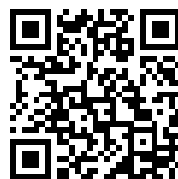

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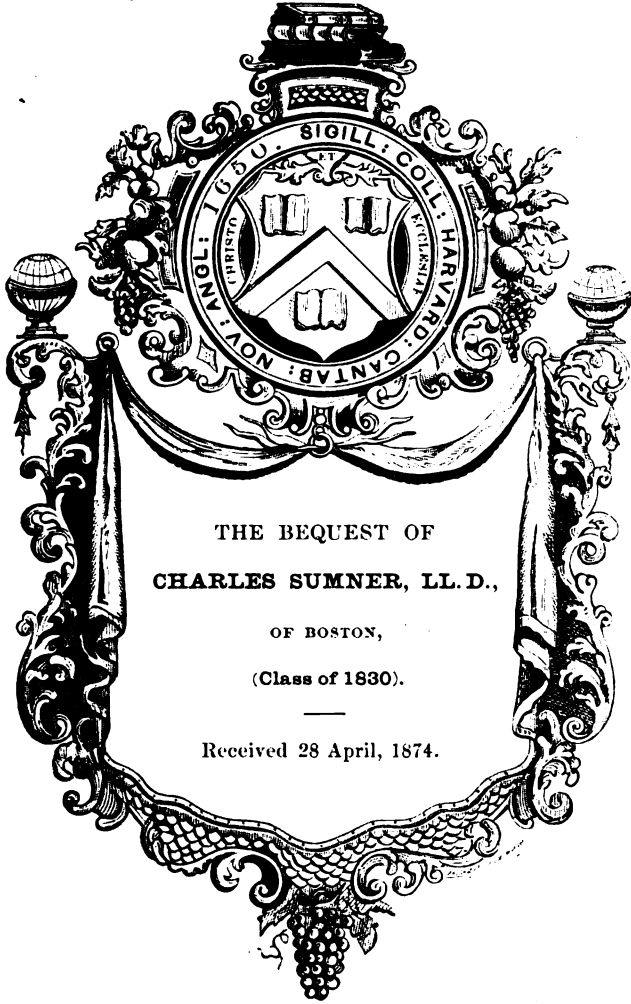
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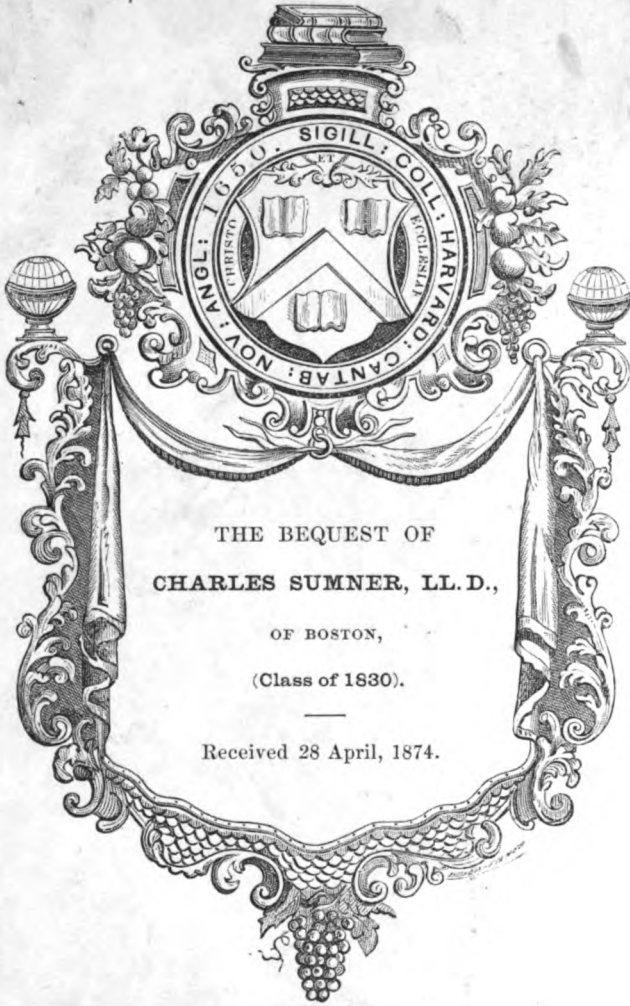
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UNIVERSAL HISTORY §
AMERICANISED;

OR,

AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE WORLD,

FROM THE EARLIEST RECORDS TO THE YEAR 1808.

WITH A PARTICULAR REFERENCE

TO THE

STATE OF SOCIETY, LITERATURE, RELIGION, AND FORM OF
GOVERNMENT,

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

BY DAVID RAMSAY, M. D.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,

A SUPPLEMENT,

CONTAINING

A BRIEF VIEW OF HISTORY,

FROM THE YEAR 1808 TO THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

“Life is so short, and time so valuable, that it were happy for us if all
“great works were reduced to their quintessence.” *Sir William Jones.*

“Primaque ab origine mundi

“Ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen.” *Ovid.*

IN ^{nine} ~~nine~~ VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

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“ Universal History Americanised ; or, an Historical View of the World, “ from the earliest records to the year 1808. With a particular reference “ to the State of Society, Literature, Religion, and Form of Government, “ in the United States of America. By David Ramsay, M. D. To which “ is annexed, a Supplement, containing a brief View of History, from the “ year 1808 to the battle of Waterloo.”

“ ‘ Life is so short, and time so valuable, that it were happy for us if all “ ‘ great works were reduced to their quintessence.’ *Sir William Jones.*

“ ‘ Primaque ab origine mundi

“ ‘ Ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen.’

Ovid.

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UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

ASIA AFTER ALEXANDER.

THE Selucidæ, or kings who succeeded Alexander in Syria and Upper Asia, were so called from Seleucus, who founded that empire called the Syro-Median. He was the son of Antiochus, one of the principal captains of Philip, the father of Alexander. He attended that monarch during his conquests in Asia, and was made commander in chief of the elephants. After the death of Alexander, he was appointed general of cavalry, and afterwards governor of Babylon. In this place he conceived a desire of becoming a sovereign like the other generals of Alexander. Seleucus, in the prosecution of this design, proceeded with great dexterity between the different rivals, who attacked each other with the utmost fury. Antigonus, it is said, discovered his stratagem, and endeavoured to arrest him; but he escaped to Egypt, from which he returned with a small army, and again took possession of Babylon. From this centre he extended his empire to Media; but, while employed with his conquests, Demetrius the son of Antigonus retook Babylon, which he plundered. The excesses committed by this prince made the Babylonians regret Seleucus, who had always treated them with mildness. Being, therefore, recalled, he set out once more to extend his possessions, and, besides Media, reduced to obedience Bactria, Hyrcania, and all the provinces formerly invaded by Alexander. On account of these numerous conquests he was styled Nicanor, that is, conqueror, to which he added the title of king of Babylon and Media. The battle of Ipsus, in which Antigonus was killed, fully established his empire.

Sixteen large cities are said to have been built by this prince, the most considerable of which was Antioch. He fixed his habitation at Antioch, on the Orontes. The bed of the river Euphrates, by gradually becoming higher, had caused the water to overflow its banks, and to inundate the plains around Babylon, where it formed marshes, which rendered the city uninhabitable. After some time, nothing remained of it but the walls. In the fourth century of the christian æra, they served to enclose a park employed for confining wild beasts. Scarcely any vestiges of it can be distinguished at present, and the place on which Babylon stood is even disputed.

Seleucus had a son named Antiochus, whom he loved with the tenderest affection. This prince was attacked by a lingering disease, the cause of which no person could discover. Erasistratus, his physician, who had made himself well acquainted with the diseases of the mind, discovered that the disorder of Antiochus arose from the passion of love, and that the object of his passion was Stratonice, his mother-in-law, the most beautiful woman of her time. He found means to draw this confession from his patient, who told him also, that, having found all his efforts to overcome his passion useless, he had resolved to put himself to death. Erasistratus had no sooner made this discovery than he waited on the king, and informed him that his son's illness proceeded from love, but that it was incurable, because it was impossible for him to enjoy the beloved object, or to live without her. "How! impossible to enjoy the object of his affection!" said the king—"Who is it then?" added he. "It is my wife," replied Erasistratus, "and I am certainly not disposed to resign her to him." "What," replied the king, "can you, my friend Erasistratus, suffer my son, my only hope to perish, by refusing him your wife? Where then is your attachment towards me?" "But," returned the physician, "suppose the prince were passionately fond of Stratonice, would you resign your pretensions to her, and follow that advice yourself which you give to me?" "O ye gods!" cried the father, "I wish I could purchase my son's life by the sacrifice of Stratonice. I would instantly resign her and

my whole kingdom to save the life of a son who is so dear to me." Erasistratus took the monarch at his word. "Antiochus," said he, "can have no other saviour but you, for the object of his love is Stratonice." Seleucus made no hesitation, and resigned his wife to his son.

At this period two only of the thirty-six generals of Alexander, Seleucus and Lysimachus, were alive, but the noble remains of the vast empire which they possessed were not able to gratify their ambition. They endeavoured to deprive each other of certain parts, which they both ought to have abandoned, in order to pass their old age in peace. The thirst of power kept them in a continual state of hostility till the last moment of their lives. Lysimachus perished in battle and Seleucus did not long survive him, being assassinated. This prince distinguished himself among all the kings of his times, by his love of justice, his clemency, and his profound respect for religion. He was fond of letters, and encouraged men of learning. He used to say; "Did men know how painful the duties of royalty are, none of them would be so mad as to accept a crown, or even to take it up were it thrown at their feet."

Under Antiochus Soter, his successor, the Gauls, invited to Asia by Nicomedes king of Bythnia, repaired thither, and founded a state called Gallo-Græcia, or Galatia. The happiness of the king of Syria was disturbed by domestic troubles. One of his sons revolted, and was punished with death. Another of them by Stratonice was appointed his successor. When he ascended the throne he assumed the name of Theos, that is, god. The same title had been given to his father, his grandfather, and their wives, but only after their death. Love, and the madness which attends that passion, occasioned a war between Antiochus and Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt. Magas, king of Cyrene and Lybia, had promised Berenice and his states as a dowry to the son of the Egyptian monarch. On his death, his widow Apame refused to adhere to an engagement which had been made against her inclination, and she invited to receive her daughter's hand, Demetrius, brother to a king of Macedonia. This prince, who was one of the handsomest men of his time,

excited the affection of the widow, and she resolved to marry him herself, to the prejudice of Berenice. Being certain of the mother's attachment, Demetrius shewed very little respect for the daughter, and still less for the courtiers and ministers. They all therefore resolved to get rid of him, and Berenice, having conducted the conspirators to her mother's apartment, they put him to death, notwithstanding the efforts of the queen, who covered him with her own body to defend him from the blows of the assassins. Berenice went to conclude her marriage in Egypt, and the king seized on her dowry. Apame then retired to Antiochus Theos, and persuaded him to endeavour to wrest from the hands of her son-in-law the states which her daughter had brought him.

This gave rise to a bloody war, which was suspended on the part of Antiochus by a revolt of the Parthians and Bactrians. The embarrassment into which Antiochus was thrown by the rebels, compelled him to make a peace, sealed by a marriage, but the consequences of it proved exceedingly fatal to him. He had two children by Laodice his wife, who was also his sister, yet he divorced her, in order that he might marry Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, who brought him immense riches. As long as the Egyptian monarch lived, Antiochus shewed great respect for his daughter, whom he loved to such a degree that he sent to Antioch, water of the Nile, which it was thought the state of her health required; but, unfortunately for Berenice, he died two years after her marriage. Antiochus then dismissed her, and took back Laodice, who returned with her two children, Seleucus and Antiochus Hierax, but with a firm resolution of preventing the future inconstancy of her husband. She adopted indeed a very sure method of effecting her purpose, which was to destroy him by poison, and she endeavoured to render her crime useful. She placed in the bed of the deceased a man named Artemon, who in his features and voice had a perfect resemblance to the king. The impostor recommended to the nobility who came to visit him, his wife and his children. Laodice, at the same time, caused a proclamation to be issued in the name of her husband, whom

the people believed to be still alive, by which her eldest son Seleucus was appointed successor to the crown.

Berenice escaped with her son at her breast to Daphne, where there was a temple dedicated to Apollo, considered as an inviolable asylum. The cruel Laodice, however, paid as little respect to the innocence of her rival as she had done to the sacred bonds of Hymen. She caused Berenice to be massacred, together with her child. The king of Egypt, who hastened to her relief at the head of an army, arrived too late to prevent the murder, but time enough to punish Laodice, whom he put to death. Her sons, Seleucus and Antiochus, spent their lives in disputing for the throne which they ascended in turns. They both died in confinement. Seleucus was ironically surnamed Callinicus the Victorious, because he succeeded in none of his enterprizes. Antiochus was called Hierax the Hawk, because no prey came wrong to him; and Seleucus, the son of Callinicus, who succeeded him, was styled Ceraunus, or the Thunderer, because he was as weak in mind as feeble in body. He reigned only three years; but in that short space was exposed to the perfidious efforts of a conspiracy, which had almost overturned the throne. He maintained himself on it, however, by the councils of his cousin Achæus, the son of Andromachus, his mother's brother; but this faithful relation was not able to secure him from poison. Achæus punished the criminals, and the crown was offered to him, to the prejudice of the brother of the deceased king; but he refused it, and employed himself with success in securing it to Antiochus, who was only fourteen years of age, and under his protection.

In history, this prince has been styled the Great, and he seems to be equally entitled to it by his noble actions and his faults, his prosperity and his misfortunes. Among the last may be reckoned the blind confidence which he long placed in Hermias, who had been the minister of his father Ceraunus, and whom he retained in the same quality. Hermias was obstinate, imperious, and cruel; an enemy to those who possessed talents likely to obscure his own, and could neither bear contradiction nor remonstrance; but he possessed in a

sovereign degree the art of captivating the mind of his master.

By the arrangement made at the beginning of his reign, Achæus took charge of the provinces of Asia Minor; Molo was sent as governor to Media, and Alexander to Persia. The two latter were brothers, and both able generals; and both revolted. Epigenes, a man of profound sense and irreproachable character, remained with the young monarch to command the army attached to his person, but his noble qualities excited the hatred and jealousy of Hermias. Epigenes was of opinion, that it would be prudent for the monarch to subdue the rebels Molo and Alexander, and restore peace to his kingdom before he should attack another; but this measure was opposed by this rival Hermias. He pretended that it was not the business of Antiochus to attack the rebels; that this task was fit only for his general; and that, being a king, he ought to combat against none but kings. This ostentatious advice prevailed over the sound reasoning of Epigenes. The minister even found means to make Epigenes, on account of his persisting in his opinion, to be suspected of collusion with the rebellious governors. Antiochus, however, leaving his general to exercise his own discretion against the rebels, went himself to attack the king of Egypt, but the latter deigned to oppose to him only his generals, who did not suffer him to approach the frontiers.

During this shameful expedition, the rebels acquired more strength, and gained a battle. It was then debated in the council, whether the king should proceed against them in person, or continue to harass Egypt. Hermias and Epigenes, in the course of this discussion, again advanced contrary opinions. That of Epigenes prevailed; but Hermias did not fail to be soon revenged for this preference. The useless expedition against Egypt had exhausted the treasury, and when it was necessary to march, no money could be procured. The troops murmured, and the king found himself under great embarrassment. Hermias then offered to pay the army with his own money, if the king would dismiss Epigenes. He coloured over this insolent proposal with a

pretence, that, after the dissension which had taken place between them, they should never be able to agree, and that the public business would suffer by their discord. To his great regret Antiochus left Epigenes in Apamea, with strict orders not to quit it. After the departure of the king, Hermias caused Epigenes to be conveyed to the citadel, and, as the governor of it was entirely at his devotion, he charged him to find out some crime of which his prisoner might be accused. To suppose a secret correspondence by letters between him and the rebels, to accuse him before his own tribunal, to condemn him and cause him to be executed, was for the governor the affair of one day, and for Hermias to obtain the king's approbation was the affair of a moment.

Antiochus defeated the rebels, and Molo killed himself after an unfortunate battle. One of his brothers, named Neolaus, escaped, and carried to his other brother Alexander the news of his defeat. Finding themselves without any resource, they first put to death their mother, then their wives, and afterwards themselves. Such cruel scenes frequently took place in Asia, where the conquerers were accustomed to spare none of the family of the conquered, lest there should remain avengers, and, through a dread that their destruction might be accompanied with torture, the unhappy wretches chose rather to destroy themselves. Antiochus conceived a design of adding to the provinces he had just conquered, Media, a neighbouring kingdom, inhabited by a warlike people. Hermias at first opposed this expedition, in which the king, from whom he derived all his authority, might perish; but, having learned that the queen was just brought to bed of a son, he strongly urged the king to engage in the war, under an idea that he would be killed, and that he should then be appointed tutor to the young prince. He was deceived, however, in his expectations. The ambitious pretensions of Antiochus were confined to a treaty of peace, the disadvantages of which the attacked king preferred to the danger of hostilities.

Hermias still reigned with insolent despotism, which he extended even to his master. He sometimes spoke to Antiochus in a tone very far distant from that of respect. This

behaviour offended the king. His physician Apollophanes having convinced Antiochus that by abandoning so much authority to such a minister, he was exposing himself to danger, the destruction of Hermias was therefore resolved on. Antiochus enticed him to a secret place, and caused him to be assassinated by his guards. All Syria was filled with the utmost joy by his death. When the news reached Apamea the inhabitants hurried to the house where his wife lodged, and stoned her and her children to death.

One of the greatest crimes of Hermias was that of having rendered Achæus criminal and Antiochus cruel. Faithful to his pupil, Achæus did his utmost to render his government in Asia Minor flourishing. He undertook against his usurping neighbour expeditions which terminated happily, and this success excited the jealousy of Hermias, who endeavoured to ruin Achæus in the esteem of Antiochus, by ascribing to him ambitious views, and a secret connection with Ptolemy, a crime unpardonable with the king of Syria, who still had an eye on Egypt. Achæus well knew that this calumny met with so much credit as to require the greatest precaution for the security of his life. Under this impression, he believed that the best means of saving himself was to assume the crown he had before refused, and to cause himself to be proclaimed king of Asia.

Thus what had been supposed became reality. Achæus entered into an engagement with Ptolemy, who was able to support him, and Antiochus saw himself threatened with a dangerous war. A battle ensued, in which Antiochus sustained a defeat, that would have occasioned the loss of all Syria had he been engaged with a prince less indolent and less fond of pleasure than the monarch of Egypt. This prince, after carrying his laurels into several provinces which submitted, and overrunning Palestine as far as Jerusalem, being desirous of enjoying ease and luxury in his palace, granted an advantageous peace to Antiochus. This peace was a mortal blow to the unfortunate Achæus. His old pupil, who had full time to make the necessary preparations for pursuing him, obliged him to shut himself up in the citadel

of Sardis ; but three Cretans, by an act of treachery, drew him from that asylum, and for a stipulated sum delivered him up to the king. Antiochus saw him shed tears, and caused his head to be struck off. He afterwards endeavoured to re-establish the Syrian empire in its ancient splendour. He expelled the Parthians from Media, pursued them to their own country, forced their king Arsaces to fly to Hyrcania, the capital of which he took, and afterwards granted him peace. He proceeded thence to Bactria, which he would have united to his empire, had he not preferred leaving it under the dominion of a king, to serve as a barrier against the irruptions of the Scythians. In these wars, which lasted seven years, Antiochus shewed as much ability as valour. He was wounded ; undertook laborious marches at the head of his army ; exposed himself to the same sufferings as his soldiers, hunger and thirst, the piercing cold of the mountains of Armenia, and the suffocating heat of the deserts. By this expedition he acquired the surname of Great, which he might have borne with glory to the end of his life, had he not undertaken a war against the Romans.

This war was in its origin just on the part of the republic. In its commencement, the Romans acted only as the protectors of Ptolemy Philopator, an infant whose states Antiochus wished to invade, and who, to enable him to commit that act of injustice, had formed an alliance with Philip, king of Macedonia. The first conquest Antiochus proceeded to make, in order to obtain the rest, was that of Thrace. The Romans pretended that it belonged to them, as depending on Macedonia. Antiochus carried his right so far back as the conquest of that province by Seleucus, his great-grandfather, from Lysimachus, one of the successors of Alexander. Had the claimants spoken out clearly, without involving their pretensions in haughty speeches, Antiochus would have said : " I have need of Thrace, in order that I may reach Greece, and ensure that power which I wish to establish over such states as I think proper : " and the Romans would have replied : " From Greece you may advance to Italy : we will not suffer you to set a foot in Europe. " Such, in a few words, were the motives of this war, which procured to the

Romans an entrance into Asia, and which, in the course of time, carried them much farther into that vast country than they had at first imagined.

The Egyptian war was suspended or terminated by a promise of marriage between two children of four or five years of age, young Ptolemy and a daughter of Antiochus.

As Antiochus had suspended the Egyptian war, he perhaps might have deferred that which he was planning against the Romans, had not his uncertainty been fixed by Hannibal. This great general, expelled by the hatred of the Romans from the ruins of Carthage, had taken shelter in the court of Syria, where he made Antiochus acquainted with the stratagems of the senate, and shewed him that the Romans only wished to amuse him by their embassies, and that they were determined at any rate to involve him in war, that they might subject him to their laws. As Antiochus was too well convinced of the truth of this information, he made great preparations, and hesitated only in regard to the time and manner of employing them.

Hannibal urged an immediate invasion of the Roman territory in Italy, in preference to a war of defence, and traced out the plan of an attack to be made in conjunction with the Gauls, the Carthaginians, their African allies, and the discontented cities of Greece, whom the enemy of the Romans proposed to put in motion. He fixed the station for the armies and fleet, and developed a general invasion, which would have thrown the Romans into great embarrassment had it been wholly adopted, and had the operations been begun with speed.

But Antiochus suffered himself to be anticipated. At the age of fifty, he became enamoured of a beautiful Chalcidian, and amused himself with the joys of wedlock. While he was thus lost in pleasure, the consul Acilius forced the passage of Thermopylæ, gained a battle, and compelled him to return to Asia. Soon after his fleet was defeated, and the way was then left open for the Romans, both by land and sea. The king of Syria imagined he should be able to retard their progress by excursions against their allies, and in particular by invading the territories of the king of Pergamus,

whose kingdom he plundered ; but the Romans did not alter their plan, and always continued to advance, in spite of every opposition. He endeavoured also to excite enemies against them. " These despotic republicans," said he to Prusias, king of Bithynia, " are the most implacable enemies of monarchs, and wish to overturn all their thrones. Colouring their injustice with the specious pretext of giving liberty to the people, they induce them to revolt against their lawful sovereigns. After having subdued Thrace and Macedonia, they now come to attack me, and, if I have not sufficient strength to resist them, you may expect to see them enter Bithynia." This reasoning was just, but Antiochus still retreated, and the Romans advanced, while Prusias accepted their alliance.

Antiochus, thrown into despair by his repeated defeats, was at a loss what measures to pursue. " All my designs," said he, in the depth of his distress, " have been attended with disappointment. Heaven persists to persecute me, and every thing seems to announce my speedy ruin." All the predictions of the Carthaginian hero were realized. The Romans, whom he ought to have kept within their own territories, passed the Hellespont, and entered Asia ; while Antiochus was seized with terror, as he saw himself ready to be attacked in the centre of his states, and exposed to the necessity of hazarding the fate of a battle.

This took place soon after in the plains of Magnesia. The army of Antiochus, though far more numerous, was entirely defeated. Scipio the younger, who commanded the Romans, was indebted for his victory, not so much to his own ability and efforts, as to those of Eumenes, king of Pergamus, whose kingdom Antiochus had ravaged. Antiochus therefore had to contend against an enemy inflamed with a desire of revenge, and against the Romans, accustomed to conquer, and proud of their success. The habits of their strict discipline prevailed. The victorious army was enriched by the plunder of the camp, the most abundant in valuable articles of every kind that perhaps ever existed. The booty obtained in the cities which surrendered in succession, formed a mass of treasure, with which even Rome found itself over-

loaded. "Luxury, adorned with the spoils of Asia, entered Rome in triumph, having every vice in its train. It occasioned more mischief to the Romans than the most destructive war, and avenged the conquered world."

The unfortunate Antiochus was obliged to subscribe to a treaty, the most humiliating perhaps ever dictated to a great power. The Romans required, besides a renunciation of his rights, that he should deliver up his elephants, his galleys and vessels of every kind, together with ten proscribed persons, among whom was Hannibal; twenty hostages between the age of eighteen and forty-five, at the option of the Romans; among that number his own son; five hundred and forty thousand bushels of wheat, and fifteen thousand talents, to be paid in equal parts for twelve years as tribute, but two thousand five hundred down for the expences of the war.—They limited also his navigation and the number of his troops, as well as his alliances and connexion with his neighbours.—Antiochus submitted to all these conditions—suffered his ships to be burnt—and assisted at the sacrifice which was to ratify the treaty. In consequence of this ceremony, each of the contracting parties struck the victim and said: "If I violate my engagements may Jupiter strike me as I strike this victim."

After this period, Antiochus wandered about in his kingdom, going from town to town. In that situation he was put to death, either by his own officers, or by the hands of the people, irritated to see the treasures of their temples carried away to pay the Romans. The end of Antiochus the Great was like that of those rivers which, after flowing some time with a majestic course, hide themselves ignominiously in the sand.

Seleucus Philopator, the son and successor of Antiochus, being embarrassed to collect the tribute promised by his father, spent almost the whole of his reign in searching for money: he is called therefore in the scriptures the raiser of taxes*.

* "Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger nor in battle." Daniel ii, 20. Seleucus Philopator succeeded his father, An-

Heliodorus his treasurer poisoned him with a design of usurping the crown, and perhaps he might have succeeded, had it not been for the arrival of Antiochus, the brother of the deceased king.

This prince had been put into the hands of the Romans as a hostage by his father Antiochus the Great. His brother required that he might be given up, and in exchange for him sent his son Demetrius. Antiochus learned by the way the crime of Heliodorus, and was informed of his intended pro-

tiochus the great, in the throne of Syria, but he performed nothing worthy of the empire of Syria and of his father, and perished ingloriously without fighting any battles. The tribute of a thousand talents, which he was obliged to pay annually to the Romans, was indeed a grievous burden to him and his kingdom: and he was little more than "a raiser of taxes" all his days. He was tempted even to commit sacrilege; for, being informed of the money that was deposited in the temple of Jerusalem, he sent his treasurer Heliodorus to seize it. His reign was of short duration in comparison of his father's, and he was "destroyed neither in anger nor in battle," neither in rebellion at home nor in war abroad, but by the treachery of his own treasurer Heliodorus. Seleucus having sent his only son Demetrius to be a hostage at Rome instead of his brother Antiochus, and Antiochus being not yet returned to the Syrian court, Heliodorus thought this a fit opportunity to dispatch his master; and, in the absence of the next heirs to the crown, to usurp it himself. It would be a digression from the main purpose of this work, but it would be easy to show, that the leading historical events of the period now under review were all circumstantially foretold about two hundred years before they took place by the prophet Daniel, in the 11th chapter of his prophecies. The reader who is desirous to investigate this matter will find it clearly explained and amply confirmed by Bishop Newton, in his elaborate Dissertation on the Prophecies, pages 317—352. American edition. This is concluded as follows, page 352. "It may be proper to stop here, and reflect a little how particular and circumstantial this prophecy is concerning the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, from the death of Alexander to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. There is not so complete and regular a series of their kings, there is not so concise and comprehensive an account of their affairs to be found in any author of those times. The prophecy is really more perfect than any history. No one historian hath related so many circumstances, and in such exact order of time as the prophet hath foretold them; so that it was necessary to have recourse to several authors, Greek and Roman, Jewish and Christian, and to collect here something from one, and to collect there something from another, for the better explaining and illustrating the great variety of particulars contained in this prophecy."

jects. He learned also that he would have a competitor in Ptolemy, king of Egypt, the nephew of the deceased king ; but fortunately he was furnished with an army by Eumenes, king of Pergamos, who, proceeding at the head of it into Asia, placed him on the throne, though, according to the succession, it ought to have been reserved for Demetrius.

The character of Antiochus as drawn by historians is exceedingly whimsical. He was fond, it was said, of running about in the streets of Antioch, and of passing whole days in the shops of the engravers and goldsmiths, conversing with them respecting their trade, which he pretended to know much better than they. If he met any of the lower classes of the people, he readily entered into conversation with them, drank with the meanest of his subjects, formed parties of pleasure with young persons, and danced and sang without any regard to his dignity. These were faults against decency which rendered him ridiculous. Sometimes he was seen in the Roman dress, running from house to house as was practised at Rome when the magistrates were elected, pressing the citizens to give him their suffrages ; presenting his hand to one, embracing another, and soliciting sometimes for the place of ædile, and sometimes for that of tribune. He was fond of wine and good cheer even to excess, and, when intoxicated, he threw by handfuls among the populace money or stones which he had previously provided. This prince was styled Epiphanes the Illustrious, but it would have been more proper to have called him Epimanes the Madman. However, it must be allowed, that Antiochus could intermix great things with these mean actions.

Four expeditions which he undertook against Egypt were concerted with address, and conducted with bravery and ability. He sent spies, under the title of ambassadors, to examine every thing minutely. When he found that negligence, want of discipline, and effeminacy every where prevailed, he entered the kingdom, under pretences which may always be found, and took some towns, and gained several battles. The young king, Ptolemy Philometor, who was his relation, threw himself into his arms as lost. Antiochus gave him a favourable reception, but carried him away prisoner,

as well as all the gold, silver, and precious vessels which he could find in that opulent country. This formed so much towards paying the tribute due to the Romans. When he transmitted the money to them, he took care to add some of the rarities of Egypt, to make the senate satisfied with his reasons for attacking it. The senate received his presents, but did not declare its sentiments respecting his expedition, so that Antiochus was emboldened to undertake another, which, on account of the pillage of the maritime cities, was equally lucrative.

The Egyptians, having no hope of seeing Ptolemy Philometor released from his captivity, placed upon the throne his younger brother, named Ptolemy Euergetes or Physcon. This gave occasion to Antiochus to enter the kingdom, and the council of the new king resolved to solicit the protection of the Romans for an unfortunate minor, persecuted by his relation. These republicans, flattered by this supplication, and ambitious of being called the tutors of kings, a title which they assumed afterwards, sent ambassadors to enquire into the nature of the dispute. The cause was pleaded with great solemnity in the camp of Antiochus, who determined to enter into an accommodation, but he said, that he had occasion for two men taen at a great distance, and who would be a long time in arriving, to clear up certain points, and to regulate the conditions. But the arbiters having made him ashamed of the evasion which he employed, he added: "Let us say nothing more on the subject. Egypt belongs to Ptolemy Philometor, the eldest of the two brothers; let him be recalled, let him be placed upon the throne, and the war will be terminated."

He expected that neither of the two brothers would yield, that a quarrel would therefore arise, and that he could take advantage of that opportunity to ruin them both. A quarrel indeed took place, but it was checked by their sister Cleopatra, who made them consent to hold the helm of government in conjunction. This union gave great joy to the Egyptians, and occasioned the utmost uneasiness to Antiochus, who made haste to interrupt or oppose it, but he found by the way the ancient arbiters. Never did the Roman ma-

jesty shine with so much splendour. Three ambassadors, among whom was Popilius, arrived with a simple train, without fleet or army. As Antiochus had known the latter during the time he resided at Rome as a hostage, he advanced and stretched out his hand to him. "I will not accept that sign of friendship," said the Roman; "until you have read the decree of the senate." This decree interdicted him from proceeding to hostilities. Antiochus read it without any apparent emotion, and said he would return an answer when he had consulted his council. Popilius, having a rod in his hand, drew a circle on the sand around the king, and said, "You shall not quit this circle until you declare whether you accept or refuse the proposals contained in the decree. I hope you will respect the order of the senate and Roman people."

They were respected, and even with circumstances which bordered on meanness. Antiochus sent ambassadors to Rome to make a humble declaration of his obedience to the republic. "Egypt," said they, in his name, "was ready to acknowledge me as its sovereign. You have forbidden it, and I obey your orders as I do those of the immortal gods." Popilius and the other ambassadors were conducted by him in great pomp to his Asiatic states. He paid them every honour which the most abject flattery could imagine. Wherever they appeared, they were sole sovereigns; and he resigned to them his palace without residing in it himself.

Excessive deference generally excites distrust. The Romans learned that Antiochus was preparing an armament. Tiberius Gracchus, sent by the senate to visit the kings, republics, and free cities of Greece, thought it necessary to proceed to Antioch, to examine into the conduct of a prince whose power might become formidable. The king of Syria, on his part, thought proper to amuse the Romans by entertainments. This showed that he was little acquainted with the severe character of Gracchus. Antiochus sent for the most celebrated actors, with the best workmen of Europe and Asia, gave spectacles and feasts, and invited an innumerable crowd to be present at them; but what disgraced him in the eyes of the least delicate, was performing a part himself in

a theatrical piece, flattered with the idea of making the people laugh by buffoonery and indecencies which did violence to modesty. The ambassadors always appeared to be the object of his attention and adoration. He even went so far as to offer to him his diadem ; but Gracchus refused it with disdain, and on his return to Rome said, that after what he had seen, he might assert that no danger was to be apprehended from the king of Syria.

The principal ornaments exhibited at these entertainments consisting of gold and silver plate, and valuable tissue, were the spoils taken from the Jews. Antiochus sold to the highest bidder the dignity of high priest. The purchaser exacted from the people the sum he had expended. This produced schism, dissension, and wars, in which Antiochus took a share to support those who purchased his protection. He took Jerusalem, put forty thousand men to the sword, and sold forty thousand more as slaves. Being introduced by the false high priest Menelas, he penetrated to the sanctuary called the holy of holies (a place forbidden to every mortal except the high priest, and to him only once a year,) and caused a hog to be sacrificed on the altar of burnt offerings, an animal abhorred by the Jews, ordered the temple to be sprinkled with the water in which it had been boiled, in order to render it impure, and carried away the altar of incense, the table of show-bread, and the candlestick with seven branches. To add to their misfortune the conqueror established as governor a Phrygian named Philip, a ferocious and oppressive tyrant.

The severities exercised against the Jews obliged them to take up arms. The Maccabees put themselves at their head, and gained great advantages over Lysias, a good general, in whom Antiochus placed great confidence. This prince had sent him into Judea with an army which he thought sufficient for subduing the revolted Jews; but he was defeated. When Antiochus received this intelligence, he fell into a violent passion, and swore he would exterminate this rebellious and obstinate nation, and annihilate the worship of the God whom they adored. He was marching with precipitation, or rather running to execute his design, when he found himself attacked with a severe pain in his bowels. The violence of his suf-

ferings did not however cool his ardour. Having ordered his horses to be urged on with greater speed, he was thrown from his chariot by the rapidity of the movement, and his flesh was so bruised by the fall, that it dropped in pieces from his body. It became filled also with worms, and emitted an infectious odour, which rendered him insupportable to himself. While thus a prey to the most excruciating torture, he acknowledged the just punishment of God, and promised, if he should recover his health, to repair the losses he had occasioned to the Jews, to cause the sacred vessels to be carried back to the temple, and even to embrace the law of circumcision. His repentance, however, was of no avail as to the prolongation of his life.

Antiochus left an infant son named Antiochus Eupator, but he had also a nephew named Demetrius, who was a hostage at Rome. This young prince, when he heard of his uncle's death, asked permission to go and take possession of the states of his father Seleucus, which Antiochus had seized when the nephew was exchanged for the uncle. He proposed that his cousin Eupator should come and assume his place as hostage, while he went to recover the throne which Antiochus left vacant by his death. The demand of the young prince was just, and he made it known in a full senate, but the conscript fathers thought it would be more advantageous for the republic to keep Asia under the power of a minor, than to commit it into the hands of a young active prince, who would become acquainted with his own forces and might be tempted to employ them. They refused, therefore, to comply with the request of Demetrius, and at the same time declared, that they took Eupator under their protection, and would become his guardians. They appointed three men of great experience to discharge that office under their inspection. The senate did not confine itself to the policy of maintaining an infant on the throne ; it recommended to the tutors to govern the kingdom in such a manner as might be proper to weaken it, and desired them to burn all the ships, and to hamstring the elephants.

Octavius, the first of the three tutors, immediately set out, and proceeded through Cappadocia. When he arrived in that

country, Ariarthes, the sovereign of it, was much astonished to see him without troops or guards, and preparing, without any precaution, to enter Asia, in order to take upon him the government of a people who had not invited him ; especially as he knew that the young monarch had already a tutor named Lysias, a man of ability and cunning, who was not very scrupulous in his principles, and whom he certainly would not find disposed to be deprived of his employment. Ariarthes offered to Octavius to accompany him at the head of an army, the command of which he would resign to him, and he begged him at least to accept of an escort. But what escort, in the opinion of the haughty republican, was equivalent to the name of Rome ? He refused the offer, and entered Syria with no other attendants than those who used to follow him into Italy. Without so much as deigning to inform the regent of his arrival, he proceeded straight forwards to Laodicea, caused the ships to be burnt in his presence, and the elephants to be rendered unfit for service. The people being incensed at this arbitrary proceeding, an assassin employed by Lysias, taking advantage of a favourable opportunity, put Octavius to death. He was canonized at Rome ; and a statue was erected to his memory, among those of the great men who had shed their blood for their country.

Demetrius imagined that this murder would irritate the senate, and that he should easily obtain permission to go and dethrone the pupil of Lysias, who was known to be the author of the assassination. He asked leave, therefore, a second time, contrary to the sentiments of Polybius, the historian, one of the greatest politicians of his time, who said to the prince : " Take my advice, and do not twice stumble against the same stone. Have you but one way of getting into Syria ? Should a man of your age depend on the will of a senate composed of unjust and ambitious men ? Only dare to break your chains, and you will of course reign." As Polybius foretold, Demetrius met with a refusal. He then took measures to escape, and set out for his paternal kingdom. When he arrived at a place of safety, he wrote a letter to the senate, filled with excuses, thanks, and promises.

The senate pretended great indifference in regard to this event, and suffered the rivals to attack each other: the contest, however, was not of long duration: By means of a report which Demetrius spread, that he had been sent by the Romans, the people espoused his cause, and he soon got rid of Lysias and his young pupil, who were both massacred. He then ascended the throne, and was acknowledged king by the Romans.

Demetrius Soter, who had profited by favouring an imposture, was himself a victim to one. Ariarthes, king of Cappadocia, had married Antiochus, the daughter of Antiochus the Great. This princess remained several years after marriage without having a child. She was supposed therefore to be barren, and as she apprehended that this fault might deprive her of the love of her husband and his subjects, she twice pretended to be pregnant, and had the address to give the king two supposititious sons, but she afterwards became really pregnant, and brought forth successively two daughters and a son. As she then declared and proved to her husband that the two other children, named Ariarthes and Holophernes, were supposititious, he caused them to be sent out of the kingdom with a sufficient pension for their maintenance. The eldest, named Ariarthes, went to Rome, and, being destitute of talents or courage, seemed to be little affected by his misfortune. On the second, named Holophernes, who was active and enterprising, it made a greater impression. He was sent to Ionia, and prohibited from ever returning to Cappadocia.

On the death of king Ariarthes, his real son, named also Ariarthes, succeeded his father without any opposition. Demetrius offered him in marriage his sister Laodice, the widow of Perses, king of Macedonia, who had been treated with so much indignity by the Romans. As this alliance displeased the king of Cappadocia, he protested against it, and his refusal gave offence to that of Syria. The latter listened to the pretensions of Holophernes, encouraged them, and placed him on the throne of Cappadocia. Ariarthes having attacked Holophernes, recovered his crown, and obliged him to take refuge at the court of his benefactor.

Demetrius, being freed from all care, began to abandon himself in obscure retreats to a dissolute life, which exposed him to the contempt of his people. Holophernes, observing them in this disposition, conceived a design of mounting the throne of Syria, thus disgraced by a profligate sovereign. He accordingly formed a conspiracy, which was to be seconded by Attalus, king of Pergamus, and Ptolemy, king of Egypt. It was, however, discovered, and Demetrius for this time escaped the danger to which he had been exposed by his declaration in favour of an impostor. But he prepared for himself another, the consequence also of an imposture, which he was not able to avoid.

The kings of Pergamus and Egypt both continued his enemies, and that of Cappadocia naturally united himself to them. While they were exerting themselves with the utmost ardour to find out some method of harassing him, they met with a man named Heraclides, who wished to avenge the death of a brother and his own banishment. His brother, Timarchus, had been governor of Babylon when Demetrius ascended the throne, and he himself was treasurer of the province. Both of them were much respected by Antiochus Epiphanes, and consequently attached to Eupator, his young son. Owing either to this attachment, or to their being accused of extortion by the people, Demetrius caused the governor to be beheaded, and the treasurer to be banished. The latter retired to Rhodes; and as he was acquainted with the secrets as well as the manners and customs of the court of Syria, he sought for a young man qualified by his talents and figure to act properly the part which he intended him to perform. Having met with one Balas, who seemed suited for his purpose, he gave him the necessary instruction, and made him assume the name of Alexander. They then gained over Laodice, the real daughter of Epiphanes, who acknowledged him as her brother, and trusting to the support of the three kings, who were acquainted with and favoured the project, Heraclides carried his disciple to Rome, and presented him to the senate.

Heraclides reminded the conscript fathers of their alliance with Antiochus, their suspicions of Demetrius, and their re-

pugnance to open the way for him to the throne : " Yet you were ignorant," said he, " that Antiochus Epiphanes left any other children but Eupator, who was cruelly assassinated, and that one of his children is still alive." Then turning to Balas : " Be not afraid," added he, " illustrious descendant of one of the first kings of Syria. I have drawn you from the misery in which you were buried, to conduct you to the foot of the most powerful and most equitable of tribunals. Speak for yourself, and be persuaded, that a cause so just as yours must be approved and supported by the august assembly which hears you." The speech of Balas alluded chiefly to the attachment of his father, the future gratitude of the son, and the unalterable union which would be established between Rome and Syria.

Though the senate had pretended to be indifferent in regard to the escape of Demetrius, it still retained a secret displeasure on that account, and it was, besides, of importance for the republic that the seeds of discord should be sown in distant countries, in order that they might solicit its assistance. To the great astonishment of the whole city, who were convinced of the imposture of Balas, the senate passed the following decree : " The senate and Roman people having heard the demand of Alexander and Laodice, the children of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, the friend and ally of the republic, permit the son to prosecute the right given to him by his birth, and we recommend to our allies to assist him in this enterprize." The last clause authorized Balas to collect troops, and immediately excited against Demetrius a multitude of enemies, among whom was Jonathan, chief of the Jews, then in alliance with the Romans, whose prudence and valour added great strength to the party of Balas. Demetrius, being well convinced of the superiority of his rival, sent his two sons Demetrius and Antiochus, for the sake of safety, to the house of a friend, who resided in Cnidus, a city of Caria, and made preparations for a decisive battle. His left wing penetrated that of the enemy opposed to it, and unfortunately advanced too far in the pursuit. The prince maintained for a long time the shock of the centre and of the other wing of the enemy, hoping to see his own

return. He was at last obliged to order a retreat, and remained behind his troops to cover them ; but his horse happening to plunge into a bog, he was abandoned by his soldiers at the moment when ready to be surrounded by the enemy. He, however, combated alone on foot against the multitude, till, being at length overpowered, he fell covered with wounds.

Though the king of Egypt could not be ignorant that Balas was an impostor, he gave him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage. Prosperity made the vicious character of the new king display itself in full force. He plunged into debauchery and indecency of every kind, and abandoned the reins of government to Ammonius, a man of a gloomy and ferocious disposition. Acts of violence, exercised against people of all ranks, rendered their government odious. Demetrius, the eldest of the children who had fled, was informed in his retreat that the people were discontented, and Lasthenes, his host, having procured for him some companies of Cretans, he entered Cilicia at their head. His troops soon increased, and the province submitted to his authority.

Alexander Balas, finding himself hard pressed, called in Ptolemy, his father-in-law, who arrived, having under his standards an immense crowd. It might have been believed that he was going to protect Balas, but he carried away his daughter from him, and gave her to Demetrius. This exchange, it is said, was meant as a punishment for a conspiracy of the son-in-law against the father-in-law. The consequences were fatal to Balas. The inhabitants of Antioch tore to pieces Ammonius, whom they found concealed under a female dress. His master, the king, experienced a fate not much better. Having lost a battle, he fled as far as he could, and endeavoured to find shelter under the tent of an Arab, a nation commonly hospitable, but he was put to death.

The king of Egypt found it very difficult to make the inhabitants of Antioch consent to have Demetrius for king, as they were afraid of finding in him the vices of his father, particularly indolence in government and abuse of authority. Their apprehensions were too well founded. The new king left all the power to Lasthenes, the friend of his father-in-

law, by whom he had been educated. The latter was both cruel and impolitic. Cruel, because he sought out all those who had been attached to Balas, and put them to death; and impolitic, in disgusting the old soldiers who composed the ordinary guard of the kings, and reducing them to a few companies of Cretans, who could not be of much service. His want of address, in bringing upon himself the hatred and contempt of the people, and his imprudence in depriving him of his best defence, inspired a resolute man with a design of dethroning Demetrius.

This man, named Diodotus, and afterwards surnamed Tryphon, was of ordinary birth. Balas had made him governor of Antioch, and he had gained the confidence of the new minister, who shut his eyes against a piratical kind of commerce which he carried on. This commerce consisted in keeping vessels to cruise along the coasts of Asia, where they procured slaves, which Diodotus sold at great price to the Romans, who at that time were fond of being attended by a great number of domestics. By this traffic Diodotus acquired great riches, and he carried his confidence of impunity so far as to build, in the neighbourhood of Antioch, a fortress, in which he shut up his treasures. This gave no umbrage either to the king or his minister, for neither of them was aroused from his torpor till Diodotus openly shewed his designs.

Balas had left a son, still an infant, born to him by his wife Cleopatra. Tryphon suddenly appeared with this young Antiochus, and published a manifesto containing the claims of the young prince, to whom he declared himself tutor. On this intelligence, all the soldiers whom Demetrius had discharged without any reason, and a number of other malcontents, joined the pretender. Demetrius, being surprized, was obliged to shut himself up in Seleucia. Diodotus then took possession of Antioch, together with the elephants, which at that time formed the chief strength of the Asiatic armies, and the money in the treasury, and caused his pupil to be proclaimed. He found means also to bring over to his party, Jonathan, the Jewish chief, who had been before at-

tached to Balas, and who without doubt considered himself obliged to follow the standard of his son.

It may readily be presumed, that Tryphon did not give himself so much trouble to preserve the crown on the head of an infant. He wished to place it on his own, and when he saw the greater part of Syria subject to his obedience, he got rid, at the same time, of his pupil and of Jonathan, whom he knew to be attached to the family of Balas. As the young prince was attacked with the stone, nothing was necessary but to give orders that the operation of cutting, to which he was obliged to submit, should be badly performed. He accordingly died, and Tryphon assumed the Diadem. Frequent battles took place between him and Demetrius, and hostilities were suspended only by a strange resolution of the latter. Being solicited by the inhabitants of the country situated between the Indus and the Euphrates, who were continually exposed to the incursions of the Parthians, he determined to make war on these people, under a persuasion that if he returned conqueror he would easily recover from Diodotus the rest of the empire. At first he had great success; but the Parthians laid an ambuscade for him, and took him prisoner. Their king Mithridates, after carrying him about as a captive through the disputed provinces, treated him with every kind of respect, assigned to him Hyrcania as a place of residence, with a revenue suited to his dignity, and even gave him his daughter Rhodogune in marriage; but still kept him in a sort of confinement.

On hearing of his imprisonment, his spouse Cleopatra had retired to Seleucia, with two children whom she had borne to him, but, fearing that she might be besieged there by Tryphon, she wrote to Antiochus, the youngest brother of Demetrius, to come to her assistance, and offered him the crown and her hand. She was no doubt induced to make the latter proposal by the knowledge she had of the marriage of Rhodogune. Antiochus, who had been called Sidetus, or the Hunter, accepted her invitation, married her, and, having mounted the throne, defeated Tryphon, and routed his army. In flying, he scattered money, it is said, behind him,

in order to stop those by whom he was pursued. The accounts given of his death are various.

Sidetes governed with justice and mildness, and acquired in an uncommon degree the love and esteem of his subjects.

This prince might have lived happy and reigned with glory, had it not been for his desire of recovering the provinces wrested from him by the Parthians. He gave out, as a pretence for the war, that he meant to deliver his brother from captivity, as if he was anxious to break the chains of a monarch whose wife and kingdom he possessed. He suffered his camp to be encumbered with all the appendage of luxury : suttlers, cooks, comedians, musicians, women, children, and their attendants, so that the army, which contained nearly eighty thousand combatants, consisted of more than three hundred thousand persons. Every thing went on well while they had to march under a summer's sky, through the beautiful plains of Media and Babylon. Antiochus gained three battles, but when the period arrived of going into winter quarters, the necessity of lodging all these people made him divide his army into small bodies. The Parthians, ever active and vigilant, stole imperceptibly into the intervals, while the inhabitants, tired of these troublesome guests, concerted with the enemy a general massacre ; and in one day all the Syrians were butchered or loaded with irons, and Antiochus perished along with them.

The defeats which the king of the Parthians had sustained, made him resolve to release Demetrius, that he might endeavour to effect a diversion by the co-operation of the two brothers ; but, immediately after the catastrophe of Sidetes, he sent in pursuit of his prisoner, who, fearing this change, had hastened his departure. The cavalry dispatched for that purpose not being able to overtake him, he returned to his own kingdom, and unfortunately found there his wife Cleopatra. A captivity of nine years, occasioned by his having involved himself imprudently in a foreign war, had not rendered him wiser. He interfered in a quarrel between Ptolemy Physcon, king of Egypt, and his spouse Cleopatra, whom he had divorced. The latter having proposed the throne and her hand to Demetrius, he was tempted by the

offer, and invaded Egypt. While besieging Pelusium, the inhabitants of Antioch, Apamea, and several other cities, irritated on account of his tyrannical government, revolted, and received with every testimony of joy a pretended son of Alexander Balas, sent to them by the king of Egypt. This impostor, named Tebina, was the son of a broker of Alexandria. The people were so much displeased with Demetrius, that Tebina soon found himself at the head of an army, and the king, being defeated and forced to fly, thought he should find an asylum in Ptolemais, where his wife Cleopatra resided; but she caused the gates to be shut against the husband of Rhodogune. He then took shelter in Tyre, where he was put to death by the governor whom he had himself established in that city.

The kingdom of Syria, after this event, was divided between Tebina and Cleopatra. Seleucus, whom the latter had born to Demetrius Nicanor, assumed the title of king in the provinces next to those governed by his mother. Through a dread that this prince might stand in her way, Cleopatra invited her son to come and confer with her on an affair of importance, and, at a moment when he least expected it, she plunged a poniard into his bosom. She then sent for another of her sons, whose age made her hope that he would be a long time on the throne without entertaining any idea of taking the reins of government into his own hands. He was named Antiochus, and got the surname of Grypus, in allusion to his acquiline nose. Syria, while partitioned between Cleopatra and Tebina, was pretty quiet.

Tebina was mild, merciful, and just, and inspired confidence by his fidelity in performing his promises. Three of his principal officers having revolted, he employed no other means to bring them back to their duty than the hope which he held forth to them of obtaining pardon, and even of recovering their offices. They laid down their arms, without asking any farther security than his bare word. After this submission, he lived with them on the same terms as before, and never threw out the least reproach against them for their conduct. Though of low birth, he possessed great magnanimity. He never would subject his kingdom to the payment

of tribute, nor even to simple homage, which the king of Egypt demanded. From being a benefactor, the Egyptian monarch became his persecutor. He excited Grypus to take up arms against him, and, as a pledge of his vengeance, gave to the king of Syria his daughter Tryphæna in marriage. Tebina, hard pressed on two sides, was unable to withstand his opponents. Having lost a battle, he went on board a vessel in order to fly to Greece, but he was taken on his passage by a pirate, who delivered him up to Grypus, by whom he was put to death. He may be classed among the number of those few, who by their usurpation neither made themselves formidable, contemptible, nor hated.

The war against Tebina freed Grypus in some measure from the tutorship of his mother. Cleopatra, being offended that he should attempt to shake off her authority, resolved to transfer the sceptre to a third son whom she had borne to Antiochus Sidetes. As this young prince was an infant, she had reason to hope that his feeble hands would long suffer her to have the management of affairs. She resolved, therefore, to get rid of Antiochus, and, with this view, having prepared a poisonous draught, she offered it to him one day as he returned hot and fatigued from some exercise. The prince, it is said, who had been forewarned of her design, pretending to respect his mother, desired her to drink first, but as she excused herself, he insisted, and declared before the whole court that there was no other means, by which she could be freed from the suspicion entertained of her having an intention to poison him. Cleopatra, finding no evasion would avail her, swallowed the poison, and expired. She had been the wife of three kings, and the mother of four. She occasioned the death of two of these husbands, killed one of her children with her own hand, and attempted to poison the other.

During eight years, the reign of Grypus was attended with a considerable degree of tranquillity. To secure this advantage, like a son worthy of Cleopatra, he endeavoured to poison one of his brothers, surnamed Cyzicenus, the son of Antiochus Sidetes. The prince, finding his life threatened, put himself in a state of defence, and a lucky chance furnished

him with unexpected assistance. Lathyrus, the son of Physcon, king of Egypt, had married his sister Cleopatra, and though that prince entertained a tender affection for his spouse he was obliged by his mother to divorce her, and to marry his youngest sister Selene. Both of them were the sisters of Tryphæna, the wife of Grypus. The divorced princess, finding herself free, offered her hand to Cyzicenus, and, instead of a dowry, brought him an army. Cyzicenus was defeated, and made his escape, but his wife fell into the hands of Grypus. Her sister Tryphæna requested that her husband would deliver his prisoner into her hands, that she might have the pleasure of putting her to death; but the king, disgusted by this request, accused his wife of cruelty, and declared that he would never comply with any demand of the like kind.—Tryphæna imagined that she could see in this firmness of her husband the certain proof of an amour which she already suspected. Her unfortunate sister had taken shelter in one of the temples of Antioch; and, while her husband was endeavouring to moderate her fury, she sent thither assassins, who, not being able to drag Cleopatra from the altar which she embraced, cut off her hands. They then dispatched her, while imploring the gods whose temple they profaned, and uttering curses against the authors of so barbarous a murder.

The history of the unfortunate family of the Selucidæ, after this period, is nothing but a disgusting tissue of the most horrid crimes: poisoning, assassination, incest, and fratricide. Five sons of Grypus reigned in succession, and perished by violent deaths. Cyzicenus expired in the flames, a victim of sedition. The kingdom being afterwards divided, one part considered Antioch, and another Damascus, as its capital: some cities erected themselves into republics, and others submitted to the power of one ruler, called a tyrant. The wives and sisters of the monarchs usurped power, and formed principalities, which were transferred by marriages. Two of them are suspected of having married their own sons. At length irregularity and confusion were carried to such extent, that the Syrians themselves, a people possessed of very little delicacy of manners, became tired of them. They expelled, therefore, all these kings who were engaged in bloody con-

tests with each other, and called in Tigranes, king of Armenia, to govern them.

The Romans, though often applied to by the competitors, had been extremely cautious not to afford to any party such assistance as would give it a preponderance. They received embassies, accepted presents, and suffered them to ruin each other. The moment for reaping the fruits of their selfish policy at length arrived. Tigranes was conquered by Ptolemy. When the Armenian prince received from the people the sceptre of Syria, Selene, the widow of Grypus, had formed a small state, where she educated two sons whom she had borne to Antiochus Cyzicenus. The eldest was named Antiochus the Asiatic, and the other Seleucus Cybiosactes. Tigranes dispersed this family, and, having taken the mother, put her to death. The two sons, though ill able to cope with so powerful a prince, maintained themselves the best way they could, sometimes in one part of the kingdom, and sometimes in another, flattering themselves with the hope of obtaining the friendship of the Roman republic, by means of the presents which they lavished on the senators during their visits to Rome. But when Asiaticus explained to Pompey his pretensions and his hopes, after some pretty severe reproaches respecting the negligence which the Syrian prince had shewn in prosecuting his right, the Roman general said: "The kingdom of Syria belongs to Tigranes: we have conquered him, and, consequently, his rights have become ours. Thus the empire of Syria belongs to the Roman republic, which is better able to defend it than you." By this decision the kingdom of Syria, so rich, so powerful, and one of the most beautiful gems in the crown of Alexander, became in sixty-five B. C. a Roman province. Of the two brothers, the last of the descendants of the Seleucidæ, Antiochus died in obscurity, and Seleucus married Berenice, queen of Egypt, his relation. This princess becoming disgusted with her husband, took the shortest way to get rid of him, and put him to death. The Syro-Median empire lasted two hundred and sixty-three years, during which time it had been exposed to continual agitation. The centre of Asia, the richest and most beautiful part of that vast country, which is itself the

richest of the four quarters of the world, has been subjected to perpetual revolutions. Ninus, Semiramis, and their successors carried their bloody standards over the plain watered by the Tygris and the Euphrates. These conquerors gave birth to the monarchy of the Assyrians, which was lost in that of the Medes and Persians. The impetuous Alexander conquered and dispersed all those who came in his way, and, before he had consolidated his empire, left it to his generals. In consequence of their destroying each other, one only remained master of the kingdoms of Asia. His descendants, known under the name of the Seleucidæ, in like manner destroyed each other. By discord their empire was abandoned to the Romans, who reaped the fruits of it, and governed it by prætors, pro-consuls, and generals, for six hundred and ninety-nine years.

In A. D. six hundred and thirty-four, the Saracens invaded this country, and they completed the conquest of it in six hundred and forty. In nine hundred and seventy it was conquered by the Fatimites, immediately after their conquest of Egypt. In eleven hundred and sixty-six, Nuroddin, the Atabek of Damascus, gained several advantages over the Egyptians, and his nephew, the famous Saladin, being chosen vizier of Egypt, upon the death of Al Aded, the last of the Fatimite caliphs, assumed the government, and established a new dynasty, the princes of which were called Ajobites. In twelve hundred and fifty-nine, this country was conquered by Hulaku the Tartar, but it was presently recovered by the sultans of Egypt. It was ravaged by Timur Bek in fourteen hundred, but was not kept by him. After this time it underwent the revolutions of Egypt till both were conquered by Selim I, emperor of the Turks, in fifteen hundred and seventeen. It has ever since remained a part of the Turkish empire.

Origin and Progress of Oracles.

The great bond that first united, and afterward principally held the Greeks together, was their religion.

Superstition was early formed into a system in Egypt. The same body forming the hereditary priesthood and the nobility of the nation, directed with a high hand the belief and consciences of the people, and prophecy was perhaps the most indispensable part of their office. It was usual with the Phenician traders, then the general carriers of the Mediterranean, to steal women. It happened that the master of a Phenician vessel carried off a woman-attendant of the temple of Jupiter at Thebes, on the Nile, and sold her in Thesprotia, a mountainous tract in the north-western part of Epirus, bordering on the Illyrian hordes. Though reduced to slavery among barbarians, the woman soon became sensible of the superiority which her education in a more civilized country gave her over them, and she conceived hopes of mending her condition by practising upon their ignorance what she had acquired of those arts, which in able hands imposed upon a more enlightened people. She gave out that she could discover present secrets, and foretel future events. Her pretensions excited curiosity; she chose her station under the shade of a spreading oak, where, in the name of the god Jupiter, she delivered answers to numbers who came to consult her, and shortly her reputation as a prophetess extended as far as the people of the country were known. These simple circumstances of her story were afterward, according to the genius of those ages, turned into a fable. A black pigeon, they said, flew from Thebes in Egypt to Dodona, and perching upon an oak proclaimed with human voice, "That an oracle of Jupiter should be established there." The Dodonæans, concluding that a divinity spoke through the agency of the pigeon, obeyed the mandate, and the oracle was established. The historian accounts for the fiction thus. The woman on her arrival speaking in a foreign dialect, the Dodonæans said she spoke like a pigeon, but afterward, when

she had acquired the Grecian speech and accent, they said the pigeon, who from her darker complexion was called the black pigeon, now spoke with a human voice. The trade of prophecy being both easy and lucrative, the office of the prophets was readily supplied both with associates and successors. A temple for the deity and habitations for his ministers were built; and thus arose the oracle of Jupiter at Dodona.

In consequence, probably, of the success at Dodona, oracles were attempted in various places. Olympia was famous for the oracle of Olympian Jupiter. The pretension to the gift of prophecy, as a dispensation of the deity to certain individuals, being found still lucrative, continued still to be common. But it was often dangerous: for, in gratifying one great man, though by telling the simple truth, the ill will of another, or perhaps of the multitude, was excited. Whenever, therefore, means occurred for establishing the belief that a deity favoured any particular spot with his peculiar presence, and would deign there to communicate with mortals; the faithful delivery of the divine mandate no longer then depended on the credit of a single person, but a college of priests became its warrant, while the supposed sanctity of the place protected all within its precincts. Through such inducements many oracles were in early times established, which, like Olympia, succeeded for a time and decayed. But the oracle which held its reputation, and extended it, we may say, over the world, was Delphi. Of this celebrated place, so many fables are related, that it is no easy matter to determine what to believe or what to reject. We will endeavour to point out a few facts, which may assist in forming some general idea of the whole.

On the southern side of Mount Parnassus, the mountain-crags form a natural amphitheatre, difficult of access, in the midst of which a deep cavern discharged a vapour powerfully affecting the brain of those who came within its influence. This, we are told, was first brought to public notice by a goatherd, whose goats browsing on the brink were thrown into singular convulsions, upon which the man going to the spot, and endeavouring to look into the chasm, became him-

self agitated like one frantic. These extraordinary circumstances were communicated through the neighbourhood, and the superstitious ignorance of the age immediately attributed them to a deity residing in the place. Frenzy of every kind among the Greeks was supposed the effect of divine inspiration, and the incoherent speeches of the frantic were regarded as prophetic. A spot, therefore, to which herdsmen only and their goats had hitherto been accustomed to climb over the rugged sides of the mountain, now became an object of extensive curiosity; it was said to be the oracle of a divine being: the rude inhabitants from all the neighbouring parts resorted to it for information concerning futurity; to obtain which, any one of them inhaled the vapour, and whatever he uttered in the ensuing intoxication passed for prophecy.

But the function of the prophet, under these circumstances, was not a little dangerous: for many, through the superinduced giddiness, fell into the cavern and were lost. An assembly of the neighbouring inhabitants was therefore convened, in which it was determined that one person appointed by public authority should alone be permitted to receive the inspiration, and render the responses of the divinity, and that the security of the prophet should be provided for by a frame placed over the chasm, through which the maddening vapour might be inhaled with safety. A virgin was preferred for the sacred office, and a frame was prepared resting on three feet, whence it had the name of tripod. The place bore the name of Pytho, and thence the title of Pythoness, or Pythia, became attached to the prophetess. To obtain the inspiration, which it was supposed not only enabled, but forced her to reveal the will of the divinity, the Pythoness was placed on the tripod. A sacred estimation thus became attached to the form of that machine, which induced not only the Greeks but the Romans to prefer it for every utensil to which it could be applied, whether for sacred or domestic purposes.

The importance of the oracle being increased by this interference of public authority, a farther establishment became necessary. A rude temple was built over the cavern, priests were appointed, ceremonies were prescribed, and sacrifices

were performed. A revenue now was necessary. All, therefore, who would consult the oracle henceforward, must come with offerings in their hands. The reputation of the place no longer then depended simply on the superstition of the people: the interest of the priests became its guardian. Still new incentives to public credulity and curiosity became necessary. The hymn to Apollo, transmitted to us as the composition of Homer, seems to offer so probable an account of the next and final change in the property of this celebrated place, that it may be permitted to introduce it here.

