold charities of the churches. These were obtained through voluntary contributions,[1] the donations of wealthy con-

halte von 50–40 Prozent auf 20–5 Prozent und wurde nicht bloss mit Kupfer legiert, sondern zum Teil infolge der in den kaiserlichen Münzstätten herrschenden Unterschliefe des Personals durch reichlichen Zusatz von Blei, Zinn und Zink verunreinigt; alle Gläubiger und Stiftungen mussten zugrunde gehen, wenn mit diesem Gelde die Schulden abgezahlt werden konnten. Die Kupfermünze endlich, woraus der Staat den meisten Gewinn ziehen muss und kann, war selten geworden und wertvoller als das Pseudosilber (Weisskupfer), und wo sie noch auftrat, wurde sie zurückgehalten und vergraben, obgleich sie an Gewicht auf die Hälfte, gesunken oder nur beschnitten im Kurse war. Schiller, *loc. cit.* p. 843.

[1] St. Justin, *Apol.* i, 67.

verts,[1] weekly collections,[2] and a monthly tax.[3] Out of the funds thus provided the poor, the widows, and the orphans were supported,[4] those who could not earn a livelihood or who had lost their means of support by becoming Christians were aided,[5] freedom was purchased for Christian slaves, and Christian captives ransomed. Large sums were necessary to carry out these schemes of charity.[6] In the time of Pope Cornelius fifteen hundred poor people, widows, and orphans, were supported by the Church in Rome;[7] and at a later date three thousand were cared for by the Church in Antioch.[8] Nor was the liberality of particular churches confined to its own members. St. Cyprian collected 100,000 sesterces (about $5000) in the Church of Carthage for the ransom of Christians in Numidia;[9] and Pope St. Stephen supplied with necessaries the churches in

[1] When Marcion left the Church, the sum of 200 sesterces, which he had given at his baptism, was restored to him. Tertullian, *De Praescr.* 30; *Adv. Mar.* iv, 4. St. Cyprian sold his gardens on the day of his baptism and presented the proceeds to the Church. Pontius, *Vita Cypr.* c. 2.

[2] Offerings made during the celebration of the mass.

[3] Tertullian, *Apol. c.* 39.

[4] The names of those who were to receive aid were kept in a special register. St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 41.

[5] St. Cyprian offered to support a converted actor until such time as he could provide for himself in a way sanctioned by the Church. St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 61.

[6] *Con. Ap.* iv, 9.

[7] Ensebius, *loc. cit.* vi, 43.

[8] Chrysostom, *Hom. 66 in Matt. iii.*

[9] St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 59.

the provinces of Syria and Arabia.[1] Some isolated attacks on the Christians in Rome which took place before the promulgation of any edict show clearly that Valerian's good will towards the followers of Christ was changing little by little to hatred. Cupidity was manifestly the motive for these attacks. A wealthy Greek family[2] consisting of two brothers, Hippolytus and Hadrias, and the latter's wife, Paulina, and their two children, Neo and Maria, after a stormy voyage by sea in which they vowed sacrifices to the Stygian Jupiter if they were saved, became Christians shortly after their arrival in Rome.[3] Hippolytus was the first to renounce paganism, and after his conversion he commenced to lead the life of a solitary in a grotto, where he devoted himself to the work of preparing cemeteries for the faithful either by working with the *Fossores* or having

[1] Eusebius, *loc. cit.* vii, 5.

[2] De Rossi has been at considerable pains to elucidate the many difficulties which centre around this group of martyrs known only through *Acta* of donbtful valne, and a few *Epigrammata*. Aubé says of the *Acta:* Sont absolument dénués d'autorité. *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 332. Dufourcq says: Il est infiniment probable que l'épigramme, et les gestes qu'elle cite, sont antérieurs à Symmaque (499–514), ou en sont contemporains. *Gesta Martyrum Romains*, p. 301. Cf. De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. iii, pp. 208–213, for a critical discussion of the whole subject.

[3] Olim sacrilegam quam misit Graecia turbam,
Martyrii meritis nunc decorata nitet.
Quae medio pelagi votum miserabile fecit,
Reddere funereo dona nefando Jovi.
Epig. 78. Ihm.

the work done by others at his expense.[1] One by one the remaining members of the family were converted. They were instructed in the Christian faith by Eusebius, a priest, and Marcellus, a deacon, and received baptism from the hand of Pope St. Stephen. Their eagerness to observe all the Gospel precepts led them to renounce their earthly possessions, which they distributed among the Christian poor. This attracted the attention of Maximus, prefect of the city, who conveyed the information to the Emperor or his representatives and had the Christians arrested on a charge of attempting to subvert the pagan worship.[2] The entire family, together with Eusebius and Marcellus, were summoned before the tribunal to answer this accusation. The same question asked of each one — "Whence did you procure this enormous wealth and all this money with which you seduce the people?" — shows that a suspicion existed in the minds of the Roman authorities of some immense fund available as a means to an active Christian propaganda. The examination elicited nothing confirmatory of such a belief. All

[1] Quem monachi ritu tenuit spelunca latentem,
Christicolis gregibus dulce cubile parans.

Ibid.

[2] Divulgatum est Valeriano a quodam Maximo prefecto urbis. *Passio;* De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. iii, p. 206. On the importance of this mention of Maximus in regard to the date, vide de Rossi, *loc. cit.* p. 211. Allard, *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, p. 44, note; Dufourcq, *loc. cit.* p. 181.

the accused boldly confessed their faith and were put to death. Paulina, the first to suffer, was buried in a cemetery on the Appian Way, one mile from Rome, where they used to hold their meetings.[1] The children, Neo and Maria, were decapitated in the presence of Hippolytus and Hadrias, who were themselves executed shortly afterwards and buried with Paulina and her children in the same cemetery on the Appian Way. An agent of the prefect, named Maximus, who had been appointed to watch the Christians, became a convert himself, and paid for his faith with his life.

To this period in all probability must be assigned the martyrdom of the Christian spouses, Chrysanthus and Daria.[2] A convert himself, Chrysanthus became a very eager apostle of Christianity and,

[1] Sepelivit Via Appia, ex praecepto S. Stephani episcopi, milliario ab urbe Roma primo, juxta corpora sanctorum in arenario ubi frequenter conveniebant. *Passio.* The place of burial is discussed by De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, pp. 262 seq.; tom. ii, pp. 180–184; and the date by Dufourcq, *loc. cit.* p. 181.

[2] The "paleographical traditions" are unanimous in assigning this martyrdom to the reign of Numerian. Vide Dufourcq, *loc. cit.* p. 226. Most commentators, however, assume that the word *Numerianus* is a copyist's error for *Valerianus*. For authorities, vide Allard, *loc. cit.* p. 46, note. While admitting that the topographical indications in the *Acta* have been confirmed by the Itineraries and by the discoveries of archaeologists, M. Dufourcq (*loc. cit.* p. 226) is of opinion that the later date — time of Numerian — cannot easily be set aside. But as Numerian while emperor never visited Rome, he comes to the conclusion that, "Un redacteur a combiné une tradition de Constantinople avec une tradition Salarienne." *Loc. cit.* p. 227.

according to the Acta, before his death saw many of those to whom he had brought the knowledge of Christ die by the sword for the faith. After suffering many indignities and cruelties, Chrysanthus and his wife were finally buried alive in an *arenarium* on the Via Salaria Nova.

CHAPTER V

FIRST EDICT

Text lost — Reconstruction from Proconsular Acts of St. Cyprian and letter of Denis of Alexandria — Clauses of edict — New spirit in anti-Christian legislation — Abjuration of Christ not required — Cemeteries confiscated — Purpose of edict — Aimed principally at hierarchy — Effect of edict — St. Stephen — Tarcisius — Unknown martyrs of the crypt of Chrysanthus — Cyprian exiled to Curubis.— Visited by many Christians — Vision — Letters to confessors in the prisons and mines — Sufferings of exiled Christians — Aided by Cyprian and Quirinus — Denis of Alexandria — Exiled to Kephron — Makes many converts — General survey.

WHETHER Valerian yielded himself blindly to the influence of Macrianus, or whether he was swayed by political, legal, or religious motives, a decree promulgated about the middle of the year 257, bearing his name and addressed to the provincial governors, shows that his attitude towards the followers of Christ had undergone a complete change. It is very much to be regretted that neither the edict itself nor the instructions which accompanied it have come down to us. The Proconsular Acts[1] of St.

[1] The documents relating to the martyrdom of St. Cyprian are two, viz. the *Acta Proconsularia*, and the *Vita Cypriani* by the deacon Pontius. Their absolute authenticity is beyond question. Cf. Paul Monceaux, "Examen Critique des Documents rélatifs

Cyprian and a letter of Denis of Alexandria which contains an account of his trial enable us to reconstruct if not the exact phraselogy, at least the drift and general terms of this enactment.

The Acts of St. Cyprian relate that on the third day before the Kalends of September (August 30), St. Cyprian was summoned to the private office (*secretarium*) of the proconsul in Carthage to be judged by Aspasius Paternus the proconsul. The following conversation took place: —

Aspasius Paternus. The most sacred Emperors Valerian and Gallienus have sent me letters in which they command that persons not conforming to the Roman religion must be compelled to practise the ceremonies. I have inquired regarding you.[1] What do you answer?

Cyprian. I am a Christian and a Bishop. I know no gods but the one true God, who made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all they contain. This is the God we Christians serve; we pray to Him night and day for ourselves and for all men, and for the safety of the Emperors themselves.

au Martyre de Saint Cyprien," *Revue Archéologique*, 3me série, tom. xxxviii (1901), pp. 249–271. Of the *Acta Proconsularia*, M. Monceaux says: "On n'en a jamais mis en doute la parfaite authenticité. On s'accorde à le considérer comme l'un des récits martyrologiques les plus dignes de foi, les plus purs de toute altération, même comme le type par excellence de cette classe de documents." *Loc. cit.* p. 251.

[1] Exquisivi de nomine tuo. *Acta*, c. 1.

PATERNUS. Do you still persevere in this course?

CYPRIAN. It is not possible to change a good resolution known to God.

PATERNUS. Will it be possible[1] for you in accordance with the commands of the Emperors to go as an exile to the city of Curubis?

CYPRIAN. I go.

PATERNUS. They have deigned also in writing to me to mention priests as well as bishops. I wish, therefore, to know from you the names of the priests who are in this city.

The proconsul's previous play on words had brought forth no answer from Cyprian. Now the lawyer had his chance.

CYPRIAN. By your laws you have well and wisely decreed that men should not be informers.[2] Therefore I will neither reveal their names nor betray them. You will find them in their respective cities.

PATERNUS. I demand their names to-day and in this place.

CYPRIAN. Since our discipline forbids that a man should voluntarily surrender himself, and since such a thing is repugnant even to your laws, they can-

[1] Bona voluntas quae Deum novit, immutari non potest . . . . Poteris ergo secundum mandatum, etc. *Acta*, c. 1.

[2] Legibus vestris bene atque utiliter censuistis, delatores non esse. *Ibid.* Trajan (*Ep. ad Plin.*) forbade the anonymous *delatio* of Christians. Hadrian was still stricter: he ordered the *delatores* to be punished. See page 42 above.

not surrender themselves, but if you search for them, they will be found.

PATERNUS. They will be caught.

And he added: It is furthermore commanded that you hold no assemblies, and that you must not enter your cemeteries. Any one who fails to observe this salutary precept will be put to death.

CYPRIAN. Do as you are commanded.

Then Paternus the proconsul gave orders that the blessed Cyprian should be "deported" into exile.[1]

About the same time Denis of Alexandria was summoned before the Proconsul Aemilianus.[2] What took place at the trial he himself relates in a letter

[1] En réalité, ces prétendus Actes Proconsulaires se composent de trois documents distincts, et de quelques légères additions. Ces trois documents sont: 1. Le procès-verbal de l'interrogatoire de 257; 2. Le procès-verbal de l'arrestation de Cyprien et du second interrogatoire en septembre 258; 3. Le récit du martyre proprement dit. Monceaux, *loc. cit.* p. 254.

The first two parts are undoubtedly official documents. Without assigning any reason for his opinion, M. Monceaux seems to think they were drawn up by clerics in Carthage (*loc. cit.*). It is more probable, however, that they were taken from the archives in the office of the proconsul. Cf. *Compte-rendu, Analecta Bollandiana*, tom. xx (1901), p. 473.

[2] During the reign of Gallienus this Aemilianus became one of the "Thirty Tyrants." He was possessed of considerable military genius, and after being forcibly elected to the purple, he brought the whole of Egypt and the Thebaïs into subjection; for which he received from his followers the name of Alexander or Alexandrinus. Theodotus, one of Gallienus' generals, defeated him and cast him into prison, where he died — Strangulatus in carcere captivorum veterum more. Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 22.

written in answer to Germanus,[1] a bishop who had endeavored to slander him. Fortunately Denis is careful to record minutely the questions and answers. "Listen," he says, "to the very words which were spoken on both sides as they were recorded.

"Dionysius, Faustus,[2] Maximus,[3] Marcellus,[4] and Chaeremon[5] being arraigned, Aemilianus the prefect said: 'I have reasoned verbally with you concerning the clemency which our rulers have shown to you; for they have given you the opportunity to save yourselves, if you will turn to that which is according to nature, and worship the gods which preserve their Empire, and forget those that are contrary to nature. What, then, do you say to this? For I do not think that you will be ungrateful for their kindness, since they would turn you to a better course.' Dionysius replied: 'Not all people worship all gods, but each one those whom he approves. We therefore reverence and worship the one God,

[1] All that is known of this Germanus is that he accused Denis of cowardice. In all probability this letter was a public epistle, intended for the Christians at large.

[2] Faustus was a companion of Denis in the Decian persecution. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vi, 40. He lived to a great age, and was martyred during the Diocletian persecution. *Ibid.* vii, 11.

[3] The successor of Denis in the See of Alexandria. *Ibid.* vii, 28.

[4] Not otherwise known.

[5] The only notice of him we find is in this chapter of Eusebius.

the Maker of all; who hath given the Empire to the divinely favored and august Valerian and Gallienus, and we pray to Him continually for their Empire that it may remain unshaken.' Aemilianus the prefect said to them: 'But who forbids you to worship him, if he is a god, together with those that are gods by nature. For ye have been commanded to reverence the gods, and the gods whom all know.' Dionysius answered: 'We worship no other.' Aemilianus the prefect said to them: 'I see that you are at once ungrateful and insensible to the kindness of our sovereigns. Wherefore ye shall not remain in this city. But ye shall be sent into the regions of Libya, to a place called Kephro. For I have chosen this place at the command of our sovereigns, and it shall be by no means permitted you or any others, either to hold assemblies, or to enter into the so-called cemeteries. But if any one shall be seen without the place which I have commanded, or be found in any assembly, he will bring peril on himself. For suitable punishment shall not fail. Go, therefore, where ye have been ordered."[1]

These two documents are of incontestable historical value and contemporary with the facts they relate. Agreeing in all general features, and completely in-

[1] The translation is taken from the American edition of Eusebius, by Professor McGiffert, New York, 1890.

dependent of one another, they enable us to reproduce in outline at least the decree of Valerian and the instructions which accompanied it. M. Aubé has summarized these instructions under four heads.[1] In the first place, the leaders of the Christian communities, the bishops and priests, were to be immediately seized. Secondly, without resorting to rigorous measures, but appealing as much as possible to conciliatory means, the magistrates were to compel these members of the Christian hierarchy to render homage as other men did to the gods of Rome without requiring them to renounce their faith. In neither document is there any question of compelling the Christians to abjure. Thirdly, in case of persistent refusal to perform acts of worship to the pagan deities, to send them into exile. Fourthly, to warn the Christians that the holding of any assemblies or even entering their cemeteries would be punished with death.

The minuteness of these provisions shows clearly the intimate knowledge which the Roman authorities possessed regarding the constitution and discipline of the Church, the destruction of which was the manifest purpose of the edict. In this it was in harmony with all the preceding laws on the subject of Christianity. It marked, however, the commencement of a new policy, a policy of compromise, in which means

[1] *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, pp. 343 seq.

less cruel to the individual were to be employed, but none the less fatal to Christianity as a corporate organization enjoying in some measure the protection of the laws. In two essential points this edict was different from all previous enactments.

In the first place, no one was to be compelled to abjure Christ, as was the case seven years before during the Decian persecution. Instead of a formal act of denial, the Christians should participate in some way in the pagan rites and make formal acknowledgment of the pagan deities. They could remain followers of Christ if they chose; but they must nevertheless show their allegiance to the national cult. It is difficult to explain this radical departure from the old policy, if we regard the omission of abjuration as a step towards a more lenient régime. M. Allard thinks that because "Valerian was less despotic than" Decius, more cautious, and hence less inclined to proceed to extreme measures, he was mercifully inclined towards the Christians, whom he had formerly favored, and allowed them a middle course.[1] It is true that this syncretistic expedient might have appealed to a man who was the friend of Plotinus. Such a course of action was nothing new in Rome; Alexander Severus and Elagabalus had tried it; and a few years later the Mithraic worshipper Aurelian would ascribe his victories

[1] *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, p. 51.

over the Palmyrenians to the great gods of Rome.[1] But could the Roman authorities have known so little of Christianity as to believe that the promise of immunity would induce the Christians to cast incense at the feet of Jupiter or Janus? As had been proved during the Decian persecution, the faithful would more readily condone actual denial of Christ, or the purchase of a certificate from the magistrate attesting such denial, than they would the slightest participation in the unclean rites of paganism.

The second point of notable difference between Valerian's edict and the laws of his predecessors was the clause it contained regarding the Christian cemeteries.[2] Hitherto these places of sepulture had escaped the fury of the pagans. For whether the Christians had enrolled themselves as a "burial club," and as such obtained a legal title to their cemeteries, or whether they omitted this formality, the fact that these cemeteries were the last resting-places of the dead gave them a religious character

[1] Vopiscus, *Vita Aureliani*, c. 26. Credo adjuturos Romanam rem p. veros deos, qui nunquam nostris conatibus defuerunt.

[2] La parola *cimitero* proviene dal greco idioma, e la radice fondamentale ne è κει affine al latino quie, dalla quale derivano molti vocaboli come il verbo κεῖμαι significa giaccio, riposo, dormo; quindi mutando la ε in ο da la radice κοι, unde deriva il tema κοιμα e percio il verbo κοιμάω eqnivalente al latino *dormitum duco;* quindi κοιμητήριον propriamente significa il luogo ove si dorme. Armellini, *Gli Antichi Cimiteri Cristiani di Roma e d'Italia*, p. 14.

which placed them under the protection of the common law of Rome.[1] Careless and prodigal of human life as they were, the Romans regarded a grave as a sacred thing, the violation of which they punished with condemnation to the mines.[2] For the Christians, however, the cemeteries were more than places for burial; they were meeting-places for the living, devoted to prayer and sacrifice. The fact that popular outbreaks against the Christian cemeteries began to occur about the beginning of the third century, precisely at the time the Christians are supposed to have formed themselves into burial clubs, and that the Christians remained in undisturbed legal possession of their cemeteries for nearly fifty years afterwards, strengthens the theory that they took advantage of the law allowing the organization of *collegia funeraticia* in order to escape popular hatred, or confiscation of their possessions by the Roman authorities.[3] Such an expedient would of course have placed Christianity in the invidious position of being illegal as a religion and legal as an association. If such a legal fiction was tolerated, it ceased with the promulgation of Valerian's edict.

[1] Religiosnm locum unusquisque sua voluntate facit, dum mortuum infert in locum suum. Marcian, *Digest*, i, 8, 6, 4.

[2] Qui sepulchrum violaverint, aut de sepulchro aliquid detulerint, pro personarum qualitate aut in metallum dantur aut in insulam deportantur. Pauli, *Sent.* ii, c. 13.

[3] Armellini, *loc. cit.* pp. 66 seq.

The appearance of having recourse to conciliatory measures, and the insidious nature of the proceedings adopted to enforce the edict, prove clearly that there was a well-defined plan on foot to effect the total suppression of Christianity, or at least to deprive it of its distinctive character of a separate and independent religion by merging it in the *mélange* of creeds and cults which made up the religion of the Empire. The idea that such a process was possible must have arisen either from a profound knowledge or a lamentable ignorance of the Christian Church; for the merest acknowledgment, either in word or action, of any pagan deity cut a Christian off from intercourse with his brethren as effectually as if he became a worshipper of Isis or Mithra.

The edict was aimed principally at the clergy, and it was to be enforced without the shedding of blood. If the clergy performed the rites, they might remain with their flocks; if they refused, banishment awaited them. In either case their influence would immediately cease. If they *lapsed* by outward conformity with pagan practices, they would have to join the ranks of the penitents before being readmitted to the Church, and the example of such defections could not but weaken the allegiance of the great mass of their people. In exile they could neither instruct nor advise their flocks, and thus it was

thought that the people, deprived of the example and guidance of their leaders, and without places of assembly, would soon yield to the seductions of pagan life and abandon their strange superstition. Valerian, from the prominent position he occupied in the time of Decius, must have seen that denying Christ and conforming to the pagan rites was an expedient on the part of the Christians to escape punishment and death, and that as soon as danger had passed they were eager to associate themselves once more with their brethren. With this knowledge to guide him, he adopted measures milder than those of Decius, but far more effective for the purpose he had in view. He sought to put Christianity to a slow death in the stifling atmosphere of Paganism by depriving it of its vital elements, preached by the bishops, and the mutual support the living word afforded by congregational gatherings.

It is impossible to say what effect the edict produced at first on the Christian communities. It is not unlikely that the kindness of the Emperor disarmed their fears of persecution to some extent; but previous experiences, and the conviction that the laws which were already in existence could be put into operation at any time, must have made them watchful.

In Rome Pope St. Stephen died on the second day

of August, 257,[1] and was succeeded by St. Xystus on the 30th of the same[2] month, the day St. Cyprian was tried at Carthage. This is sufficient indication that in Rome, at least, the Christians had succeeded in evading to some extent the pursuit of their enemies. Pope Stephen was buried in the cemetery of Callixtus on the Appian Way,[3] therefore the Christians had access to this their principal meeting-place even at the time of his death. There can be little doubt that Pope Stephen was not martyred. The tradition that both he and his successor were slain at the altar arose in all probability from the proximity of their burial places; but the silence of St. Cyprian and his biographer, Pontius, on the subject, and the fact that the Liberian Catalogue makes no mention of his martyrdom, while the Philocalian Catalogue places him among

[1] Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.* i, p. ccix; *Les Origines Chrétiennes*, p. 437.

[2] For the different dates assigned to this event see Goyau, *Chronologie de l'Empire Romain*, sub anno 257. Aubé is of opinion that Xystus was elected about the 25th of August, and therefore before the edict was issued: Est-il supposable que l'authorité romaine eût admis Sixte comme organe attitré de la communauté, quand l'édit avait pour objet de la dissoudre en mettant ses chefs dans l'alternative de reconnaître la religion de l'état ou de partir en exil? *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 366. His position as Pope and his election to the office were altogether independent of his position as *Actor* or *Syndicus* of the Christian corporation. Enrolment in the register of the Urban Prefect was not a necessary condition to his election.