Apollo was a deity of great reputation in the islands and in Asia Minor, but hitherto of little fame on the continent of Greece, when a vessel from Gnossus, in Crete, came to the port of Crissa, and the crew landing, proceeded immediately up the neighbouring mountain Parnassus to Delphi. Presently a wonderful story was circulated, "That this vessel, being bound to Pylus, on the coast of Messenia, had been forced by a preternatural power beyond that port, and while the astonished crew were perfectly passive, had been conducted with surprising exactness and expedition to Crissa: that a dolphin of uncommon magnitude had accompanied the vessel, apparently with authority, and on their arrival at Crissa discovered himself to the crew to be the great and beneficent god Apollo, ordering them at the same time to follow him to Delphi, where they should become his ministers." The project succeeded beyond expectation. Apollo was now the presiding power of the place; and under this god, through the skill of his new ministers, the oracle recovered, and increased its reputation. Delphi, which had the advantage of being really near the centre of Greece, was reported to be the centre of the world; miracles were invented to prove so important a circumstance, and "Navel of the Earth" was among the titles which it acquired.

Delphi, prospering through its oracles, became early a considerable town. Situate as it was among barren mountain crags, the rich vale of Crissa was at hand for its supply; the Bœotian plain was not far distant, and the neighbourhood of the sea was a great additional convenience. Before Homer's time, if we may credit the hymn to Apollo, the temple

of that deity was built of stone with some magnificence. Its fame and influence was quickly so extended, that nothing of moment within Greece was undertaken by states, or even by private persons who could afford the expence, without first consulting the oracle of Delphi. In circumstances of doubt, anxiety, and distress, Delphi was the refuge. A present upon these occasions was always necessary, and princes and opulent persons endeavoured to conciliate the favour of the Deity by offerings of great value. Afterward, vanity came in aid to superstition, in bringing riches to the temple. The names of those who made considerable presents were always registered, and when statues, tripods, or other ornaments of valuable materials or elegant workmanship were given, they were publicly exhibited in honour of the donor.

The wealth and growing estimation of Delphi had also another source. In the general insecurity of property in the early ages, and especially in Greece, it was highly desirable to convert all that could be spared from immediate use into that which might most easily be removed from approaching danger. Gold and silver having then acquired their certain value as signs of wealth, a secure place of deposit would be the next object of the wealthy. No place offered such security as those temples which belonged not to any single state, but were respected by the common religion of the nation. The priesthood, not likely to refuse the charge, would have a large interest in acquiring the reputation of fidelity to it. Thus Delphi appears to have become the great bank of Greece, perhaps before Homer, in whose time its riches seem to have been already proverbial.

The Pythoness was chosen from among mountain cottagers, the most unacquainted with mankind that could be found. It was always required that she should be a virgin, and originally she was taken very young. The purity of virgin innocence, to which the Greeks always attached an idea of mysterious sanctity, made a girl most fit, in vulgar opinion, to receive the influence of the god; and ignorance was at the same time very commodious for the purposes of the priests. Once appointed, she was never to quit the temple. But unfortunately it happened that one Pythoness made

her escape : her singular beauty enamoured a young Thesalian, who succeeded in the hazardous attempt to carry her off. It was afterward decreed, that no Pythoness should be appointed under fifty years of age, but that in simplicity she should still be the nearest possible to a child, and that even the dress appropriated to girls should be continued by her. The office of Pythoness appears not to have been desirable. Either the emanation from the cavern, or some arts of the managers, threw her into real convulsions. Priests, entitled prophets, led her to the sacred tripod, force being often necessary for the purpose, and held her on it till her frenzy rose to whatever pitch was in their judgment most fit for the occasion. To secure themselves was not difficult, because those noxious vapours which have been observed in caverns, in various parts of the world, are so much specifically heavier than the wholesome air, that they never rise above a certain height. But Pythonesses are said to have expired almost immediately after quitting the tripod, and even on the tripod. The broken accents which the wretch uttered in her agony, were collected and arranged by the prophets, and then promulgated, till a late period always in verse, as the answer of the god. There were, however, a few days only in the year in which the god might be interrogated, and those variable within the power of the priests. Previous sacrifices were moreover necessary, and, if the victims were not favourable, the Pythoness would in vain solicit inspiration. Thus the priests had it always in their power to deny answers, to delay answers, or to give answers direct, dubious, or unintelligible, as they judged most advantageous for the credit of the oracle. With frequent opportunities, therefore, of arrogating the merit of true prophecy, the oracle generally avoided the risk of being convicted of false, though such misfortune happened to many oracles less ably conducted than that of Delphi, which thence acquired the reputation of being the least fallacious of all oracles. But if princes or great men applied in a proper manner for the sanction of the god to any undertaking, and made ample presents to the institution, they seldom failed to receive it in direct terms,

provided the reputation of the oracle for truth was not liable to immediate danger from the event.

That these oracular responses were impositions on mankind cannot be doubted. Probable conjectures about future events growing out of existing causes may sometimes prove true; but the certain foreknowledge of future contingent events is the sole prerogative of deity. The credit of the oracles was kept up among an ignorant superstitious people, by responses which had no definite meaning, or one capable of different interpretation, or such as were lucky conjectures on the probable connexion between present causes and their future effects, founded on experience, and the natural tendency of the present state of things.

Of the Origin and Constitution of the Council of Amphictyons.

Ages before letters began to record the transactions of the Greeks, a regular establishment had been made of an assembly of deputies from the provinces northward and southward of mount *Æta*, to consult on the common interests of their constituents. Their ordinary place of meeting was a temple dedicated to the goddess *Ceres*, near the mouth of the river *Asopus*. Those deputies bore the title of *Amphictyons*, it is said, from the founder of the institution.

The constitution of this famous assembly, obscure in its origin through extreme antiquity, is not accurately known. We find, however, that every state of the *Amphictyonic confederacy* sent at least one representative, who bore the title of *Pylagore*. Each member had an equal vote on every occasion in which the authority of the council was exerted, and no *Amphictyon* was denied any legal privilege or authority from the rank or estimation which his constituents held among the Grecian states, but all were properly peers. The form of the *Amphictyonic oath* has been preserved to us. It ran thus: "I swear that I will never subvert any *Amphictyonic city*: I will never stop the courses of their water, either in war or peace. If any such outrages be attempted, I will oppose them by force of arms, and destroy those cities which are guilty of such attempt. If any devastations be committed in the territory of the god, if any shall be privy to such offence, or entertain any design against the temple, I will use my hands, my feet, my whole force to bring the offending party to condign punishment. If any shall violate any part of this solemn engagement, whether city, private person, or nation, may such violators be obnoxious to the vengeance of *Apollo*, *Diana*, *Latona*, and *Minerva the Provident*. May their land never produce its fruits.—May their women never bring forth children of the same nature with the parents, but offspring unnatural and monstrous.—May they be for ever defeated in war, in judicial controver-

sies, and in all civil transactions ; and may their families and their whole race be utterly destroyed." The first part of this oath is pointed to what was really the most important business of the assembly, and what seems to have been with great wisdom and humanity proposed as the principal end of the institution, the establishment and support of a kind of law of nations among the Greeks, that might check the violence of war among themselves, and finally prevent those horrors, that extremity of misery which the barbarity of elder times usually made the lot of the vanquished. The view of the founders seems evidently to have gone farther, to bring all disputes between Amphictyonic states before this tribunal, and totally to stop war among them, or to punish it as private war and rebellion. To this, however, after the return of the Heraclides, amid the jealous claims of every Grecian city to absolute independency, the Amphictyonic council was never equal. Revolutions in early times reduced it to obscurity. Afterward, the Delphian oracle and the Delphian treasure were committed to its superintendency, whence no small additional importance accrued to it. Nevertheless the members seem wisely to have avoided the attempt to exert an authority, which they wanted power effectually to support. Contests between states were, however, always esteemed proper objects of its jurisdiction, but the superintendency of the religion of the Greek nation was more particularly its office. Its authority to fine any Amphictyonic state, and, in case of non-compliance with injunctions, even to levy forces and to make war on the disobedient, were allowed. Of disputes between private persons it never condescended to take cognizance. Its proceedings were generally conducted with prudence and dignity, and its decrees, notwithstanding its deficiency of power, were highly respected.

Of the Manners of the early Greeks.

The manners of a people receive their tone from a great variety of circumstances, varying with the time, climate, religion and government. We find, accordingly, the manners of the Homeric age distinguished from those of following times in Greece by many characteristic lines, and we may observe throughout a strong oriental tinge, which afterward very much faded away. Migrations from the east into Greece had ceased before Homer's time; but the eastern merchants still engrossed the little commerce of the Grecian towns. Afterward, the commercial intercourse between the two countries lessened. The distinguishing features in the Homeric manners are licentiousness, hospitality, and a union of the highest dignities with the meanest employments. These are, however, not the peculiar growth of any soil and climate. The two first are the seldom failing produce of defective government, and the other will every where be found in an unimproved state of society.

Murders were so common among the Greeks, that, unless committed with peculiar circumstances of enormity, they scarcely left a stain upon the character of the perpetrators. Some of the favourite personages of the Iliad and Odyssey had been guilty of this crime, and had fled their country in consequence: not however to escape public justice, but to avoid revenge from the relations of the deceased. Private revenge, we know, was formerly almost the only restraint upon the most atrocious crimes against individuals in western Europe, insomuch that, in the weakness of public justice, private revenge even received the sanction, and was put under the guidance of the law. Hence it was, that among the early Greeks, as in general through the east, a numerous progeny was so particularly esteemed a great blessing to parents. A numerous family was always a powerful family: it could do justice to itself, and injure others with impunity. Cruelty, violence, and oppression are so evidently the result of defective government, that it is unnecessary to look for

any other general cause of the scenes of this sort with which Homer abounds. For when every man is in a great measure judge in his own cause, vices of this class are not only more frequent, but less criminal than in a civilized state, as where the individual transfers his resentments to the community, and private injury expects redress from public justice. Where the legislature does not engage for our personal security we have a right to use such means as are in our power, to destroy the aggressor who would destroy us. In such cases, bodily strength and courage must decide most contests; while, on the other hand, craft, cunning, and surprize are the legitimate weapons of the weak against the strong.

Hospitality prevails in most countries very much in proportion to the idleness, poverty, and insecurity which attend a defective police. This virtue is most cultivated where it is most wanted. In Arabia, the rights of hospitality, so properly called the point of honour of the east, are the happy substitutes of positive law, which in some degree supplies the place of justice, connecting, by a voluntary intercourse of good offices, those vagabond tribes who despise legislation, and set the civil magistrate at defiance. We find it established as a principle in Homer, that, "to those not totally void of the feelings of humanity, the guest and the suppliant should be as a near relation:" and he gives them a divine right to kind treatment: "the stranger," he says, "and the poor are from Jove." The liberties taken by suppliant strangers, and the confidence reposed in them, were consonant to these principles. Ulysses, saved alone from shipwreck, on an unknown coast, goes without introduction to the palace of the king of the country, which is represented as singularly rich and splendid, enters the apartments, and finding the king and queen at supper with the principal nobles, abruptly addresses his supplication to the queen. Not only kindness but honour is immediately shown to him; he is lodged in the palace, and the next day, the king recommending him to favour in an assembly of the people, declares at the same time that he knows not who he is. It seems indeed to have been a general point of civility, not hastily to ask any stranger who he was. From these offices of hospitality once performed, new

and still more sacred rights arose, which did not expire with the persons who gave origin to them, but descended to all the posterity of either party. A man was peculiarly bound to show kindness to a hereditary guest, to one who had entertained any of his ancestors, or who had been entertained by them.

How necessary this generous point of honour was to alleviate the miseries to which mankind in that unsettled state of law and government were liable, we may gather from many lively and affecting pictures scattered through Homer's poems. Beside the general incompetency of governments to secure internal order, the best regulated were in perpetual danger of ruin from foreign enemies, and this ruin was frequently both cruel and complete. "These are the evils," we are told in the *Iliad*, "that follow the capture of a town: the men are killed, the city is burned to the ground, the women and children of all ranks are carried off for slaves."

Where such were the manners of warriors, even the noblest characters could not be without stains of barbarism and illiberality. We find in the *Iliad*, the men of the highest ranks meeting in battle, addressed each other in language the most grossly insulting.

It was little usual among the Greeks to give quarter. "Why so tender hearted?" says Agamemnon to Menelaus, seeing him hesitate while a Trojan of high rank, who had the misfortune to be disabled by being thrown from his chariot, was begging for life: "Are you and your house so beholden to the Trojans? Let not one of them escape destruction from our hands. Let all perish unmourned; let not a vestige of them be seen remaining." The poet gives the sanction of his own approbation to this inhumanity. "It was justly spoken," says Homer, "and he turned his brother's mind." Menelaus accordingly pushed away the noble suppliant, and the king of men himself was the executioner who put the unresisting wretch to death. Hector, in whom we find so many amiable qualities, was not less infected with this barbarous spirit of his age. When he had killed Patroclus, and stripped him on the spot of his rich armour, he postponed the most pressing and most important concerns

to the gratification of weak revenge, losing sight of all the greater objects of battle, while he struggled for the naked corse, with intention to complete its contumely by giving it to be devoured by Trojan dogs, and to make his vengeance lasting by depriving it of those funeral rites, which, in the opinion of the times, were necessary to the repose of souls after death. We must not therefore wonder that the common Greeks should delight in wounding the dead body of Hector himself, when he was soon after slain: nor ought we to attribute peculiar ferocity to the character of Achilles for the indignities with which he treated it, since both the morality and the religion of his age, far from condemning such conduct, evidently taught him to consider it as directed by social affection, and enforced by the piety, such as it was, which the gods of his country required. When the unfortunate monarch of Troy came afterward in person to beg the body of his heroic son, we find the conduct of Achilles marked by a superior spirit of generous humanity. Yet, in the very act of granting the pious request, he doubts if he is quite excusable to the soul of his departed friend, for remitting the extremity of vengeance which he had meditated, and restoring the corse to receive the rites of burial. Agreeably to this cruel spirit of warfare, the token of victory was the head of the principal person of the vanquished slain, fixed on a post. The milder temper of a more civilized age abolished this custom, and it became usual for the conqueror to suspend only a suit of armour on a post, which, thus adorned, was termed a Trophy. Perhaps fire-arms have contributed to humanize war. The most cruel strokes to individuals are now generally in a great measure the result of chance; for it seldom can be ascertained from what hand precisely they come, and revenge thus wants its object. This has had its share in making revenge alien to modern warfare. But the principal cause doubtless is the influence of the Christian religion in softening the hearts of men towards each other, as the redeemed people of a common Saviour.

Homer has left us many pictures of his heroes in their hours of relaxation, with the goblet circulating. Yet there is great elegance in his convivial meetings. At the feasts of

the great, the song of the bard seldom failed to make a principal part of the entertainment. The bard, indeed, seems to have been a person of importance in the household establishment of every wealthy chief. His knowledge and memory, in the deficiency of books, were to supply the place of a library; his skill in music and poetry was to convey instruction in the most agreeable manner, and inform, even when pleasure was the only apparent object.

Women in the Homeric time enjoyed more freedom, and communicated more in business and amusement among men, than in after ages has been usual in those eastern countries. The character of Penelope, in the *Odyssey*, is the completest panegyric on the sex that ever was composed; and no language can give a more elegant or a more highly coloured picture of conjugal affection than is displayed in the conversation between Hector and Andromache, in the sixth book of the *Iliad*. Even Helen, in spite of her failings, and independently of her beauty, steals upon our hearts in Homer's description, by the modesty of her deportment, and the elegance of her manners.

It was customary in the heroic age, as indeed at all times in Greece, for ladies of the highest rank to employ themselves in spinning and needle-work, and in directing the business of the loom, which was carried on, till lately, in the highlands of Scotland, and now is in many parts of the United States, by every family within itself. It was praise equally for a slave and a princess to be skilful in works of this kind. In Homer's time, washing also was employment for ladies. The princess Nausicaa the daughter of the opulent king of Phæacia, went with her maids in a carriage drawn by mules to a fountain in a sequestered spot at some distance from the city, to wash the clothes of the family.

The manners and principles of the heroic age of Greece, when compared with those of the Teutonic ancestors of those European nations from whom the United States of America derived their origin, show strong lines of resemblance, but with some characteristic touches of discrimination. Greece was a country holding out to its possessors every delight of which humanity is capable, but where,

through the insufficiency of law, the instability of government, and the characters of the times, happiness was extremely precarious, and the change frequent from the height of bliss to the depth of misery. Hence Homer seems to have derived a melancholy tinge widely diffused over his poems. He frequently adverts in general reflections to the miseries of mankind. His common epithet for war and battle is "tearful." On the contrary, with the early European bards, war and battle were subjects of highest joy and merriment. Yet there was more generosity and less cruelty in the Gothic spirit of war than in the Grecian. What circumstances gave the weaker sex so much more consequence among the Teutonic nations than among the Greeks; how the spirit of gallantry, so little known to this elegant and polished people, should arise and gain such universal influence among the fierce unlettered savages of the north, will probably ever remain equally a mystery in the history of man, as why perfection in the sciences and every elegant art should be first attained in, and particularly why it should be so long confined to, the little territory of Greece, and to those nations which have derived it thence.

EPIRUS.

EPIRUS is supposed by antiquarians to have been first peopled by Dodanim, the grandson of Japhet. It is situated between the Ceraunian mountains, the gulph of Ambracia, Thessaly, Macedonia, and the Ionian sea. It is a rugged country, and covered, even in the defiles, and on the summits of its mountains, with a multitude of towns. The sea also bathed the ramparts of many famous cities, all of which were peopled by warlike inhabitants. Epirus was at first divided into several petty kingdoms, independent of each other, till the whole were subjected by the Molossian princes. The inhabitants, who had formerly been called by various names, were then blended under the common appellation of Epirots. Epirus had nothing uncommon among its productions, but the Molossian dogs, which were strong, fierce, and obstinate. We know nothing certain of its history before the reign of Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles. This prince became notorious for his conduct at the taking of Troy. He avenged the death of his father who was killed there. After having sacrificed old Priam at the foot of the altar, he threw down young Astyanax, the son of Hector, from the summit of a tower; and butchered Polyxena, the daughter of the unfortunate Priam, at the tomb of Achilles. After the destruction of Troy, he conquered all Epirus at the head of the Molossi his first subjects, but did not long enjoy his conquest, for he had scarcely made arrangements for its government when he was assassinated.

The successors of Pyrrhus in lineal descent were Molossus, Pielus, Admetus, and Tharymbas. The last is said to have applied with unwearied diligence to the study of polite literature; to have encouraged learning among his subjects, and to have formed many salutary laws, on which account Plutarch has numbered him among the ancient legislators.

Alcetas, who next appears in the history of this country, experienced many vicissitudes of fortune: being deposed by his own subjects; reinstated by Dionysius, tyrant of Syra-

cuse ; and threatened with a formidable invasion by Jason, of Pheræ. He died, however, in peace.

Two brothers reigned conjunctly after the decease of Alcetas. On their demise, Alexander, the nephew of one of them, was raised to the throne by the interest of Philip, king of Macedon, and received the hand of the princess Cleopatra in marriage.

Alexander had scarcely assumed the diadem, before he was invited into Italy to assist the Tarentines against the Brutii and Lucani. Accordingly he went, reduced several cities belonging to the enemy, and rendered his name formidable to all the eastern part of the country. This success fired his soul with military ardour, and induced him to believe that he should obtain as great a share of glory in Sicily, Italy, and Africa, as his nephew, Alexander the Great, was acquiring in Persia, and other parts of Asia. In this he was fatally mistaken ; for, after obtaining two decisive victories, his forces were defeated with great slaughter ; he was murdered by the treachery of his guards, and his dead body exposed to every ignominy that barbarous rage or malice could suggest. All the ancients speak of this prince, as being no way inferior in bravery or conduct to the immortal hero of Macedon ; but he had the misfortune to engage in his first campaigns with nations no less courageous than his own Epirots, and equally inured to the toils of war ; hence he used to observe, that the country he designed to conquer was inhabited by men, whereas the provinces which fell beneath his nephew's arms were only peopled by women.

Æacides, the son of Arybus, and grandson of Alcetas, next obtained the crown of Epirus. Upon the death of this prince, his brother Alcetas received the sovereignty, and engaged in a war with the adherents of Cassander, which, after being carried on for some time with various success, terminated to the advantage of the Epirots. Alcetas, on the conclusion of peace, began to exercise the most wanton cruelties upon his subjects ; but the public indignation being effectually roused, he received the just reward of his nefarious conduct, and his children were all murdered in a general insurrection.

Pyrrhus, the son of Æacides, succeeded to the throne of Alcetas, and reigned in perfect tranquillity till he was seventeen years of age, when, supposing his government firmly established, he quitted Epirus to be present at the nuptials of a particular friend in Illyricum; but he was no sooner gone, than the Molossians broke out into an open revolt; chased his friends from court; seized on the royal treasures; and bestowed the diadem on Neoptolemus his great uncle.

The unfortunate prince being thus unexpectedly stripped of his dominions, retired to his brother-in-law, Demetrius, and signalized himself on several occasions under that great commander. At length, being sent as a hostage into Egypt, he ingratiated himself so effectually with queen Berenice, that she gave him her daughter, Antigone, in marriage; and prevailed on Ptolemy to give him a sufficient body of forces for the recovery of his kingdom.

Pyrrhus recovered his paternal crown, and caused the usurper to be put to death for having attempted to take him off by poison. He might now have passed his days in tranquillity, but his restless temper and boundless ambition urged him on to fresh expeditions and new difficulties. He was respectfully asked by the Tarentines to assist them against the Romans. Being highly gratified in having an opportunity to try his strength with this rising nation, he consulted with his judicious friend, Cineas, respecting the vast projects which his warm imagination had formed.

“The Tarentines,” said he, “have invited me to assist them: if I triumph over the Romans, the whole west will be subject to my power. It is certain that it will be easy for me to conquer them. What do you think of the enterprize?” Cineas, instead of giving a direct answer, said, “After you have conquered the Romans, whither will you turn your arms?” “When they shall be conquered,” resumed Pyrrhus, “I will pass over into Sicily, where every thing is in confusion by the death of king Agathocles. You know that the conquest of that island is of the utmost importance.”— “But when you are master of Sicily, what will you do then?” added the minister; “Nothing will be more easy,” replied the king, “than to pass over to Africa. Agathocles, with a

small fleet, was able to beat the Carthaginians. When they are subdued, Macedonia, my ancient domain, and the whole of Greece cannot escape me." "And when we have conquered all," said Cineas, "What shall we do then?" "Do then!" continued the king, "we shall live in peace, and think only of enjoyment." "Ah," exclaimed the sage minister, "what prevents you from living in peace at present, and from enjoying as you please all the comforts of life? Why should you go so far in search of that happiness, which you have now in your own power, and purchase at so dear a rate, what you may obtain without any trouble?" Pyrrhus did not expect such a reply, and was somewhat disconcerted by it; but, disguising his ambition, he replied, "It is a practice hereditary in my family to assist the unfortunate." Under this pretence, he gave orders for marching to the relief of the Tarentines.

Cineas set out first with an advanced guard of three thousand men, and, arriving at Tarentum, took possession of their citadel, and waited for the king, who soon appeared, but in a state very different from what had been expected. Pyrrhus, being shipwrecked, threw himself into the sea with his guards, and, after being buffeted the whole night by the tempest, got on shore not far from Tarentum, where he was joined in succession by his troops. He was received by the Tarentines with every demonstration of joy. After his arrival, they thought of nothing but pleasure, as they imagined that Pyrrhus alone would put an end to the war, and that he would lead only the Epirots to battle; but the intention of the monarch was very different. As soon as he found himself master of the city, he shut the places of exercise, and the public gardens where the inhabitants assembled to hear the news, and to settle, while they were walking, the affairs of the state. Festivals and spectacles were also forbidden. The king made all the young men take up arms;—taught them their use;—incorporated them among his troops;—and behaved with great severity at reviews, and to those who absented themselves, or who did not properly discharge their duty. This rigour having made many of the inhabitants leave the place, Pyrrhus declared them punishable with death,

as well as those who did not appear at reviews. Spies, who introduced themselves into private companies, gave him an account of every thing that was said or transacted. In consequence of this system, the most mutinous were privately arrested, and under various pretences sent to Epirus, and there confined. Calumnies were propagated against those whose influence was dreaded. To render such men suspected by the people was an object diligently pursued. The most common method was to persuade the people, that every measure pursued to subject them was put in execution at the instigation, and by the advice of those whom they before considered as their friends, and who had enjoyed their confidence. The art of deceiving the people, and making them kiss the chains imposed on them, is far from being modern.

The war of Pyrrhus against the Romans, exhibits a new character in history ; as it was conducted with a regard to the rights of humanity before unknown. It must be admitted that Pyrrhus was the first who employed in his operations those flattering marks of attention, which shew esteem for the enemy against whom war is carried on ; but his conduct was readily imitated by the Romans. They had great generals, who were neither presumptuous in victory nor abject in defeat ; and senators filled with love for their country, and models to the people by their frugality, disinterestedness, and the purity of their morals. The war with Pyrrhus is perhaps the noblest monument of the republic.

It began by a kind of challenge, in which haughtiness was displayed by both parties. Pyrrhus wrote to the consul Levinus, " I learn that you are at the head of an army destined to make war on the Tarentines. Disband that army as soon as possible, and come and explain your pretensions. When I have heard both parties, I will give judgment : and I know how to make my sentence be obeyed." The answer of Levinus was as follows : " Know, Pyrrhus, that the republic neither admits you as an arbiter, nor fears you as an enemy. By what right do you pretend to be a judge, when you have injured us by landing in Italy without our consent ? We will have no arbitrator but Mars, from whom we are descended." The two armies soon found themselves in the field opposed

to each other; and the king of Epirus could not help admiring the noble and undaunted appearance of the Romans. It may be said, that in the first battle they were defeated by the elephants, for these animals had never been before seen in Italy. The horses, unable to bear their smell, and frightened at the strange noise they made, ran away with their riders, and left the legions uncovered. Pyrrhus found means to break their ranks, but lost so many of his men as to make him say, "that he was both conqueror and conquered," and, "that such another victory would ruin him." After the battle, he gave orders, that the Epirots and Romans should be buried without any distinction. Looking at the bodies of the latter, and observing that they had no wounds behind; that they had all fallen in the posts assigned to them; held their swords in their hands; and still retained after death a certain martial air in their faces; he exclaimed, "O that Pyrrhus had Romans for his soldiers, or the Romans Pyrrhus for their leader. Together we should be able to subdue the whole world."

This victory enabled Pyrrhus to advance into Campania, but he formed no establishment there, and returned to take up his winter quarters in Tarentum. Reflecting in that city on the skill and bravery of the Romans, he was convinced, that if he did not succeed in terminating the war by an honourable peace, his ruin would be unavoidable. He was, therefore, highly gratified on hearing that the Romans intended to send ambassadors to him; and, as he believed, for the purpose of entering into a treaty. In this confidence, he received the embassy with the utmost honour. It was composed of three men of great merit, Cornelius Dolabella, celebrated by his victories, Æmilius Papus of tried probity, and the virtuous Fabricius. Pyrrhus waited with a sort of impatience mixed with joy, to see what would be the proposals of the ambassadors; but he was much surprised when they only asked for an equal exchange of prisoners, or that he would accept of a ransom for those of superior rank and dignity. The monarch, however, concealed his surprise, and appointed a day for returning an answer.

In that interval he behaved to the ambassadors with every mark of politeness. His object was to induce them to render the senate favourable to his wishes. He addressed himself in particular to Fabricius, but the Roman showed that he was proof against the most flattering offers. Pyrrhus finding that he could not gain him over to his interest, was desirous of trying whether he possessed as much intrepidity as virtue, and, for that purpose, caused one of his largest elephants to be concealed behind a curtain in the place where he received the ambassadors. As Fabricius had never seen one of these animals, the king brought him within the elephant's reach, upon which the curtain was suddenly drawn, and the monstrous animal appearing, threw his trunk over Fabricius's head, and sent forth a loud cry. The intrepid Roman, turning towards the monarch, without showing the least sign of terror, said, "Does the great king, who could not move me by his offers, think to frighten me by the cry of an animal?" The king, surprised at this instance of firmness, invited him the same day to dine with him. During the repast, the conversation happening to turn on the Epicurean philosophy, which Pyrrhus extolled, because, perhaps, it was favourable to indolence and pleasure, Fabricius, in whose character austerity of manners was not incompatible with urbanity, paid him the following delicate compliment: "May Pyrrhus, while he carries on war against the Romans, make his happiness to consist in that indolence, so much boasted of by Epicurus."

The day fixed for giving his answer having arrived, the king generously set the prisoners at liberty without any ransom. He sent back the ambassadors with a polite message to the republic, accompanied by Cineas, to whom he gave orders to enter into a treaty of peace. The proposals he was to make were, that the Tarentines should be comprehended in the treaty, and that the republic should restore liberty and their former privileges to the Greek cities of Italy, as well as to the Samnites and other Latin nations. On these terms, Pyrrhus offered to put an end to all hostilities, and to go to Rome himself to confirm the peace by an oath. Cineas, who had been the disciple of Demosthenes, made a speech in the

senate worthy of his master. A part of the senators were inclined to accept these proposals, but as several of them were absent, they deferred the conclusion of the business till the next day, when Appius Claudius caused himself to be carried to the senate, which he had not attended for many years, on account of great age and loss of sight. This respectable veteran proved so clearly to the senators, how dangerous it would be for the glory and safety of Rome to agree to such a shameful treaty, that they unanimously decreed as follows: "The war against Pyrrhus shall be continued; his ambassadors shall receive orders to leave Rome this day. Entrance into the city shall be refused to the king of Epirus; and notification shall be given to the chief of the embassy, that the republic will enter into no negotiation with his master until he shall quit Italy."

Cineas, much astonished, set out to carry back this haughty answer to the king: "What do you think of the senate?" said Pyrrhus; "I thought," replied Cineas, "that I was in an assembly of kings." It was necessary to have recourse once more to arms. The king was wounded in a battle, which terminated in favour of the Romans; but their success was rendered indecisive by the bravery of Pyrrhus. While the consuls were preparing for another engagement, they received a letter from Nicias, the king's physician, in which he offered to poison his master if they would promise him a great reward; but, being filled with detestation on account of his horrid proposal, they wrote to the monarch as follows: "Caius Fabricius and Quintus Æmilius, consuls, to king Pyrrhus: health. Pyrrhus, you are betrayed. He whose fidelity ought to have been unshaken, has offered to poison you. We inform you of this, not to court your favour, but in order that it may not be said that we had any share in a crime at which our feelings revolt. To put an end to the war by an act of treachery, would, in our opinion, be a horrid attempt; and we shall employ no means for that purpose, but such as are consistent with honour and justice." This generous behaviour inspired the king with the most lively gratitude; and he immediately sent back all the prisoners, who at different times had fallen into his hands. But

the consuls did not think themselves authorized to receive presents for having abstained from committing a base action ; and they accepted the prisoners, only on the condition of releasing an equal number of Epirots. The losses which the king had sustained made him sincerely desirous of peace ; and he once more sent Cineas to Rome, to try whether he could not prevail on the senate to enter into an accommodation ; but he found them firmly resolved on listening to no proposals that might be made until Pyrrhus should withdraw from Italy.

The Syracusans, fortunately, supplied this prince with a pretext for quitting Italy, as they invited him to their assistance against the Carthaginians. He at first obtained some success ; but, being afterwards abandoned by the Sicilians, and hard pressed by the Carthaginians, he thought himself exceedingly happy to find the same pretence for leaving Sicily as he had found for quitting Italy : his being recalled by the Tarentines, who were threatened by the Romans. He came to a trial of strength with the latter once more, but on very unequal terms, for they had become accustomed to the elephants, which they no longer dreaded. In the last battle they even derived very great advantage from these animals. They assaulted them with burning torches. A young elephant having been wounded, its piercing cries reached its mother ; she, quitting the ranks, made her way through the soldiers, overturning every thing that stood in her way, and by these means a dreadful confusion was occasioned in the army of the Epirots. Pyrrhus returned to Tarentum, and endeavoured for some time to make it be believed, that he was determined to continue the war with activity, but in reality he thought only of retiring. He left a good garrison in the citadel, and ordered the governor to defend himself to the utmost in case of an attack. To induce obedience to his instructions, Pyrrhus sent to the governor a terrible memorandum, consisting of a chair covered with the skin of the perfidious physician who had offered to poison his sovereign : but other projects made Pyrrhus forget Tarentum, and the Romans soon got possession of it. Pyrrhus set sail for Epirus with eight thousand foot and five hundred horse, after

having spent six years in Italy and Sicily, without obtaining any solid advantage.

To recruit his exhausted treasures, and retrieve his reputation, Pyrrhus, shortly after his return, resolved to lead his warlike troops against Antigonus Gonatus. A combined army of Epirots and Gauls marched into Macedon, where they ravaged the country and took possession of the kingdom.

From Macedon, the warlike king of Epirus, marched with his two sons, Ptolemy and Helenus, into Peloponnesus, under colour of assisting Cleonymus, (who had been lately driven from his throne by an ambitious nephew,) but in reality to make himself master of Greece. However, the obstinate resistance which he met with at Lacedæmon obliged him to alter his resolution, and try his fortune in another quarter.

At this juncture, Aristetas, one of the principal citizens of Argos, invited the royal Epirot to espouse his cause against the party of Aristippus. Pyrrhus put his army in motion, but, in passing some narrow defiles, he was unexpectedly attacked, and lost a considerable number of Gauls and Molossians, together with his son Ptolemy. However, the Lacedæmonians paid dear for this assault, as the king suddenly faced about, and attacked their cavalry with such irresistible fury, that the greater part of them were cut in pieces, and the rest compelled to save themselves by a disorderly flight.

Having thus taken ample revenge for his loss, Pyrrhus continued his march toward Argos, and, having formed an encampment in the vicinity of that city, sent a herald to Antigonus, who had engaged to assist Aristippus, challenging him to single combat; but that prince returned for answer, "that if Pyrrhus were tired of his existence, he might find means enough to terminate it."

Meanwhile, the citizens of Argos, seeing two foreign potentates ready to engage at their gates, and rightly surmising that the victor would reduce them to a state of vassallage, sent ambassadors to both parties, requesting them to withdraw their armies, and permit the inhabitants to compose their dissensions by themselves. Antigonus readily acceded to this proposal; but the king of Epirus resolved to make

himself master of the city, and actually persuaded Aristæus to open one of the gates to him at midnight. A detachment of Pyrrhus's Gauls was conveyed into the market place without being discovered by the adverse party; but the noise which was made in attempting to introduce the elephants, threw the whole city into confusion. In the first moment of recollection, the affrighted Argives sent to Antigonus, entreating him to advance instantly to their assistance. He accordingly marched up to the walls, and sent a chosen body of troops into the city, under the command of his son Alcioneus. Aræus, king of Lacedæmon, arrived at the same time, with a considerable force, and joining the Macedonians, threw the Gaulish troops into complete disorder. Pyrrhus hastened to their relief with a body of Molossians, but the darkness of the night, and the tumultuous noise of the soldiers, prevented the execution of his design.

The conflict raged with dreadful fury till break of day, when the streets appeared covered with dead bodies. Pyrrhus, perceiving that the city was filled with the enemy's troops, resolved on an immediate retreat; but, as he was apprehensive of some misfortune from the narrowness of the gates, he sent a messenger to his son Helenus, whom he had left with the main body of his army, desiring him to make a large breach in the wall, and prepare to cover his retreat, in case he should be overpowered by the enemy. This message being totally misunderstood, Helenus selected the best of his troops, and made a vigorous exertion to enter the city to rescue his father, but his soldiers were so thronged in the gate, that they wounded each other with their weapons; and Pyrrhus, who had hitherto fought with more than ordinary intrepidity, found it impossible to pass. He therefore pulled off his diadem to prevent his being known, and resolved to sell his life as dear as possible. A common soldier of Argos, however, wounded him with a javelin. The king, inflamed by the sight of his own blood, rushed upon the assailant with inexpressible rage; but the mother of the Argive, perceiving from the top of a house her son's imminent danger, threw down a tile upon Pyrrhus, which struck him so violently upon the head, that he staggered and fell sense-

less to the ground. A Macedonian soldier, seeing this accident, and recognizing the king's features, dragged him into a porch, and cut off his head, which was immediately carried by Alcioneus to Antigonus. That prince was so far from insulting the memory of his fallen competitor, that he covered the head with his own garment, and caused it to be buried with suitable honours.

Thus died Pyrrhus, a prince equally famous for his military talents and excellent disposition. He seems to have proposed Alexander the Great to himself for a model, and is universally celebrated by the ancients for his profound knowledge in the art of war; but his inconstancy was so remarkable, that he scarcely tried his strength with one enemy, before he was anxious to engage another.

Pyrrhus was succeeded by his son Alexander, who, shortly after his accession, reduced the kingdom of Macedon, but was afterwards repulsed with considerable loss, and even chased from his paternal dominions. However, he soon regained the sovereignty of Epirus by the assistance of the Acarnanians; and, having gained a signal victory over the Illyrians, ended his days in peace.

Ptolemy, the son and successor of Alexander, was a prince of promising expectations; but he died when he was scarcely out of his minority, and left the crown to his son Pyrrhus, who, after a short reign was treacherously murdered by the Ambracians.

Deidamia, the daughter of Pyrrhus the Second, next ascended the throne; but the Epirots, disdaining to live beneath the government of a woman, caused her to be assassinated in the temple of Diana, whither she fled for shelter. Upon the death of this princess, the royal family of Pyrrhus being extinct, the Epirots formed themselves into a republic. This, about 167 B. C., was reduced by Paulus Emilius, and became a Roman province, all the towns being destroyed in one day. Epirus was afterwards governed as a part of the eastern empire for 13 centuries. Upon the taking of Constantinople by the Latins in 1204, Michael, a bastard of the house of Angeli, seized this country for himself, and it was held by his posterity until it was taken by the Turks in 1432.—In 12

years after, it revolted from the Turks, and was finally reduced by Mahommed II. in 1466, and it has ever since been subject to the Turkish empire. Of the history of the Epirots at this period nothing particular is known. A detail of it for the last 350 years would give an opportunity of contrasting the slaves of Turkish masters with the energetic warriors of Pyrrhus and the other kings of Epirus; the apathy of despotism with the turbulence of ambitious and warlike monarchs.

ITALY.

ITALY in latitude corresponds with Virginia, and the more northern and eastern states. It is about 670 miles in length. Its average breadth is about 100 miles; but, in the northern territory, it extends more than 300 miles. The boundaries are strongly marked by the hand of nature. They consist of the Adriatic on the north-east, the Mediterranean on the south-west, and the grand Alpine barrier on the north.

Italy, in general, presents a splendid variety of scenery. In the north, the sublime scenery of the Alps is contrasted with fertile plains. In the district which lately composed the ecclesiastical state, there are several marshes and stagnant waters, which generate that insalubrious state of the air called the *mal aria*, so pernicious during the hot season in the Campagna, and even in the city of Rome. The kingdom of Naples is, in general, a mountainous, but beautiful country. It has, however, three great defects,—in being exposed to the eruptions of Vesuvius,—subject to frequent earthquakes,—and to the enervating sirocco, or south-east wind, which sometimes blows for several days together, causing a universal languor of body and mind.

Among the principal mountains of Italy must be reckoned those branches of the Alps, which are situated within its limits; the Appenines, which run the whole length of Italy; and Vesuvius, a tremendous volcano, about six miles from Naples. Its height is only about 3600 feet; but its eruptions, accompanied with subterraneous thunder, immense columns of smoke intermixed with flames, and the showers of stones cast to a prodigious height, and the lava descending in copious streams, form a sublime assemblage of terrific objects far surpassing the powers of description.

Italy is intersected with numerous rivers, flowing in almost every direction, of which the Po is by far the most considerable. This famous river, anciently known by the names of Padus and Eridanus, rises in Mont Vesula, on the confines of France and Italy, in the centre of the western Alps.

After a course of about 300 miles, it falls into the gulph of Venice. The numerous tributary rivers, rushing from the mountains, bring down so much gravel and sand into the Po, that its bed has been considerably raised, and, in some places, banks of thirty feet in height are necessary to preserve the country from inundation. From this circumstance, hydraulics have been much studied in this part of Italy, and numerous canals of irrigation attract the traveller's attention.

In central Italy, the Arno, passing by Florence and Pisa, falls into the Mediterranean sea. The Tiber, immortal in classical history, after receiving above forty rivers, or torrents, flows through Rome, and falls into the Mediterranean, about fifteen miles below that ancient capital of the world.— Both the Tiber and the Arno have their sources in the Apennines, near San Marino. Those mountains also give rise to a number of inferior streams, among which is the Rubicon, a small rivulet of classical fame, now called Fiumesino.

Of the numerous canals which serve for the irrigation of the Milanese, some are thirty miles long, and near fifty feet wide, and are mentioned so early as in the eleventh century, but the inland navigation of Italy is not important, and the inconsiderable breadth of a great part of the country renders it, in a great measure, unnecessary.

The Romans were indebted for their metals chiefly to Greece, Macedonia, Pannonia, and, above all, to Spain and Lusitania. Many of the mountains afford considerable quantities of emeralds, jasper, porphyry, and lapis lazuli. There are also vast quarries of the most beautiful marble. Mineral waters, also, are found in many parts of the country. Those of Baia, in the vicinity of Naples, were famed as a place of resort for the opulent Romans, and the adjacent coast was covered with their magnificent villas. They are still much frequented by valetudinarians.

In general, Italy is extremely fertile, and has ever been famed for the abundance, as well as the variety and excellence of its productions. Its climate is various, but, in general, temperate and warm. In the northern division, cold winds descend from the mountains, and the frosts in winter are sometimes keen. In Tuscany, and even at Rome, they

are not wholly unknown. The winters are only of short continuance, and, at Rome especially, the snow generally melts as soon as it has fallen. In Naples, the heats, being moderated by breezes from the mountains and from the sea, is not so intense as might be expected. The sirocco, though coming from the south-east, is not a sea breeze, but a steady wind proceeding directly from the deserts of eastern Africa. The air is in general salubrious except in the Campagna and some other marshy parts, where the *mal aria* is in summer extremely pernicious to health.

Italy produces abundantly wine, oil, fruits, and silk. These, indeed, may be called its staple commodities. But there is no want of pasturage and corn, where encouraged by the farming system. The quantity of corn produced is generally sufficient for home consumption, and a surplus for exportation might be had, if other productions were not found more beneficial. In the plains of Lombardy the orange trees generally require shelter, although they thrive in the open air on the western side of the lake of Como, at the foot of high Alps, covered with eternal snow. Lombardy shares with Belgium and England the reputation of being the garden of Europe. Most parts of Tuscany are well cultivated; but more to the southward, especially in the neighbourhood of Rome, agriculture is astonishingly neglected; and the Campagna di Roma, formerly one of the most fertile provinces in Europe, is, through want of cultivation and drainage, almost wholly converted into barren wastes and stagnant morasses. Many parts of the kingdom of Naples are well cultivated.

The animals of Italy exhibit no high degree of perfection. The horses are of an inferior kind. The cows of the Lodesan are generally of a dark red colour, lank and ill made; but the kind of cheese, which was formerly produced in the duchy of Parma, and is yet known by the name of Parmesan, is much celebrated, and constitutes an article of commerce. The buffalo, although tame, is of a ferocious aspect; his flesh is coarse, but his hide, though light, is exceeding firm. The breed of sheep is every where neglected, and the wool is coarse and hairy.

It would be a vain attempt to describe, or even to enumerate, in this compendium, the magnificent relics of antiquity every where found in Italy; the monuments of ancient architecture and sculpture, the temples, the amphitheatres, the triumphal arches, the columns, &c. sublime memorials of former grandeur. It would be equally impossible to give even a catalogue of the works of modern artists, the excellent paintings, &c. which adorn the Italian churches and palaces. Rome, Naples, Florence, and some other cities, present such an assemblage of antiquities and curiosities, as cannot possibly be comprised in a work of this general nature.

Rome is seated on the Tiber at the distance of about fifteen miles from the Mediterranean sea, and nearly in the same latitude as the city of New York. It stood upon seven hills, the Palatinus, Capitolinus, Quirinalis, Cœlius, Esquilinus, Aventinus, and Viminalis. Of these, Mons Palatinus was the original seat of infant Rome. There Romulus built his city; there was the mud-walled palace of that first Roman king; and, afterwards, there stood the imperial seat of succeeding emperors. At present it is covered with kitchen-gardens. The Palatine mount was, indeed, a situation suitable for the residence of the sovereigns of the world. Its height was about 125 feet above the Via Sacra, and it commanded every part of the city, the Tiber, and the adjacent hills. The inhabitants of modern Rome have in a great measure abandoned the seven hills to convents, villas, gardens, and vineyards; and the Campus Martius is now one of the most populous quarters of the city. The hills appear less considerable than formerly, as the intervening vallies have been raised by enormous quantities of rubbish, and modern Rome stands on the ruins of the ancient city.

The circuit of ancient Rome has, by some writers, been exaggerated to the extent of fifty miles; and its population to the incredible number of 4,000,000. But Mr. Gibbon, on the authority of Ammonius the mathematician, who measured the wall of Aurelian, has stated its circuit to have been no more than twenty-one miles, and its form circular, at the time when the city was besieged by the Goths, A. D. 408. The same author has, also, on probable grounds, estimated

its inhabitants at 1,200,000 at the same period. We may, without any material error, conclude, that in the age of the Antonines, Rome must have been nearly equal to London and Paris taken together, and have contained about 1,500,000 inhabitants. From various circumstances noticed in Roman history, it is probable, that the imperial city was never more wealthy than in the time of Augustus. He boasted, that he had found Rome built of brick, and left it of marble*. His example was followed by his ministers and generals, who vied with one another in adorning the city with elegant structures; Agrippa left to posterity the immortal monument of the Pantheon. Nero, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, successively embellished the capitol. All accounts of the Colisæum, or amphitheatre of Titus, would seem incredible, had not that massy structure resisted, even to this day, the destroying hand of time, as well as of barbarian invaders. This immense pile is of an elliptical figure, in length 564, and, in breadth, 467 feet; its height is 140 feet. The marble seats, covered with cushions, were sufficient for the accommodation of 34,000 spectators, and, with the upper galleries, contained the astonishing number of 80,000 persons. The Circus Maximus, used for the exhibition of public spectacles, was superbly adorned by successive emperors, and had seats for 260,000 spectators. To these might be added innumerable other monuments of Roman grandeur†. It suffices to say, that the magnificence and

* Sueton. in Aug. cap. 28.

† Ancient Italy is said to have contained eleven hundred and ninety-seven cities. Gaul, at the same time, boasted of more than a thousand. Three hundred African cities had once acknowledged the authority of Carthage; nor is it likely that their numbers diminished under the administration of the emperors. Under the reign of the Cæsars, Asia proper, alone, contained five hundred populous cities, enriched by the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art. The capitals of Syria and of Egypt held a superior rank in the empire. Antioch and Alexandria looked down with disdain on a crowd of dependent cities, and yielded, with reluctance, to the majesty of Rome itself.

All these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which, issuing from the forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the fron-

luxury of Rome, were never equalled in any other city of the ancient or modern world.

tiers of the empire. The great chain of communication, from the north-west to the south-east point of the empire, was drawn out to the length of four thousand and eighty Roman miles. The public roads were accurately divided by mile-stones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles, either of nature, or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams. The middle part of the road was raised into a terrace, which consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large stones, or granite. Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, that their firmness has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse, but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions. The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish, throughout their extensive dominions, the regular institution of posts. Houses were every where erected, at the distance of five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and, by the help of these relays, it was easy to travel a hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads. Nor was the communication of the Roman empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The provinces surrounded and enclosed the Mediterranean, and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the middle of that great sea. The coasts of Italy are, in general, destitute of safe harbours; but human industry had corrected the deficiencies of nature.

The extensive empire and power of Rome was attended with beneficial, as well as injurious, consequences to mankind. The same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused, likewise, the improvements of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The east was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury, whilst the west was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either were ignorant of, or disdained agriculture. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates, and the industry of more civilized nations, were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe. It would be almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal, or the vegetable reign, which were successively imported into Europe from Asia and Egypt. We shall slightly touch on a few of the principal heads. 1st. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits that grow in European or American gardens are of Asiatic or Egyptian extraction. The apple was a native of Italy, and when the Romans had tasted the richer flavour of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and the orange, they contented themselves with applying to all these new fruits, the common denomination of apple, discriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2d.

Rome is now about twelve miles in circumference, and surrounded by a single wall, defended by some towers and

In the time of Homer, the vine grew wild in the island of Sicily, and most probably in the adjacent continent, but it was neither improved by the skill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taste of the savage inhabitants. A thousand years afterwards, Italy could boast, that of the fourscore most generous and celebrated wines, more than two-thirds were produced from her soil. The blessing was soon communicated to the Narbonnese province of Gaul; but, so intense was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that in the time of Strabo it was thought impossible to ripen the grapes in those parts of Gaul. This difficulty, however, was gradually overcome. The olive, in the western part of Europe, followed the progress of peace, of which it was considered as the symbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were strangers to that useful plant: it was naturalized in those countries, and, at length, carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flourish in the neighbourhood of the sea, were insensibly exploded by industry and experience. 3d. The cultivation of flax was transported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country. The use of artificial grasses became familiar to the farmers, both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media.

Under the Roman empire, the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously but incessantly employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendour—whatever could sooth their pride or gratify their sensuality.

The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forests of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought over land from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube; and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity. There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets, and other manufactures of the east; but the most important and popular branch of foreign trade was carried on from Arabia and India. The objects of oriental traffic were splendid and trifling: silk, a pound of which was esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold; precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond; and a variety of aromatics that were consumed in religious worship, and the pomp of funerals. The labour and risk of the voyage was rewarded with almost incredible profit; but the profit was made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expence of the public.

Notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past, and to depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous state of the empire was warmly felt, and honestly confessed, by the provincials as well as Romans.

bastions, but without any ditch. Most parts of the city exhibit a strange mixture of magnificence and meanness; of superb churches, splendid palaces, and the finest remains of antiquity, with ill built plebeian houses, the abode of filth and poverty. Rome has a great many piazzas or squares. Most of these are adorned with fountains; but in few of them is the water good. The best is that of the fountain of Trevi, the only water now brought to Rome by an ancient aqueduct. This fountain supplies all the lower parts of the city, which have, therefore, the best water, and the worst air. Many parts of Rome are esteemed unhealthy in summer, and the most indigent person will not sleep on a ground floor during that season. In winter, the air is esteemed good for persons affected with asthma.

It would be vain to attempt a description of the numerous churches. The cathedral of St. Peter is well known to be the largest and most magnificent temple ever constructed for the worship of the Deity; and perhaps the boldest and best finished piece of architecture of the ancient or modern world. Its length inside is 662, and its breadth 291 feet; the length of the transept 493, and the height, to the top of the cross, 435 feet.

They affirm, that with the improvement of arts, the human species was visibly multiplied. They celebrate the increasing splendour of the cities; the beautiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an immense garden; and the long festival of peace which was enjoyed by so many nations, delivered from the apprehension of future danger. But this long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level; the fire of genius was extinguished; and even the military spirit evaporated. The most aspiring spirits resorted to the court or standard of the emperors, and the deserted provinces, deprived of political strength or union, insensibly sank into the languid indifference of private life. This diminutive stature of mankind was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pygmies, when the fierce giants of the north broke in, and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and, after a revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science.

The palace of the Vatican, near to St. Peter's, is a vast irregular building, and would require a volume to describe it properly. Its superb ornaments were almost innumerable, and its fine paintings and statues inestimable, before the late French invasion subjected it to hostile rapine : the finest productions of ancient and modern art, as well as the choicest books, and manuscripts, of the celebrated library, were carried away to Paris*.

The Tiber, which flows through Rome, and divides the city, is about 315 feet wide, and navigable for large barks. Very little commerce, however, exists ; and, although there are some manufactures, they are of little importance. Rome is chiefly supported by the great number of foreigners who visit that ancient capital of the world, and, in consequence of the general prevalence of a taste for travelling, its population has, during more than a century, been gradually increasing. According to a census taken in 1760, the number of inhabitants was 155,184. The latest authentic accounts state the population at 162,000.

Rome contains a famous university, and a great number of other institutions for the instruction of youth. In this city nothing, indeed, is wanted for the encouragement of learning. Public libraries abound. Many of the principal monasteries also have excellent collections of books.

No public spectacles are allowed, except during the carnival ; but at that time seven or eight theatres are open, and attended with an ardour unknown in other places, where they are under no restraints. There is a court of inquisition at Rome, but its power is little more than nominal, and its functions are seldom exercised. A stranger is perfectly at ease on the subject of religion, and there are few places where superstition is less prevalent. The Roman nobility are well educated, and highly polished. The middle classes of the inhabitants are fond of the polite arts, and great admirers of poetry. The populace are daring and ferocious.

* Most of these have been returned since the restoration of Louis XVIII.

The immediate environs of Rome are mostly flat. At a distance are many considerable hills. The surrounding country has, in general, either a volcanic or marshy appearance; but it affords some fine situations adorned with magnificent villas. Among these may be mentioned Frascati, famous for being the site of Cicero's Tusculan villa; and Tivoli, the ancient Tibur, where Zenobia, the Palmyrian queen, lived in elegant retirement. Here immense ruins, spread over a vast tract of ground, revive the idea of Roman magnificence.

Naples, situated on a fine bay of the sea, in $40^{\circ} 50'$ north latitude, is, in respect of physical circumstances, one of the most agreeable places of residence that Europe affords. The climate is mild and salubrious; the situation admirable; the city populous and gay; the environs beautiful and interesting. The trade of Naples is much less considerable than might be expected from the excellence of its situation and the fertility of the country; a circumstance which proceeds from the indolence of the inhabitants. There are, however, several manufactures of silk velvets, handkerchiefs, &c. These manufactures, with their wines, oil, fruit, &c. constitute their exports.

It is one of the characteristic features of Naples, that, in proportion to the population, fewer of the inhabitants contribute by productive labour to the wealth of the community, than in any other city of Europe, or, perhaps, of the world. The number of nobility, ecclesiastics, lawyers, musicians, domestics, and lazaroni, is incredible. The nobility are numerous, but poor. Many of them have high titles, and small estates. About a hundred of them have the title of prince, and a greater number that of duke. Their attachment to splendour and show, is seen in the richness of their dress, the brilliancy of their equipages, and the number of their attendants. Provisions at Naples are exceedingly plentiful and cheap; and the wants of nature being easily supplied, the common people work very little. The number of lazaroni, a class of people peculiar to this city, is computed at about 40,000. This class of people have neither house nor property. They generally sleep in the street; but, in the rainy season, they resort in crowds to the caves under Capo di Monte. Persons

of a middle rank pass much of their time in coffee-houses, or other places of public resort; and few pursue their respective callings with any great degree of assiduity. Amidst all this idleness, however, fewer disorders and outrages take place than might be supposed; a circumstance in a great measure owing to the sobriety of the people. The greatest luxury of Naples is iced water. The crown grants a monopoly of the snow necessary for making this indispensable article to a company of traders, who are obliged to furnish the city at a certain price, which is generally about three farthings per load. It is all brought from the mountains, about eighteen miles distant, where it is constantly preserved in deep reservoirs.

Naples, notwithstanding the mediocrity of its commerce, and its want of industry, has, in the two last centuries, rapidly increased in population. The number of its inhabitants was, towards the end of the sixteenth century, estimated at about 160,000. At present the population is computed at 380,000. Naples is therefore the fourth city of Europe in respect of population, being inferior only to London, Paris, and Constantinople. The environs of Naples are peculiarly delightful and interesting. To attempt a description would require a large volume. The fertility of the country, the beautiful landscapes formed by the city, the bay, Vesuvius, Portici, &c. together with the subterraneous cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, buried under the ashes of Vesuvius, in the great eruption A. D. 79, and discovered in the last century, form an assemblage of objects highly interesting to the naturalist, the classical scholar, and the antiquary.

Venice, once the seat of a republic, great in commerce and arms, is remarkable for the singularity of its situation, being built on numerous islands, in the midst of a lake of shallow water, called the Lacunes, near the head of the Adriatic. The number of islands on which Venice is built is commonly reckoned at seventy-two. But travellers and writers frequently differ in regard to its extent and the number of islands on which it stands. They reckon, however, about 400 canals, forming an intricate labyrinth of communication throughout the city, and a still greater number of bridges.

From the situation of Venice, it may be easily conceived that there can be no streets of any great regularity and extent, nor any use for carriages. The gondolas, or long narrow boats, with a room in the middle six feet by four, and calculated to contain eight persons, answer the same purpose as the hackney coaches of other countries, and, like these, have their regular stands.

The once famous commerce of Venice is now greatly declined, and become inconsiderable in comparison with its former importance. This city can boast of excellent manufactures of velvet and silk stockings. One of the principal manufactures is that of glass. Printing and jewelry are also considerable branches of trade. But the opulence of Venice is the fruit of her former, rather than of her present, commerce. The number of inhabitants is computed at about 150,000, but, together with trade, population has declined.

Adjacent to the coast of Italy are numerous islands, of which several excite attention from their classical fame, or their natural curiosities, but are of little modern importance. Capri, at the entrance of the Gulph of Naples, the ancient Caprea, is famous for having been many years the residence of Tiberius, and the scene of his dissolute pleasures. The island of Malta, supposed to be the ancient Melita, where Paul was shipwrecked, is an object of great importance. Its circumference does not exceed fifty miles, but its population is computed at 60,000. The ancient fame and distinguished valour of its knights, so eminently displayed in Palestine and the isle of Rhodes, and particularly in the famous siege of Valetta, the principal, or, indeed, the only city of the island, when that small body of men, with little other assistance, withstood the formidable force of the Ottoman empire, have given Malta almost a classic reputation. Existing circumstances demonstrate its modern importance. Sardinia is an island of great extent, being about 150 miles in length, from north to south, and 80 or 90 in breadth, from east to west, and constituting a kingdom. The soil, in many parts, is said to be fertile; but, in consequence of the absence of all the great proprietors of lands, who, previous to the late revolutions, have constantly resided in Piedmont, and left the

peasantry under the oppression of rapacious stewards, agriculture has been extremely neglected. Sardinia contains several mountainous tracts, and the whole country may be regarded as a waste, of which only some particular spots exhibit marks of cultivation. The air is rendered very unhealthy by the numerous morasses; and the Romans esteemed this island so disagreeable a residence, that it was often used as a place of banishment for state prisoners. The whole population of Sardinia is computed at about 450,000.

The island of Sicily is of a triangular form, and was anciently known by the name of Sicania, Sicilia, Trinacria, and Triquetra. It is separated from Italy by a narrow strait, called the Faro di Messina, and is situate in the same latitude as the contiguous parts of North Carolina and Virginia, and, like the latter, has produced several very eminent men. *Æschylus*, *Diodorus Siculus*, *Empedocles*, *Gorgias*, *Euclid*, *Archimedes*, *Epicharmus*, *Theocritus*, &c. were natives of this island. It does not exceed six hundred miles in circuit.

Its fertility was so well known, that Sicily was anciently called the granary of Rome: to this day the desirable things which nature has frugally bestowed on other countries, are plentifully found in this. It was full of cities even in remote periods of antiquity. One of these, now called Messina, was founded, according to the chronologists, five hundred and thirty years before the siege of Troy.

Though the island is less than most of the states of America, yet, before the Christian era, it contained several distinct sovereign powers at the same time. These had their wars, and their alliances with each other. Their form of government was often changed from foreign conquests, and oftener from internal convulsions. The island has often been the battle ground of the Carthaginians, Grecians, Romans, Saracens, Normans, and others, contending for its sovereignty, or as the allies of one part contending with another. A detail of all these events would require several volumes, and would be comparatively uninteresting to American readers. A rapid survey of the most interesting particulars is therefore all that shall be attempted in this summary. In general, it may be noticed, that in their wars anterior to the

Christian era, the treatment of the vanquished was cruel in the extreme. One case will serve as a sample of many. When the Carthaginians took Selinus, they rifled the houses, then set them on fire, and either threw into the flames the women and children they found, or put all without distinction to the sword. The city was razed, two hundred and fifty years after it had been built, and the few women and children who outlived this fatal day were carried away captives.

The natural curiosities of Sicily are numerous. Mount Etna has been famous during the last eighteen centuries for its tremendous volcanoes. This mountain occupies a considerable portion of the interior of the island, the circuit of its base being not less than one hundred and eighty miles.

The whole island is divided into three distinct regions, the fertile, the woody, and the barren. These three are as different both in climate and productions as the three zones of the earth, and perhaps with equal propriety might have been styled the torrid, the temperate, and the frigid. The first region surrounds the foot of the mountain, to the extent of about fourteen or fifteen miles. It is composed almost entirely of lava, which, after a number of ages, is converted into the most fertile of all soils.

The lavas which form this region, take their rise from a number of beautiful little mountains. These are all of a regular figure, either that of a cone or a semi-sphere, and almost all are covered with beautiful trees and the richest verdure. Every eruption generally forms one of these mountains. As the great crater of Etna itself is raised to such an enormous height above the lower regions of the mountain, it is not possible that the internal fire, raging for a vent, even round the base, and no doubt vastly below it, should be carried to the height of twelve or thirteen thousand feet, for so high is the summit of Etna. It has, therefore, generally happened, that after shaking the mountain and its neighbourhood for some time, it at last bursts open its side, and this is called an eruption. At first it only sends forth a thick smoke, and showers of ashes, that lay waste the adjacent country: these are soon followed by red-hot stones, and rocks of a great size thrown to an immense height in the air

Sometimes this process is finished in the course of a few days, sometimes it lasts for months, which was the case in the great eruption of 1669. In that case, the mountains formed are of great size ; some of them are not less than seven or eight miles round, and upwards of one thousand feet in perpendicular height ; others are not more than two or three miles in circumference, and three or four hundred feet high.

After the new mountain is formed, the lava generally bursts out from its lower side, and bearing every thing before it, is for the most part terminated by the sea. This is the common progress of an eruption ; however, it sometimes happens that the lava bursts at once from the side of the mountain.

The beautiful country near Hybla was so celebrated for its fertility, and particularly for its honey, that it was called Passi, until it was overwhelmed by the lava of Etna ; and having then become totally barren, by a kind of pun its name was changed to Mal Passi. In a second eruption, by a shower of ashes from the mountain, it soon resumed its ancient beauty and fertility, and for many years was called Bel Passi. Last of all, in 1669, it was again laid under an ocean of fire, and reduced to the most wretched sterility, since which time it is known again by its second appellation of Mal Passi. However, the lava, in its course over this beautiful country, has left several little islands, or hillocks, just enough to show what it formerly was. These make a singular appearance in all the bloom of the most luxuriant vegetation, surrounded and rendered almost inaccessible, by large fields of black and rugged lava. The mountain, from whence the first eruption issued that covered the Mal Passi, is known by the name of Montpellier.

This mountain is of a very old date. The eruption by which it was formed buried a great number of villages and country houses. In some eruptions of Etna, the lava has poured down with such a sudden impetuosity, that in the course of a few hours, churches, palaces, and villages have been entirely melted down, and the whole run off in fusion without leaving the least mark of their former existence.— But if the lava has had any considerable time to cool, this singular effect never takes place.

The great eruption of 1669, after shaking the whole country round for four months, and forming a very large mountain of stones and ashes, burst out about a mile above *Montepeleri*, and, descending like a torrent, bore directly against the middle of that mountain, and pierced it to a great depth. The lava then divided into two branches, and surrounding this mountain, joined again on its south side, and laying waste the whole country betwixt that and *Catania*, scaled the walls of that city, and poured its flaming torrent into the ocean. In its way, it is said to have destroyed the possessions of nearly 30,000 people, and reduced them to beggary. It formed several hills where there were formerly valleys, and filled up a large lake, of which there is not now the least vestige to be seen.

A vineyard belonging to a convent of Jesuits lay directly in its way. This vineyard was formed on an ancient lava, probably a thin one, with a number of caverns and crevices under it. The liquid lava, entering into these caverns, soon filled them up, and by degrees bore up the vineyard, and the Jesuits, who every moment expected to see it buried, beheld with amazement the whole field begin to move off. It was carried on the surface of the lava to a considerable distance, and though the greatest part was destroyed, yet some of it remains to this day.