[3] Cf. Dufourcq, *Gesta Martyrum Romains*, p. 179; De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, p. 180; tom. ii, pp. 82 seq.

the bishops and not the martyrs, seems to be conclusive proof that he was not called on to shed his blood in defence of the faith. The manner of his death is not known; but there is nothing impossible in the conjecture that he may have died in prison or on his way to exile.[1] It is significant, however, that the election of Xystus took place so soon after the death of Stephen. That such an occurrence was possible, and that Xystus could remain unmolested and active in Rome, seems strange in view of the banishment of other bishops at the same time.

There were many Christians in Rome, nevertheless, who felt the weight of Roman justice precisely at this juncture for violating that clause of the edict regarding the use of the cemeteries. In the Acts of St. Stephen we find an account of the death of a young acolyte named Tarcisius, who had some official connection with one of the cemeteries, probably that of Callixtus.[2] He was engaged in carrying the Blessed Sacrament to some of the confessors, when his movements aroused the suspicion of a band of soldiers, who seized him, and in the struggle to retain possession of the sacred burden, which he would not expose to profanation by surrendering it, he was slain. His brethren obtained possession of his body and interred it in the papal crypt, where Pope Da-

[1] Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. iv, note on St. Stephen.

[2] De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. ii, pp. 7–10 seq.

masus in the fourth century set up an inscription in his honor.[1]

The vigilance of the Roman authorities in preventing the Christians from using their cemeteries as meeting-places, which led to the death of the acolyte Tarcisius, brought about also the martyrdom of a large number of the faithful who had assembled in a crypt near the tomb of Chrysanthus and Daria, in order to celebrate the first anniversary of the death of these martyrs. While the Holy Sacrifice was being offered, soldiers stationed themselves at all the exits and allowed no one to escape. Thus trapped, the helpless Christians were put to death by being buried alive under a mass of stones and sand.[2] The place where they died was forgotten until long after the persecutions had ceased.[3] In making some repairs to the tombs of Chrysanthus and Daria, Pope Damasus discovered the skeletons of a multitude of men, women, and children, and even the sacred vessels used in the Sacrifice of the Mass, which were still clasped in the hands of the priests and deacons. He was unwilling to make any changes in this

[1] Tarcisium sanctum Christi sacramenta gerentem
Cum malesana manus premeret, vulgare profanis.
Ipse animam potius voluit dimittere caesus
Prodere quam canibus rabidis coelestia membra.
Epitaph, written by Pope Damasus.

[2] Gregory of Tours, *De Gloria Martyrum*, i, 38.

[3] Quæ crypta diu sub velamento permansit operta donec urbs Romana, relictis idolis, Christo Domino subderetur. *Ibid.*; De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, p. 201.

crypt, and contented himself with recording the glories and sufferings of the martyrs in an inscription which he placed over their remains,[1] and in order that pilgrims to the catacombs might not be deprived of such an edifying spectacle, he placed a window in the wall of the tomb through which the relics were visible even in the time of Gregory of Tours.[2]

The scantiness of our knowledge regarding the operation of the edict in Rome and other parts of the Empire is partly compensated for by the fuller records furnished by the African Church. The letters of Cyprian written while he was in exile,[3] and his "Life" written by the deacon Pontius, give us an accurate though incomplete picture of the sufferings of the Christians in Carthage. For some reason

[1] Sanctorum quicumque legis venerare sepulchrum,
Nomina nec numerum potuit retinere vetustas.
Ornavit Damasus titulum cognoscite rector.
Pro reditu cleri Christo praestante triumphans
Martyribus sanctis reddit sua vota sacerdos.

Cf. Allard, *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, p. 73; Armellini, *Gli Antichi Cimiteri Cristiani*, p. 211; De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, p. 213.

[2] Verumtamen pariete illo qui est in medio positus, fenestram structor patefactam reliquit ut ad contemplanda sanctorum corpora aditus aspiciendi patesceret. Gregory of Tours, *Ibid.*

[3] Vide *Epp.* 76, 77, 78, 79, 80. The first of these Epistles was written by St. Cyprian to the martyrs in the mines. *Epp.* 77, 78, and 79 are answers to Cyprian's letters from three different groups of confessors. *Ep.* 80 was written to the Christians in the Carthaginian prisons.

the sentence which the proconsul inflicted on Cyprian, of which we have already spoken, was not put into execution for several days. He did not reach Curubis, the place assigned for his banishment, until September 14.[1] This was "an out-of-the-way, clean, pleasant, well-walled little coast-town about fifty miles from Carthage, in a lonely not savage district, at the back of the great eastward promontory of the Gulf of Tunis."[2] He was accompanied by many members of his household, among them the deacon Pontius, who finds no fault with the place, and, doubtless, echoes his master Cyprian when he says no place of banishment is an exile to the God-fearing Christian, to whom the entire world is one house, and who is a stranger even in his own city.[3]

Cyprian's fame and position doubtless procured for him many exemptions and privileges. He was subjected to no physical sufferings, and, as far as we know, endured no hardships whatsoever. The Christians visited him in large numbers, and the citizens of Curubis treated him with the profoundest respect, gladly supplying whatever was necessary for his needs or comfort.[4] He had nothing to com-

[1] Benson, *Life of St. Cyprian*, p. 467. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Vita Cypriani*, c. xi.

[4] Frequentiam visitantium fratrum, ipsorum et inde civium caritatem, quae repraesentabat omnia, quibus videbatur esse fraudatus. *Ibid.* c. xii.

plain of except that he was removed from his flock and confined to one place.

All doubts as to his future fate vanished on the first night of his exile. It was revealed to him in a vision which he afterwards related to Pontius that he was to become a martyr within a year. "The first day we were in exile, before I was fully asleep, a young man of extraordinary stature appeared to me. He led me to the praetorium, where it seemed to me I was conducted to the tribunal of the proconsul. As soon as he saw me, he commenced at once to note down on his tablet some sentence of which I knew nothing, for he had omitted the customary interrogations. The young man, however, had stationed himself behind the proconsul, and read carefully whatever had been written. He could not speak to me from where he was, but made a sign which indicated clearly what was on the tablet. With his hand opened flat like a sword he imitated the death stroke, thus expressing himself as fully as if he spoke. I understood that I was sentenced to martyrdom. But in order that I might arrange all my affairs, I begged for a respite of one day. After I had repeated my petition several times, the proconsul began again to make some notes on his tablets. The calmness of his face showed me that he considered my petition a just one. The youth, who revealed to me the tidings of my

passion, made another sign which clearly indicated that my petition had been granted. Though no sentence had been pronounced, I confess I was glad to know that I was reprieved. The uncertainty of interpretation had terrified me so much that the remains of fright still caused my heart to throb with fear."[1]

"'What could be clearer than this manifestation?' says Pontius. Cyprian was to suffer martyrdom. The reprieve of one day meant that his death would take place in just one year, and in the mean time, while every one knew the certain day of his passion, no one spoke of it." The delay was granted to him in order that he might arrange all his affairs; but as he had no will to make nor personal matters to attend to, this meant that the affairs of the Church needed his attention.[2]

During his forced leisure Cyprian kept up an active correspondence with his fellow bishops and the members of his flock by messengers and letters. Some attribute the composition of the "Exhortation to Martyrdom" to this time.[3] It contains nothing, however, which would indicate that the persecution had already commenced, while his letters to the Christians in exile and in prison are filled with references to their sufferings. It seems improbable,

[1] *Vita Cypriani*, c. xii.

[2] Quae vero res illi, aut quae voluntas ordinanda, nisi ecclesiastici status? *Ibid.*

[3] Benson, *loc. cit.* pp. 264, 474 seq.

therefore, that he would have written this work while the storm was raging and omit all mention of present trials. The mild treatment received by Cyprian shows clearly that he made no attempt to hold any meetings of his flock during the time he remained in Carthage after his condemnation.

It was not so, however, with other bishops. In many places the Christians continued to hold their assemblies in defiance of the prohibition contained in the edict, and for this temerity they were arrested in crowds. The clause of the edict which forbade the use of the cemeteries and the holding of assemblies was the only one under which the laity could be convicted. The penalty for violating this prohibition was death, which it would seem was inflicted on many persons.[1] Others were sentenced to that other form of capital punishment, condemnation to the mines.[2] First beaten with whips and rods, they were then branded on the foreheads and their heads shaven on one side, so that if by any chance they escaped they would be recognized as runaway slaves or criminals.[3] Half starved and in rags, with no bed but the bare ground, they were driven to their toil in the mines or smelting-furnaces, the smoke

[1] Ut ex vobis pars jam martyrii sui consummatione praecesserit, meritorum suorum coronam de Domino receptura. St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 76.

[2] Capitalium poenarum isti gradus sunt; summum supplicium . . . deinde proxima morti poena, metalli coercitio. Callistr. *In Dig. Jus.* xlviii, 19, 28.

[3] Semitonsi capitis capillus horrescit. St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 77.

from which blinded and choked them.[1] Among these prisoners were nine Numidian bishops who had sat in the Council at Carthage,[2] and crowds of Christians of all ages and conditions of life.

That they were able to survive the rigors and privations of such an existence was due to the fatherly care of Cyprian and the liberality of his wealthy lay friend Quirinus. The sub-deacon Herennianus[3] conveyed to the prisoners a letter of exhortation and encouragement from Cyprian, and many gifts and large sums of money by which their urgent needs were supplied. He brought back answers from three groups of martyrs imprisoned in different mines, one written by Nemesianus, Dativus, Felix, and Victor; another by Lucius and his companions; and the third from Felix, Jader, Polianus, and the other martyrs in the mines of Sigus. It must have filled Cyprian's soul with joy to know that although the persecution had become general, there was as yet no reason to lament the lapse of any of the brethren.

Those who remained in the prisons of Carthage were also objects of solicitude to the exiled bishop. To them also he wrote a letter, exhorting them to

[1] St. Cyprian, *Ep. Nemesiani inter Cypr.* No. 78.

[2] St. Cyprian's Epistle (77) was addressed, "Nemesiano, Felici, Lucio, alteri Felici, Litteo, Poliano, Victori, Jaderi, Dativo." All were probably from Numidia. Cf. Benson, *loc. cit.* p. 471.

[3] Herennianus performed a similar kind office for the Carthaginian martyrs. *Passio Montani*, c. 9.

courage, to think not of death but immortality, not of temporary punishments but of eternal glory, in order that they might follow in all things Rogatianus the presbyter and Felicissimus who had gone before them.

In the neighboring See of Alexandria the Christians exhibited the same fidelity to their faith and the same courage in refusing to conform to the ordinances which forbade congregational gatherings and access to the cemeteries. It is regrettable that the only information we possess regarding Alexandria comes from a letter written by Denis the bishop to exculpate himself from the charges made by Germanus, one of his colleagues in the episcopacy, who accused him of seeking safety in flight, and of neglecting to hold any gatherings of his flock.[1] "He hastened me away," he says, "though I was sick, not granting me a day's respite. What opportunity, then, did I have to hold any assemblies or not to hold them."[2]

Notwithstanding the haste with which he was deported, he found an opportunity to converse with some of his clergy who were free, and on whom he impressed the necessity of holding the customary assemblies during his absence.

Kephron, a wretched spot on the edge of the desert, was designated as the place of his banish-

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vii, 11. [2] *Ibid.*

ment. Until he was ordered to go there, he says he never even heard the name. After his arrival the place became a centre of pilgrimage for the Christians of Egypt. These visitors and the friends who shared the exile of the bishop were numerous enough to form a considerable congregation. The pagan inhabitants, however, conceived an utter dislike for the strangers, and showed it by persecuting them and attacking them with stones. But in the end many of them abandoned the gods and became followers of Christ. In order that he might the more easily re-arrest Denis, the proconsul transferred him to Colluthion, a "town or section of country in the district of Mareotis." Denis frankly confesses that the thought of such a place made him tremble with fear. He was separated from his friends, who were sent to different villages in the same district; but though he dreaded the rough inhabitants and the bandits, he had the consolation of being nearer to Alexandria, and of being able to receive visits from his Christian followers. The scope of his letter did not of course embrace any account of the sufferings of the martyrs, "which," he says, "are known to all." Though in exile, and guarded as he was, he found it possible to hold special meetings such as were held in the more remote suburbs of Alexandria.[1]

[1] Eusebius, *loc. cit.* vii, 11.

Scenes similar to those which occurred in Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria took place doubtless in every quarter of the Empire. The edict was applicable everywhere, and its enforcement would be rigid or lenient according as it fell into the hands of a cruel or indulgent magistrate.[1] Multitudes had confessed and had been crowned, so that every age and both sexes were found in the blessed flock of the martyrs.[2] "Sentences, confiscations, proscription, plundering of goods, loss of dignities, contempt of worldly glory, disregard for the flatteries of governors and councillors, and patient endurance of the threats of opponents, of outcries, of perils and persecutions, and wandering and distress and all kind of tribulations"[3] had failed utterly to shake the constancy of the followers of Christ. None of those who had fallen into the toils had lapsed,[4] and the victims formed scarcely a moiety of the multitudes willing and eager to thrust themselves into posts of danger. Whether in hiding or in exile, the influence of the

[1] Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum Sincera*, Introd. c. 24.

[2] St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 77.

[3] Denis of Alexandria in Eusebius, *loc. cit.* Denis says he suffered those things under Decius and Aemilianus. It is no exaggeration to think that he was not the only one who endured such trials.

[4] M. Aubé (*L'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 349), from a passage in Commodian, thinks some cases of recantation occurred.

> Sed plurimi pereunt qui putant utrieque placere,
> Idolie atque Deo, placeat cum nemo duobue.
>
> *Carmen Apol. Ver.* 762-763.

bishops over their flocks remained unimpaired. Their emissaries went everywhere, to the prisons and mines, carrying messages of hope and comfort. Wealthy Christians poured out their riches to succor their brethren in misfortune, whose faith and constancy shone brighter every day.

Valerian's first essay as a religious reformer had failed. The policy of "Moral Decapitation" had resulted in the same way as the fire and sword policy of Decius. Though the time was scarcely propitious for more vigorous measures, it was necessary that such should be adopted, or all proceedings against the Christians abandoned. The comparative security which the Empire enjoyed when the edict was issued was again violently disturbed; and though Valerian did not relinquish hope of effecting the necessary internal reforms, the need of being at the head of his legions now became imperative.

CHAPTER VI

SECOND EDICT — PERSECUTION IN ROME

Peace restored to Roman Empire in 257 — Borani repulsed — Valerian holds brilliant levee at Byzantium in 258 — Purpose of this gathering — War against the Persians — Shahpur captures Antioch — Valerian proceeds against him — Issues new edict against the Christians — Harsher measures adopted — Reason for increased severity — Did the council at Byzantium have any connection with this new law — Christians did not provoke harsher measures — Barbarians took many Christian prisoners — No alliance between the Christians and the enemies of the Empire — New edict a development of old one — Probable text — Christians in Rome — Changes in the Catacombs — Martyrdom of Pope St. Xystus — St. Laurence — St. Eugenia — SS. Rufina and Secunda — Protus and Hyacinthus — St. Pancratius the boy martyr.

WHEN Valerian issued his first edict against the Christians, Rome was enjoying a well-earned peace. The valor of her legions and the skill of her generals had won back the territory which the barbarian invaders had hoped to wrest from her. Crowns and "russet ducal tunics"[1] were awaiting the triumphant commanders who had restored the power and prestige of the Roman name and set up the standards of victory along the frontier from the Rhine to the Danube and the Black Sea.

[1] Vopiscus, *Vita Aurel.* c. 13.

As early as 256 Aurelian, the future Emperor, Valerian's favorite general, from whom he expected "as much as from Trajan were he alive," had accomplished his work in the Balkan Peninsula so well that he was able to leave the field, bearing the proud title of *Liberator Illyrici*, in order to devote himself to more peaceful pursuits as inspector-general of the army.[1] The successes of Gallienus are best indicated by the inscription on his coins, *Restitutor Galliarum*,[2] while his judicious treaty with a prince of the Marcommani had secured the maintenance of Roman supremacy in Pannonia.[3] The Goths were still troublesome in the neighborhood of Nicopolis, but their resistance was short-lived after Aurelian took command of the army instead of Ulpius Crinitus, who was incapacitated by sickness. With forces consisting of Roman legions and barbarian allies, and by matching Teuton against Teuton, Aurelian drove the Goths across the Danube, seized large quantities of booty, and, what was of more importance, added new lustre to the glory of Rome.[4]

[1] Vopiscus, *loc. cit.* c. 9. Ille Liberator Illyrici, ille Galliarum Restitutor, ille dux magni totius exempli. Cf. Schiller, *Geschichte der Römischen Kaiserzeit*, p. 816.

[2] Eckhel, 7, 402; Cohen, 480–486; Schiller, *loc. cit.* p. 814.

[3] Pollio, *Vita Gall.* c. 21; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* xxxiii, 6; *Ep.* 33, 1.

[4] Vopiscus, *loc. cit.* c. 11. The composite character of the Roman army is shown by the enumeration of troops made by Valerian in

In the same year the Borani, a tribe from beyond the Black Sea, had suffered a signal reverse in an attempted irruption into Asia Minor. Who these people were is not known with certainty. Gibbon calls them Goths;[1] but Mommsen says they are more correctly termed Scythian than Gothic.[2] The small, practically defenceless kingdom of the Bosphorus first fell into their hands, and the inhabitants, always friendly to the Romans, consented under compulsion to furnish transports to convey them to the Roman territory south of the Black Sea. They first descended on Pityus at the end of the great post-road which led to the foot of the Caucasus, a frontier-city possessed of an excellent harbor protected by a strong wall.[3] They abandoned their ships and laid siege to Pityus, but their efforts to capture the place proved unavailing. The garrison, under the command of Successianus, a brave and efficient soldier, repulsed their attacks.

his letter designating Aurelian as commander in Moesia: Habes sagittarios Ityraeos trecentos, Armenios sescentos, Arabes centum quinquaginta, Saracenos ducentos, Mesopotamenos auxiliares quadringentos; habes legionen tertiam Felicem et equites catafractarios octingentos. Tecum erit Hariomundus, Haldagates, Hildomundus, Carioviscus.

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, c. x.

[2] *Roman Provinces*, vol. i, p. 265.

[3] Zosimus, i, 31. Schiller is of opinion that this expedition of the Borani took place as early as 253 (*loc. cit.* p. 817); Tillemont and others place it in 257. Cf. Goyau, *Chronologie de l'Empire Romain*, sub anno.

Fearing that their retreat would be cut off, they abandoned the siege and withdrew to their homes beyond the Euxine. As a reward for his meritorious conduct Successianus was afterwards promoted to the position of Praetorian Prefect and the defence of Pityus given to other hands.[1]

Such was the happy consummation of events which enabled Valerian to hold a brilliant levee of all his great commanders in the Thermae near Byzantium during the summer of 258. At no other time in his reign could the Emperor have assembled such a gathering of soldiers and administrators, and at no other time was it possible for them to be absent from their posts. There was an imposing review of troops before the Emperor himself and his court. At the right sat Baebius Macer, Prefect of the Praetorium, and beyond him Quintus Ancarius, the Praeses of the Orient. On the left were Avulnius Saturninus, the *Dux* or commander of the Scythian frontier; Murrentius Mauricius, Prefect Designate of Egypt; Julius Trypho, the *Dux* of the Oriental frontier; Maesius Brundisinus, Prefect of the Corn-supply of the East; Ulpius Crinitus, *Dux* of the frontiers of Illyrium and Thrace, and Fulvius Boias, Commander in Rhaetia.

The strange document which describes all the pageantry of this occasion with so much detail was

[1] Zosimus, bk. i, c. 32.

copied by Vopiscus from a book written by Acholius, the Lord Chamberlain of Valerian.[1] No hint is given as to the purpose of the gathering or what took place, except that Valerian with great pomp and ceremony singled out Aurelian as the recipient of the highest honors. In a speech filled with the most extravagant praises he conferred on him consular honors, loaded him with dignities and decorations, quadrupled and quintupled the usual rewards, and, in order that he might have the means to bear his new burdens, compelled the wealthy Ulpius Crinitus to adopt him as his son.[2]

No mere love of display could have led to the massing of such a body of troops, and the presence of so many commanders from different parts of the Empire, at an epoch when all their energies were needed to restore order and public confidence. The subject uppermost in the thoughts of the Emperor and his advisers at the time was the perennial Eastern Question. This was a subject to fill their minds with anxiety and fear, a question for the settlement of which Rome would have to put forth her best energies. The levee at Byzantium was a council of war, and the soldiers assembled there were doubt-

[1] Quam fidei causa inserendam credidi ex libris Acholi, qui magister admissionum Valeriani principis fuit, libro actorum ejus nono. Vopiscus, *loc. cit.* c. 14.

[2] Aurelian did not become consul in the following year. Cf. Schiller, *loc. cit.* p. 816, note 5.

less intended for service against the Persians. East of the Mediterranean Roman supremacy was tottering to a fall; the old frontiers were destroyed, Roman allies were killed, and Roman territory was devastated.[1] Chosroes, king of Armenia, who for thirty years had maintained the independence of his country against the attacks of the Persians, was at last slain by the emissaries of Shahpur, and his kingdom, so long the buffer-state between Roman and Persian, was captured and disorganized. The friends of Tiridates, the young son of Chosroes, were imploring the aid of Rome to regain the Armenian throne, while others of the leaders, among whom was Artavazdes, the uncle of Tiridates, had passed over to the enemy and were ready to resist any interference with the plans of Shahpur.[2] With Armenia under his control, the Persian monarch set out with an enormous force to capture the Roman possessions. He reduced in quick succession the two important cities of Carrhae and Nisibis, and then, under the guidance of Cyriades, a renegade Roman, who had attempted to set up an independent kingdom in Syria, he turned his army toward Antioch, and by the rapidity of his movements took possession of the city before the inhabitants fully realized what

[1] Rawlinson, *Seven Great Monarchies*, vol. vi, p. 253; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. x; Schiller, *loc. cit.* p. 821.

[2] Pollio, *Vita Valer.* c. 3.

had occurred.[1] Nothing now stood in the way of Persian supremacy in the whole East but the strong fortress of Edessa, against which Shahpur's next efforts were directed. So far all his attempts to capture it had failed.

The disgrace inflicted on Rome by the successes of Shahpur, and the danger, increasing with each new victory, that Roman supremacy in the East would be forever lost, aroused Valerian and his lieutenants to the necessity of immediate and vigorous measures. Their first care was necessarily the relief of Edessa and the recapture of Antioch. For this purpose all the soldiers who could be spared from the European commands were drafted to Byzantium in 258. Trusting that the successes of his generals along the Rhine and the Danube were permanent, and that with reduced forces they could hold what they had already won, Valerian himself, although far advanced in years, resolved to direct personally the campaign against Shahpur, and immediately after the council of Byzantium he set out with his army for Syria and Armenia.[2]

[1] Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 2; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rer. Ges.* lib. xxiii, c. 5, thus describes the fall of Antioch: Namque cum Antiochiae in alto silentio, scenicis ludis mimus cum uxore immissus, e medio sumpta quaedam imitaretur, populo venustate attonito, conjux, Nisi somnus est, inquit, en Persae: et retortis plebs universa cervicibus, exacervantia in se tela declinans spargitur passim.

[2] Zosimus, i, 32.

It was precisely at this juncture that Valerian issued his second edict of persecution against the Christians. Its appearance was well timed, or rather, to speak more accurately, the time made its appearance possible. With the restoration of Roman power in the European provinces and the crushing defeats inflicted on the barbarians, the opportunity offered itself of effecting those internal reforms from which so much good to the State was expected.

It is perhaps useless to speculate as to what motives could have induced Valerian to inaugurate a new policy in his treatment of the Christians. One thing, however, is certain, the rescript of 258 was an open acknowledgment that the law of the preceding year was an utter failure. It had for a time caused the Christians some suffering and great inconvenience, nothing more ; but as an engine of destruction it scarcely made an impress on the numbers or the fidelity of the followers of Christ. They soon adapted themselves to the changed conditions. Though the bishops were in exile, their supervision over the Christian fold never ceased, and though the priests were scattered or in hiding, their ministrations never failed. Benson's theory, that " the something which motived the idea that the edict was not acting strongly enough to reform the Christians was the removal of the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul to their temporary hiding-places in the Cata-

combs," scarcely affords sufficient ground for "thinking that the Emperor may have been induced to sharpen his decree by tidings of this translation."[1] This was simply one phase of the activity which the Christians showed in preserving what they esteemed sacred, and of securing the permanence of their congregational life and spirit.

It is probable that the new attitude taken by Valerian was a result of the reports he received from his lieutenants when he assembled them at Byzantium. In such a gathering it is natural to suppose that a question of so much importance as the treatment to be accorded to the Christians received some attention. The appearance of the rescript so soon after the convention was not a mere coincidence. There must have been some connection between them. What this connection was, it is impossible to say. Our information regarding what happened at Byzantium is confined to a passage in the life of Aurelian which Vopiscus borrowed from the writings of Acholius, who was evidently an eyewitness, and which he inserted for the purpose of adding additional lustre to the renown of the conqueror of Zenobia. Possessing the confidence of the Emperor to the extent of being promoted to the inspector-generalship of the army, and coming back fresh from his victories over the Goths to

[1] *Life of Cyprian*, pp. 476, 486.

receive the most extraordinary favors from his sovereign, it may be well supposed that Aurelian was a prominent figure in the deliberations of the Council. If his opinion was sought for in regard to the Christians, enough is known of his character to conclude that he would have counselled none but the harshest measures in dealing with them. Nothing else could be expected from one of his training and temperament. He never inclined towards leniency. Cold-blooded, self-restrained, even austere in his habits, he possessed none of the vices of paganism, never indulged in excesses, and never pardoned others who did.[1] He never tolerated any license or disorder among the soldiers under his command, and was distinguished as a leader for his severity, cruelty, and rigid adherence to discipline.[2] His punishments were frightful.

He once inflicted death on a soldier, guilty of seduction, by having his limbs fastened to two trees forcibly drawn together, which when released tore him asunder. By the command of Aurelian the mangled body was left there as a salutary warning to evil-doers.[3] He devoted some time every day to the

[1] Vopiscus, *Vita Aurel.* c. 6, described him thus: Fuit decorus ac gratia viriliter speciosus, statura procerior, nervis validissimis, vini et cibi paulo cupidior, libidinis rarae, severitatis immensae, disciplinae singularis, gladii exserendi cupidus.

[2] *Ibid.* c. 7. Militibus ita timori fuit, ut sub eo, posteaquam semel cum ingenti severitate castrensia peccata correxit, nemo peccaverit.

[3] *Ibid.*

practice of arms, and from his skill in their use,[1] and his readiness to settle all disputes by the arbitrament of the blade, he won for himself the name of "Aurelian of the sword."[2] The vigor of which age had deprived Valerian was found in abundant measure in his lieutenant, and it was doubtless through the influence of the cold-blooded and heartless Aurelian that the Christians were called on to endure another bloody persecution.

There is absolutely no foundation for the accusation made against the Christians by M. Aubé,[3] that their disloyalty to the State had incensed the Emperor and his advisers. Basing his allegations on a passage in the "Carmen Apologeticum" of Commodian, and some statements in an Encyclical Letter of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, M. Aubé makes the charge that the Christians regarded the barbarian invaders as friends and allies, to whom they looked for deliverance from the pagan yoke. He says that in Cappadocia and Pontus they joined the ranks of the invaders, fought and pillaged with them, and profiting by the general confusion, reduced to slavery some of the unfortunate inhabitants who were without arms or means of defence.

[1] Theoclius, quoted by Vopiscus, *loc. cit.* c. 6, says that in one day he slew forty-eight Sarmatians with his own hand, and in several succeeding engagements he killed nine hundred and fifty.

[2] Aurelianus manu ad ferrum. *Ibid.* c. 6.

[3] *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 351.

While it is true that the Christian writers of the time pointed to the misfortunes of the Empire as a punishment from Heaven, they never advised their co-religionists to revolt, and their words afford no basis for the charge that the kindness shown to the Christian captives was the result of gratitude for treasonable conduct towards the Roman State. Far from condoning disloyalty, St. Gregory, in a letter to one of his suffragan bishops, on mere hearsay evidence lays down rules for the readmission to the Church of rebellious Christians, so strict that they show clearly he considered treason to be almost synonymous with apostasy. Furthermore, the invasion of his diocese did not take place until long after the promulgation of the edict.[1] As long as Successianus remained in command, the invaders did not succeed in passing the outposts on the extreme east of the Euxine. But when Valerian, in making up his army for service in the East, removed the successful defender of Pityus and probably reduced its garrison, the barbarians made such good use of the opportunity thus offered that Valerian himself was compelled to abandon his operations against the Persians and make a forced march to Asia Minor, in order to prevent a junction of their forces with those of

[1] Schiller places this invasion as early as 258; Tillemont (iii, p. 408) and others in 259. Cf. Goyau, *Chronologie*, etc., sub anno.

the Scytho-Gothic invaders from beyond the Euxine.[1]

The friendship of the barbarians for their Christian captives arose from altogether different causes. Sozomen tells us that when Constantine became master of the world, a long interval had already elapsed since the Goths had received the Christian religion, to which they were converted by priests captured in their raids into Asia. Touched by the kindness shown by these priests to the sick and wounded whom they nursed and cured, and by their exalted virtues and irreproachable lives, the barbarians decided they could do nothing better than imitate such excellent men and adore the same gods they did. Hence they begged to be instructed, listened with respect to what they were taught, received baptism, and formed many churches.[2]

Philostorgius, speaking particularly of the ravages which the Scythians and Goths committed in Asia, Galatia, and Cappadocia during the reign of Valerian and Gallienus, says that among the captives taken from Cappadocia were the ancestors of the celebrated Ulphilas, whom the Goths venerated as a prophet at the end of the fourth century.[3] In like manner the Sarmatians,[4] the

[1] Zosimus, i, 36; Schiller, *loc. cit.* p. 819.
[2] Sozomen, *Hist.* lib. ii, c. 6.
[3] *Hist. Eccl.* lib. ii, c. 5.
[4] St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 16.

Burgundians,[1] the Gauls, and the barbarians from the region of the Rhine received the Christian religion at the same time and in the same way as those of the Danube.[2] And thus, says Tillemont, was the great mercy of God manifested, inasmuch as He made use of the marauding expeditions of the barbarians to give them the grace of repentance and redemption.[3]

The character of the second edict issued by Valerian shows it was a product of the same brain, and dictated by motives founded on the same conception of the relations between Christianity and the State which had produced the law of the preceding year. It was the work of a man who, seeing conditions which he considered detrimental to public order continue to flourish in spite of repressive enactments, found himself in the dilemma of abandoning all efforts for their amelioration or of proceeding to more vigorous measures. The exact text of the edict is unfortunately not in existence; but, thanks to the vigilance of St. Cyprian, we know with certainty what its main features were. Rumors of some impending change in legislation caused the Bishop of Carthage to send messengers to Rome in order that he might be at once informed as to any new move against the Christians. His first care

[1] Orosius, *Hist.* lib. vii, c. 3.
[2] Sozomen, *Hist.* lib. ii, c. 6.
[3] *Mémoires*, tom. iv, p. 25.

when he received the tidings which they brought was to convey them to the members of his flock. In a letter written to Successus, Bishop of Abbir Germaniciana,[1] who had written to him for information, he says: "The reason I could not write to you at once, Dearest Brother, is that none of the clergy could leave this place, because they are now in the very fire of combat and all eager to gain the Crown of Celestial Glory. Those whom I sent to the city to find out the truth in regard to what has been decreed against us have returned.[2] There were numbers of vague and uncertain rumors in existence; but the truth is this: Valerian has sent a rescript to the Senate which commands — that bishops, priests and deacons be incontinently put to death; that senators and men of high rank and knights of Rome be degraded and deprived of their possessions, and if they persist in being Christians after their means are taken away, they also must be punished with death; that matrons be deprived of their

[1] *Ep.* 80.

[2] Quae autem sunt in vero ita se habent, rescripsisse Valerianum ad senatum, ut episcopi et presbyteri et diacones in continenti animadvertantur, senatores vero et egregii viri et equites Romani dignitate amissa etiam bonis spolientur et si ademptis facultatibus Christiani esse perseveraverint, capite quoque multentur, matronae ademptis bonis in exilium relegentur, Caesariani autem, quicumque vel prius confessi fuerant vel nunc confessi fuerint, confiscentur et vincti in Caesarianas possessiones descripti mittantur. Subjecit etiam Valerianus imperator orationi suae exemplum litterarum, quas ad praesides provinciarum de nobis fecit. *Ibid.*

property and banished; that the Caesarians, whether they confessed before or confess now, 'suffer confiscation, be put in bonds, entered in the slave lists, and sent to work on Caesar's estate.'[1] The Emperor also subjoined to this order a copy of the letters he sent to the provincial governors regarding us, which letters we are expecting every day, hoping with all our faith for strength to suffer, and expecting, through the help and mercy of God, the Crown of Eternal Life."

Such was in essence the second enactment of Valerian. The most cursory comparison of its provisions with those of the former edict shows clearly that the one was a development of the other; but where the former was tentative, the latter was final. Both originated from the same general conception of the means to be adopted for the repression of Christianity, and both were a result of the policy first inaugurated by Decius, that the existence of the Christian Church was fatal to the essential unity of the Empire. There was the same conviction that Christianity's vital point was the hierarchy, and the same desire to wound it through its leaders, to reduce it to inanition by cutting off its life-giving elements, to remove its centres of unity, its capacity

[1] So this passage is rendered by Benson (*Life of Cyprian*, p. 480), who adds this note: Descripti, sic lege; not inscripti, "branded." Mart. viii, 75, 9.

for concerted action, and thus paralyzed and disintegrated, to doom it to extinction in the noisome atmosphere of paganism.

The edict showed the result of careful deliberation based on previous anti-Christian efforts. Decius was satisfied if the members of the hierarchy by word or act renounced Christ; Valerian at first demanded that they should openly ally themselves with paganism. In the former case penance readmitted them to the Christian fold. In the latter, exile was insufficient to prevent their active influence over their flocks. Now the mere proof of rank made them outlaws and made their lives forfeit. The clause in regard to Christians of rank, nobles, knights, and senators, was an innovation, inspired perhaps by the zeal they had shown in providing for the needs of their Christian brethren condemned to the prisons or to the mines. They were to be reduced to beggary, and their lives to be spared only on condition that they return to paganism. Thus they could neither aid the Church from their own purses nor hold her possessions in trust, and the privileges of rank could not avail to mitigate the severities which might be practised against them, nor afford them the opportunity of relieving the sufferings of their co-religionists. The matrons were likewise to be deprived of their possessions and sent into banishment. The Caesariani, Chris-

tians of Caesar's household, who as we know from Denis of Alexandria were present in large numbers at the court of Valerian, were to be sent in chains to the *Ergastula* on Caesar's estates.[1] The power possessed by freedmen and slaves at the Roman court was always enormous, and in the hands of Christians it would be an important factor in diminishing the success of any attempts against the welfare of the Church. Thus the edict spared neither rank nor sex; it cut off from Christianity all sources of power and influence, left it without resources and without a friend in high places.

There was no mention made of what measures were to be adopted in regard to the lowly members of the Christian Church (*simplices fideles*). The aim of the edict was the destruction of Christianity, and the plan adopted was sufficient for the purpose without trying to exterminate all who professed the religion of Christ. Should such a thing be attempted, the towns would be depopulated, the prisons filled, and all the resources of the Empire would be insufficient for its execution. The adoption of such a scheme would make it easier for the

[1] On the Christians of Caesar's household, vide De Rossi, *Bullettino*, January, 1867, p. 15. The celebrated "Graffito" representing Alexamenos, conjectured to be a page of the imperial household, adoring the head of an ass, is discussed by Duchesne, *Nuovo Bullettino*, vol. v, p. 18 (1900).

bishops, priests, and influential men to escape than if all the efforts of the officials were directed towards their capture and punishment. As long as the great mass of Christians had no rallying-points, and as long as they entertained their beliefs in private, they could never be a menace to the State. Should they attempt to hold any meetings or to take possession of the cemeteries from which they had been expelled, — the only way in which it was possible for them to manifest their activity, — the former edict was still in force, and provided ample penalties for this form of wrong-doing.

That the Christians in Rome intended to continue their congregational life by using the Catacombs as meeting-places, and by making them asylums in times of danger, is clearly indicated by many peculiar features in the construction of these subterranean dwellings, which manifestly belong to the time of the Valerian persecution. According to De Rossi, the idea of making the Catacombs inaccessible to the pagans by means of secret entrances and intricate passageways was first put into execution during the reign of Septimius Severus.[1] At that date there was no law or rescript forbidding the Christians free access to their cemeteries and

[1] *Rom. Sott.* tom. ii, pp. 257 seq.; part ii, pp. 45–48, plates LI, LIII; Northcote and Brownlow, *Rom. Sott.* vol. i, p. 155; Armellini, *Gli Antichi Cimiteri Cristiani*, p. 118.

the use of them as burial-places. But by holding assemblies there the Christians incurred the anger of the pagan populace, who frequently broke up their congregational gatherings. Speaking of Africa, in which the *areae* [1] of the Christians were especially attacked, Tertullian says: "We are daily beset by foes, we are daily betrayed; and we are oftentimes surprised in our meetings and congregations.[2] You know the very days of our assemblies: therefore we are besieged and attacked and even arrested in our secret gathering-places." [3]

These words of the great African apologist are considered by De Rossi to be an eloquent commentary on some strange features which he noticed in the cemetery of Callixtus, the first cemetery possessed by the Church as a corporate organization. Here he observed evidence of secret entrances to the subterranean crypts by labyrinthine passages, whose openings were artfully concealed in neighboring sand-pits, and which were manifestly intended for use at precisely the same time during which there were public stairways leading to the same Catacomb which descended boldly from the high-

[1] Sub Hilariano praeside, cum de areis sepulturarum nostrarum adclamasset, areae non sint. Tertullian, *Ad Scap.* c. 3.

[2] Quotidie obsidemur, quotidie prodimur, in ipsis plurimum coetibus et congregationibus nostris opprimimur. *Apol.* c. 7.

[3] Scitis et dies conventuum nostrorum: itaque et obsidemur et opprimimur, et in ipsis arcanis congregationibus detinemur. *Ad Nat.* bk. i, c. 7.

way. This paradox he explained by the equally strange position which in his opinion the Christians occupied in the eye of the law. As an illegal religious association they could not lawfully hold any assemblies, but possessed of the rights of a burial club they could in ordinary cases enter their cemeteries with perfect safety for the purpose of interring their dead associates.

The express prohibition to make use of the cemeteries for any purpose whatsoever, contained in the first edict of Valerian, gave rise, according to De Rossi, to greater activity on the part of the Christians in making access to the Catacombs more complicated and difficult. The regular stairways were destroyed by the Fossores themselves and cut off from the rest of the passages; the galleries were blocked up with sand; the old entrances were closed and recourse had to the new ones opening from the adjacent sand-pits, in order that no one could enter who had not the key to the tortuous approaches. These facts, which were brought to light by the minute examination made by De Rossi's brother, place before our eyes the scenes of which in those bloody days the subterranean cemeteries were the theatre, and "show us here a Christian Pompeii which keeps fresh the imprint made by its mysterious and heroic inhabitants."[1]

[1] De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. ii, p. 257.

It could scarcely be expected that these precautions would suffice to baffle the Roman officials. No sooner was the edict promulgated than they were able to lay violent hands on the Bishop of Rome, who had fled to the Catacombs for security. Cyprian's letter to Successus in regard to the new edict contained the fearful tidings that the Pope "Xystus was martyred in the cemetery on the 8th day of the Ides of August, and with him four[1] deacons;" that "the Prefects of the City were every day urging the persecution, and were condemning all who were brought before them, and confiscating their property."[2]

Thanks to the researches of De Rossi, there is no doubt as to the place where this martyrdom occurred. When the Pope, on August 6, wished to assemble the faithful for divine worship, prudence forbade him to go to the cemetery of Callixtus, which was the principal cemetery of the Christian community and seems to have been known as such to the pagans. Nearly opposite this cemetery, on the left side of the Via Appia, was the cemetery of Praetextatus, founded by the illustrious person

[1] "Quattuor," sometimes written "Quartum." Cf. De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. ii, p. 87.

[2] Xistum autem in cimiterio animadversum sciatis octavo iduum augustarum die, et cum eo diacones quattuor. Sed et huic persecutioni quotidie insistunt praefecti in urbe, ut si qui sibi oblati fuerint, animadvertantur, et bona eorum fisco vindicentur. *Ep.* 80.

whose name it bears, and much more secure because not so well known to the officials.[1] As late as the eighth century, tradition pointed out this spot as the veritable scene of the martyrdom,[2] and directly over the cemetery of Praetextatus was built an oratory, distinct and quite distant from that which now rises over the papal crypt, and which was dedicated to the honor and memory of St. Xystus.

In the cemetery itself there are numerous memorials of St. Xystus, which in the opinion of De Rossi date from a time anterior to Constantine. Here is a picture marked with the name SUSTUS, and on a sepulchral stone a representation of an episcopal cathedra attesting the place of the martyr's death, and a "graffito" of a bishop seated in his cathedra with a listener who holds a book seated at his feet. The obscurity of the cemetery of Praetextatus, and the relics found therein, all square admirably with the opinion that this was the place resorted to by the bishop in his efforts to escape capture and death.[3]

[1] *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, pp. 181 seq., 247; tom. ii, pp. 87–97; *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 1863, pp. 1–4, 18, 91; 1870, p. 42; 1872, p. 76; 1874, pp. 36–37.

[2] *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, pp. 180–181; tom. ii, p. 88.

[3] Pope Damasus wrote an inscription for the tomb of Xystus in the cemetery of Callixtus: —

> Tempore quo gladius secuit pia viscera matris
> Hic positus Rector coelestia jussa docebam.
> Adveniunt subito rapiunt qui forte sedentem.
> Militibus missis populi tunc colla dedere;

Here he assembled the faithful for the celebration of the divine mysteries, and while seated in his cathedra addressing his flock he was suddenly surprised by the entrance of a band of soldiers. The suddenness of the attack brought consternation to the little band. Expecting a general massacre of all who were thus found openly violating the laws, Xystus arose and offered his life to the soldiers in order to save his followers, who had gathered around him to protect him with their lives. From the fact that the Pope was put to death in the place where he was arrested many have thought that his martyrdom took place immediately after his arrest. But as De Rossi has shown, it is extremely improbable that a band of soldiers would have murdered five Romans as important as the bishop of the city and four of his seven deacons without the formality of a trial. The epitaph placed in the papal crypt by Pope Damasus says,—*Adveniunt subito rapiunt qui forte sedentem*, and the Liber Pontificalis tells us that Xystus was led away (*ductus est*) to offer sacrifice. These references would seem to indicate that the Pope was brought before some tribunal

> Mox ubi cognovit senior quis tollere vellet
> Palmam, seque suumque caput prior obtulit ipse
> Impatiens feritas posset ne laedere quemquam.
> Ostendit Christus, reddit qui praemia vitae;
> Pastoris meritum, numerum gregis ipse tuetur.

Cf. Duchesne, *Lib. Pon.* i, 156.

in order to be sentenced according to the regular legal forms.

After his condemnation, he and his four deacons were sent back [1] to the place where they had been apprehended in order that they might be executed on the spot where they were found violating the laws.[2] When he reached the crypt, Xystus seated himself in his episcopal chair, bowed his head, and received the executioner's stroke.[3]

Four deacons, Januarius, Vincentius, Magnus, and Stephanus, were put to death in the same manner and at the same time. Two other deacons, Felicissimus and Agapitus, were martyred on the same day but in a different place, and their bodies were interred in the cemetery of Callixtus. As soon as an opportunity offered, the Christians transferred the remains of the martyred Pope to the papal crypt, and enshrined behind his tomb the blood-stained chair in which he died.

The death of St. Xystus and his six companions left the Roman Church with but one surviving deacon.[4] This was the Archdeacon Laurence. Christian martyrology offers few incidents equal in

[1] *Rom. Sott.* tom. ii, p. 92; Duchesne, *loc. cit.* pp. 156, 157.

[2] The names of these deacons are preserved in the Liber Pontificalis, *loc. cit.*

[3] Prudentius, *Peri Stephanon*, ii, 21, declares that Xystus was crucified, — Jam Xystus adfixus cruci. Vide Allard, *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, Appendix C, p. 318.

[4] Sozomen, lib. vii, c. 19.

pathos and interest to the traditional story of the sufferings and death of St. Laurence; but unfortunately the story as we know it does not come from the hands of contemporary writers. The Acta of his martyrdom, if they were ever written, disappeared very soon; those which are now in existence were composed at least two centuries later.[1] Besides these Acta there are some references in the writings of St. Ambrose,[2] and a long poem which Prudentius composed in honor of St. Laurence,[3] which describe in detail the principal events of his martyrdom.

From these unsatisfactory sources we learn that St. Laurence was not condemned at the same time as St. Xystus, and that when the hour of separation came he was overwhelmed with grief, not because his master was to suffer, but because they were to be separated in death.[4] St. Xystus comforted him with the prophetic warning that he himself would suffer a more cruel death in three days.[5] This respite was granted because the prefect of the city desired to compel St. Laurence, who was treas-

[1] Tous ces indices nous permettent de dater des environs de l'an 500 les *gesta Laurentii*. Dufourcq, *loc. cit.* p. 309.

[2] *Officiorum*, lib. i, c. 41; lib. ii, c. 28.

[3] *Peri Stephanon*, ii.

[4] Flere coepit, non passionem illius, sed suam remansionem. St. Ambrose, lib. i, c. 41.