In the woody region, or the temperate zone, the air is refreshing, and every breeze is loaded with a thousand perfumes.

This mountain unites every beauty and every horror, and all the most opposite and dissimilar objects in nature. In its higher regions, an immense gulph of fire for ever exists in the midst of snows, which it has not power to melt, and immense fields of snow and ice for ever surround this gulph of fire, which they have not power to extinguish. To this succeeds the highest, or the desert region, but no imagination has dared to form an idea of so glorious and magnificent a scene. The immense elevation from the surface of the earth, drawn, as it were, to a single point: this point or pinnacle, raised on the brink of a bottomless gulf, often discharging rivers of fire and throwing out burning rocks, with a noise that shakes the whole

Island. Add to this, the unbounded extent of the prospect, comprehending the greatest diversity, and the most beautiful scene in nature.

The frigid zone of Etna is marked out by a circle of snow and ice, which extends on all sides to the distance of about eight miles. In the centre of this circle, the great crater of the mountain rears its burning head, and the regions of intense cold and of intense heat seem for ever to be united in the same point. On the north side of the snowy region, there are several small lakes that are never thawed, and in many places the snow, mixed with the ashes and salts of the mountain, is accumulated to a great depth.

Etna furnishes snow and ice not only to the whole island of Sicily, but likewise to Malta, and a great part of Italy; and it makes a very considerable branch of commerce, for even the peasants, in these hot countries, regale themselves with ices during the summer heats, and there is no entertainment given by the nobility, of which these do not always make a considerable part. It is a common observation amongst them, that without the snows of Etna their island could not be inhabited, so essential has this article of luxury become to them.

The barren region is immediately succeeded by the woody, which forms a circle or girdle of the most beautiful green, surrounding the mountain on all sides, and is certainly one of the most delightful spots on earth. This presents a remarkable contrast with the desert regions. It is not smooth and even, like a great part of the latter, but it is finely variegated by an infinite number of those beautiful little mountains, that have been formed by the different eruptions of Etna. All these have now acquired a wonderful fertility, except a very few that are but newly formed.

The circumference of this zone, or great circle, on Etna, is not less than seventy or eighty miles. It is every where succeeded by the vineyards, orchards, and corn-fields that compose the fertile region. This last zone is much broader than the others, and extends on all sides to the foot of the mountain. Its whole circumference is 183 miles.

The present crater of this immense volcano is a circle of about three miles and a half in circumference. It goes shelving down on each side, and forms a regular hollow, like a vast amphitheatre. From many places of this space, issue volumes of sulphurous smoke, which, being much heavier than the circumambient air, instead of rising in it, as smoke generally does, immediately on its getting out of the crater rolls down the side of the mountain like a torrent.

The crater is so hot that it is very dangerous, if not impossible, to go down into it; besides, the smoke is very incommoding, and in many places the surface is so soft, that there have been instances of people sinking down in it, and paying for their temerity with their lives. Near the centre of the crater, is the great mouth of the volcano. When we reflect on the immensity of its depth, the vast cells and caverns whence so many lavas have issued, the force of its internal fire to raise up those lavas to so vast a height, the boiling of the matter, the shaking of the mountain, and the explosions of flaming fire, the mind is filled with horror.

In descending from the frozen regions on the summit of the mountain, a delightful climate soon presents itself. The trees are in full verdure, and the fields covered with all the flowers of the summer, but on descending farther the heat is distressing.

The greatest physical disadvantage of Sicily is the dreadful effects of this volcano, which have been matter of historical record ever since the year 79; and the tremendous earthquakes to which the island, as well as the opposite province of Calabria, is subject. In 1693, the city of Catania, near to mount Etna, was totally destroyed, and about 18,000 persons were buried in the ruins. Since that time, it has been re-built, —possesses a university, and contains about 26,000 inhabitants. In the destructive earthquake of 1783, according to the returns made to government, 32,367 persons lost their lives. The large, populous, and commercial city of Messina, which contained a great number of magnificent buildings, was almost destroyed; but not above 700 persons are said to have perished. Palermo, the capital of Sicily, and the present residence of the court, is situated on a beautiful plain,

enviored on the land side by a semicircular range of high and rocky mountains, forming a kind of amphitheatre. Few cities can boast so fine a point of view. There are upwards of 300 churches in Palermo, and many of them are magnificent and richly ornamented. The trade of this capital of Sicily is considerable, but the harbour is unsafe. The number of its inhabitants is computed at about 100,000. The whole population of Sicily may be 1,000,000.

Sicily has been famous from the early ages of Grecian antiquity. The Phœnicians were probably the first settlers on the island, but Grecian colonies afterwards occupied most of the coasts. At an early period, its state was exceedingly flourishing. Ancient historians celebrate the power and splendour of some of its kings, particularly of Dionysius the Elder, and of the tyrant Agathocles; the latter of whom, from the lowest extraction, rose to the sovereignty, and by his formidable arms, endangered the very existence of Carthage. Their accounts of the magnificence, the riches, and population of Syracuse, when governed by its native princes, cannot but astonish a modern reader. The Carthaginians long coveted, and at last obtained, possession of the greatest part of this fertile island. It became afterwards the subject of a furious contest between them and the Romans; and, as the Carthaginian power began to decline, it fell under the dominion of Rome. After the fall of the Roman empire, Sicily, as well as the south of Italy, became a bone of contention between the Greek emperors and the Saracens, and at last fell under the dominion of the latter. In the eleventh century, a band of Norman adventurers, under Tancred and Robert Guiscard, expelled the Greeks from Naples, and the Saracens from Sicily. The provinces on the continent were, for some time, divided into different Norman principalities, and this fine island was a separate kingdom. In the reign of Roger II, the Norman kingdom of Sicily was exceedingly powerful. This prince distinguished himself in the crusades, and, in returning from Palestine, he conquered from the Greek empire, Athens, Corinth, and Thebes. He also expelled the Greeks from their remaining possessions in Italy, seized on the isles of Corfu and Negropont; and, with his

numerous war galleys, appeared even before Constantinople, but was driven back by the fleet of Venice, then in alliance with the Byzantine emperor. Roger also defeated a Saracen fleet, took the town of Tripoli in Africa, and rendered Tunis tributary.

Although the art of breeding silk-worms, and manufacturing silk, had, in the reign of Justinian, been introduced from the remotest parts of Asia into the eastern empire, it had been, for the space of six centuries, confined to the countries of Asia Minor and Greece. The barbarism of Europe had hitherto been hostile to the extension of commerce and the introduction of curious manufactures. In the western countries, silk was worn only by princes and grandees, and purchased at an extravagant price at Constantinople, and other ports of the Byzantine and the Saracen empires. But the Sicilian king having, about the year 1130, made these conquests in Greece, brought away numbers of persons well skilled in every thing relative to the production and manufacture of this valuable article; and his subjects were by these means instructed in the art both of breeding the worms and of working the silk. In a short time the silk manufactures of Palermo equalled those of Greece, and proved a vast source of commerce and wealth. From Sicily they were progressively introduced into Italy, Spain, and France.

On the failure of the male line of the Norman kings, A. D. 1190, the succession devolved on the emperor Henry IV, in right of his wife Constantia. This prince subdued the Sicilians, on whom he exercised the most horrible cruelties. After various revolutions and wars, Charles, count of Anjou, brother of St. Louis, king of France, established himself on the throne of Naples and Sicily, in the year 1268, and held it as a vassal of the Holy See. The boundless ambition of this prince excited the jealousy of all the neighbouring powers, and the severity of his government rendered him odious to his new subjects; while the debauchery and insolence of the French troops gave the Sicilians an irreconcilable aversion to that nation. The consequences were fatal. Historians disagree with regard to the formation of the plot, but it is certain that a general massacre of the

French, attended with every circumstance of cruelty that popular indignation and fury could produce, took place throughout the island. This bloody execution is distinguished by the name of the "Sicilian vespers;" because it began exactly about the time when the bells were ringing for vespers, on Easter Sunday, 1282. Such are the profanations and horrors to which the tyranny of rulers, and the turbulence of subjects, have sometimes given rise, among those who pretend to be the disciples of the Prince of Peace.

Peter, king of Arragon, supported the Sicilians, and claimed their crown in right of his wife. They received him with open arms. He was crowned at Palermo, and Charles was obliged to abandon the island. The kingdoms of Naples and Sicily were now separated. The family of Anjou continued in possession of the former, and Peter of Arragon made James, his second son, king of Sicily, who, on the death of his elder brother Alphonso, ascended the throne of Arragon. About the year 1382, a civil war taking place among the princes of the house of Anjou, Joan, queen of Naples, was put to death by her cousin Charles, surnamed the Peaceable. Naples became a scene of continual revolutions, one branch of the house of Anjou possessing, and the other pretending, to the crown, and neither of them able to support themselves against the kings of Arragon. Amidst these incessant revolutions, Naples, at one period, had five kings in the space of three years. After long wars, and a number of treaties, no sooner concluded than broken, the Spanish general Gonsalvo de Cordova, surnamed the Great Captain, finally reduced the whole kingdom under the power of Ferdinand the Catholic, king of Arragon, A. D. 1503; and, in consequence of the succession of the Emperor Charles V, it became an appendage to the Spanish house of Austria. By the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, Naples was ceded to Austria, and Sicily to the duke of Savoy, with the title of king. Sicily was, in 1719, exchanged with the emperor for Sardinia, to which the regal title was also annexed. And in 1735, after a short, but active war between the houses of Austria and Bourbon, the former was stripped of this so often contested kingdom. Don Carlos, son of Philip V, king

of Spain, was acknowledged king of Naples and Sicily ; and that branch of the Bourbon family had remained in peaceful possession of the crown, till the late invasion by the French under Joseph Bonaparte.

General History.

Of all the countries of the globe, Italy is that which affords the most copious materials for history. Rome, twice mistress of the world, first, by her temporal, and afterwards, by her spiritual arms, has ever attracted the attention of the politician, the warrior, and the philosopher.

The origin of its first inhabitants, or from what country they emigrated, is unknown. From its vicinity to Greece it is most probable that Italy was peopled from that country. The Romans pretended a fabulous origin from Troy ; but their ancestors were nothing more than a mixed horde of banditti from various Italian tribes.

The first important event of Italian history of which we have any account, is the founding of Rome by Romulus, B. C. 748. The infant city of Rome, the destined mistress of the world, was built on the Palatine mount, near the banks of the Tiber, fifteen miles from the mouth of that river, and contained about 1000 houses, or rather huts, built of mud, and covered with reeds. The palace of the Roman king was of the same materials. The number of its inhabitants able to bear arms was about three thousand, consisting of banditti of every description. To increase the number of its citizens, Romulus made it an asylum for fugitives, outlaws, and malefactors, who resorted thither from various parts of the neighbouring country. Such was the origin of Rome, which afterwards became the centre of wealth, and the seat of the most powerful empire that the world has ever seen. The inhabitants of Italy, at the period when Rome was founded, were in a state of very imperfect civilization, but they were cer-

tainly far above the condition of savages. There had long been colonies of Greeks settled on the coast. At that period the Greeks themselves, however, were little better than barbarians. Whether Romulus, or any of his associates, were acquainted with letters is a circumstance wholly unknown; but, from the prudent regulations established in infant Rome, it is evident that its founder, whatever was his birth and education, had seen something of civilized life, and had tolerable ideas of the nature of government*. In those savage citizens, a steady and prudent conduct was not less conspicuous than a warlike and enterprising genius. The primitive Romans being a collection of lawless banditti of the male sex, the seizure of the Sabine virgins, at a public festival, a measure equally bold and politic, supplied them with wives for perpetuating their race and their power. The war between the Romans and Sabines, to which this act of violence gave rise, ended in their incorporation and union. Other tribes were successively subdued and incorporated with the conquerors. The population of the city was increased by these contests, as well as by the constant accession of the Italian banditti; and the Roman territory, though at first not more than eight miles in breadth, became, before the death of Romulus, somewhat extended. During the reign of this first Roman king, the senate was formed; a political and civil constitution was established; and various regulations, suitable to an infant state, were adopted. Numa Pompilius, his successor, and second king of Rome, was of the Sabine branch, a man of learning and a philosopher. This prince, equally pacific and prudent, undertook the laudable task of civilizing his ferocious subjects. For this purpose he made use of all the resources of policy, and of the power of superstition over ignorant minds. To restrain their turbulence, and to inspire them with a love of peace and civil order, he pretended to have interviews with the goddess Egeria, and to receive from her the laws which he imposed

* Liv. lib. 1. Plutarch in Vita Romuli.

on the people. He regulated with minute exactness the civil and religious institutions of the Romans ; and may be considered as the author of their religion and laws.

According to the Roman historians, seven kings reigned in Rome for the space of two hundred and forty-five years ; a circumstance perhaps unparalleled in the annals of royalty. Absolute monarchy appears to have been unknown in Rome. Both the senate and the people had a share in the government. On the expulsion of Lucius Tarquinius, the last of those kings, in consequence of the rape committed by Sextus, his son, on Lucretia, a Roman lady, as well as for various other acts of despotism and oppression, the Romans established a republican government*, two hundred and forty-

* The constitution of Rome is very often celebrated by Cicero, as the most perfect of all governments, being happily tempered and compounded of the three different sorts that are usually distinguished from each other, the monarchical, the aristocratical, and the popular. Their king was elected by the people as the head of the republic, to be their leader in war, and the guardian of the laws in peace ; the senate was his council, chosen also by the people, by whose advice he was obliged to govern himself in all his measures ; but the sovereignty was lodged in the body of the citizens, or the general society, whose prerogative it was to enact laws, create magistrates, declare war, and to receive appeals in all cases, both from the king and the senate.

This was the original constitution of Rome, even under their kings.— But the kings, by gradual encroachment, having usurped the whole administration to themselves, were finally expelled by a general insurrection of the senate and the people. This was the ground of that invincible fierceness and love of their country in the old Romans, by which they conquered the world ; for the superiority of their civil rights naturally inspired a superior virtue and courage to defend them, and made them, of course, the bravest, as long as they continued the freest, of all nations.

By this revolution of the government, their old constitution was not so much changed, as restored to its primitive state ; for though the name of king was abolished, yet the power was retained, with this only difference, that instead of a single person chosen for life, there were two chosen annually, whom they called consuls, invested with all the prerogatives and ensigns of royalty, and presiding, in the same manner, in all the affairs of Rome. Thus the republic reaped all the benefit of a kingly government, without the danger of it ; since the consuls, whose reign was but annual, and whose conduct was liable to examination, could have no opportunity of invading its liberty, and erecting themselves into tyrants.

five years after the foundation of their city, and five hundred and three before the Christian era. During the monarchical

By the expulsion of the kings, the city was divided into two great parties, the senate and the plebeians, naturally jealous of each other's power, and desirous to extend their own; but the nobles, or patricians, of whom the senate was composed, had a great advantage over the people, and, within the compass of sixteen years, became so oppressive as to drive the body of the plebeians to that secession to Mons Sacer, during which they extorted a right of creating a new order of magistrates, of their own body, called tribunes, invested with full powers to protect them from all injuries, and whose persons were to be sacred and inviolable.

The plebeian party had now leaders, subject to no controul, whose business it was to fight their battles with the nobility. These never ceased urging the senate with fresh demands, till they had laid open to the plebeian families a right to all the magistracies of the republic.

The honours of the government were no longer confined to particular families, but committed equally and indifferently to every citizen who could recommend himself to the notice and favour of his countrymen.

The tribunes, however, would not stop here, nor were content with securing the rights of the commons, without destroying those of the senate; and as oft as they were disappointed in their private views, and obstructed in the course of their ambition, used to recur to the populace, whom they could easily inflame to what degree they thought fit, by the proposal of laws for dividing the public lands among the poorer citizens, or by the free distribution of corn, or the abolition of all debts, which are all contrary to the quiet and discipline and public faith of society. This abuse of the tribunitian power was carried to its greatest height by the two Gracchi, who left nothing unattempted that could mortify the senate or gratify the people, till, by their agrarian laws and other seditious acts, they had, in great measure, overturned that equilibrium of power in the republic, on which its peace and prosperity depended.

But the violent deaths of these two tribunes, and of their principal adherents, put an end to their sedition, and was the first blood that was spilt in the streets of Rome, in any of their public dissensions. These two illustrious brothers were severally deserted by the multitude in the very height of their authority, and massacred in the face of the whole city. This vigorous conduct of the senate, though it seemed necessary to the present quiet of the city, soon after proved fatal to it, as it taught all the ambitious, that there was no way of supporting an usurped authority but by force; so that, from this time, all those who aspired to extraordinary powers came attended by armies to enforce their pretensions, which were always decided by the sword.

Force being found necessary to controul the authority of the senate, and to support that interest which was falsely called popular, instead of courting the multitude by real services and beneficial laws, it was found a

government, the Roman territory had acquired no considerable extension, and included only a small tract of country surrounding their mud-built city. From the establishment of the republic, a period of about one hundred and seventy-eight years elapsed before the dominions of Rome extended much beyond the limits of the present Campagna. The Romans did not carry their arms beyond the confines of Italy until about two hundred and sixty-two years before the Christian era, two hundred and forty-one after the expulsion of their kings, and about four hundred and eighty-six years after the building of Rome. So slowly did this famous people proceed in the first step towards the establishment of their extensive empire.

Numerous volumes of Roman history have already been compiled by able writers, and perused by almost every reader. It would far exceed the limits of this compendium, to relate the long series of wars and conquests by which Rome attained to the acmé of her greatness. Twice she was brought to the verge of ruin; once by the irruption of the Gauls under Brennus, about A. U. C. 389, when the city was destroyed, the senators massacred, and the capitol, alone, withstood the assaults of the invaders*; and the second time, when Hannibal approached its walls after the battle of Cannæ. The contest between the two rival republics of Rome and Carthage is one of the most important and obstinate that history records. It was decided in the three successive Punic wars: the first of which was, in its beginning, disadvantageous to the Romans, but terminated to their advantage: the second was long and bloody, and threatened the extinction of the Roman power. Spain and Italy were long the

much shorter way to corrupt them by money. The men of power had, therefore, always a number of mercenaries at their devotion, who, by clamour and violence, carried all before them in the public assemblies. This kept up the form of a legal proceeding, while, by a superior force, the great could easily support and carry into execution whatever they pleased, by faction and bribery.

* Plutarch in Camillo.

theatre of this tremendous contest. Hannibal, the famous Carthaginian general, having passed out of Spain into Gaul, and thence over the Alps into Italy, was almost constantly victorious. He defeated the Romans in several engagements, but especially in the sanguinary conflicts of the lake Trasimenus, and of Cannæ, in the latter of which, the loss of the Romans is almost incredible. The greatest part of their army was cut off, and about 70,000 of them are said to have fallen on that bloody field*. Rome was threatened with annihilation, and Hannibal advanced almost to her gates; but he did not venture either to assault or besiege the city. Had Hannibal at this critical juncture been properly supported, the extinction of the Roman name must, according to every probability, have been the necessary consequence. But divine Providence had decreed a different issue. A faction, hostile to the fortune and fame of Hannibal, had long existed in the senate of Carthage, and gained at last a decided predominancy. Notwithstanding his pressing solicitations, he received no reinforcements. The fortune of the war was changed. A plan of operations was formed at Rome, which none but Romans could have thought of adopting. Instead of attempting to negotiate a peace, the terms of which, at that juncture, must have been humiliating, they resolved to carry the war into the heart of the enemy's country. Having immediately equipped a formidable armament, and invaded Africa, those Romans, so lately in imminent danger of being attacked in their own capital, suddenly appeared before that of the enemy. The victorious Hannibal, after having for the space of sixteen years ravaged Italy, and reduced the dominions and power of Rome to the precincts of the city, was recalled to defend the walls of Carthage. The famous battle of Zama, B. C. 202, decided the issue of the war, and terminated the greatness of the Carthaginian power. Hannibal, so long the terror of Rome, was totally defeated by the celebrated Publius Cornelius Scipio, surnamed Africanus. The Carthaginians, to save their capital, were obliged to purchase

* Polybius Hist. lib. 3, cap. 12.

peace by the surrender of their fleet, with other conditions so humiliating, that they could never after rise to their former greatness. Such was the event of the second Punic war. Before that memorable epoch, Rome had made continual but slow advances: her progress was afterwards astonishingly rapid, and her formidable rival being subdued, nothing could withstand her victorious arms. Greece was annexed to her empire, and, about eleven years after the battle of Zama, the Roman armies first entered Asia. About twenty-two years after their Asiatic expedition, Perseus, or Perses, the last king of Macedonia, was defeated and made prisoner by Paulus Emilius; and that ancient kingdom was reduced under the dominion of Rome.

The third Punic war proved fatal to Carthage. In the year 147, B. C. that opulent and powerful city was totally destroyed by the Romans, and her territories reduced to a Roman province. Lucullus and Pompey annihilated the formidable power of Mithridates, king of Pontus; dispersed the numerous armies of Tigranes, the Armenian monarch; completed the conquests of Asia Minor and Syria; and extended the empire of Rome to the shores of the Euxine, and the banks of the Euphrates. Julius Cæsar, in achieving the conquest of Gaul, reduced under the dominion of the Romans, a nation which they had ever considered as their most dangerous enemy. The remotest provinces of Spain, and of Lusitania, the modern Portugal, were reduced by the victorious arms of Pompey, and other commanders. About thirty years before the Christian æra, the Roman republic had extended its dominions from the Atlantic ocean to the banks of the Euphrates, and from the deserts of Arabia and Africa, to the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euxine sea. All the nations within these boundaries acknowledged the sway of Rome, and enriched her with their spoils.

During the period which preceded the Punic wars, the Roman's knew little of wealth, and still less of luxury. Their manners were plain and simple. The arts which embellish life and render society agreeable had made little progress. Their architecture was mean. Painting and sculpture were scarcely known. Commerce was disregarded by a people

who despised foreign luxuries, and whose principal study was war. Literature was as little cultivated as arts and trade.

The popular form of the Roman government caused eloquence to be held in high estimation. The military orations of their commanders called forth their talents for public speaking; but, previous to the introduction of literature from Greece, Roman eloquence was the simple effusion of nature, unpolished by art. Of all the arts of peace, agriculture, being the most essentially necessary, was, by the primitive Romans, held in the greatest esteem. Their consuls and dictators did not disdain to handle the plough.

If no nation whatever, as Livy informs us, kept free from luxury longer than the Romans, it is certain that after its introduction none ever carried it to a more extravagant height. No sooner was Carthage annihilated, and the conquest of Greece, Macedonia, and Asia achieved, than every thing was totally changed at Rome. Wealth rushed in like a torrent, and was accompanied by luxury its constant attendant. Those countries had been enriched by the spoils of Persia, and embellished by the efforts of industry and art. They had long been in a high state of civilization: conquest and commerce had concurred to increase their wealth. This now flowed into Rome, the great receptacle of plunder. The Roman generals and other opulent citizens soon began to rival sovereign princes in riches and magnificence, and luxury displayed itself in all kinds of forms. The mud-built city totally disappeared: its thatched huts were changed into palaces: superb temples, magnificent porticoes, immense baths, lofty columns, and triumphal arches, formed its embellishments. The frugal repasts of the primitive Romans were superseded by sumptuous feasts. Lands and seas were ransacked, and the spoils of a whole province were sometimes expended on a single supper.

The influx of wealth and luxury into Rome, through the rapid success of her arms, and the spoils of conquered countries, produced among her citizens another revolution, which history must celebrate as the basis of European civilization and literature. In conquering Greece, the Romans imbibed a taste for the arts and literature of that country. Grecian

learning and elegance, as well as Asiatic luxury, were introduced, and made a progress equally rapid and brilliant. Various circumstances concurred to this introduction of Grecian literature. Various obstacles were also raised against those new studies by the admirers of the ancient discipline. These apprehended, that the study of letters among the Roman youth would diminish their ardour for the exercise of arms*. But when the Romans had once imbibed a taste for learning, no opposition could check their progress. The antiquated notions of primitive simplicity soon disappeared; and the Roman youth flocked in crowds to complete their studies in the schools of philosophy and rhetoric at Athens and other Grecian cities. Rhetoric was their favourite study: it was, together with the science of arms, the grand recommendation to popular favour, and opened a road to all the offices and honours of the republic. The apprehension that learning would enervate the Romans was soon discovered to be unfounded. The muses were associated with the Roman eagles, and several of the greatest generals of the republic distinguished themselves as their votaries. Scipio, Sylla, Lucullus, Cæsar, Pompey, and Antony, are equally illustrious in the annals of literature and of war†. The age of senatorial and forensic eloquence, among the Romans, may be considered as commencing about the time of the destruction of Carthage, and ending at the death of Cicero. During this brilliant period, Rome vied with Athens herself in the culture of letters. The number of orators who shone in the senate and the forum, was scarcely ever exceeded in Greece, in the age of her greatest literary fame.

This moral and intellectual revolution which wealth and conquest produced at Rome, and which forms so striking a circumstance of her history, was soon followed by tremendous political convulsions. These have generally been attributed to the corruption of manners occasioned by the influx of wealth and the prevalence of luxury. The influence

* Plutarch in *Catone*.

† See Plutarch's lives of these illustrious commanders.

of this new state of things had undoubtedly contributed to weaken that patriotic spirit, which caused the primitive Romans to overlook all private interest with a view to that of the republic. The wealth of the principal citizens gave them an undue influence. Costly feasts, sumptuous shows, and splendid entertainments, were used as means of courting popular favour. In the election of their magistrates, the people paid more regard to the riches, than to the virtue of the candidates. A universal system of corruption was established, and, amidst the dissipation of feasts and spectacles, the mass of the citizens lost sight of the republic, while the great sacrificed the public interest to motives of private ambition.

In the latter times of the republic, the Roman citizens surpassed in magnificence and pomp, in expensive entertainments and sumptuous mode of living, the ostentatious and effeminate monarchs of Asia. Their houses were most costly structures, and splendidly decorated*. Their feasts were served up in gold plate, on tables inlaid with the same metal. The guests reclined on sofas supported by legs of ivory, silver, and sometimes of gold, and covered with triclinaria, or rich Babylonian carpets, of about £6,000 sterling in value. Fountains of variegated marble played in their cænacula, or dining rooms, in order to cool the air; and in their lamps, which were often fabricated of the richest materials, were burned the most fragrant and costly oils. Their carriages were covered with silver and gold. To support this extravagance, the governors of provinces were guilty of the most grievous extortions†. The most shameless corruption pervaded every department of the state, and the most infamous crimes polluted the citizens. Overgrown individuals enriched themselves at the public expense; and the lower classes of citizens, reduced to poverty, sank into a state of dependence on the patrician order. Under the emperors, luxury, if possible, increased:

* Pliny, lib. 36. cap. 15.

† Cicero's Oration against Verres.

but we shall the less wonder at Caligula's extravagance in expending above £ 80,000 on a single supper, when we are told, that the tragedian Clodius Esopus lavished 600 sester-tia, about £ 4,843 sterling, on one luxurious dish, and that his son treated each of his guests, after dinner, with a rich cordial, in which a costly pearl was dissolved. It will not perhaps be too bold an assertion that no other city, of the ancient or modern world, ever exhibited such scenes of expensive magnificence and luxury as Rome in the latter times of the republic, and under the emperors.

The wealth and luxury of Rome, with all the corruption of manners which they had introduced among her citizens, were only concurrent causes which served to give activity to others of a more hidden nature. The radical cause of her troubles was coeval with the city itself, or, at least, with the form of republican government which was adopted. An odious regulation separated the Roman citizens into two distinct classes, often hostile to each other, and always agitated with mutual jealousies. These were the patrician and the plebeian, or, in modern language, the aristocratic and democratic orders. All the offices and honours of the republic were confined to the patricians; but the right of election resided with the people. The third, or equestrian order, does not appear to have been numerous, and never acted any conspicuous part in the domestic troubles of the republic; but the patricians and the plebeians maintained an unceasing contest. After repeated struggles, victory declared in favour of the democratic party. Caius Marius, a plebeian, was elected to the consular dignity, the highest in the Roman republic. This triumph of the people excited the resentment of the patrician order. Rome, which had long nourished the seeds of civil war in her constitution, soon reaped the fruit in full maturity. The whole policy of the patrician order was the depression of the people; and the senate had long maintained its authority by an uninterrupted series of foreign wars, which drained off the turbulent spirits, and left the citizens little leisure for attending to their privileges, or for asserting their rights. To keep the people amused with wars abroad, and employed in splendid amusements at home, was an invariable

maxim of patrician policy. The rising power of the popular party brought matters to a crisis. The tumultuous scenes which patrician ambition and popular licentiousness had so often excited, were renewing on a more extensive scale. The civil wars between Marius and Sylla drenched Rome with the blood of her citizens; and the patricians, as well as the plebeians, found themselves at the mercy of an armed soldiery. The evil was grown too inveterate, and the ambition of individuals too restless and aspiring to be controlled by any other authority than one founded on the extinction of the republican system. The influx of wealth, and the mixture of Asiatic luxury with Roman ambition, gave an additional force to the factions. The senate, although it retained its ostensible authority, no longer possessing efficient power, was, together with the people, governed by overgrown individuals. The factions themselves underwent a total change in regard to their principles and their objects. The grand struggle between the patricians and the plebeians was converted into a war between the rich and the poor; or, rather, into a contest between powerful demagogues who had armies at command, and ruled over the senate as well as over the people. Many of the citizens of Rome equalled sovereign princes in opulence, and the heterogeneous mass composing the Roman populace, were ready to follow any leader who entertained them with feasts, and distributed large sums of money among them for the purposes of corruption.

Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus, had obtained the principal sway in Rome. Combining their different advantages, more completely to establish their authority, they formed a triumvirate, and governed the republic with an absolute power. In consequence of this combination, they procured for themselves the government of the best provinces, and the command of the chief military force of the republic. Crassus had Asia; Pompey selected Spain; Gaul, which was not yet conquered, was assigned to Cæsar. Crassus lost his life, and the greatest part of his army, in an expedition against the Parthians. Cæsar, in somewhat more than nine years, completed the conquest of Gaul. In every campaign he had been successful, and saw himself at the head of the

best troops of the republic. The senate was alarmed at the news of his victories, and Pompey grew jealous of his power. On Cæsar's declaring his intention of presenting himself as candidate for a second consulship, he received an order to disband his army, and appear as a private person at the election. Cæsar endeavoured to come to an accommodation, but finding the majority of the senate decidedly hostile to his interests, he entered Italy with his veteran legions, who were devoted to his cause, and advanced towards Rome. On the news of his approach, the senate, with most of the patrician order, left the city and passed over into Greece. Cæsar, although a patrician, was the favourite of the people, and Pompey was the idol of the senate. Having entered the city without opposition, he was pronounced consul and dictator. He then hastened into Spain, where the troops under Pompey's lieutenants soon submitted themselves to his disposal. Thus reinforced, he passed into Macedonia, where the senate had collected a numerous army, of which Pompey had the command. In the first engagement Cæsar was defeated; but the whole strength of both parties being afterwards concentrated in the plains of Pharsalia, the contest was there decided. Cæsar was completely victorious. Pompey fled into Egypt, and was immediately followed by Cæsar. Receiving intelligence on his arrival that Pompey had been slain by the order of king Ptolemy, Cæsar immediately laid siege to Alexandria, where he met with great difficulties, and was exposed to great dangers. Having at last taken the capital, and made himself master of the whole kingdom, he committed the government to the famous Cleopatra, whose beauty, accomplishments, vices, and misfortunes, have rendered her name immortal. The only enemies now remaining were Scipio and Juba in Africa, and the two sons of Pompey in Spain. These being speedily conquered, Cæsar was received on his return to Rome, with general applause by both the people and the senate, and honoured with the title of Father of his country, and the office of perpetual dictator. He was about undertaking an expedition against the Parthians, when he was slain in the

senate-house by Brutus and Cassius, and other conspirators*. Cæsar fell in the fifty-eighth year of his age, after

* There were about sixty persons said to be engaged in this conspiracy, the greatest part of them of the senatorian rank ; but M. Brutus and C. Cassius were the chief in credit and authority, the first contrivers and movers of the whole design.

M. Junius Brutus was of the most illustrious family of the republic, deriving his name and descent, in a direct line, from that first consul L. Brutus, who expelled Tarquin, and gave freedom to the Roman people. Having lost his father when very young, he was trained with great care by his uncle Cato, in all the studies of polite literature ; under the discipline of such a tutor he imbibed a warm love for liberty and virtue. He had excellent parts, and great industry, and acquired an early fame at the bar. But philosophy was his favourite study. While his mother lived in the greatest familiarity with Cæsar, he was constantly attached to the opposite party, and firm to the interests of liberty, for the sake of which, he adhered to Pompey, whom he hated, and acted on that side with distinguished zeal. He had publicly defended Milo's act of killing Clodius, by a maxim which he maintained to be universally true—that "those who live in defiance of the laws, and cannot be brought to a trial, ought to be taken off without a trial." The reason of the case was applicable to Cæsar, whose power had placed him above the reach of the law, and left no way of punishing him but by assassination. This therefore, was Brutus's motive ; and Antony did him the justice to say, that he was the only one of the conspirators who acted from principle ; that the rest from private malice rose up against the man, he alone against the tyrant.

C. Cassius was descended likewise from a family not less honourable or ancient, nor less zealous for the public liberty than that of Brutus. The old writers assign several frivolous reasons of disgust, as the motives of his killing Cæsar. But we find the true motives in his temper and principles : for his nature was singularly impetuous and violent, impatient of contradiction, and much more of subjection, and passionately fond of glory, virtue, and liberty : it was from these qualities that Cæsar apprehended his danger ; and when admonished to beware of Antony and Dolabella, used to say, that "it was not the gay, the curled, and the jovial whom he had cause to fear, but the thoughtful, the pale, and the lean," meaning Brutus and Cassius.

The next in authority to Brutus and Cassius were Decimus Brutus and C. Trebonius : they had both been constantly devoted to Cæsar, and were singularly favoured, advanced, and entrusted by him in all

he had advanced himself to a height of power which no conqueror had ever attained before. To raise this mighty

his wars. Decimus was of the same family with his namesake Marcus, and Cæsar, as if jealous of a name that inspired aversion to kings, was particularly solicitous to gain them both to his interest, and seemed to have succeeded to his wish in Decimus, who embraced his friendship, and accepted all his favours. He was brave, generous, magnificent, and lived with great splendour in the enjoyment of an immense fortune. He kept a numerous band of gladiators at his own expense for the diversion of the city; and, after Cæsar's death, spent about four hundred thousand pounds of his own money in maintaining an army against Antony.

Trebonius had no family to boast of, but was wholly a new man, and a creature of the power of Cæsar, who advanced him through all the honours of the state to the consulship. As the historians have not suggested any reason that should move either him or Decimus, to the resolution of killing a man to whom they were infinitely obliged, we may reasonably impute it, as Cicero does, "to a superior love of their country, which made them prefer the liberty of Rome to the friendship of any man, and choose rather to be the destroyers than the partners of a tyranny."

The rest of the conspirators were young men of noble blood, eager to revenge the ruin of their fortunes and families, and men obscure and unknown to the public. It was agreed by them all, in council, to execute their design in the senate, which was summoned to meet on the Ides, or fifteenth, of March: they knew that the senate would applaud it when done, and even assist, if there was occasion. They took it also for granted that the city would be generally on their side. The only deliberation that perplexed them, and on which they were much divided, was whether they should not kill Antony and Lepidus together with Cæsar, especially Antony, the most ambitious of the two, and the most likely to create fresh danger to the commonwealth. Cassius, with a majority of the company, was for killing him: but the two Brutuses alleged, "that to shed more blood than was necessary would disgrace their cause, and draw upon them an imputation of cruelty, and of acting, not so much to free the city, as to get the dominion of it into their own hands." This lenity proved their ruin, and, by leaving their work imperfect, defeated all the benefit of it.

Many prodigies are mentioned by the historians to have given warning of Cæsar's death, which having been forged by some, and credulously believed by others, were copied as usual by all, to strike the imagination of their readers, and raise an awful attention to an

fabric, he had made more desolation in the world, than any man, Bonaparte excepted, that ever lived. He used to say, that his conquests in Gaul had cost about a million and two hundred thousand lives; and if we add the civil wars to the account, they could not cost the republic much less, in the more valuable blood of its best citizens: yet, when through a perpetual course of faction, violence, rapine, and slaughter, he had made his way at last to the empire, he did not enjoy the quiet possession of it above five months.

He was endowed with every great and noble quality that could exalt human nature, and give a man the ascendant in society: he was formed to excel in peace as well as war, provident in council, fearless in action, and executing what he had resolved with an amazing celerity: generous beyond measure to his friends, placable to his enemies, and for parts, learning, and eloquence, scarcely inferior to any man. He spoke with the same force with which he fought, and if he

event in which the gods were supposed to be interested. Cicero has related one of the most remarkable of them, "that as Cæsar was sacrificing, a little before his death, with great pomp and splendour, in his triumphal robes and golden chair, the victim, which was a fat ox, was found to be without a heart. On the next day he sacrificed again, in hopes to find the entrails more propitious, but the liver of the bullock appeared to want its head, which was reckoned also among the direful omens. These cases of victims, sometimes without a heart, or a liver, gave rise to a curious question, how to account for the cause of so strange a phenomenon. The most probable solution is, that if the facts be truly represented, they were contrived by Cæsar's friends, and the heart conveyed away by some artifice, to give them a better pretence of enforcing their admonitions, and putting Cæsar upon his guard against dangers which they really apprehended, from quite different causes than the pretended denunciations of the gods. In the morning of the fatal day, M. Brutus and C. Cassius appeared, according to custom, in the forum, to hear and determine causes, where, though they had daggers under their gowns, they sat with the same calmness as if they had nothing upon their minds, till the news of Cæsar's coming out to the senate called them away to the performance of their part in the tragical act. This they executed at last with such resolution, that through their eagerness to stab Cæsar, they even wounded one another.

had devoted himself to the bar, would have rivalled Cicero. Nor was he a master only of the politer arts, but conversant also with the most abstruse and critical parts of learning. He was a most liberal patron of wit and learning, wheresoever found; and, from his love of talents, would readily pardon those who had employed them against himself: rightly judging, that by making such men his friends, he should draw praises from the persons by whom he had been aspersed. His capital passions were ambition and love of pleasure, which he indulged in their turns to the greatest excess: yet the first was always predominant, and to it he could easily sacrifice all the charms of the other, and draw pleasure even from toils and dangers, when they ministered to his glory. For he thought Tyranny the greatest of goddesses, and had frequently in his mouth a verse of Euripides, which expressed the image of his soul, that "if right and justice were ever to be violated, they were to be violated for the sake of reigning." This was the chief end and purpose of his life; the scheme that he had formed from his early youth; so that he came with sobriety and meditation to the subversion of the republic. He used to say, "that there were two things necessary to acquire and to support power, soldiers and money, which yet depended mutually on each other: with money, therefore, he provided soldiers, and with soldiers extorted money: and was of all men the most rapacious in plundering both friends and foes, sparing neither prince, state, temple, nor even private persons, who were known to possess any share of treasure. His great abilities would necessarily have made him one of the first citizens of Rome; but disdainng a private condition, he could never rest till he had made himself a monarch. In acting this last part, his usual prudence seemed to fail him; as if the height to which he had ascended had turned his head and made him giddy: for, by a vain ostentation of his power, he destroyed the stability of it; and as men shorten life by living too fast, so by an intemperance in reigning, he brought his career to a violent end.

It was a common question after his death, and proposed as a problem by Livy, whether it was of service to the republic that he had ever been born. The question did not

turn on the simple merit of his acts, but on their accidental effects, particularly their production of the settlement under Augustus, and the benefits of that government, both of which were the consequences of his tyranny. Suetonius, upon balancing the exact sum of his virtues and vices, declares him on the whole "to have been justly killed." This appears to have been the general sense of the best, the wisest, and the most disinterested men in Rome, at the time when the act was committed.

The only question which seemed to admit any dispute was, whether it ought to have been committed by those who were the leaders in it: some of whom owed their lives to Cæsar, and others had been loaded by him with honours, to a degree that helped to increase the popular odium against the act and its author, particularly M. Brutus, who was the most cherished by him of them all, and who was left by his will the second heir of his estate. Cæsar's friends charged them with base ingratitude for killing their benefactor, and abusing the power which he had given to the destruction of the giver. The other side extolled the greater virtue of the individuals, for not being diverted by private considerations from doing an act of public benefit.

Some of Cæsar's friends, particularly Pansa and Hirtius, advised him always to keep a standing guard of prætorian troops for the defence of his person, alleging, that a power acquired by arms must necessarily be maintained by arms: but his common answer was, that he had rather die once by treachery than live always in fear of it. He used to laugh at Sylla for restoring the liberty of the republic, and to say in contempt of him, that "he did not know his letters." But Sylla had learned to resign his guards and his government together; whereas Cæsar, by dismissing the one and retaining the other, committed a dangerous fault in politics; for he strengthened the popular odium, and consequently his own danger, while he weakened his defence.

He made several good laws during his administration. The most considerable, as well as the most useful of them, was that no Prætor should hold any province more than one year, nor a consul more than two. Cæsar knew, by expe-

science, that the prolongation of these extraordinary commands, and the habit of ruling kingdoms, was the readiest way, not only to inspire a contempt of the laws, but to give a man the power to subvert them; and he hoped, therefore, by this law to prevent any other man from doing what he himself had done, and to secure his own possession from the attempts of all invaders.

The assassination of Cæsar, which was the last effort of the patrician party, threw the people of Rome into extreme confusion, and roused their fury to the highest pitch. The conspirators, having saved themselves by a precipitate flight, passed into Macedonia, and collected an army. His nephew Octavius, and his friend Mark Antony, stood forward as the avengers of his death. The battle of Philippi decided the contest. The conspirators were defeated. Brutus and Cassius perished. Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus formed a second triumvirate, and the latter being set aside, the two former divided between them the supreme power. Antony governed the eastern, and Octavius the western part of the Roman dominions. The naval engagement of Actium decided the differences that arose between them. Mark Antony being defeated, fled into Egypt, where both he and Cleopatra fell by their own hands. By the death of Cleopatra the illustrious race of the Ptolemies became extinct, and Egypt was reduced to a Roman province. From that period, Octavius, being left without either associates or rival, was honoured with the title of Augustus, and reigned sole sovereign of the Roman world.

Rome had, at this period, arrived at the height of her power and glory. Her military system, which enabled her to make so brilliant a figure in the annals of the world, naturally excites our curiosity, and attracts our attention.

The constitution of the Roman republic was in theory and practice completely military. Rome might have been considered as a camp, for all her citizens were soldiers. Every Roman citizen, with a few exceptions, before he attained to the age of forty-six, was obliged to serve ten years in the cavalry, or sixteen in the infantry. In case of any pressing danger, the time of military service began at twenty years of age,

and a citizen could not be admitted as a candidate for any of the offices of the state, till he had served ten campaigns.

In the primitive ages of Rome, the use of arms was wholly restricted to those classes of citizens who had property to defend. The requisite qualification for a Roman soldier was the possession of valuables to the amount of about £40 sterling, a very considerable sum at that early period. The soldier, as he served without pay, was supposed to be capable of providing for his own maintenance, at the time that he defended his property and his country. At the siege of Veii A. U. C. 349, which, continuing the long space of ten years, imposed great hardships on soldiers thus unprovided for by the state, a regular pay was first established. The Roman soldiers, however, like those of all ancient nations, depended, chiefly on plunder for the acquisition of wealth. Numerous instances also shew that their emoluments arising from immense donatives amounted to more than their regular pay; and, consequently, that the profits of a military life were, in every respect, irregular and indeterminate, but generally very considerable. In process of time, war was improved into an art, and converted into a trade. The qualification of property began to be disregarded. Caius Marius was the first of the Roman consuls who indiscriminately admitted the rabble of Italy into the legions. His example was followed by other commanders, and the legal qualifications being disregarded in the choice of soldiers, the personal requisites of age, strength, and stature were alone sought after. The legions, when recruited in the most distant provinces, and consisting of men of different nations, were considered as composed of Roman citizens. That distinction, when no longer regarded as a legal qualification, being converted into an honourable recompense, every legionary soldier became, by virtue of his enrolment, a citizen of Rome.

The number of soldiers of which the Roman legion was composed varied at different periods. Under the emperors, it consisted of six thousand one hundred infantry, and seven hundred and twenty-six cavalry. The defensive arms of the legion of infantry consisted of a helmet with a lofty crest,

a breast-plate, or a coat of mail, greaves on their legs, and a buckler on their left arm. The buckler was concave, and of oblong form, four feet in length, and two feet and a half in breadth, made of light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and guarded with plates of iron or brass. The offensive arms were the spear, the pilum, and the sword. The pilum was a ponderous javelin about six feet long, and terminated by a massive triangular point of steel. When this formidable weapon was thrown by a skilful hand, no shield or corslet could resist the impetuosity of the stroke, and no cavalry durst approach within its reach. As soon as the Roman soldier had darted his pilum, he drew his sword and rushed on the enemy. The sword, having a double edge and a sharp point, was equally formed for striking or pushing, but the soldier was instructed to prefer the latter method. The defensive arms of the Roman cavalry were the helmet, the oblong shield, light boots, and a coat of mail. The javelin and the long broad-sword were the principal offensive weapons. The cavalry of the republic was composed of the noble youth of Rome and Italy, who performed their military services on horseback ; and, in expectation of advancement to the public offices and honours of the state, recommended themselves by deeds of valour to the future suffrages of the citizens. The camp of a Roman legion was a regular fortification, exactly quadrangular, surrounded with a deep ditch, a high rampart, and a strong palisade. All these were made by the soldiers. The Roman legionaries were as well trained to the use of the spade and the pick-axe, as to that of the sword and the pilum. Instances of extraordinary works of this kind are met with in Roman history, particularly the wall nineteen miles long, and sixteen feet high, with a proportionable ditch, constructed by one legion, assisted by some auxiliary troops, in one of Cæsar's expeditions* against the Helvetii.

The laborious exercises to which the Roman soldiers were perpetually trained, fitted them for supporting such fatigues

* Cæsar, Comm. de Bello Gallico, lib. 1. cap. 6.

as may seem astonishing to modern effeminacy. They were diligently taught to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to use every kind of defensive and offensive arms. The arms appropriated to this imitation of war were of double the weight of those used in real action. On a march, beside their arms, the legionaries were laden with their kitchen furniture, the instruments of fortification, and provisions for several days. Under this cumbrous weight they were trained to march near twenty miles in the space of six hours. On the appearance of an enemy, they instantly deposited their baggage, and by rapid evolutions converted the columns of march into an order of battle. The Roman discipline was extremely rigid. The centurions were authorised to punish with blows, the generals to punish with death. On the other hand, besides the substantial rewards of regular pay, occasional donatives, and a stated recompence after the appointed time of service, every artifice was devised to influence the imagination, excite enthusiastic courage, and inspire the mind of the soldier with exalted ideas of military glory. Every thing that could strike the eye, and fill the imagination with a view of the majesty of Rome, and of the exploits of her heroes, was pompously displayed. The painted representations of captured cities and conquered armies, the arms and spoils of vanquished enemies, the military bands of music, the general, arrayed in robes of purple embroidered in gold, and exalted on a triumphal car, followed by the victorious army marching in solemn procession through the streets of Rome, altogether formed a spectacle indescribably magnificent and impressive*. But, amidst this splendid pomp, a spectacle was always exhibited, which to a modern reader must appear an indisputable proof of Roman barbarism. A train of illustrious captives, kings and commanders, in chains, following the triumphal car of the conqueror, swelled the insulting pride of the Roman people. These, after the close of the pompous procession, were put to a cruel death, while the multitudes

* See the circumstantial account of the triumph of Paulus Emilius over Persæus, king of Macedonia. Plutarch in Vita P. Emilii.

of inferior warriors, who had fallen into the same calamitous circumstances, were condemned to perpetual slavery.

The number of the Roman legions varied in different periods. The peace establishment of Adrian and the Antonines consisted of thirty legions, amounting, with their auxiliary troops, to about 375,000 men. The naval force of the Roman empire seems to have been inadequate to the extent of its territory. Their two principal fleets were stationed at Ravenna and Misenum: the former commanding the eastern, the latter the western part of the Mediterranean. Other squadrons also guarded the southern coasts of Gaul, the British channel, and the Euxine. Numerous vessels were likewise maintained on the Danube and the Rhine, to intercept the passage of the barbarians. The whole marine of the Romans, consisting only of galleys, would appear inconsiderable in comparison with the naval armaments of modern Europe; but as none of the barbarous nations had any great maritime force, the Roman marine was sufficient for every useful purpose. A modern historian considers 450,000 men as the highest computation that can be reasonably made of the whole military and naval establishment of the empire.

Previous to the siege of Veii, the citizens of Rome made war at their own private expence; but a regular pay being then established, a public fund became necessary, and a tax was levied in proportion to property. This must have fallen heavy on the citizens during the Punic wars, when the Italian states paid their tribute in military services, and the Romans themselves supported the expences of the mighty contest with Carthage. But, after the wealth of Syracuse, of Carthage, of Macedonia, and of Asia, was brought in triumph to Rome, the citizens were delivered from taxation. The tribute of the provinces was found sufficient to defray the public expenditure till the reign of Augustus. That emperor again introduced taxation, which increased in successive reigns, and at last became intolerably burdensome. Mr. Gibbon supposes the amount of the Roman revenue to be between £ 15,000,000 and £ 20,000,000 sterling.

The celebrated Roman republic was, under Augustus, changed into a monarchy. It still retained the republican offices, dignities, and forms. The senate still existed, and consuls were elected as usual. The title of Emperor, by the moderns translated Emperor, signified nothing more than the commander in chief of the military force of the republic. The constitution of the empire was limited in theory, but despotic in reality. Augustus, who was a consummate master of the art of governing mankind, sensible how much men are attached to forms and names, instead of abolishing the republican offices and dignities, contrived to unite most of them in his own person*. He was careful at the same time

* The provinces, long oppressed by the ministers of the republic, sighed for the government of a single person. The people of Rome demanded only bread and public shows, and were supplied with both by the liberal hand of Augustus. The rich and polite Italians enjoyed the present blessings of ease and tranquillity, and suffered not the pleasing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom.

The reformation of the senate was one of the first steps in which Augustus laid aside the tyrant, and professed himself the father of his country. He was elected censor, and expelled a few members, and persuaded near two hundred to prevent the shame of an expulsion by a voluntary retreat. But while he thus restored the dignity, he destroyed the independence, of the senate.

Before an assembly thus modelled and prepared, Augustus pronounced a studied oration, which displayed his patriotism, and disguised his ambition. He lamented, yet excused his past conduct. Filial piety had required at his hands the revenge of his father's murder. He was now at liberty to satisfy his duty and his inclination. He solemnly restored the senate and people to all their ancient rights, and wished only to mingle with the crowd of his fellow-citizens, and to share the blessings which he had obtained for his country.

It was dangerous to trust the sincerity of Augustus; to seem to distrust it was still more dangerous. Amidst this confusion of sentiments, the answer of the senate was unanimous and decisive. They refused to accept the resignation of Augustus; they conjured him not to desert the republic which he had saved. After a decent resistance, the crafty tyrant submitted to the orders of the senate, and consented to receive the government of the provinces, and the general command of the Ro-

to reject such titles as were displeasing ; and refused that of dictator, which had appeared so odious in Sylla and Julius

man armies, under the well-known names of proconsul and imperator. But he would receive them only for ten years.

Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects of the republic. The most important resolutions of peace and war were seriously debated in the senate, and solemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a great distance from Italy, the generals assumed the liberty of directing them against whatever people, and in whatever manner, they judged most advantageous for the public service. Such was the power over the soldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to or assumed by the generals of the republic. They were at the same time the governors, or rather monarchs of the conquered provinces, united the civil with the military character, administered justice as well as the finances, and exercised both the executive and legislative power of the state.

Although Augustus considered a military force as the firmest foundation, he wisely rejected it as a very odious instrument of government. It was more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his policy, to reign under the venerable names of ancient magistracy, and artfully to collect in his own person all the scattered rays of civil jurisdiction. With this view, he permitted the senate to confer upon him, for life, the power of the consular and tribunitian offices, which were in the same manner continued to all his successors. The consuls had succeeded to the kings of Rome, and represented the dignity of the state. They were considered as the supreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary jurisdiction ; but, whenever the senate empowered the first magistrate to consult the safety of the commonwealth, he was raised above the laws, and exercised, in the defence of liberty, a temporary despotism. The character of the tribunes was, in every respect, different from that of the consuls. Their force was suited rather for opposition than for action. They were instituted to defend the oppressed, to pardon offences, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it necessary, to stop, by a single word, the whole machine of government. But when the consular and tribunitian powers were united, when they were vested for life in a single person, when the general of the army was at the same time the minister of the senate, and the representative of the Roman people, it was impossible to resist the exercise, nor was it easy to define the limits, of his imperial prerogative.

Cæsar. His successors imitated, in this respect, his example; and the republican dignities and forms were continued to the last period of Roman power, as an ostensible veil for despotism.

The tender respect of Augustus for a free constitution which he had destroyed, can only be explained by an attentive consideration of the character of that subtle tyrant. A cool head, an unfeeling heart, and a cowardly disposition, prompted him, at the age of nineteen, to assume the mask of hypocrisy, which he never afterwards laid aside. With the same hand, and probably with the same temper, he signed the proscription of Cicero, and the pardon of Cinna.

To these accumulated honours, the policy of Augustus soon added the splendid, as well as important dignities of supreme pontiff and of censor. By the former, he acquired the management of the religion, and by the latter a legal inspection over the manners and fortunes of the Roman people. The emperors, as the first ministers of the republic, were authorised to employ the revenue at their discretion; to declare peace and war; to ratify treaties; and, by a most comprehensive clause, they were empowered to execute whatsoever they should judge advantageous to the empire, and agreeable to the majesty of things, private or public, human or divine.

When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the imperial magistrate, the ordinary magistrates of the commonwealth languished in obscurity, without vigour, and almost without business. The names and forms of the ancient administration were preserved by Augustus with the most anxious care. The usual number of consuls, prætors, and tribunes, were annually invested with their respective ensigns of office, and continued to discharge some of their least important functions.

The system of the imperial government, as it was instituted by Augustus, may be defined an absolute monarchy, disguised by the forms of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly professed themselves the accountable ministers of the senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed.

The face of the court corresponded with the forms of the administration. In all the offices of life, the emperors affected to confound themselves with their subjects, and maintained with them an equal intercourse of visits and entertainments. Their habit, their palaces, their tables, were suited only to the rank of an opulent senator.

His virtues, and even his vices, were artificial ; and according to the various dictates of his interest, he was at first the enemy, and at last the father of the Roman world. When he framed the artful system of the Imperial authority, his moderation was inspired by his fears. He wished to deceive the people by an image of civil liberty, and the armies by an image of civil government.

The death of Julius Cæsar was ever before his eyes. The fidelity of the legions might defend his authority against open rebellion, but their vigilance could not secure his person from the dagger of a determined republican. Cæsar had provoked his fate as much by the ostentation of his power, as by his power itself. The consul, or the tribune, might have reigned in peace. The title of king had armed the Romans against his life. Augustus was sensible that mankind is governed by names ; nor was he deceived in his expectation that the senate and people would submit to slavery, provided they were respectfully assured that they still enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble senate and enervated people cheerfully acquiesced in the pleasing illusion ; or, if roused to seek the restoration of free government, they attacked the person of the tyrant, without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

During a long period of two hundred and twenty years, from the establishment of this artful system to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent in a military government were in a great measure suspended. Excepting one short, though violent eruption of military licence, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away unstained with civil blood.

The annals of the successive emperors exhibit a strong and various picture of human nature. In their conduct, we may trace the utmost lines of vice and virtue, the most exalted perfection, and the meanest degeneracy of the human species. If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of mankind was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman

empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm, but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws.

The labours of these monarchs were overpaid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue; and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. But they must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man, and the fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse that absolute power which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. It is almost superfluous to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theatre on which they acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius, and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy. During four-score years, (excepting only the short and doubtful respite of Vespasian's reign,) Rome groaned beneath an unremitted tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue and every talent that arose in that unhappy period.

Under the reign of these monsters, the slavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumstances, the one occasioned by their former liberty, the other by their extensive conquests, which rendered their condition more completely wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From these causes were derived the exquisite sensibility of the sufferers, and the impossibility of escaping from the hand of the oppressor.

The Romans, though oppressed beneath the weight of their own corruption, and of military violence, for a long

while preserved the sentiments, or at least the ideas of their free-born ancestors. From Grecian philosophy they had imbibed the justest and most liberal notions of the dignity of human nature and the origin of civil society. The history of their own country had taught them to revere a free, a virtuous, and a victorious commonwealth, to abhor the successful crimes of Cæsar and Augustus, and inwardly to despise their tyrants.

The subsequent division of Europe into a number of independent states has been productive of beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant would soon experience a gentle restraint from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would easily obtain in a happier climate a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world; and when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive.

In the Roman empire, as in other military governments, the sovereign power was at last usurped by the soldiery. The popular assemblies having been suppressed, not even an ostensible share of the government was left to the citizens. And while the senate was made use of only as an engine of state to sanction the decrees of imperial despotism, the em-

perors themselves were no more than instruments in the hands of the soldiers, who advanced them to the imperial dignity, and hurled them from their high elevation, according as they thought well or ill of their conduct. The senate, overawed by the soldiery, was glad to exercise an ostensible authority in ratifying the military elections; and the emperors, raised by the legions, or the prætorian guards, were sensible that their standing depended on their favour and support*.

The unbounded licence of the soldiery did not appear in its full extent, and with all its pernicious consequences till after the death of Commodus; when the conspirators who had terminated the life of the tyrant, appealed to the prætorian guards for their approbation and support, in the elevation of Pertinax to the imperial purple. That body, now sensible of its uncontrollable authority over the city, assumed the sole disposal of the empire. Rome then exhibited a phenomenon to which history affords no parallel. Discontented at their own choice of an emperor, who, instead of encouraging licentiousness, aimed at the restoration of discipline, the prætorian soldiers hurled Pertinax from the elevation to which he had been raised by their power. A party of 300 or 400 of the most desperate among them, marched to the imperial palace, assassinated the virtuous emperor, placed his head on a lance, and carried it in triumph to their camp. This military corps now possessing an uncontrollable power, and proceeding to an excess of licence unexam-

* It has been calculated by politicians, that no state, without being soon exhausted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleness. But the advantages of military science and discipline cannot be exerted, unless a proper number of soldiers are united into one body, and actuated by one soul. There is no superiority of natural strength or acquired skill which could enable one man to keep in constant subjection one hundred of his fellow creatures: but an hundred thousand well disciplined soldiers will command with despotic sway ten millions of subjects; and a body of ten, or fifteen thousand guards, will strike terror into the most numerous populace that ever crowded the streets of an immense capital. The prætorian guards scarcely amounted to the last mentioned number. They were always necessary, but often fatal to the throne of despotism.

pled in the annals of nations, exposed the sovereignty of the Roman world to sale by public auction. Didius Julianus, a wealthy senator, and Sulpicianus, father-in-law of Pertinax, bid against each other. Julianus was the highest bidder, and purchased the blood-stained robes of imperial majesty, by a donative of upwards of £200 sterling to each soldier*. The gates of the camp were instantly thrown open. The purchaser was declared emperor. The soldiers, placing him in the middle of their ranks, in close order of battle, conducted him through the streets of Rome. The senate was commanded to assemble, and the senate-house being filled with armed soldiers, the election was immediately confirmed.

But although the prætorian guards had sold the empire, the legions in the different provinces refused to ratify the infamous contract. In Britain, Clodius Albinus, in Syria, Pescennius Niger, and in Illyricum, Septimus Severus, a native of Africa, were, by their respective armies, proclaimed emperors. All men of abilities, and esteemed by the soldiers, they, on this important occasion, omitted no measures that could further conciliate their affection. Severus, assembling his troops, painted in the most lively colours the insolence of the prætorian guards, and animated the legions to avenge the insult offered to Rome and her victorious armies; and at the same time promised to each soldier, what he called not a bribe, but an honourable donative of about £400 sterling, double the sum for which the prætorians had sold the empire. Such an offer was irresistible: he was instantly proclaimed emperor, and saluted by the title of Augustus.

In the gradual ascent of Severus from an obscure station, his daring ambition had never been diverted from its steady course by the allurements of pleasure, the apprehension of danger, or the feelings of humanity. On this important occasion, he acted with all the vigour of decided character. He immediately began his march from the banks of the Danube towards Rome; and, having the sovereignty of the world in

* Gibbon, Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. I.,

view, cheerfully sustained all the hardships of the meanest soldier. The distance was about 800 miles, which he marched on foot, and in complete armour, at the head of his warlike columns. On his approach towards Rome, he made an offer of pardon to the prætorian guards, on condition that they should abandon their emperor, and give up the murderers of Pertinax. These licentious soldiers gladly complied with such easy terms. They immediately seized their comrades who had perpetrated the murder, and signified to the senate that they no longer supported the cause of Julianus. That assembly immediately pronounced a sentence of deposition and death against the unfortunate prince, and acknowledged Severus as lawful emperor. Julianus was then beheaded as a common criminal, after having, through an ambitious infatuation, employed his immense treasure in the purchase of an anxious and precarious reign of only sixty-six days. Severus immediately advanced to Rome, and was invested with the imperial purple, and attained the highest object of human ambition without drawing his sword. His two rivals, Albinus in the west, and Niger in the east, were still in arms.—The emperor made but a short stay in Rome before he set out on his march against Niger. This expedition being successfully terminated, he turned his arms against Albinus.—A single battle decided the fate of the empire*. The contest between the British and the Illyrian legions was long and doubtful: the personal bravery of the emperor turned the

* The Roman soldiers, after the fall of the republic, combated in this domestic war only for the choice of masters. Under the standard of a popular candidate for empire, a few enlisted from affection, some from fear, many from interest, none from principle. The legions, uninflamed by party zeal, were allured into civil war by liberal donatives, and still more liberal promises. A defeat, by disabling the chief from the performance of his engagements, dissolved the mercenary allegiance of his followers. It was of little moment to the provinces under whose name they were oppressed or governed. They were driven by the impulsion of the present power, and as soon as that power yielded to a superior force, they hastened to implore the clemency of the conqueror. In the vast extent of the Roman empire, there were few fortified cities capable of protecting a routed army.

scale, and victory declared in his favour. Albinus was afterwards taken and put to death, a fate which Niger had already undergone, and Severus, without a competitor, was left in the undisputed possession of the empire.

The prætorian guards owed their institution to Augustus. Their original number was about 9000. They were distinguished by double pay and superior privileges. At first only three cohorts were stationed in Rome, and the rest were distributed in the neighbouring towns. Tiberius, under pretence of improving their discipline, but most probably in order to overawe the capital, assembled them at Rome, in a permanent and strongly fortified camp. Vitellius increased them to 16,000, which was afterwards, generally, their number. Such was the origin of the prætorian guards, at first so necessary, afterwards so dangerous, to imperial despotism. Conscious that the seat of empire and the person of the sovereign was in their power, they had, since the accession of Claudius, exacted from every emperor a liberal donative. Marcus Aurelius, with his colleague, Lucius Verus, gave £160 to each soldier; and Adrian complained, that the promotion of a Cæsar had cost him £2,500,000 sterling. This military corps was cashiered by Severus; but he re-established the institution on a new model, and increased it to four times the former number. A new body of prætorian guards, consisting of above 50,000 men, was formed of soldiers chosen for valour, strength, and fidelity, draughted from all the legions of the empire. This formidable force, which was to be constantly recruited in the same manner, was thought sufficient to crush every attempt at rebellion among the Romans, and to deter the legionary commanders from erecting the standard of revolt. Roman history, however, proves the latter supposition to have been ill founded. The command of this corps now became the most important office of the empire. The prætorian prefect, who was formerly a mere military officer, was placed at the head of the finances and of the law. In every department of the administration, he represented the person, and exercised the authority of the emperor.