[5] Post triduum me sequeris. *Ibid.* Post hoc sequeris triduum. *Peri Stephanon*, 28.

urer and administrator of the Church, to surrender all the property which he had under his care.[1] He was committed to the custody of a soldier named Hippolytus, whom he converted, together with his whole household of nineteen persons. A large number of these converts were put to death for embracing the Christian faith, and Hippolytus himself was condemned to be torn by wild horses.[2]

After the lapse of three days, during which St. Laurence busied himself in gathering together the poor and needy who were dependent on the bounty of the Church, he presented himself to the prefect accompanied by a multitude of the blind, the lame, and the halt. He handed a list of their names to the prefect, saying: "These are the treasures of the Church."[3] The enraged magistrate at once condemned him to be put to death on a gridiron over a slow fire.

How much truth, if any, is contained in this narrative, it is hard to say. Recent criticism has denuded the story of its most dramatic features, and relegated to the realm of fable everything but the single fact that St. Laurence died the death of a

[1] Hoc poscit usus publicus,
Hoc fiscus, hoc aerarium,
Ut dedita stipendiis
Ducem juvet pecunia. *Ibid.* 23–26.

[2] Cf. Dufoureq, pp. 202 seq., for the history of the different martyrs named Hippolytus.

[3] Hi sunt thesauri ecclesiae. St. Amb. *loc. cit.* lib. ii, c. 28.

martyr. In the first place, the Acta themselves were written by some one unacquainted with the main facts of Roman history. Both Decius and Valerian are represented as taking part in the trial and condemnation of the martyr, whereas Decius was dead and Valerian in the far East at the time. The quality of the dialogue between St. Laurence and his bishop, savoring as it does of the tragic drama, and the impossibility that such lengthy discourses could take place at such a moment, throw the gravest doubt on its authenticity. It was at most, as M. Aubé observes, an amplification, made by the clever pen of St. Ambrose,[1] of a few traditionary words or even looks.

It is not unlikely, however, that St. Laurence was commanded to surrender the treasures of the Church. The edict itself and many other contemporaneous incidents prove conclusively that the confiscation of ecclesiastical property was one of the means adopted to eradicate Christianity, and it is quite probable that the delay in executing St. Laurence was intended for the purpose of wringing from him the secrets which he alone possessed.[2] Otherwise, it is hard to

[1] *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 369.

[2] The deacon selected among the seven to divide with the Pontiff the care of the *Summum Sacerdotium* had charge of the *arca* of the Church. He administered its temporal affairs; took charge of the offerings of the faithful; distributed them for the support of the clergy, of the widows, the orphans, the poor, the confessors

explain why he was not immediately executed together with St. Xystus, from whom it is difficult to believe he was separated during the celebration of the sacred mysteries in the Catacombs. The presentation of the poor to the prefect as the treasures of the Church is, doubtless, a pious fiction of a later date, which does little credit to the prudence of St. Laurence, of whom it can scarcely be believed that he would expose beggars and cripples, could he have succeeded in doing so with such persons, to the fury and cruelty of a prefect of Imperial Rome.

M. Dufourcq has effectively disposed of that portion of the narrative relating to the conversion and death of Hippolytus and his companions, whose names, he says, are mentioned together for no other reason than that their tombs were situated in the same place, and thus through some uncertain connection between Hippolytus and St. Laurence the histories of all were inextricably confused.[1]

of the faith condemned to the mines or shut up in the prisons, and for the maintenance of the cemeteries. Thus the deacon necessarily took charge of the archives of the Church, the *matricula* or list of the clergy, confessors, and poor, and in this way became naturally the head and censor of the clergy, and possessed authority almost equal to that of the Pontiff himself. Consequently, the archdeacon, because of his position as administrator of ecclesiastical affairs and his correspondence with other churches, was usually selected for the Pontificate. Cf. De Rossi, *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 1866, pp. 8 seq.

[1] Le fait est que nous ignorons tout de ces martyrs, hormis ce point seulement : comme leur tombeau était tout voisin de celui d'Hippolyte, elles furent associées à l'histoire de ce saint et en-

The most that can be said in favor of the traditional story of the death of St. Laurence, namely, that he suffered death on a gridiron, is that it affords a subject for interminable discussion. The traditions on which this story rests are not worthy of credence; while the extraordinary and refined cruelty of the prefect in condemning St. Laurence to a lingering death over a slow fire is with difficulty reconciled with the express command contained in the edict regarding bishops, priests, and deacons (*animadvertantur*) which ordinarily meant decapitation. There can be no doubt, however, as to the tradition itself. How did it come into existence? According to Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri, by a mistake in transcription, by which the customary and solemn formula for announcing the death of a martyr—*passus est*—was made to read *assus est*.[1] The Liber Pontificalis, which, according to Duchesne, drew from sources independent of the existing Acta and traditions regarding St. Xystus and St. Laurence, uses precisely this formula, *passus est*.[2]

gagées à sa suite dans le cycle de Laurent. *Loc. cit.* p. 202; *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, pp. 180, 181.

[1] Ora un *passus est*, col semplice cancellarsi di una lettera diventa *assus est*, ció che appunto significa fu cotto arrosto. Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri, "S. Lorenzo e il Supplizio della Graticola," *Römische Quartalschrift*, vol. xiv (1900), pp. 159–176. This is an elaborate and scholarly discussion of all the questions connected with the death of St. Laurence.

[2] Et post passionem beati Xysti; post tertia die passus est beatus

It follows that the traditional account of the martyrdom of St. Laurence is nothing but a legend pure and simple. But as Franchi observes, "the halo of glory with which the Church and the uninterrupted veneration of the faithful have surrounded that brow will still remain and shine with all its fulness, whether he died on a fiery gridiron, or whether he received the same crown as the other deacons of Rome, of Carthage, and Lambesa, the crown of St. Xystus and St. Cyprian."[1]

A subdeacon named Claudius, Severus a presbyter, Crescentius a lector, and Romanus a porter, were put to death on the same day that St. Laurence died. The bodies of all were reverently interred by the Christians in the cemetery of Cyriaca on the Via Tiburtina.[2]

Although the edict expressly stated that the punishment to be inflicted on Christian matrons was confiscation and banishment, there were several

Laurentius ejus archidiaconus IIII id. Aug., et subdiaconus Claudius, et presbyter Severus, et Crescentius lector, et Romanus ostiarius. Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.* vol. i, p. 155.

[1] *Loc. cit.* p. 176.

[2] Two of these companions of St. Laurence are absolutely unknown except for the reference in the Liber Pontificalis. Cf. Duchesne, *loc. cit.*

The tomb of Crescentius is mentioned in the Itineraries. Romanus, who is called a porter in the Liber Pontificalis, is called a soldier in the Itineraries. Dufourcq, *loc. cit.* pp. 200, 201; Allard, *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, p. 93, note; De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, pp. 168, 179; *Bullettino*, 1864, p. 33.

women of noble birth who paid the extreme penalty. Among these was Eugenia, the daughter of a certain Philip who had held the position of governor in Egypt. After her martyrdom her body was interred in the cemetery of Apronianus on the Via Appia. Her tomb is mentioned in the "Itineraries" and in the Liber Pontificalis.[1] Another Christian maiden, Basilla, whose name is associated with that of Eugenia, was denounced as a Christian by a pagan to whom she was betrothed, and whom, because she preferred virginity to marriage, she refused to wed. Two others, Rufina and Secunda, who refused to abjure Christianity, were condemned by the prefect, Julius Donatus, and decapitated at a place ten miles from Rome where Pope Damasus afterwards built a church in their honor.[2]

Two slaves, Protus and Hyacinthus, who belonged to the household of Eugenia, were condemned to death for their activity in spreading Christian truths. The tomb of St. Hyacinthus was opened in 1845, and was seen to contain ashes and charred bones and some stray threads of gold which, it is conjectured, formed part of the precious cloth in which the remains of the martyr were wrapped.

[1] Cf. Dufourcq, *loc. cit.* pp. 191 seq. The *Acta* of St. Eugenia were drawn up some time between 410 and 526. *Ibid.* p. 300; De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, pp. 180, 181.

[2] Cf. Dufourcq, *loc. cit.* pp. 232, 311; *Acta Sanctorum*, July, tom. iii, pp. 27 sq.

The condition of these relics is taken as proof positive that St. Hyacinthus and his companion were burned at the stake.[1]

The fury with which the Christians in Rome were pursued is by no means indicated by the number of martyrs whose Acta have survived or whose names have been preserved. Even children of tender years did not escape. Pancratius, the son of a Phrygian noble, refused with the greatest fortitude to offer sacrifice to the gods and was consequently slain.[2] His body was interred on the Via Aurelia.[3] The place of his sepulture became an object of veneration to pilgrims in the fifth and sixth century, and the young saint himself was known as the avenger of violated oaths.[4]

[1] The *Acta* of these saints are not in existence. Their names occur in the *Acta* of St. Eugenia, mentioned above. The tomb of Hyacinthus escaped the changes and restorations in the Catacombs, and remained intact until 1845, when it was discovered by the Jesuit archaeologist, Marchi. Cf. Armellini, *Gli Antichi Cimiteri Cristiani*, pp. 186 seq.; Allard, *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, Appendix G, p. 363.

[2] Cf. De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, pp. 182.

[3] Dufoureq, *loc. cit.* pp. 215, 309.

[4] Est etiam haud procul ab urbis muro et Pancratius martyr, valde in perjuribus ultor, Ad cujus sepulchrum, si cujusquam, mens insana juramentum inane proferre voluerit, priusquam sepulchrum ejus adeat . . . aut arripitur a daemone, aut cadens in pavimento emittit spiritum. Greg. Tour. *Glor. Mart.* i, 39. Cf. *Liber Pontif.* vol. i, p. 303.

CHAPTER VII

ST. CYPRIAN AND THE AFRICAN MARTYRS

St. Cyprian receives tidings of new rescript — Warns the Christians of Africa — Summoned to Utica by Galerius Maximus, who had succeeded Aspasius Paternus as procousul — Withdraws into hiding — Returns to his villa when the proconsul comes to Carthage — Arrest — Condemnation — Death — Massa Candida — Sources: St. Augustine, Prudentius — Legend or history — Cruelty of proconsul towards Christians of Carthage — Large numbers massacred — Arrest of Lucius, Montanus, Flavianus, Julianus, Victoricus, Renus — Acts of these martyrs — Long imprisonment — Visions — Other Christian prisoners — Trial — Execution — Martyrs in Numidia — Marianus and James — Agapius and Secundinus — Sufferings of Marianus and James — Visions — Trial and condemnation — Sent to Lambesa — Execution — Other Christian confessors.

THE care and foresight which St. Cyprian manifested in securing the first tidings of the new rescript were in keeping with his whole line of conduct since the Decian persecution. His legal attainments and his familiarity with the spirit and traditions of the Roman Constitution showed him that a change in dynasty or the fleeting favor of a ruler could never alter appreciably the status of Christianity. The followers of Christ were still outlaws, and, when occasion demanded or opportunity offered, all the machinery of legal repression could

be set in motion against them. With this knowledge, and mindful of the bloody scenes of death and suffering and the shameful instances of apostasy witnessed in his own church in Carthage, he bent all his energies towards preparing his flock for the struggle which he knew could not be long deferred. A note of warning runs through all his writings at this time. The true Christian must be prepared to abandon all things and to seek happiness in heaven. "How often has it been revealed to me," he says, "how frequently and manifestly has it been commanded by the condescension of God, that I should diligently bear witness and publicly declare that our brethren who are freed from this world by the Lord's summons are not to be lamented, since we know that they are not lost but gone before."[1] In accordance with the wishes of Fortunatus, a fellow bishop, he prepared an "Exhortation to Martyrdom," "because the hateful time of Anti-Christ was beginning to draw near, and the minds of the brethren should be prepared and strengthened, whereby, as soldiers of Christ, they might be animated for the heavenly and spiritual conflict."[2]

His letter of exhortation to Successus at the outbreak of the persecution was the culmination of years of labor and teaching. That which he had expected had come to pass, and the faith and forti-

[1] *De Mortalitate*, c. 20. [2] *Exhort. ad Martyr.* c. 1.

tude of his followers were once more to be tried in the fiery furnace of persecution. "I beg," he writes, "that these things may be made known by your means to the rest of our colleagues, that everywhere, by their exhortation, the brotherhood may be strengthened and prepared for the spiritual conflict, that every one of us may think less of death than immortality; and, dedicated to the Lord with full faith and entire courage, may rejoice rather than fear in this confession, wherein they know that the soldiers of God and Christ are not slain but crowned."[1]

This letter was written from Carthage, whither Cyprian had been recalled by Galerius Maximus, who had succeeded Aspasius Paternus as proconsul.[2] Neither the Acta nor Pontius give any intimation of the reason why his banishment had been so abruptly terminated. He was ordered, on his return, to take up his residence in his country-house near Carthage,[3] the beautiful villa which he had sold for the benefit of the poor in the early days of his conversion, and which his friends had repurchased and presented to him.[4] Here in the scenes of his early manhood, surrounded by memorials of his pagan

[1] *Ep.* 81. [2] *Acta*, c. 2.

[3] Ex sacro praecepto in suis hortis manebat. *Ibid.*

[4] Hortos, quos inter initia fidei suae venditos, et Dei indulgentia restitutos, pro certo iterum in usum pauperum vendidisset, nisi invidiam de persecutione vitaret. Pontius, *Vita Cyp.* c. 15.

life, he waited day by day for the crown which had been promised to him.[1] Friends — pagan and Christian — congregated there. Men of high rank and noble family, generous with the prodigality of the world, came to him and urged him to fly, promising him places of concealment and safety. But the fire of martyrdom was already burning in his veins, and he sternly and firmly refused to accede to their wishes. "He would, perhaps, have done so," says his biographer, "if a divine command had been added to the solicitations of his friends." Whenever an opportunity offered he set himself to teaching those around him, exhorting them to overcome the love for temporal things by reflecting on the glory that was to come. So eager was he to preach Christ and to bear witness to Him that he hoped the death stroke might come while he was speaking about God.[2]

When the imperial circular containing the Emperor's instructions for the governors of provinces arrived in Africa, Galerius Maximus was at Utica, and, though in ill-health, he at once despatched officers to Carthage to seize Cyprian and conduct him to Utica for trial. Apprised of their coming, and knowing full well that such a summons meant

[1] Inde quotidie sperabat venire ad se, sicut illi ostensum fuerat. *Acta*, c. 2.

[2] *Ibid.*

condemnation and death, Cyprian accepted the asylum offered by his friends, and when the emissaries of the proconsul arrived he was not to be found. While there was a question merely of personal safety, he had scorned concealment; but now a just cause for flight arose. He would not die anywhere but among his own people: "for the reason that it is fit for a bishop, in that city in which he presides over the Church of the Lord, there to confess the Lord, so that the whole people may be glorified by the confession of their prelate in their presence." [1]

From his hiding-place he addressed a letter to the clergy and people of Carthage, giving the reasons for his retirement, and assuring them it would last only while the proconsul was absent. When Aspasius Paternus should return he would be ready to present himself before the tribunal. Furthermore, it was his firm belief that the words spoken by a bishop at the moment of his confession were uttered under the influence of divine revelation. How appalling, then, to think that he, a bishop marked for certain death, should go to a distant city and make his confession away from his own people. "The honor of our church, glorious as it is, will be mutilated, if I, a bishop placed over another church, should receive my sentence or my confession

[1] St. Cyprian, *Ep.* 82.

at Utica, and should go thence as a martyr to the Lord, when, indeed, both for my own sake and yours, I pray with continual supplications, and with all my desires entreat, that I may confess among you, and there suffer, and thence depart to the Lord even as I ought."[1]

The proconsul's return was not long delayed. On account of sickness he did not take up his residence in the city itself, but in an adjoining villa owned by a certain Sextus.[2] From there on September 13 he despatched two officers[3] and a numerous body of soldiers to capture the leader and the bishop of the Christians. Cyprian made good his promise. When they arrived he was there to meet them, and without hesitation resigned himself into custody. He was placed in a chariot between his captors, the strator and the equistrator, and was at once driven off to the villa occupied by the proconsul. His conduct and bearing on the journey must have surprised the stern soldier of the Third Legion and the grim jailer who accompanied him. His prayers and wishes had been consummated, and with no trace of hesitancy or fear he bore himself with dignity and composure, manifesting, as his biographer

[1] St. Cyprian, *loc. cit.*

[2] In Sexti . . . ubi idem Galerius Maximus Proconsul, bonae valetudinis recuperandae gratia, secesserat. *Acta Procon.* c. 2.

[3] Principes duo, unus Strator officii Galerii Maximi Proconsulis et alius Equistrator a custodiis ejusdem officii. *Ibid.* c. 2.

says, "cheerfulness in his look and courage in his heart."[1]

On arriving at the proconsul's it was learned that, because, perhaps, of illness, he was not yet ready to take up the case. With the intention probably of making the death of Cyprian serve as a lesson to the people of the city, he remanded him until the following day in the custody of the first princeps who had arrested him, and in his house situated in the street of Saturn between the Via Venerea and the Via Salutaria, Cyprian spent the night.[2]

The news that Thascius was in custody spread at once throughout the city. No person in Carthage was more prominent than the aged bishop of the Christians. During the greater part of his long life he had been constantly in the public eye. Renowned as a lawyer and orator long before his conversion, his fame had increased day by day, not only among the faithful, but even among the pagans, to whom in the dark days of the plague he was a constant benefactor and kind friend.[3] With feelings of veneration and regret they assembled from

[1] *Vita*, c. 15.

[2] In vico, qui dicitur Saturni, inter Veneream et Salutariam. *Acta Procon.* c. 2.

[3] Productum esse jam Thascium, quem praeter celebrem gloriosa opinione notitiam, etiam de commemoratione praeclarissimi operis nemo non noverat. *Vita*, c. 15.

all sides and stood in silent throngs around his temporary prison. Lest anything should occur unknown to them, the entire Christian population of Carthage kept vigil throughout the whole night around the house of the princeps. Through the kindness of his custodians[1] Cyprian was allowed to spend his last hours in the company of his deacons and some of his intimate friends. One incident alone of this night's sorrowful vigil has been preserved. Cyprian with his usual care sent a message to the waiting Christians that the maidens should be carefully guarded during the darkness and disorder.

The morrow dawned glorious in the brilliant sun and cloudless sky of an African day.[2] When Cyprian came forth, the throng, whose interest and ardor night had not diminished, were there to see and follow him. His way to the villa of Sextus led across the stadium. It was right and proper, says Pontius, that he who had finished the conflict and was going to his reward should pass through the scene of so many struggles.[3] After a long and tiresome walk in the midst of an ever-increasing

[1] Custodia delicata. St. Cyprian, *loc. cit.*

[2] Illuxit denique dies alius, ille signatus, ille promissus, ille divinus; quem si tyrannus ipse differre voluisset, nunquam prorsus valeret; dies de conscientia futuri Martyris laetus; et discussis per totum mundi ambitum nubibus, claro sole radiatus. *Vita*, c. 16.

[3] *Ibid.*

crowd, it was found when they reached the villa that the proconsul could not at once proceed with the trial. A place of retirement was provided for the aged bishop. The seat he occupied was by chance covered with a white cloth, and in the enthusiasm of the moment his followers saw in this a providential provision by which their bishop would take his last rest in a chair adorned like his episcopal cathedra. While waiting for the summons of the proconsul, one of the officers of the court, a lapsed Christian, noticing that Cyprian's garments were drenched with perspiration, offered him a change of clothing. Some feeling of reverence for his former bishop, or the desire to possess these relics of a martyr, may have prompted this kindness, but Cyprian quietly refused it, saying, "Why cure complaints that will cease forever before the day has passed?"[1]

At last he was summoned to the proconsul's presence, and ushered into the Atrium Sanciolum where the trial was to take place. Guarded by soldiers, the venerable prisoner faced his judges. No time was lost in preliminaries. There were no speeches by counsel or summoning of witnesses; the accusation was ready, and the prisoner was called on to affirm or deny its truth.

Although a very sick man, the proconsul con-

[1] Pontius, *loc. cit.* c. 16.

ducted the trial in person. He said: You are Thascius Cyprianus.

CYPRIAN. I am.

GALERIUS. You have made yourself the Pope[1] of certain sacrilegiously minded men.

CYPRIAN. I have.

GALERIUS. The most sacred Emperors have ordered you to offer sacrifice.

CYPRIAN. I will not do so.

GALERIUS. Have a care for yourself.

CYPRIAN. Do what you are ordered. In a matter so plain there is no need for further colloquy.

This ended the examination. The accused had admitted his guilt, and in accordance with the usage of the court the proconsul consulted with his council before passing sentence. The conference was brief; he turned to the prisoner and said: "For a long time you have led a life of sacrilege; and you have gathered round you in a vile conspiracy a large number of others. You have lived as a declared enemy to the gods and the sacred laws of Rome. Even the pious and exalted Augusti, Valerian and Gallienus, and the most noble Caesar Valerian, have not been able to induce you to practise the national rites. Therefore since you are the

[1] Tu papam te sacrilegae mentis hominibus praebuisti. *Acta Procon.* c. 3. Ruinart has the following note on the word "papam:" Forte papatem ut legendum esse censet noster Mabillonius, etc.

author of detestable crimes, and since you are a standard-bearer in wickedness for others, you will serve as a lesson to those whom you have made partners in your guilt. Discipline will be vindicated in your blood." This was the official statement of the crime: then came the sentence which he read from a tablet on which it had been inscribed: "We order that Thascius Cyprianus be put to death by the sword."

The trial and condemnation were over, and the hush which had fallen on the crowded hall was first broken by Cyprian's fervent, "Thank God." The Christians at once broke out in clamors. "Let us too be beheaded with him." The sentence to their minds was worthy of the victim. He was glorified in his condemnation. A standard-bearer for Christ and an enemy of the gods, he was an example to his followers, whose tumultuous cries seemed to threaten a disturbance of some kind. Lest the course of justice should be interfered with, the prisoner was immediately surrounded by a cordon of legionaries, and all — victim, guards, and spectators — moved at once to the scene of execution, The spot was quickly chosen, if it had not been already selected, at a short distance from the atrium, but within the grounds of Sextus. The place was in the midst of a large level plain, so level, indeed, that those on the outskirts of the crowd could not

see what was happening inside the military lines. Like so many Zacchaeuses, says Pontius, they climbed the trees, that nothing in the tragic scene might escape them.

Within a space enclosed by the soldiers the noble old citizen of Carthage had taken his place, surrounded still by his devoted little band of deacons and friends. He removed his cape and knelt down, and then, prostrating himself for a few moments, gave himself up to prayer. When he arose he took off his dalmatic or loose upper garment and gave it to the deacons.[1] Then standing upright, a striking figure in his long close-fitting tunic of linen, he awaited the coming of the executioner.[2] This was the moment he had looked forward to as the time in which the Holy Ghost would speak through his lips; but no words came. The grim form of the executioner, who was late in arriving, aroused him from his reverie and turned his thoughts to the final preparation. With customary large-heartedness he ordered his followers to give the headsman twenty-five pieces of gold, and then taking a handkerchief he bound it round his eyes, and, because he could not perform the sad task himself, Julian a priest and another Julian tied his hands. Everything was now ready. The ground at his feet was strewn with

[1] Vide Benson, *Life of Cyprian*, p. 513; the dress of Cyprian.
[2] Spiculator, *Acta*, c. 5.

linen cloths and handkerchiefs[1] by the Christians to catch the drops of his blood, and the martyr waited in silence for the death-stroke. But the headsman faltered, unnerved perhaps by the noble mien of his victim, or touched by his kindness and generosity; his trembling hands could not hold the blade. Angered by such a show of weakness, and eager, perhaps, to have the gruesome task finished, the centurion in command seized the sword and, with a strength so great that it seemed preternatural,[2] he severed the martyr's head. "And so the Blessed Cyprian suffered on the 18th day of the Kalends of October, Valerian and Gallienus being Emperors."[3]

The body lay where it fell, and Christians and pagans came and gazed on it with curious eyes. When the chance offered the faithful removed it to a more secluded spot, and in the darkness of the night they carried it with torches and tapers to the cemetery of Macrobius Candidianus, a former procurator, and interred it in a pagan cemetery on the Via Mappaliensis near the great cisterns of Carthage.[4]

Notwithstanding the immunity from persecution which ordinary Christians (*simplices fideles*) were

[1] Linteamina et mannalia. *Acta*, c. 5.

[2] Concesso desuper vigore. *Vita*, c. 19.

[3] *Acta*, c. 5.

[4] "Where was Cyprian buried?" Cf. Benson, *loc. cit.* p. 509.

supposed to enjoy, a multitude of them suffered death in Utica about the time that St. Cyprian was summoned thither by the proconsul. This hecatomb took place in the month of August, 258.[1] Unfortunately, no contemporary document is in existence which treats of the circumstances of this fearful massacre. Our knowledge of the event is derived from a few references in St. Augustine,[2] a notice in an old Carthaginian Calendar, a poem by Prudentius, and an African inscription dating probably from the fifth century.[3]

In a sermon preached on the feast of St. Cyprian and delivered in Carthage, St. Augustine [4] refers to these martyrs as the Massa Candida Uticensis, *massa* because of their number, *candida* because of their brightness. In another sermon, delivered

[1] These martyrs are mentioned in the *Martyr. Hierony.;* in the *Carthaginian Calendar;* in Ado; and in the *Roman Martyrology*, but on different days of August. *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, vol. iv, ser. 5, 1894, p. 39.

[2] The historical references are all collected in Morcelli, *Africa Christiana*, tom. ii, p. 150; *Acta SS.*, Aug., tom. iii, pp. 761–768.

[3] SUB HEC SACRO
SCO BELAMINE ALTA
RIS SUNT MEMORIAE
SCOR MASSAE CANDI
DAE SCI HESIDORI
SCOR TRIOM PUERORU
SCI MARTINI SCI ROMANI +

It was first published in the *Bulletin de l'Académie d'Hippone*, 1893, p. xxviii. For full description and commentary, vide De Rossi, *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, vol. iv, ser. 5, 1894, p. 39; *Analecta Bollandiana*, tom. xiii (1894), p. 406.

[4] Sermon 311.

in Utica on the *natalis* or anniversary of their martyrdom, he says the number of these martyrs is not less than 153.[1] This is all we can glean from Augustine; but in a sermon sometimes attributed to him the number of the martyrs is said to be three hundred, and the manner of their death decapitation.[2] Prudentius, in a poem written in honor of St. Cyprian, goes more fully into details.[3] "It is averred," he says, "that a trench was hollowed in the midst of a great plain and filled to the top with quicklime. From this glowing mass burst forth flames and deadly fumes. At the side of the trench there was placed an altar. The Christians were given the alternative of offering sacrifice of incense before this altar, or of casting themselves into the pit. They did not hesitate a moment. Three hundred leaped into the glowing mass and disappeared in its

[1] Sermon 306.

[2] Sermon 317.

[3] Fama refert foveam campi in medio patere jussam,
Calce vaporifera summos prope margines refertam.
Saxa recocta vomunt ignem, niveusque pulvis ardet,
Urere tacta potens; et mortifer ex odore flatus.
Appositam memorant aram, fovea stetisse summa,
Lege sub hac salis aut micam, jecur aut suis litarent
Christicolae, aut mediae sponte irruerent in ima fossae.
Prosiluere alacres cursu rapido simul treceuti.
Gurgite pulvereo mersos liquor aridus voravit,
Praecipitemque globum fundo tenus implicavit imo.
Corpora candor habet, candor vehit ad superna mentes.
CANDIDA MASSA dehinc dici meruit per omne saeclum.
Peri Stephanon, 13.

depths. Whiteness enveloped their bodies, whiteness carried their souls to heaven, and thus for all time they shall be called the Massa Candida."

Though this poetic description cannot be accepted literally, it is, perhaps, going too far to say, that "there exists nothing like history, nothing to show at what period, or in what way the group suffered."[1] In the first place, it can scarcely be denied that Augustine of Hippo-Regius, the bishop of a neighboring see, was eminently qualified to speak of Utica and its history; and the vagueness of his remarks, instead of arguing ignorance of the subject, shows that he was speaking of an incident well known to his hearers. The erection of a basilica in Utica dedicated to the Massa Candida shows that the legend had some foundation in fact;[2] while the inscription of Guelma (Calama) is conclusive proof of the veneration accorded to these martyrs in Africa in the fifth century.[3]

The account given by the poet Prudentius, though doubtless erroneous in some of its details, can be easily reconciled with the meagre references found in Augustine. Stripped of its poetic character, the

[1] Benson, *Life of Cyprian*, p. 518.

[2] Hic martyres, vulgo Massa Candida, laudantur, quorum in basilica apud Uticam sermonem habitum esse, ex Floriacensi ms. deprendimus. Note *ad Psalm. cxliv*, Migne, P. L. xxxvii, col. 1880.

[3] De Rossi, *loc. cit.*, is of opinion that this inscription dates from the fifth century.

story lays no burden on our credulity. It is easy to suppose that the edict of Valerian in regard to congregational gatherings and the use of the cemeteries occasioned some outbursts of popular fury against the Christians, and that large numbers were slain. This hypothesis is doubly confirmed by the fact that the proconsul was in Utica a short time before the death of Cyprian, and by a passage in Cyprian's letter, written while he was in hiding, in which he admonishes the Christians to refrain from tumult of any kind, and to make no inopportune professions of their faith.[1]

Though there is nothing contrary to historical precedent in the kind of death mentioned by Prudentius, it may perhaps be better to consider the pit of quicklime as a piece of poetic imagery rather than an actual fact. The dramatic scene of the altar and the alternative sacrifice savor more of the realm of fancy than of reality. Such imagery might easily arise from the use of quicklime by the proconsul to prevent an epidemic if a large number of bodies remained unburied. The Christians were not allowed to enter their own cemeteries, and it is quite conceivable that their refusal to make use of pagan burial places led the authorities to cover the unburied bodies of the martyrs with quicklime.

[1] Aubé, *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 386; Allard, *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, p. 108.

After the death of Cyprian the See of Carthage remained vacant for a whole year. This in itself is sufficient proof of the unrelenting fury with which the Christians were persecuted. It is quite probable that the execution of the edict in Proconsular Africa was entrusted to the legionaries, as in the neighboring province of Numidia.[1] Their task was rendered easy by the fact that a large number of the bishops and priests were in custody since the preceding year.[2] It is unfortunate that the names of very few victims of the persecution have been preserved; but the character of Galerius Maximus, the proconsul who governed the Province of Africa, is sufficient warrant for the conclusion that a bitter war of extermination was waged against the followers of Christ. His appointment was a recent one,[3] and probably from innate cruelty, or because his temper was soured by bodily infirmities, his administration was marked from the beginning by excessive severity.

The manifestation of loyalty and devotion made by the Christians on the morning of Cyprian's condemnation could easily be construed into an act of rebellion,[4] and as we have said, St. Cyprian in

[1] *Passio Mariani et Jacobi*, c. 2.

[2] *Ibid.* c. 3.

[3] He was the successor of Aspasius Paternus. *Acta Procon.* c. ii.

[4] Post hanc vero sententiam turba fratrum dicebat; et nos cum ipso decollemur. Propter hoc tumultus fratrum exortus est et multa turba eum prosecuta est. *Acta Procon.* c. 5.

his last letter addressed to the bishops, and through them to the Christian congregations, admonished all of the necessity of refraining from violence; but shortly after his death, and in defiance of his warning and his admonition, an outbreak of some kind occurred which was speedily suppressed.[1] The Christians were specially singled out for the vengeance of the proconsul on this occasion.[2] Large numbers of them were put to death in the month of January, 259, among whom were Paul and Successus, who for many years had been important figures in the African Church.[3] The Acts of these martyrs have not been preserved, and our knowledge of them is confined to an incidental reference in the Acts of Montanus and Lucius.

The tumult among the people and the subsequent slaughter of the Christians were followed by the arrest and imprisonment of six members of the clergy, Lucius, Montanus, Flavianus, Julianus, Victoricus, Renus, and the catechumens Primolus and Donatianus. A peculiarity of the Acts of these martyrs is that, with the exception of the last scenes

[1] Post popularem tumultum quem ferox vultus præsidis in necem concitavit. *Passio Montani*, etc. c. 2.

[2] Postque sequentis diei acerrimam persecutionem Christianorum. *Ibid.*

[3] Paulus et Successus cum comitibus suis. *Passio Montani*, etc. c. 21. They are commemorated in many Martyrologies on January 19. Successus was probably present at the Council of Carthage. Cf. Ruinart, p. 281, note.

of condemnation and execution, they purport to have been written by the martyrs themselves. The torments they endured during a long imprisonment impelled them, they say, to commit to writing an account of their sufferings, in order that their example might animate their brethren to courage and fortitude in the defence of their faith. This desire of being witnesses to the faith in life and in death has in it something akin to Cyprian's desire to die among his own people, and to address to them his last words.

Until quite recently these Acts were considered to be incontestably authentic. Baronius,[1] Ruinart,[2] Tillemont, Morcelli,[4] Le Blant,[5] Allard,[6] accept them as such, and Harnack declares they were written about the time of Cyprian.[7] M. Aubé, while admitting that these Acts are of great antiquity, says

[1] *Annales, ad Ann.* 262. Fide dignissimam omnique ex parte sibi constantem . . . insigne antiquitatis monumentum.

[2] *Acta Sincera.* Actis fide omnino dignis, et talibus quae merito inter pretiosiora et sinceriora sacrae antiquitatis monumenta computentur.

[3] *Memoires*, tom. iv, p. 206. Une pièce où tout est digne de la gravité chrétienne.

[4] *Africa Christiana*, vol. ii, p. 153, publishes the Acts in full.

[5] *Les Persécuteurs et les Martyrs*, p. 162. L'une des pièces les plus précieuses qu'aient laissées les premiers âges chrétiens.

[6] L'authenticite de la pièce n'est pas contestée: le style suffirait à l'établir, . . . Ces narrateurs appartient comme Pontius à l'école et peut-être à l'entourage de saint Cyprien. *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, p. 116.

[7] *Geschichte der Altchristlichen Litteratur*, pt. 2, vol. 2, p. 471.

it is difficult to believe they were written by the martyrs themselves, and considers that they were rather an amplification of an older and briefer document.[1] J. Rendel Harris and Seth K. Gifford, in the introduction to their edition of the Greek text of the Acts of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas, go still further and declare that the Acts of Montanus, etc., are "a deliberate forgery, based chiefly on the Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas."[2] Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri contests the conclusions of the Cambridge scholars in the learned introduction to his edition of the Acts of Montanus, etc., and from a very detailed examination and comparison of both documents arrives at the conclusion that the Acts of Montanus were written by an imitator of St. Cyprian, and were drawn up some years after the events they relate. He admits that the redactor may have taken the Acts of Perpetua as a literary model, and in the part which is written in the first person he doubtless made use of some older document which he enlarged.[3]

[1] *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 399. La pièce de Ruinart n'est que l'amplification d'un récit plus ancien et sans doute plus simple. Au reste, il est bien difficile de croire que cette pièce ait été écrite, comme on le dit, par un des martyrs et qu'elle nous soit venue dans la pureté première.

[2] *The Acts of the Martyrdom of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas*, London, 1890, p. 27.

[3] Concludiamo: *La Passio Montani* etc. è opera di un imitatore di S. Cipriano e scritta un certo numero di anni dopo l'avvenimento. L'autore, pur narrando un fatto, anche ne' particolari

The results of Pio Franchi's labors have not met with universal approval, but the reasons advanced by Gifford and Harris and those who accept their statements are not of sufficient validity to reject the conclusions of the learned *Scriptor* of the Vatican Library. The coincidences in style and composition between the two Acta are not sufficient ground for the opinion that the Acta of Montanus were a "*tendenz-schrift*," drawn up in the time of Diocletian to check the dissensions in the church of Carthage, while the paramount literary influence of Cyprian points out the redactor as one who was well acquainted with the spirit and writings of the Bishop of Carthage.[1] The expedient of making the Acts the personal production of the martyrs themselves and giving it the form of a letter addressed

qnasi tntti, molto diverso, prese a modello letterario la P. P. che segui fino nella composizione, facendo raccontare, nella prima parte, ai martiri stessi la loro prigionia e diverse visioni. Per codesta parte però si valse, secondo ogni probabilità, d' un documento, o di un appunto, già esistente, cui ampliò ed accomodò senza troppi riguardi. La narrazione poi ch' egli scrisse in nome proprio, la compose di getto. Dunque la *Passio Montani* non è una deliberata falsificazione, ma un documento di valore, una relazione in sostanza attendibile e sincera: è però in pari tempo un' opera letteraria. Chi l' ha redatta ha avuto in mira di comporre un' opera bella ed edificante, non una relazione pura e semplice. *Gli Atti dei SS. Montano, Lucio e compagni. Recensione del testo ed introduzione sulle sue relazione con la Passio S. Perpetuae*, Rome, 1898.

[1] Cf. Pio Franchi, *loc. cit.*, Introd., passim; *La Passio SS. Mariani et Jacobi*, Rome, 1900, pp. 7, 8.

to the faithful[1] is nothing extraordinary; neither are the visions which appeared to the prisoners;[2] but the form of the letter, addressed to no one in particular,[3] and some verbal peculiarities it contains show clearly that it was written for purposes of edification.[4]

On the night after their arrest, Montanus and his fellow martyrs were not lodged in the public prison, but left in the custody of the district commanders.[5] The anger of the proconsul was so great that he threatened to commit the Christians to the flames on the following day. This information conveyed to them by their guards struck them with consternation. It is related that they prayed to God, who preserved the Three Children in the fiery furnace, to save them from this fate, and that they attributed to their prayers and to the power of God the proconsul's change of plan in their behalf. He was unable to preside at their trial on the following

[1] Vide Franchi, *Passio Montani*, p. 23, note 2.

[2] Le Blant, *Les Persécuteurs et les Martyrs*, pp. 96 seq.

[3] Et nobis est apud vos certamen, fratres dilectissimi. *Passio*, c. 1.

[4] Franchi, *loc. cit.* pp. 23–24.

[5] Apud Regionantes in custodia constitutis. *Passio*, c. 3. Morcelli, *Africa Christiana*, ii, p. 153, calls them *magistros regionis*. Aubé, *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 396, says: Confies à la garde de quelque agent de l'Officium. Franchi, *loc. cit.* p. 29: Termine del resto non registrato ne' lessici e privo d' altri esempî, non può designare alcuna sorta di guardie, sì bene de' magistrati regionarî. These guards are called *milites* in the same paragraph.

day, and they were accordingly transferred to the public prison.

The horrors and loathsomeness of this noisome den were beyond description. In addition to the hardships of prison life, they were harassed by uncertainty regarding their ultimate fate and the species of torture they would be called on to undergo. This uncertainty lasted for several days, the sickness of the proconsul rendering him unfit for the performance of any duties. During this period of anxiety one of the prisoners, Renus,[1] had a vision, in which he saw himself and his fellow prisoners led out to execution,[2] and before each one there went a lamp. This vision he related to his fellow prisoners, and they were filled with joy, because it showed they were fellow travellers with Christ, who was a light to their feet.[3]

[1] Nothing more is said of Renus after this. What became of him? Solo potrebbe credersi che il nome Renus sia stato inserito da altra mano più tarda. Franchi, *loc. cit.* p. 29. He adds: Come spiegarci in tal ipotesi, la interpolazione? He does not attempt it; though there seems to be no grounds for his rejection of the opinion that this incident was inserted in imitation of a nearly similar incident in the Acts of Perpetua, *loc. cit.*

[2] Produci singulos. *Acta*, c. 5. Qui non significa semplicemente esser tratti dalla prigione, come spiega Tillemont (*Mém.* iv, 208), nè esser condotti al supplizio come intende Allard (*Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisième Siècle*, p. 117), ma venir menati all' udienza che seguira.

[3] Franchi considers that De Rossi was mistaken in thinking he found a reference to this vision in the Ostrian cemetery. (*Bull. Crist.* 1880, p. 66.) Quella che apparve al de Rossi una lucerna,

The pleasure which this vision brought was interrupted on the following day by a command to appear before the procurator, on whom had devolved the duties of the proconsul, who had just died.[1] So much confusion, however, arose after the death of the head of the government that the soldiers who had charge of the Christian prisoners did not know where to conduct them. They were led back and forth through the streets seeking the place where the procurator would sit in judgment. He finally gave them an audience in his office (*secretarium*),[2] and, probably because he had no jurisdiction in such matters, he postponed the case and sent them back to prison until such time as the authorities in Rome should appoint a new proconsul.[3] Glad of any respite, and filled with joy because they had escaped death, the Christians returned to prison praising and glorifying God, to whom they attributed the delay. Because of the cruelty or avarice of their jailer, Solon, who refused to supply them with food and drink, they suffered intensely from hunger and

in realtà non è altro che il rotolo tenuto in mano, secondo il solito, da uno dei due santi avvocati che presentano al divin Giudice l' anima della defunta. Franchi, *loc. cit.* p. 29.

[1] Post paucos autem dies Galerius Maximus proconsul decessit. *Acta Procon. Cypriani*, c. 5. Cf. Franchi, *loc. cit.* pp. 30–32.

[2] In secretarium vocavit. *Acta*, c. 6.

[3] The fact that the procuratores had no jurisdiction in capital cases was sufficient reason for postponing at least the execution of the edict, which read: Episcopi, presbyteri, diacones in continenti animadvertantur.

thirst. Through lack of proper sustenance, and because of the rigors of confinement, Donatianus, one of the catechumens, was taken ill, and was baptized shortly before he died. The other catechumen, Primolus, died before he could receive baptism; but his brethren consoled themselves by thinking that his courageous confession of faith sufficed instead.[1]

There were many other Christian prisoners in the jail at the same time. One of these, Victor, a priest, had a vision in which he saw a child whose face shone with an indescribable splendor, enter the dungeon.[2] This child led the prisoners to all the doors as if to set them free, but they were unable to go forth. Then the child said to Victor, "Be courageous; I am with you. Tell the others they will receive a glorious crown; for the spirit seeks God, and the soul in the hour of anguish turns to its true home." Victor asked him where Paradise was. "Is it outside the world? Show it to me." "And where, then," was the answer, "would be your faith?" "I cannot fulfil your commission to my brethren," said Victor, "unless you give me a sign." "Give them,"

[1] Baptizatus in carcere statim spiritum reddidit. *Passio*, c. 2. Ora l'espressione *baptizatus in carcere* significa qui, secondo ogni verosimiglianza, battezzato col carcere, dalla pena del carcere. Franchi, *loc. cit.* p. 26.

[2] Questo giovinetto (puer) non è di certo N. S. Franchi, *loc. cit.* p. 34.

he said, "the sign of Jacob." Another of these Christians, a widow named Quartillosa, whose husband and son had been martyred shortly before, had a vision of her dead child. He entered the prison and seated himself near her, saying: "God has seen your trials and sufferings." While he was speaking, a young man of enormous stature appeared carrying in his hands two phials filled with milk. He approached Quartillosa and said: "Have courage: the Omnipotent God has not forgotten you." He presented the phials to all the prisoners and they drank, and the milk was not diminished.[1] Then the stone mullions in the windows seemed to vanish so that there was nothing to prevent free ingress, and the young man, laying down the phials, one at each side of the widow, left the prison saying: "Behold you are satisfied, and there is still abundance. Another vessel will be sent to you." This vision was the forerunner of a visit from Herennianus, a subdeacon, and Januarius, a catechumen, who were sent by Lucianus, a priest, to carry to the prisoners the Food that never fails.[2]

Some dissension arose in the prison between Montanus and Julianus in regard to admitting a certain woman, who belonged to one of the hereti-

[1] Whether this vision symbolized the Eucharist, and whether it had any connection with the visit of the subdeacon, vide Franchi, pp. 40–46.

[2] Alimentum indeficiens. *Acta*, c. 9.

cal sects, to the society of the orthodox prisoners.[1] The coolness between the two confessors lasted for some time. Montanus, a man of violent temper and unbending severity, because he could not brook the remonstrances of Julianus and refused to be reconciled to him, had a vision in which he saw the centurions conducting all the prisoners to the place of execution. When they had arrived at the designated spot in the midst of a vast plain, Cyprian and Lucius appeared to them.[2] The whole scene shone with a brilliant white light. The garments of the martyrs were white, and their bodies whiter still, and so transparent that the inmost recesses of the heart were visible. Montanus saw that there were some dark stains on his own breast, and the discovery awoke him from his slumbers. He related his vision to the others and added, "Do you know what caused these stains? They were the result of my refusal to be reconciled with Julianus."

Up to this point the Acts are written in the

[1] Ob eam mulierem quae ad nostram communionem obrepsit, quae non communicabat. *Ibid.* c. 11. Peut-être appartenait-elle à quelque parti séparé, celui de Marcion, ou celui de Novatianus. Aubé, *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 396.

[2] Is est dubio procul qui cum ab aliis in exsilio constitutis ad Cyprianum scripsit, ubi ait Cyprianum coronam martyrii sibi et aliis ex prophetia spopondisse. Quattuor autem episcopi sub Lucii nomine Concilio Carthag. de baptismo haereticorum interfuere — Lucius *scil.*, a Castro-Galba, Lucius a Thebeste, Lucius a Membresa, qui ibidem *confessor* appellatur; et tandem Lucius ab Ausafa, seu Assapha. Ruinart, *Acta Sincera*, p. 278, note.

first person and purport to be the record of the prison-life of the martyrs drawn up by themselves. They spent several months in custody before they were cited to appear before the new proconsul. When the summons came, it is related that they gave this narrative of their trials and afflictions into the hands of a pious Christian, with the injunction that he should complete it with an account of their trial and execution.[1] In May of the year 259 [2] they were brought face to face with the proconsul, and in answer to his questions unhesitatingly confessed their faith, and their rank in the Christian hierarchy. At the solicitation of his friends, who denied that he was a deacon as he had said, Flavianus was sent back to prison until his case could be thoroughly investigated. The others, Lucius, Montanus, Julianus, and Victoricus, were sentenced immediately, and at once led away to execution. An immense throng of sightseers had gathered to witness the last scenes. Although the Christians had seen many of their number die, they never before assembled in such large numbers, and never before gave such proof of their affection for

[1] Haec omnes de carcere simul scripserant. Sed quia necesse erat omnem actum martyrum beatorum pleno sermone compleeti, quia et ipsi de se per modestiam minus dixerant; et Flavianus quoque privatim hoc nobis munus injunxit, ut quidquid litteris eorum deesset, adderemus: necessaria reliqua subjunximus. *Acta*, c. 12.