In the reign of Severus, the imperial government of Rome degenerated into an undisguised military despotism. Setting

aside even the ostensible authority of the senate, which had hitherto been respected, he assumed the style as well as the conduct of an absolute sovereign; and exercised without disguise the legislative and executive power. His government was strict, but characterized by attention and discernment; although a tyrant to the senate, he was a friend to the people, and generally favoured the poor and oppressed. Many cities owed to him their prosperity, and by public monuments attested their gratitude. He revived the glory of the Roman name, and carried his victorious arms as far as Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the two principal cities of the Parthian monarchy. From the east he turned his attention to the west, passed over into Britain, and penetrating almost to the northern extremity of the island, reduced the fierce Caledonians to a temporary submission. He died at York in the year two hundred and eleven, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and the eighteenth of a glorious and successful reign. Severus could justly boast, that, having received the empire involved in foreign and domestic wars, he left it triumphant over every enemy, and in the enjoyment of universal peace.

Salutary laws, executed with inflexible firmness, had, during the reign of Severus, corrected a multitude of abuses; but gratitude, misguided policy, or perhaps necessity, induced him to relax the nerves of military discipline. He also increased the pay of the legions beyond the example of former times. His profuse liberality, which taught them first to expect, and then to claim, extraordinary donatives on every occasion of public festivity or danger, gave rise to various discontents, while the relaxation of discipline rendered them averse to subordination.

From the death of Severus, A. D. 211, to the elevation of Decius, A. D. 249, all the sovereigns of the Roman world perished by violence. In the short space of thirty-eight years, no less than twelve emperors successively fell by secret conspiracy, or open rebellion. Geta was murdered by his brother, Caracalla by the prætorian guards, who elevated their præfect Macrinus to the imperial purple. This emperor fell by the sword of rebellion. The vicious Elagabalus was massacred by the prætorian guards, and Alexander, whose

whole reign was spent in continual struggles against the corruption of the age, and in unavailing efforts for the restoration of military discipline, met with a similar fate. Maximin, originally a Thracian peasant, afterwards a soldier, a man of extraordinary strength and stature, was by the army raised to the purple, and afterwards murdered in his tent. The two Gordians, father and son, perished in civil contest. Maximus and Balbinus were seized in the imperial palace by the prætorian guards, dragged through the streets of Rome, and afterwards put to death. The third Gordian was invested by the populace with the purple at Rome, and his authority confirmed by the army, and afterwards murdered at the instigation of Philip, the prætorian prefect. Philip, an Arab by birth, and originally a robber by profession, having by his courage and conduct risen to the rank of prætorian prefect, was by his licentious band raised to the sovereignty of the world, and in his turn fell in a revolt of the legions of Mæsia. Decius, the leader of this revolt, was immediately universally acknowledged emperor*. The exaltation and downfall of those monarchs of the Roman world serves to blacken the page of history, and to exhibit the turbulent despotism and anarchy of the Roman state. The emperor was only the first officer of a military government, and elected for the particular benefit of the soldiery. Events of a different nature, and of greater national importance, began, in the reign of Decius, to attract the attention of the Roman people.

The northern nations, whose invasions were long formidable, and at last fatal to Rome, now commenced those incursions, which, during more than two centuries, gave almost constant employment to her arms, and finally subverted her power. Rome had twice before been endangered by the ferocious attacks of the nations inhabiting the vast countries situated beyond the Danube. The formidable invasion of the Cimbri had been repelled by the consul Marius; and the war with the Marcomanni and Quadi, who inhabited Bava-

* Gibbon, Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. I.

ria and Austria, had been successfully terminated by Marcus Aurelius. Ever since the reign of Augustus, the emperors had always found it necessary to guard the banks of the Danube, and constantly stationed a number of legions on the Illyrian frontier, which extended from the head of the Adriatic to the shores of the Euxine. In the reign of Decius, the Goths, who afterwards acted so conspicuous a part in the subversion of the empire, began to be noticed in Roman history. The origin of this celebrated people is buried in obscurity; by some they are supposed to have emigrated from the shores of the Euxine and Caspian seas, in two grand divisions, one spreading itself over Germany, and the other settling in Scandinavia, at a period long before the Christian era; others content themselves with tracing them to the latter country, without seeking a remoter antiquity or a more distant origin.

From the Christian era to the age of the Antonines, the Goths were established about the mouth of the Vistula; and westward, along the coasts of the Baltic, were seated the various tribes of the Vandals. During the interval which elapsed between the reigns of M. Aurelius and Alexander Severus, they had advanced further south, and, being joined by numerous adventurers from the nations of the same savage origin, and their force increased by the accession of various barbarian tribes, they advanced into the Ukraine, and took possession of that fertile country. They seated themselves soon after in Dacia, and even passed over the Danube, took Philopopolis by storm, and massacred 100,000 inhabitants. The emperor Decius marched against those formidable invaders, and, after gaining many signal advantages, was with his son slain in battle. Gallus, his successor, purchased a peace from the victorious Goths, by leaving in their hands the booty and the prisoners they had taken, and engaging to pay them an annual tribute. This ignominious treaty, however, far from assuring peace to the empire, was an encouragement to new invaders, who spread devastation throughout the Illyrian provinces. These being repelled by Emilianus, governor of Pannonia and Mæsia, the fortunate general was proclaimed emperor by the army. Gallus, advancing against

him, was abandoned by his forces and slain, together with Volusianus his son. The senate ratified the election of Emilianus; but, in less than four months, the soldiers who had raised him to the purple imbrued their hands in his blood. Valerian, an officer of singular merit, was next elected emperor. The beginning of his reign was prosperous, and his virtues promised the restoration of Roman glory. But having undertaken an unsuccessful expedition against the Persians, he had the misfortune to be made prisoner, and ended his days in captivity. *be*

The succeeding reign of Gallienus was peculiarly unfortunate. Sapor, the Persian monarch, devastated Syria, and the greater part of the lesser Asia. The Goths, the Franks, and the Alemanni harassed with repeated invasions the whole length of the Roman frontier, from the Euxine to the mouth of the Rhine. The Goths, with their fleets composed of small vessels carrying from twenty-five to thirty men, ravaged not only the countries on the southern shores of the Euxine, but spread devastation through Greece and Asia Minor. All the large and opulent cities of those countries were plundered. The spoil was immense, and the number of captives considerable. The historian of the decline and fall of the Roman empire relates the events of three of these naval invasions; in the last of which, Athens, the ancient seat of the muses, was sacked, and the famous temple of Ephesus, one of the wonders of the ancient world, was involved in the general scene of destruction. While the Goths were ravaging the east, similar troubles agitated the west. The Franks, bursting out from their morasses near the banks of the lower Rhine, passed that ancient barrier of the Roman empire, ravaged Gaul, crossed the Pyrenees, and having carried terror and devastation through Spain, extended their destructive inroads to Africa. The Alemanni, a nation inhabiting the central parts of Germany, at the same time made dreadful incursions into Italy, advanced as far as Ravenna, and displayed their victorious banners almost within sight of Rome. The armies of the empire were then occupied in the east against the Persians, and in the west against the Franks; and Italy was left almost defenceless.

Civil war, as well as foreign invasion, convulsed the empire during this calamitous reign. No less than nineteen usurpers, in different provinces, erected the standard of revolt, and assumed the imperial dignity. Of these, Tetricus alone was a senator, and Piso a patrician. Most of the others, having originally been peasants, enlisted into the legions as private soldiers, and had been promoted by their valour to military command. It would be useless to detail the sanguinary contests, the temporary successes, and the uniform fate of those various pretenders to empire. Every one of them died a violent death. No sooner were they invested with the bloody purple, than they found themselves compassed with the threefold dangers of secret conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war. They stood on the edge of precipices, and perished after a short period of splendid trouble and miserable anxiety. During this period of universal confusion, the transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, were rapid and almost certain consequences of the possession of empire.

The elevation and downfall of these transitory monarchs, individually considered, is of little moment in national history; but the uniformity of their fate is of great importance, when the results produced, and its connexion with the happiness of the people is taken into consideration. The price of their fatal elevation was immediately paid to the troops, in immense donatives drawn from the exhausted provinces. They were under the necessity of supporting their usurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. Their embarrassed situation often compelled them to burden the people with oppressive contributions, in order to purchase the neutrality or the services of the barbarians. In Gaul, Posthumus had a body of Franks in his service; bands of the Roxolani were entertained by Regillianus in Illyrium; while Gallienus, the only emperor recognised at Rome, subsidised a body of the Heruli, and invested their chief with the ornaments of the consular dignity. The fatal measure was adopted of introducing hostile barbarians into the heart of the empire, in the character of auxiliaries, and of making them acquainted, not only with the opulence, but with the

military discipline of the Romans. During this general distraction of the empire, the fertile island of Sicily was ravaged by numerous troops of banditti, composed of peasants and slaves, emboldened by impunity and success. Egypt exhibited a similar scene of disorder. The anarchy which prevailed throughout the Roman dominions had extinguished the authority of the laws, and introduced an ungovernable spirit of licentiousness. Alexandria was the theatre of a civil war, which, with short intervals, continued during a period of twelve years. All intercourse was cut off between the different quarters of the city, every street was converted into a field of battle, and every building of strength into a citadel. Before these troubles subsided, a great part of that commercial and opulent city was reduced to a heap of ruins. Tumults and commotions did not, indeed, take place throughout the whole empire at one precise time, but they all happened within the space of fifteen years, from A. D. 253, to A. D. 268, during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus, and that of Gallienus alone.

These destructive scenes of human contention, however, were not the only misfortunes of this calamitous period. Famine and pestilence, those terrible scourges of mankind, appeared in their most terrific forms: the former was the necessary consequence of the civil wars and foreign invasions which ruined agriculture. The causes of the latter are less apparent, but its effects were dreadfully conspicuous. From the year 250 to 265, it raged without intermission through every province and city of the empire. During some time, it carried off about five thousand persons daily in Rome, and several towns were entirely depopulated. A modern historian supposes, from certain particular facts and various authorities, that during the period here alluded to, not less than half the population of the Roman empire was consumed by the joint calamities of war, famine, and pestilence*.

Gallienus having been assassinated by conspirators at the siege of Milan, the removal of an effeminate and indolent

* Gibbon Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. I. ch. 10.

prince made way for a succession of heroes ; and the Roman empire, which seemed to be on the verge of destruction, was saved by a series of warlike emperors, who derived their obscure origin from the martial provinces near the banks of the Danube. Claudius was the immediate successor of Gallienus. The obscurity of his origin betrays the meanness of his extraction. Authentic history can only discover that he was a native of Illyrium ; that he had spent his life in arms ; and that he had risen to promotion by his merit. His actions however were sufficient to render his name immortal. He almost totally annihilated the immense armament of the Goths, who, passing in an immense number of vessels through the Bosphorus, had renewed their invasions in a still more formidable manner than in the preceding reign. In the complicated operations of this dangerous war, he performed exploits worthy of the greatest heroes, and was considered as the saviour of the empire. This great emperor, dying of the plague at Sirmium, nominated Aurelian, one of his generals, as his successor. Aurelian, originally a peasant of Illyrium, had enlisted into the army as a common soldier, and, passing through all the gradations of military promotion, had in every station distinguished himself by matchless valour, rigid discipline, and prudent conduct. When vested with the imperial purple, he eminently sustained his former character. Every moment of his short reign of four years and nine months was signalized by some glorious achievement. He subdued all the foreign and domestic enemies of the empire, and, with a prudent policy, ceded to the Goths the Roman province of Dacia, established by Trajan beyond the Danube. In consequence of this judicious cession of a country always exposed to hostile inroads, the civilized Goths erected in Dacia a kingdom which for some time served the Roman empire as a barrier against the more northern barbarians. This emperor subdued the famous Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, whom history describes as one of the most accomplished women that ever existed ; a prodigy of beauty, valour, and learning. In the reign of Aurelian, and during his absence in Pannonia, the Alemanni made that formidable incursion into Italy, which threatened

Rome, and induced the terrified citizens to construct new walls encompassing a larger space than the ancient precincts of the city. The precaution, however, proved unnecessary. The emperor advancing by hasty marches to provide for the safety of the capital, totally defeated and almost annihilated the invaders. He re-established not only the tranquillity but the glory of the empire. After some time, he conducted his army against the Persians, but was slain in his march by conspirators.

The administration of Aurelian was vigorous, but severe and despotic. As he had saved, so he also governed the empire by the sword. He was a warlike prince, and a useful though severe reformer of a degenerate state. His death was regretted by the soldiers, who admired his military abilities, and nothing can be a greater proof of the change which his rigorous government had effected, than the tranquillity that reigned during the space of eight months before a new emperor was elected. During this interregnum, the Roman world remained without a sovereign, without any military sedition, and without any civil commotion, exhibiting a picture extremely different from that of the preceding times. After a variety of deliberations, Tacitus, a venerable and aged member of the senate, was elected by that body, and acknowledged, first by the prætorian guards, and afterwards by the whole army. His reign promised to be useful and glorious, had it been longer. Licentiousness, however, began again to prevail among the soldiers; and, after having reigned less than a year, it is uncertain whether this emperor fell by sickness or assassination.

Probus, another Illyrian peasant, who, like Claudius and Aurelian, had owed his promotion in the army to military merit, assumed the purple. He was the favourite of the soldiers, and the senate willingly confirmed their choice. The barbarians on every side had again burst into the empire. They were all vanquished and expelled by the courage and conduct of Probus. Every frontier of the empire witnessed his exploits. The east and the west were the theatres of his victories. Having delivered Gaul from a formidable invasion of the Franks, he passed the Rhine, penetrated into the

heart of Germany, and displayed his invincible eagles on the banks of the Elbe and the Neckar. All his measures were directed with unremitting attention and activity to the happiness as well as the glory of the empire. His prudence was always equal to his valour, and in every undertaking he was invariably successful. The single point in which he seemed to forget the rules of moderation was the rigid discipline which he introduced among the troops, on whom he imposed severe and incessant labours, exercising them in draining marshes, improving waste grounds, constructing useful or ornamental edifices, and other toilsome tasks, whenever they were not employed in military operations. He is also said to have imprudently expressed a hope, that by the establishment of universal peace he should render a standing army unnecessary. This impolitic avowal of his inattention to the interests of the soldiery, that formidable power of which every Roman emperor was only the minister, proved fatal to Probus. While, in one of the hottest days of summer, he was severely urging the toilsome labour of draining the marshes of Sirmium, the soldiers, impatient of fatigue, suddenly threw down their tools, seized their swords, and plunged them into the breast of the emperor. Probus ascended the imperial throne at forty-four years of age, and in a reign of six years rivalled the fame of the greatest heroes whose names are recorded in history.

Claudius Aurelian and Probus are deservedly esteemed the restorers of the Roman empire, which, during the reign of Gallienus, had been brought to the verge of dissolution. Nor did the effects of their vigorous administration terminate with their lives. Their camps were the great schools of military science and discipline, and produced pupils of distinguished eminence. The emperors Carus, Dioclesian, Maximian, Constantius Chlorus, and Galerius, with a number of other celebrated commanders, were trained to arms under their victorious banners. Probus was succeeded by Carus, whose short reign was signalized by his extraordinary successes against the Persians. He made himself master of the great cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and displayed the Roman eagles beyond the Tigris. Being struck dead in his

tent by lightning, his two sons, Carinus and Numerian, were acknowledged emperors. Numerian was in the camp and beloved by the troops; Carinus lived detested at Rome. The former dying in his tent, to which his disorder had for some time confined him, Aper, the prætorian prefect, concealing his death, continued to govern in his name; but the cheat being discovered, his policy proved fatal to him. Being brought to account for his conduct before a great military council of the generals and tribunes, Diocletian, whom the army had destined to the purple, plunged his sword into the breast of the prefect, and was immediately proclaimed emperor. Carinus made preparations for a war against his rival, but being killed by one of his officers, whose wife he had seduced, civil discord was extinguished, and Diocletian remained sole master of the Roman world. The origin of Diocletian was more abject and obscure than that of any of his predecessors, his father being a slave. Talents and fortune supplied the deficiency of birth. He had risen by his merit from the lowest to the highest rank, and, having been successively promoted to the government of Mæsia and the consular dignity, was thought worthy of ruling the empire. His prudent administration justified the public opinion, but the events of his reign are too numerous to be particularly related in this historical sketch. Conscious of the weighty task which he had undertaken, and to provide at the same time for the security of the east and the west, he gave himself, in the second year of his reign, A. D. 286, a colleague in the person of Maximian, who was a soldier of fortune and an Illyrian peasant. Diocletian, though a pupil of the camp, was famous rather as a statesman than a warrior, being as much distinguished by his artful policy, as Maximian was for his ferocious courage and cruelty. The former of these emperors took the name of Jovius, the latter that of Hercules. Maximian, soon after his elevation, quelled a formidable revolt of the peasants of Gaul. The two emperors, in order to lighten their own load of public affairs, and to provide more effectually for the safety of the state, made choice of two Cæsars, whom they adopted as their sons, and employed as their lieutenants. These were Galerius and

Constantius Chlorus, both of whom were afterwards emperors. Diocletian in person reduced Egypt, which, since the reign of Gallienus, had repeatedly relapsed into rebellion. He also prohibited the study of alchymy, to which the Egyptians were greatly addicted, and committed to the flames all the books which treated of that illusory science. In the east, a war, disastrous at its commencement but afterwards successful, was carried on against Persia, and finally terminated by an advantageous peace, which continued about forty years. Rome was now in high prosperity, freed from the invasions of the barbarians as well as from the evils of anarchy, and rendered victorious over all her enemies by a series of warlike peasants from the banks of the Danube. In the year 303 of the christian era, these joint emperors celebrated their victories by the solemn pomp of a triumph, the last that Rome ever beheld. Soon after this period, that city ceased to be the capital of the empire. A very remarkable and important change in the Roman state was introduced under these emperors. They were the first who abandoned the imperial city and fixed their ordinary residence in the provinces. Maximian established his court at Milan, a station, indeed, more convenient than Rome for watching the motions of the German barbarians. Diocletian chose Nicomedia in Asia Minor for his imperial seat, and, till he celebrated his triumph in the twentieth year of his reign, it does not appear that he had ever visited Rome. Even on that memorable occasion, he remained there only two months. This dereliction of the ancient capital was attended with considerable changes in the system of government. Under Tacitus and Probus, the senate had resumed some appearance of its constitutional authority; but when Rome was no longer the residence of the emperors, this august body lost even that shadow of importance which it had hitherto retained. The sovereigns laid aside the titles of consul, proconsul, tribune, &c. which, even united with imperial despotism, still indicated the republican origin of the Roman constitution. The title of Imperator was still retained; but it acquired a new signification, and that of Dominus or Lord began to be superadded. Diocletian and his colleague Maximian exer-

cised the legislative as well as the executive power, without ever consulting the senate. The senatorial dignity was till the last period of the empire considered as an honorary distinction ; but the senate as a constitutional assembly losing all connection with the imperial court, sank into oblivion. The manners of the court of Rome were also quite laid aside in that of Nicomedia. Diocletian, instead of the Roman, introduced the Persian magnificence, with all the formality of Asiatic despotism, and assumed the diadem, which the Romans detested, as the ensign of royalty. His person was of difficult access, and, whenever a subject was admitted to his presence, he was obliged to prostrate himself, according to the eastern fashion, before his absolute lord and master.

The constitution of the empire, as well as that of the imperial court, was new-modelled. Diocletian, from his own experience and that of his predecessors, had reason to think that the activity of one single man, whatever might be his abilities, was inadequate to the government of so immense an empire, and the defence of so extensive a frontier. He had therefore chosen a colleague. Each had his own Cæsar or lieutenant, who, being their natural or adopted heirs, should supply an uninterrupted succession of emperors. He also imagined, that the strength of the Roman legions being placed in the hands of four partners in the sovereignty, interested in each others support, and properly stationed in four different quarters of the empire, the improbability of successively vanquishing four such formidable opponents would deter any aspiring general from erecting the standard of rebellion. The views of the most profound politicians are often illusory. The system of division just introduced by Diocletian, after being productive of those civil wars which it was intended to prevent, finally proved the principal cause of the subversion of the Roman power. All historical evidence concurs to shew that the division of empire has almost ever been attended with another material disadvantage. Instead of one imperial court at Rome, several courts were established in different provinces, where the emperors and the Cæsars vied with the eastern monarchs in pomp and magnificence. An immense expenditure and heavy taxation

was the necessary consequence of this arrangement. The glory and wealth of Rome began to decline, after that city was no longer the imperial residence.

Milan and Nicomedia began to rival the ancient capital of the empire in magnificence, although so greatly inferior in extent and population. Maximian modelled his government after the maxims and examples of Diocletian, and a systematic plan of oriental despotism was gradually introduced into Italy. The politic Diocletian committed to his ferocious colleague every task that was likely to excite any uncommon degree of popular odium, and Maximian gladly undertook that of oppressing the senate, by involving the most illustrious of its members in fictitious criminations. The camp of the prætorians under the wall of Rome was incompatible with the maxims of Diocletian's government, but by his artful measures the numbers of that military corps were insensibly reduced. Two Illyrian legions, under the new titles of Jovians and Herculians, were chosen for the important and honourable service of guarding the persons of the emperors, and the prætorian guards had the mortification of seeing their privileges as well as their numbers diminished. After having established the peace and security of the empire, Diocletian and Maximian astonished the world by the voluntary resignation of the imperial dignity. On the same day, the 1st May, A. D. 305, the resignation of both the emperors took place. Diocletian had previously constructed for himself a magnificent palace at Salona, a town of Dalmatia, near the shores of the Adriatic, in a dry, pleasant and healthful situation, commanding a most beautiful prospect of land and sea. Here that extraordinary man, who from a servile origin had raised himself to the sovereignty of the world, passed the last nine years of his life in retirement, employing himself in superintending his buildings, plantations, and gardens. Maximian, possessing less relish for retirement, resumed the purple, and at last engaged himself in schemes of ambition which cost him his life.

Scarcely had eighteen months elapsed since the resignation of the emperors, before tremendous revolutions shewed the imperfections of Diocletian's system of division, and

eighteen years of discord and confusion ensued. During this period, no less than five civil wars convulsed the empire, and each interval of peace was no more than a suspension of arms.

On the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian, the imperial dignity devolved according to the new constitution on the two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, who, in consequence, assumed the title of Augusti; but two new Cæsars were to occupy their former situations. These were chosen by Galerius, without paying any attention to the interests of Constantius or Maximian. The persons whom Galerius promoted were Maximin, his nephew, and Severus, a general greatly attached to his interest. Constantine, afterwards emperor, then resided at the court of Galerius; but, receiving intelligence of his father's sickness at York, he made his escape from Nicomedia, and, by a hasty journey, arrived in time to receive his dying exhortations, with his nomination to the succession of the western part of the empire.

The capital at this time, as well as the provinces, was burdened with the weight of taxation, which was even enforced by torture. The inhabitants of the imperial city were disgusted with the new system which reduced Rome to the state of a tributary province, while the seat of empire was removed to Nicomedia. The prætorian guards were not less exasperated at the reduction of their numbers and the abolition of their privileges. They were even apprehensive, and not without reason, that their dissolution was intended. This general dissatisfaction of the citizens and soldiery was fomented by the senate, and every rank of people in Rome resolved to shake off the yoke of their distant sovereigns, and to elect a prince, who, by fixing his residence among them, might deserve the title of a Roman emperor. In consequence of this disposition of the public mind, the capital erected the standard of revolt, and Maxentius, the son of Maximian, and son-in-law to Galerius, was unanimously elected emperor. Maximian also, at the request of the senate, left his retirement, and reassumed the purple, in conjunction with his son. Severus, whom Galerius had pro-

moted from the rank of Cæsar to that of Augustus, commenced a war against the joint emperors, which terminated in his defeat and death. Galerius, exasperated at the fate of Severus, immediately resolved to direct the whole force of the east against his son-in-law and the Romans. Invading Italy with his numerous legions, he shewed himself a true barbarian, ravaging the country, and threatening the imperial city with total destruction. Galerius, after his unsuccessful expedition into Italy, invested Licinius, his friend and former companion in arms, with the vacant purple of Severus, and resigned to his immediate command the Illyrian provinces. Maximin, on receiving intelligence of this transaction, assumed the dignity and extorted from Galerius the title of emperor. Constantine had, in pursuance of his father's nomination, as well as by military election, been invested with the imperial purple at York, and the Roman world was now governed by six emperors. Constantine commanded in Britain and Gaul, Maximian and Maxentius at Rome, Licinius in Illyrium, Galerius in Asia Minor, and Maximin in Egypt and Syria. Maxentius and his restless father could not long agree in the exercise of an undivided authority. Both laid claim to the supreme command, but the prætorian guards considering Maximian as the enemy of their corps, espoused the party of Maxentius. The old emperor, as his last refuge, fled to the court of his son-in-law, Constantine. Here he resigned the purple a second time, but, during that emperor's absence in an expedition against the Franks, he again placed himself on the throne. On Constantine's approach he retired to Marseilles, and prepared for a vigorous defence, but the soldiers abandoning his cause, purchased their pardon by surrendering the city, and delivering up the person of Maximian. He was soon after put to death. The next year, A. D. 311, Galerius died at Nicomedia of the morbus pediculosus. His name is infamous in history. He was an enemy of civil and religious liberty, a tyrannical emperor, and a bloody persecutor of his Christian subjects. The number of emperors was now reduced to four. An alliance was formed between Constantine and Licinius, Maxentius and Maximian formed a simi-

* the lousy disease

lar connection. Thus was the Roman world divided into two great parties, having opposite interests and hostile views.

Constantine had employed the time since his accession in repelling the inroads of the Franks, and providing for the security of Gaul, while Maxentius, by his vices and follies, was rendering himself infamous and detested. Rome, which had formerly regretted the absence, now abhorred the presence of her sovereign. Ambassadors were privately sent to Constantine, requesting him, in the name of the senate and the people, to undertake their deliverance from their oppressor. The enterprize was glorious, but not less hazardous; and although Constantine must have viewed the situation of the Romans with compassion, he prudently wished to decline a war, with the difficulties and dangers of which he was fully acquainted. Maxentius, who openly avowed his pretensions to the whole empire of the west, rashly ventured to provoke a formidable enemy. The backwardness of Constantine to enter on the contest was highly excusable. The disproportion of forces was immense. The whole army of Maxentius amounted to one hundred and seventy thousand foot and eighteen thousand horse. The whole force of Constantine consisted of no more than ninety thousand foot and eight thousand horse, and the defence of the Rhine required at least half of that number. At the head of about forty thousand men, Constantine marched to encounter an enemy whose army was more than four times the number of his own. It was at this critical juncture that he saw in the air the famous vision of a resplendent cross, as related by Eusebius. If numbers, however, gave an apparent superiority to Maxentius, the advantages of military skill and discipline were on the side of Constantine. The troops brought into the field by the former were little accustomed to the practice of war, and enervated by the luxuries of Rome, which they left with great reluctance: those of the latter were hardy veterans, long inured to the exercise of arms against the barbarians of the Rhine. The characters of the two commanders were as different as those of the two armies. Maxentius, immersed in debauchery and vice, was inexperienced in arms.

The intrepid mind of Constantine had from early youth been formed to war, and his eyes were accustomed to its bloody scenes.

This skilful and enterprising leader deliberated with caution, but acted with vigour. Having conducted the veteran legions of Gaul across the Alps, he descended into the plains of Piedmont, before Maxentius had received any certain intelligence of his march. The city of Susa was immediately taken by assault, and most of the garrison put to the sword. Advancing to the plains of Turin, he found his march intercepted by a formidable army, under the conduct of the lieutenants of Maxentius. The contest was bloody; but Constantine, by his rapid and skilful evolutions, baffling the massy columns of the Roman cavalry, proved in the end completely victorious. Turin, Milan, and all the cities between the Alps and the Po acknowledged his power, and zealously embraced his party. But the rules of military prudence did not yet permit him to advance against Rome. While Constantine was signaling his courage and conduct in the field, the sovereign of Italy, immersed in luxurious pleasures, appeared insensible of the dangers that menaced his throne. The rapid progress of Constantine, however, at last roused him from his fatal security, and the experienced officers who had served under the banners of Maximian were at length obliged to inform him of his real situation, and to urge the necessity of vigorous exertions. Though his armies had suffered two bloody defeats, he still possessed ample resources. The prætorian guards considered their interest and importance as connected with his cause, and a numerous army was soon collected. The tyrant, conscious of his want of talents for war, trembled at the thought of so dangerous a contest, but necessity and shame obliged him to take the field in person against his antagonist. As superstition is generally the concomitant of fear, Maxentius, before his departure from Rome, consulted the Sibylline books. The guardians of these ancient oracles, who "were as well versed in the arts of the world as they were ignorant of the secrets of fate," gave him this doubtful answer: "Hostem Romanorum esse periturum," "the enemy of the Romans

... disease

will shortly perish." As the vanquished commander would by the victor be certainly declared the enemy of Rome, those artful interpreters of the will of Heaven secured their own reputation, whatever might be the event of the war.

On the 28th of October, A. D. 312, this important contest was decided. Constantine had long been apprehensive that his antagonist, instead of risking the issue of the contest in a general engagement, would shut himself up in Rome, where immense magazines would secure him against the danger of famine. It was therefore with equal surprise and pleasure that, on his arrival within about nine miles of the imperial city, he discovered the army of Maxentius drawn up in order of battle on a spacious plain, with the Tiber in their rear; an injudicious position, precluding the possibility of a retreat. Constantine, on this memorable occasion, displayed all the talents of the general and soldier. Having disposed his troops with consummate skill, he charged in person the enemy's cavalry, and his irresistible attack determined the fortune of the day. The prætorian guards distinguished themselves by the most desperate valour, but all their efforts were unavailing: the confusion became general, and the flying troops of Maxentius rushed by thousands into the Tiber, where most of them were drowned. The emperor attempted to make his escape back into the city over the Milvian bridge, but the crowd pressing on him, forced him into the river, and the weight of his armour immediately sank him to the bottom. His two sons were put to death, and his whole race extirpated; a treatment which, how severe soever it may appear, was only the same that awaited the person and family of Constantine had he been vanquished.

Constantine, now master of Rome, was caressed by the senate and people. Games and festivals were instituted to commemorate his victory, and a triumphal arch was erected to his honour. The final abolition of the prætorian guards was one of the immediate consequences of this revolution. Their fortified camp was destroyed, and such of the prætorians as had escaped the sword were dispersed among the legions on the frontiers. Constantine now formed an alliance with Li-

cinus, the Illyrian emperor, and, in order to cement the union of their families and interests, gave him his sister Constantia in marriage. But Constantine's presence being necessary on the banks of the Rhine, Maximin, the sovereign of the Asiatic part of the empire, resolved on a war with Licinius. The issue of the war was in favour of the latter, who, by the superiority of his military skill, and the firmness of his Illyrian legions, gained a decisive victory over the numerous forces of his antagonist. Maximin did not long survive his defeat. After his death, the provinces of the east acknowledged the sovereignty of Licinius.

These incessant revolutions must have afforded to Diocletian in his retreat at Salona ample subjects of reflection, and he could scarcely fail of congratulating himself on his happy retirement from the tumultuous scene. But the melancholy catastrophe of his wife and daughter must have excited very different sentiments. These two unfortunate princesses, whose august dignity the Romans had so long been accustomed to revere, after having suffered a variety of persecutions and insults from Maximin, were put to death by Licinius, and their bodies ignominiously thrown into the sea. History is silent concerning their crimes. But it informs us, that Diocletian ineffectually endeavoured by entreaties to alleviate their misfortunes. He humbled himself so far as to send a suppliant message to Maximin, who owed to him his promotion to greatness and empire. But past favours were forgotten, and gratitude was a virtue unknown to the tyrant. When Diocletian wore the purple at the head of his legions, he was used to command, but now he could only supplicate, and his supplications were rejected. If ever he repented of his resignation of the sovereign authority, it must have been on this melancholy and humiliating occasion.

By the death of Maxentius and Maximin the number of emperors was reduced to two. Licinius and Constantine divided between them the whole Roman world—the former ruling the east, and the latter the west. But scarcely a year had elapsed since the death of Maximin, before a war took place between the two emperors. Two decisive victories gained by the superior abilities of Constantine obliged Li-

cinus to sue for peace. A reconciliation was effected, which during the space of eight years preserved the internal tranquillity of the empire. Constantine employed this interval in repelling his foreign enemies. The warlike nation of the Goths had been so completely humbled by Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus, as to have long respected the majesty of Rome. So great indeed had been their dread of the Roman arms, that, even during the intestine divisions of the empire, they had not ventured to make any hostile incursions. But the lapse of almost fifty years had at length produced new sentiments and views. The strength of the nation was recruited, a new generation had arisen, and the misfortunes of former days were forgotten. The Goths and the Sarmatians, uniting their force, invaded the province of Illyrium. Constantine marched against those formidable enemies, and, after meeting with an obstinate resistance, not only expelled them from the Roman provinces, but, passing the Danube, penetrated into the interior of Dacia, and restored the ancient frontier established by Trajan. Crispus, his son, who was dignified with the title of Cæsar, displaying in another quarter of the empire his conduct and valour, was equally successful against the Franks and the Alemanni on the banks of the Rhine.

Constantine, now every where victorious, resolved to reign over the whole empire. In the year 323 he entered on his grand contest with Licinius, who at this momentous crisis displayed the greatest activity, and vigorously exerted those abilities which had formerly raised him to the purple. He called forth his immense resources, collected all the forces of the east, and filled the plains of Adrianople with his troops. His army consisted of 150,000 foot and 15,000 horse; that of Constantine, assembled at Thessalonica, amounted to about 120,000 infantry and cavalry, composed of the warlike legions of Europe, whose discipline was confirmed by action, and whose courage was elated by a long series of victories. With these veteran troops he marched to attack Licinius, who remained strongly encamped near Adrianople, with the river Hebrus in his front. The battle was extremely obstinate and bloody, but the military skill and heroism of Con-

stantine overcame all opposition. The fortified camp of Licinius was taken by assault ; 39,000 men are said to have been slain, and great numbers surrendered themselves prisoners.

Licinius, being now unable to keep the field, shut himself up in Byzantium, the fortifications of which had during the civil wars been repaired and strengthened. The siege of that place was immediately undertaken by Constantine, but it proved a laborious and difficult enterprize. As Licinius was master of the sea, Byzantium constantly received fresh supplies of provisions. Being master of Asia Minor and Egypt, the most commercial provinces of the empire, his marine, consisting of three hundred and fifty galleys of three ranks of oars, was greatly superior to that of his rival, who had only about two hundred small vessels. Notwithstanding this disparity of force, Constantine gave orders to force the passage of the Hellespont, where the fleet of Licinius remained inactive, and in that narrow strait could not avail itself of the superiority of numbers. He intrusted to Crispus, his eldest son, the execution of this difficult enterprize, which he performed with singular success. The engagement continued two days. The issue of the first day's encounter was indecisive, and the loss nearly equal. On the second day, Crispus, taking advantage of a strong south wind, which carried up his vessels against those of Licinius, gained a complete victory. The loss of the enemy was about five thousand men, a hundred and thirty vessels were destroyed, and the rest of the hostile fleet escaped with great difficulty. Crispus distinguished himself on this occasion by his conduct as well as his courage, and the fruits of his victory were the constant supplies which the open passage of the Hellespont poured into the camp of the besiegers, together with the means of intercepting those of the enemy. Constantine, in the mean while, pressed the siege of Byzantium, raising mounds, and employing all the military engines then in use. The battering rams having already shaken the walls, Licinius retired with his treasures to Chalcedon, and collected a new army of nearly sixty thousand men. Constantine, ever watchful over the motions of his antagonist, transported part

of his army over the Bosphorus, and the last decisive engagement took place on the heights of Chrysopolis, at present Scutari, opposite to Constantinople. The troops of Licinius fought with desperate but unavailing valour, and their total defeat, with the loss of about twenty-five thousand men, terminated the war. Licinius, retiring to Nicomedia, entered into a negotiation, by which, through the intercession of his wife Constantia, the sister of Constantine, he obtained a promise of life, with the enjoyment of peace and affluence, on condition of resigning the purple, and retiring to a private condition. But, notwithstanding this stipulation, he was afterwards executed, on a charge of secret conspiracy. The transactions of this age are all clouded with obscurity, misrepresented by the spirit of party, or too highly coloured by panegyric.

Such was the series of great events which raised Constantine to the undivided sovereignty of the Roman world, and the consequences of his elevation have rendered his reign one of the most distinguished epochs in the history of mankind. Amidst a long train of political changes following one another in rapid succession, a moral and intellectual revolution of a more important and extraordinary nature had been gradually taking place in the world. The christian religion, spreading from Judea, had made its way into every corner of the Roman empire. The fantastic ideas of the pagan mythology, which from time immemorial had darkened the human mind, began to be gradually dispelled, and a celestial light dawned on the intellectual world. The christians were long stigmatized as atheists, and often persecuted as despisers of the gods of Rome. A multitude of priests, and other persons interested in the support of paganism, directed the superstition, not only of the people, but also of the emperors, in subserviency to their designs, and procured the imperial sanction to intolerance and persecution. After many alternate periods of persecution and tranquillity, the christian church received the last and most terrible shock in the joint reign of Diocletian and Maximian. The persecution which then commenced was the last struggle of declining paganism, and the most tremendous effort that ever had been made for the ex-

tirpation of christianity. The cruelties exhibited in other parts of the empire were never admitted into the provinces under the command of the equitable Constantius, who considered himself as the common father of all his subjects, and the Deity as the universal parent of all mankind. The enlightened and liberal conduct of Constantius was through policy adopted by Maxentius, who judged it prudent to secure the fidelity of so considerable a body of subjects. Galerius, the implacable enemy of the christians, labouring under a painful disease, and struck with remorse, at length published an edict of toleration, and even condescended to solicit the prayers of those christians whom he had so cruelly endeavoured to exterminate. Maximin, succeeding Galerius, affected at first to adopt the same prudent measures. But cruelty and superstition were interwoven in his character, and nature had fitted him for a persecutor. He adopted a plan for the annihilation of christianity more systematic than those of his predecessors, and his infamous agents adding violence to policy, inflicted on the christians the most cruel and ignominious punishments. But, in the space of a few months, the tolerating edicts of Constantine and Licinius obliged him to suspend the prosecution of his designs. A few days before his death he published an edict of toleration, in which he endeavoured to exculpate himself, by imputing the sufferings of the christians to his judges and governors. His death delivered the church from the last of her persecutors, and insured her tranquillity. From tranquillity she rose to triumph, and the despised symbol of the cross was displayed on the banners of the empire.

Constantine and Licinius, in their interview at Milan, had published their famous edict of universal liberty of conscience throughout the Roman world. After the last civil war had given Constantine the undivided possession of the imperial power, he determined to carry into execution the design which he appears to have long revolved in his mind, of embracing christianity, and rendering it the national religion of the empire. This was accordingly done, and in consequence thereof, his reign forms the line of demarkation between the pagan and the christian world, between polytheism

and christianity. Constantine, by the establishment of christianity, acquired a more extensive and lasting influence over the moral condition of mankind in all succeeding ages, than any other monarch who has ever appeared on the political theatre of the world. The Roman empire, which Constantine governed, is now no more ; and the city of Constantinople, which he founded, in order to perpetuate the glory of his reign, is now in the hands of a people, who in his days were a nation totally unknown ; but in the establishment of christianity, he erected to his own memory a monument more durable than brass or marble.

The motives which induced Constantine to embrace and establish Christianity, after he had waded through seas of blood to the sovereignty of the world, are variously delineated by different writers. It has been the general opinion that a conviction of its divine truth was the impelling motive. But Mr. Gibbon and some other writers of these latter times seem willing to excite a suspicion, that inducements of a political nature might have determined him in favour of that extraordinary measure. Impartial candour must, however, confess, that the existing circumstances of the Roman empire in that age were not such as authorize an opinion that Constantine embraced the Christian religion from any political motives, or inducements of a temporal nature, for the disadvantages of such a measure, considered in a political view, overbalanced the advantages. At Constantine's accession, and during the whole of his reign, paganism was the religion of a vast majority of the empire, and a far greater part of its military strength lay among the pagans than among the Christians.

If the celebrated vision of Constantine, which he is said to have seen in his march against Maxentius, and which, in connection with his subsequent dream, is generally believed to have been the principal cause of his conversion, really happened, that circumstance alone is sufficient to determine the question, and to silence all the arguments of those who would insinuate that he embraced Christianity from temporal motives.

We are informed that Constantine, being in Gaul, was invited by the senate and citizens of Rome to undertake a war against Maxentius, who ruled them in a tyrannical manner. Constantine, on receiving this invitation, immediately began his march towards the capital of the world. His troops consisted of veteran soldiers, but were far inferior in number to those he knew Maxentius would bring against him. He was marching against an enemy, from whom, according to the rules of war among the rival emperors and generals of Rome, he was, in case of defeat, to expect no mercy. The enterprise in which he was engaged was of the most hazardous nature. The point to be determined was whether he should be sole emperor of the west, or be expelled from that part of the empire already under his dominion. Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, fixes on this critical period of Constantine's life to delineate the state of his mind respecting religious matters. The delineation is curious and interesting, and, although merely conjectural, is not improbable. He says that Constantine, meditating on his perilous enterprise, the superior force he had to contend with, and the great uncertainty of success, began to make serious reflections on the Divine Providence. He recollected, at the same time, that most of the emperors who had adhered to the worship of that multifarious plurality of gods which the pagan world adored had come to a tragical end, while his father Constantius, who had always worshipped one only Supreme Being, had been invariably successful in his undertakings. In consequence of these reflections, says the historian, Constantine poured out the anxiety of his soul before the Lord of the Universe, beseeching him to enlighten his mind in regard to the right manner of invoking his assistance, whether through the medium of a plurality of divinities, according to the established rules of pagan worship, or as one eternal and undivided unity, in conformity to the doctrines of the Christian religion. These are ingenious conjectures, but they are only conjectures.

In the precarious situation in which Constantine then stood, it was not difficult to conceive that he must have revolved in his mind reflections of a serious nature, and as it was the custom among pagans to look up for divine assist-

ance, it is not improbable that the different opinions of the Christians and pagans relative to supernatural things might excite some anxiety in his mind. For it is extremely probable, that Constantine and many other pagans of that age, although not convinced of the truth of Christianity, had but little confidence in the gods they worshipped, and began shrewdly to suspect that the whole system of paganism was nothing more than an imposition on the minds of men. In that critical period, when paganism was on the decline, and Christianity not yet established, the minds of men must have been much agitated in regard to religious subjects. On the one hand they saw a system, which, from time immemorial, had attracted the veneration of mankind, falling into general disrepute. They discovered that this system could give no satisfactory solution to that grand problem, whether death be a total extinction of being, or only a passage to a future state of existence. On the other hand, they saw a new religion sprung up in the empire, diametrically opposite to the ancient system; a religion which inculcated infinitely more luminous and rational ideas of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being, and of the duties of man, than paganism had ever given, and which above all professed to solve the great problem of the future and final destiny of the human race, by teaching, that the present life is only a state of probation, and that all mankind are destined to a future and far more perfect state of being. The Christian revelation also unravelled those intricate problems, of which the genius and learning of philosophers could give no satisfactory solution. The pagans had seen the constancy, the fortitude, and even the cheerfulness with which the Christians suffered the most cruel tortures for their religion. The thinking part of the pagan world could not but be struck with the contemplation of so wonderful a moral phenomenon, and began to think that there might be something in Christianity with which they were unacquainted. It is not possible to fix a more interesting period in history of the human mind than the fourth century, comprising nearly that portion of time which elapsed between the commencement of the great persecution under Diocletian and Maximian, to the total abolition of pagan-

ism in the reign of Theodosius the great. During the whole of this period, the Roman world was fluctuating between two religious systems diametrically opposite to each other; for it must be observed, that although Christianity was the religion of the imperial court from the time of Constantine, except in the short reign of Julian, yet the majority of the people continued pagans till the reign of Theodosius. It must above all be considered, that the question which agitated the minds of men in those days was not merely concerning philosophical opinions, nor concerning forms and ceremonies. The question related to matters of the utmost importance to mankind. In this uncertain state of the human understanding, it is reasonable to suppose, that a man of a vigorous intellect like Constantine, who, although he had been much more instructed in tactics than philosophy, must have sometimes reflected on subjects of such singular importance, could not have been an unobserving spectator of what was going forward in the world, and of the revolution which was taking place in the ideas of mankind. His circumstances, when about to dispute the possession of the world, were sufficient to induce a person so situated to look up to a power possessing an unlimited control over all mundane events.

When we contemplate the critical situation of Constantine in the point of time alluded to, and presume to hazard a conjecture on the state of his mind, we must allow this delineation of it as given by historians to be perfectly consistent with probability. In this critical moment, the miraculous event of that emperor's celebrated vision is said to have happened, which has obtained general credit through a long succession of ages.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, either to ascertain the reality of the fact or to prove it a fiction. Every one must, from the examination of circumstances, draw his own conclusions respecting the authenticity of this extraordinary narrative, which in substance is thus related:—Constantine, being on his march towards Rome, and revolving in his mind the hazardous nature of his enterprise, and fully convinced of the all-controlling power of an Omnipotent Being, discovered in the air the figure of a resplendent cross, with this

inscription, legibly conspicuous: "In hoc signo vinces." "By this sign thou shalt overcome." Both he and his army were astonished at the sight, but not knowing how to interpret the celestial omen, he still remained in the utmost agitation of mind. However, it is added, that in the succeeding night, Christ himself appeared to the emperor in his sleep, displaying before his eyes the same triumphant banner of the cross which he had lately seen in the air, and unequivocally promised him the victory, if he fought his antagonist under its auspices. Constantine immediately adopted the cross as his standard, and caused its figure to be engraven on the shields of his soldiers. After this miraculous vision and dream, Constantine, full of confidence, marched towards the capital of the world, and at the very gates of Rome gained that signal victory over Maxentius, which ended in the destruction of the tyrant, and placed the conqueror above all opposition.

Eusebius, an historian of great and deserved celebrity, a man of extraordinary erudition, and an intimate confidant of Constantine, is the author of this narrative, and he asserts that he had the relation of the extraordinary circumstance from the emperor's mouth.

A great revolution was the immediate consequence of Constantine's conversion. After the Christian religion obtained the sanction and support of the imperial authority, the election of its prelates came directly or indirectly under the controul of the empire. A new scene opened in the church. This was the golden age for ecclesiastics. Before that period, some churches had been liberally supported by the devotion and zeal of wealthy individuals, but the situation of the clergy was still insecure, and contemptible in the eyes of the pagan world. Afterwards, they lived in princely splendour, honoured and esteemed as the first rank of men in the empire. Formerly they had been sunk in the gloom of obscurity, but now they basked in the broad sunshine of honour, wealth, and imperial favour. To a person who contemplates the aspect of the Roman empire in that age, a new world seems to appear. The system of polytheism and idol worship, which from time immemorial had by its pompous cere-

monies and splendid festivals commanded the veneration of mankind, fell into disrepute, and Christianity, which had so long been the object of contempt, and frequently of persecution, at last became the established religion of the masters of the world. The Roman empire saw magnificent churches erected for the worship of the crucified God, whose name had so long been despised; and the rites of the Christian religion celebrated with a pomp and solemnity equal if not superior to what had been displayed in the pagan temples. A total revolution was taking place in religious opinions and human ideas. What a scene would this have appeared to a Christian of the apostolic age; and how wonderful and striking a spectacle must it have exhibited to those who had lived in the time of the last dreadful persecution, and had witnessed the contempt in which the Christian religion had been held. To such observers, another part of the scene must have appeared no less extraordinary. They would view with no small astonishment the newly acquired opulence and splendour of churchmen. They would see ecclesiastics possessing princely fortunes, and living in a luxurious manner. What would a Christian, whose mind had been formed by the simple maxims of primitive Christianity think, on seeing the ministers of the humble and lowly Jesus display the magnificence of sovereign princes? And what must have been his reflections on contemplating a system of honour and emolument set up by the professed followers of one whose whole life was a continued scene of poverty and sufferings, and whose preachings and practice were entirely calculated to inspire all those who embraced his doctrine with a sovereign contempt for the things of this world.

In the reign of Constantine the church was enriched, but it evidently appears that the spirit of genuine Christianity was in a great measure extinguished. The emperor annexed princely salaries to the different prelacies, and the prelates and other ecclesiastics soon began to lose sight not only of that humility and contempt of the world, of which the Great Author of religion had given so striking an example, but also of that diffusive charity and universal benevolence which Christianity so strongly inculcates.

Before the expiration of the apostolic age, different opinions in religious matters began to arise among Christians. During the predominance of paganism, those quarrels among the professors of the new religion were held under restraint; while Christians of every description saw the sword of persecution drawn against them, or at least suspended over their heads, their contentions were confined to the efforts of the pen, or the anathemas of intolerant zeal. But as soon as Christianity could claim the support of the imperial authority, the different sects of Christians began to manifest towards one another a shameful degree of animosity.

The difference of opinion on theological subjects which caused the greatest division in the church, a division of the longest duration, and which made the most conspicuous figure in the early history of the Christian religion, was that which is commonly known by the name of the Arian heresy. The majority held the doctrine of the Divine Nature of Christ, and the perfect equality of the three Persons of the Trinity, while a very numerous body, with Arius, a priest of Constantinople, at their head, maintained that the Son is essentially distinct from the Father, and subordinate to him; that he is a spontaneous and dependent being, created by the supreme will of the Father, and begotten before all worlds; that the Father had impressed upon him the effulgence of his glory, and had transfused into him the fulness of his spirit; that he was the framer of the world, and that he governs the universe in obedience and subordination to the First Person of the Trinity, his Father and Sovereign. Such were the doctrines and questions which agitated the Christian world during the long period of almost three hundred years, but especially in the fourth century.

Constantine, on seeing the professors of Christianity divided into two opposite factions, could not without regret contemplate those divisions, which rent the church, and disgraced that religion which it had been so much the object of his endeavours to establish. In order to settle the dispute, and ascertain the real principles of the Christian faith, he convoked the celebrated Council of Nice, A. D. 325, which consisted of 318 bishops, and other ecclesiastics to the number of 2048.

After a session of two months, the opinions of Arius were condemned, the equality of the three Persons of the Divine Trinity was declared the true doctrine, and the resolutions of this council comprised in the Nicene Creed were published as the only orthodox creed of the Christian church.

Before Constantine embraced the Christian religion, he had established liberty of conscience upon the broadest and most rational basis, nor does it appear that he ever exercised any kind of persecution against the pagans, nor would such a measure indeed have been consistent with good policy, as, during the whole of his reign, they composed a vast majority of his subjects. However, soon after the council of Nice, he began to persecute the Arians. There is, however, no doubt of the emperor's conduct in this respect being swayed by the insinuations of ecclesiastics. He was better skilled in marshalling and conducting an army than in the stratagems of theological warfare, and was therefore easily impelled by their councils to adopt violent and even contradictory measures. In fact, we see him, at the instigation of a faction of bishops, recalling Arius, and so far misled by an exhibition of false charges as to persecute Athanasius, the champion of the council of Nice, and the strenuous asserter of its doctrines, which the emperor zealously supported, and considered as the orthodox representation of the Christian faith. Though Christianity was the occasion of sundry incidental evils, a moral revolution, greatly for the benefit of mankind, took place in every country where it has been received and regarded. A comparison between the state of pagan and Christian society will illustrate this general observation.

The two great banes of connubial happiness among the ancient pagans were polygamy and divorce. The first of these prevailed generally throughout the Roman empire. The other was allowed for the most trivial causes, and exercised with the most wanton cruelty. Both evidently tended to destroy that mutual confidence, harmony, and affection, that constant union of interests and of sentiments which constitutes the supreme felicity of the matrimonial state. Besides this, the treatment of married women in general among the

ancients was harsh, ungenerous, and unjust. They were considered as little better than slaves and beasts of burden, and treated accordingly.

Christianity cut off that grand source of domestic wretchedness, polygamy, and confined the dangerous liberty of divorce to one only cause, the want of fidelity to the marriage bed. It provided no less for the security and comfort of the weaker part, than for the sovereignty of the stronger. It established just so much command on one side, and subjection on the other, as is necessary to prevent those everlasting contests which perfect equality produces. By the gradual prevalence of Christian principles and manners, women were admitted to an equal share in the advantages and the blessings of society. Their understandings were consulted in every important concern of life.

In all the ancient republics, the greatest part of the inhabitants were slaves. Every private family was, in the times of paganism, a little despotic kingdom. The master was the tyrant, and the servants his wretched subjects, whom he bought and sold, and treated as he did his cattle; and whom he could punish and torture as he pleased, and put to death with or without reason. It is true that the vernæ or home-born slaves were sometimes treated with great lenity, and even with tenderness and indulgence. But these favourites of fortune bore a very small proportion to that immense multitude who were made to feel the utmost rigour of their condition. In general these wretched beings were continually exposed to every evil that the most wanton tyranny could inflict. They were compelled frequently to till the ground in chains, or confined in subterraneous dungeons, and strained to labour beyond their strength by the severest treatment. They were obliged to suffer every insult and every injury without resistance and without redress. They had no protection afforded them, could have no justice, no reparation. They were subject to the cruelty, not only of their own masters, but of every one that met them. If their master happened to be found murdered in his house, every slave in the family (which sometimes amounted to thousands) were frequently put to death; even those that were confessedly innocent.

Such was the genius of paganism towards a very large class of the human species. The genius of the gospel was of a different cast. From the very first moment of its appearance, it gave every consolation, every support to those who groaned under this heavy bondage that was consistent with the peace and welfare of society, and with the avowed principles of the Christian religion. The first teachers of this religion did not, indeed, expressly prohibit slavery, nor did they tell the slaves whom they converted to the faith that their conversion made them free, and released them from the obedience due to their masters. But it laid down such general rules of conduct, and governing principles of action, for all ranks and conditions of men, as silently and quietly, but effectually corrected the inherent vices of every kind of power, such as should gradually soften and smooth away the asperities of every species of arbitrary government, whether supreme or subordinate, whether exercised over nations or individuals.

But this was not all that the gospel did for this unfortunate race of men. When the empire became Christian, laws were made for their protection and relief. The influence both of government and of religion was continually operating in their favour, and gradually prepared the way for the utter extinction of the pagan system of slavery over all Europe. It is true that a milder species of it has been twice revived in some parts of Christendom, but one species of it, the feudal system, has long since yielded, and another, that of the negroes, is beginning rapidly to yield to the benign genius of Christianity. This heavenly system has also promoted the happiness of mankind in all the great and important concerns of civil and social life.

In the article of government, its operation was highly salutary and useful; not by enjoining or prescribing any peculiar form, but by regulating the respective duties both of those who govern and of those who were governed. It reminded the latter, that their Christian profession did by no means dissolve or weaken their political obligations, but, on the contrary, confirmed and strengthened them; that, under

whatever form of government they lived, and whatever allegiance they owed before their conversion, the same was still due from them after it; that they were to be subject to those rulers under whom Providence had placed them, and Christianity found them, "not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

In the same manner, it was required of their rulers, that, however unlimited their power might be by the laws and constitution of their country, they should themselves limit and restrain it by the immutable laws of moral rectitude; that they should observe in their public as well as private conduct the dictates of justice, equity, moderation, mercy, humanity, and universal good will, which the gospel prescribed to them, as well as to every other disciple of Christ.

It is well known, that, except in the free states of Greece and Rome (and that only for a few centuries), a ferocious despotism prevailed over the greater part of the ancient habitable globe, and that even those celebrated republics scarcely ever enjoyed internal tranquillity and external peace. They were continually agitated and distracted within by popular commotions and sanguinary convulsions, or exposed without to unceasing and inexpiable wars, which always destroyed their repose, and sometimes endangered their very existence. This was the case, with but few exceptions, even in their most perfect state, and in their decline they were mangled and torn in pieces by such dreadful massacres and proscriptions, by such deliberate and premeditated methods of murdering each other, as cannot be recited without pain and horror. Nor did their boasted freedom extend in general much beyond the walls of the metropolis and the adjacent territory. It could seldom subsist but under the immediate influence of the legislature. The governors of the provinces, removed from under the eye of the supreme magistrate, and destitute of all religious restraint, became the most savage and merciless of tyrants. The unhappy people over whom they presided were continually exposed to plunder, rapine, oppression, insult, and every kind of injury; and thus, whilst liberty reigned in the centre, the utmost rage of despotism laid waste the extremities of the empire.

The laws of the twelve tables were sanguinary and cruel, more especially those respecting insolvent debtors, who, after an imprisonment of sixty days, might be sold for slaves, or put to death, and their bodies divided among the creditors.

Romulus allowed the murder of infants, and it does not appear that this practice was forbidden by any subsequent law. The Roman state, as well as almost every other in the ancient world, was for many ages drenched in the blood of these innocent victims of a mistaken and inhuman policy.

The cruelty of the Roman law with respect to children did not stop here. It extended its severity even to the adult. It gave the father uncontrolled and unlimited power over his children; it considered them not as persons, but as things; as part of the furniture of the family mansion, which the master of the family might remove, or sell, or destroy, like any other part of the furniture. The father could compel his married daughter to repudiate a husband whom she tenderly loved, and the wife herself, though the mother of a numerous family, was subjected no less than her children to the paternal authority and despotic will of her husband. She might be retained or dismissed at pleasure; and for certain crimes (some of them of a very trivial nature) might be put to death. The liberty of divorce also on the part of the husband was almost unbounded, and in the latter ages of the republic exercised with the most wanton, insolent, and capricious tyranny*. Such were the laws of the most celebrated ages of antiquity.

As the laws were in many important instances inhuman or vicious, the administration of them was no less partial and corrupt. In what manner justice was administered at Athens is evident from their treatment of the two most upright and virtuous of their citizens, Socrates and Aristides. In Rome,

* Cicero, one of the greatest and most enlightened heathens, at the age of sixty-two, for very insufficient ostensible reasons, divorced his wife Terentia, with whom he had lived thirty years, to prepare the way for his marriage with the young, rich, and handsome Publola. He soon after divorced his new bride, because she seemed to rejoice at the death of his beloved daughter Tullia, the fruit of his marriage with Terentia.

especially in the latter periods of the republic, the courts of justice were one continued scene of open and undisguised iniquity, venality, partiality, and corruption, insomuch that it was hardly possible for a poor man to obtain redress for the most cruel injuries, or for a rich man to be brought to punishment for the most atrocious crimes.

In all these great and important articles of civil policy (and in a multitude of others which might be mentioned), the infinite superiority of Christian Europe and America admits of no question. And this, it may be safely affirmed, is in a great degree owing to the influence which the spirit of Christianity has had on governors and the people; on the temper of the laws, and on those who framed and administered them. It is this principally which has so softened and subdued the fierceness even of arbitrary power, that despotism in all its rigour (that rigour which it possessed in pagan nations, and still possesses in African and Asiatic kingdoms) is scarcely to be found in Christian countries. The horrors of war have been greatly mitigated, and their frequency, their duration, and their attendant miseries, considerably diminished. The Greeks and pagan Romans were the common enemies of mankind; the oppressors, the plunderers, the robbers, and the tyrants of the whole earth. The greatest part of their wars were voluntary and unprovoked;—were wars of aggression, of interest, injustice, rapine, and ambition. A lust of empire, a passion for martial achievements, an insatiable thirst for glory, were the ruling principles of their conduct. Their governments were little else than military establishments.—Every citizen was a soldier, and every kingdom upon the watch to devour its neighbours. The surest road to the honours of the state was through the field of battle.

Whilst every thing thus tended to inflame the fiercest passions of the human heart, the wars of the ancient pagans were incessant and sanguinary. The injustice and wantonness with which they were begun could be exceeded by nothing but the vindictive and implacable spirit with which they were carried on; and the world was consequently for many ages overwhelmed with ruin, desolation, and bloodshed.—The savage and cruel treatment of their captives in war is

well known to every one. Every page of pagan history is polluted with scenes of this nature. The loss of thousands in the field was in those ages the least part of the evils of war. Those among the vanquished who survived had reason to envy the lot of those who fell. Perpetual slavery, or an ignominious death by the hand of the executioner, were their certain destiny, and even among nations the most polished we are continually shocked with the desolation of whole countries, with the entire destruction of flourishing and opulent cities, and with the indiscriminate massacre and utter extermination, not only of those able to bear arms, but of the most helpless and unoffending part of the inhabitants, of every age, sex, and condition.

If we go back to the earliest ages of Greece, Homer tells us what the general practice in his time was. "These," says he, "are the evils which follow the capture of a town. The men are killed, the city is burnt to the ground, and the women and children are doomed to slavery*."

The descendants of Homer's heroes, in subsequent ages, exceeded even those models of barbarity. After the taking of a town, they murdered every human creature in the place, not excepting even the women and children. Instances of this cruelty occur perpetually in the Peloponnesian war, as well as in almost every other†.

The Romans trod but too closely in the footsteps of the Greeks, their masters and preceptors in cruelty as well as in every thing else. Abundant proofs of this occur in all their histories‡.

* Iliad ix. v. 590.

† See Thucydides throughout: but more particularly the extreme cruelty of the Athenians and Lacedæmonians to their prisoners. lib. ii.

‡ During the siege of Jerusalem, and in the course of the Jewish war, the number of Jews that perished by the sword was one million three hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred and sixty: and the number of captives was ninety-seven thousand. Those under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves; those above seventeen were sent to the works in Egypt, or dispersed through the Roman provinces to be destroyed by the sword or by wild beasts, and eleven thousand of them perished by hunger. Even Titus, the mild and merciful, Titus,

Christianity also effected the entire abolition of human sacrifices. This horrible practice prevailed throughout every region of the heathen world, to a degree which is almost incredible, and still prevails in many savage countries where Christianity has not yet reached. There are incontestable proofs of its having subsisted among the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Persians, the Phœnicians, and all the various nations of the east. No climate, no government, no state of civilization, no mode of pagan superstition was free from it. Even the Greeks and Romans, though less involved in this guilt than many other nations, were not altogether untainted with it. On great and extraordinary occasions they had recourse to the effusion of human blood, which was esteemed the most meritorious sacrifice that could be offered to the gods*. But among other more barbarous nations it took a firmer and a wider root. The Scythians, Thracians, and the Gauls, were strongly addicted to it†, and even Britain was at one time (under the gloomy and ferocious despotism of the Druids) polluted with the religious murder of its wretched inhabitants. But wherever the divine light of christianity

the “deliciæ humani generis,” treated those wretched beings with the most savage barbarity. In the shows and spectacles which he exhibited, many of the captives were destroyed; some by wild beasts, and others fighting with each other.

* It appears from late publications, especially those of Dr. Buchanan, that human sacrifices still subsist among the Hindoos. Death is inflicted in various ways in their sacred rites. Children are sacrificed by their parents to Gunga. Men and women drown themselves in the Ganges, in the places reputed holy. They devote themselves to death by falling under the wheels of the machine which carries their gods. Widows are burned and buried alive with their deceased husbands. And it was calculated by the late learned Mr. William Chambers, that the widows who perish by this self-devotedness in the northern provinces of Hindostan alone, are not less than 10,000 annually. This horrid custom has subsisted ever since the invasion of India by Alexander, 350 years before the Christian era.

† Caesar states that “life was necessary to redeem life, and that the gods would be satisfied with nothing less.” “Quod pro vita hominis nisi vita reddatur non posse aliter deorum immortalium numen placari.”

Com. de Bell. Gal. lib. vi.

**the delight of mankind*

broke forth, this tremendous demon of superstition disappeared.

Besides the silent and gradual influence of Christianity on the minds and manners of men, the first efforts that were made, and the first laws that were enacted to restrain and check some of the inhumanities above mentioned, were the acts of Christian princes and Christian legislators.

With respect to paternal power, Constantine, the first Christian emperor, in order to prevent the destruction of children by their father, wisely and humanely ordained, that the public should maintain the children of those who were unable to provide for them.

In the year 319, he put an effectual stop to this horrible practice, by making it a capital offence, and even affixing to it the punishment denounced against parricides. He also restrained the exposure of infants by an edict, in the year 331, and, under the emperors Valentinian, Valens, and Gratian, this crime was made a capital offence.

The first edict against gladiatorial shows was by a Christian emperor, and Honorius afterwards completed what Constantine had begun. This horrid exhibition was by his laws finally abolished. Constantine also put an end to the savage punishment of crucifixion.

In these instances (and more might be produced), we see that some of the greatest miseries which oppressed mankind in the heathen world were actually removed by the laws and edicts of Christian rulers. There can be no doubt that the happy effects of these laws are to be ascribed solely and exclusively to the beneficent spirit of that heavenly religion, which meliorated the heart, and humanized the dispositions of those who made them. And we are therefore warranted in concluding, that many of the other great improvements in civil, social, and domestic life, which render our situation so infinitely superior to that of the ancient, as well as to the modern pagan world, are to be attributed to the operations of the same powerful cause.

The predominant feature of paganism is cruelty. All its steps are marked with blood. Its ferocious temper may be traced in the civil policy, the laws, the domestic institutions,

the wars, and even in the most solemn religious rites of the ancient heathen world. This was the case even among the most learned and most philosophical nations of antiquity.— But its aspect was still more dreadful among those whom they called barbarians, and it remains no less so among the savages of the present day, of which their cruelty to their women, their sanguinary and vindictive wars, the torments they inflict on their prisoners, and their human sacrifices, are but too convincing proofs.

In the religion of Christ, we see a directly contrary spirit, a spirit of meekness, mercy, gentleness, humanity, and kindness, which has been for eighteen hundred years contending with the evils generated by paganism, has actually banished some of them from the face of the earth, has greatly mitigated others, is gradually undermining all the rest, and has introduced so large a portion of benevolence* and mutual good will into the minds and manners of men, into all the various relations of social, civil, and domestic life, as plainly shows the sacred source from whence it springs.

Among the barbarians, Christianity introduced an important change in their moral and political condition. They received at the same time the use of letters, so essential to a religion whose doctrines are contained in a sacred book, and while they studied the divine truth, their minds were insensibly enlarged by the distant view of history, of nature, of the arts, and of society. The version of the scriptures into their native tongue excited among their clergy some curiosity to read the original text, and to examine, in the writings of the fathers, the chain of ecclesiastical tradition. These spiritual gifts were preserved in the Greek and Latin languages, which concealed the inestimable monuments of ancient learning. The immortal productions of Virgil, Cicero, and Livy, which were accessible to the christian barbarians, maintained a silent intercourse between the reign of Augustus and that

* Hospitals for the sick, and the many asylums for the relief of all the varieties of human misery, which are frequent in Christian countries, were, and are unknown in pagan nations.

of the early Christian emperors. By these means, the flame of science was secretly kept alive, to warm and enlighten the mature age of the western world. In the most corrupt state of Christianity, the barbarians might learn justice from the law, and mercy from the gospel. But the direct authority of religion was less effectual than the holy communion which united them with their Christian brethren in spiritual friendship. The influence of these sentiments contributed to secure their fidelity, to alleviate the horrors of war, to moderate the insolence of conquest, and to preserve, in the downfall of the empire, a permanent respect for the name and institutions of Rome. It was the interest as well as the duty of civilized Christianity to mollify, by peaceful counsels, the fierce spirit of the barbarians. These, and other concurring causes, cemented the union of the Christian republic, and gradually produced the similar manners and common jurisprudence which have distinguished from the rest of mankind the independent and even hostile nations of modern Europe. This summary of the effects of Christianity is for obvious reasons given together, though extended over many centuries. We now return to the civil history of the Roman empire.

About the same time Constantine resolved to establish the Christian religion, he also resolved for ever to remove the imperial residence from Rome, and to found a new capital, which might exist as a memorial of his glory and power, and perpetuate the splendour of his reign. Calcedon and the ancient Troy are said to have been successively chosen for the situation of this new metropolis of the world. Various considerations, however, pointed out for that purpose, Byzantium, on the banks of the Bosphorus, a city deservedly esteemed the key of Europe and Asia.

About the year 324 of the Christian æra, the foundations of Constantinople were laid, and the seven eminences on which it was built gave it some resemblance to Rome, the ancient capital of the empire. The circumference of the new city was something more than ten Roman miles, and its area about two thousand acres. Architects and artificers were collected from all parts of the empire, and multitudes of labourers were employed to bring the great work to a conclusion.

The cities and temples of Greece and Asia were despoiled of their finest ornaments for the embellishment of the new capital. The sovereign lord of the Roman world, absolute master of the lives and fortunes of one hundred and twenty millions of subjects, left nothing undone that unbounded power and immense resources could accomplish, in order to expedite and complete his design. Obligations were imposed, and encouragements held out, to attract the opulent inhabitants of Rome and the provinces to fix their residence in the new metropolis. Palaces, built in various quarters of the city, were by the emperor bestowed on his favourites. Pensions and lands were assigned them for the support of their dignity, and hereditary estates were granted from the imperial demesnes, on the easy tenure of maintaining a house in the new capital. But obligations and encouragement soon became superfluous. In the space of ten years, the original plan appears to have been completed, and in the year 334 the dedication of the city took place. The removal of the imperial residence from Rome to Constantinople has been exceedingly censured by many writers, and assigned as one of the principal causes of the downfall of the empire. This point is, however, very difficult to determine. We cannot be assured that the subversion of the empire would not have happened as soon as if the imperial residence had continued at Rome. It is certain, that the fixing of the seat of empire at Constantinople put a final period to the passage of the barbarians through the Bosphorus, who could never after force that insurmountable barrier. Greece as well as Asia Minor was secure from their ravages, until Valens unadvisedly suffered the Goths to pass the Danube. In after ages, Constantinople presented an insurmountable obstacle to the progress of the Persians under Chosroes, and resisted all the attacks of the Avans, the Goths, and other northern enemies. During the existence of the caliphate, that city was the bulwark of Europe against the Saracens, and stood its ground until A. D. 1453, one thousand and forty-three years after the entire subversion of the western empire. Indeed no good reason can be given why the empire might not have been as well defended when Constantinople was the capital, as if Rome had al-

ways retained that prerogative ; and it is no improbable conjecture, that if the imperial residence had not been removed to Constantinople, all the eastern parts of the empire would have fallen a prey to the Persians on the one hand, and to the Goths on the other, without prolonging for any considerable time the existence of the western empire.

Among the reflections which naturally arise from the contemplation of a period so important and so interesting to posterity as the reign of Constantine, it is impossible not to remark, that while he governed the Roman empire with a more distinguished lustre than most of his predecessors, and was uniformly successful in every political measure, and every military enterprise, his personal tranquillity was considerably disturbed by the disputes of theologians, and his domestic felicity also suffered a melancholy abatement from the real or supposed necessity he found himself under of putting to death his son Crispus, a prince of the most promising accomplishments. The particulars of this melancholy transaction are variously related by historians, and the whole affair seems to have been conducted in so mysterious a manner, that we can be certain of nothing but the fact itself. This reflection, however, we cannot but make : that it was either a great crime of Constantine, or a great misfortune to him. Hard must his heart have been if he could thus destroy so accomplished and promising a son without a full conviction of the absolute necessity of so severe a measure, and he must be pronounced extremely unfortunate if such necessity did really exist. It is, however, a remarkable fact, that some of the greatest men both in ancient and modern times have been extremely unhappy in their domestic concerns.

Constantine, having accomplished his two great objects of changing the religion and removing the seat of the empire, ended his life, A. D. 337. He had reigned with unparalleled glory and splendour for more than thirty years, a longer period of sovereign sway than had been allotted to any of his predecessors since Augustus. Victorious over every enemy, he had crushed all domestic opposition, and repelled all foreign aggression. His fame was so widely extended, that ambassadors from India came to congratulate him on the

splendour and prosperity of his reign, and declared that the kings of those remote countries had erected statues to his honour. His reign is certainly one of the most memorable in history. He was an instrument in the hand of Divine Providence for the general establishment of the Christian religion. But while Christianity became triumphant, its spirit was extinguished. Many nominal Christians plunged themselves into those vices, and disgraced themselves with those crimes, which had so long been the reproach of paganism. Constantine, having put to death his promising son Crispus, divided the empire at his own decease among his other three sons, Constantine, Constans, and Constantius. Constans fell by the arms of his brother Constantine, who in his turn suffered the same fate by the rebel Magnentius. Constantius, having again united in his own person the whole Roman sovereignty, died without issue in 361, and thus the posterity of the great Constantine being extinct in the first generation, his nephew Julian succeeded to the imperial throne.

This extraordinary man possessed such flexibility of thought, and such firmness of attention, that he could at the same time employ his hand to write, his ear to listen, and his voice to dictate; and pursue at once three several trains of ideas without hesitation and without error. His light and sparing diet left his mind and body always free and active for business. While his ministers reposed, the prince flew with agility from one labour to another. His sleep was never clouded by the fumes of indigestion, and he was soon awakened from it by the entrance of fresh secretaries, who had slept the preceding day, and his servants were obliged to wait alternately, while their indefatigable master allowed himself scarcely any other refreshment than the change of occupations. He hastily withdrew from all amusements with the impatience of a philosopher, who considered every moment as lost that was not devoted to the advantage of the public or the improvement of his own mind. By this avarice of time he seemed to protract the short duration of his reign.

This philosophical emperor, marching against the Persians, was so infatuated by his ideas and expectations of conquest, as to destroy the fleet of boats which he had upon the Tigris, and suffered himself to be allured by spies to advance far into the Persian territories, being made vainly to believe that the king was flying before him. This farce was carried on until the Roman army was at last involved in the midst of sandy deserts, and began to feel the effect of famine. At this critical juncture, their guides suddenly disappeared, and the Persian monarch made his appearance with the whole military force of his kingdom. The improvident emperor then discovered his error. The want of provisions rendered a retreat necessary. Betwixt that measure and perishing with famine there was no alternative. The retreat was accordingly begun, during which they were continually harassed by the Persians, who carefully avoided any close engagement. The Roman army, which, at its entrance into Persia, was one of the finest that the empire had ever sent out, now exhibited a shocking spectacle of distress. In those disastrous circumstances, the Romans at last gained the banks of the Tigris, which, for want of their boats, which Julian had madly destroyed, they could not pass. Imagination itself can hardly conceive a more distressful situation than that of the Roman army, exhausted with fatigue and perishing with hunger, a deep and rapid river in front, and the whole armed power of Persia in their rear.

In those circumstances the Persian king made in the night a general assault on the Roman camp. All was tumultuous confusion and promiscuous slaughter, until at last Roman valour repulsed the enemy; but, amidst the confusion of that dreadful night, the emperor received a mortal wound, which in a few hours terminated his life, and compelled him to appear before the tribunal of that Judge whose worship he had resolved to abolish, and whose name he had designed to obliterate from the minds of men. We have been told that Julian, taking a handful of his own blood, threw it up towards heaven, exclaiming, "Vicisti, Galilæe, vicisti!" "Thou hast conquered, O Galilæan; thou hast conquered!" Galilæan being the name by which he contemptuously called Christ.

This story has been universally circulated and pretty generally believed.

The death of the emperor Julian is an event which merits particular notice, and, perhaps, it contributed not a little to influence the religious state of Europe and the United States at this day. There is no doubt but that Julian had conceived the design of extirpating the Christian religion. If Providence had permitted his reign to have been long and prosperous, like that of Constantine, it is impossible to calculate how fatal its effects might have been to Christianity. One very important circumstance distinguishes Julian from the former persecuting emperors. Among all these, very few, if any, had been persecutors from personal inclination*. Some of

* Many of the emperors who issued the most sanguinary edicts against the Christians, are known to have shewn no particular aversion to Christianity or its professors, but even to have frequently promoted them to offices of honour and emolument, until they were misled by evil counsellors, who either had an aversion to the Christian doctrine, or a personal pique against some individuals of that religion. This was the case with Valerian, who, in the commencement of his reign, was particularly favourable to the Christians, but afterwards suffered himself to be persuaded by designing priests and intriguing courtiers, that all the calamities of the empire proceeded from the vengeance of the gods for suffering a sect of people to exist who were the professed enemies of their worship.

It is easy to conceive how much the priests of a pompous and ceremonious religion were interested in the support of a system which procured them honour, emolument, and influence. The priests of paganism could not but see the gradual encroachments which Christianity was making upon that system on which their credit and fortune depended. They could not fail of perceiving the decrease in the number of their votaries and offerings, and all the evils which menaced their declining religion. The philosophers also foresaw, in the overthrow of their systems, the destruction of their credit and the extinction of their fame. Their interests coincided with those of the priests, and the views of both were seconded by all that numerous tribe of artisans and others concerned in the embellishments of their temples, of which we have a striking instance in the conduct of Demetrius, the silversmith, of Ephesus. Paganism was a splendid, pompous, and ceremonious religion, calculated to attach a very considerable number of men of talents and ingenuity to its interest and support. The number

them would never have turned their attention to the professors of Christianity, had they not been influenced by the sug-

and magnificence of its temples, the superb statues of its gods, and the curious and costly utensils used in its sacrifices and ceremonies, gave employment to numbers of ingenious artisans, and its frequent and splendid festivals afforded an agreeable entertainment to the populace. It is therefore no wonder that a numerous body of people throughout the whole empire should be ready to support a system whence they derived so many advantages, and desirous of depressing a religion which threatened its overthrow. Of all this interested assemblage, the priests formed the van, and seized every opportunity of kindling the flames of persecution. They never failed to ascribe the public calamities to the progress of Christianity, and to persuade the emperors that the wrath of the gods could be appeased only by the blood of the Christians. The superstition of the people may also justly be supposed to have contributed to excite a spirit of intolerance and persecution against a sect of men, who were represented to them by their priests as the persons who, by their contempt of the gods, drew down the wrath of heaven upon the whole empire. The blood of the martyrs was like seed sown in a fertile soil, and the number of Christians rapidly increased, notwithstanding the havoc made among them by persecutors. In the latter part of the third century, the church had enjoyed a long repose from persecution, and, during this period of tranquillity, had begun to grow opulent, and some of the prelates lived in splendour. The Christians had enjoyed all the privileges of the other Roman subjects during the space of forty years, and were exceedingly favoured by the emperor Diocletian, when a storm burst over their heads, which seemed to threaten the entire extinction of Christianity. Its professors had grown so numerous, and were so much favoured, that the whole mass of the interested adherents and supporters of paganism were alarmed at the increasing prevalence of a religion which threatened its overthrow, and loudly called upon the emperor to avert, by the extermination of the Christians, the vengeance of the gods, ready to be poured upon the empire for tolerating the professed despisers of their worship. The emperor, although he had passed his life in camps, and was little versed in the principles and tendency of religious systems, was at first decidedly averse to intolerant measures. The importunities of the priests and the solicitations of their abettors grew daily more pressing, but the emperor resisted them a long time with inflexible firmness. Maximian, whom he had made his colleague in the imperial dignity, had already consented to the solicitations of the enemies of Christianity, and Diocletian thus reluctantly signed the bloody edict. It was not long before the horrid

gestions of priests and other interested persons. Julian, on the contrary, was a persecutor from principle. He had been educated in the Christian religion, and had not only apostatized from its doctrines, but manifested a decided preference of paganism, and a rooted aversion to Christianity. From him the church had reason to expect determined and persevering hostility. The death of such a man, in so critical a moment, may therefore be looked upon as a distinguishing link in that mysterious chain of causes and effects which constitutes the plan of Divine Providence.

In Julian, the family of Constantine was extinct, and Jovian succeeded by military election. In the perishing situation of the army, he was obliged to conclude a disadvantageous peace with Persia, and to purchase a safe retreat by the cession of Mesopotamia, the city of Nisibis. His short reign was productive of no other considerable event. The succeeding joint reign of Valentinian and Valens was unprosperous. A numerous horde of Goths, computed at two hundred thousand armed men, making a body of about a million, being expelled from their country by the Huns, appeared on the banks of the Danube, and craved an asylum in the Roman dominions, on condition of allegiance and military service. This being granted, another immense horde presented themselves with the same request, which being refused, they passed over on rafts without permission, and joined their countrymen. In circumstances so extraordinary, it was impossible that differences should not arise. The immense Gothic hordes were distressed for provisions. Mutual sus-

execution began to take place, and every species of cruelty which the infernal spirit of persecution could invent was exercised upon the professors of that religion. This was the most rigorous persecution the church had ever experienced, and it is supposed that a greater number of Christians suffered martyrdom in this than in all the other persecutions. Britain was the only province of the empire that was free from its effects. In that country the Christians found tranquillity and protection, under the equitable government of Constantius Chlorus, father of Constantine, who, although a pagan, was decidedly averse to every kind of intolerance in religious matters.

pitions arose, and reciprocal complaints of injuries and infraction of treaties at last broke out into open hostilities between the Goths and the Romans. A bloody engagement took place in the plains of Adrianople, in which the Romans were totally defeated, and Valens, the emperor, is supposed to have perished in the flames of a house in which he had taken refuge. This defeat was one of the most fatal that the Romans had ever experienced. From this period the visible decline of the empire may with certainty be dated. The Gothic war was at last terminated by the great Theodosius, in the best mode that the impolicy of his predecessors allowed him to adopt. After repeated engagements, most of the Goths were domiciliated in the empire. They retained their own laws, and were governed by their own chiefs, who were appointed by the emperor. An army of forty thousand men was maintained for the service of the empire, and not only distinguished by peculiar ornaments, but indulged with liberal pay and licentious privileges. Thus was formed that singular *imperium in imperio*, which afterwards proved fatal to Rome. During the reign of Theodosius the Great, who re-united under his sole sovereignty the whole Roman world, the empire governed by his steady hand experienced no other convulsion of so dangerous a nature. This emperor in all his measures, appears to have adopted the conduct of Constantine, and his reign was distinguished by a similar train of glory and success.

The ruin of paganism in the age of Theodosius is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition, and may therefore be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind.

In a full meeting of the senate, the emperor proposed, according to the forms of the republic, the important question, Whether the worship of Jupiter, or that of Christ should be the religion of the Romans. On a regular division of the senate, Jupiter was degraded by the vote of a very large majority. On this authority, Theodosius attacked superstition in her most vital part, by prohibiting the use of sacrifices, and condemning the impious curiosity which examined the entrails of the victims, and the practice of immolation, which

* an empire within an empire

particularly constituted the religion of the pagans. As the temples had been erected for the purpose of sacrifice, it was the duty of a benevolent prince to remove from his subjects the dangerous temptation of offending against the laws. A special commission was therefore granted to proper officers, by which they were directed to shut the temples, to seize or destroy the instruments of idolatry, to abolish the privileges of the priests, and to confiscate the consecrated property for the benefit of the emperor, of the church, or of the army. Many of the temples were the most splendid and beautiful monuments of Grecian architecture, and might have been applied to many public uses. But as long as they subsisted, the pagans fondly cherished the secret hope, that an auspicious revolution or a second Julian might again restore the altars of the gods. An eagerness to prevent this depreciated state of public affairs urged the Christian reformers to extirpate without mercy the root of superstition.

Amidst the general destruction of temples which followed, a small number was protected by the civil and ecclesiastical governors. The temple of Venus at Carthage was converted into a christian church, and a similar consecration preserved inviolate the majestic dome of the pantheon at Rome. But in almost every province of the Roman world, an army of fanatics, without authority and without discipline, invaded the peaceful inhabitants, and the ruin of the fairest structures of antiquity rapidly followed.

Though the temples of the Roman empire were defeated or destroyed, the pagans still attempted to elude the laws of Theodosius, by which all sacrifices had been severely prohibited. The inhabitants of the country, whose conduct was less exposed to the eye of malicious curiosity, disguised their religious under the appearance of convivial meetings. On the days of solemn festivals, they assembled in great numbers under the spreading shade of some consecrated trees; sheep and oxen were slaughtered and roasted, and this rural entertainment was sanctified by the use of incense, and by the hymns which were sung in honour of their gods. But it was alleged, that as no part of the animal was made a burnt-offering, these festal meetings did not involve the guests in the

guilt or penalty of an illegal sacrifice. These pretences were swept away by the last edict of Theodosius, which was expressed in the most absolute and comprehensive terms. "It is our will and pleasure," says the emperor, "that none of our subjects, whether magistrates or private citizens, shall presume in any city or in any place to worship an inanimate idol by the sacrifice of a guiltless victim." The act of sacrificing, and the practice of divination by the entrails of the victim was declared high treason against the state, a crime which can be expiated only by the death of the guilty. The rites of pagan superstition were abolished as highly injurious to the truth and honour of religion. Luminaries, garlands, frankincense, and libations were specially enumerated and condemned, and the claims of the domestic genius of the household gods were also included in this rigorous proscription. The use of any of these profane and illegal ceremonies subjected the offender to the forfeiture of the house or estate where they had been performed, and if he had artfully chosen the property of another for the scene of his impiety, he was compelled to pay without delay a heavy fine of twenty-five pounds of gold, or more than one thousand pounds sterling. A fine not less considerable was imposed on the connivance of the secret enemies of religion, who should neglect either to reveal or to punish the guilt of idolatry. Such was the persecuting spirit of the laws of Theodosius, which were enforced with the applause of the Christian world.

Had the pagans been animated by the undaunted zeal which possessed the minds of the primitive believers, the triumph of the church must have been stained with blood. But such obstinate zeal was not congenial to the loose and careless temper of polytheism. The ready obedience of the pagans protected them from the pains and penalties of the Theodosian code. Instead of asserting that the authority of the gods was superior to that of the emperor, they desisted with a plaintive murmur from the use of those sacred rites which their sovereign had condemned. If they were sometimes tempted, by a sally of passion or by the hopes of concealment, to indulge their favourite superstition, their repentance disarmed the severity of the christian magistrate,

and they seldom refused to atone for their rashness by submitting to the yoke of the Gospel. The churches were filled with the increasing multitude of these unworthy proselytes, who had conformed from temporal motives to the reigning religion, and, whilst they devoutly imitated the postures and recited the prayers of the faithful, they satisfied their conscience by the silent and sincere invocation of the gods of antiquity. If the pagans wanted patience to suffer, they wanted spirit to resist, and the scattered myriads who deplored the ruin of their temples yielded without a contest to their adversaries.

The profession of christianity was not made an essential qualification for the enjoyment of the civil rights of society, nor were any peculiar hardships imposed on the sectaries who received the fables of Ovid, and rejected the miracles of the gospel. The palace, the schools, the army, and the senate were filled with declared and devout pagans; they obtained without distinction, the civil and military honours of the empire. The pagans were indulged in the most licentious freedom of speech and writing. But the imperial laws, which prohibited the sacrifices and ceremonies of paganism, were rigidly executed, and every hour contributed to destroy the influence of religion, which was supported by custom rather than by argument. The generation that arose in the world after the promulgation of the imperial laws was attracted within the pale of the Catholic church: and so rapid, yet so gentle, was the fall of paganism, that faint and minute vestiges were in a few years no longer visible to the eye of the legislator.

The vagaries of the human mind soon reverted to similar follies; for christian superstition succeeded to that of the pagans. The grateful respect of the christians to the martyrs of the faith was exalted by time and victory into religious adoration, and the most illustrious of the saints and prophets were associated to the honours of the martyrs. In the age which followed the conversion of Constantine, the emperors, the consuls, and the generals of armies devoutly visited the sepulchres of St. Paul and St. Peter, and their venerable bones were deposited under the altars of Christ, on

which the bishops of the royal city continually offered the bloodless sacrifice. The honours of the saints and martyrs were universally established, and in a short period something was deemed wanting to the sanctity of a Christian church, till it had been consecrated by some portion of holy relics. In the long period of twelve hundred years which elapsed between the reign of Constantine and the reformation of Luther, the worship of saints and relics corrupted the pure and perfect simplicity of the christian model.

The satisfactory experience that the relics of saints were more valuable than gold or precious stones, stimulated the clergy to multiply the treasures of the church. Without much regard for truth or probability, they invented names for skeletons, and actions for names. The fame of the apostles, and of others who had imitated their virtues, was darkened by religious fiction. To the band of genuine and primitive martyrs, they added myriads of heroes who had never existed, except in the fancy of crafty or credulous legendaries. These superstitious practices insensibly diminished the light of history and of reason in the Christian world. The sublime and simple theology of the primitive Christians was gradually corrupted, and the Monarchy of Heaven was degraded by the introduction of a popular mythology, which tended to re-establish a polytheism among the new Christians nearly equal to that of the old pagans.

Theodosius imitated Constantine in the partition of the empire between his two sons Arcadius and Honorius, to the former of whom he assigned the eastern, to the latter the western part. This was the last fatal division of the empire. The two distinct monarchies gradually became strangers to each other, and even regarded each others prosperity with a jealous eye. When the western empire was hard pressed on every side by the northern invaders, the eastern empire seemed quite unmoved, and made no effort to avert its impending doom. This alienation appeared more visibly in every successive reign, and, after a long train of disasters, of which the melancholy narratives have crowded the ensanguined page of history, Rome, so long the mistress of the world, fell a prey to Gothic plunder, while Constantinople

appeared totally unconcerned at the event. Before the imperial city was ransacked by foreign enemies, the western empire had long shewn every symptom of a declining state, yet the immense fabric fell gradually, and it was a considerable time propped by the valour and discipline of the army. The Roman legions gave many checks to the barbarians, but no vigour existed in the administration, and the imperial court, through the impulse of pusillanimity, shut itself up in Ravenna. In that impregnable situation, the shadow of imperial greatness was during some time preserved; but the whole empire exhibited a deplorable scene of anarchy and disaster, one province after another falling a prey to the northern invaders, who poured by innumerable swarms into the empire, and whose numbers defeat and slaughter never seemed to diminish. The subversion of the Roman power in the west was effected, not by absolute barbarians, like those who had formerly harassed the empire with their desultory inroads, but by the Goths, who had been entertained in the imperial service, and who were consequently not unacquainted with the military discipline and arms of the Romans. Theodosius had not been many months in the grave, before the Goths, who had been overawed by his genius, rose in arms against his weak successors. They ranged themselves under the banners of Alaric their chief, and innumerable bands of these warlike adventurers from the other side of the Danube passed over and flocked to his standard. Being thus reinforced, he ravaged all the provinces of Greece, and spread consternation and alarm to the gates of Constantinople. In the conclusion of peace, Alaric was declared master-general of Illyrium, for the emperor Arcadius, and at the same time the whole nation of the Visigoths, uniting themselves under his victorious standard, elected him for their king.

Thus did the Romans put arms into the hands of their enemies; and Alaric, invested with the double power of a Roman general and a Gothic sovereign, being seated on the verge of the eastern and western empires, alternately sold his services, or at least his promises, to the courts of Arcadius and Honorius, till an opportunity offered itself for the inva-

sion of Italy. Having renounced the service of the eastern emperor, he entered into that of Honorius, and was declared master-general of the Roman armies throughout the præfecture of Illyrium. At last he began under various pretexts to throw off the mask, and making some proposals which were rejected, he in a hostile manner appeared before Rome, A. D. 409. After a close blockade, in which the citizens had long suffered all the miseries of famine, the mistress of the world was obliged to cast herself on the clemency or moderation of the king of the Goths.

The senate appointed two ambassadors to negotiate with him. When they were introduced into his presence, they declared that the Romans were resolved to maintain their dignity either in peace or war, and that if Alaric refused them a fair and honourable capitulation, he might prepare to give battle to an innumerable people, exercised in arms and animated by despair. "The thicker the hay, the easier it is mowed," was the concise reply of the barbarian, and this rustic metaphor was accompanied by a loud and insulting laugh, expressive of his contempt for the menaces of an unwarlike populace, enervated by luxury before they were emaciated by famine. He then condescended to fix the ransom which he would accept as the price of his retreat from the walls of Rome: all the gold and silver in the city, whether it were the property of the state or of individuals; all the rich and precious moveables; and all the slaves who could prove their title to the name of barbarians. The ministers of the senate presumed to ask, in a modest and suppliant tone, "If such, O king, are your demands, what do you intend to leave us?" "Your lives," replied the haughty conqueror. They trembled and retired. Alaric at length consented to raise the siege on the immediate payment of five thousand pounds of gold, of thirty thousand pounds of silver, of four thousand robes of silk, of three thousand pieces of fine scarlet cloth, and of three thousand pounds weight of pepper.

As soon as the Romans had satisfied the rapacious demands of Alaric, they were restored in some measure to the enjoyment of peace and plenty. Soon after, he returned to the siege, which he again raised on certain conditions.

In the year 410, Alaric besieged Rome for the third time. The senators adopted the resolution of making a desperate defence; but the populace, either through fear or treachery, opened the gates to the enemy. In the year 1163 from the foundation of the city, imperial Rome, after having conquered and civilized the principal part of the then known world, saw for the first time a victorious enemy within her walls. Her immense wealth, acquired by so many centuries of successful war, became a prey to the Gothic invaders; and that vast city, the largest, and in all probability, the richest of the ancient or modern world, exhibited a universal scene of pillage. The churches alone with their sacred ornaments were exempted from plunder; for the Goths were zealous Christians, and testified on every occasion the greatest veneration for every thing consecrated to religion. Rome, which had extended her conquests and her rapine over so many countries, and had concentrated within her walls, the wealth of the plundered world, being now in her turn become a prey to barbarian pillage, no more raised her drooping head*, but fell successively under the assaults of different enemies.

During these transactions, the imperial court remained closely shut up in Ravenna, a city which, being surrounded by impassable morasses, was impregnable to every attempt of an enemy. But Italy, and all the other parts of the western empire, was ravaged by different hordes of barbarians. Attila, king of the Huns, after his bloody defeat at Chalons, in Champagne, turned his arms against Italy and ravaged the country †.

* It was not easy to compute the multitudes, who, from a prosperous fortune, were suddenly reduced to the miserable condition of captives and exiles. As the barbarians had more occasion for money than for slaves, they fixed at a moderate price the redemption of their indigent prisoners, and the ransom was often paid by their friends.

† This illustrious barbarian was found dead in his bed, on the morning of his nuptials with Honoria, A. D. 453, from an excessive hemorrhage, caused by a ruptured artery. His trembling bride was found sitting by his bed-side, hiding her face with a veil, lamenting her own danger, as well as the death of her husband. His body was exposed under a silken

In the year 455, Rome was again plundered by Genseric, king of the African Vandals. The pillage lasted fourteen days, and all that the Goths had left forty years before, or that had since been accumulated, was carried away to Africa. Among the spoils, the splendid relics of two temples, or rather of two religions, (the old pagan and the new Christian systems,) exhibited a memorable example of the vicissitudes of human and divine things. Since the abolition of paganism, the capitol had been violated and abandoned, yet the statues of the gods and heroes were respected till this period. The holy instruments of the Jewish worship, the golden table, and the golden candlestick with seven branches, originally framed according to the particular instructions of God himself, and which were placed in the sanctuary of his temple, had been carried to Rome after Jerusalem had been destroyed, and ostentatiously displayed to the Roman people in the triumph of Titus. They were afterwards deposited in the temple of Peace, and at the end of four hundred years, these spoils of Jerusalem were transferred from Rome to Carthage, by a barbarian who derived his origin from the shores of the Baltic. But the Christian churches, enriched and adorned by the prevailing superstition of the times, afforded more plentiful materials for sacrilege. In the forty-five years that had elapsed since the Gothic invasion, the pomp and luxury of Rome were in some measure restored, and it was difficult either to escape or to satisfy the avarice of a conqueror, who possessed leisure to collect, and ships to transport the wealth of the capital. The imperial orna-

pavilion, and chosen squadrons of the Huns, wheeling round, chanted a funeral song to the memory of a hero, glorious in his life, invincible in his death, the father of his people, the scourge of his enemies, and the terror of the world. According to their national custom, the barbarians cut off a part of their hair, gashed their faces with wounds, and bewailed their leader, not with the tears of women, but with the blood of warriors. The remains of Attila were enclosed in three coffins of gold, of silver, of iron, and privately buried in the night. The spoils of nations were thrown into his grave. The captives who had opened the ground were massacred, and the same Huns who had indulged such excessive grief, feasted with intemperate mirth about the recent sepulchre of their king.

ments of the palace, the magnificent furniture and wardrobe, the sideboards of massy plate, were of immense value, and all carried off, in addition to gold and silver, which amounted to several thousand talents. At this time, also, the rich gilding of the capitol, which had cost the enormous sum of about two million four hundred thousand pounds sterling, was torn down to increase the booty of the conquerors.

It would be as impossible as it is useless to commemorate all the barbarian invasions that desolated Italy, as well as the other provinces of the western empire, which, under successive emperors, dragged out a precarious existence until the year 476, in which Augustulus, the last of the emperors of the west, began and ended his reign. Unable to command respect, he was reduced to the necessity of imploring the clemency of Odoacer. This successful barbarian was chief of the Heruli, who, though he had long been entertained in the service of the empire, by placing himself on the throne of the Cæsars, put a final period to the Roman dominion. Other barbarian nations about the same time seized the different provinces of the empire. The Goths and the Vandals seated themselves in Spain and Africa. The Franks made themselves masters of Gaul, and the Saxons seized on Britain*. The empire of the east saw with little concern the

* The Romans were ignorant of the number of their enemies. Beyond the Rhine and Danube, the northern countries of Europe and Asia were filled with innumerable tribes of hunters and shepherds, poor, voracious, and turbulent, bold in arms, and impatient to ravish the fruits of industry. The barbarian world was agitated by the rapid impulse of war, and the peace of Gaul and Italy was shaken by the distant revolutions of China. The endless column of barbarians pressed on the Roman empire with accumulated weight, and if the foremost were destroyed, the vacant space was instantly replenished by new assailants. Such formidable emigrations no longer issue from the north. But the long repose, which has been imputed to the decrease of population, is the happy consequence of the progress of arts and agriculture. Instead of some rude villages, thinly scattered among its woods and morasses, Germany now produces a list of two thousand three hundred walled towns. From the Gulf of Finland to the Eastern Ocean, Russia now assumes the form of a powerful and civilized empire. The plough, the loom, and the forge, are introduced on the banks of the Volga, the Oby, and the Lena; and the fiercest of the

downfall of that of the west, and Constantinople appeared indifferent to the calamities of Rome.

Nothing can more evidently shew that the fatal division of the empire, not the mere removal of the imperial residence, was one of the principal causes of its dissolution. The introduction of the northern barbarians into the empire in the character of auxiliaries was another grand cause which concurred to produce that effect. Ever since the time of Marius, the nations on the north of the Danube had appeared terrible to Rome. They frequently harassed her immense frontier, and at different periods penetrated far into her provinces. They were, however, constantly repulsed or exterminated by bloody defeats. But in the reign of Gallienus they were introduced into the heart of the empire, and entertained in the service of that emperor, as well as of the various usurpers, who, during that convulsed period, assumed the imperial purple. Under the vigorous administration of active and warlike princes like Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian, Constantine, and Theodosius, those mercenary bands, acting in due subordination, might render essential service. But during the feeble reigns of Honorius and his successors, instead of auxiliary subjects, they became insolent masters. The Roman soldiers, when called into the field, continued to support their former reputation; but a pusillanimous court, which, abandoning Rome, and shutting itself up in Ravenna, had lost

Tartar hordes have been taught to tremble and obey. The reign of independent barbarism is now contracted to a narrow span, and the remnant of Calmucks or Uzbeks cannot seriously excite the apprehensions of Europe. Cold, poverty, and a life of danger and fatigue, fortify the strength and courage of barbarians. But their superiority in bodily powers has been rendered comparatively ineffectual by the resources of science. The military art has been changed by the invention of gunpowder, which enables man to command the two most powerful agents of nature, air and fire. Mathematics, chemistry, and mechanics, have been applied to the service of war, and the adverse parties oppose to each other the most elaborate modes of attack and of defence. Cannon and fortifications now form an impregnable barrier against the Tartar horse, and Europe is secure from any future irruption of barbarians; since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous.

the affections and confidence of the people, placed its principal security in the valour of mercenary strangers. Thus the fate of imperial Rome at last depended on the sword of those formidable barbarians, who, being now improved in the art of war, for a while supported and then overturned her power.

Odoacer reigned fourteen years over Italy, during which time he endeavoured in some measure to repair the damages which the country had sustained from almost a century of continual wars and barbarian invasions. Notwithstanding the prudence and success of Odoacer, his kingdom exhibited the sad prospect of misery and desolation. Since the age of Tiberius, the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy, and it was a just subject of complaint that the support of the Roman people depended on the accidents of the winds and waves. In the division and the decline of the empire, the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa were withdrawn, the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence, and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, famine, and pestilence. The plebeians of Rome, who were fed by the hand of their masters, perished or disappeared as soon as his liberality was suppressed; the decline of the arts reduced the industrious mechanic to idleness and want; and the senators, who might support with patience the ruin of their country, bewailed their private loss of wealth and luxury. One third of those ample estates was extorted for the use of the conquerors. Injuries were aggravated by insults; the sense of actual sufferings was embittered by the fear of more dreadful evils; and, as new lands were allotted to new swarms of barbarians, each senator was apprehensive lest the arbitrary surveyors should approach his favourite villa, or his most profitable farm. The least unfortunate were those who submitted without a murmur to the power which it was impossible to resist. The distress of Italy was mitigated by the prudence and humanity of Odoacer, who had bound himself to satisfy the demands of a licentious and turbulent multitude. The kings of the barbarians were frequently resisted, deposed, or murdered by their native subjects; and the various bands of Italian mercenaries who associated under the standard of an elective general, claimed a larger privilege of

freedom and rapine. A monarchy destitute of national union and hereditary right, hastened to its dissolution. Italy was in the next place conquered by Theodoric, king of the Goths, who was commissioned and subsidised by the court of Constantinople, which now claimed the sovereignty of the whole Roman empire. This prince reigned over Italy under the authority and sanction of the eastern emperor. He preserved the Goths and the Italians as two distinct nations, reserving the former for the employments of war, and leaving to the latter the arts of peace. Theodoric, although totally ignorant of letters, was a prince of great political talents, and Italy began to flourish under his reign. At his decease, the kingdom devolved on his beautiful and accomplished daughter Amalasontha. But the Goths, in the year 535, deposed this princess, and refused to acknowledge the paramount sovereignty of the imperial court of Constantinople. Justinian, who then reigned over the east, sent the celebrated Belisarius to attempt the conquest of Italy. That great general entered Rome. The Gothic army advanced, and the imperial city sustained, during the whole of the year 537, one of the most bloody and obstinate sieges recorded in history. On the arrival of a second army from Constantinople, the Goths were obliged to relinquish their enterprize, and Belisarius, marching out of Rome, completed the conquest of Italy. After the departure of Belisarius, the Goths again revolted, and that general a second time entered Italy. Rome was captured by the Goths, A. D. 546, and two years after retaken by Belisarius, who, being recalled, the imperial city again fell into the hands of the enemy. The command of the army and the government of Italy being then conferred on Narses the Eunuch, a person of consummate military skill, and of the most daring courage, that great commander defeated the Goths, A. D. 552, slew Totila, their king, and made himself master of Rome. In another bloody engagement, he defeated and slew Teias, who had succeeded Totila, and entirely subverted the Gothic kingdom of Italy. Narses also defeated with prodigious slaughter the numerous armies of the Franks and Alemanni, which had made a formidable irruption into the country. Every enemy being subdued, Italy was, in 554, made a

province of the eastern or Byzantine empire. Narses, who had distinguished himself by the most signal display of military talents and dauntless courage, was its first exarch or governor.

After the subversion of the Gothic kingdom, Italy was divided between the Grecian or eastern emperor and the kings of Lombardy, the former possessing the south and the middle, the latter the northern part.

Amidst the arms of the Lombards, and under the despotism of the Greeks, about the close of the sixth century, Rome had reached the lowest period of her depression. By the removal of the seat of empire, and the successive loss of the provinces, her sources of public and private opulence were exhausted. The lofty tree, under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground. The Romans shut or opened their gates with a trembling hand, beheld from the walls the flames of their houses, and heard the lamentations of their brethren, who were dragged away into distant slavery. The Campagna of Rome was speedily reduced to the state of a dreary wilderness, in which the land is barren, the waters are impure, and the air is infectious. Curiosity and ambition no longer attracted the nations to the capital of the world; but if chance or necessity directed the steps of a wandering stranger, he contemplated with horror the vacancy and solitude of the city, and might be tempted to ask, where is the senate? and where are the people? In a season of excessive rains, the Tyber swelled above its banks, and rushed with irresistible violence into the vallies of the seven hills. A pestilential disease arose from the stagnation of the deluge, and so rapid was the contagion, that fourscore persons expired in an hour, in the midst of a solemn procession which implored the mercy of Heaven. A society in which marriage is encouraged, and industry prevails, soon repairs the accidental losses of pestilence and war: but as the far greater part of the Romans was condemned to indigence and celibacy, the depopulation was constant and visible. Yet the number of citizens still exceeded the means of their subsistence: their precarious food was

supplied from the harvests of Sicily or Egypt. The edifices of Rome were in like manner exposed to ruin and decay. The mouldering fabrics were easily overthrown by inundations, tempests, and earthquakes. The Roman armies underwent a similar deterioration. The iron of Tuscany or Pontus still received the keenest temper from the skill of the Byzantine workmen. The magazines were plentifully stored with every species of offensive and defensive arms. In the construction and use of ships, engines, and fortifications, the Romans continued to be eminently expert. The science of tactics, the order, evolutions, and stratagems of antiquity was studied in books. But the provinces could no longer supply a race of men to handle those weapons, to guard those walls, to navigate those ships, and to reduce the theory of war into bold and successful practice. The genius of Belisarius and Narses had been formed without a master, and expired without a disciple. Neither honour nor patriotism could animate the lifeless bodies of slaves and strangers, who had succeeded to the honours of the legions. It was in the camp alone that the emperor should have exercised a despotic command: it was only in the camp that his authority was disobeyed and insulted. He appeased and inflamed with gold the licentiousness of the troops; but their vices were inherent, their victories were accidental, and their costly maintenance exhausted the substance of a state which they were unable to defend. The camps both of Asia and Europe were agitated with frequent and furious seditions. The monarch, always distant, and often deceived, was incapable of yielding or persisting according to the exigence of the moment. The fear of a general revolt induced him too readily to accept any expression of loyalty as an atonement for popular offences. The troops, instead of punishment and restraint, were agreeably surprized by a proclamation of immunities and rewards. But the soldiers accepted without gratitude the tardy and reluctant gifts of the emperor; their insolence was elated by the discovery of his weakness and their own strength, and their mutual hatred was inflamed beyond the desire of forgiveness or the hope of reconciliation.

From the middle of the sixth century, the Roman name was reduced to a narrow corner of Europe, to the lonely suburbs of Constantinople. In the last moments of her decay, Constantinople was doubtless more opulent and populous than Athens at her most flourishing era. But each of the citizens of the latter was a freeman, who dared to assert the liberty of his thoughts, words, and actions; whose person and property were guarded by equal law, and who exercised his independent vote in the government of the republic. But the subjects of the Byzantine empire present a dead uniformity of abject vices, which are neither softened by the weakness of humanity, nor animated by the vigour of memorable crimes. A succession of priests or courtiers treads in each others footsteps, in the same path of servitude and superstition. Their views are narrow; their judgment is feeble or corrupt.

The Greek emperors, with a very few exceptions, deviated from the virtues of the great Constantine, whose successors they were. The whole history of the Byzantine empire exhibits a picture of political and moral deformity. The principal military transactions that it records are the bloody wars with the caliphate. The most interesting circumstance of a religious nature is the grand schism which arose between the Greek and Latin churches. This division of the church was a very natural consequence of the division of empire, and originated in the jealousies which reigned between the primates of the east and west. Many circumstances concurred to foment the religious dissension. The proceedings of the iconoclasts of the east had given great umbrage to the Christians of the west. The Bulgarians had been converted to Christianity about the middle of the ninth century, and each of the two primates of the east and the west claimed this new accession to the church as a part of his jurisdiction. The council of Constantinople, in 879, gave judgment in favour of the patriarch, but the pope protested against the decision. The two primates thundered their excommunications against each other, and, although many attempts were made by the emperors to unite the Greek with the Latin church, they all proved unsuccessful. The schism con-

tinued, and the Greeks imbibed an irreconcilable enmity against the Roman church. This religious animosity greatly contributed to facilitate the conquest of the Byzantine empire by the Turks.

In reviewing the long series of fifty-nine emperors who reigned over the Byzantine or Greek empire, for about six hundred years, or from Justinian to Constantine Paleologus, we meet with very few who were distinguished by their abilities. Five dynasties, the Heraclian, Isaurian, Amorian, Basilian, and Comnenian families, enjoyed and transmitted the royal patrimony during their respective series of five, four, three, six, and four generations, and then vanished into obscurity. Many were the paths that led to the summit of royalty: the fabric of rebellion was overthrown by the stroke of conspiracy, or undermined by the silent arts of intrigue; the favourites of the soldiers or people, of the senate or clergy, of the women and eunuchs, were alternately clothed with the purple. The means of their elevation were base, and their end was often contemptible or tragic. A Christian philosopher must have looked with a smile of pity and contempt on the crimes and follies of human ambition, so eager to grasp at a precarious and short-lived enjoyment. The grave is ever beside the throne. In a few hours one may run over all that is known of these fifty-nine emperors. A few minutes are more than sufficient for treasuring up in the memory all of their history that is of importance. In this period of Byzantine history, very little is worthy of the particular attention of American readers, till the year 1204. In that year, Constantinople was stormed and taken by about 20,000 Flemish, French, and Italian adventurers, who were part of a large body of crusaders on their way to Palestine. The city was given up to plunder, and the booty, amounting to £800,000 sterling, a sum nearly equal to seven times the annual revenue of the crown of England in that age, was equally divided between the French and Venetians. It is generally believed, that the secreted plunder far exceeded the acknowledged part. If, besides this, we consider how great a quantity of valuable merchandize, furniture, &c. must have been destroyed in the conflagrations, we may be

enabled to form some idea of the immense riches of Constantinople. This dreadful calamity, however, gave a mortal blow to her splendour and greatness. Her wealth was dissipated, her populous regions were destroyed, and her beautiful edifices defaced by fire. The literature of the Greeks had in a great measure centred in the capital, and genius must lament the destruction of the libraries, and the loss of many of the valuable writings of antiquity which perished in the conflagrations, as well as of the numerous statues of bronze of excellent workmanship, which Constantine had ravished from all the cities of Greece, for the purpose of adorning his capital, and which were now melted down by the ignorant and avaricious conquerors.

This stupendous revolution was immediately followed by the division of the plunder and the partition of the empire. The spoils of the city were divided into shares: Baldwin, count of Flanders, was elected emperor of the east, and one fourth of the empire was assigned for the imperial domain. The other three fourths were equally divided between the barons and the republic of Venice. The barons established a government entirely feudal, on the plan of that which then existed in France, and the Venetians at last imitated the same model. They had obtained for their share the maritime provinces and islands from Ragusa to the Hellespont, besides three of the eight divisions of Constantinople. The cost of such extensive conquests exhausted their treasury, and induced them to grant to their nobles, on condition of homage as vassals of the republic, the sovereignty of such possessions as they should reduce and maintain. In this manner arose the Venetian duchy of Naxos, in the noble family of Sanudo. The fertile isle of Candia (the ancient Crete) had fallen to the share of the marquis of Montserrat, from whom it was purchased by the Venetians. And the state or nobles of Venice, acting as private adventurers, having reduced the isles of the Archipelago as well as those of Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia, the Venetians became masters of all the maritime parts of Greece, most of which they retained until they were ejected by the Turks.

The conquerors of Constantinople were only a handful of men, but while they remained united in the capital, the memory of their conquest and the terror of their arms impressed the whole empire with awe. Their dispersion discovered the smallness of their numbers and the defects of their discipline. In the government of the Latins, all the disorders of the feudal system prevailed. The Greeks experienced the effects of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, in the subjection of their empire to the barons, and of their church to the pope. In less than a year they revolted, and massacred a great number of the Latins and the Bulgarians. At the same time invading Romania, a battle was fought, in which Baldwin was taken prisoner, about eleven months after his accession to the empire, and he soon after died in captivity. He was succeeded by Henry, his brother, and his successor was Peter de Courtenay.

The Greeks, on the subversion of their empire, had collected some of its fragments, and established the independent states of Epirus, Nice, and Trebisonde, under princes of the former imperial dynasties. These maintained successful wars against the Latin emperors of Constantinople. The reign of Robert de Courtenay was a series of continual losses, and the Latin empire gave way on every side to the Greeks of Nice and Epirus. In the year 1261, Constantinople itself was surprised and taken by the Greeks. The Latin emperor and the principal families made their escape on board the Venetian galleys, which carried them into Italy.

The Greek empire was by this revolution restored, after being fifty-seven years under the domination of the Latins. But its territories were dismembered, and a great part of its wealth annihilated. The maritime ports were possessed by the Venetians, and the Turkish power in Asia soon began to threaten Constantinople. The horrors of civil war exhausted the resources of the empire, and exposed it to the insults of foreign aggression. The sequel of its history presents a scene of anarchy, of political and theological factions, of national degeneracy and progressive decay. The moral picture is that of a people immersed in superstition and luxury. The political view exhibits a weak, distracted, and ineffective go-

vernment. The final extinction of the Byzantine or Greek empire, in consequence of the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, will be hereafter related. The Turks, hitherto little known, had lately begun to emerge into national consequence, while the Byzantine, in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries from the foundation of their principal city, Constantinople, rapidly hastened to destruction. This was finally effected in 1453, and with it fell the last vestige of the Roman power. The new Turks succeeded the old Romans, in the site of all that remained of their empire. The entire series of Roman emperors, from the first of the Cæsars to the last of the Constantines, extends above fifteen hundred years; and the term of dominion, unbroken by foreign conquest, surpasses the measure of the ancient monarchies, the Assyrians or Medes, the successors of Cyrus, or those of Alexander.

In the year 800, Charlemagne, king of France, being crowned emperor of the Romans, the western empire, the image of that of ancient Rome, was revived. Italy, being weary of its dependence on the eastern empire, its chief city, Rome, renounced all political connection with Constantinople. The eastern emperors retained some possessions in the south. The rest of Italy constituted part of the empire of Charlemagne.

The general history of this country, until the reign of Frederic II, is consequently involved in that of the empire, to which the reader must be referred. While the Roman empire existed, it was natural that the bishops of the imperial city should acquire a sort of superior influence over those of the provinces, and their authority should be regarded with a peculiar deference. The removal of the imperial residence from Rome, contributed to augment the influence of its bishop; and, after the fall, first of the western empire, and then of the Gothic kingdom of Italy, the feeble and precarious power of the Greek emperors in that country caused the Roman prelate to be regarded as a kind of secondary sovereign. The destruction of the kingdom of Lombardy, and the elevation of Charlemagne to the throne of the west, laid the foundation of the temporal power of the papal see. Its spiritual power was a natural consequence of the piety of the

barbarous conquerors of the empire, who entertained a high degree of veneration for the Roman name, and were ambitious of Roman dignities and titles. The exorbitant power of the church was the necessary consequence of the state of the European world. The clergy were almost the only persons who had any knowledge of letters, and who were capable of exercising the various functions of a regular government. The bishops composed, in every country of western Europe, a leading branch of the national assemblies. They were introduced into the cabinets of princes, and acted a conspicuous part in every department of the administration. Amidst the tumult of barbarian conquest, the ferocious chieftains might direct the operations of irregular warfare, and superintend the scenes of rapine and destruction; but, as soon as the conquering nations were established on the ruins of the Roman power, the complex affairs of political and civil government required the talents of men more acquainted with civilized life. The prelates of the church soon gained an ascendancy in the state, and the dignity of their sacred character secured the respectful submission of the people. The same causes produced the same veneration for the monastic orders: the abbots as well as the prelates had seats in the national senates; and, like them, were employed in various departments of government. The ecclesiastics were almost the only persons who, in those times of barbarism and ignorance, were qualified for such important offices; and they were careful to turn these circumstances to advantage. An eternal Providence governs the world by laws which frequently baffle the superficial investigations of man, but none of its dispensations are without their utility. Perhaps the exorbitant elevation of the church was necessary for preserving the existence of the Christian name during a long succession of illiterate ages, and amidst the tumults of barbarian anarchy. It is easy to perceive that priestly power naturally arose from the circumstances as well as from the spirit of the times. Among the new nations, most of the first clergy were of Roman descent, so that modern Europe received in a great measure her religion and learning from Rome. The church became all powerful; the laity were superstitiously attached

to its ordinances. The force of ancient prejudice, and the former fame of the imperial city, excited a peculiar deference for its prelates. The bishops of Rome made the best possible use of these favourable circumstances for placing themselves at the head of the church. After many struggles, this point was accomplished. To render the victory complete, they resolved to exalt the pontifical power above all secular monarchies. This was a contest which endured many ages. Rome, however, at last was the conqueror. By the use of spiritual arms, the popes acquired temporal power. This was the grand principle of their politics. Details on this subject would be tedious. Suffice it to say, that, through a masterly train of politics, Rome obtained, by her spiritual arts, as extensive and perhaps as powerful an empire, as she had formerly acquired by her temporal arms. Pagan and papal Rome constitute much more than half of both the ancient and modern history of the world.

After ages of contest, Italy renounced its dependence on Germany. Any attempt to trace the origin and progress of all the petty states which rose on the ruins of the imperial as well as of the feudal power, would lead to prolixity and confusion. It will suffice to exhibit a general view of the whole, and a particular sketch of the principal states.

The cities of the Roman empire enjoyed their municipal laws, which were in general extremely favourable to liberty. Each corporation had its senate, and the privileges of the people were extensive. Under the feudal system, the cities in general, although retaining some peculiar privileges, owed allegiance to the great barons in whose territories they were situated. The cities began at an early period to enrich themselves by commerce, and easily obtained immunities from the emperors. They began in the next place to shake off the authority of the barons. Under the Roman government, each city possessed the circumjacent lands as the property of the corporation. These had been seized by the feudal lords. But the Italian cities no sooner began to feel their own strength; than they attacked those troublesome neighbours, and dispossessed them of their territories. The ambition of the cities increasing with their power, they began

to attack the barons, who were situated at a greater distance. Wars between the cities and the feudal lords were general throughout Italy. The barons at last were subdued, and compelled to subject their lands to all burdens and taxes imposed by common consent. This subjection of the nobility to the municipal government became almost universal. All the Italian barons, however, were not brought into this state by compulsion: several embraced it through choice. Observing the security and estimation which the growing wealth of the cities procured to their members, the barons soon became desirous of partaking of such advantages. Many of the nobles, abandoning their feudal castles, took up their residence in the towns.

The introduction of the Italian barons into the municipal corporations did not secure the tranquillity of the cities. Like the patricians of ancient Rome, the Italian nobles aspired to all the powers of the magistracy, and the ambition of the aristocracy being equalled by the turbulence of the people, every city presented a scene of almost perpetual contest. Rome, torn by intestine factions, fluctuated through ages of anarchy, in which the power of the popes, the nobles, and the people alternately predominated. Having no authority sufficiently stable and vigorous to overawe her rebellious sons, they disdained the controul of laws, and asserted by arms their personal independence. All their palaces were fortified castles.

During these calamitous times, the number of inhabitants in Rome was greatly diminished.

The Italian cities had no sooner subdued the feudal barons, than they resolved to shake off the imperial authority. The imperial power expired in Italy at the death of Frederic II, in 1250. Before the end of the thirteenth century, almost all the great cities were become independent sovereign republics. Rome, after innumerable contests with the emperors, had the same struggles to repeat with the popes. But the pontiffs, about the year 1500, finally acquired the complete sovereignty. They found nearly as much difficulty in establishing their dominion over Rome, as over all the rest of Europe.

The papal empire was greatly retarded in its progress by its own divisions. Rome was often convulsed by the contests between popes and anti-popes, each supported by powerful factions. The grand schism, which, from A. D. 1378 to A. D. 1418, divided the church, contributed to degrade the pontifical character. But the pontificate of the ambitious and warlike Julius II raised the papal see to an elevated station in the political system of Europe. And the reign of Leo X is distinguished in the history of literature as the second Augustan age of Italy. Several of the literati of Constantinople, which, during the barbarous ages of Europe, had been the centre of learning as well as of magnificence, judged it prudent to seek an establishment in other countries, to avoid being involved in the ruin of their own. About the year 1360, Leo Pilatus first introduced the study of the Greek language into the west, and Florence was the first city in which it was brought into fashion. Grecian learning became a favourite pursuit among the Italian literati. As Italy was first distinguished by the revival of letters, they found in that country the most liberal patronage. Cosmo and Lorenzo de Medici are conspicuous in history as illustrious patrons of learning and the arts. Similar efforts of some of the sovereign pontiffs, particularly Nicholas V, were neither less vigorous nor less effectual at Rome, than those of the Medici were at Florence, and Italy saw the arts and literature of Greece resuscitated on her shores, while the rest of Europe had scarcely emerged from barbarism. Leo X, a pontiff illustrious for his munificent patronage of letters and the arts, reduced himself by his extravagant expenditure to the necessity of selling indulgences for supplying himself with money. This measure paved the way for the reformation, which gave a dreadful blow to the papal power.

Amidst the convulsions arising from the ambition of the Christian princes, especially Francis I, Charles V, and the sovereign pontiff Clement VII, not only was the papal dignity exposed to insult, but the city of Rome suffered the most dreadful calamities. The constable of Bourbon, who, having deserted from the service of Francis I, commanded the army of the emperor in Italy, being unable to satisfy the demands

of his troops, led them against Rome. The city, which was bravely defended, was taken by assault in the year 1527. The constable duke of Bourbon fell in the assault, the moment that he ascended the wall. But no pen can describe the horrors of the scene that followed. Palaces and churches were indiscriminately plundered. No age, character, or sex was exempted from injury. Cardinals, nobles, priests, matrons, and virgins were at the mercy of men deaf to the voice of humanity. The booty was immense, and innumerable acts of violence were perpetrated. The conquering army, consisting of about 25,000 men, was composed of three different nations, Spaniards, Italians, and Germans, and their conduct in the sack of a city, which was at that time regarded as the sacred metropolis of the Christian world, affords a memorable criterion of the military licentiousness of that age. Rome had never experienced such cruel treatment from the Arian Goths and Vandals, as at that time she suffered from the Catholic subjects of a Catholic monarch*. The pope, having retired into the castle of St. Angelo, was besieged in that citadel. After being long exposed to all the miseries of famine, and even reduced to the hard necessity of feeding on ass's flesh, he was obliged to surrender on very humiliating conditions.

At the period in which Rome was exposed to military rapine, the reformation was making a rapid progress in Germany, and the popes were too much involved in political intrigues to pay much attention to the affairs of religion. The breach became irreparable. Rome lost a great part of her spiritual empire, and with it the source of much of her temporal power and wealth. The authority of the papal see was rejected by one half of Europe, and greatly weakened in the other. After this revolution, the pontifical court prudently changed its system of politics. Instead of attempting to rule by terror, it supported by more conciliatory methods the remnant of its declining power. Since that period, Rome en-

* For a more detailed account of the assault and sack of Rome, see Robertson's Hist. Ch. V, vol. 2, book 4.

joyed a long and prosperous calm till the late invasion by the French, when she was involved in the general wreck of the country. The papacy was abolished, but afterwards restored. In the month of February, 1808, the papal domination was again subverted, and Rome, with all its appendages, annexed to the kingdom of Italy.

Florence was one of the cities of Italy which first resumed its ancient rights, and by its industry rose to wealth and eminence. It derived its origin from Triosola, a Roman town in the environs. During the civil wars of the Roman republic, many of the citizens leaving Rome, retired to this place, and built the present city of Florence. It was destroyed by Totila in the Gothic war of the sixth century, and about 250 years after rebuilt by Charlemagne. During the wars between the emperors and the popes, it followed the fortunes of the most powerful army, and enjoyed as much tranquillity as the state of the times allowed. At length it became convulsed with intestine factions among the principal citizens. It would afford little entertainment or instruction to a modern reader to relate the particulars of those furious contests, sometimes of the nobles against one another, and sometimes between them and the people. All the disorders formerly occasioned by the patrician and plebeian factions in ancient Rome were revived in Florence, until the family of Medici acquired the supreme ascendancy. But the most singular trait in the history of this city is the commerce, wealth, and population to which it attained in times so turbulent, amidst perpetual dissensions, and repeated changes in the form of its government. It must, according to Machiavel, its historian, have been one of the largest cities in Europe. In the great plague of 1348, 90,000 persons are said to have died in Florence. Its magnitude, wealth, and population were the effect of an extensive manufacturing system. Florence, as well as the Netherlands, wrought up great quantities of English wool, besides its silk and rich brocades. The city must indeed have been eminently commercial in which such large fortunes were accumulated by trade. The riches of the family of Medici were immense, and wholly acquired by commerce.

The great Cosmo de Medici, who, from 1434 till his death in 1464, bore the chief sway in the Florentine republic, rivalled sovereign princes in wealth, and in the magnificence of his buildings. Besides a number of churches and convents which he built at his own expence, he had five magnificent palaces, one in the city, and four in the environs. He also expended immense sums in building at Jerusalem a hospital for poor diseased pilgrims. His liberality was equal to his opulence : he was the munificent patron of learning and genius, and to him more than to any other person, except Leo X, may be ascribed the revival of letters and the arts in Italy. After the death of Cosmo, the factions of Florence again revived. Peter, his son, narrowly escaped the dagger of conspiracy. Julian de Medici was murdered by Parri and Bandini in the cathedral church of Florence, during the celebration of high mass. His brother, Lorenzo, fortunately made his escape. The archbishop of Pisa, with others of the conspirators, were at the same time to seize on the public palace. All Florence was immediately in a tumult. The citizens ranged themselves on the side of the Medici. The archbishop, with Francis Parri, the two Salviati, and Jacob Poggio, were hanged before the palace. The people immediately massacred all the conspirators that could be found. Lorenzo de Medici was now more than ever the idol of the citizens : he held till his death the authority which his grandfather, the great Cosmo, had possessed, and in all his conduct followed the example of his illustrious ancestor. Like him he was magnificent and liberal, the munificent patron of learning and genius. After his death, the Florentine republic relapsed into its former disorderly state, and was incessantly convulsed by factions, till the people, encouraged by the pope, elected Cosmo de Medici II for their chief magistrate, who assumed the title of grand duke of Tuscany. The family of Medici becoming extinct in 1739, was followed by Francis, duke of Lorraine, who was afterwards raised to the imperial throne. He was succeeded by his son, Peter Leopold, who became emperor on the death of his brother Joseph, in 1790. Tuscany was afterwards erected into a kingdom, under the ancient deno-

mination of Etruria, and assigned to a prince of Spain, but in December, 1807, it was annexed to the French empire.

Venice, once so famous for commerce, is generally supposed to have derived her origin from the invasion of Italy by Attila, king of the Huns, about the middle of the fifth century. Until that period, the cluster of small islands on which Venice now stands was destitute of culture, and probably of inhabitants. But many families of Apulia, Padua, and other cities in the neighbourhood, flying from the sword of the Huns, found there a safe asylum, inaccessible to the inroads of an enemy.

Almost the only food which their situation afforded was fish, and their only article of trade was salt, extracted from the sea. Such was the origin of Venice, in after times so famed for commerce, for wealth and magnificence. The manners and habits of the Venetians were gradually formed by their situation. The want of land obliged them to exercise their industry on the sea. Their commercial views were at first directed towards the country which they had left, and with which they were so perfectly acquainted. They began a feeble trade with the neighbouring coasts, and afterwards penetrated by the Po and other rivers into the interior of Italy. The foundation of their commerce being thus laid, they increased both the number and size of their vessels, and gradually extended their voyages to all the ports of the Adriatic. We have very imperfect information relative to those dark ages, but, about the commencement of the twelfth century, the history of Venice begins to be less obscure. In 1101, the Venetians sent a hundred vessels to the coast of Syria, to the assistance of the crusaders, and fourteen years afterwards, two hundred of their ships having defeated a Saracen fleet of seven hundred sail, obliged them to raise the siege of Joppa. At this time also they took the city of Tyre, and dispossessed the Greek emperor of the isles of Scio, Rhodes, Mytilene, and Samos. By degrees they extended their conquests over most of the Grecian islands. They made a distinguished figure in the holy wars, and in 1204 joined the French crusaders in the conquest of Constantinople. Those adventurers dividing among them the

territories of the Byzantine empire, the Venetians acquired almost all the maritime parts. Their dominions at last extended over Dalmatia, and most of the maritime provinces on the east of the Adriatic, over the Morea, as well as over all the coasts of Greece, and the isles of the Archipelago, including those of Candia and Cyprus. Their dominions on the continent of Italy were at the same time considerable. This extension of commerce and power gave rise to long wars between Venice and Genoa. The contest, which might be justly denominated commercial, was often renewed and long continued, and those two great rivals in trade and maritime strength disputed, for the space of two centuries, the dominion of the Levant and Mediterranean seas.