[2] Allard, *loc. cit.* p. 122, note.

the confessors of the faith. The pagans were also present in throngs, crowding around the Christian prisoners with such eagerness that Lucius, always weak and timid and now broken in health from his long stay in prison, begged to be saved from the mob, and to be taken immediately to the place of execution; for he feared that he could not survive the rough treatment of the rabble, and that he should not have the glory of shedding his blood for Christ. Julianus and Victoricus, giving thanks to God, and praising the Christians for their constancy under persecution, moved on quietly in the midst of their guards. Not so, however, with Montanus. He was a man of great physical strength and indomitable courage, one who never hesitated to say what he thought was true, and who was never influenced in his declarations by the rank or station of those to whom he spoke.[1] Gaunt, unkempt, and in rags, he moved along in the midst of the surging crowd, crying out again and again: "He who sacrifices to any god but the true God will be destroyed."[2] Time and again he repeated this, asserting that it was wrong to turn from the true God to idols and figures made by human hands. And while he denounced the pride and stubborness of the heretics,

[1] Montanus et corpore et mente robustus, quamquam et ante martyrinm gloriosus, ea semper quae veritas postularet constanter et fortiter dixerit, sine ulla exceptione personae. *Passio*, c. 14.

[2] Sacrificans diis eradicabitur, nisi Domino soli. *Ibid.*

saying, "The number of martyrs shows you which is the true Church," he did not spare the pusillanimous abandonment of faith by the *lapsi*. "Stand fast, brethren," he exhorted, "and fight with courage. You have examples to inspire you. Let not the perfidy of the *lapsi* lead you to destruction; but rather let our sufferings assist you to obtain your crown." He admonished the virgins to guard their sanctity. He inculcated the necessity of obedience to the heads of the Church, and warned the prelates that they must maintain peace among themselves if they would expect loyalty and obedience from their subjects.

The flood of objurgation and exhortation was cut short only by the blade of the executioner. After his companions had been beheaded, and while the sword was poised over his head, Montanus raised his hands to heaven, and in a clear voice, loud enough to be heard by pagans and Christians alike, he prayed to God that Flavianus might follow them in three days.[1] And so confident was he that his prayer would be answered, that he tore in two the bandage for his eyes, and requested the Christians to keep one part for Flavianus, who would die before three days had passed, and told them furthermore to reserve a space near his grave

[1] Cum jam carnifex immineret, et gladius super cervices ejus libratus penderet. *Passio*, c. 15.

in order that Flavianus might rest with his companions.

Though Flavianus grieved that the importunities of his friends had caused him to be separated from his fellow confessors, he allowed religion to temper his sadness. To his mother, a true mother of the Maccabees,[1] who hoping to see him die a martyr, was filled with disappointment when he was remanded back to prison, he said: "You know I have always hoped that, if I should be a martyr, I should die only after many sufferings and many disappointments. If, therefore, what I hoped for has happened, why do you grieve?"

Large crowds assembled on the third day, remembering the prayer of Montanus, and eager to see its sequel. When it became known that Flavianus was cited to appear before the proconsul, all who had hitherto been incredulous, and all who gloried in such scenes, hastened to the praetorium. The martyr approached the ordeal with a joyful countenance and a light heart, surrounded by Christian friends who encouraged and supported him. Those other friends, through whose influence his trial was postponed, besought him to be less stubborn, to sacrifice to the gods now, and do as he wished afterwards.[2]

[1] O matrem religiose piam! O matrem inter vetera exempla numerandam! O Maccabaeicam matrem. *Passio*, c. 16.

[2] Ibi eum discipuli ejus suadebant cum lacrimis etiam, ut praesumptione deposita, sacrificaret interdum postea quidquid vellet

He thanked them for their kindness and solicitude, but refused to yield to their supplications. "It is better," said he, "to suffer death than to adore stones. He alone who created all things is the Supreme God, and therefore He alone is deserving of worship." Unable to move him by their prayers, and wishing to save him from himself, those pagan friends conceived the idea of having him put to the torture, in order to force him to abjure Christ. The proconsul asked why he had falsely declared himself a deacon. The question brought forth an indignant denial. When a written statement was presented by a court officer which had been drawn up to show that Flavianus was not a member of the Christian hierarchy,[1] he asked: "Is it not more likely that I speak the truth than the persons who forged that document?" The people, unmindful of

facturus. *Passio*, c. 19. Cet échange d'idées représente peut-être le dialogue de Flavianus et du Praeses, impatient d'être obéi. Les paroles mises par l'auteur de ce récit dans la bouche des disciples de Flavianus ne conviennent pas du tout à des fidèles, et on conçoit mal que les conversations suivies pussent s'engager entre le prévenu et les assistants. Aubé, *loc. cit.*, p. 398. Franchi, *loc. cit.* p. 50, gives a different reading of the text: Condiscepoli non, come vuole il Ruinart, discepoli, perchè quella è la lezione concorde dei codici (compreso il Noallino: *cumdiscipuli*) che nessuna buona ragione ci persuade a mutare. . . . Codesti condiscepoli di Flaviano, condiscepoli, credo, in uno della tante scuole di retorica e di eloquenza, erano dunque pagani in massima parte, non cristiani.

[1] Centenarius diceret notariam sibi datam esse, qua contineretur eum fingere. *Passio*, c. 20.

his wishes, cried out, "It is not." The proconsul asked him again whether his declaration was false, and he answered: "What interest can I have in deceiving you?" Only one hope and one resource was left to his pagan friends. They rose up and clamored that he be put to the torture, and forced to speak the truth. The magistrate, convinced that such a course would be futile, immediately sentenced him to death. The martyr received his sentence with joy. Because of a terrific storm very few besides the immediate friends of the condemned man and his Christian brethren accompanied him to the place of execution. On the way he related the experiences of his lonely sojourn of three days in the prison, during which he was racked with fear and uncertainty as to his ultimate fate. Cyprian appeared to him in a vision, and in answer to the question whether a martyr's death was painful, replied: "The body feels nothing when the soul is wholly devoted to God." In another vision he saw a man who asked him the reason of his sadness, and being told said: "You are already twice a confessor, the third time you will be a martyr." Paul and Successus [1] ap-

[1] In plerisque Martyrologiis die 19 Januarii plures martyres Africani recoluntur. Ibi tamen Successus non dicitur episcopus, nec aliorum dignitates exprimuntur. S. Cyprianus paullo ante passionem epistola 80 alias 82, Successum monet de imminenti persecutione. Is videtur esse Successus ab Abbir-Germaniciana, urbe Africae in Zeugitana provincia, qui inter alios episcopos in Concil. Carthag. de haereticorum baptismo sententiam dixit. Ruinart, *Acta Sincera*, p. 281.

peared to him in forms so brilliant that his eyes could not look on their angelic splendor, and they announced to him, "We are sent to give you tidings of your martyrdom;" and immediately he saw himself led out by the centurions to be beheaded, and heard his mother's voice saying, "Give praise; never has any one suffered a martyrdom such as this."

He improved the opportunity offered by the absence of the pagan mob to impart instruction to his friends on different matters pertaining to their welfare and the welfare of the Church. He exhorted them to preserve peace and fraternal love, and suggested that Lucian should be elevated to the vacant See of Carthage. "A soul already near to Christ in heaven was gifted with special knowledge."[1] When he had finished his prayers and exhortations, he quietly moved to the appointed place, covered his eyes with the cloth Montanus had sent him, and bowed his head for the executioner's stroke, and finished his career with prayer.[2]

The severity which marked the execution of Valerian's edict in Proconsular Africa found a counterpart in the neighboring Province of Numidia. Numbers of Christians were mercilessly slaughtered, and no means were left untried to abolish the

[1] Non enim difficile fuit, spiritu jam coelo et Christo proximante, habere notitiam. *Passio*, c. 23.

[2] Passionem suam cum oratione finivit. *Passio*, c. 33.

Christian hierarchy. Out of the multitude of martyrs who suffered at this time we possess the Acta of only two, viz. Marianus and James.[1] These Acta purport to have been written by an eye-witness,[2] and without departing from the recital of what these two martyrs suffered, they recount incidentally the deaths of many other Christians, and give us a good picture of the cruelties inflicted on the followers of Christ in the jurisdiction of Aspasius Paternus, legate and commander of the Third Legion Augusta, which for three centuries, from the reign of Augustus to that of Diocletian, was engaged principally in repelling the attacks of the wild tribes beyond the frontiers, and keeping the conquered people of the province in subjection.[3] Though often repulsed, these tribes never lost confidence in their ability to dislodge the Romans, and under the chieftainship of Faraxen hordes of them were now taking advantage of the distress in the Empire to make another descent on the province.[4] This condition of things rendered it comparatively easy for the legate to direct all the energies of the legionaries under his command against the Christians, who in a country always ripe for revolt could easily be branded as

[1] Ruinart, *Acta Sincera*, p. 268.

[2] Et nobis hoc praedicandae gloriae suae munus testes Dei nobilissimi reliquerunt. *Acta*, c. 1.

[3] Cagnat, *L'Armée Romaine d'Afrique*, pp. 53–60.

[4] *Ibid.*

public enemies. As a first step in the accomplishment of his purpose, the legate gave orders that all the bishops and priests who had been exiled the preceding year should be brought back from their places of banishment and be put to death. The trial and execution of most of the Christians took place at Lambesa, the seat of government and the place where the legion had its permanent camp.[1]

It was in such circumstances that two Christians, Marianus and Jacobus, accompanied by a layman who survived the persecution and acted as the chronicler of the death of his companions, undertook a journey through Numidia. No reason is assigned in the Acts for this journey; but it may not be improbable that the spirit of sacrifice which animated so many of the African Christians inspired those three to go to the place where their brethren were most cruelly persecuted.[2] One of them, Jacobus, who had already suffered in the Decian persecution, was warned in a vision that he would soon be called on to shed his blood. This revelation was made to him one day while journeying with his companions. Fatigued with travel, he fell into a deep slumber and thought he saw a young man of extraordinary size

[1] Vide Duruy, *History of Rome*, vol. vii, p. 31, for description of Lambesa. Boissier, *L'Afrique Romaine*, pp. 109 seq.

[2] Nam pergebamus in Numidiam simul, ut semper antea socio parique comitatu ingressi viam quae nos ad exoptatum fidei et religionis obsequium illos jam ducebat ad coelum. *Acta*, c. 2.

and so radiant that the eye could not look on his dazzling brightness. This youth, it seemed to the sleeping confessor, gave to Marianus and his companion a purple girdle, and said to them: "Follow me." The full significance of the vision did not appear to the martyr at the time, but when he awoke, he simply told his brethren, who noticed his perturbation, that he was frightened, but that he had cause for rejoicing, and that they also had reason for happiness. After this journey the three Christians resided for a time at Muguas,[1] a suburb of Cirta, and while there two Christian bishops, Agapius and Secundinus, passed by under a guard of soldiers on their way from the place where they had been banished the year before to the court of the legate, to stand trial under the new edict. Some acts of kindness and generosity towards their captive brethren directed the suspicions of the soldiers towards the three wayfarers, and a few days afterwards a large detachment under the command of a centurion surrounded the village in which they lodged and took them into custody.[2] They were taken to Cirta, the capital of the Numidian kings, and arraigned before the municipal magistrates, who committed them to prison on their confession that they were

[1] Vide Tissot, *Géographie de la Province Romaine d'Afrique*, p. 394.

[2] Violenta manus, et improba multitudo sic ad villam, quae nos habebat, quasi ad famosam sedem fidei convolaret. *Acta*, c. 4.

Christians. The official[1] who was charged with their safe keeping tried in various way to compel them to abjure the detested superstition for which they had braved so much. Jacobus remained firm in asserting that he was a Christian, and removed all hope of acquittal by avowing that he was a deacon. Marianus was a lector, and his captors, fearing that he might escape punishment on the technical plea of not belonging to the clergy, tortured him in order to make him repent or confess himself a priest. They suspended him by the thumbs, and attached weights to his feet in order to increase the strain on those suffering members. His constancy under suffering wearied even the brutality of his foes, and, unable to terrify him, they cut him down and returned him to the prison where the other Christians were confined.

Exhausted and racked from the ordeal of the torture chamber, Marianus fell into a deep slumber in which he had a vision of a great, high tribunal on which was seated a judge. Near the judgment seat was an immense scaffold reached by a long stairway, up which were passing bands of confessors, all of whom, at the command of the judge, were immediately conducted to execution. Then he heard a voice saying, "Bring forth Marianus." He saw himself go up the steps leading to the scaf-

[1] Stationarium militem. *Acta*, v. 4.

fold, and when he reached the top, St. Cyprian, who was seated at the right of the judge, stretched forth his hand and said, "Come sit with me." And while he sat there other bands of Christians passed before the judge and received their crowns. After some time the judge arose, and all who were there accompanied him to the praetorium by a way beautiful with trees and streams, until he suddenly disappeared from their gaze. Then Cyprian, taking a phial from the side of a glittering pool, filled it from a fountain and drank, and filling it a second time gave it to Marianus, who drained it. While he was giving thanks to God, he awoke.

Among the Christians whom Jacobus and Marianus saw in the prison there was a Roman knight, Aemilianus, who for fifty years had devoted his life to God, and who was now portioning out the close of his career between fasting and prayer.

After a few days the Christians were again summoned before the legate. During the trial, one of the bystanders, whose looks and actions betrayed his sympathy for the prisoners,[1] was arrested, and in answer to the interrogations confessed that he too was a believer in Christ. This avowal, and similar declarations from the other prisoners, satisfied the judge of their guilt, and having no jurisdiction in capital cases, he forwarded the evidence to the

[1] Christus in ore ejus et facie relucebat. *Acta*, c. 9.

legate, and sent the prisoners under a strong guard to Lambesa for sentence and death.

After a long and fatiguing journey they were brought before the legate in the praetorium at Lambesa. Several days elapsed, however, before he could find time to attend to their case. So many of the Christian laity were under accusation that the legate, Caius Macrinius Decianus, adopted the policy of separating them from the clergy in the hope that the fear of death would lead many of the former to renounce Christ. The charge against these men and women was not so much that they were Christians, but that they had, in open defiance of the Emperor's decree, been guilty of holding congregational assemblies.[1] In a country such as Numidia, inhabited by people ready at a moment's notice for revolt, and kept in subjection only by force of arms, this in itself constituted a serious charge. Several days were occupied in disposing of these cases, and numbers of Christians were hourly led to execution.

While Marianus and Jacobus lay in the dungeon awaiting sentence, their hopes of joining their

[1] La condanna a morte di quei laici deve avere una qualche ragione speciale, che il nostro agiografo non ci permitte di determinare. Forse erano stati colti nell' atto di una riunione illecita in un cimitero o in un luogo religioso; forse avevano cercato di difendere dei sacerdoti al momento dell' arresto. Franchi, *Passio Mariani et Jacobi*, Introd. p. 18.

brethren on the field of death were kept alive by visions and apparitions of the Saints. Jacobus saw Agapius, the bishop whom he had assisted at Muguas, and who had since then suffered death with his two wards, Tertulla and Antonia. The martyr was seated at a banquet table with many others whom Jacobus had seen in the prison at Cirta, and among whom he seemed to be the most joyful. Jacobus and Marianus, in a spirit of love and fellowship, desired to share in this *agape*, and presented themselves at the feast, but were met by a child who had suffered death a few days before. This youth wore a chaplet of roses around his neck, and carried a palm branch in his hand, and noticing the eager haste of the two friends he asked them, "Why do you hurry? you will sup with us to-morrow."

On the following day Jacobus, Marianus, and the other clerics [1] were led before the legate and immediately sentenced to death. The place of execution was a small plain surrounded by hills and watered by a little river, into which the bodies of the martyrs were thrown, so that it was said they received a double baptism, — in the water of the stream, and in their own blood. So great was the number of the condemned that they were ranged in rows, to allow the headsman to perform his task

[1] Ceteros clericos . . . sententia animadversionis. *Acta*, c. 12.

without the inconvenience of having the ground soaked with blood and heaped with bodies, as would happen if the prisoners were all executed on the same spot.

With eyes blindfolded, and kneeling for the death stroke, many of the Christian martyrs had visions which they related to the devoted brethren who stood near to aid and encourage them. Some said that they saw glittering arrays of men, robed in white and mounted on white steeds; others that they heard the neighing and tramp of war horses. Marianus, with the true spirit of a prophet, proclaimed that the time was near when the blood of the martyrs would rise in vengeance. He foretold that evils of divers sorts would afflict the persecutors; that there would be pestilences, famines, earthquakes, captivity, and murder.[1] The whispered confidences between the Christians and their friends could not last long, nor could the ringing

[1] M. Aubé does not consider these threats prophetic; he says (*l'Eglise et l'Etat*, p. 403): Les annonces d'événements postérieurs, comme la captivité de Valerien et la coalition des chefs indigènes numides, avec lesquels le successeur de Veturianus eut affaire deux ou trois ans plus tard, et dont il ne vint à bout qu'après plusieurs sanglantes combats, prouvent que cette rélation n'a pas été écrite par nn de ceux qui furent immolés à la fin d'avril ou an commencement de mai 259. The writer of the *Acta* says nowhere that he was a victim of the Valerian persecution. He may have lived for several years afterwards, and some passages in the *Acta* themselves seem to imply that he did. Vide Franchi, *loc. cit.* pp. 19 seq.

denunciations of Marianus deter the executioner in his hideous work. Row after row suffered, and at last, when Marianus' turn came, his head, severed at one blow, rolled on the ground to the feet of his mother, Mary, who had accompanied him there. She threw herself on the mangled body, and, kissing the bloody lips, gave thanks to God that she had borne such a son.

The Acts of Marianus and Jacobus, to which we are indebted for this account of the persecution in Numidia, claim, as has already been said, to be the work of a Christian who was himself an eye-witness of the events and a companion of the martyrs. Tillemont [1] and Allard [2] regard them as incontestably authentic; so does M. Dufourcq, the rigorous critic of the "Gesta Martyrum Romains." [3] So convinced is M. Dufourcq of their antiquity and genuiness that he places them in contrast with the Roman Acta as a proof that the latter are the work of later hands.[4] Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri, to whom we are indebted for a new and critical edition of the "Passio Mariani et Jacobi," [5] contests the assertion of Schultze that this Passio emanated from an African school of hagiographers, who devoted

[1] *Mémoires*, tom. iv, pp. 215, 649.

[2] *Les Dernières Persécutions du Troisieme Siècle*, p. 130, note.

[3] Nul ne conteste l'authenticité de ceux-ci. *Gesta Martyrum Romains*, p. 67.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Rome. *Tipografia Vaticana*, 1900.

themselves to the production of Acta and Passiones modelled after the Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas.[1] In the learned Introduction to his work Franchi refutes the contentions of Schultze, and explains the difficulties which M. Aubé regarded as insuperable to believing the Acts to be the work of a contemporary and an eye-witness.[2]

[1] *Theologisches Literaturblatt*, 1889, col. 470; quoted by Franchi.
[2] *Loc. cit.*

CHAPTER VIII

PERSECUTION IN THE WEST AND THE EAST

Tarragona — Caesar worship abandoned — St. Fructuosus — Esteemed by pagans and Christians — Arrest — Trial — Death at the stake — Martyrdom of Augurius and Eulogius on the same day — Martyrs in Ganl — The Orient — Death of Priscus, Malchus, and Alexander — St. Cyril of Caesarea in Cappadocia — Nicephorus of Antioch in Syria — Condemnation and death of St. Paregorius — St. Leo of Patara in Lycia.

It is not surprising that Tarragona (Tarraco), the capital of Hispania Citerior, should have witnessed a rigid enforcement of the edict against Christianity. This place was one of the earliest strongholds of Roman power in Spain and the richest coast-town in the peninsula. From the time of its first occupation Tarragona was a centre of Roman life and culture. The numerous inscriptions found among its ruins, the remains of a huge aqueduct, the rows of seats still visible on the seashore, attesting the site of its amphitheatre, all bear witness to its character and greatness.[1] The people of Tarragona surpassed even the inhabitants of Rome in passionate devotion to the national gods.

[1] Elisée Reclus, *The Earth and its Inhabitants*, vol. xvii, p. 304.

They were the first among the provincials of the West to erect an altar to the Genius of the Emperor, and to profess that the destinies of Rome were inseparable from those of the house of Augustus by consecrating a temple to "Aeternitas."[1]

The devotion of the Tarraconenses to these new deities was short-lived. In the beginning of the second century the temple of Augustus was in ruins. Hadrian passed the winter of the year 122 in Spain, and as a rebuke to the people of Tarragona rebuilt the ruined temple at his own expense.[2] In a convention of the representatives of the cities of Spain, which he convoked for the dedication ceremonies, he spoke in the harshest terms of the repugnance for military service shown by the inhabitants of "Italica." His generosity and his words were unavailing. In the time of Septimius Severus the temple of Augustus was again a mass of ruins.[3] How can this laxity be explained? Might it not be possible that the doctrines of Christianity had supplanted the old beliefs which made Tarragona "an example for all the other provinces."[4] At the outbreak of the Valerian persecution it contained a

[1] *Revue d'Histoire et de Littérature Réligieuses*, 1896, p. 437. Tacitus, *Ann.* i, 78. Templum ut in colonia Tarraconensi strueretur Augusto petentibus Hispanis permissum. Cf. Dion, lib. li.

[2] Spartianus, *Vita Hadriani*, c. 12.

[3] Spartianus, *Vita Severi*, c. 3.

[4] Tacitus, *loc cit.* In omnes provincias exemplum.

flourishing Christian community ruled over by its own bishop, Fructuosus, a man esteemed and respected by Christians and pagans alike.[1] This widespread respect may have been the reason why he was not molested until January, 259. Public opinion, however, could not prevent the execution of the laws, and on the 17th day of the Kalends of February, in the consulate of Aemilianus and Bassus, after the bishop had retired for the night, six soldiers, Aurelius, Festucius, Aelius, Pollentius, Donatus, and Maximus, appeared before his house with an order from the governor for his arrest. He at once arose and surrendered himself. Two deacons, Augurius and Eulogius, who lived with him, were also seized and lodged in prison.

No doubts as to his fate existed in the mind of Fructuosus, and from the beginning he devoted himself to preparation for death. Several days elapsed before he was brought to trial, during

[1] Talem amorem habebat non tantum a fratribus sed etiam ab ethnicis. *Acta*, c. 3.