Many naval engagements took place with various success, but more frequently to the disadvantage of the Venetians. In 1252, they lost almost their whole fleet of galleys, and five thousand of their mariners were carried prisoners to Genoa. In 1298, they suffered from the same enemy a still greater defeat, and a few years after were, by a treaty of peace, prohibited from navigating the Levant seas with armed vessels. Before the middle of the fourteenth century, Venice found a new enemy in the Turks, but her contests with Genoa did not cease. In 1379, the Genoese fleet, having defeated that of Venice, advanced with its whole force up the Adriatic, and made a formidable attack on the capital of the republic. But the Genoese fleet, which was manned with above twenty thousand mariners and soldiers, was obliged to retire with prodigious loss. From this time Venice seems to have acquired an ascendancy over Genoa. The Venetians had at this time learned the use of artillery, of which the Genoese seem to have been ignorant. From the commencement to the middle of the fifteenth century, Venice was in the height of her prosperity. She was mistress of the navigation of the Levant and the Mediterranean seas, and in a great measure engrossed the trade of the east. But the increase of the Turkish power gradually diminished that of the republic. In 1429, the Turks made themselves masters of Thessalonica, and soon after dispossessed the Venetians of most of their Levantine isles. In 1462, Venice lost Negropont and

the Morea. She retained Cyprus till 1570, and Candia till 1669. Thus all her possessions to the east of the Adriatic, except the coast of Dalmatia, were swallowed up in the Ottoman empire. The discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope to India by the Portuguese, gave the finishing blow to the oriental trade of Venice, by which she had acquired such enormous wealth and power. Since that time, Venice has flourished by her former acquisitions, rather than by her modern commerce. But, although she has of late possessed little maritime strength, Venice is a place of considerable resort for the trading vessels of all nations. In the year 1759, no less than seventeen hundred and eighty-one vessels of all sizes entered that port.

The history of Genoa may be said to run parallel to that of Venice. Its greatness arose from the same cause, and from the commencement of the twelfth, to nearly the end of the fourteenth century, these two rival republics kept about an equal pace in aggrandizement. Genoa had, during a considerable time, the ascendancy over Venice, but sooner began to decline. Venice was frequently at variance, but Genoa almost always in amity, with Constantinople. By a special permission of the Greek emperors, the Genoese built the suburb of Pera, adjoining to Constantinople, and established a colony in the Crimea, where they rebuilt the ancient city of Theodosia, since called Caffa, and opened a trade with India. During some time the Genoese had a strong rival in the Pisans, who were then a formidable naval power. The contest between these two states continued, with various intervals, from 1125 to 1283, when Pisa was totally vanquished and her maritime power annihilated. That commercial republic at last sank under the power of Florence, and became part of the grand duchy of Tuscany. The fall of the Greek empire was a fatal blow to the greatness of Genoa. She then lost the suburb of Pera, with her lucrative commerce of Constantinople, and in 1474, the Turks conquered her possessions in the Crimea. The discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope gave the last decisive stroke to her lucrative commerce, as well as to that of Venice. The Italian cities, especially Pisa, Genoa, and Ve-

nice, first revived the spirit of commerce in Europe after the fall of the Roman empire. They were followed by the Flemings, and the Hans Towns in the north, and during the middle ages, these merchants of the south and the north managed all the trade then carried on in that quarter of the globe. To ascertain the maritime strength of Venice and Genoa, we have only to reflect on their numerous fleets and their bloody naval engagements during the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and, although their vessels were far inferior to modern ships of war, they were the largest then in use, and their engagements, although they were destitute of artillery, were attended with as great an effusion of blood as those of modern times. The opulence of those commercial cities corresponded with their extensive trade. During the middle ages, the magnificence of Venice, Genoa, and several other cities of Italy and the Netherlands, formed a striking contrast with the meanness of those of other parts of Europe.

Milan, like the other great cities of Italy, shook off the imperial authority during the distracted state of that country in the wars between the popes and the emperors. It did not, however, acquire independence; but fell under the dominion of the Visconti, one of the most powerful families of Milan. The Visconti, having expelled the rival family of La Torre, assumed the sovereignty, and reigned for several generations as dukes of Milan. From the family of Visconti it passed to that of Sforza, was sometimes conquered by the French, and at last fell under the dominion of the House of Austria. It flourished exceedingly during the middle ages, and about the year 1367 appears to have been in the meridian of its glory. At that time, Galeazzo Visconti, duke of Milan, stipulated to give his daughter a marriage portion of two hundred thousand ducats of Florence, a sum equivalent to a much greater number of pounds sterling at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was certainly such a sum as scarcely any other sovereign of Europe in that age could have advanced on such an occasion. The vast wealth of Milan was owing to its manufacturing trade, but in later times this has greatly declined, although it may yet be regarded as con-

siderable. This city is at present the capital of the kingdom of Italy.

The Roman Catholic religion is professed throughout Italy, but its genius is mild, and though, in the ecclesiastical states, as well as in Sicily and some other parts, no other worship is publicly tolerated, no dissenters are persecuted.

The annual revenue of the pope, arising from the ecclesiastical states, was lately computed at about £350,000.

The commerce of Italy has greatly declined. Previous to the late revolutions, it was considerable, although mostly carried on in foreign bottoms. The principal ports for the Italian trade are Genoa and Leghorn, and lately Venice and Naples, with Messina and Palermo, in Sicily.

Zimmerman, on a medium of six different writers, fixes the population of Italy at sixteen millions, and the superficial content at ninety thousand square miles, with 177 inhabitants to each.

Italy has now no political relations independent of France.

The Italian is a mixture of Latin and Gothic, composing a flowing, sweet, and harmonious language.

Since the revival of letters, Italian authors have distinguished themselves in every department of literature and science. Galileo, Torricelli, Malpighi, Borelli, and several others have shone in the mathematics and natural philosophy. Machiavel, Strada, Guicciardini, Bentivoglio, and Giannone are famous as historians, and Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent will stand the test of criticism in all ages. In regard to purity and correctness of style, Boccace is esteemed one of the chief of their prose writers. He is an accurate delineator of life and manners. His productions are considered as too licentious; but he drew his pictures from nature, and the originals ought to be condemned, rather than the painter. A long list of Italian poets might be enumerated; but Dante, Ariosto, and Tasso are the most eminent. Petrarch, however, who wrote with great elegance both in Italian and Latin, is distinguished as the first who revived among the moderns the genius of ancient poesy. In the fine arts, the Italians have hitherto excelled all the other nations of Europe, and their architects, painters, sculptors, and mu-

sicians are unrivalled in numbers as well as in excellence. Bramante, Bernini, and several others in architecture; Raphael, Romano, Veronese, Carraccio, Corregio, Titian, and and Michael Angelo, are names of great celebrity. The genius of Italy at present seems to lie dormant, and to rely on its ancient fame rather than its present exertions.

There are several universities in Italy. That of Rome has long been celebrated. Naples, Salerno, Perugia, Florence, and Pisa, have also their universities. The provinces which now compose part of the kingdom of Italy, contained those of Milan, Venice, Padua, Verona, Mantua, Parma, Bologna, and Ferrara. Popular education, however, has been greatly neglected in Italy.

The manners and customs of the Italians vary in the different states and districts, from the indolence and luxury of the Neapolitans, to the laborious industry and frugality of the Genoese. The inhabitants of Lucca and St. Marino cannot be surpassed in industry.

The Italians have been represented as jealous, vindictive, and effeminate; but the furious jealousy by which they were formerly characterized scarcely any longer appears, and their revengeful spirit is proportionably less observable. Their unwarlike disposition has been ascribed to effeminacy, but it has been found, in several modern instances, that the Italian officers and soldiers, when properly trained to arms, have showed themselves worthy of their Roman ancestors. In regard to genius, none will deny to the Italians a place in the first rank of European nations.

THE
HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

Of the Church of Christ in the first Century.

CHRIST, the incarnate son of God, was born in Bethlehem, in the reign of Augustus the Roman emperor, and about 4000 years from the creation of the world. The particulars of his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, are so fully related by the evangelists that there is no necessity of repeating them here. The first years of his infancy were spent in Egypt; and we have but one authentic trait recorded of his earlier days, when his thirst for knowledge detained him in the temple at Jerusalem, and the Jewish rabbis were astonished at his understanding and answers. From twelve years of age he lived in a state of subjection to his parents at Nazareth; and there is reason to suppose that he worked at his father's occupation as a carpenter, ministering to his parents' necessities and his own.

About the age of thirty, he entered on his ministry, and shewed himself unto Israel as the Messiah. During three years or more, we behold a display of such a character as had never before appeared among the children of men. His life was spent in the noblest acts of beneficence to the bodies and souls of men. His whole temper and conduct were the living comment of the sublime and heavenly truths which he taught. His doctrines bore the stamp of Deity in their intrinsic excellence, and received the fullest confirmation from the most astonishing miracles.

His ministry and miracles awakened great attention, but excited equal envy and enmity. A few, and but a few, dared to join themselves unto him, and confess him as the Messiah,

and these the least and lowest among the people. His principal and first followers, whom he called to be apostles, or missionaries, were chiefly fishermen, Galileans, poor and illiterate. Their names were as follows, Simon, who is called Peter, Andrew, James, the son of Zebedee, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, the son of Alphaeus, Selbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus, Simon, the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot.

The effects of Christ's personal ministry upon earth, notwithstanding all the miracles performed before the thousands of Israel, were inconsiderable ; nor did even his few followers as yet truly understand the nature of that kingdom of God which should come. They looked for a temporal Messiah, and expected that at his time he would restore the kingdom to Israel. Christ forbade these expectations, but frequently comforted his followers with the assurance, that after his ascension into heaven, he would send them another comforter, whose efficacious teachings should not only lead them into all truth, but whose almighty power should enable them to perform greater works and wonders than those which he himself had wrought, or they had ever yet beheld.

Dismal and dark at that time was the state of mankind. The heathens, sunk in the grossest idolatry, were sullied with every vice, and their foul crimes were sanctified by the very examples of the gods whom they worshipped. The Jews were infected with equal abominations : zealous indeed for Moses ;—proud of their relation to Abraham ;—precise in the formalities of worship and the minutiae of ceremonies ; but dead to all spiritual religion, and fallen into the deepest depravity of manners. The whole earth appeared immersed in the universal deluge of prevailing corruption.

Such was the dismal night in which the Son of Righteousness made his appearance in the world. Scarcely in any age had ignorance and wickedness a more general prevalence. In this state of things, it pleased God to erect the first Christian church at Jerusalem. The circumstances that preceded this event were of the most extraordinary nature. The apostles were all assembled to celebrate the Pentecost, one of the Jewish festivals, when suddenly there came a sound from hea-

ven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared "unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance." Effects of the most extraordinary nature instantly followed. This gift of tongues first displayed itself, to the amazement of a number of Jews out of every nation under heaven, who heard these Galileans speak each in his own language. The sudden ability of illiterate men to speak intelligibly in all languages, not only with propriety and force, but impressively on the consciences of the numerous foreigners then assembled at Jerusalem, could not but strike the hearers with astonishment, and afford an incontestable evidence of divine agency. Even this would only have excited a momentary wonder, if the same Spirit who gave the tongue to speak had not opened the ear to hear, and the heart to understand. Instantly, and with the deepest convictions of the truth, their consciences were pierced as with a sword, and they cried out under the word, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They immediately received baptism, joined themselves to the despised followers of the crucified Nazarene, and were received into the bosom of the new-formed Christian church.

While many were expressing their admiration at this strange event, others derided the apostles as intoxicated with wine. The zeal of Peter was stirred up to preach to those who admired and to those who scorned. He openly declares, that he and his brethren were witnesses of the resurrection of their Master, that he was exalted to heaven, and had received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, which he had now shed forth on the apostles, and concerning which they now had the plain demonstration of their senses, and draws the conclusion, that the despised person, whom they had subjected to the most painful and ignominious death, was owned by the God of their fathers to be the Lord and the promised one, through whom alone salvation was exhibited to sinful men. Multitudes were pricked in their hearts: they found themselves guilty of murdering the Christ of God, and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them,

“ Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Thus the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus began to be preached at Jerusalem. The grace of God in Christ was offered to all. Peter exhorted them all to receive this grace by believing on Jesus, for the remission of sins, with a submission to his ordinance of baptism, as an emblem of washing away their sins; and assured them, that God would receive them into his favour in this way. They whose hearts God had smitten with a sense of guilt, were consoled by the grace of forgiveness. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls.

Here we see the regular appearance of the first Christian church. They were Christians, not only in name, but enjoyed real communion with their Saviour; and prayer was their daily employment and delight. Though it does not appear to have been any injunction of the apostles that they should live together in a community of goods, yet the operations of divine grace so far loosened their minds from the love of this world, that they practised it for the present, and “ sold their goods and possessions, and parted them to all men as every man had need*.” In this happy frame, they spent much of

* The reputation acquired by those who sold their estates must have been very great. It excited the ambition of those who were not upright in the sight of God. But the increase of such Christians would have disgraced the cause. The Lord was therefore pleased to check this evil at the opening of the New Testament dispensation. Ananias and Sapphira, seeing how those persons were respected who had parted with their whole substance to supply the wants of their poor brethren, agreed together to sell their land, to secrete a part of the money, and to give the rest to the apostle as the whole price. In doing this, they perhaps expected to have a maintenance from the common stock, and yet to reserve a part of their substance to themselves: yet the desire of reputation seems to have predominated. But Peter immediately discovered the deception which they were practising, and charged it upon Ananias in express terms. The falsehood was a bold attempt to impose upon the Spirit of truth; and this was to lie unto God, and

their time in the temple, and in the mutual offices of social kindness. The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

A miracle wrought soon after by Peter and John on a man lame from his birth, a well-known beggar, about forty years of age gave a farther attestation to their doctrine. Peter disclaimed all merit in himself or his colleagues in the miracle, and declared to the astonished people, that the act had been performed through faith in the name of Jesus, that very Jesus whom they had caused to be crucified. He also charged them with killing the Prince of Life, and at the same time asserted, that God had raised him from the dead, whereof he was a witness. Peter exhorted them to repentance and conversion, and laid open to their view the prospect, not of a temporal, but of a spiritual kingdom, in the hope of which they were to rejoice, and patiently bear the afflictions of this present life.

The church was now increased to five thousand, and the signal for persecution was raised by the magistrates of Jerusalem. The two apostles, Peter and John, were imprisoned

not unto men. The estate continued Ananias's property even after his profession of Christianity. The sale of it was not a matter of compulsion, but of voluntary choice; and even the money, after it was sold, was at his own disposal. This liberality was not expressly required of the primitive Christians, but was the result of their abundant zeal and love. So that the crime of Ananias did not so much consist in retaining part of the price of the land, as in endeavouring to impose upon the apostles with a pertinacious lie, the result of avarice combined with ostentation. For this complicated crime, Ananias and Sapphira were in succession struck dead by an immediate act of divine power, as an awful judgment of God upon them. This apparent severity on two detected hypocrites was real mercy to vast numbers: it excited a reverential fear and a holy jealousy in the whole company. It doubtless induced a dread of hypocrisy, covetousness, or vain glory: it prevented the increase of scandals in the church, and the intrusion of hypocrites; and thus it tended to render the Gospel honourable in the eyes of the people.

and examined. Peter frankly answered that the miracle had been "wrought in the name of Jesus, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead."

The wisdom and boldness of two unlettered fishermen, who had been companions of Jesus, struck the court with astonishment. They dismissed them, with a strict charge to be silent in future concerning the name of Jesus, though the apostles declared their inability to comply with it, because they must "obey God rather than man."

The most perfect unanimity as yet prevailed among the Christians, and they not only professed to have all things common, but practised accordingly with the greatest cheerfulness. The poor lacked nothing. The richer brethren converted their possessions into money, and left the distribution of the whole to the discretion of the apostles.

The apostles enjoyed much more of the power of Christ's religion, than they had ever done whilst their Master was with them on earth. We hear no more of their dreams concerning a temporal kingdom. The courage of Peter in confronting the magistrates, forms a perfect contrast to his timidity in denying his Master.

Multitudes of both sexes were added to the church, chiefly of the common people. The high priest and his party were filled with indignation to see the progress of the gospel. Their first step was to imprison the apostles; but by night, through the ministry of an angel, they were set free, and ordered to preach in the temple. The next morning a full sanhedrim was convened, and the apostles were ordered to attend. The court was astonished to find them at large. They were soon, however, informed, that their prisoners were preaching in the temple. The high priest upbraids them with their disobedience to the former injunction of silence: to him they returned their former answer, that, "they ought to obey God rather than men." They bore witness to the resurrection of Christ, and declared that, "God had exalted him to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." With such plainness did these first Christians lay open the real nature of the gospel, and exhibit it as something extremely different from a mere system of morality.

The church was now much enlarged, consisting partly of foreign Jews, who used the Greek language, and were called on that account Hellenists or Grecians. These supposed, that in the daily supply of the poor, the apostles had not ministered equal relief to their widows as to those of the Hebrews. It is not improbable, that through inadvertence some temporary neglects might have taken place. The apostles informed the disciples that the ministry of the word of God must be attended to in the first place, and must not be neglected for the sake of providing for the poor. They advise them, therefore, to look out for seven holy and wise men, to whom this business should be committed. Seven deacons were accordingly amicably elected, Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas. In this easy way, seven coadjutors were appointed to the apostles.

Of these deacons, Stephen was at first the most distinguished. A synagogue of Hellenist Jews held a contest with him, the result of which filled them with such vexation, that they suborned men to accuse him of blasphemy against Moses and against God. In his defence, he gave a striking summary of the history of Israel, as an evidence of their national obduracy, and boldly rebuked the Jews as the betrayers and murderers of Christ. They were cut to the heart, but Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God," and what he saw he openly confessed. Whereupon they stoned him to death, while he called upon his Divine Master, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Thus firm and constant was his faith, and his charity was no less conspicuous. He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." When he had said this he fell asleep, the usual beautiful phrase of the New Testament to express the death of saints, and at the same time to intimate their expectation of the resurrection. All praise is below the excellency of that spirit which shone in this first of martyrs.

The Jewish magistrates were now left to themselves in religious concerns. Stephen was their first Christian victim. A considerable number suffered soon after.

A young man named Saul, an Hellenist of Tarsus, distinguished himself in this persecution. He took care of the clothes of the witnesses who were employed in stoning Stephen, and made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and dragging forth men and women, committed them to prison, and when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them. The religious worship of the disciples suffered a grievous interruption. None of them found it safe to remain at Jerusalem. The apostles alone stood their ground. This persecution was the first occasion of the diffusion of the gospel through various regions, and what was meant to annihilate it was overruled for its extension.

Dispersed in order to save themselves from the rage of their enemies, many of the disciples fled from Jerusalem into different parts, and wherever they went carried with them the tidings of salvation through their crucified Lord, and with the most beneficial and astonishing effects. Some also of the first converts, who had returned from Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost to their several abodes, widely dispersed the same blessed truth. The success of some of these among the Jews at Damascus, awakened the fury of the zealot Saul. Ambitious of a commission from the high priest to seize and bring in chains to Jerusalem any converts to the Christian doctrine whom he should find, he prepared himself to dart on his prey. While breathing nothing but threatening and slaughter against the fold of Christ, he is arrested in his mad career, and suddenly changed by the power of the Spirit of Jesus from a persecutor to a preacher—from Saul the murderer, to Paul the apostle of the Gentiles. He seems to have been born in the superior ranks of life: a Roman citizen by birth, the son of a respectable father, in a capacity to afford the first education for his son in Jerusalem, under the tuition of the learned Gamaliel; and to support him many years in the prosecution of his studies in this metropolis of Jewish learning and glory. His abilities were great, and his proficiency in scientific attainments singular. Exemplary piety, according to Jewish ideas, still more eminently adorned his youthful progress; peculiarly observant of the Mosaic institutions, he embraced with zeal the traditions of the elders,

and, rigid in pharisaical prejudices, became on principle a determined persecutor. He thought it his incumbent duty to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and acted accordingly; compelling the feeble to blaspheme, and stoning to death the steadfast; and, being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them even to strange cities. He had been taught to regard the Son of Mary as an impostor and blasphemer, and to hate him for attempting to draw away disciples after him, to the dishonour of Jehovah, and his divinely appointed institutions. In the very act of savage pursuit after these suffering followers of the despised Galilean, the strong arm of Almighty grace arrests him. He hears the voice of Jesus, and, struck with amazement, is cast prostrate on the earth before the Adorable Personage whom he was persecuting in his members. After three days loss of sight, and horrors of mind from reflections on his own former conduct, he was restored by Ananias, at once to the light of day and the light of life. The scales which fell from his eyes again opened a passage for the beams of the sun; but a brighter Sun shone upon his heart, and that Jesus, whom he had so bitterly persecuted, had given him the light of the knowledge of his glory. No moment's delay retarded his open confession of his glorified Lord: he arose straightway, and was baptized in his name,—and proclaimed him in the synagogue as the Son of God, whom he had so recently blasphemed as an impostor, and whose worshippers he had come thither on purpose to extirpate. His activity in the cause which he had embraced exceeded the ardour of persecution by which he had been distinguished. He flew as with the wings of a seraph over the habitable globe, and the vastness of his success corresponded with the rapidity of his movements and the labours of his ministry. From Damascus to Arabia, Judea, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ. Returning with the same unwearied diligence, he visited the churches he had planted in Damascus, Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, Galatia, the regions of Greece, and at Rome, and many other places: for every where he preached and taught Jesus Christ; and in every place the Spirit of

God made his ministrations the savour of life unto life. An eye cast over this immense tract of country will fill us with astonishment how one man's labour could fill so extensive a sphere. We Gentiles are bound to acknowledge his zeal and labours with peculiar thankfulness ; for he is eminently our apostle. The other apostles restricted their labours, at least for a while, to the Jews. It was reserved for Paul, by an express vision, to be sent from the temple far off unto the Gentiles. Yet even he commenced with the synagogue : being there rejected, he turned to the heathen, and among them reaped that abundant harvest, the happy fruits of which are continued unto this day, and have been extended to us Americans, who were at that time the ends of the earth.

If his labours and preaching be taken into the account ; if we consider his Epistles to the several churches, the blessed effects of which must be felt and acknowledged in all churches to the end of time ; if we mark the precision and clearness with which the characteristic doctrines of the gospel are therein displayed, and the great blessings derived from them to the Christian world in every age, the warmest gratitude must be excited for the services of the apostle Paul to the Christian church.

Peter also ranks high in the sacred college. Zealous for his Divine Master, and intrepid in spirit, he stands next to Paul in the rank of the noble army of martyrs and confessors. No man, during our Lord's life, expressed stronger attachment to him ; followed him with greater fidelity ; or shewed, on every occasion but one, a soul more devoted to his honour and service. When his Master's resurrection was announced, his eager spirit led him among the first to run to the sepulchre, and to him of all his apostles the Lord of Life was pleased first to manifest himself after his victory over the grave. He needed this token of favour to bind up the wounds of his broken heart, after his late sudden and fearful fall.

He appeared after the descent of the Holy Ghost among the most intrepid witnesses for his adorable Lord, and the bold accuser of his betrayers and murderers. He, like his brethren, was for a while still under the bond of confining the

preaching of the gospel to the Jewish pale. An immediate revelation from God, which sent him to Cornelius, was not sufficient entirely to subdue his prejudices. Yet he triumphed over them at last, and his Epistles appear addressed to the Gentile converts scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythina. The church, to the latest ages, will receive the edification of these beautiful letters, though immediately written for the use of his cotemporaries.

Respecting the sphere of his labours, we have no authentic records, except the Acts of the Apostles and his own Epistles. In these his services appear to have been eminently useful in Judea and Samaria. We find him at Antioch, and probably through all Asia Minor he had preached to those to whom he directed his Epistles.

Andrew was the first called to the apostleship. He had attended the ministry of John the Baptist, and hearing him point out Jesus when he passed by as the Lamb of God, he with a companion immediately followed him, and the conversation of the Great Master that day, convinced him of his true character as the Christ. A discovery so important could not rest concealed in his bosom : he hastened to impart it to his own brother Simon, and eagerly introduced him to an acquaintance with the Messiah. All the days of his Master's abode upon earth, he was his faithful follower and constant attendant. His labours no doubt were correspondent to his station, though no divine record informs us of the peculiar scene of his ministry.

John was the beloved disciple. Jesus was a man ; and amiableness engaged his affection. John lay in his bosom. He was admitted to the glorious scene of transfiguration on the mount, and to behold the more awful spectacle of the agony in the garden. His faithful attachment withheld him from deserting his Master at the last trying conflict. Though he shared in the momentary panic, when all his disciples forsook him and fled, he was the first to recover from the consternation : he followed Christ into the high priest's palace, and stood by his cross at the mournful scene of crucifixion. To him the dying Lord commended his agonized mother : and, honoured by the charge, he immediately took her to his

own home, and provided for her as a dutiful son. After Christ's resurrection, he was the first to run to the tomb, on the report of the women. Love added wings to his feet, when he outran Peter.

He appears among the zealous confessors at Jerusalem, and Peter's companion at the temple: great in the miracles wrought by him—great in the testimony borne to his adorable Master—great in suffering for his name's sake. Yet of his life, which was remarkably extended, we have few authentic particulars. His Gospel, Epistles, and Revelations, breathe a spirit of distinguished love and honour for his glorious Lord.

He seems to have long spent his labours among his countrymen in Palestine, and to have shared in their sufferings. The Revelations speak of him as banished to the Isle of Patmos for the testimony of Jesus; but where he chiefly lived, or where or how he died, we have no authentic record.

Of two of the apostles bearing the name of James we know very little; and still less is recorded of the labours of the apostles Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, Jude, Simon, and Matthias.

We have the most conclusive evidence that the church of Christ was spread with the rapidity of lightning; that in a very short space of time it occupied the vast extent of the Roman empire, and passed beyond its bounds into the most barbarous nations. That it had the most powerful obstacles to contend with from the various established religions, the strong hand of power, the whole of what is styled wisdom and philosophy, is equally admitted. Its conquests, therefore, must have proceeded from the divine energy attending the promulgation of the Gospel, and its own luminous evidences. For the persons immediately employed in the work, considered in themselves, were confessedly the most unlikely men in the world to have gained attention or procured converts; and unless the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven had qualified them for their work, and accompanied their word with demonstration and power, how they should have ever succeeded in their attempts seems utterly inexplicable.

Wherever the Gospel was preached and sinners converted to God, churches were formed for the edification of the body of Christ. The whole was considered as one body, and acknowledged no other head but their master Christ, and themselves members one of another, actually influenced and animated by one spirit, really dwelling in the members as in the head.

The form in which the church of Christ appeared in this primitive age, under the immediate inspection of the apostles and disciples of the Lord, deserves our consideration. The first of these was formed at Jerusalem. This was the fruitful source whence issued the noble army of martyrs, confessors, and evangelists, who, holding up the word of Light, diffused the brightness of the glory of God, the Saviour, to the ends of the earth. These were the fruit of our Lord's ministry, during his labours in Judea and its adjacent countries. They consisted of twelve men first chosen, called apostles, or persons sent, who were the constant attendants of Jesus during his travels, the witnesses of his miracles, and the auditors of his heavenly discourses. To these were added seventy others, who were sent out to preach and teach ; but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel only. They were all endued with miraculous powers, and on their return from their itinerancy through the nation, reported with triumph the wonders they had wrought. These were of the lowest order of the people. No ruler or pharisee was found professing faith in Christ, and if some really inclined to believe on him, they dared not openly avow what they felt, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. Above five hundred brethren were summoned to behold our Lord's ascension into heaven : and we can hardly suppose that any real disciple capable of travelling would be absent on that occasion. Of these about a hundred and twenty abode at Jerusalem, and with Mary and the other women kept their solemn assemblies there for prayer and supplication, waiting for the promise of the Father, when they should be baptised with the Holy Ghost, as their Master had assured them. This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, in virtue of which great additions were daily made of such as should be

saved. Three thousand believed the first day, and myriads followed them. Of these the whole body were of one heart and of one mind. Their number was so great, that no one place was capable of containing them. It is probable that private houses were the churches of the first converts to Christianity. We accordingly find them breaking bread from house to house, Acts ii. 46, preaching and teaching in every house, Acts v. 42.

Many observances in the church of Jerusalem yet remained among the Jewish converts, never designed as a model for the Gentile churches. These were all zealous for the law, nor did they suppose themselves exempted from any of its obligations. They kept the Jewish sabbath, circumcised their children, attended the temple worship and the synagogues, and in all things scrupulously followed the Mosaic ritual. Yet they maintained at the same time the doctrines of grace, met on the first day of the week for Christian ordinances; and, though they regarded the Jewish ceremonies as not yet abrogated, they looked for their acceptance with God, not from the deeds of the law, but from the righteousness of faith. The middle wall of partition had not yet been broken down.

Hitherto the gospel church had been confined within the Jewish pale. The ideas even of the apostles were not sufficiently enlarged to expect that on the heathen at large the light of Christ should shine. The miraculous conversion of Paul produced no alteration in this respect. Though he preached boldly at Damascus the moment his eyes were opened, it was only in the synagogues of the Jews, and many years elapsed in labours in Arabia, Jerusalem, Tarsus, Damascus, and Antioch, before he received his commission as an apostle to the heathen, and learned, by an express revelation from his blessed Lord, that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs and partakers of the gospel.

The Gentile churches were chiefly formed by the labours of Paul, and the itinerant evangelists his companions.

At Antioch a great number of persons had believed, and turned to the Lord, Gentile proselytes as well as native Jews, through the ministry of those who had been driven

from Jerusalem. This intelligence reaching the apostles, Barnabas was dispatched to strengthen their hands. The work increasing, he resolved to go to Tarsus, and engage Paul as his associate; and their united labours were crowned with singular success. There were the disciples first distinguished by their zeal, and numbers received the now honoured, but then reproachful name of Christians.

But now the divine commission issued to level all distinction between Jew and Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. Henceforward there was a more general and glorious communication of the gospel to the Gentile world. It was no easy matter to break through Jewish prejudices. The Holy Ghost, therefore, especially commanded that Paul and Barnabas should be separated for the particular work to which he had appointed them. These, with proper assistants, immediately issued forth in the name of the Lord; and, in a vast circle, through Seleucia, Cyprus, Paphos, Perga, Antioch, and Pisidia, abundantly enlarged the pale of the Christian church by their indefatigable labours. They chiefly at first confined themselves to the boundaries of the synagogue, yet collected there a numerous audience of Gentile proselytes. The Jews could not bear to see the whole city assembled to hear the word of God. They sought to prejudice the multitude against Paul and Barnabas; whilst they, waxing bolder under the persecution, solemnly took leave of their Jewish brethren, and openly avowed their purpose of henceforth devoting themselves to the service of the Gentiles.

The Jews instigated the rulers and their own devotees to expel them from their territories; whilst Paul and Barnabas left behind them the dust of their feet to witness against their persecutors.

The same success, and the same bitterness of malice, attended them at Iconium. They firmly maintained their stand till a meditated assault to stone them compelled their removal to Derbe and Lystra, and the adjacent parts of Lycaonia, which by this means enjoyed the preaching of the gospel. The same Jews pursued them from Antioch and Iconium to Lystra, stoned the venerable Paul, and left him for dead; but his work was not done, and till then he was immortal.

A miraculous restoration to life and soundness enabled him to depart for Derbe, to plant a new church there ; and then, undismayed, to return through the former scenes of his sufferings, confirming the faithful, and providing for their edification, by ordaining elders in every church. Returning through Pisidia and Attalia, they arrived happily at Antioch, communicating the glad tidings of their success, and of the Gentile churches which they had planted.

The contention raised at Antioch by the Judaising Christians compelled Barnabas and Paul to go up to Jerusalem, in order to consult with the apostles and elders on this important question : Whether Gentile churches and converts from the heathen were still bound by the Mosaical institutions. At Jerusalem the cause was solemnly discussed before James, who presided, and all the other apostles, elders, and brethren ; and, according to the unanimous suffrage of the assembly, James pronounced a definitive decree in favour of Gentile freedom from the yoke of bondage. Thus often does unforeseen good arise from evil intentions.

About this time, Paul and Barnabas planned a new excursion to visit the churches which they had planted, and to increase their number, when a trivial dispute, wrought up into passion, ended in a breach which separated them for a while (Acts xv. 39.) It is beautiful to observe the fidelity with which the sacred historians relate the faults of the greatest and best of men.

Syria and Cilicia were first visited by Paul, confirming the churches ; and Derbe and Lystra were next blessed with his labours. Timothy, a favoured spiritual child of the apostle, was chosen for his travelling companion. By this visitation the churches were established, and increased in number daily.

Phrygia and the regions of Galatia afforded a plenteous harvest, and were filled with flourishing churches. And now God directed them to a new scene of labours and usefulness. They therefore crossed the sea to Greece ; and Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, arrested their attention. There Lydia was their first fruit. At the same place, some interested masters of a pythonic or

fortune-telling damsel, in resentment for the loss they sustained, excited the multitude to such a degree against them, that they were committed to prison. But this, and the ill usage they received there, only served to turn the house of the jailer into a little Bethel, by the wondrous and instantaneous conversion of himself and all his household.

Paul's character as a Roman citizen procured his discharge from the jail of Philippi. This was done at the request of the magistrates, who had committed him, but began to fear being called to an account for the abuse of their power. Paul expressed no resentment for his ill usage, took his leave of the brethren, and departed. Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessalonica, successively shared his labours. The latter place appears to have eminently profited by his preaching, and, as was usually the case, his success exasperated his Jewish enemies, and a tumult drove him by night to Berea, to escape his persecutors.

Berea next received the gospel, and their noble candour in the search of the scriptures was crowned with a divine conviction of the truth, and a numerous host of converts; but the same enmity being there excited by the Jews, Paul was sent off secretly to Athens.

His ardent spirit could not but be moved at the gross idolatry he there beheld; and his conscious superiority challenged the conflict with the proud philosophers, and even confounded the Areopagites, leaving some solid proofs of his short ministry in that seat of the learning of the times: but it was at Corinth, whither he next went, that the Lord, having much people, sent one to call them out of darkness into marvellous light. The amazing progress of the gospel encouraged a long continuance of his ministry there. Soon driven from the synagogue, the Gentiles welcomed him, and a plenteous harvest crowned his labours. That heathen wilderness budded and blossomed as the rose.

To this flourishing church we have two epistles; great gifts adorned them, but great divisions were introduced by false brethren, and great offences afforded much scandal to the Christian world. To correct, to reform, to rebuke, to in-

struct, and to edify, appear to have been the apostle's objects in these epistles.

From Corinth Paul took shipping for Syria, and hastily passing through Ephesus, proceeded by Cæsarea to Jerusalem, and thence to Antioch. After some stay in that favoured place, he revisited the churches of Galatia and Phrygia, and returned to Ephesus.

At Ephesus Paul continued about two years, spreading the gospel throughout all Asia, first addressing his Jewish brethren, and being by them rejected, he removed to the school-room of one Tyrannus. Many miracles were wrought by him, and wonderful effects produced by his ministry, (Acts, xix. 19,) insomuch that the craftsmen perceiving the famed Diana's temple greatly deserted, and their gains diminished, raised a tumult, from which, however, Paul was preserved. Yet as the place was become too dangerous to abide there, he departed again for Macedonia; and passing through Greece, where he had before planted the gospel, after three months stay, he returned to Syria, through Macedonia, accompanied by a variety of friends, his fellow helpers in the work. From Philippi he embarked for Troas. There, after a few days stay, and the miraculous recovery of Eutychus, he walked to Assos, where his companions took him on board and sailed to Mitylene, and, after passing visits at Samos and Trogylium, he arrived at Miletus. Thither he summoned the elders of the Ephesian church, and, after a solemn and affecting charge, took his last farewell. To this church was addressed that heavenly epistle which is still extant, directed to all the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus.

A prophetic impression that he should see Rome (Acts, xix. 21,) was now accomplished in an unexpected manner. The illegal seizure and imprisonment of his person, and other injuries received from the Jews, compelled him, after a long confinement, to claim his privilege as a Roman citizen, and appeal to Augustus.

His apology to the people, his defence before Felix, his beautiful discourse to Agrippa and his court, all speak a language that cannot be read without admiration. His voyage

to Rome, though disastrous, afforded a noble evidence of his courage, and to him God gave all who sailed with him in the ship, who owed their escape from shipwreck to his counsels. Wherever he went he communicated blessings, and displayed the miraculous powers with which he was invested.

Had the mode of church government been as essential to salvation as the doctrine of the atonement, or the agency of the Holy Spirit, it would assuredly have been as explicitly stated in the historical and epistolary parts of the New Testament; but when we find that subject treated in so indistinct and cursory a manner—when so little stress appears to be laid upon it—and when men equally wise and good, after investigating the matter with ability and diligence, remain still of different opinions, we may safely conclude that the claims of mutual forbearance are infinitely stronger than the pretensions of any exclusive church, that the outward administration of church order must be a much less important concern than various denominations have supposed, and that the inward blessings enjoyed in the conscience constitute the essence and fill the volume of the sacred record. Every believer in Jesus who is a partaker of the grace of God in truth is a member of the true church, to whatever denomination of Christians he may belong; while popes, bishops, presbyters, pastors, deacons, and private communicants, without this, belong to no church which the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls will acknowledge for his own.

Every member of the primitive church seems to have made it a constant practice to lay aside, weekly, according to ability, a certain portion of his income or gains for the poor, the persecuted, or the church. Hence, though generally the Christians were of the lowest and most indigent class of the people, the riches of their liberality abounded: their means for this arose from their Christian character. Their industry was great, and they wasted nothing in extravagance of any kind, being by principle self-denied to all indulgences for themselves, that they might be enabled to give to him that needed. If all real Christians more conscientiously observed this rule, a fund might be raised for the relief of the necessitous and the furtherance of the gospel, of immense

value to the aggregate body, though scarcely felt by the individuals who compose it.

The persecutions mentioned in the scripture, were principally from the Jews. The reason of this is evident: for in Judea the principal civil magistrates, as well as the high priests and church rulers were Jews: and where the concurrence of the Roman governors was necessary, they had generally sufficient influence to engage them to act according to their wishes. Thus, even Pilate was prevailed upon contrary to his own convictions, to condemn our Lord to death.

As the Christian ministry was for many years confined to Jews and the synagogue, Christians who diligently observed the Mosaic ritual could not be easily distinguished from their brethren, and would generally be considered as Jews by the heathen. But their peculiar observances, and above all their zeal to propagate the doctrines of faith and salvation by Jesus Christ, with that purity of conduct, which, whilst it reproached those around them, was accompanied with the most solemn warnings that they must perish or repent, could not but engage the attention and excite the enmity of their neighbours. Accordingly we see them exposed to bonds and imprisonment, to scourging and insult, on their first attempts to preach and teach Jesus Christ. Judea, in consequence, became the scene of great distress and poverty. This was first relieved by a liberal distribution of what the more wealthy there possessed, and afterwards by generous contributions from all the Gentile churches. We have information of many acts of violence committed, and there were doubtless many more which are not recorded. If Saul made such havoc in the church, entering every house of the Christians; and, hauling men and women, committed them to prison, most probably others at Jerusalem copied his example. Nor did the Roman government, however little naturally disposed to persecute on account of religious matters, properly discountenance the tumults and oppressions which the Jewish zealots, the rabble multitude, and interested pagans, were continually exercising against the Christians.

The very nature of real christianity, however peaceable in all its principles, is so contrary to the common principles of

action in corrupt fallen man, that it cannot but excite opposition. And where only weakness and non-resistance were on one side, and power, malice, and enmity on the other, it is impossible in the nature of things but that the consequences should ensue which are recorded, and abundantly more than would be publicly noticed. It is therefore probable, that the sufferings and the martyrs were more numerous than any record has preserved.

The Jewish persecutions were followed by those of the Roman. It was about the year of our Lord 64, that the city of Rome sustained a general conflagration. The emperor Nero, though lost to all sense of reputation, was yet studious to avert the infamy of being reckoned the author of this calamity, which was generally imputed to him. But no steps that he could take were sufficient to clear him. There was, however, a particular set of people, so distinct from the rest of mankind, and so much hated, that they might be calumniated with impunity. These were then known at Rome by the name of Christians. Unless we transplant ourselves into those times, we can scarcely conceive how odious and contemptible the appellation then was. Tacitus calls their religion a detestable superstition, which at first was suppressed, and afterwards broke out afresh, and spread far and wide. If so grave and cautious a writer as Tacitus can thus asperse the christians, we need not wonder that so impure a wretch as Nero should not hesitate to charge them with the fact of burning Rome.

Now it was that the Romans legally persecuted the church for the first time. Tacitus observes, "Some persons were apprehended, who confessed themselves christians, and they were condemned, not so much for the burning of Rome, as for being the enemies of mankind. Their execution was aggravated with insult. They were covered with skins of wild beasts, and torn by dogs; were crucified and set on fire, that they might serve for lights in the night."

Three or four years were probably the utmost extent of this tremendous persecution, as in the year 68 the tyrant was himself summoned before the divine tribunal. He left the Roman world in a state of extreme confusion. Judea par-

took of it in an eminent manner. About forty years after our Lord's sufferings, wrath came on the body of the Jewish nation to the uttermost, in a manner too well known to need the least account in this history. What became of the Christian Jews alone concerns us. It is said that the congregation were commanded by an oracle, revealed to the best approved among them, that before the wars began they should depart from the city, and inhabit a village beyond Jordan, called Pella. Thither they are said to have retired, and were saved from the destruction which soon after overwhelmed their countrymen. We hear no more of their persecuted state till the reign of Domitian, who succeeded to the empire in the year 81. He renewed the horrors of Nero's persecution, and put to death many persons accused of atheism: the common charge against christians, on account of their refusal to worship the pagan gods.

In the year 96, Domitian was slain, and Nerva, the succeeding emperor, recalled those who were banished, and forbade the accusing of any men on account of impiety or Judaism. Others escaped by the lenity of Nerva. This brings us to the close of the century, in which we behold the christians for the present in a state of external peace. We shall now present the reader with a short account of the heresies which prevailed in the first century.

The reader will not expect the names, the opinions, and acts of all those who are commonly called heretics. Our subject is the history of christianity. Those who have departed from its foundation will therefore be merely incidentally mentioned, and only viewed in one single light, as they deviated from the spirit of the gospel. Let us keep in view what that really is. The simple faith of Christ as the only Saviour of lost sinners, and the effectual influences of the Holy Ghost in recovering souls altogether depraved by sin, are its leading ideas.

When the outpouring of the Spirit began, these things were taught with power; and no sentiments which militated against them could be supported for a moment. As the love of the truth was lessened, heresies and various abuses of the gospel appeared, particularly toward the end of the century.

The epistolary part of the New Testament affords but too ample proof of corruptions. That amazing mass of austerities and superstitions, by which the purity of the faith was so clouded, and that self-righteousness which superseded men's regard to the mediation of Jesus, were beginning even in the apostles' days, as the epistle to the Colossians shews.

The prophecy of Antichrist in the first epistle of Timothy, chapter iv, expressly intimates that its Spirit had already commenced, by the excessive preference of celibacy and abstinence. The corrupt mixtures of vain philosophy had also seduced some from the faith.

Ecclesiastical historians, who have passed by the most glorious scenes of real christianity, have yet with minute accuracy given us the list of heretics without end. But Tertulian reduces the heresies of the apostolic times to two: the Docetæ and the Ebionites.

Simon was the father of the Gnostics, or Docetæ, and of a number of heretical opinions and practices of the first century.

The Ebionites for the most part looked on Jesus Christ as a mere man, born of Mary and her husband, though a man of a most excellent character. They denied the virtue of his atoning blood, and laboured to establish justification by the works of the law.

These two schemes, the one opposing the humanity of Christ, the other annihilating his divinity, were the inventions of men leaning to their own understandings, and unwilling to admit the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. The primitive christians held that the Redeemer was both God and man, equally possessed of the real properties of both natures. The only difficulty in the subject is for man to be brought to believe, on divine authority, doctrines which he cannot comprehend. Though we have just as good reason to doubt the union of soul and body in man from our equal ignorance of the bond of that union, yet proud men, unacquainted with that internal misery and depravity of their nature which renders a complete character like that of Christ so divinely suitable to their wants, and so exactly proper to mediate between God and man, were soon willing to

oppose the doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus. The doctrine of the atonement was opposed by the Docetæ in their denial of the real human nature of Jesus, and by the Ebionites in their denial of the divine nature, which stamps an infinite value on his sufferings.

Nor did the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which St. Paul had so strenuously supported, escape a similar treatment. In all ages it has been either fiercely opposed or basely abused.

On reviewing the ecclesiastical history of the first century we see the most astonishing revolution in the human mind and in human manners that was ever seen in any age, and that effected without any human power, legal or illegal, and even against the united opposition of all the powers then in the world; and this too, not in countries rude or uncivilized, but in the most learned and the most polished part of the globe.

Every dispassionate observer must confess that the change was for the better. No man will venture to say that the religious and moral principles of Jews and Gentiles, before their conversion to Christianity, were good. The idolatries, abominations, and ferocity of the Gentile world will be allowed to have been not less than they are described in the first chapter to the Romans; and the writings of Horace and Juvenal will prove that the picture is not exaggerated. The extreme wickedness of the Jews is delineated by their own historian, and is not denied by any. What but the influence of God, and an out-pouring of his Holy Ghost, can account for such a change. Here are thousands of men turned from all wickedness to all goodness, many in a short space of time; reformed in understanding, in inclination, in affection; knowing, loving, and confiding in God; from a state of mere selfishness converted into the purest philanthropists; living only to please God and to exercise kindness toward one another; and all of them recovering really (what philosophy only pretended to) the dominion of reason over passion; unfeignedly subject to their Maker; rejoicing in his favour amidst the severest sufferings; and serenely waiting for their dismissal into a land of blissful immortality. This must be of God.

But the Christian church was not yet in possession of any external dignity or political importance. No one nation as yet was christian, though thousands of individuals were so, but those principally of the middling and lower ranks. The church was chiefly composed of persons too low in life to be of any weight in the despotic system of government which then prevailed. St. Paul, as far as we know, was almost the only man of great genius and extensive education who was connected with Christianity, in the first century. We need not then be surprised that Christians are so little noticed by Tacitus and Josephus, intent only as they were on sublunary politics. Nor is this itself a small exemplification of the genius of this religion, destined to form men for the next life and not for this.

In doctrine they all worshipped the one living and true God, who made himself known to them in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; each of these they were taught to worship by the very office of baptism, performed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the whole economy of grace so constantly reminded them of their obligations to the Father, who chose them to salvation, to the Saviour, who died for them, and to the Comforter, who supported and sanctified them, was so closely connected with their experience and practice, that they were perpetually incited to worship the Divine Three in One. They all agreed in feeling conviction of sin, of helplessness, of a state of perdition; in relying on the atoning blood, perfect righteousness, and prevalent intercession of Jesus, as their only hope of heaven. Regeneration by the Holy Ghost was their common privilege; and, without his constant influence, they owned themselves subject only to sin and vanity. Their community of goods and their love-feasts, though discontinued after some time, probably because found impracticable, demonstrated their superlative charity and heavenly-mindedness. Yet a gloomy cloud hung over the conclusion of the century.

The first impressions made by the out-pouring of the Spirit, are generally the strongest and the most decisively distinct from the spirit of the world. But human depravity, overborne

for a time, rises afresh, particularly in the next generation. The first Christians, with the purest charity to the persons of heretics, gave their errors no quarter, and discountenanced them by every reasonable method. The heretics, on the contrary, endeavoured to unite themselves with christians.

It has been of unspeakable detriment to the Christian religion to conceive that all who profess it are true believers. Very many are Christians in name only, never at all attending to the nature of the gospel. We have seen the first Christians individually converted. National conversions were then unknown, nor has the term any proper meaning. But when ideas of Christians by wholesale grow fashionable, opposites are mixed ; the form of the gospel stands, while its power is denied. But no scenes of this kind appeared in the first century.

In this century, the canon of Holy Scriptures was completed. The last portion of this is called the New Testament. The books contained therein are in number twenty-seven. These were written by eight different persons whose names were Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, and Jude ; and at different periods, extending from the year 52 till 96 of the Christian era ; and in different places, both in Europe and Asia, particularly Rome, Corinth, Macedonia, Patmos, Judea, and Ephesus ; and yet all so harmoniously agreeing as to preclude all doubt of a concerted system to impose on the world. Of the twenty-seven books, five are historical, twenty-one epistolary, and one prophetic. The writers of the four first are called Evangelists, because they give an account of the genealogy, birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Saviour. The fifth gives the history of the apostles, and particularly of their labours in preaching the gospel, and settling Christian churches. The Epistles are letters, written either to individuals, or to particular or several churches, or catholic epistles, or circular letters to the churches in general. It is supposed that they were all written by one or other of the apostles. Paul's name is prefixed to thirteen of them, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, though it bears not his name, is generally supposed to have been written by him. The name of Peter is prefixed

to two. Three are supposed to have been written by John. The names of James and Jude are each respectively prefixed to one. To the last book, which is prophetical, the name of John is prefixed.

The history contained in the New Testament is an exact counterpart of the prophecies, promises, and types of the Old Testament. An enlightened student of the Old Testament, before the coming of Christ, must have expected exactly such events and such changes in the outward state of the church as the New Testament records. A connected narrative of all the grand outlines of the history contained in the New Testament might be formed from the very words of the Old Testament. The person of the Redeemer as Emmanuel; his descent in human nature from Judah and from David; his miraculous conception; his birth at Bethlehem; his character, miracles, and doctrines; the reception given him by his countrymen; the manner, and all the circumstances of his death; the end and design of his sufferings and death; his resurrection, ascension, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit; the conversion of vast multitudes, the obstinate unbelief and opposition of the Jewish nation, and the tremendous judgments of God on them for these crimes; the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the calling of the Gentiles, and the glorious triumphs of Christianity, might be related in the words of the Old Testament prophets, only by substituting in a few instances the past for the future tense; yet there was an interval of several hundred years between these prophecies and their fulfilment. The four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, have done, without appearing to have intended it, what was never performed by any author before or since. They have drawn a perfect human character, without a single flaw. They have given the history of one, whose spirit, words, and actions were in every particular exactly what they ought to have been; who always did the very thing that was proper, and in the best manner imaginable; who never once deviated from the most consummate wisdom and excellency, and who in no one instance let one virtue entrench on another, but exercised all in perfect harmony and exact proportion.

St. Matthew, the first of these, is supposed to be distinguished from the other evangelists by the frequency of his references to the Old Testament. He also records more of our Lord's parables than the others. He begins his history with the genealogy of Christ, in the line of Joseph, the husband of Mary, his mother; and relates some circumstances concerning his miraculous conception, birth, and infancy. He gives us a brief account of the ministry of John the Baptist, and records the baptism and temptation of Christ, and his entrance on his public ministry. He then proceeds with the narrative of his miracles and discourses, till at length he fully records the manner of his crucifixion, death, and burial; and, having borne witness to his glorious resurrection and appearance to his disciples, closes his history with some most important words, which the Lord Jesus spoke immediately before his ascension into Heaven.

St. Mark records many of the same facts, and a few of the same discourses and parables which are found in St. Matthew's Gospel; but he omits many things, and adds others; and he records some miracles much more fully than Matthew hath done.

The gospel of St. Luke contains many parables, discourses, miracles, and events which had been omitted by the preceding evangelists, and several recorded by them are here passed over. The history begins with the circumstances preceding and attending the birth of John the Baptist, and that of Jesus himself, and it closes with a fuller account of what passed between our Lord's resurrection and ascension than Matthew or Mark had given. St. Luke is supposed to have been a man of learning, previous to his being endued with spiritual gifts. His style is more pure and classical than that of the other evangelists.

St. John is the only evangelist who mentions Peter as the apostle who smote the high priest's servant, and Malchus as that servant's name. He alone records the resurrection of Lazarus. The other evangelists record our Lord's predictions concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the dispersion of the Jews; but John is entirely silent on these subjects. None of the other evangelists (ex-

cept by genealogies concerning our Lord's descent from Abraham and David) go farther back than the miraculous conception of John, the forerunner of Jesus ; but this apostle begins his gospel by at once declaring who the Saviour was, antecedently to his incarnation. The beginning of our Lord's miracles and ministry, from a short time after his baptism till John the Baptist was imprisoned, is here alone recorded. And one miracle, our Lord's discourse with the scribes, priests, and rulers, is here alone transmitted to us. Indeed, scarcely any of the miracles or incidents of our Saviour's life which the other evangelists record are here repeated. This gospel, published long after the other three, is almost entirely an original work.

The variations between the evangelists are not inconsistent with each other. They are sufficient to prove that they were not confederates in deceiving the world with a preconcerted false narrative, and at the same time are not greater than might be expected from the distinct accounts of four cotemporary honest men, who had undertaken to give a history of the same series of events. They are not so great as those which occur in the histories of the American revolution, by different authors of established reputation for veracity.

The book called the Acts of the Apostles was written by Luke, as an appendix to his gospel, and is the first and best ecclesiastical history that the world has ever seen. It records the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies concerning the kingdom of the promised Messiah, and also of those predictions or promises that our Lord gave to his disciples, "while he was yet with them." It is a fact which cannot be doubted, that the religion of Jesus, who expired on a cross at Jerusalem, almost eighteen hundred years ago, was soon very extensively propagated among the nations ; that it obtained a permanent establishment, which it preserves to this day ; and that the prophets had foretold that this would be the case as to the kingdom of the Messiah : but the book before us is the only history which expressly relates the manner in which this religion was at first promulgated. In it we are informed, that eleven obscure men, whom Jesus had called to be his

attendants and apostles, having continued with him till his crucifixion, saw and conversed with him, after his resurrection, and beheld him ascend from them towards Heaven, till a cloud received him ; and that shortly afterwards the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of the Lord, descended upon the apostles and others in a most extraordinary manner, enabling them to speak divers languages, and work stupendous miracles ; and that within less than two months from the time in which Jesus was crucified, and at Jerusalem, under the immediate notice of his crucifiers, the apostles began boldly to declare that he was risen from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and exalted at the right hand of God ; that he was the promised Messiah, and as such entitled to all confidence ; and that the apostles also charged the people, the priests, and the rulers with murdering the Lord of Glory. They were themselves unarmed and unprotected, except by a divine power ; they possessed neither human learning, eloquence, nor influence, yet they had all the wisdom and the folly, the learning and the ignorance, the religion and the irreligion of the whole world to encounter, as well as the rulers and princes to oppose them ; notwithstanding which they became decidedly and permanently triumphant. They employed no weapons but simple testimony to the facts which they had witnessed ; cogent arguments, affectionate persuasions, fervent prayers, and patient sufferings, even unto death. Proceeding in this manner, and every where attended by a divine power, they had such astonishing success, that many hundreds of thousands, not only from among the Jews and proselytes, but also from the most licentious idolaters, became the avowed disciples of the crucified Jesus, and the devoted worshippers and servants of the one living and true God. Thus, in the Acts of the Apostles, there is given us a history of the manner in which the most extraordinary revolution that ever took place in the moral and religious state of the world was first begun, the effects of which were afterwards extended far more widely, till Christianity became the religion of powerful and numerous nations, and superseded the idolatries and superstitions in which they were before enveloped.

The greater part of the New Testament is epistolary, and was written prior to the year 71 of the Christian era. The epistle to the Romans is placed first, though some others were written before it; but it was addressed to the Christians who resided in the capital city of that great empire, which then lorded it over the whole known world, and the epistle itself is one of the longest and most comprehensive of all that were written by the apostle. This epistle is the only part of the scripture in which divine truth is delivered in a systematical method. It is a proper model for any one who intends to compile a body of divinity. After the introduction, the apostle opens his subject by shewing man's relations and obligations to God his Creator, and his apostacy from his worship and service: he proceeds to prove the universal sinfulness of both Gentiles and Jews, and the impossibility of any man's justifying himself before God by his own obedience. Having brought the world in guilty, and deserving of wrath, he proceeds to state the method of our salvation by the mercy of God, through the redemption of his Son, and the way of justification by faith in his blood. He next proceeds to show that this way of justification is closely connected with sanctification and evangelical obedience: he then states the believer's experience and conflicts, and displays his character, hopes, and privileges: and at length he leads our reflections back to the source of these blessings, in the eternal election and sovereign love and mercy of God. Lastly, he applies the whole by a variety of practical exhortations, precepts, and instructions, enforced by evangelical motives. And concludes with affectionate salutations, cautions, and prayers, and with ascribing glory to God our Saviour.

The Epistle to the Corinthians was written by St. Paul, in answer to one which he had received from them, and much of it is employed in resolving certain doubts, and regulating certain points of order, concerning which the Corinthians had consulted him. Though they had written to St. Paul, requesting his answer and directions in these points, they had not said one word about the enormities and disorders which had crept in among them; his information concerning these irregularities had come round to him from other quarters. The

epistle was written to oppose various corruptions in doctrine and practice, which were calculated to subvert the influence of the false teachers, and to re-establish the apostle's own authority in that church. By general truths, he made way for a more direct and particular opposition to the several gross irregularities and dangerous errors into which they had been seduced. He stated the truth and will of God in various particulars. He resolved the several questions that had been proposed to him ; he intermixed exhortations and directions with his other subjects ; and concluded with affectionate and pathetic prayers for them. Though this epistle is not so systematic as the preceding one, yet it is replete with important instruction, and contains the fullest and most interesting declaration and demonstration of the resurrection of believers, in consequence of the resurrection of their Lord, which is any where to be found.

The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians was written about a year after the foregoing, while the apostle was on his progress through Macedonia. Having heard by Titus that his First Epistle had produced very good effects on many of the Corinthians, he wrote this also, in order to prepare the way more completely for his visit to them. In it he justified himself from the charge of levity or carnal policy, in delaying his journey to Corinth. He expatiated on his conduct in the Christian ministry. With great earnestness he recommended to them the collections for the poor Christians at Jerusalem, and shewed the manifold advantages of such services. At length he contrasted his own gifts, labours, sufferings, and conduct with the pretences of their false teachers, and shewed himself not a whit inferior to any of the apostles. He then concluded with various admonitions and affectionate good wishes. The most remarkable circumstance in this Epistle is the confidence of the apostle in the goodness of his cause, and in the power of God to bear him out in it.

The Galatians, to whom one of the Epistles of Paul is addressed, were the descendants of the Gauls, who migrated from their own country to seek for new settlements, and who, after a variety of disasters, got possession of a considerable district in Asia Minor. They were generally idola-

trous Gentiles before their conversion. Some professed converts to christianity intruded among them, drawing them off from the true gospel to depend on ceremonial observances, and to the vain endeavour of establishing their own righteousness. The apostle, in his epistle to them, opposes this false gospel.

The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians was written during his imprisonment, and is remarkable for a peculiar pathos, which is generally ascribed to the extraordinary consolations enjoyed by the apostle during his sufferings for Christ's sake.

The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians was written from Rome, where the writer was a prisoner, and twelve years after he had first preached at Philippi: but the conduct of the Christians there had uniformly been so exemplary, and their grateful affection to him so fully evinced, that he had only to rejoice over them with heartfelt gratitude, while he poured out his prayers for them, and affectionately animated them to persevere and press forward in their heavenly course.

The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians warns them against teachers who, by grafting heathen philosophy on the ritual law of Moses, had corrupted the gospel, and were attempting to draw aside the Colossians. He therefore particularly warned them against these deceivers, and against all who, either by superstitious observances or philosophy, attempted to draw them aside from the simplicity of Christ, in whom alone they were complete. These cautions and exhortations are introduced and connected with the most exalted views of the personal and mediatorial dignity of Christ, and the fullness and freeness of his salvation.

The First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians is the oldest book of the New Testament. It was written A. D. 52, to confirm the Thessalonians in the faith, and to animate them to a courageous profession of the gospel, and the practice of all the duties of christianity. It concludes with a direction, that it should be publicly read in the church to which it was addressed. The existence of this clause is an evidence of its authenticity. Either the Epistle was publicly read in the church of Thessalonica during St. Paul's life time, or it was

not. If it was, no publication could be more authentic, no species of notoriety more unquestionable, no method of preserving the integrity of the copy more secure. If it was not, the clause would remain a standing condemnation of the forger, and one would suppose an invincible impediment to its success.

The Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, amidst a number of instructive warnings, exhortations, and encouragements, contains a most remarkable prophecy of the papal power under the characters of "the man of sin," and "the mystery of iniquity." The principles described were so opposite to the genius of christianity at the time when this epistle was written, that it was highly improbable that they should ever prevail in the christian church; and, consequently, a prediction like this, which answers in every particular so exactly to the event, must be allowed to carry its own evidence with it, and to prove that the author of it wrote under a divine influence.

The two Epistles of Paul to Timothy, and the one to Titus, are just such as a prudent aged minister might with great propriety address to a beloved young minister of the gospel. The first epistle of Paul to Timothy contains cautions against false teachers, directions concerning the worship of God and the behaviour of believers, the character and conduct to be expected in bishops and deacons and their families; exhortations to Timothy concerning his private and public behaviour; admonitions against several sins and temptations, and solemn charges to faithfulness. This and the two following epistles are peculiarly replete with instruction to ministers, and should be continually studied and meditated on by all who bear the sacred character.

Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy was intended to animate him to endure persecutions with courage and constancy, to caution him and others against false teachers and corrupt professors of Christianity, and to direct and animate him in fulfilling his ministry and in following after holiness. The apostle had been for some time under close confinement at Rome, and had nothing before him but the certain prospect of being called to suffer death in the same cause to which he

had devoted his life. In this situation, he expresses an entire satisfaction in reflecting on the part he had acted, and earnestly recommends it to his beloved pupil to follow his example in maintaining the glorious cause, even at the hazard of his life. He appears throughout the epistle to have felt a strong conviction of the truth of those principles he had embraced, and glories in the sufferings he had endured in support of them.

The scope and instructions of Paul's Epistle to Titus are similar to the two preceding ones addressed to Timothy.

The Epistle of Paul to Philemon was written to him in order to produce his cordial reception of his fugitive slave, Onesimus, who had been converted under St. Paul's ministry. After he had given satisfactory proof of a real change, Paul judged it proper to send him back to his master with this intercessory letter. The most competent judges have pronounced it to be an excellent specimen of fine writing of the epistolary kind. Indeed we can scarcely conceive how such a cause as that of Onesimus could have been pleaded in a more interesting and masterly manner.

The Hebrews, to whom the next epistle is addressed, allowed the divine authority of the Old Testament, and therefore the writer of this epistle reasoned with them principally from their scriptures; and he thought it best to conceal his name, that none might be deterred by it from reading his arguments, or induced to receive them with prejudice. He therefore entered upon his subject without any introduction. That God, who in former times had spoken to the progenitors of the Hebrews by prophets, who made known his truth and will from time to time through successive generations, and who had spoken to them in divers methods, by personal conference, by dreams and visions, or by supernatural impulses upon their minds, had, under the dispensation of the gospel, spoken to them by his own Son appearing personally among them in human nature. The writer of this epistle, generally acknowledged to be Paul, intended to prove the doctrines of Christianity, and the changes which it had introduced and would introduce, to be entirely consistent with the "oracles of God," as received by the

Jews, so that any man who fully understood the Old Testament must have expected the substance of what was taught by Christ and his apostles, and the events which had occurred. It is therefore highly probable that he expressly aimed to write an epistle which might be put into the hands either of Judaizing Christians or unbelieving Jews, and read by them without any prejudice on account of the person who wrote it. The epistle opens with a declaration of the personal and mediatorial dignity of Christ; it then shews his superiority to Moses, and proves that in him the types of the law have had their full accomplishment; that he was the substance of all those shadows, and that the ancient scriptures taught Israel to expect an entire new dispensation, priesthood, and covenant, under the reign of the Messiah. The writer shews the nature, efficacy, and triumphs of faith, by which all the saints in former ages had been accepted by God, and enabled to obey, suffer, and perform exploits in defence of their holy religion. This epistle connects the Old Testament with the New, and elucidates both more fully than any other epistle. We here find the great doctrines peculiar to Christianity stated, proved and applied to practical purposes in the most convincing manner.

The General Epistle of James was not addressed to any particular church, but to the Jewish converts dispersed through the world. It is not so replete with the peculiar doctrines of Christianity as St. Paul's epistles are in general, or indeed as the other apostolic epistles: for it is supposed to have been written with a special design of counteracting those false teachers who in different ways perverted these doctrines, and wrested them to their own destruction, and that of other men. It abounds with exhortations to the patience of hope, and the obedience of faith and love, with which various warnings, reproofs, and encouragements are interspersed.

The First Epistle General of Peter contains the same great doctrines with which St. Paul's Epistles are replete, applied to the same practical purposes. It is peculiarly remarkable for the sweetness, gentleness, and humble love with which it is written.

The Second Epistle General of Peter is remarkable for the energy with which the writer inculcates holiness, and the solemn yet affectionate manner in which he testifies against the delusions of those who neglect it. It appears that the apostle, by this Epistle, especially intended to put Christians upon their guard against the false apostles who perverted the gospel, and the profane scoffers who started objections to the truth of it; but it is replete with the most important instructions on a variety of subjects.

John, in his First Epistle General, expatiates on the love of God to man, and again and again most pathetically enforces on believers love to each other. He also lays down various marks and evidences by which Christians might be distinguished from self deceivers and hypocrites.

In his Second Epistle, he is supposed to put those to whom he wrote on their guard against such heretics as affirmed that Jesus was not really a man, but only appeared to be one, and to do and suffer those things which the apostles and evangelists had recorded of him.

In his Third Epistle, he addresses Gaius with exhortations to persevere in his liberal and zealous support of those who went forth to preach the gospel, and cautions him against the presumptuous and malicious designs of Diotrephes.

St. Jude, in his Epistle General, cautions his brethren against the same deceivers whom St. Peter in his Second Epistle had opposed.

The Revelation of John the Divine consists of matters chiefly prophetic, which were immediately revealed to St. John from Jesus Christ: this took place when he was in the isle of Patmos, in the Egean sea, whither he was banished by the emperor Domitian, A. D. 95 or 96. The Revelation opens with the apostle's account of an extraordinary vision which he had of the Lord Jesus appearing to him in glory. Then follow seven short epistles from Christ himself to the seven principal churches in Asia, and after them it contains a series of prophecies relating to events which would take place in the church and the nations of the earth, through all the subsequent generations of mankind, to the end of the world, the day of judgment, and the eternal state.

The prophetic part begins with the opening of the seals in the sixth chapter, and has been interpreted to predict, first, the progress of the gospel, and then the gradual undermining of the pagan persecuting Roman empire, till that was terminated by the conversion of the emperors to Christianity. The seventh chapter has been explained as predicting in the former part of it the enlargement of the church in consequence of the revelation above mentioned, and in the latter part of it as describing the blessedness enjoyed with Christ by the martyrs and suffering Christians, who had lived during the pagan persecutions.

In the eighth chapter, under the seventh seal, the sounding of seven trumpets is announced. The four trumpets, the sounding of which is mentioned in this chapter, are interpreted to predict the gradual subversion of the Roman empire by the Goths, Huns, Moors, and Vandals, till the whole fabric seemed completely demolished by the death of Augustulus.

The sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets, in the ninth chapter, is interpreted to predict the Mahometan imposture and its destructive success.

The eleventh chapter is interpreted to predict the state of the church in the western regions, during the term of the fifth and sixth trumpets, while Mahometanism made such tremendous ravages in the east, or during the period of twelve hundred and sixty years. This prediction shews the extremely corrupt state of the nominal Christian church in the dark or middle centuries.

The thirteenth chapter is interpreted to predict the rise, establishment, and dominion of the papal persecuting Roman empire. The fourteenth chapter is interpreted as predicting the opposition made by the remnant of true believers to this antichristian power, and their protest against its abominations, and the several stages of that reformation, which at length was effected in the protestant and reformed churches: with a general intimation of those tremendous judgments by which at last the whole papal persecuting empire will be destroyed. The fifteenth chapter contains a vision of seven angels having seven vials, containing the seven last plagues

which were about to be poured out, and in which the wrath of God would be fulfilled.

The sixteenth chapter records the pouring out of the seven vials, which is interpreted to predict the succession of judgments by which the papal persecuting empire and church, and Rome itself, the metropolis and centre of both, will be utterly desolated. The whole of this prophecy is considered as yet unfulfilled. The seventeenth chapter gives a figurative description of the beasts, both the ten-horned beast and the two-horned beast, with the extent and seat of their empire. The eighteenth is interpreted by all protestant expositors as a prophecy of the utter desolation of Rome. In the nineteenth chapter is a prophecy of the subsequent efforts against true Christianity, made by the remains of the anti-christian party, and of the final victory obtained over them, ending in their entire destruction.

The twentieth chapter opens with a prediction of Satan's being bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Then the Millennium or triumphant reign of Christ for a thousand years takes place, at the close of which Satan being again liberated, successfully renews his efforts, and impels those whom he has deceived to levy war against the remnant of believers. But at that crisis, fire from heaven consumes the assailants, the devil is finally consigned to the place of torment, the general judgment immediately succeeds, and all the wicked being cast into the lake of fire, the state of the righteous in heaven is described in the two concluding chapters.

The predictions contained from the sixth to the fourteenth chapter, are supposed to be fulfilled, and it is certain, that the history of the world for the first fifteen or sixteen centuries of the Christian æra, seems very well to correspond with the predictions contained in these chapters. Future events will doubtless cast light on the subsequent chapters of this prophetic book. These revelations close the canon of holy scripture, being written near the end of the long life of the beloved disciple John, and more than forty years after the date of the early epistles of St. Paul, which are the oldest books of the New Testament.

Century II.

Trajan was the master of the Roman world in the beginning of this century. He was the friend of Pliny, and esteemed the most humane and excellent of all the Roman emperors. Yet under him we have one of the most authentic monuments of the suffering state of the Christian world. When such men as Trajan and Pliny, famed for mildness, prudence, and philosophy, displayed a spirit so very opposite to these pretensions, what must have been the case in general?

The ingenious Pliny had been appointed by Trajan to the government of Bithynia; and, in the exercise of his office as proconsul, the Christians, against whom the severity of preceding edicts evidently subsisted, were brought before his tribunal. Not having before had occasion to be present at such examinations, the multitude of the criminals, and the severity of the laws against them, seem to have greatly struck him, and caused him to hesitate how far he ought to carry them into execution without consulting first the emperor himself. The following translation of the letter itself, written A. D. 107, will throw more light upon the state of the church than perhaps any other monument of antiquity which has reached us.

“ C. Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, wishes health :

“ SIRE,

“ It is usual with me to consult you in every matter wherein I am in doubt, and to submit to your determination; for who better than yourself can direct me when I hesitate, or instruct me where uninformed? Till now I never had occasion to be present at any criminal process against the Christians. I am ignorant, therefore, to what extent it is usual to inflict punishment or urge persecution. I have much hesitated also, whether there should not be some distinction made between the young and old; and, in the application of the tor-

ture, whether there should not be a difference between the robust and the delicate ; whether pardon should not be offered to penitence, or whether an openly professing Christian shall be allowed to retract in order to escape punishment ; whether the profession itself is to be regarded as a crime, however innocent in other respects the professor may be, or whether the crimes attached to the name must be proved before they are liable to suffer.

“ In the interval, my method with the Christians who have been impeached as such has been this : I interrogated them, Are you Christians ? If they avowed it, I asked the same question a second and a third time, threatening them with the punishment decreed by the law. If they still persisted, I ordered them to be executed on the spot, for whatever their profession of religion might be, I had not the least doubt that such perverseness and inflexible obstinacy certainly ought to be punished.

“ There are others infected with this madness, who, being Roman citizens, I adjudged to be transported to Rome for your immediate cognizance.

“ In the discussion of this matter, accusations multiplying, a diversity of cases occurred. A schedule of names was sent me by an unknown accuser ; but, when I cited the persons, many denied the fact that they were or ever had been Christians ; and, repeating after me the usual formula, addressed the Gods, offered supplications with wine and frankincense to your image, which, with the statues of other deities, I had ordered to be produced, adding their maledictions of Christ, to which, I am assured, no real Christian by any torments could be compelled. These, therefore, I thought proper to discharge.

“ Others, named by an informer, at first acknowledged themselves Christians, and then denied it, pretending that though they had been such, they had renounced the profession. All these adored your image and the statues of the gods, and at the same time called Christ an accursed object.

“ From their affirmations, I learned, that the sum of all their offence, call it fault or error, was that on a day fixed they used to assemble before sunrise, and sing together in al-

ternate responses hymns to Christ as a deity, binding themselves by the solemn engagements of an oath not to commit any manner of wickedness ; to be guilty neither of theft, nor robbery, nor adultery ; never to break a promise, or keep back a deposit when called upon. This service being concluded, it was their custom to separate, and meet together again for a repast, promiscuous indeed, and without any distinction of rank or sex, but perfectly harmless : and even from this they had desisted since the publication of my edict, forbidding, according to your orders, all clubs and associations.

“ For farther information, I thought it necessary, in order to come at the truth, to put two damsels who were called deaconesses to the torture ; but I could extort nothing from them but the acknowledgment of a superstition as depraved as immoderate, and therefore desisting from farther investigation, I hastened to consult you : for, indeed, the matter appeared to me deserving the most attentive consideration, especially in the view of the immense numbers of those who are involved in this dangerous predicament ; for informations are already brought against multitudes of all ages, of all orders, and of both sexes ; and more will be impeached, for the contagion of this superstition has not only widely spread over the cities and villages, but reached even the farm houses. I am of opinion, however, that it may yet be stopped and corrected, for it is evident that the temples, which I found nearly deserted, begin to be frequented, and the sacred solemnities, that for a long time had been suspended, are come again into practice : so that now there is a brisk sale of victims for sacrifices, where before there scarcely could be found a purchaser. Whence I cannot but conclude, that the bulk of the people may be reclaimed, if impunity be allowed to repentance.”

The following reply of Trajan to Pliny casts a fuller light upon the subject, and enables us to form very clear views of the state of the Christian church at that time.

Trajan to Pliny.

“ MY DEAR PLINY,

“ You have certainly followed the right track in the discussion of the causes relative to the impeachment of the Christians. No certain rule can be laid down invariably to be adhered to in all cases. They are not to be hunted up by informers, but if impeached and convicted, let them be executed: only with this restriction, that if any person deny that he is a Christian, and demonstrate it by offering supplication to our gods, however suspicious his conduct may have been before, his penitence shall secure his pardon. But, unless every information has the accuser's name annexed, whatever be the crime charged it is not to be regarded, as it would be a precedent of the worst sort, and totally contrary to the maxims of my government.”

These letters appear to give a complete view of the state of Christianity, and the dreadful persecutions to which the faithful were exposed. The inference is fair and indisputable, that under other emperors and other governors the Christians would not meet with more liberal treatment.

It is evident, by the laws then in force, that it was a capital crime for any man to be a Christian, and that nothing else was necessary for his instant execution, than his own confession or conviction by evidence of the fact, or even his refusal to commit an act of idolatry when accused, in order to his exculpation.

It is clear that the humane Trajan and the philosophic Pliny appear not to entertain a doubt of the propriety of the law, or the wisdom and justice of executing it in all its rigour. Pliny confesses he had ordered such capital punishment to be inflicted on many, chargeable with no crime but their profession of Christianity; and the emperor confirms the justice of the sentence, and enjoins the continuance of such executions, without exception in favour of any who did not apostatise, curse the Lord Christ, and worship the idols of paganism.

Never was a testimony so noble and unequivocal given to the excellence of the Christian character; of their piety, purity, and peaceable conduct. So that no man could belong to this holy community, whose outward walk and conversation did not adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Even delicate women are put to the torture, in order to try if their weakness will not betray them into accusations of their brethren. But not a word, not a charge can be extorted capable of bearing the semblance of evil or crime. To worship Christ their God; to meet for praise and prayer and mutual instruction; to form engagements to abstain from every evil word and work; to be examples and reprovers of that wicked and adulterous generation; to celebrate the sacred mysteries of their faith in the participation of the supper of the Lord, and the repast of Christian fellowship which attended it: these are the depraved superstition, the execrable crimes, which nothing but a Christian's blood can expiate. There must be something divine in that doctrine, that can enable men thus to live and thus to die. There must be great depravity in human nature, when such characters as Pliny and Trajan embroil their hands in innocent blood, and decree such atrocious judgments against persons so amiable and just even by their own acknowledgment.

These letters furnish evidence of the singular peaceableness of the Christians, and their great care to give no offence, and to submit even to the most unjust requisitions. Persons of all ranks, of every age and sex, had been converted to Christianity. The body was so vast as to leave the pagan temples a desert, and their priests solitary. Scarce a victim was ever brought, or a sacred solemnity observed, through the paucity of worshippers. The defection from paganism must have been wonderfully general and striking, which could have produced such effects. But the Christians neither abused their power to resist government, nor acted with the less moderation in their worship, careful not to bring down upon themselves unnecessary sufferings. They knew the edicts against them, and assembled, to avoid offence, before break of day, in their several congregations at the houses of the faithful.

A more unequivocal evidence cannot be given of the Godhead of Christ, as universally admitted in the first ages of the church. The heathen, who knew the import of singing hymns to their deities, could not but regard the person to whom such hymns were addressed as really and truly God in their estimation. If the Christians could have adored a man, they would not have found such reluctance to cast a pinch of frankincense on the altar before the image of Trajan, in order to save themselves from torments, and death in its most tremendous forms.

It is awful to consider the test to which the Christians were brought, and the fearful evidence which appeared how many had assumed the name of Christian and deserted paganism, who had never drank in the spirit of vital Christianity; and, therefore, when persecution arose, they fell away from their profession. We have conclusive evidence of the power of God in supporting his people under every suffering and terror, in the very damsels who were tortured. Almost incredible to modern vulgar Christianity as this may be, we see such things have been.

Nothing can afford a more striking proof of the sufferings of the church, than that the very best of the emperors had their hands deeply imbrued in the blood of martyrs. During the reign of Trajan, a period of about twenty years, we may collect from the specimen which authentic history has preserved, how dreadful their case must have been. It appears that his edicts were unrepealed, and continued in full force. Wherever the activity of magistrates or the malignity of accusers brought forth their charges, real or supposed, the innocent suffered. Being the object of general odium, it can hardly be doubted but that every accusation against them was credited. It was more easy to condemn than examine. Christians, from their renunciation of all false deities, were termed atheists; from their nightly and secret assemblies, supposed to perform mysteries that were in their nature the most horrid, and under the covert of darkness to commit the greatest impurities, to be the implacable enemies of mankind, secret rebels against government. These and a multitude of other evils, which were supposed to be inseparably connect-

ed with Christianity, fended them more obnoxious than men of any other religion. But Christianity militated in all its points against emperors, priests, and philosophers; and Christians, with an intrepidity and zeal which no torments could suppress, would at all hazards propagate their opinions, and make known their religion.

From these assumed premises, nothing was easier than to convict every Christian, in the judgment of his heathen enemies, of the most complicated crimes. And wherever an accuser was found, the law could not easily be prevented from taking its course against them. The innocence of their lives was no protection. Not only was this not credited, but their own confessions of Christianity, and obstinate resistance to every idolatrous rite, left them without a plea in the face of the edicts that must judge them. No doubt the humanity of some governors, and probably the avarice of others, procured, in many places, a sort of quiet impunity. Yet, with every reasonable deduction for the probable amount of such exceptions, the sufferings of the church under such edicts have been deplorable, and nothing but its divine original and support could have sustained it in the fire, and spread its conquests over the obdurate and prejudiced hearts of men.

An. 117. The edicts of Trajan and preceding emperors against the Christians continued unrepealed under Adrian. But his rescript to Minucius Fundanus, the next pro-consul, enjoins a mitigation of their state. Idle clamours must not be heard, but if any thing contrary to the laws was proved, they must take their course.

The Christians about this time were persecuted from an unexpected quarter. Always hated by the Jews, and persecuted wherever they prevailed, a respite from their malice had been enjoyed since the fearful vengeance executed on Jerusalem and that nation by Titus. But their prejudices respecting the Messiah; the unconquerable hope of a temporal deliverer; and their numbers, though thinned by slaughter, engaged them once more to rally under the standard of Barchochebas, and contend with the Romans for empire. During the course of this rebellion, the Christians, refusing to join the standard of this false Messiah, suffered the most atrocious

indignities, and were massacred without mercy, till the fall of the rebel, and the destruction of his adherents, once more covered them from his rage.

The destructive earthquakes and other calamities which lately befel several of the Asiatic cities, being laid by the pagan priests to the door of the Christians, whom they considered as atheists for not believing in the pagan deities, they were sacrificed cruelly as victims in the supposed anger of the offended deities. But the emperor Adrian, on a representation from them, issued a fresh decree, forbidding Christians merely as such to be molested.

An. 161. His successor, Marcus Aurelius, so highly celebrated for wisdom, virtue, and philosophic attainments, soon discovered his bitter enmity against Christianity and its professors. Believing all the atrocious charges of the pagan priests and infidel sophists against the Christians, and deaf to the remonstrances and apologies of Justin Martyr and others in their favour, he let loose his savage magistrates on them, and they died under the imputation of crimes which they abhorred. Never had the Christians more unjust and cruel treatment. Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and others, fell before the implacable enmity of the philosopher, and whole churches were nearly extirpated by the malice and cruelty of his proconsuls.

An. 180. The character of Commodus appears the very reverse of Aurelius. He was an epicure, and abandoned to every vice. Marcia, a woman of mean original, was a beloved concubine of the emperor; and, having great influence over him, employed it in favour of the Christians, whom she either pitied or esteemed. There is something in real Christian virtue venerable in the eyes even of profligates. God can make the basest of persons subservient to the purposes of his own glory, and the good of his church. Henry the VIIIth no more meant the reformation than Commodus the protection of Christianity.

The Christians of this century, being generally illiterate men, adhered to the doctrine of the cross and its atonement, and entered not into the niceties of disquisition on the nature and attributes of God or the human soul. In this period,

however, matters unhappily took a different turn, and men, affecting to be wise above what is written, began to introduce a philosophical Christianity, pregnant with all the heresies that have since infested the Christian world. Presuming to explain every thing, and reconcile incomprehensible truths to human capacities, they involved themselves in endless errors.

Trajan, from the commencement of his reign, had endeavoured to revive the decaying interests of literature, but the Augustan age returned no more. The philosophers of the different sects still held their ground, but the eclectics, with Ammonius at their head, taking Plato for their teacher, and engrafting on him all that was applicable from the other sects, prevailed, especially in the school of Alexandria, and spread from thence universally.

Christianity, which hitherto had little to boast of its converts among the learned and philosophic, began now to receive a spurious adoption by these new disciples of Plato, but suffered grievously from the unnatural alliance. From this school came forth men famous in their day, Justin, Origen, Tertullian, and many others; zealous indeed in apologies for the Christian cause, and ready to die rather than renounce their profession, yet holding a Christianity of a very equivocal nature. From their writings originated the doctrines of Pelagius Arius, and all the train of exalters of human ability, and debasers of the glory and atonement of God our Saviour. They retained the profession, title, and garb of philosophy, and meant to add thereby a dignity to the Christian religion. The declension of vital Christianity followed.

Instead of keeping to the Scripture language, and being content to be ignorant of what faith adores, and reason cannot scan, their attempts to pry into the things which are above human comprehension opened a door of endless controversy about the nature of God, and the mode of his divine subsistence; concerning the person and glory of Jesus Christ; respecting the souls of men, and a future state. The consequence was a departure from the essentials of Christianity, the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ, and the influences of the Holy Ghost on the human heart.

Under an affectation of greater spirituality exalting the soul to sublimer purity and human perfection, they placed the great objects of religion in contemplation, retirement from the world, and bodily mortification. Hence sprung, in the succeeding ages, the whole brood of mystics, monks, hermits, and recluses. The principles of Platonism produced their ascetic rules, and seclusion from human society, with all the evils inseparable from a state so unnatural, and contrary to every thing contained in the Scriptures of truth.

From these sources flowed numerous errors. Their very names would fill pages. Some of the leading features will appear when we consider the principal personages who flourished in this period of the Christian church; we shall therefore present to the view of our readers some of the most eminent personages and writers to the end of the second century.

Justin, surnamed the Martyr, stands first on the ranks of the Alexandrian school, and among the wise men of this world, who began to combat paganism with the weapons rather of earthly than of heavenly temper. The account that he gives of himself is, that he was a native of Neapolis, in Samaria, had a learned education, and went to the famed school of Alexandria for improvement. There his inquisitive mind engaged in philosophical pursuits; ranged through each sect in turn; and found nothing conclusive or satisfactory. The Platonic system, which he had last endeavoured to fathom, appeared to him most specious and attractive. When taking one of his contemplative walks by the sea-side, he providentially met an aged Christian on the shore, where one question having led to another, the unknown stranger directed him to the prophets, as more ancient, and infinitely wiser than all the philosophers. He opened to him the leading principles of the Christian dispensation, and exhorted him above all things to pray to God and his Christ to enlighten his understanding. They parted; remained unknown to each other; but from that moment a new scene opened to Justin's view. He examined the Scriptures of truth, and became a Christian, and soon after proceeded to Rome, to combat heretics, and present to the emperor Pius his first apology for his Christian brethren. In this he completely

refutes the charges brought against them, describes their worship, and vindicates their purity and simplicity.

After a considerable absence, returning to Rome, the bloody persecution of his brethren roused his spirit to address the bitter, philosophic Aurelius on the cruelty and injustice of these executions. Crescens impeached him before the prefect. He was committed to prison and executed, but he steadily avowed his veneration for Christ, and his refusal to comply with every act of idolatry required of him. An. 163.

It is impossible not to reverence the martyr, and to hope that the root of the matter was in him, but many things of a suspicious nature are found in his writings. He speaks of justification, regeneration, and forgiveness of past sins through Jesus Christ, and acknowledges the necessity of divine illumination; but his Platonic opinions blend with his Christian profession. He insinuates that Plato and Christ taught nearly the same doctrines; supposes a general illumination from God in the pagan sophists, a particle of the divine word, which he calls the Son of God, and innate in every man.— Though it may be hoped that he was a good man, and a real Christian, yet still he remained a Platonist, a mystic, or self-sufficient patron of innate moral power, and far too philosophical to be scriptural. The wisdom of the schools of Alexandria had darkened the brightness of evangelical glory in his mind, and rendered him, in many points of Christian doctrine, a very miserable guide to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Irenæus, who presided over the church of Lyons, was elected bishop, An. 178, and martyred about 203. He was a Greek, and learned the barbarous language of Gaul, in order to be able to instruct its inhabitants. The labours of his ministry were great, and of his writings still greater. He combated all the heresies then subsisting in the church. The very names of these are an awful witness how much and among how many the purity of the Christian doctrine and practice had begun to be corrupted. He is far more valuable in confuting his adversaries than in delineating evangelical truth. Like Justin, his philosophic opinions mingle with and debase the Christian purity. He quits the scriptural

grounds of God's election and grace, and supposes all that self-sufficiency of the human intellect and human agency, which bespeaks a man too little acquainted with his own heart. Irenæus, however, has in an unequivocal manner avowed the deity of our Saviour, the redemption effected by his blood, and our union in the second Adam Jesus Christ, though mixed with a farrago of philosophic notions.

Tertullian, who flourished from 194 to 220, is a striking instance how much wisdom and weakness, learning and ignorance, faith and folly, truth and error, goodness and delusion, may be mixed up in the composition of the same person. No man more distinguished himself in defence of the Christians, or possessed a larger fund of all that was in that day esteemed deep philosophical research. Yet no man exhausted his zeal more about trifles, or set more value upon will-worship and voluntary humility.

There are many other respectable personages, whom we cannot particularly notice, though famous in their generation. Panæus, of Alexandria; Dionysius, of Corinth; Theophilus, of Antioch; Melito, of Sardis; Apollinaris, of Hierapolis; Athenagoras, and others, whose writings prove that the faith once delivered to the saints in the Scriptures of truth, was still preserved in its purity. And, though in many of them it was obscured by philosophic novelties and Platonic explications, yet the great foundations of a triune God, the incarnation of Jehovah the Son, the power of the Holy Ghost upon the conscience, the one atonement, the efficacy of faith, and the necessity of holiness may be found in all the earlier writers, too often indeed mixed with fables, fanciful explanations, absurd allegories, and practices destitute of all authority from the oracles of God.

The best part of the church was not that which was most visible; the greatest purity of doctrine and simplicity of practice was to be found not among the wiser philosophic Christians, but the more unlettered and inferior pastors and people, who, without being able to read Hermes or Plato, contented themselves with the evangelists and epistles, and lived and died in obscurity, examples of every thing that is excellent and of good report. But they left no writings that

attract curiosity, nor stood in any eminence of station or literature to engage that admiration, which is oftener attached to what is counted great, than to what is simply good.

The simplicity of gospel truth ill accords with a farrago of rites and ceremonies. Nothing could be more unadorned than the primitive worship. A plain man chosen from among his fellows, in his common garb, stood up to speak, or sat down to read the scriptures, to as many as chose to assemble in the house appointed. A back room, and that often a mean one, or a garret to be out of the way of observation, was their temple. The recorded particulars of their worship were those still observed in the true churches of Christ throughout the world. Hymns sung to Christ as their God appeared to the heathens a prominent and striking feature of the Christian worship. The Holy Scriptures were read in portions; and the presbyter or bishop, or two or three of the congregation, who were endued with prophetic or preaching talents, spoke a word of exhortation to the people, agreeably to the scriptures which had been read. Prayer from the heart, without a prompter, followed: the bishop or presbyter led the devotions, to which the people replied with a loud and audible Amen. The whole was a spiritual, not a formal service. He that led the worship prayed from his heart, and out of its abundance. We have yet no trace of any form or established ritual. The mode of worship was left to the discretion of the several churches and its ministers.

It is probable that the Supper of the Lord closed the devotions of his day. It was as constant as the return of that day, and every member of the church as constantly a participant. A friendly meal or feast, called *agapæ*, from the love and union in which they kept it, served at once as an opportunity of ministering an act of charity to the poor, and of testifying their union in one body, where all distinctions of poor or rich were laid aside, and all with humble equality acknowledged themselves members of the living head Christ, and of one another.

Then every man produced according to his ability, weekly, what he had laid by for charitable purposes. This formed a fund of oblations, under the controul of the church, for all

the various purposes of general good, such as the provision for the necessities of the poor, the support of evangelists, the relief of the persecuted, and for the assistance of such churches and persons whose indigence called for the help of their richer brethren. It does not appear that any part of this fund was appropriated to pay the salaries of any minister of the sanctuary, unless as he came under the title of an itinerant evangelist, and incapable of providing his own maintenance, or as one who, being wholly occupied in the gospel work, was justly entitled to live by the gospel.

Notwithstanding the general prevalence of sound doctrine and gospel practice in this century, a spirit of pride and pre-eminence began to debase the ministers of the sanctuary. From the equality of the first pastors, a second race ascended one step above their fellows, and, from the greater progress of Christianity, and the necessary calls to attend to the general interests of the whole, superiority of some over others became established by universal consent. Instead of little households united under one presbyter, the churches in many places became numerous, as well as the multitude of attendants in each. Towns and districts adjacent naturally became connected, and a president was found necessary. Where a vast body of Christians was collected, one man was insufficient for all the calls of the church and people. Assistants were taken in, and deacons, though first instituted only for the care of the poor, were employed in other inferior departments of ministerial service. From a single society, governed by its own members under apostolic superintendence, union was formed between several, and a superior chosen by general suffrage, or received from the oldest congregation. Many churches were thus associated, and, on occasions of general concern, they met to consult in a body composed of the principal persons deputed from the several societies, of which the pastor or bishop was always one. At first they appeared merely as the delegates of the respective congregations, but when thus frequently assembled, they soon began to assume authority, and imperceptibly to act in their own name, instead of that of the people, to prescribe without consulting them, and gradually separating themselves as a clerical body,

too frequently endeavoured to aggrandize themselves, arrogating privileges and distinctions unknown in the first lowly days of the church, and rising in self-importance on every acquisition of power to which veneration for their leaders made the people submit. Notwithstanding the piety, humility, and prudence of the best, the loftier and more imperious generally took the lead in their synods ; influence degenerated into dominion, and counsels into canons.

As the borders of Christianity were enlarged, and the number of bishops increased, they naturally united in one great confederate republic, of which they were become the heads and leaders : and, as at first a bishop or bishops were appointed, where they had several presbyters their assistants, so another step became necessary. When a large district or province met in assembly, and many bishops were present, a superior was still needful for order, to manage debates, and maintain uniformity in their sessions. Then archbishops arose, and as the church thus grew more monarchical, great capitals and very extensive sees mounted into patriarchs ; till at last the attempt to imitate imperial state led to one supreme visible head : though this did not take place till after ages of abuse.

Assumed pomp and dignity required a sort of maintenance very different from the state when the pastor wrought with his own hands to minister to his necessities, and laboured by day that he might serve the church by night. The idea of priesthood had yet scarcely entered into the Christian sanctuary. But on the dissolution of the whole Jewish economy under Adrian, when the power of the associated clergy began to put forth its bud, the ambitious and designing suggested that the succession to these honours now devolved upon them, and that the bishop stood in the place of the high priest, the presbyters were priests, and the deacons Levites : thus a new tribe of clergy arose, completely separated from their lay brethren. The altar indeed was not yet erected, nor the unbloody sacrifice of the Eucharist perfected ; but it approached by hasty strides, and, to add greater security for the maintenance of the priesthood, the divine right of tythes became attached to the divine right of episcopacy.

These abuses indeed grew not up at once. The remaining piety and purity of the true church and multitudes of its primitive pastors retarded their progress, till the union of church and state, in the establishment of Christianity under Constantine, nearly completed the worldly system.

The simplicity of the primitive worship, contrasted with the pomp of paganism, was striking. It was concluded by the heathen, that they who had neither altar, victim, priest, nor sacrifice, must be atheists, and without God in the world. Those who were now rising into self-created eminence, fancied that it would be for the interest and honour of Christianity to remove these objections of the Gentiles, by very harmless but useful alterations. Though magnificent temples had not yet arisen, the names of things began to change. There were already priests, and oblations were easily rendered sacrifices. The separation of the clergy as a body became more discriminated by their habits. High priests must have more splendid robes than the simple tunic of linen. A variety of new ceremonies was invented, to add dignity to the mysteries of Christianity, and obviate the objections to its meanness and simplicity. And as the pagan populace were particularly attached to their idolatry by the festivals in honour of their heroes and their gods, and delighted with the games and pastimes on these occasions, they were indulged with the same pleasures of feasting, sporting, and dancing at the tombs, and on the anniversary of the martyrs, to which they had been accustomed in the temples of their gods. The authors of this indulgence supposed that thus of their own accord the pagans would quit their idolatry, and return, under christian auspices, to a more virtuous and regular course of life.

The blessed ordinance of the commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby, continued to be celebrated weekly: but with additional ceremonies. The wine was now mixed with water; the bread divided in pieces, and sent to the sick and absent. It became also more important, and was supposed to be essential to salvation, and therefore was ministered to infants.

Amidst all the mistakes of the sincere—the departures of heretics from the faith—and of too many professors from the life of godliness, a blessed company of faithful people, witnesses for Christ, still increased and multiplied. Every church presented a numerous body of worshippers, whom no dangers could intimidate, nor earthly advantages tempt to renounce their crucified Master. With all the unhallowed mixtures, which we cannot but lament and condemn, a truly holy seed sprang up amidst the tares of philosophy and the rank weeds of pride, which the great enemy had plentifully disseminated. Even among those branded with the name of heretics, there were doubtless many living members of Christ's body, but the great mass of the faithful, and the great power of religion, were to be sought in the lower orders of clergy and people, who busied themselves in no philosophic investigations, joined in no contentions for pre-eminence or advantage, but simply receiving the truth as it is in Jesus, searched the scriptures for the mind of God, and followed it in simplicity and godly sincerity. The doctrine in all the churches seems fundamentally pure, and the practice could not have much degenerated, where so many were ready to lay down their lives in hopes of a joyful resurrection. And indeed all the apologies and the evidence from enemies as well as friends, declare the truth and fidelity of the general body of those who bore and owned the Christian name.

That there were always hypocrites in the church, and even martyrs to false principles, is admitted ; but every view of the whole demonstrates that there was a true church of faithful men, who loved Jesus Christ in sincerity, worshipped him in spirit, and, looking for an eternal rest, were ready to be offered in flames rather than deny the Lord that bought them.

Hitherto no general departure from the truth, no marked apostacy appears. Episcopal power was indeed extended, but many of these bishops were evidently the best of men, and most zealous advocates for truth. Profane learning had more abundantly entered the church, but it furnished able advocates more qualified to confute their enemies. Perse-

cution had not abated its fury, nor had the faith and patience of the saints failed. There were spots and blemishes among them, and seeds of deleterious quality ; but as yet the church was a glorious church, and precious in the sight of the Lord of Life.

Century III.

An. 202. Severus, during the first years of his succession, trod in the steps of his immediate predecessors. But in the tenth year of his reign, and the beginning of the third century, his rage burst forth like fire against the Christians. Whatever was the cause of this change, the consequences were terrible to the church of Christ. Alexandria, Carthage, and other cities of the African church were particularly exposed. The father of Origen suffered, and he himself, though a youth, hardly escaped, being eager to offer himself to martyrdom. Multitudes were dragged to prison and to death, and many heroines gave noble proof of the strength of faith in the weaker sex.

Many are said to have purchased connivance from the government, and to have bought off the informers, and thereby escaped the fury of the persecution. The rigid casuists of that day highly censured this practice. On the other hand, too many appeared emulous to rush on unnecessary danger, and to court martyrdom.

An. 211. Death delivered the church from this scourge, and Caracalla was brought forward to be the protector of Christ's suffering people. Few men have exceeded him in the atrocities of vice ; but an early attachment to a nurse who was a Christian is said to have prepossessed him in their favour : on such slight circumstances turn matters of the greatest moment. During his six years reign, the Christians enjoyed full toleration. This continued under Heliogabalus, who was too much engrossed with the science of eating, to

attend to other cares. The rigidly virtuous Alexander Severus continued a measure of the same kindness, influenced, it is said, by his mother Julia, who favoured Christianity. He so far commended the Saviour, as to count him worthy of a statue among the demi-gods and heroes: but the statutes against Christianity remained unrepealed, and, though the penal laws slumbered, it was always in the power of a malignant magistrate to be mischievous.

An. 235. Maximin, who murdered Severus, issued his bloody edicts against the bishops, pastors, and others of the Christian church; but death, after a three years' reign delivered the world from this tyrant. A hasty succession of Pupienus, Balbinus, Gordian, and Philip, the last reputed half a Christian, procured a calm for the persecuted church, which continued till the middle of the century, when the accession of Decius to the imperial throne once more let loose upon the defenceless churches the merciless executioners who deluged the earth with blood. An. 238—249.

Short as his reign was, never did the church suffer from her most envenomed enemies severer treatment. Multitudes fell in every province. The orders to all prætors and magistrates extended to the extirpation of the Christian name, and, whilst multitudes braved all the rigours of punishment, more unhappily gave proofs of their weakness. Gallus and Volusianus, though with less fury, continued the persecution. Valerian was at first more friendly, and extinguished the fires which had been kindled; but falling under the influence of his prime minister, Macrianus, a pagan bigot, fresh edicts were published against the assemblies of the faithful; their principal bishops were sent into banishment, and many executed with the most lingering torments. Divine Providence interposed and delivered him a captive to his enemies. His son Gallienus, and his successor Claudius, suffered the Church to enjoy a few years respite, and the meditated destruction of the Christian name by Aurelius was prevented by his violent death. Tacitus his successor, soon left the empty throne to Probus. Carus, and his sons followed, and Dioclesian maintained for the first eighteen years of his reign the peace, which, with few interruptions, the

church had enjoyed for the space of forty years. An. 260—284.

But forty years of peace, though it had greatly spread the profession of Christianity, had introduced a spirit of worldliness and decay. The church became more and more external; the power of the clergy began to advance with hasty strides.

Yet at no time had the struggles between paganism and Christianity been more severe, or the martyrs more abundant, than towards the middle of this century, and from the beginning of it the conflict had been sharply carried on. The heathen priests, envious and enraged to see their craft in danger, and their temples deserted, moved heaven and earth to stop the defection from idolatry, and to bring back the apostates. The Jews expressed their rooted enmity on every occasion, and the philosophic sects, with Lucian at their head, whetted the edge of argument and ridicule against the disciples of the crucified Nazarene. But, above all, the prætors and magistrates enforced the edicts of the cruel emperors, and, under colour of executing the laws, gratified every unhallowed disposition of the human heart. It is impossible to calculate the number of sufferers in the vast extent of the Roman empire, where the same laws subsisted and the same spirit prevailed. The sufferers must have been immense. The very nature of man under such a state of society compels us to form this conclusion. Notwithstanding all the objections that infidelity can raise, the fact will remain unimpeachable, that in this century, many, in a great variety of places, of every age, sex, and condition, were tortured for the name of Jesus, not accepting deliverance on the conditions of idolatry.

On the most strict examination of what is recorded, and all that may be fairly presumed from existing circumstances, the church of Christ will be found a glorious body, rising superior to all suffering, and triumphant over all the opposition and prejudices of mankind, through the simple preaching of the cross of Christ. The man who considers this impartially, and yet continues an unbeliever, must have recourse to a

credulity much greater than any which he presumes to ridicule.

The pride of wisdom, and the corruption of the human heart, naturally produce error and evil. The seeds already sown begin to vegetate abundantly, and the tares in many places to overshadow the wheat. The miseries which the church suffered occasionally checked their growth; yet the evil itself continued to spread. During the intervals of persecution, and in many places where money or interest procured an exemption from the penal statutes, the Christians enjoyed a state of prosperity, were connived at in the army, had preferment at court, were unmolested in their profession, and throve in the world by their temperance, industry, and frugality. Abundance proved a snare. To be rich without trusting in uncertain riches, and preferred without feeling the pride of exaltation, is a rare attainment.

Christianity had now also assumed the philosophic garb, and many of her most famed doctors became eminent for their science, and teachers of the eclectic philosophy. The schools of Alexandria, with Origen at their head, and their manner of tuition, began to produce an awful departure from the simplicity which is in Christ. In order to meet the various philosophic sects on their own ground, and to soften down their prejudices against the cross, a mode of arguing and disputation was admitted, very different from "Thus saith the Lord," and a general admission granted that paganism included many principles of Christianity, and that the philosophy of Plato, Hermes, and Pythagoras, perfectly corresponded with the leading principles of Jesus Christ. Indeed, to reconcile these together, and to make the transition easy from paganism and Platonism to the profession of Christianity, was one of the great objects of its most renowned defenders. It is not wonderful that error entered at a thousand doors, when concessions the most unscriptural were admitted.

Since human reason alone was asserted to be the sovereign tribunal, to which every doctrine must be submitted, revealed truths could only be received or rejected according as they passed the philosophic ordeal. The imbecility of the human

intellect, and its incompetence to fathom the deep things of God, were utterly denied. The proud sophist, seated on his throne, summoned to his bar Jesus Christ and Plato, Moses and Pythagoras; canvassed their pretensions with the same freedom, and selected from each according to his own opinion.

As a divine revelation, to which implicit obedience should be paid, was rejected, and a divine interpreter to illuminate the darkness of the human mind was thus exploded, the essential principles of true Christianity made no part of their system. As the first of their opinions, the unity of the Godhead was mixed up with the reveries of Plato, though in essence their religion was deism, yet many of this sect made profession of Christianity. With these Origen, the great oracle of the day, associated; and, to render Christianity more palatable and rational, he debased the pure doctrines of the cross with the unscriptural alloys of human wisdom and eclectic science. But the unlearned and simpler Christians retired with the Bible from the field of controversy, and left the honours of the day to Plato, Plotinus, and the philosophic school of Origen.

The mystery of God the Father and of Christ being thus subjected to philosophical investigation, a host of heretical tenets sprang up in the eclectic school. The gnostics of the former ages now met new adversaries: Plotinus against Adelpheus, and Origen against both, and in this dispute the Christian doctrine and spirit alike suffered violence.

An. 240—269. As the doctrine of the Trinity was the most inexplicable, ingenuity exhausted itself in speculations upon it. Noetus broached the heresy of the Patripassians, or the Father suffering in Christ. Sabellius followed in a new modification of the same sentiment; and Baryllus added different ideas to the dogma. Whilst Paul of Samosata explained away the divine persons; allowed only the Son and Spirit to exist in God, as the faculty of reason and activity in man; affirmed that Christ was a mere man, and received his reason from the Father, and by this agency wrought miracles, and that on this account only he might be called God.

But all these novelties were wrapped in expressions the most ambiguous, and capable of endless explications.

In this age also arose the wild heresy of the Manicheans. It came from the east, and was an attempt to unite the doctrines of the magi with Christianity, as the school of Alexandria, with Origen at its head, desired to ingraft Christianity on Platonism.

The doctrines of Manes contained a tissue of absurdities respecting two originally existing principles of good and evil.

Origen, who was born in 185, and died in 252, was a most extraordinary character. In piety fervent, in zeal distinguished, from his earliest years a Christian; his morals unimpeachable; literally a eunuch for the kingdom of Heaven's sake; and sealing the truth of a confessor with the sufferings of a martyr. Indefatigable in labour, endued with singular genius, improved by immense erudition, and admired by his cotemporaries as the paragon of science and learning; yet, withal, debasing the doctrines of Christianity with the most absurd interpretations, and subjecting them to the dogmas of the Platonic philosophy, as if this was the divine key to unlock these treasures of wisdom. He supposed the outward letter of scripture to be of no spiritual benefit but as it led to the hidden meaning, and the whole of revelation to be of little use to those who should understand it only according to the literal sense. He taught, with his master Plato, that the human soul was an emanation of the divine nature, comprehending in it all the principles and elements of truth, human and divine; and this soul pre-existing, and subject to transmigration. His high opinion of the powers of the human intellect, and the freedom of the human will, superseded the necessity of all supernatural influence from the Holy Ghost: and his supposition of the soul's suffering in other bodies destroyed the idea of eternal punishment as the wages of sin.

His austerities and manners were as far from christian excellence as his doctrines were from truth and simplicity. To eradicate concupiscence, he submitted to a painful operation, against which human nature revolts; and to subdue every bodily craving, he exercised the severest rigour of

mortification. Familiar with cold, nakedness, and poverty, barefooted, abstaining from wine, and every indulgence, frequent in vigils and fasting, he macerated the body. This remarkable severity of manners contributed greatly to enhance his character for sanctity, as the depths of his philosophic researches exalted his reputation for wisdom. Thus he opened the road to all the gloomy discipline and follies of monkery, which the spirit of self-righteousness afterwards beget on pride and self-sufficiency, and produced the hermits and solitaries that peopled the deserts and monasteries with the useless crew of celibataries.

The school of Alexandria was the chief scene of his labours. He was heard as the oracle of science, honoured by all the philosophical sects, and his name was in high celebrity among heathens as well as christians. Nor did the violence committed upon himself prevent his being ordained a presbyter in the church of Alexandria. From thence he travelled to Athens, every where disseminating his Platonic christianity, and generally admired and revered, attacking every heresy with the artillery of his profound erudition. His philosophical christianity and Platonic theology seemed the very reverse of Paul's determination, "to know nothing else but Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Greatly, therefore, as Origen was venerated in his day ; eminent for ability and activity, and closing a long life of profession with a readiness to suffer every torment for the religion he maintained, his christianity appears awfully equivocal. No man contributed more to corrupt the simplicity of Gospel truth ; no man opened a wider door to the wildest systems of errors ; no man's teaching and example more powerfully paved the way for all monastic follies and abuses : and, if an impartial examination is made of the good or evil arising to christianity by his labours, the latter will be found to preponderate, and leave very meagre features of a christian man, or of a christian divine.

Cyprian, elected bishop an. 248, martyred 258, was in many things worthy, but he was a man compassed about with infirmities. In his epistles he mixed sentiments highly exceptionable, with observations wise and judicious. We

must note with disapprobation assertions so unscriptural as the following: "There is only one episcopacy: such as are out of this church have no salvation to hope for." "No baptism is valid, nor any ordination valid out of this church," meaning that to which Cyprian belonged. "Baptism in the church always procures remission of sins." "Calamities are to be wished for, as they enable us to merit the rewards of heaven."

Cyprian was by birth a man of family. His fortune was considerable, and his prospects in the world promising. He was bred to the bar, had a learned education, was an admired orator, and not an inelegant writer. His genius was vivid, and his erudition respectable. When he became a christian, he readily sacrificed all that he might win Christ. His substance he distributed to the poor, and his talents he devoted to the church, of which he became a bishop about two years after his conversion. He was also a married man, that being as yet no bar to the episcopal office.

During the persecution of Decius, Cyprian lay concealed; the ravages it occasioned were great, but the apostacy greater. The picture which Cyprian draws of the state of christianity preceding this persecution, exhibits a fearful view of bishops, presbyters, and people. The professors lost in worldly-mindedness and gain;—luxury and effeminacy in dress and manners generally prevalent;—profaneness without a check, and marriage with infidels common: even bishops, not only negligent of their flocks, but utterly deserting them for pleasure or gain: thus the declension, which had long before commenced in the days of peace and prosperity, advanced with hasty strides. Though the conflict was much less fierce in Africa than in many other places, and deserved the name of trial rather than persecution; yet, on the first sound of the edicts of the bloody Decius, before the magistrate sat or the informer produced an accusation, crowds of nominal christians ran to exculpate themselves, and to offer the prescribed sacrifices: too numerous to be all admitted to the proof, they regretted the delay of another day to brand themselves apostate.

At first Cyprian continued openly to support his own church, and wrote exhortatory letters to the suffering brethren at Rome ; but the madness of the pagan populace demanded him for the lions, and he withdrew from the scene of blood.

His retreat, however, did not prevent his anxious care for his own and other suffering churches. Many of his beautiful letters were written during his concealment. His letter to the church of Carthage bespeaks a wise and experienced Christian. He guards the confessors against spiritual pride, and warns them against fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. His other letters breathe the same spirit of parental care and watchfulness.

We must pass over more slightly a numerous host, who shone in the firmament as stars of lesser magnitude. Hippolytus, Julius Africanus, Dionysius of Alexandria, Methodius, Minutius Felix, Arnobius : all have left us writings, and are delivered down to us as the successful defenders of the Christian cause. Indeed it was now universally prevalent, but the professors were more than the possessors, though they also were a great host.

The government of the several churches in an enlarged circle was now consolidated under one head with magisterial authority. The bishop, however, still consulted his presbyters and the congregation of the faithful in matters of moment relative to his church. One bishop also had great pre-eminence over his fellows ; summoned councils ; presided at their deliberations ; and usually swayed their opinions. Such was Cyprian in Africa. The bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria claimed a sort of pre-eminence for the antiquity of their respective sees, and were consulted on difficult matters. The bishop of the great metropolis began to claim a certain priority of dignity above his fellows ; but whilst the bishops watched with jealousy the ambitious encroachments of their companions in office, each endeavoured to extend his claims in his own church. They assumed every day more of absolute rule in their own sees, trenching upon the rights of the presbyters, and excluding the interference of the faithful. These were now taught implicit obedience,

and heard the constant warnings of the deadly crime of resisting episcopal authority seated upon the throne of God, and claiming divine right and submission. The evils necessarily resulting from such a spirit appeared in the pride, pomp, luxury, and carnality of many of these prelatial dignitaries. The other orders endeavoured to imitate them in lording it over their inferiors. Even the deacons usurped many of the offices of the presbyters, and appointed beneath them a group of inferior orders, sub-deacons, door-keepers, readers, exorcists, buriers of the dead, which strengthened the clerical army with their subordinate functions.

Though marriage was still generally used, a state of celibacy continued to acquire unmerited reputation, and monkery, the offspring of the Platonic philosophy, and fondling of the great oracle, Origen, banished multitudes from society.

The sacraments also, instead of simple memorials, and outward signs of inward and spiritual grace, began to be supposed to have divine grace necessarily attached to them, and to acquire a value which they had not before attained; becoming so indispensibly necessary to salvation, that the communion was administered even to infants.

Long sermons full of trope, figure, and allegory, with an affectation of Grecian eloquence, were introduced by the school of Origen, and tended greatly to debase the simplicity of Christian truth. Incense now first smoked on what began to be called the altar. The sacrament of the Lord's supper was celebrated with greater pomp and solemnity. Gold and silver vessels were used in the service, with garments for beauty and glory: supposing these would command greater reverence and respect for the sacred mysteries. They began also to speak of the elements after consecration, in a language which laid the foundation for the doctrine of transubstantiation, and by degrees proceeded, after a course of ages, from veneration to adoration, and from high mystical flights to suggest a real body of Christ in the eucharist.

Before admission to baptism, the exorcist, with frightful menaces and formidable shouts, pretended to expel the prince of darkness from the candidate. The remission of sins was thought to be the immediate effect of baptism rightly admi-

nistered by the bishop or his delegate. By his subsequent prayer and imposition of hands, the Holy Ghost was supposed to be given. These baptismal solemnities were reserved for the great festival of Easter, and the forty days succeeding. A solemn parade and procession of the exorcised and baptized, in white garments and crowns, in token of their victory over the devil, closed the august ceremonial.

The Platonic doctrine of demons, generally taught and believed, introduced all the absurdities of spells and exorcisms, and as bodily macerations were supposed of peculiar efficacy, and the demons less troublesome to those who were lean and hungry than to such as were fat and full, all were put under discipline, and the degree of sanctity increased in proportion to the rigour of the fast, and the mortifications imposed on the body. Days of fasting were enjoined and multiplied by bishops and councils; and sharp and bitter contentions followed, whether they should be on the sixth or seventh day of the week. In aid of other mighty weapons against the powers of darkness, the sign of the cross began very generally to prevail, and Christians undertook nothing of moment without this important precaution.

Prayers were universally offered thrice a day, according to the custom of the Jews. On festivals, the general mode was to stand; on days of fasting and humiliation, to fall on their knees, or prostrate on the ground. Forms of prayer began to be introduced; but no ritual was generally established. Every man was yet at liberty to express the sensations of his mind in free and unrestrained effusions.

Though the rubbish now began to disfigure the sanctuary, there appears in numberless instances a genuine spirit of zeal for Christ, and fidelity to his service. The doctrines which are according to godliness may be found in the greater number of the writers of that age.

With all the mixtures of what was evidently wrong, the body of the church held fast to the head Christ. The labours of Cyprian must have been greatly blessed. Such was the very flourishing state of the African church, that he was able to assemble sixty-six neighbouring bishops. When we

see his own sufferings and those of a multitude of others, we cannot but hope that many of these African bishops and of the flocks in their small dioceses were men of true primitive simplicity of manners.

The unhappy idea of the unity of the church under a particular mode of government, produced the plenteous tares of controversy. To avoid it, multitudes removed to the obscurer scenes of life, and, unaffected with the asperities of the prevailing disputes, quietly pursued their way to Heaven and glory, through sanctification of the Spirit.

Many spared no expence or trouble to multiply and circulate copies of the word of God ; a work then of no small difficulty, and a treasure of the value of which we are incompetent judges, who, since the art of printing has been invented, can so easily and for a trifle procure what was then so hard to obtain. Something like the modern Bible societies took place about this time.

As we approach the close of the third century, we observe that a long scene of comparative ease and prosperity ; the unchristian disputes which prevailed ; the growing importance of clerical men ; the vast prevalence of the profession of Christianity ; the general ascendancy of ambition and controversy in the Christian nominal church, bespoke a very declining state of spiritual religion.

But, notwithstanding all offences, Christianity was now rising to universal empire. The system, both in its principles and practice, was so superior to paganism, that after the school of Alexandria arose to meet the philosophic sects with weapons drawn from their own armoury, the folly and falsehood of the established superstitions were completely demonstrated, and contempt was poured on the rabble of pagan deities, the objects of popular devotion. Christianity, also, in the garb of Platonism, lost many of its most revolting features in the eyes of the rationalists, and they more easily abandoned a religion which before they did not believe ; and gods whose conduct excited horror and disgust instead of adoration. Thus, without ever tasting the grace of God in truth, multitudes even of the wiser heathens and philosophers, became converts to the profession of Christianity, and

swelled the number of deserters from paganism. In vain Celsus, Porphyry, Lucian, whetted their weapons of argument or ridicule; the more the matter became the subject of examination, the more the Christian apologists triumphed, and numbers of the learned and superior grades in society joined the banner of the cross. But these were far from the ornaments or living stones in the spiritual temple. Of the wise, the mighty, the noble professors of Christ, few were ever found really faithful. The gate of Heaven is too strait, and the road too narrow for many of them to enter.

Christians now were not debarred from honours and offices: the emperor's court was filled with them; the army composed of Christian professors, both officers and soldiers; and many held high civil employments. The churches, no longer able to contain the crowds of worshippers, were enlarged and multiplied. The Pagan altars were abandoned to the priests that attended them. The living few rejoiced to see the casting down of Satan's empire in the idolatrous world, while they lamented the prevailing abominations among those who bore the Christian name, and the pride and worldliness too strongly marked in the priesthood as well as people. We should greatly err if we thought the former days were better than our own. With some fluctuations, great declensions and alternate revivals, Christianity subsists now as in the days of the apostles. The glory of the Lord then evidently appeared; it spread to the ends of the earth. The truth as it is in Jesus hath ever since had its confessors, and often its martyrs; but oftener those who had only a name to live while they were spiritually dead. Then as now the many endeavoured to reconcile the incompatible services of both God and mammon. But there was and ever will be a remnant according to the election of grace, whom false science and philosophy shall never deceive nor pervert from vital godliness.

Century IV.

At the close of the third century, the Roman empire was under the dominion of four; for Diocletian had associated Maximian to share with him the cares of government, and by each of these a successor had been chosen: Galerius by Diocletian, and Constantius Chlorus by Maximian. These four had divided the empire between them. Diocletian and Galerius occupied the east and Africa, Maximian and Constantius the west. Gaul and Britain fell to the care of the latter. Diocletian himself had been long indifferent to all religions, though professing paganism. Maximian was a brute in nature. Chlorus was a man of candour, and, though no Christian, not a polytheist. He kept his portion of the empire undisturbed. But Galerius fostered a rooted enmity to Christianity, and breathed nothing but fury and slaughter against all its professors. He used all his influence with the aged emperor, now more than ever influenced by the pagan priests, to extirpate the Christians; but Diocletian, sensible of the immense number of those who must be devoted to destruction, preferred the more cautious steps of suppressing their assemblies and intimidating their leaders.

The great church of Nicomedia was the first object of vengeance, as a prelude to the razing of all the rest. The first edict enjoined the suppression of Christian worship, and the seizure and delivery of all their sacred books, in order to commit them to the flames. Many eluded the edict, and concealed the sacred treasures, whilst some bishops and presbyters, to avoid the threatened ruin, gave up their Holy Scriptures, and were branded by the zealous as *traditores*, or traitors. An. 303.

The church at Nicomedia being levelled to the ground, and other sacred edifices sharing the same fate, a second edict issued, depriving the Christians of all preferment, honour or dignity, in the state or army. Men might have an appeal to the laws against professors of Christianity, while they were excluded from legal protection, and exposed to every insult without redress. A daring disciple, whose zeal prompted

him to pull down the unjust decree, was seized and burnt alive.

As the measures hitherto adopted were not fully correspondent to the sanguinary spirit of Galerius, he caused, as Lactantius asserts, the palace of Diocletian to be set on fire, and then accused the Christians of the act, with a malicious design to destroy both the emperors. The too credulous Diocletian became infuriate at the accusation, and Nicomedia flowed with the blood of martyrs as incendiaries. Diocletian's wife and daughter, suspected of favouring Christianity, were compelled to sacrifice: the eunuchs of his court, and the officers of the army were the first victims. The bishops and principal presbyters were seized and conveyed to prison, and another edict compelled them by every torture to sacrifice to the Gods, hoping their example would effectually influence their flocks. Some purchased their lives by base compliance, but many endured all the severity of torture and death itself, rather than deny their Lord; more were buried alive in the mines to expire in hard labour and poverty.

But the fidelity of the martyrs and confessors being unconquerable, their sufferings confirmed the faithful and confounded their enemies. A fourth edict therefore came forth, at the instigation of Galerius, commanding the magistrates to torture even to death, without distinction of age, sex, or station; to use every wile or cruelty to make the Christians apostatize, and to slay the obstinate. Nor could any thing short of that Almighty arm, which can support the feeble and subdue the proud, have prevented the utter subversion of the Christian church.

It would be endless to particularize the sufferings of multitudes who braved every torment which malice and cruelty could invent. Humanity recoils at the recital of such atrocities, and turns away from the groans of the tortured, and the convulsions of the dying. Promiscuous slaughter of all ranks and ages dyed the fields with blood; an entire city was given up to flames and the sword; and where policy wished to spare useful subjects, they were condemned to slavery. To sacrifice or to suffer was the only alternative. Instigated by the orders of

the inhuman tyrants, as well as goaded by the priesthood around them, the magistrates vied with each other in the execution of every brutal edict. A noble army of martyrs peopled the mansions of glory, and from their blood sprang up a numerous host of confessors ready to meet the same fate.

An. 305. Galerius, ambitious as cruel, had now seized the empire from his associates. He compelled Diocletian and Maximian to resign their dignity, waiting for the entire dominion on the death of Chlorus, whose ill state of health soon promised his rival that gratification. Meantime he associated to himself in the cares of empire Maximin his sister's son.

Constantius Chlorus, drawing near his end in Britain, solicited Galerius to send him his son Constantine, who was kept as a hostage at court. The request was refused, and Constantine, sensible of the danger of his situation, determined to attempt his escape. Accordingly he seized an opportunity, and, to prevent pursuit, is said to have killed all the post horses on his rout. His arrival at York was but just announced when Constantius expired, and the army, without waiting to consult Galerius, immediately pronounced Constantine emperor of the west in the room of his father. Thus, in the very moment when the light of Israel was threatened with extinction, God provided a protector for his afflicted church. An. 306.

Galerius heard with indignation an event so contrary to his ambitious designs; and, compelled to suppress for a time the vengeance he meditated, reluctantly confirmed the purple to him whom he hoped soon to strip of this imperial ornament.

A contest took place between Galerius and Maxentius, who had succeeded Maximian in Italy. Thus weakened by dissension, Constantine first attacked Maxentius, defeated him, and seized Rome the capital of the world. About the same time, Galerius perished by a lingering and painful disease.

Constantine, who with his father had ever favoured the Christians, now openly appeared their protector. And as Galerius had, before his death, either from policy or the hor-

rors of a guilty conscience, suspended all the edicts, and restored freedom of worship and repose to the disciples of Jesus, the world at last saw the banners of the cross erected in peace. Maximin, the successor of Galerius, made a feeble effort to renew the scenes of blood ; but he soon fell by the sword of his colleague Licinius. And he shortly after yielded the purple to Constantine, who thus became the undisturbed possessor of the Roman empire, both east and west, A. D. 313—323. By his instrumentality the Christian church and people were preserved amidst the fires that had been kindled around them.

Constantine, the first Roman emperor who professed Christianity, is usually surnamed the Great. A nobler appellation would have been the Good, but he merited it not. Whatever obligations the church owed to him, he probably owed as great to the Christians, and policy directed his conduct as well as conviction.

It is most likely that Constantius his father had communicated to him his own views. He despised the gods of heathenism. Disposed to tolerate all religions, under the influence of sceptical principles, he could not but observe the excellence and fidelity of the Christian character, and therefore, like many others, though no Christian himself, he preferred them in his household, court, and army, where they enjoyed protection, and prayed for the prosperity of their humane sovereign. The vast increase of Christians also could not but make it a considerable object among those who were contending for empire, to secure such a body in their interest by toleration, rather than to exasperate them by persecution.

The empire to which Constantine was advanced, rendered it necessary to strengthen himself and weaken his enemies as much as possible ; his interest, therefore, concurred with his inclinations to favour the long persecuted, but now wide spreading, professors of the Christian name. There is no evidence that Constantine was at all a Christian at his accession to the empire. It rather appears, even after his victory over Maxentius, that he considered all religions as alike useful to mankind. Though he tolerated Christianity, and ad-

mitted its public worship, he left all parties the same liberty, and attached himself as yet decisively to neither.

A miraculous appearance of the cross in the sky, and the vision of Christ to Constantine, are believed by many Christian historians to have taken place, and are supposed by them to have been the means of his conversion. We cannot say that these things did not take place, for they were not impossible, nor can we deny that the Lord might manifest himself to him in this extraordinary way; but the evidence of the fact is far from being conclusive: we can conceive that such a report might have a great effect upon the Christian soldiers in both armies, and tend powerfully to secure the object he had in view. A dream he might have had, and have mentioned it; and his banner with the inscription "in hoc signo vinces" annexed to a cross, might conduce to the victory which he gained. Had the fact been as he reported, ten thousand witnesses of his army would have rendered his own oath to Eusebius unnecessary. And were it a reality, Constantine must have been still more criminal to sin against such conviction, take no decided part with the professors of the religion of Jesus, and not immediately join in their worshipping assemblies. Nothing of which appears till long after.

Become the conqueror of Maxentius, and, as it seems, chiefly by the support of Christians, his favour to them was shown by great munificence to their poor. Their bishops were honoured and caressed by him, and their synods held and supported by his authority. Licinius had taken a contrary party. As his rival, Constantine, openly protected and cherished the Christians, Licinius persecuted and oppressed them. The latter courted the priests of the ancient superstition, and endeavoured to strengthen his authority by the support of his pagan subjects. The matter was thus at issue: the cross prevailed, and paganism fell with Licinius.

Having now no longer a competitor, Constantine resolved to take the most decided part with the Christians. He prohibited the heathen sacrifices, and shut up the temples, or converted them to the purposes of Christian worship. He

universally established Christianity, and tolerated no other religion openly throughout the bounds of his empire.

That Constantine might be sincere in his preference of Christianity to all other religions, there is little reason to dispute, nor does it much signify whether he was sincere or a hypocrite in his profession, if his heart was not right with God. That such was his state, appears upon the clearest and most decisive evidence. He waded to empire through seas of blood; his nearest relatives were sacrificed to his ambition. Nothing in his whole life discovers a trace of real conversion to God, and his latter days were the most oppressive and tyrannical. The whole tenor of his life, except favouring bishops, building churches, enriching them with wealth and costly ornaments, and other very equivocal marks of Christianity, displays no trait of a Christian character or a Christian hero.

The bounties he bestowed, the zeal he displayed, his liberal patronage of episcopal men, and the pomp he introduced into worship, made the church appear great and splendid; but it is not easy to find in Constantine a trace of the religion of the Son of God. As an outward professor, and for an outward church, no man was more open or more zealous: as a partaker of the grace of God in truth, either in genuine repentance for his crimes, or real newness of life, better evidence is wanted than that of Eusebius, who, like many a courtly bishop, is very cordially disposed to exalt the king by whom he himself had been exalted.

Constantine chose to die in the profession of Christianity as the true religion, and from some of its doctrines, ill understood, expected to be saved by the water of baptism, to which ignorance and superstition had now annexed the remission of sins. But every one who has truly learned Christ, sees nothing in all this to prove that Constantine died other than he lived.

His establishment of Christianity contributed very much to the debasement and declension of true religion. From him and his son Constantius, evangelical truth suffered in the spirit of the Christian professors, as much as their persons and

outward circumstances had suffered from Diocletian or Galerius.