The *Acts* of Fructuosus (*Des Meilleurs du Recueil de Ruinart*, Aubé, p. 409) are certainly of great antiquity. They were used by Prudentius (*Peri Stephanon*, vi) and were read publicly in the churches of Africa in the time of St. Augustine, who speaks of them in two sermons, 213, 273. The style and several archaic expressions, — *fraternitas*, *in mente habere*, — the precision and exactness in the minutest details, marked them out as the work of a contemporary. Cf. Allard, *Les Dernières*, *etc.* p. 98, note; Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. iv, article on St. Fructuosus. Aubé is of opinion that the *Acts* are interpolated. *Loc. cit.*

which he was visited by his followers, one of whom, Rogatianus, a catechumen, he baptized with his own hand.[1]

Friday, January 21, was the day set for the trial.[2] The bishop and the two deacons were, by the command of the governor, brought before the tribunal at the same time. The praeses, Aemilianus, at once demanded of Fructuosus: Do you know what the Emperors have ordered?

FRUCTUOSUS. I do not; but I am a Christian.

AEMILIANUS. They have ordered all subjects of the Empire to do homage to the gods.

FRUCTUOSUS. I adore one God, who made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all it contains.

AEMILIANUS. Do you know that there are gods?

FRUCTUOSUS. I do not.

AEMILIANUS. You will soon know it.

To this the bishop vouchsafed no reply, but turned his eyes to heaven and prayed in silence.

AEMILIANUS. Who are to be obeyed, who feared, who adored, if the gods are not honored and the images of the Emperor not respected?

Receiving no answer, he turned to Augurius, one of the deacons, saying: "Do not allow yourself to be influenced by what Fructuosus has said." Au-

[1] Erat autem et fraternitas cum ipso, refrigerantes et rogantes ut illos in mente haberet. *Acta*, c. 1. For the meaning of *refrigerantes*, see De Rossi, *Bullettino*, 1882, p. 126.

[2] Producti sunt XII Kalend. Februarii, feria sexta. *Acta*, c. 2.

gurius answered: "I too worship the Omnipotent God." To the other deacon, Eulogius, he said: "Do you also worship Fructuosus?" "No," he replied, "I do not worship Fructuosus; but I adore the God whom Fructuosus adores." Turning again to Fructuosus, Aemilianus asked: "Are you a bishop?" "I am," was the answer. "You were," he replied, and immediately condemned the three to be burned alive.

The people followed them with tears and prayers to the amphitheatre. On the way some one in a spirit of mercy presented the martyrs a cup containing some beverage, probably a narcotic; but this Fructuosus refused to take, saying: "It is not yet time to break the fast." [1]

When the amphitheatre was reached, the stakes and pyres were ready for the victims. Regarding the place of sacrifice as sacred ground, Fructuosus, like Moses of old,[2] removed his shoes, and when this short preparation was finished, said, in answer to a Christian named Felix, who took his hand and

[1] Cumque multi ex fraterna caritate eis offerent, uti conditi permixti poculum, ait, nondum est hora solvendi jejunii. *Acta*, c, 3.

[2] Vix haec ediderat, relaxat ipse
Indumenta pedum, velut Moyses
Quondam facerat ad rubum propinquans.
Non calcare sacram cremationem
Aut adstare Deo prius licebat
Quam vestigia parce figerentur.
Peri Stephanon, vi, 85–90.

begged to be remembered in his prayers: "I shall remember the entire Church Catholic, which spreads from the East to the West." At the door leading to the arena he turned to the Christians who had accompanied him to this stage in his journey, and in a voice loud enough to be heard by Christians and pagans alike, he said: "You will not be long without a bishop. The promises of God cannot fail here nor hereafter. The present trials are merely of the hour."

With words of encouragement and hope from Fructuosus, the three martyrs advanced to the centre of the arena, and took their places on the piles of fagots. They were at once bound to the stakes, and the fires lighted. When the flames circled around and above them the cords which bound them were destroyed, and the three martyrs, freed from their bonds, fell on their knees, and with arms outstretched in the form of a cross continued to pray while life and strength lasted.[1]

Two Christians of the governor's household, Babylan and Mygdonio, saw in a vision the three martyrs ascending into heaven adorned with their fetters and bearing on their heads crowns of victory.

When night came the Christians repaired in

[1] Non ausa est cohibere poena palmas
In morem crucis ad Patrem levandas
Solvit brachia, quae Deum precentur.
Ibid. 103–105.

crowds to the amphitheatre and poured wine on the still smouldering fires, in order to save what remained of the bodies of the martyrs.[1] Everyone kept whatever relics he found and took them to his home; but in the night Fructuosus appeared and warned them of the wrong they had done, and on the following morning each brought what he had taken away, and the remains were all interred in the same place.

The zeal shown by Aemilianus in executing the commands of the Emperor in Spain was doubtless equalled by his colleagues in Gaul; but owing to the lack of trustworthy records very little can be said in regard to the persecution in the western provinces. The Acta of St. Pontius of Cemenelum (Cimiez),[2] a town in the southeast of France, which assigned the death of this martyr to the reign of Valerian, are so manifestly legendary that they are valueless, except in so far, perhaps, as they preserve some slight substratum of fact re-

[1] The use of wine for such a purpose is not easily explained. The ancients used it in the libations after cremation.

> Reliquias vino et bibulam lavere favillam.
> Vergil, *Aen.* vi, 227.

Such a practice could scarcely have been in vogue among the Christians. Tarragona was celebrated for its wines in antiquity; and as their most precious possession the Christians may have poured it over the bodies of their martyrs. Cf. Martial, *Epig.* lib. xiii, 118; iii, 78.

[2] *Acta SS.*, May 14, tom. iii, p. 274. Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* tom. iii, p. 429; Aubé, *L'Eglise et l'Etat*, pp. 413 seq.

garding the name of the martyr and the date and place of his death.

Another Gallic martyr, St. Patroclus, whose Acta say he was put to death by Aurelian, suffered on Friday, January 21, the same day on which St. Fructuosus died.[1] But as January 21 did not fall on Friday during the reign of Aurelian, commentators are not agreed as to the date; some place it as early as 253, others in 259.

The sufferings of the martyrs Privatus, Liminius, Ausonius, Anatolius, and a multitude of others who, according to St. Gregory of Tours,[2] were massacred in an invasion of France by the Alemanni under Chrocus, cannot logically be laid at the door of Valerian; and, furthermore, in all probability the raid of these barbarians did not occur before the fifth century.[3]

In the eastern section of the Empire, where the Christians were doubtless more numerous, the havoc and disorder caused by marauding bands of Scythians, Goths, and Persians do not seem to have diverted the Roman magistrates from the task of exterminating the followers of Christ. The

[1] *Acta SS.*, January 21, tom. ii, p. 322. Cf. Allard, *loc. cit.* p. 97, note 5; Tillemont, *Mém.* tom. iv, p. 523, note on St. Patroclus.

[2] *Historia Francorum*, i, 31; *Acta SS.*, February, tom. i, p. 766; March, tom. iii, p. 649; May, tom. iv, p. 454.

[3] Cf. Goyau, *Chronologie*, p. 312, for the various dates assigned to this event.

heroism displayed by the martyrs whose Acta have been preserved, in voluntarily presenting themselves before the tribunals and confessing their faith, proves clearly that the existing records give no adequate picture of the cruel warfare waged against the Church in the Orient.

The cruelties practised against the Christians of Caesarea in Palestine aroused such a spirit of emulation in three youths, Priscus, Malchus, and Alexander, who lived in a secluded place at some distance from the city, that they left their retirement and, presenting themselves before the magistrates, boldly confessed that they were Christians. To live in hiding while others were every day giving testimony to the faith seemed to them too pusillanimous to be consistent with Christian duty. The boldness of their action, or the necessity of amusing the fickle mob of Caesarea, prompted the magistrate to inflict on them the severest penalty. He gave orders that they should be thrown to the wild beasts in the arena. A woman who belonged to the sect of Marcion was condemned to a similar death during the same persecution. These simple facts are related by Eusebius, who gives no further details of the fierce conflict which could arouse men to an act so desperate.[1]

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* vii, 12. Marcionitic martyrs are mentioned by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iv, 15; *Martyrs of Palestine*, chap.

About the same time Caesarea in Cappadocia was the scene of one of the most touching martyrdoms in the annals of Christianity. A boy named Cyril, who had been converted to Christianity a short time before the persecution, so incensed his parents by his fervor in the practice of his new religion, and by constantly repeating the name of Christ, that they tried by every means in their power to compel him to return to paganism. They threatened him, and scourged him, and as a last resort they disinherited him and drove him as an outcast from their doors. The harshness and severity of the parents, which met with the approval of their pagan friends, in nowise daunted the resolution of the little Christian hero, who willingly relinquished his patrimony, saying, "that his faith in God would provide better and more desirable things than those he had forfeited."

The boy's opposition to the will of his father, who was evidently a man of considerable importance, became known throughout the city, and finally reached the ears of a magistrate, who considered the matter so weighty that he ordered Cyril's arrest. When the boy appeared the magistrate said to him, "I shall not punish you for your past wickedness,

10. In *Hist. Eccles.* v, 16, Montanist and Marcionitic martyrs are referred to, though the Christians would not acknowledge them as such. All were equally guilty, however, in the eyes of the state.

and will allow you to return to your home if you abandon this folly." Cyril replied: "I glory in being accused of what I have done: for by it I have deserved heaven. I rejoice to be deprived of a home here, for I shall possess a greater and a better one hereafter. Of my own free will I became poor in order that I might possess eternal riches. I do not fear death, for I see before me a better life."

Various other expedients were tried to shake his resolution: he was bound as if for execution; a sword was held over his head; he was conducted to the stake; but all without avail. He maintained his courageous demeanor throughout, and even rebuked some of the bystanders who grieved because of his suffering. His words and actions left no course open to the magistrate but to enforce the law, and the boy was immediately sentenced to death. He bore his fate calmly and received death as cheerfully and bravely as he had spoken of it.[1]

The same disregard for physical suffering, and the same desire to gain the martyr's crown, were exhibited by a certain Nicephorus of Antioch in

[1] *Acta SS.*, May, tom. vii, 29th day. Ruinart (*Acta Sincera et Selecta*, p. 289) is of opinion that this account of the martyrdom of St. Cyril — written in the form of a letter — is from the pen of St. Firmilian of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Cf. Tillemont, *Mémoires*, tom. iv, article on St. Firmilian.

Syria.[1] At the outbreak of the persecution a priest named Sapricius, between whom and Nicephorus a warm friendship had once existed, was seized and carried before the tribunal. He boldly confessed that he was a Christian and a priest, and bore unflinchingly the tortures which the magistrate inflicted on him in order to compel him to abjure Christ. By his courage and steadfastness he gave abundant proof that death had no terrors for him, and the judge at once sentenced him, saying, "We order that Sapricius, a priest, who contemns and disobeys the commands of the Emperors by refusing to offer sacrifice to the gods, shall be beheaded."

When Nicephorous heard that his one-time friend had been condemned to death, he desired most eagerly to be reconciled with him before he died. He met him on the way to the place of execution, and casting himself on the ground he said: "Martyr for Christ, pardon me if I have done aught against thee." Sapricius paid no heed to his plea, and passed him by in silence. He renewed it a second time a little farther on, and was repulsed a second time. The persistency and humility of

[1] Simeon Metaphrastes is the first who states positively that Nicephorus was martyred in Antioch. The other manuscripts simply say, *in partibus Orientis*. In antiquity, however, the name *Oriens* was a common designation of the diocese or patriarchate of Antioch. Cf. Ruinart, *Acta Sincera*, *Admonitio in Martyrium S. Nicephori*, p. 283.

Nicephorus astonished the pagan soldiers. They said: "This man must be mad to ask pardon from a condemned criminal." "You do not know," answered Nicephorus, "what I ask from a confessor of Christ, but God knows."

While the final preparations were being made at the place of execution, Nicephorus again approached the doomed priest and begged piteously for pardon and reconciliation, without evoking a single word of response. At the last moment, when the lictors ordered Sapricius to go on his knees for the death stroke, he faltered and said: "Why should I kneel?" "Because," they answered, "you have refused to offer sacrifice to the gods, and because you have refused to obey the commands of the Emperors for the sake of that man who is called Christ." "Do not strike," he begged; "I shall obey, I shall offer sacrifice."

This unexpected turn in events wrung a protest from Nicephorus. He begged the quaking apostate not to abjure Christ, not to lose the eternal crown for which he had already suffered so much; but his plea was fruitless. Then, moved by the insult offered to Christ, and with the true spirit of the martyr, he presented himself to the lictors, saying: "I too am a Christian and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ whom this man has denied. Strike me in his stead."

The lictors had no power to inflict the death penalty because a man accused himself, and one of them set off at once to the magistrate to report what had happened. Without waiting to summon Nicephorus, the magistrate gave orders that if he did not at once conform to the decree he should be instantly beheaded. No time was lost in putting the sentence into execution, and Nicephorus died "and ascended to heaven crowned with faith, with charity, and with humility."[1]

Though no part of the Roman dominions felt the scourge of invasion and pillage more deeply than Asia Minor during the last years of Valerian's reign, the Emperor's representatives retained sufficient authority and power in the cities not yet visited by the barbarians to inflict the greatest cruelties on the Christians. At Patara, a city on the south-east coast of Lycia, Paregorius, about whom nothing

[1] Certamen sancti magnique martyris Nicephori et contra injuriam memoriam. Ruinart, *loc. cit.*

These *Acta*, preserved both in Greek and in a Latin translation, are nothing more than a treatise or exhortation on the necessity of fraternal charity, written with a purpose of showing that no one can truly love God if at the same time he hates his neighbor. They contain many things that are not easily reconciled with the terms and spirit of Valerian's edict: *e. g.* the torture inflicted on Sapricius, unnecessary after his avowal that he was a priest, and the summary condemnation of Nicephorus on the bare report of a lictor. M. Allard (*loc. cit.* p. 138, note) is of opinion that in their present form the *Acta* are an enlargement of an older and probably contemporary document. Cf. Aubé, p. 424.

is known besides a simple reference in the Acts of his friend and fellow-martyr, Leo, was put to death shortly after the promulgation of the edict. The fame of his sanctity and sufferings made his tomb an object of veneration to the faithful, many of whom visited it every day. Among those who cherished the memory of Paregorius was his friend Leo, an old man who led the life of an anchorite, and clothed himself in the skins of wild beasts.

During one of his visits to the tomb of his departed friend, Leo witnessed a fête at the temple of Serapis, an Egyptian deity whose worship had been introduced shortly before by the newly appointed Proconsul Lollianus. Among the worshippers were many who had formerly been Christians.

Thoughts of the blasphemous and idolatrous ceremonies he had witnessed filled the mind of Leo on his way to the tomb of the martyr the following day when he passed by the Tychaeum, or temple of the goddess Fortuna, which was adorned within and without with flowers and lights for the celebration of some festival, and without counting the consequences of his act he broke the lamps and trod the tapers under foot. The priests of the temple, angered by such irreverence, assembled the people and harangued them, saying the incensed goddess would confer no more favors on the city unless the author of this sacrilege was punished. Leo was

seized on his return from the tomb and brought before the procurator, who sentenced him to the torture and afterwards condemned him to death by being dragged over the rough stones to a neighboring torrent and cast into its depths. Long before the river was reached the martyr was beyond the reach of further suffering, and his executioners contented themselves with casting the body over a precipice. When opportunity offered, the Christians recovered it and interred it, "praising God who had given the martyr such courage and strength." [1]

[1] The only indication which the *Acta* of these martyrs give as to the date of their death is contained in the words, *Proconsulem Lollianum Electum ab imperatoribus*. This slight reference shows that when the martyrs died the Empire was governed by joint rulers as in the days of Valerian and Gallienus. Precisely at this time a certain Lollianus was prominent in the affairs of Rome. (Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 5.) Though his life was obscure (Vita in multis obscura est (*Ibid.*), he succeeded in dethroning Postumus in the kingdom of Gaul. The *Acta* gives every evidence that a violent persecution, such as that of Decius, Valerian, or Diocletian was in progress at the time. Decius, however, is usually mentioned alone in hagiographical writings, and during the persecution of Diocletian Lycia was not governed by a proconsul, a title which Diocletian conferred only on the governors of Asia, Achaia, and Africa. Though these indications are extremely meagre, they nevertheless point more strongly to the epoch of Valerian than to any other. Cf. Allard, *loc. cit.* pp. 142, 143, note 3; Ruinart, *Admonitio in Martyrium SS. Leonis et Paregorii; Acta SS.*, February, tom. iii, p. 59.

CHAPTER IX

FALL OF VALERIAN — EDICT OF GALLIENUS.

Barbarians renew invasions in 258 — Berbers and Quinquegentanei in Africa — Ganl — Postumus revolts — Franks cross the Rhine — Ingenuus assumes the purple in Moesia — Defeated by Gallienus — Alemanni invade Lombardy — Borani again attack Pontus — Goths devastate Bithynia — Valerian returns from the East to repulse them — Retraces his steps — Encounters Shahpur — Captured — His captivity and death — Empire in disorder — Thirty Tyrants — Revolt in Sicily — Gallienus unmoved — Issues edict of toleration — Analysis of edict — Effect — General summary.

VALERIAN'S departure for the Orient in the summer of 258 was the signal for a general movement among the seething, maddened hordes beyond the frontiers. Like hungry wolves they poured into the Empire, carrying death and desolation wherever they went, and beating down opposition whenever they met it. The thin line of legionaries, decimated by disease and never thoroughly reorganized since the civil wars that preceded Valerian's election, was powerless to stop this inundation. Wherever the Romans had set up their sacred *termini*, there were enemies ready to match the undisciplined valor of multitudes against the training of the rapidly diminishing legions, whose courage and endur-

ance had spread and maintained the warp of Roman civilization and Roman authority among so many various tribes and peoples. As if by concerted arrangement, the whole Empire was at once girdled with a contracting band of fire and steel.

In Africa the Berbers, a tribe of warriors from the mountains of Mauretania, who invaded Numidia from the west, taxed all the resources of the Third Legion Augusta, and were prevented from forming a coalition with the Quinquegentanei, who had made an attack from another point, only by the energy and skill of the legate, Caius Macrinius Decianus. He defeated them at Mila, and pursuing their shattered forces to the confines of Mauretania, he engaged them a second time and added to their humiliation by a second decisive victory. During this time the Quinquegentanei, a confederation of five desert tribes, whose names and origin are still matters of dispute, were engaging the attention of Quintus Gargilius Martialis, the commander of the Roman cavalry. Under the leadership of Faraxen, a man whose name brought terror to the hearts of the Romans in Africa, these five tribes united to make common cause against the common enemy. The white-robed followers of the Sheiks from the desert were no match, however, for the light Moorish cavalry of the Roman. Gargilius defeated them and drove them beyond the borders, and what was

of more importance slew their leader Faraxen, the man through whose skill and influence these various tribes were made to act in concert. With a persistency born of despair, both the Berbers and Quinquegentanei renewed their attacks, and though Roman supremacy was never again endangered through their efforts, they succeeded in ambuscading and slaying the conqueror of Faraxen.[1]

The withdrawal of part of the garrisons from the northern frontier to furnish material for Valerian's army in the East left the rich territory south of the Rhine and the Danube at the mercy of the Teutonic peoples. As long as Gallienus remained in command of the Rhenish Provinces he was able, with the comparatively small force at his command, to keep his opponents in check and to frustrate all their attempts to gain a footing on the coveted territory on the left bank of the river. In 258,[2] however, the critical condition of affairs on the Danube required his presence, and leaving his eldest son, P. Cornelius Licinius Valerianus,[3] a mere boy, as

[1] These events are known only from the inscriptions. C. I. L. viii, 2615, 9047. Vide Cagnat, *L'Armée Romaine d'Afrique*, pp. 56, 57; Creuly, "Les Quinquegentiens et les Barbares, Anciens Peuples d'Afrique," *Revue Archéologique*, new series, vol. 3 (1861), p. 51; Schiller, *Geschichte*, p. 818. M. Cagnat, *loc. cit.*, places these invasions in 258 or 259. Cf. Goyau, *Chronologie*, p. 310.

[2] Schiller, *loc. cit.* p. 827.

[3] Schiller maintains against the common opinion that it was the elder and not the younger son of Gallienus who was slain by Postumus *Ibid.*

his representative in Gaul, he entrusted the defence of the Rhine to his lieutenants. One of these, M. Cassianius Latinius Postumus,[1] proved faithless to his trust, and aspiring to be the ruler of a separate and independent kingdom in Gaul, he had himself proclaimed emperor by his troops, and at once laid siege to Cologne, which was defended by a brave and faithful officer, the tribune Silvanus. He was the guardian of the Emperor's son, and refused to surrender the city. After a long investment Cologne fell into the hands of the usurper, and he at once slaughtered Silvanus and his imperial charge.[2]

The conflicts among the Romans themselves gave the Franks the opportunity they had so long desired. Pouring across the Rhine, they pillaged Gaul at will, and, according to some, extended their forays to Spain, and even to the coast of Africa.[3] The result of these well-timed expeditions was the loss of considerable Roman territory on the left bank of the Rhine, and the total abolition of Roman jurisdiction on the right. After Gallienus,

[1] *Trig. Tyr.* c. 3.

[2] Mommsen, *Roman Provinces*, vii, 178.

[3] Eutropius, *Breviarium*, ix, 8; Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* c. 33, Francorum gentes, direpta Gallia, Hispaniam possiderent . . . pars in usque African permearet. Mommsen, *loc. cit.*, thinks the Frankish expedition to Africa took place in the reign of Gallienus. Cagnat, *loc. cit.* p. 57, says that with the exception of the passage in Aurelius Victor the histories and monuments afford no proof of this invasion.

the name of no Roman emperor is found on the monuments on the right bank of the Rhine. The success of the Franks, as is evident, was due not so much to valor or ability as to lack of effective opposition. Gallienus and his subordinates were capable and experienced soldiers; "but, amidst the utter unruliness which then prevailed in the Roman State, or rather in the Roman army, the talent or ability of the individual profited neither himself nor the commonwealth."[1] The reason for Gallienus' hasty departure from his headquarters in Cologne was because a usurper had appeared in Moesia and Pannonia.[2] At the instigation of his soldiers, who were terrified by the Sarmatian invaders of Dacia, Ingenuus, the governor of Pannonia, assumed the purple, in order that he might have sufficient authority to regulate the affairs of the province, free from all interference by higher powers. As soon as Gallienus appeared on the scene Ingenuus shut himself up in Mursa and prepared for a siege.[3] With the aid of Aurelius, Gallienus soon compelled the city to capitulate, and in order to escape falling into the hands of his

[1] Mommsen, *loc. cit.* p. 179. The date of this event is certain: Tusco et Basso coss.; Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* c. 9. Cf. Schiller, *loc. cit.* p. 833, note 5.

[2] Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, 33, 2.

[3] Bei Mursa auf dem rechten Ufer der Drau, an der Stelle des heutigen Eszek. Schiller, *loc. cit.* p. 833.

implacable conqueror, Ingenuus hanged himself.[1] Gallienus wreaked a terrible vengeance on the cities which had acknowledged the pretensions of Ingenuus. He gave orders that all the male inhabitants, young and old, should be slain; and his commands were executed with brutal fidelity.[2]

Before he could relieve the provinces of Pannonia and Moesia from the Sarmatian invaders, word was brought to Gallienus that the Alemanni had profited by his absence to pour across the Limes Rhaeticus, and passing from thence across the Alps had devasted Lombardy and carried their operations as far as Ravenna.[3] The inhabitants of Rome, fearing that an attack would be made on that city, were filled with dismay, and the danger seemed so imminent that the Senate with some show of its ancient patriotism called out the Praetorian guard, armed the plebeians, and prepared

[1] Fertur sane idem Ingenuus, civitate capta, laqueasse se atque ita vitam finisse. Pollio, *Ibid.*

[2] A letter from Gallienus to Celer Venerianus on this subject is preserved by Pollio in order to show, he says, what cruelty this voluptuary could be capable of. Gallienus Veneriano. Non mihi satisfacies, si tantum armatos occideris, quos et fors in bellis interimere potuisset. Perimendus est omnis sexus virilis, si et senes atque inpuberes sine reprehensione nostra occidi possent. Occidendus est quicumque male dixit contra me, contra Valeriani filium, contra tot principum patrem et fratrem. Ingenuus factus est imperator. Lacera, occide, concide, animum meum intellege, mea mente irascere, qui haec manu mea scripsi.

[3] Zosimus, i, 37; Eutropius, ix, 8; Zonaras, xii, 24. Cf. Schiller, p. 814; Gibbon, chap. x.

to put the city in condition to stand a siege. Their fears were groundless. Before the Alemanni could direct their efforts against Rome, Gallienus appeared at the head of his legions, and with unwonted vigor compelled them to retreat. Loaded with booty, pillaging and burning the cities they passed, the Alemanni traversed Italy; but were finally brought to bay at Milan, where Gallienus with a force numerically far inferior to theirs inflicted on them a crushing defeat.[1] With a fatuity born, perhaps, of the perplexities regarding the safety of the throne itself, he did not pursue the defeated hosts of the enemy, or attempt to reëstablish the old boundaries, and thus robbed his victory of its most fruitful results.[2]

While both the Emperors were engaged in distant wars, Gallienus in the West and Valerian in the East, the Borani, smarting under the defeat inflicted on them the year before by Successus, renewed their attacks on the Roman territory in Asia Minor, and directing their first attempt against Pityus, they buried their former disgrace in its ruins. Profiting by the recollection of their previous mistakes, they had retained their ships, in which they at once set sail, and following the coast

[1] Zonaras, *loc. cit.*, says the Alemanni numbered 300,000 and the forces of Gallienus 10,000.

[2] Schiller, *loc. cit.*

of the Euxine, they first disembarked at the mouth of the river Phasis, near which was situated the famous temple of Diana, which they attempted, though without success, to pillage. Undismayed, they resumed their journey as far as Trebizond (Trapezus), the capital of the Province of Pontus, a city containing an enormous population and well fortified with a double wall. The number of inhabitants was increased by swarms of refugees from the surrounding cities and towns, who had fled there for safety, carrying with them their wealth and treasures. The impregnable defences of the city, and its large garrison, strengthened by reinforcements from outside, caused the besieged to neglect the fortifications, and to give themselves over to riot and luxury. The Borani were quick to profit by this carelessness, and at night they easily scaled the walls and put the garrison to flight. While the soldiers escaped through the gates the inhabitants were massacred by their ruthless foes. The city was reduced to ruins, and the victorious barbarians, loading their ships with booty, and chaining their prisoners to the oars, returned to their homes in the kingdom of the Bosphorus.

The success of the Borani incited their neighbors the Goths to similar expeditions, and in the following winter they collected an enormous army for the invasion of Bithynia. Adopting a different

course, these new marauders followed the western coast of the Euxine, and, because of the impossibility of procuring a sufficient number of transports, they divided their forces into two parts, one of which went by land, the other by sea.

At Byzantium they captured a number of fishing boats and merchant vessels and set sail for Asia Minor. Their first landing-place was near the strong city of Chalcedon, which the garrison had abandoned on the news of their coming, and which now fell into their hands with all its treasures of money and arms. On the advice of Chrysogonus, a Greek refugee, they next marched to Nicomedia, which they took by siege. Although the wealthiest of the inhabitants had fled, carrying with them as much as they could of their possessions, the barbarians themselves were surprised at the amount of booty this city afforded. They bestowed rich rewards on the traitor who had led them there, and, still unsatisfied with their plunder, they pillaged Nice, Prusa, Apamea, and Chios, and directing their steps towards Cyzicus they met their first check. The river Rhyndacus, swollen by recent rains, stopped their victorious march. Satisfied doubtless with what they had gained, and fearing an encounter with the forces of Valerian, who, as we have seen, returned from the East on the news of their raids, they signalized their departure by setting fire to

the cities of Nice and Nicomedia.[1] The army of Valerian never came in sight of the Goths. When he reached Cappadocia the information was conveyed to him that the invaders had fled and were now safe from pursuit. Valerian contented himself with sending reinforcements to Byzantium, and immediately retraced his steps to the seat of war in the East. He had succeeded in preventing a union of the Persian and Gothic forces; but besides this he accomplished nothing except, as Zosimus says, the destruction of the Cappadocian cities through which his army passed.[2] This expedition, however, probably resulted in his capture and downfall. When he left the East to go to the relief of Bithynia he had already gained many victories over the Persians. Antioch was in his possession; for on the arrival of his army of relief the inhabitants had risen in revolt and slain the pretender Cyriades.[3] The gates were thrown open to the Romans,

[1] Zosimus, i, 31–35. Cf. Mommsen, *Roman Provinces*, vol. i, p. 265; Schiller, p. 817; Gibbon, *loc. cit.*; Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* iii, p. 461. For chronology see Goyau, p. 314.

[2] Zosimus, i, 36.

[3] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. x, p. 557, note 1, says: "The reign of Cyriades appears in that collection (Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* 1) prior to the death of Valerian; but I have preferred a probable series of events to the doubtful chronology of a most inaccurate writer." Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, chap. 4, p. 82, considers that Gibbon's nexus of events has the greatest probability. Duruy, vi, pp. 418–421, and Allard, *loc. cit.* p. 159, also place the death of Cyriades in 260, after the captivity of

and Antioch immediately became the base of operations against the Persians. Edessa, too, was still uncaptured.[1] The garrison had not only succeeded in keeping the Persians at bay, but in many successful sorties inflicted heavy losses on them and recovered large quantities of booty. When Valerian returned from Cappadocia, more than half his army had melted away from famine and pestilence. This did not deter him, however, from making an attempt to raise the siege of Edessa, and in pursuance of this project he collected all his available forces and set out at once to the rescue of the beleaguered city.[2] In Mesopotamia his army met that of Shahpur, and the aged Roman Emperor tasted the bitterness of defeat.[3] Through the malice or imprudence of one of his generals, the Roman army was betrayed into a situation where neither courage nor skill could avail them, and where retreat was impossible.[4] The

Valerian. Tillemont, iii, pp. 405, 406, inclines to the date 258 or 259. Schiller, p. 820, says it occurred in 256. I consider that the text of Pollio cannot be lightly set aside, and have consequently assigned the death of Cyriades to 258. Ipse per insidias suorum, cum Valerianus jam ad bellum Persicum veniret occisus est. *Trig. Tyr.* c. 1.

[1] Zonaras, xii, 23. No two writers, as far as I am aware, are agreed as to the dates and order of these events; I have adopted what I consider the simplest and most logical arrangement.

[2] Zonaras, *loc. cit.*

[3] Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* c. 32; Eutropius, ix, 7.

[4] Victus est enim a Sapore rege Persarum, dum ductu cujusdam sui ducis, cui summum omnium bellicarum rerum agendarum commiserat, seu fraude seu adversa fortuna in ea esset loca de-

hopelessness of his position, and the seditious murmurings of his soldiers, who were driven to desperation by hunger and sickness, compelled Valerian to sue for terms. He sent large presents of money to Shahpur; but the wily Persian deferred his answer until resistance was no longer possible, and until he had disposed his troops most advantageously to prevent escape; then sending back the legates, he demanded that Valerian should present himself in person to arrange the terms of submission. The frightful condition of his army, and the impossibility of further resistance, left no course open to the unfortunate Emperor but to comply with the wishes of his enemy; and trusting to his honor, Valerian went to the place agreed on for the conference with only a small retinue, where Shahpur with true Oriental perfidy at once seized him.[1]

ductus, ubi nec vigor nec disciplina militaris, quin caperetur, quicquam valere potuit. Pollio, *Valeriani Duo*, c. 3. Tillemont and the later editors reject this passage as spurious. Gibbon and Rawlinson accept it, and attribute to Macrian the perfidy which led to Valerian's downfall. The letter of Valerian to the Senate shows that Macrian was entrusted with the entire control of the army. (See p. 120.) It is quite conceivable that Macrian's ambition to wear the purple — Denis of Alexandria says he madly desired it — led him to betray his master. It is certain that he was not involved in Valerian's defeat, for he retained command of a sufficient number of soldiers, probably as a reward for his treason, to make an attempt to wrest the crown from Gallienus.

[1] Zonaras, *loc. cit.*, says that it was asserted by some that Valerian fled to his enemy for protection; but he himself inclines to the opinion that the Emperor was betrayed. Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* xxxii, dolo circumventus est; Petrus Patricius, *Frag.* 9.

The capture of Valerian was no mere ruse on the part of Shahpur to wring better terms from the disheartened Romans. He wished to lower their pride, not to compel them to capitulate. He sent no messengers to Rome to demand ransom, asked for no grants of territory in return for the life and freedom of his illustrious captive; but kept the unfortunate monarch in chains until death came to his relief. In a captive emperor he might have had a powerful pledge of peace and a valuable hostage; but Oriental despotism and pride found more delight in heaping opprobrium on the fallen sovereign, and, through him, on the entire race of haughty Romans, than in making use of his sad plight to promote peace or gain political ascendancy.

It is not surprising that Roman vanity hesitated to speak about the sad straits to which Valerian was reduced, or to add to the glory of his conqueror by describing his shame. The earliest pagan writers content themselves with saying that he grew old in his captivity, and, Roman emperor as he was, that he was treated as a slave.[1] But to those of his subjects to whom he had been an oppressor, — to the Christians, — who saw in his downfall the hand of divine retribution, to whom his humiliation was

[1] Pollio, *Valeriani Duo*, c. 4, Valeriano apud Persas consenescente. *Trig. Tyr.* c. 12, senex apud Persas consenuit. Gall. c. 1, erat omnium maeror quod imperator Romanus in Perside serviliter tenetur.

strength, there was no hindrance to speak the truth. From them we learn to what lengths Oriental barbarism went. We are told that the unfortunate Emperor was loaded down with chains, and was led around at the stirrup of his captor still robed in his royal purple and wearing the imperial insignia of his former greatness; and that whenever Shahpur mounted on horseback he placed his foot on the neck of his imperial slave. How long the unhappy Roman endured this shame is not known. Some say he lived for five or six years, and that when he died his skin was stuffed with straw and hung up in a Persian temple as a perpetual memorial to the shame of Rome.[1] It would be extremely difficult to form an estimate of the effect which Valerian's fall and captivity produced in the Roman Empire. He was the one cohesive force in Roman life. No sooner was he removed from the scene than the suicidal ambition of pretenders reduced the whole commonwealth to a fratricidal battlefield. Usurpers appeared in every province: men of different talents and of different stations of life, but all intent on the removal of the surviving Emperor, the clever

[1] Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, c. 5; Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, i, 2; *Orat. Constant.* xxiv. Cf. Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* xxxii, 5, *Epit.* xxxii, 5, 6; Eutropius, *Brev.* ix, 7; Zonaras, xii, 23; Zosimus, i, 36; Petrus Patricius, in Müller, *Frag. Graec.* iv. p. 188; Rawlinson, *Seventh Great Monarchy*, pp. 86 seq.; Gibbon, *loc. cit.*

but unworthy son of the unfortunate Valerian.[1] There were many worthy and deserving soldiers among these pretenders — the Thirty Tyrants; but their deeds were as ephemeral as their claims; and for the most part they achieved nothing but the devastation of the Empire, which through interneciue strife fell an easy victim to the hordes of barbarians who once more poured across the frontiers.[2] The Goths again ravaged Asia, Thrace, and Greece; the Sarmatians spread over Illyricum; the Alemanni marched at will through Gaul and Italy; the Franks traversed Spain. A rebellion of slaves and bandits reduced peaceful and prosperous Sicily to turmoil,[3] and even Rome itself was forced to rebuild its walls to save itself from the destruction which seemed inevitable.

With Persians in the East and Teutons in the West it would seem that the last vestiges of Roman power had departed; but great crises are only the crucibles which refine the gold of genius; and old established institutions have a reserve of power which keeps them from going down before the first

[1] Quo nihil prodigiosius passa est Romana res p. *Trig. Tyr.* c. xxxi, 5.

[2] Cf. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, c. x, pp. 562 seq.; Schiller, pp. 823 seq.; Tillemont, iii, pp. 465 seq.

[3] Denique quasi conjuratione totius mundi, concussis orbis partibus, etiam in Siciliam quasi quoddam servile bellum extitit, latronibus evagantibus, qui vix oppressi sunt. Pollio, *Duo Gallieni*, c. 4.

shock. Rome recovered from civil strife, she pushed the barbarians back over her wide extended *limites;* but she had suffered a moral awakening from which she never receded.

When Augustus assumed the title of Summus Pontifex, he consecrated in his house on the Palatine a new sanctuary of Vesta, thus identifying the sacred fire — the symbol of the perpetuity of the state — with that of his own house, in order to convince men that the destinies of the Empire were for evermore inseparable from those of the house of Caesar, that one would last as long as the other, i. e. for all eternity. The worship of the Genius of the Emperor and the deification of departed Caesars became an integral part of Roman thought and polity. But now that Caesar was in the toils, what were men to think? The letters written to Shahpur by different Oriental kings, which are inserted in the life of Valerian by Pollio, may be, as Simcox says, the work of Greek sophists;[1] but they show how potent even in defeat was this idea of the perpetuity of the Roman State. Velsolus says, "If I could be convinced that the Romans could ever be thoroughly conquered I would congratulate you on your victory." Valenus, king of the Cadusi, writes, "The Romans are never so much to be feared as when they are defeated." Artabasdes, king of the

[1] *History of Latin Literature*, vol. ii, p. 356.

Armenians would imply that the existence of the Roman State was necessary for the well-being of the rest of the world: "You have conquered an old man and have made enemies of all the peoples of the earth."[1] These are truly the Roman sentiments; but the course of ideas follows the course of power. The influence of Persia was manifested not so much in dragging a decrepit old man at a chariot wheel, as in the spread of its customs and its ideals over the whole Occident. Insensibly Rome began to feel the influence of Eastern ideas, and the shadow of popular sovereignty vanished with the substance when Diocletian established his court at Nicomedia, and instituted a régime modelled on the absolutism of Persia.[2] Outlaws as they were, the Christians were nevertheless loyal Romans, and more faithful to the traditions of the past than those whose ideas and policy had been cradled amidst the ignominious scenes which attended the last days of Valerian.

The only person in the Empire who seemed indifferent to the fate of Rome and the misfortunes of Valerian was his son and co-regent, Gallienus. He received the news of his father's defeat with affected stoicism, saying: "I knew my father was a mortal." Nor could he be induced to take any measures for his release or rescue, professing that

[1] *Vita Valeriani*, c. 2, 2.

[2] Cf. Freeman, *Historical Essays*, third series.

he was satisfied because his father had acted as a brave man. Though the whole world grieved for the unfortunate captive, the servile courtiers with whom Gallienus had surrounded himself lauded him for his forbearance and firmness.

Inconstant and cynical, the character of Gallienus defies analysis or description. He was undoubtedly the cleverest man of his time. Philosopher and poet, man of affairs, successful in everything he undertook except the administration of the Empire, he lacked the quality most essential in a ruler —patriotism. He cared nothing for the fate of the commonwealth, and merely smiled when told that whole provinces had been lost. When Egypt revolted he asked, "What shall we do without Egyptian linen?" When Gaul seceded he laughed, saying, "The republic will be ruined for want of arras-cloth."[1] Voluptuary, cynic, agnostic, he yet retained sufficient sense of justice to put a stop to the war of extermination against the Christians. Scarcely was he freed from the restraining influence of his father, and at liberty to follow his own way, than he took a step from which other and more patriotic Emperors had shrunk. He issued an edict of toleration which guaranteed to the Christians the full and free exercise of their religion.

Unfortunately the text of this edict has been

[1] Pollio, *Gallieni Duo*, c. 6.

lost. Its purport, however, can be easily gathered from the rescripts which the Emperor addressed to the bishops authorizing them to regain possession of the cemeteries and the property of the Church which had been confiscated under the laws of Valerian. Eusebius has inserted in his History a copy of the rescript sent to the bishops of Egypt. The full text is as follows:[1] "Shortly after this Valerian was reduced to slavery by the barbarians, and his son, having become sole ruler, conducted the government more prudently. He immediately restrained the persecution against us by public proclamations,[2] and directed the bishops to perform in freedom their customary duties, in a rescript which ran as follows: —

"'The Emperor Caesar Publius Licinius Gallienus Pius Felix Augustus to Dionysius, Pinnas, Demetrius, and other bishops. I have ordered the bounty of my gift to be declared through all the world, that they [i. e. the heathen] may depart from all the places of religious worship. And for this purpose you may use this copy of my rescript that no one may molest you. And this, which you are now enabled lawfully to do, has already for a long time been conceded by me.[3] Therefore Aure-

[1] *Hist.* vii, 13.

[2] ἀντιγραφή.

[3] "The reference is doubtless to the edicts referred to above, and which he had issued immediately after his accession, but

lius Cyrenius, who is the chief administrator of affairs, will observe this ordinance which I have given.' "

"I have given this in a translation from the Latin," says Eusebius, "that it may be more readily understood. Another decree of his is extant addressed to other bishops, permitting them to take possession again of the so-called cemeteries."

The value of this passage from Eusebius cannot be overestimated. There is no reason to consider it anything but what it claims to be — a faithful translation into Greek from a Latin copy which the Bishop of Caesarea had before him. It shows, in the first place, that a general edict of toleration had been issued from the Imperial Chancery which made Christianity a *religio licita* before the rescript was sent to the bishops in the various provinces. It shows, too, that in the execution of Valerian's edict a different disposition was made of the *loci religiosi*, the meeting-places of the Christians, and the cemeteries. The first were confiscated and sold by the procurator fiscalis ; the second, it would seem, were merely seized and closed up. As we have already seen, the *religiositas* of the cemeteries exempted them from confiscation.[1]

which had not been sooner put in force in Egypt because of the usurper Macrianus." Note by the American editor, from whom I have taken this translation.

[1] De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* tom. i, p. 200.

For the first time peace had been declared between the Church and the pagan Roman State. The hierarchy had received official recognition, and the bishops and priests could henceforth minister to the faithful, and assemble them for prayer and sacrifice, without fear of molestation; their meeting-places and cemeteries were restored; and, should any jealous pagan attempt to interfere with them, they had letters bearing the imperial seal guaranteeing them rights, to disregard which was treason. This was all the advocates of Christianity, the Apologists, had ever claimed; the Edict of Milan fifty-three years later granted nothing more.[1]

The history of the Church from Nero to Gallienus shows that the favor and good will of the Emperors towards the Christians had never entirely stopped the persecutions. Neither Commodus, nor Alexander Severus, nor Philip the Arab had revoked the laws which made belief in Christ a felony, and which placed the lives of His followers at the mercy of every governor or magistrate who cared to enforce the iniquitous edicts of Nero and Trajan.[2]

Speculation has always been busy regarding the influences and motives which could have led Gallienus to take such a bold step as the removal of

[1] Aubé, *l'Eglise et l'Etat*, pp. 439 seq.

[2] Gorres, "Die Toleranzedicte des Kaisers Gallienus," etc., *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie*, 1877, pp. 606 seq.

all the legal disabilities under which his Christian subjects labored. Some are inclined to trace this act of justice to the Emperor's taste for philosophy and his attachment to Plotinus, the leader of the Neo-Platonists.[1] The aim of Neo-Platonism was the synthesis of all the intellectual and religious forces in one composite philosophico-religious system, into which Christianity, though perhaps not formally, was to be admitted. This tendency the Christians themselves opposed. Their hostility to amalgamating the teachings of Christ with the tenets of Neo-Platonism provoked a bitter intellectual struggle, which culminated in the writings of Porphyry, next to Celsus the most violent opponent of Christianity, and which perhaps paved the way for the revival of the spirit of persecution under Diocletian.[2] It was inevitable that some adjustment should take place; but Gallienus was too clear-sighted not to perceive that no *rapprochement* was possible as long as Christianity was legally sequestrated. His interest in the triumph of Neo-Platonism was shown in his willingness to establish a philosophical colony in Campania, where the practical advantages of the system advocated by Plotinus could receive a real test.[3] If the differences

[1] *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, article "Gallienus."

[2] Neander, *Church History*, vol. i, pp. 236 seq.

[3] Porphyry, *Vita Plotini*, c. 12; Jules Simon, *Histoire de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie*, vol. i, p. 208.

between Christianity and the newer-heathenism were to be obliterated, this result could be more readily obtained by transferring the scene of conflict from the realm of law to that of science, from the arena to the school.

The Emperor's wife, Salonina, is by some believed to have been a Christian.[1] If so, her influence was doubtless thrown on the side of her co-religionists; but the invidious position she occupied in the household of Gallienus, and his corruption and gross immoralities, make it extremely doubtful whether he would be amenable to a woman whose life, if she were a Christian, was a standing reproach to his recklessness and luxury.

The character of Gallienus, versatile, volatile, and inconstant, allows no place for the belief that his edict of toleration was the result of any well-considered or consistent scheme of administration. Paradoxical, he could be active or remiss, cruel or lenient, sceptical or philosophical. Immersed

[1] The reasons for thinking that Salonina embraced Christianity arise solely from the inscription *Augusta in Pace* or *Aug. in Pace* found on the medals of the Empress. This formula *In Pace* is found only on Christian monuments. Hence it has been concluded that Salonina was a follower of Christ. De Witte, *Du Christianisme des quelques Impératrices Romaines*, tom. iii, p. 10. Kraus, *Real-Encycl.*, thinks that the symbol proves nothing more than that Christianity was a part of the religious syncretism professed by the Empress. Duruy, *History of Rome*, vi, 387, also doubts whether the Empress was a Christian. Cf. Allard, pp. 163 seq., for a full discussion of the subject.

in luxury and sensuality, he had no regard for tradition or vested rights, and never turned his face towards the future. He took a bold step in advance; but he did not proceed far enough. The incompatibility between Christianity and the heathen Roman State was not a matter to be settled by philosophers or political theorists. It was not enough that Christianity should go forward; idolatry must recede. The social and political structure of Roman life was yet interwoven with pagan beliefs and practices. They occupied the ground for which Christianity was striving. The principle had been affirmed, however, that the existence of the Christian religion was not detrimental to the welfare of the Roman commonwealth: the old adversaries faced one another at last in the open, and prepared for the final struggle in which the prize was the hegemony of souls in imperial Rome.

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