To those who look to the flourishing state of the church, in exaltation, honour, and general establishment, Constantine may appear a Christian hero, a great emperor, a nursing father: to those who look to the man, they will see at best a very dubious character, whose morals were a disgrace to the profession of Christianity, and whose principles, if he ever had any, were those of education.

The rising pompous church began to eclipse all who basked not in the sunshine of imperial favour. These were few, and of no reputation, and, rising to no height of episcopal dignity or eminence, they were suffered quietly to walk with God; to be blessed, unnoticed, and unknown.

About the year 320, Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, came into public notice. He was a man of science, grave deportment, irreproachable manners, and an acute disputant. He was of the school of Origen, the prolific father of heresy, the offspring of false philosophy and human reasonings. The famous Eusebius had trod in the same crooked path, and his Platonic system had begun to degrade the Son from co-equality, whilst he seemed to admit co-eternity with the Father. Arius advanced with a larger stride, asserting that before he was begotten he had no existence; that he had a beginning, and was created from non-existence. Proud reasoners from that day have moved downwards through all the gradations and shades of distinction between essential deity and the mere man Christ Jesus: but the difference is less important than it appears. The infinite distance between self-existent and created godhead, renders every subsequent gradation from a nominal God to no God at all inconsiderable. The first step is the essential heresy.

The opinions of Arius were too cogent with the pride of human wisdom not to find multitudes of defenders. Disputes enlarged the number among the wise and philosophic, who, by attempts to make that clear and consistent with reason, which must be incomprehensible because above it, spread the Arian heresy, for which the Platonic philosophy had prepared the Christian world.

Arius was expelled from the church by Peter, bishop of Alexandria, but restored by his successor Achillas. He was afterwards, with many of his adherents, excommunicated by a council at Alexandria. But all the philosophic school of rational Christianity espoused the cause of the heresiarch, and widened the breach.

An. 325. It was thought worthy the great Constantine himself to preside in the decision of this controversy at Nice, in Bithynia. The general assembly, therefore, of episcopacy met in all the pomp of magnificence, with the emperor at their head, and, after disputes the most violent, the Arian heresy was condemned; the creed drawn up by Hossius of Corduba, since called the Nicene, was adopted; and banishment enacted against all who should refuse to subscribe the decree in its favour.

Arius was deposed, excommunicated, and forbidden to enter Alexandria. All this party, except two, engaged to subscribe to what they did not believe. The breach, instead of being healed, was made wider than ever. The change of a single letter, *ομοιουσιος* for *ομοουσιος*, gave to the vanquished party the means of evasion. So every one who subscribed retained his own sense.

A wordly church and an outward uniformity being the object pursued by Constantine, it is no wonder that a person acting on no settled principle should veer about. After the death of his mother Helena, his sister Constantia acquired great influence over him; Arius and his party, whom she befriended, had their condemnation reversed; and, though the Nicene creed continued unrepealed, Athanasius, who had succeeded Alexander at Alexandria, and the orthodox Trinitarians, found the courtly party, with the emperor on their side, strong enough to counteract all that had been decided, and to turn the tables of persecution on the orthodox. An. 326.

Athanasius was expelled from his see, but he returned triumphant to the charge, the unshaken champion for many years of what is yet held by the orthodox as the scriptural doctrine of the Trinity.

The deposition of Athanasius at the synod of Tyre was the triumph of Arianism. It desolated the church of Christ

more extensively and more permanently than any other heresy whatever.

The church was now, in the esteem of some, exalted to the highest pinnacle of prosperity. It was invested with vast authority, and the episcopal order collected in synods and councils, with almost sovereign dominion. The churches vied in magnificence with palaces, and the robes and pomp of service imitated imperial splendour. If outward appearances could form a glorious church, here she could present herself; but these ornaments concealed beneath them all the spirit of the world, pride, luxury, covetousness, contention, malignity, and every evil word and work.

The unhappy success of some, in discovering real or pretended carcasses of certain holy men, multiplied the festivals of martyrs in the most extravagant manner. These, in the manner of the heathen Bacchanals; were chiefly observed in revelling, gluttony, drunkenness, and diversion. Fonts for holding the water were set up in the porch of every church, for the more commodious administration of baptism. In some places they added salt, as an emblem of purity and wisdom. Every where they anointed the person with oil, both before and after baptism. The baptized were obliged to wear their white garments for the space of seven days. Such was the folly of these times, that pilgrimages were undertaken to Palestine, and to the tombs of martyrs: as if thence the principles of virtue were to be had. Quantities of dust brought from Palestine and other holy places were handed about as powerful remedies against the influence of Satan, and sold and bought at enormous rates. The same virtues which the heathens had attributed to their temples and images, were by the Christians ascribed to their consecrated churches, and their images of holy men. The worship of the martyrs was gradually formed upon the heathen plan of worshipping their inferior deities. Tombs were falsely pretended to be the lodging places of the sacred bodies of saints: and even robbers, and wicked or fictitious persons, were enrolled in the sanctimonious list. Some buried the bones of the dead in retired places, and then pretended they were informed of God in a dream or vision that a saint lay there. Many,

chiefly monks, travelled about selling their fictitious reliques, or deceiving the people with ludicrous combats with evil spirits. Many had already lived solitarily in the manner of savage beasts, especially in the deserts of Egypt, of whom Peter the Hermit, who, after ninety years of solitude, died in 343, was the chief. In a short time the whole east was filled with these indolent mortals, who pretended the necessity of idleness and self-maceration in order to enjoy fellowship with God. From the east this gloomy institution passed into Europe, and prospered so exceedingly, that Martin, bishop of Tours, a chief promoter of it, had two thousand monks attending his funeral. The two general classes of the monkish order were the cœnobites, who lived together in fixed habitations, and formed societies under some common governor; and the eremites, who lived in deserts, caves, and holes of rocks. The anchorites were still more rigid. They sought for the wildest deserts, lived upon roots and herbs as beasts; and to the utmost of their power shunned the sight of mankind. The sarabaites were a fraternity who went about selling reliques and working fictitious miracles. The cœnobites were often guilty of the most shameful and unnatural crimes. No wonder, then, that the church was every where contaminated with crowds of profligate persons.

The rites of worship were exceedingly multiplied. It was a leading maxim with many, that the new religion ought to be conformed to the heathen as much as possible, in order to please such as had assumed the Christian name, and to allure such as had not. Hence, while many of the heathen temples were by consecration turned into Christian churches, many of their ceremonies were adopted into the service of the true God, and the Christian ritual became extremely pompous and splendid. Gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax-tapers, crosiers, or bishops' staves, instead of augural rods, processions, lustrations, images, and such like marks of pagantry were equally seen in the heathen temples and the Christian churches. Nor did the churches newly erected differ in almost any thing material from idolatrous temples. So that the conversion of heathens into Christians too fre-

quently now imported scarce any thing else but the name. The heathen had imagined the vast number of temples drew the favours of the gods upon the country. The Christians now fancied that multitudes of churches dedicated to God, Christ, his angels, and saints, drew down the favour of the divine persons and other celestial beings upon a place, in proportion to their number or magnificence, they being greatly delighted with such testimonies of respect.

By degrees the people became degraded into annihilation. Their voice was neither asked nor their consent deemed any longer necessary: even the presbyters bowed to sovereign episcopal sway, and ministerial court appointments. The prelatical government became modelled, like the imperial, into great prefectures: of which Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople claimed superiority whilst a sort of feudality was established, descending from patriarchs to metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, some with greater, and others with less extensive spheres of dominion. Thus all grasped at more than belonged to them; eager to enlarge their own respective privileges, yet cordially conspiring to erect the most despotic episcopal authority over all the Christian world beside, and assuming to themselves all church powers as they claimed all its emoluments.

Among these, the bishop of Rome held a most distinguished place. Constantinople, however, began to eclipse the ancient seat of empire, and her bishop to claim a supremacy, which, however, was always disputed, and terminated at last in the schism of the Greek and Latin churches. General opinion seems to have been in favour of the ancient capital. The splendour of her bishop, his riches, revenues, pomp of worship, and multitude of clerical offices, attracted especial notice. Hence the elevation to that see became a principal object of sacerdotal ambition, and occasioned contests and tumults, contrary to every idea of Christian charity and humility. Yet, though claiming some privileges above his fellows, the bishop of Rome had as yet pretended to no direct dominion over his brethren, who were supposed to hold by the same divine right as himself. This abuse, like all others, grew up by degrees, and chiefly by a succession of crafty

pontiffs embracing, in a system of uniform policy, every occasion to aggrandize themselves, and exalt the power of their see. This they successfully practised, till they trampled at last upon the prostrate world. A real Christian can discern amidst all abuses a glorious church; not indeed in these disgraces to the Christian name, but in the hidden, secret, faithful few, who entered into none of these depths of worldly policy.

The Platonic philosophy had introduced the preposterous notion of a purificatory process to pass on departed spirits. The martyrs had also risen into wonderful and criminal veneration. Their relics and tombs were supposed to possess singular sanctity, and to afford protection from wicked spirits. A desire to render Christianity more palatable led to the adoption of the ceremonies of paganism, only altering their objects, and putting saints and martyrs in the room of the deities that were exploded. Visitation of the tombs led to distant pilgrimages where famous men had lived and died, especially to Jerusalem, where Christ and his apostles had resided, and chiefly expired. And as the difficulties and the distance increased the meritoriousness of the act, these kind of penances became fashionable. The very dust from the tombs was brought home as precious: and a tooth or a bone esteemed an invaluable acquisition. With such fooleries the Christian world was amused, deceived, and enslaved; laid open to all the juggles of an interested priesthood, and a veneration inculcated for things and persons, that produced an accumulated load of superstitious ceremonies and observances, superseding the whole of evangelical and vital religion. All the artifices of heathen priests were coarsely imitated by their Christian successors. Prodiges, miracles, visions, conflicts with the devil, were pretended, to give sanctity to places and persons, in order to multiply objects of devotion, encourage pilgrimages, increase a veneration for the office, and fill the pockets of the clergy. Such was the general body of the church in these last golden days of Constantine.

In the midst of all these conflicts, disputes, and follies, Christianity extended its pale in the east and to the north.

Persia was full of professing Christians, persecuted by Sapor, and supported by Constantine, who obtained peace for them. But the outward diffusion of the knowledge of Christianity must be ever distinguished from the possession of the truth in the love of it. The subjects of the latter being few, and generally poor and despised, rarely afford grounds for notice from those by whom the records of history have been handed down to us. They were too simple to enter into all the learned disputes and definitions, and were content to worship God the Son as the true God; and to acknowledge a triune Jehovah, without attempting to comprehend the mode of his existence. Among the bishops themselves, there were doubtless men of true faith and primitive manners, such as Hosius of Corduba, and several others: men uninfected with courtly ambition and worldly objects. In these the true church subsisted. They were separate and distinct from their fellows, whilst dwelling among them. Though outwardly sharing in the same worship and ordinances they were men essentially of a different spirit, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

An. 337—340. On the death of Constantine, his three sons divided the empire. Constantine the II^d had Britain, Gaul, and Spain; Constans, Illyricum, Africa, and Italy; while Constantius possessed the east. Discord between the two first soon ended in the death of the elder, and the annexation of his dominions to those of Constans. Nor did Constans himself long enjoy the fruits of his fratricide, being slain by the sword of Magnentius, who aspired to empire, and contended with Constantius for universal dominion. But failing in the contest, he laid violent hands on himself, and left the world again subject to the son as it had been to the father.

An. 350. Constantius seems to have embraced his father's religion. The court was Arian, and therefore this became the fashionable religion. The party now uppermost failed not to improve the opportunity of oppressing the orthodox, urging the emperor to acts of violence against the patrons of the Nicene Creed. The old and orthodox patriarch of Constantinople recommended a successor who was chosen by the people and the presbyters to fill the see, but being known to

be in the opposition to the Arian and courtly party, Constantius, by his own authority, ordered his deposition, and placed Eusebius of Nicomedia, the zealous friend of Arius, in the see.

These proceedings excited the most violent sensations in the Christian world, and roused all the zeal of polemics in defence of the true and established doctrine. The deity of God our Saviour was not an article of faith that would admit of compromise. Many in that day thought that the salvation of sinners depended on the faith in this essential truth: and therefore contended for it stoutly, and often too violently. On the other side, the Arian weapons of warfare appear to be still more unchristian. These were deceit and intrigue; and meanly courting the great, that the strong arm of vengeance might be exerted on their adversaries: from this last charge even the orthodox when in power cannot be excused.

A protest of a hundred bishops, assembled under the famed Athanasius, against the deposition of Paul, and the election of Eusebius, produced his own deposition, the emperor's wrath, and another synod. After a violent struggle, and many acts of cruelty, Athanasius, justly apprehensive for his life, fled to Rome, as yet the seat of orthodoxy.

A general council was held at Sardicæ; but, instead of healing the divisions, the same asperity and the same animosity continuing, widened the breach, and the combatants parted more irreconcilable than ever. Indeed it is hardly possible it should be otherwise. The matter in dispute was incapable of compromise. Athanasius, however, obtained a vindication and acquittal from all the charges laid against him. Successive councils were held, but without any good effect. Sometimes the Arians, and sometimes the Athanasians predominated.

An. 361. In the midst of these contentions, the emperor closed his life of tumult; having just deposed Miletius, and conferred the see of Antioch on Euzoius, the pillar of the Arian heresy, from whose hands, shortly before his death, he received baptism: deluded with the idea then commonly entertained, that a ready passport to heaven was thereby gained.

Julian, his successor, had escaped the massacre of his relations, and was the only surviving branch of the imperial family of Constantine. He had been sent to command in Gaul, and was engaged in a dangerous but successful warfare against the Germans. On a decisive victory, his army, by acclamation, saluted him with the title of Augustus, in opposition to his earnest and reiterated remonstrances to the contrary.

Julian is branded by historians as the apostate, but hardly deserved that name. The christianity he had been taught scarcely merited the title. He beheld with horror his cousin's hands defiled with the blood of his nearest relations; he saw all the religion of the court consisting in the ambition and intrigues of sycophantic bishops; and he was too far removed from the poor and lowly, but sincere followers of Christ to have ever discovered the divine power of genuine christianity, whilst he was tired out and disgusted with the bitter quarrels and contentions of nominal christians. His philosophic friends strengthened his objections, and turned his hatred for the ill usage of his family by professing Christians, against christianity itself. From his earliest youth initiated in classic literature, his proficiency was considerable, as his labours were indefatigable. He produced several literary works, in which he displayed much vanity of science, but few traits of a deep and matured understanding. Seduced by the flatteries of the pagan sophists, he became the dupe of the most abject superstitions, and he betrayed as gross an ignorance of true philosophy as of religion by his implicit belief and diligent study of all the absurdities of magic. His writings afford a strange mixture of genius and folly, of wit and weakness, of candour and simplicity. Yet his virtues deserve an honourable mention. He was as brave in the field as diligent in his duties; most exemplarily temperate, disdaining the indulgences of the animal man, and eager to acquire the title of philosopher: and what above all deserves a tribute of praise, in all his enmity and opposition to christianity, he indulged nothing of that cruelty which had so often marked his pagan predecessors. With sovereign power he maintained universal toleration. He

favoured indeed the superstitions which he himself practised, but he compelled no man by any pains and penalties to conform to them. He condescended as an author fairly to enter the lists with argument and ridicule, as more potent adversaries had done before. There is nothing in all this inconsistent with the character of an honest, mistaken man. His tolerant indulgence of all sectaries is but the duty of every governor, whatever his religion may be; and its policy, as well as its justice, deserves to be imitated. He did little harm to true christianity by shutting up the philosophic schools, whilst he left to every man the free perusal of the word of God. His candour, his lenity, his tolerance, deserve admiration. Christians have abused him with an asperity, and infidels vaunted his excellences with an exaggeration, of which he was equally undeserving.

His favour to the Jews, in permitting them to rebuild their desolate temple, seems perfectly consistent with the general toleration he had granted, and might or might not be designed with particular enmity to the Christian faith. Whether this was interrupted by balls of fire, or the death of the emperor, the agency of Providence is still the same.

An. 363. The death of Julian put a period to all his purposes. After a short reign of twenty months, he fell in the flower of his age, in an expedition against the Persian monarch. So that from him Christianity could have received no material injury: and whatever his intentions might be, the true church enjoyed under him all that real Christians need desire, tolerance and peace.

An. 363. Jovian, during his short reign, approved himself a cordial friend to the church of Christ, and appears an eminent instance of true wisdom and piety; maintaining general toleration even to pagans, whilst he promoted the faith which he himself embraced with his countenance and support, without violence or persecution of those who differed from him. Under him, Athanasius, drawn from his concealment, returned to govern the church of Alexandria, and to enjoy a short gleam of prosperity, till the emperor's death paved the way for a new order of things.

An. 364. Valentinian and Valens succeeding to the empire, though brothers, took different lines of conduct. Valentinian, like Jovian, protected the orthodox, whilst Valens, deeply rooted in the Arian heresy, renewed in the east the persecution against those who upheld the Nicene creed, expelled them from the seat of prelacy, and placed the churches under the care of those of his own faith.

An. 371. Athanasius suffered another banishment through Arian malice, but was again recalled to his see, and permitted there to die in peace. That he was not exempt from many things highly blameable is certain: we dare not palliate his faults, but candour forbids severe reprehension, and inclines us to impute them rather to the times than to the man.

An. 378—379. Valens perished in battle. His successors, Gratian and Honorius, concurred in their endeavours to suppress paganism, and erect the banners of the cross, but none used methods so strong and severe as Theodosius, who has received the name of Great from those whom he favoured, though nothing in the man or his manners deserved such a title. His temper was violent, and his government tyrannical. In order to suppress paganism, he made it a capital crime to sacrifice or attend any of its rites. Resolving to establish uniformity of religion and worship throughout the empire, he enacted cruel pains and penalties against those who refused to conform to his establishment. He is highly commended by the great luminaries of that day for his zeal. But he was a fierce bigot, establishing uniformity by the most unchristian edicts.

For nearly forty years Arianism was the prevalent religion, especially in the east; and, except Athanasius and a few resolute witnesses for the truth, all the bishops of any name in the Christian world, at Rome, Antioch, Constantinople, and Alexandria, subscribed the Arian creed, submitted to the emperor, and kept their bishoprics. Even the orthodox managed their disputes in a manner so anti-christian, that victory thus obtained was no triumph: and, with regard to all the trumpery of superstition and monkery, they

were as deeply involved in these, or more so than their rivals. The monks and solitaries were all professors of the Nicene creed.

The Platonic philosophy, so highly revered, having established the maxim "of the necessity of the abstraction of spirit from body in order to come into communion with God," every bodily mortification was prescribed, in order to attain this desirable end. Celibacy and virginity, fasting and poverty, self-inflicted punishments and solitude, were, therefore, recommended as the first of attainments, and essential to eradicate every thing human from the heart. From these, all the orders of friars and nuns, black, white, and grey, have since sprung.

The light of truth and grace was grown very dim, and the power of it was reduced very low ; but the church was exalted very high, full of magnificence, riches, and honours. To obtain these much coveted blessings, the most scandalous and often bloody contentions took place between ambitious rivals for the same preferment.

Among the numerous authors who in this century wrote on Christian subjects, the following hold a chief place : Macarius, Victorinus, Pacianus, Optatus, the Apollinarii, Ephraim, Hilary, Basil, Gregory, Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Jerom, Augustine. Their characters will be found detailed in Mr. Milner's Church History, and passages extracted from their voluminous works with exemplary patience, some of them breathing the spirit of truth, piety, and grace. But whoever will be at the pains to consult these vast folios themselves, will be disappointed at finding them stuffed with a farrago of superstition, errors, monkery, Origenism, Platonism, bitterness, and bigotry, that will little repay the pains of perusal. Some indeed are less exceptionable than others. Chrysostom and Augustine are among the best. But the moderns, on every subject which exercised the pens of these ancient sages, are superior to them in force of argument, precision of doctrine, and clearness of evangelical truth. Indeed all the fathers were far from infallible guides or decisive authority. Were errors such as are found in them to be detected

in modern authors, they would destroy their reputation, and sink them low in the public esteem.

Origen, Tertullian, and many others, stand branded with heresy. Even the soundest, such as Ambrose, Jerom, Chrysostom, all vindicate the practice of evil that good may come, and the lawfulness of pious frauds ; nay, impiously affirm that both Peter and Paul inculcated and practised them. Indeed, they severally stand convicted of a want of truth, that the meanest Christian at present would blush to have proved upon him. It is a very insufficient apology that in these dark ages, with their dim light, these humble souls groped their way to the heavenly kingdom ; for they had the same Bible, and the same divine interpreter as we have. In many things they no doubt are commendable ; but as enlightened Christians, as deep divines, as masters in Israel, we find them strangely defective. Their antiquity has clothed them with a veneration and magnitude, to which, if we judge by their writings, they are little entitled. Can error, folly, fraud, lying, miracles, superstition, monkery, receive any justification or apology from the spirit of the times ? The Bible is the sole record of divine truth ; nor can any departure from its doctrines be admitted. We may and ought to pity the mistakes of good men, and may safely admit great excellence compatible with great ignorance and infirmity. But such are not the oracles we may follow, nor the examples we must imitate. Nor can we honour such feeble and often false interpreters of the Scripture, as most of the Christian fathers are, with the appellation of sound divines.

An. 395. Augustine figures among the most eminent of the fathers as an author, but a considerable portion of his writings is jejune, declamatory, and sometimes highly objectionable. On the subject of the doctrines of grace, wherein he excels, there is more deep reasoning, solid argument, precision of language, and scriptural evidence in one page of Edwards on Free Will, than in all the voluminous works of Augustine. Yet is Augustine an eminent character, his principles evangelical, and the general tenor of his life highly exemplary.

The church, in all the pomp of rites and ceremonies, groaned under the load of her own trappings. Vestments, holidays, fasts, festivals, shrines, martyr's tombs, and holy water, had begun to deck out the church of Rome. The growing virtue of relics, and the supposed efficacy of the intercession of departed saints, opened a door for the grossest superstitions.

Now also was first introduced that unscriptural mode of patronage, since become so prevalent. To encourage the building of churches, the builder was permitted to appoint his own presbyter. Wealth and riches had acquired the first importance, and the congregation of the faithful was become nothing in the scale.

The government of the church was entirely new modelled. Instead of the people chusing their own bishops and presbyters, they were no more consulted. The presbyters wholly depended on bishops and patrons; the bishops were the creatures of patriarchs and metropolitans, or were appointed by the emperor. In this manner church and state formed their first inauspicious alliance, and the corruption which had been plentifully sown before, now ripened by court intrigues for obtaining bishoprics from imperial appointment, or on the suggestion of the prime minister.

Men were not wanting who had sense to discern, and courage to remonstrate against these growing abuses. Such was Jovinian, who denied the superior sanctity of monachism, celibacy, and bodily macerations, and affirmed that a Christian who lived in marriage, and a life of temperance and piety, was equally acceptable to God. But he was soon silenced by the bishop of Rome, and by the famous Ambrose, and banished, at their instigation, to the isle of Boa.

Ærius, a presbyter, made a firmer resistance, and maintained the more offensive doctrines, that bishops and presbyters in the Scripture were the same persons, and only different descriptions of age and office; that prayers for the dead were futile, and hope from their intercession vain; that stated fasts and festivals had no sanction in the New Testament. These, with similar assertions, roused a host of enemies, and he was quickly silenced. Superstition stalked triumphant,

and no man dared to open his mouth against any abuses. Indeed the monkish institutions and self-inflicted austerities were regarded as the perfection of human excellence.

We have seen the outward visible church rent with disputes, and sunk in pride, pomp, luxury, and ignorance. But, amidst grievous departures from evangelical simplicity, much truth and godliness remained. Many bishops were truly men of God, such as Augustine and others, with their little and obscure flocks; who, in their contracted spheres, seem to have obeyed the precepts and to have cultivated the pure doctrine of the gospel. Of this we have a strong testimony borne by Ammianus the historian, a heathen philosopher, and an enemy to Christianity. "At Rome," says Ammianus, "they ride in chariots, attended by a noble retinue, feasting luxuriously, their tables surpassing those of kings: but how much more rationally would they act if they imitated the exemplary lives of their poorer brethren, the bishops of the provinces, in the plainness of their diet and apparel, the modesty of their looks, and the humility of their demeanour, walking acceptably with the eternal God as his true worshippers."

A pleasing fact thus opens to our view, that, far from the courts of monarchs and the thrones of cathedrals, in humble poverty, retired from scenes of luxury and ambition, a race of worthy pastors fed their flocks, who were truly apostolical in their manners. Far removed from the great sources of corruption, riches, power, and connexion with the great and philosophic world, they gave themselves to the word of God and to prayer; their work was their wages, and their people their crown and joy of rejoicing.

We have also ground for believing, that many of the solitaries of the desert, who had fled from persecution, felt happy to have escaped from a disordered world, to be more occupied in the work of prayer and praise, and that many of them walked with God, and went to glory. Such are God's secret ones, the remnant whom the world knoweth not; the chosen called and faithful; the only church worth a Christian's care.

Century V.

The establishment of Christianity under Theodosius seemed to have placed the catholic church on an eminence. The name prevailed, but the glory was departed. The profession of Christianity had become general, but the power of it was nearly lost. Ambition, pride, luxury, and all the evils engendered by wealth and power almost universally prevailed.

The vast empire of Rome was now divided into two parts. Arcadius reigned at Constantinople, and Honorius at Ravenna, who had preferred it to Rome for the capital of the west. Under the latter, the Goths began their ravages in the west, continuing their incursions till the final destruction of the empire. These were a swarm from the northern hive of barbarians, under the various names of Goths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Suevi, Alans, Franks, and Burgundians. The desolations which these invaders spread were inconceivable. The barbarous tribes were in general idolators, ignorant, warlike, living only by the sword. Those among them who had imbibed any thing called Christianity, had chiefly received it from the Arians, whom the severity of the Theodosian establishment had compelled to take refuge among the northern barbarians, and who had converted them to their Christianity. The first irruptions of these savage conquerors were marked with uncommon fury against the catholic profession. Wherever the Arian conquerors came, they retaliated severely on the Nicene believers all the evils they had themselves suffered. Gaul and Spain were deluged with these barbarians, and Genseric, passing into Africa, every where marked his way with blood. The bishops who confessed the true divinity of Christ were tortured, maimed, banished, or massacred, and their churches levelled with the ground. An. 429.

In the east, the Persian monarchs exercised similar severities, and threatened the extinction of the Christian name. Even where the Roman dominion still subsisted, the bitterness and enmity between the orthodox and heretics, supplied the place of pagan adversaries. The contests for the greater

bishoprics of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and other cities, exhibited the scandalous conflicts of men professing the peaceable religion of Christ, and murdering one another in support of the candidates who disputed the several sees, with mutual excommunications and torrents of blood. Amidst these ravages without and within, ignorance and superstition advanced with gigantic strides.

The pagan system indeed was nearly destroyed in the western empire, though some symptoms of it yet remained. Fresh edicts restrained the pagans, and in the east the younger Theodosius completed the conversion of their temples to the worship of the true God. But the east escaped not the ravages of northern barbarians. The Huns cruelly invaded and plundered Thrace and its confines; the Vandals Africa; whilst the Goths poured as a deluge on the west. There, after the sack of Rome, Italy fell with its capital into the hands of Odoacer, and hardly began to breathe under a settled government, before a new horde of Ostrogoths supplanted their fellows. Under Theodoric their leader they conquered Odoacer, and seized the disputed throne. The miseries of the church during those conflicts were terrible; nor could such accessions as were made be any compensation for the losses sustained. Even the conquerors, when they assumed the profession of Christianity, with whole nations and armies baptised at the instigation of their monarchs, only changed one superstition for another, and seem nearly as much heathen as before. Such were the Franks under Clovis, who was persuaded by his wife to embrace her religion. He and all his court were baptized by Remigius bishop of Rheims.

An. 449. The Saxons, invited to assist the helpless Britons to expel their northern foes, seized the kingdom which they were called to defend;—inhumanly ravaged the country;—destroyed the churches and monasteries;—and drove the poor remains of the Christian inhabitants into the mountains of Wales. Desolation spread on every side: but men repented not of their wickedness, and the church grew more corrupt than ever, both in doctrine and practice.

The imperial establishment of uniformity was far from procuring the peace of the church, and still farther from ad-

vancing its spiritual prosperity. The church indeed became vast in extent. The wings of the temple were stretched out wider and farther, but the divine inhabitant was fled.

An. 411. The Manichæans continued to disperse their wild opinions of the two original principles of good and evil.

The Arians still subsisted, though held down by the strong arm of power. Many were banished, but they carried with them their opinions, which were held with greater tenacity, because of the sufferings which they had brought upon them, and for the same reason they taught them with greater zeal among the barbarians where they had taken refuge. Under the northern ravagers a fair opportunity was given for avenging the injuries which they had suffered, and they made use of it. Their arm fell heavy upon the orthodox whom they conquered, especially in Africa; and they pleaded in their vindication the example which had been set them by the Theodosian establishment. Banishment, expulsion, plunder, and often death itself, were the penalties they inflicted.

An. 429. New heresies sprung up. Nestorius and Eutyches, two men of good reputation, started a fresh subject for investigation respecting the nature of Christ: and, taking opposite sides, formed two great parties in the church.

The orthodox church believed the incarnate God to be perfect God and perfect man. Apollonaris had denied Christ a human soul, and supposed that the divine nature supplied its place. Nestorius suggested that Christ consisted of two persons. He refused Mary the title which religious zeal had begun to give her, of the mother of God, and allowed her to be only the mother of Christ, to whose human nature alone the title should apply. Cyril of Alexandria denounced his anathemas against this new sentiment, which were in the same manner repelled by Nestorius of Constantinople. The world was in a flame about a manner of expression. The council of Ephesus declared the true faith to be "one divine person, in whom both natures completely subsisted without confusion." Notwithstanding the condemnation of Nestorius, his sentiments were extensively propagated in the east, where still a large body of Christians remains of that denomination.

An. 448—451. Eutyches adopted the opposite sentiment to Nestorius, and maintained that Christ had but "one person and one nature, the incarnate word." Hence he was accused of denying Christ's humanity, and as such excommunicated and deposed. Reciprocal excommunications followed. In these the pontiff of Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople were opposed to each other; and thus the division between the Greek and Latin churches was widened. An. 482.

It does not appear that Nestorius or Eutyches denied the godhead or glory of Christ, or the real atonement made by him on the cross; but it was the miserable temper of those times to be searching Plato and Aristotle for subtleties of explication, and as soon as a new idea was started, it was made the subject of solemn controversy. Anathemas liberally hurled at each other widened the breach, and verbal controversies were transformed into mortal errors.

An. 411. A new heresy was introduced by Pelagius, which spread far and wide. The radical principles of this heresiarch went to the destruction of the fundamental doctrines of revealed religion, a vicarious atonement and divine influence. He denied the corruption of human nature, or any imputation of sin from the first man; affirmed that every person is born as pure as Adam; that sin is only the imitating Adam's transgression; that nothing is necessary to human perfection but the exertion of our native faculties; that every man who does evil has it wholly in his own power to repent and amend; that the human will is as free to good as to evil, and requires no supernatural aid; that an infant needs no remission of sins; and that our works are meritorious of salvation.

A new modification of the doctrine of Pelagius, under the name of semi-pelagianism, was introduced. Cassian, its advocate, admitted, that though every man had power to commence repentance without divine preventing grace, merely by the calls of the word, no man could persevere without it. He denied that divine grace was given to one more than another in consequence of any predestination; affirmed that Christ died alike and equally for all men; that the same

grace necessary for salvation purchased by him was alike offered to all men ; that a man without grace was capable of faith and holy desires ; that every man was born in a state of perfect freedom of will, equally capable of resisting the influences of grace, as of complying with its suggestions. This system suiting the spirit of proud unhumbléd man, it spread through all the western and eastern churches. It is the religion of the unawakened conscience, and will not be vanquished by any weapons of earthly temper.

Augustine, in many a laboured treatise, nobly defended the doctrines usually denominatéd evangelical. The grand point he maintains, is the necessity of divine grace in order to salvation ; that there is an eternal purpose of God or predestination with regard to those who shall be saved ; and that they, and they only, will finally obtain it.

An. 451. The emperor deposéd and turned out, or appointed the bishops as he pleased ; and his influence hitherto met little or no resistance in nominating to the important sees. Constantinople, the seat of his residence, was raised to peculiar dignity. The bishop of Rome grew jealous, and using all his wiles, contended for the supremacy. The east chiefly acknowledged the one, the west the other, but each missed no opportunity of enlarging their several jurisdictions. The great patriarchs now assumed the sole right of consecrating bishops in their province ; convened yearly synods ; encouraged appeals to their courts of judicature, and received complaints against their prelates. But the emperor and general councils interposéd to check the patriarchal abuses. To extend their authority, the patriarchs endeavoured to attach the monks ; protected them against their bishops ; excited disputes between the prelates ; and sought to draw all power to themselves. Rome especially received applications with avidity, and, by a politic profession of being the protectress of the oppressed, drew appeals in abundance to her tribunal. By a well regulated system of craft and encroachment, she continued to rise in the scale of eminence. Nor did the vices of the clergy lessen the reverence paid to them by the ignorant and superstitious multitude,

The monks, under divers leaders, served to support the

dignity of the church, and converts were multiplied throughout the Christian world.

Departed spirits rose into veneration ; their images began to be held sacred. A fancied immediate presence of the saint was supposed to be attached to some of them ; and pretended miracles consecrated their deification. The merit of visiting the tombs of martyrs, and pilgrimages to other famed places, grew into a thousand abuses ; and relics were esteemed a sovereign cure for diseases of body or mind, for driving away devils, and a charm against every human misery. The bishop of Rome encouraged this lucrative trade, and dispersed these wonderful favours to the deluded multitude. In addition to the nostrums invented to quiet men's consciences in this life, the purgatorial fire came in aid to save them in the next ; and, as the clergy claimed the most ample power of regulating its severity, or terminating its duration, the deceived crowd were eager to procure their help to alleviate their expected sufferings, or to shorten the period of their torment.

In the beginning of this century, a new order of monks was instituted, who obtained the name of Watchers, from their method of performing divine service without any intermission. They divided themselves into three classes, which relieved each other at stated hours, and by that means continued without any interval a perpetual course of divine service. Amongst the mystics, many not only affected to reside with wild beasts, but imitated their manners or shut themselves up in narrow and miserable dens. Men, who, by standing several years motionless on the tops of pillars, acquired the name of pillar-saints, were highly revered. About the year 427, Simeon, a Syrian, introduced a refinement in mortification, by residing successively upon five pillars of six, twelve, twenty-two, thirty-six, and lastly of forty cubits high. In this wretched state he continued during thirty-seven years of his life, and his sublime example was emulated by one Daniel, a monk, who resided sixty-eight years upon the top of a pillar, and died in that situation at the advanced age of eighty.

Baradatus, a monk of Syria, erected for himself, upon the summit of a mountain, a box so contrived as not to admit of

his standing in a perpendicular posture, and which, having no close cover, exposed him to all the inclemencies of the wind, the rain, and the sun. He afterwards contrived to raise himself from his supine posture, and continually stood upright, covered with a garment of skin, with only a small aperture in his box sufficient to allow him to draw his breath, and stretch out his hands to heaven. His cotemporary, James, not less disposed to austerity, fed entirely upon lentils, dragged about a load of heavy iron chains, bound about his waist and neck, from which several others were suspended. In the course of three days and nights, in which he offered up incessant prayers, this admired maniac was so covered with the snow as to be scarcely discernible. Pretended miracles were perpetually reported, and they were referred to by some of the fathers of the church, not only as examples of Christian perfection, but as infallible authorities for the validity of particular doctrines.

An increasing veneration for the Virgin Mary had taken place in the preceding century, and very early in this, an opinion was industriously propagated, that she had manifested herself to several persons, and had wrought considerable miracles in support of the substantial party. Her image, holding in her arms the infant Jesus, was honoured with a distinguished situation in the church, and in many places invoked with a peculiar species of worship.

Every splendid appendage which had graced the heathen ceremonies was now interwoven into the fabric of Christianity. That which had been formerly the test of Christianity now became a Christian rite; incense, no longer considered as an abomination, smoked upon every Christian altar. The services of religion were even in daylight performed by the light of tapers and flambeaux. The discovery of relics was proportioned to the desire of obtaining them. No fewer than the remains of forty martyrs were found by the credulous Pulcheria, the sister of Theodocius. This princess, on approaching the place where these bodies, according to the revelation with which she had been favoured, were deposited, had the ground broken open. The princess then approached, and discovered a considerable quantity of

precious ointment, and two silver boxes, which contained the inestimable relics of the martyrs. These she honoured with a magnificent shrine, and deposited it near the remains of the holy Thyrsus, who she believed had thrice appeared to her for the purpose of discovering the place where the martyrs were interred. The undecayed body of the prophet Zachariah was likewise said to have been found in consequence of a revelation from himself, after it had been interred about twelve hundred years. The pretended remains of Stephen, of Nicodemus, of Gamaliel, and of several others, made their appearance about the same time; but the exhibition in detail of such knavery and folly as accompanied these transactions, would afford little amusement and still less profit. The account of the seven persons who fled from the persecution of Decius into a solitary cave near Ephesus, where, after a repose of an hundred and ninety-five years, they awaked as vigorous and in appearance as youthful as when they entered it, is familiar to all.

The compliance with every pagan superstition which could be at all reconciled with Christianity, was extended, on all occasions, to the utmost excess. Amongst others, the Christians attempted to obtain a knowledge of futurity, by methods similar to those employed by the pagans, who used to divine by opening the books of Virgil, and the first verses which arrested their attention were interpreted into a prediction of their destiny. Instead, however, of divining by the *Sortes Virgiliana*, the Christians made use of a Bible for the same purpose; and the practice was carried so far, that many of the inferior clergy found in it a very lucrative trade.

The ceremonies of the church grew in proportion as the life of religion was lost. The clergy failed not to make themselves important, and the ignorance of the times, and the established superstitions, regarded them only as capable of approaching the Deity, and obtaining favourable responses from him. A pomp of worship, garments, utensils, and altars, awed the vulgar into reverence, and a round of perpetual loud-sounding services night and day kept up the semblance of fervent devotion. The churches were loaded with ornaments. Solid silver encased and enshrined the rotten

bones, bodies, and relics of the saints. Public penance was now cunningly dispensed with, and private confession to a priest substituted in its stead. Thus to receive absolution was convenient for the culprit, and the practice gave importance to the ghostly father.

Notwithstanding the depravity and corruption which pervaded the clerical body, the whole was not contaminated. Instances of disinterested virtue illuminated the dreary and dismal annals of the fifth century. We behold with veneration and with pleasure the liberal Deogratias, bishop of Carthage, selling the costly plate of the church for the ransom of a number of captives. Nor was this a solitary instance of public and private virtue: it was even exceeded by Acacius, bishop of Amida, who ransomed seven thousand Persian captives perishing with hunger. The erudition, piety, and truly Christian charity of Atticus, bishop of Constantinople, who distributed liberally, not only to the orthodox, but to the necessitous heretics; the still greater mildness of Proclus, his friend and disciple, towards the heretics, and his active as well as passive virtues; the piety, simplicity, and affability of Licinius, a Constantinopolitan prelate, are instances of human excellence worthy of imitation.

Augustine was evidently a bright and shining light, adorning the fifth century. In conduct he was exemplary; sound in the faith, and zealous for its purity. We hear of four hundred and forty-six bishops assembled with him in Africa, then apparently the garden of the church. These and some of their flocks may be supposed men of like minds with himself. Their situation in life was probably indigent, devout, and simple, like the people to whom they ministered, and with whom much of the power of godliness yet rested. And, no doubt, in other parts of the empire, many resembling these were found, far from the greater sees, the constant objects of ambition and avarice, and distant from the councils of polemic bitterness and contention; men who shunned unprofitable disputes, intent on the edification of their flocks.

The labours of St. Patrick in Ireland were said to be attended with such effects on that wild people, as to give hope that something better than nominal Christianity was produ-

ced. But the legendary tales of these popish apostles are to be received with much hesitation.

Not only among the catholics, but with the reputed heretics also we may expect to find men of a right spirit, and truly devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the hasty anathemas denounced against them.

The grievous sufferings of many, through the incursions of the barbarians, or the savageness of Arian persecutors, could not but greatly tend to drive the faithful to seek their rest in the great shepherd of Israel; whilst those who yielded their bodies to stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, for the preservation of a good conscience, gave the most unequivocal evidence that they knew in whom they had believed.

Century VI.

The general state of the outward church in this century was dreadful. The progress of barbarism advanced rapidly. Goths and Vandals reigned. A momentary triumph of Justinian was succeeded by fresh swarms of Lombards, who fixed their empire over the degenerate Romans, and ruled them with a rod of iron. Yet the conquerors themselves by degrees melted down into the same mass with the vanquished, adopted their religion, and exchanged the ritual of heathenism for Christianity, from which its features were now scarcely to be distinguished. Wondrous conversions of whole nations, Germans, Gauls, Britons*, encreased the

* Towards the close of this century, Bertha, the believing wife of Ethelbert, one of the most considerable of the Anglo-Saxon princes, excited in her husband a favourable opinion of her own religious faith. This was greatly increased by the arrival of Augustine, the monk, who travelled on a holy mission into Britain, in the year 596. This monk, aided by the labours of his forty companions, whom Pope Gregory associated with him in this mission, had the happiness to complete in

fame of the monkish apostles, who ministered baptism to them by thousands. Though continuing to live in all their former savageness of manners, licentiousness, and ignorance, the repetition of a formula, and the sign of the cross admitted them with facility within the pale of the church : except the change of names, little perceptible difference appeared between the Christian converts and the pagans.

Pretended miracles multiplied under such priests and people, and produced admiration, nay almost adoration, of the sacerdotal order, who were said to be solely invested with this high privilege. But all the power of monarchs, and all these wholesale conversions, hardly replenished the ravages made by the Saxons in Britain, the Lombards in Italy, and the Huns in Thrace and Greece. In Persia the desolations were still more dreadful, and reduced the profession of Christianity very low. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons by Augustine, of the Irish by Columbas, of the Alans, Bohemians, and some savage hordes near the Euxine sea, added comparatively but little to the nominal fold which had been wasted by war and the sword.

The internal state of the church was dark and gloomy. Ignorance and superstition advanced with rapid strides.

Ethelbert the conversion which Bertha had begun. He preached, he persuaded, he threatened, and his labours were so successful that Christianity reared her triumphant fabric upon the ruins of paganism. Heathen temples were converted into Christian churches ; Christ Church was formed into a cathedral, and the monk whom Gregory had invested with full spiritual power over all the British and Saxon clergy, assumed the title of Archbishop of Canterbury. Upon his arrival in Britain, Augustine found the christians of Britain attached to the tradition of the eastern churches, respecting the time of celebrating Easter, and differing also from the practices of the church of Rome in the performance of some baptismal rites. This variation was warmly and haughtily condemned by the arrogant monk ; but the British clergy would not submit to his imperious decrees. They refused even to acknowledge him as their archbishop, and would not be prevailed upon to change their ancient ceremonies. During six hundred years, the Britannic church never acknowledged any subjection to the power of the Romish prelates.

Even pope Gregory the Great contributed to it as much as the most stupid barbarians. His abhorrence of all pagan literature induced him to proscribe the noblest works of heathen antiquity, and to devote the writings of Livy and other admired authors of ancient Rome to the flames.

The monks, now cloistered and separated from the rest of the world, preserved the little literature which remained in the western world. But, covered with the thick darkness of bigotry and superstition, their labours are supposed to have done more harm than good. Indignation rises on reviewing these miserable compositions of conventual folly.

Scarcely an author of that age affords a treatise that is worthy of perusal for edification. Their commentaries on scripture are wretched; either consisting of quotations from the fathers and ancient doctors, or allegorical interpretations, where all is visionary, perverted, or buried in hidden meanings and mysteries. Whilst these were held up as the mirrors of doctrine, the models of practice were blazoned in the lives of the saints, decked out in all the frippery of monkish fooleries, and self-instituted services of voluntary humiliation and atrocious mortifications of the body. The scriptures, the only sure guide to a holy conversation, were forgotten, whilst all these self-instituted forms and follies were supposed to advance the Christian to a higher rank of sanctity than the Bible ever taught.

The corrupt lives of the clergy bore a growing proportion to their wealth, the honours they claimed, and the veneration paid to them. The bishops of Rome stand branded out of their own mouths by the mutual criminations of the contending candidates for the holy see, with every thing detestable. Symmachus and Laurentius, by assassinations, massacres, and perpetual tumults, strove for the sacred tiara. Three councils were assembled at Rome, to determine on the validity of the accusations, alike forcibly urged by both parties against their antagonists, and probably equally true. However, the papal chair was consigned by Theodoric to Symmachus, without any evidence of his having justified himself from the charges laid against him. The greatest crimes of the clergy seldom exposed them to the slightest correction. *Omnia Romæ*

venaliqu, all things at Rome are on sale, was as true of Rome papal as pagan.

Yet the clergy contrived to maintain their dominion over the superstitious and ignorant people. Nor did any thing in their conduct prevent the multitude from lavishing their treasure to procure absolution, which these good men alone could grant, and the participation of the merits of departed saints and martyrs, which was only to be secured through their mediation and instrumentality.

The merit of monkery and of all who contributed to this unnatural seclusion, filled the world with convents, and the outward church with its most zealous defendants. This great army fought in one uniform cause for their own privileges, and those of the church to which they belonged.

Images of saints and relics multiplied so immensely, that there were sometimes more bones of a single saint than ever belonged to any one human body ; and afterwards more pieces of a cross than would have made several. Purgatory kept up its lucrative trade. The merit any man wanted might be purchased by building churches and monasteries, or maintaining communities of idle monks, or by interesting the dead on their behalf, and buying a little of the superabundance of their merits. The church appropriated these, together with the relics to herself. To increase this valuable stock they ransacked even the oil of the lamps that burned at the tombs of the martyrs ; and the bishop of Rome disposed of this rich commodity at no inconsiderable price ; and sent it to crowned heads as the greatest present. It being supposed to be invested with celestial energy to chase away evil spirits, and to heal alike the diseases of body and mind.

The primitive doctrines of the gospel were so entirely obscured by superstition, that great numbers began to conceive that the profession of religion was all that was necessary for acceptance with God. When they made expiation for atrocious offences by the infliction of voluntary personal punishment, or added pomp to the worship of the monastery, they conceived their salvation most certainly attained. Early in this century, Sigismund, king of Burgundy, who had cruelly murdered his own son, attempted to appease the vengeance of

the Supreme Being by liberal donations to the monastery of St. Maurice, in Vallais, by the institution of a full chorus of perpetual psalmody, and by an assiduous practice of the most austere devotions of the monks.

Benedict, the founder of an order which is still distinguished by his name, erected in the wilderness twelve monasteries, each containing twelve monks, one of which, from a variety of causes, increased so much in splendour and reputation, as to be not only exempted from episcopal power, but to hold fourteen villages under its peculiar jurisdiction.

To expatiate upon the extravagances and absurdities practised by the different orders of monks, or to recount the artifices practised by them in their commerce with the world, would afford a detail little edifying or agreeable.

Degraded by superstition and ignorance as the cloistered retreats certainly were, they however became almost the only refuge to which learning and philosophy could retire from the tumults of war and the desolations of barbarism. The founders of many orders had extorted from their followers a solemn obligation to employ a certain portion of their time in the daily study of books deposited for their use. An accumulation of absurdity would in an ignorant age be necessarily admitted at the same time; but this obligation occasioned the reception of a fund of genuine knowledge into these gloomy repositories.

The same heresies continued to afford abundant matter for the polemics of councils, and to exercise the zeal of the orthodox. Curious and unprofitable questions respecting the nature of Christ chiefly engrossed attention, and were furiously disputed. Did one of the Trinity suffer? Was his nature compounded? and the like.

The Arians maintained a firmer footing: for a long while protected by the northern clans, whom they had converted. But the Vandals, being expelled from Africa and Italy, recovered these provinces, returned to the orthodox faith, and several of the Gothic kings, whether from policy or conviction, changing their opinions, Arianism lost ground before the expiration of this century, and has never since risen into power or eminence.

The Nestorians in the east were the most zealous Christians, and spread abroad their tenets abundantly. Their missionaries are said to have extended Christianity into India, Armenia, Arabia, Syria, and all the countries adjacent.

The farther we advance, the less visible to observation grows the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. The prevalence of Arianism, during a great part of this century, contributed to extinguish the light in Israel: and Pelagianism, widely diffused, spread the subtle poison of pride and human sufficiency. If we add the reign of superstition, the general neglect of the scriptures, and the universally prevalent ignorance, we shall no longer wonder that we find so few faithful. Yet the light of Israel was not quite put out, nor the power of divine grace utterly withheld. He that promised to be with and in his church always, even to the end of the world, had not forsaken the earth.

The disciples of Augustine, in Africa and elsewhere, maintained manfully the doctrines of grace against the Pelagians and semi-Pelagians, who endeavoured to corrupt them, and to introduce the debasing alloys of human sufficiency and proud reasonings: with these we may expect to find a practice correspondent with their principle of faith working by love. In France, Lucidus and others strenuously asserted the evangelical truths against their opposers, and contended for the faith once delivered to the saints.

The mountains of Cambria still afforded a race, if not of primitive Christians (though we hope many such were among them), yet of men who refused to obey the insolent dictates of Gregory and Austin, though threatened with death for refusing canonical obedience.

The Nestorian zeal to spread Christianity in the east speaks strongly in their favour, and many of like spirit were to be found among the Novatians and Eutycheans. Though the semi-Pelagians in dispute were in the habit of contending for human power and perfection by their own exertions, there is reason to believe that several of them looked to Jesus Christ alone for salvation, and received the grace of God in truth, though fearful of admitting its all-powerful operations. Their hearts were sounder than their heads.

Century VII.

The barbarian conquerors had now generally submitted to the religion of the vanquished, and Lombards and Burgundians embraced the orthodox faith. The Anglo-Saxon kings of the heptarchy in England entered the pale of the church, many of them at the instigation of their fair consorts, and they easily ordered their subjects to be of their master's religion. And as England was famed for virtue and learning in that dark age, missionaries from thence and from Ireland, with St. Columbas at their head, issued forth to convert their neighbours.

An. 610. The Jews in Spain and Gaul continued to be converted by the sword, and driven within the pale of the church. The zealous Heraclius in the east dragged them to the fonts, and baptized them in multitudes. But the labours of the Nestorian Christians open a more pleasing prospect. Their missionary efforts appear as extensive as blessed; penetrating into India, China, and the immense nations of barbarians on their northern confines even unto Scythia and Siberia.

All outward persecution against the church as a body had subsided, and except now and then some scenes of transitory oppression in Persia, and turbulent attacks from the Jews in Syria and Palestine, the world was comparatively at ease, or rather lulled into the profound sleep of ignorance, superstition, and monkery. A stupid external system of pompous devotion included all the services of the church.

But now God was preparing a scourge, whose heavy hand to this day continues to be felt, and whose tyranny has nearly extinguished the Christian name from the pillars of Hercules to the remotest east, where Mahometan darkness covers the earth, and its gross darkness the people. In the country where first the Lord of life and glory drew his breath, and all the labours and sufferings of the first apostles were displayed; in those flourishing churches through Asia and Greece, to which

most of the sacred epistles are directed, there the crescent has supplanted the cross.

An. 622. In the beginning of this century arose the famed Mahomet, a man endowed with every talent for lifting himself to eminence in this world. He possessed deep contrivance, a noble person, ready elocution, invincible perseverance, and intrepid courage. He had exercised the business of a merchant in Arabia, and by travelling had gained a thorough knowledge of the country and its inhabitants. The Christianity there professed had been debased by superstition, and mixed with heathenism. He conceived, therefore, and executed the vast project of erecting the fabric of a new religion, of which he was ambitious to be regarded as the founder and prophet. Adopting the leading article of the Christian and Jewish faith, the unity of the Godhead, and manifesting the highest reverence for the one Jehovah, he marked every species of polytheism and idolatry with the deepest abhorrence. He pretended a divine commission for reforming the prevalent abuses among Jews and Christians, and to bring them back to the pristine and patriarchal religion. But knowing those with whom he had to do, and the general practice of polygamy in the east, and among the Arabs, he engrafted its general use into his religious system, and thus connected the most plausible point of doctrine with the most seductive and indulgent practice.

Mahomet displayed consummate skill in seizing the auspicious moment, and in using the proper means suited for the accomplishment of his purpose. Whether he was illiterate, fanatic, or an impostor, certain it is he was a great man : and the success which crowned his enterprizes is a proof of the wisdom with which they were planned, and the vigour with which they were executed. He saw the Christians divided, disputing, and one party harassing and persecuting the other ; Arabia, ignorant and half pagan, prepared to turn with every wind of doctrine ; the people around him naturally turbulent and warlike, and, if united under one head, sure to form a tremendous military force. His friends and connexions were considerable, but the consciousness of his own native powers afforded him surer resources. He began

covertly and with small essays : success beyond his most sanguine expectations emboldened his confidence, and he burst forth as a torrent on every side. All submitted to his arms, and generally embraced his victorious religion. His followers were naturally attached to him by the strongest ties: the love of war and the love of women. And as in the indulgence of these, heaven also could be attained as the final recompence, the advantages which he possessed for operating on the public mind were astonishingly great. His army, fired by religious enthusiasm, and pursuing the most desirable objects of the corrupted heart, power, wealth, and sensual gratification, seconded with all their might the designs of their politic leader.

Arabia submitted during the life of Mahomet. A solid dominion acquired, and forces trained to war, ready for farther enterprises, afforded his successors an easy conquest through the east in Egypt and Africa. They cut off from the Roman empire its noblest provinces, and threatened to subjugate the whole, had not the dissensions among the caliphs themselves, the successors of Mahomet, turned their swords against each other, and retarded the ruin that, rising as a flood, threatened to deluge the empire and the world.

The policy of the impostor contributed equally with his arms to spread his dominion. He contrived to set the Christians against the Christians. He proffered liberty of conscience and possession of property to all who submitted, and only wreaked his vengeance on those who resisted his power.

If he supported his cause, and endeavoured to extricate himself from embarrassments by pretended visions and revelations, this was only what the monks had taught him. He might fairly play off their own artillery against them, and with greater advantages impose on the credulity of the populace, and secure the interested support of his associates. The gross ignorance which every where prevailed; the grievous corruptions of doctrines and manners; the bitter quarrels fomented among Christians, and their irreconcilable enmity and anathemas against each other, rendered them not only an easy conquest, but as easy converts to the new religion, in which Christ held a high rank among the prophets, little

more degraded than he had been by many professing Christian teachers. The religion of Mahomet, by enjoining the externals of fasting, prayer, and alms-giving, gratified the pride and self-righteousness of the unhumbled heart ; whilst the sensual indulgences allowed by it afforded to the flesh all its most coveted gratifications. With such an army, and such a religion, the conversions must have been immense, and the conquests rapid.

During these conflicts, in which resistance was death or slavery, and every art and violence was used by the caliphs to make their religion as universally triumphant as their arms, the Christians must have suffered immensely.

Nothing can exhibit a more deplorable object than the internal state of the church during this century. The ignorance, that was universal and profound, will hardly be credited. Many of the bishops, neither able to write nor read, were sunk nearly into the same mental imbecility as their ignorant flocks, yet at the same time, they publicly displayed vestments daubed with gold and silver, crosiers embellished with the most precious stones, and ceremonies instead of vital religion : ceremonies so numerous and variegated, that they required a master to teach and some memory to retain them. The monks had monopolised in their convents the very rags of science, and attempted to adorn their few and puerile performances with the extravagances of legendary saints, and quotations from the fathers. But above all, they cultivated the splendid glory of polemic disputation. The beautiful subtleties of sophistical syllogism enabled the disputants to talk about controverted points with a profundity of apparent wisdom, that made an admiring audience gape, or the listening pupil stand amazed.

The writers of the day, trained up in these schools, imitated their subtle masters ; and a few unmeaning homilies, composed in this style, supplied a preached gospel, and were handed from one to another.

An. 660. Monastic rules and directions for the attainment of the supposed highest perfection of our nature, led men wholly off from the one great line of faith and holiness revealed in the book of God. Hence sprung the famous pe-

nitiary of Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury, describing all the various sins and their shades of evil, accurately distinguished and regularly classed according to time, place, circumstance, and intention of the offender, in order that the clergy might form an exact scale of penance proportioned to the offence. These fooleries gained a high reputation, and were generally adopted: whilst the doctrine of justification by faith through the blood of Jesus alone was forgotten, and sanctification of the Spirit superseded by practising these prescriptions of self-instituted mortification, penance, and oblations, till all real religion was lost in forms and ceremonies.

The vices of the clergy and people bore a pretty exact proportion to their ignorance. The moral instructions were included in a description of certain principal virtues, and those treated in the most jejune manner. And a remedy was ready for every violation in penance and alms, and for the greatest crimes, by building or retiring to a monastery.

This subject cannot be better illustrated than by translating a specimen of the divinity of the day, descriptive of the character of a good christian, exhibited to our view by St. Eloi, bishop of Noyon, in one of his famous homilies.

“ He is the good christian who comes often to church, and brings his oblation to be presented on God’s altar; and presumes not to taste of the fruits he hath gathered, till he hath first made his offering of them to God; who, on the return of the sacred solemnities, for many days preceding observes a sacred continence even from his own wife, that he may approach God’s altar with a safe conscience, and who can repeat by memory the creed and the Lord’s prayer.

“ Redeem your souls from the punishment due to your sins, while you have the remedies in your power. Offer your tithes and oblations to the churches; light up candles in the consecrated places according to your abilities; come frequently to church, and with all humility pray to the saints for their patronage and protection: which things if ye do, when at the last day you stand at the tremendous bar of the Eternal Judge, ye may say confidently to him, ‘ Give, Lord, because I have given.’ *Da, domine, quia dedi!*”

No man stood higher on the scale of piety, wisdom, and sanctity, than St. Eloi, as will appear by the gifts of a miraculous nature with which it was believed he was especially furnished. The writer of his life dwells upon one of these with singular complacence.

“Respecting this most holy personage, besides his other miraculous virtues, one was especially bestowed on him by the Lord; for, on his diligent search, and persevering with singular ardour of faith in this investigation, many bodies of holy martyrs concealed from human knowledge for ages were discovered to him, and brought to light.” Thus, after hundreds of years of putrefaction, the corpses of many saints were discovered and identified by this most accurate investigator. These relics raised the holy prelate to the summit of human reverence, and filled the coffers of his see with the most abundant oblations. The life of faith in the Son of God, and divine influence derived from his Spirit, had opened the way to heaven and glory for the primitive saints; but St. Eloi and his fellows had found out a shorter road, by the purchase of relics, and oblations to the church and her ministers.

The bitter contests between Rome and Constantinople for the supremacy proceeded to a final rupture between the eastern and western churches, which continues yet unclosed: the one too proud to receive an equal, the other to bear a superior. Notwithstanding all the craft and intrigue to enlarge the authority of Rome, and to create one supreme and visible head of all the churches, this still met with great opposition from many monarchs and bishops in the west, and in the east few submitted themselves to the tyrant's patent, but maintained their obedience to Constantinople. In order to strengthen the authority of the Roman see, her politic pontiffs contrived to attach the monks to her obedience, by encouraging them to quarrel with the bishops, and transfer their allegiance to Rome. Securing by their devotedness to this see a protector of their immunities, they were sure to find there a more indulgent superior than when under the nearer eye of their own immediate prelates: by this means, all the pretensions of the most insolent pontiffs found a

host of defenders, and the most blasphemous ideas were broached, as if every disobedience to these wicked men was rebellion against God in his vicegerent upon earth. Thus, wealth accumulating and power increasing through the west, a dominion grew up, which, in the succeeding ages, launched its thunders against monarchs, and brought the proudest of them to the feet of the triple crown which those Roman pontiffs assumed.

An. 629. Every head of the church distinguished his reign by the invention of some new holiday, and the addition of new rites and ceremonies. The festival of the cross was thus instituted, the relics of which were esteemed so inestimably precious, and so diligently collected, that after all the deeply deplored losses by infidels, more pieces of the wood were produced than ever Simon the Cyrenian carried, and which by some strange magic had been preserved incorruptible six or seven hundred years, and been found in a variety of places. There was nothing too gross for that superstitious age to swallow. The sanctity of the churches now grew to such an eminence, that they afforded a sanctuary to the most atrocious criminals, whence they might not be taken by any process of civil justice, and where they were supported by the alms of mistaken charity.

None of the writers in the church of this age are worth mentioning. They contain literally nothing that will repay the loss of time in reading them.

The old heresies remained to trouble the peace and provoke the censures of the church. The Arians, though declining, were numerous, and the semi-Pelagians maintained sharp warfare against Augustine and his disciples in Gaul and Britain. There also important disputes had taken place, respecting baptism, the clerical tonsure, and the time for the celebration of Easter: such trifles were then deemed of the last importance, and exercised the wisdom of synods and the keenness of polemic rage, as much and more than the very essentials of Christianity.

Whoever casts his eye over the dreary scene described, will be constrained to acknowledge how little of true religion could possibly remain in the church of God, corrupted in all

the superior branches, and contaminated by such examples : where ignorance sat enthroned, and all zeal was expended on idle ceremonies or trifling disputes. Yet the Lord had not left his church without witnesses. Many such remained, though hidden from observation, and calling no attention from the great saints and polemics of that day. The highly exemplary zeal of the Nestorians to spread the knowledge of Christ through the dark regions of the east, and the extent and success of their labours, suggest a strong evidence that the religion of the Son of God was cultivated in its power and divine influence among many of them.

The disciples of Augustine held fast the doctrine of that revered father, and with the evangelical principles the power of godliness hath ever vested.

At the close of this century also, the first traces appear of a small but precious body, afterwards named Waldenses. Retiring from the insolence and oppression of the Romish clergy, and disgusted with their vices, they sought a hiding-place in the secluded valleys of the Pays de Vaud, embosomed by the Alps, and removed from the observation of their persecutors, where they might enjoy purer worship, and communion with God. The origin of this germ of reformation cannot perhaps be exactly ascertained. They themselves affirm, that they began to separate themselves from the corruptions of the Romish church about three hundred years after the reign of Constantine. Their beginnings were indeed small, but they had in time great increase, and the vital spark of heavenly fire seems to have been in an especial manner preserved in this wilderness.

Neither numbers, power, nor greatness constitute the church. No man can belong to it who is not joined to the Lord in one Spirit ; and, however reduced the body may be to appearance, yet Christ still had his remnant, according to the eternal counsel of his will : the Lord knew those that were his in the darkest hour of the deepest apostacy.

Century VIII.

In this century, darkness thickens round us. All is a dreary blank of ignorance, superstition, and unchristian contentions. The church seems to have lost every thing which gave it characteristic excellence, purity of doctrine, and real sanctity of manners; while fraud, ambition, and vice rose to their summit over an abject world.

In the east, the Saracens continued to spread their arms and religion through Asia and Africa, inflicting upon the vanquished Christians the miseries and oppressions which a new dominion and a different religion necessarily brought in their train; whilst the distracted state of the eastern empire left the provinces an easy prey to the ravagers. The fierce disputes of contending parties in the church, carried on with inveteracy while their Saracenic foes were at the door, palsied the arm of resistance: biting and devouring one another, they virtually invited their enemies to seize the desolated empire.

The Turks, a new enemy from the wilds of mount Caucasus, also turned their arms against the Grecian emperors, and proved a dreadful scourge to all the Christians as far as their ravages extended.

An. 711—714. The Saracens, passing the Straits of Gibraltar, had rushed like a torrent into Spain, and extended their conquests to the mouths of the Rhone: Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and part of Italy, suffered by their ravages. The Grecian emperors could oppose but a feeble barrier to their progress, and Europe seemed ready to fall under the Mahometan yoke. Though submission to the conquerors secured life and some of its advantages, yet the sufferings and oppression of the Christians were great, and their number awfully diminished by conversion to the dominant religion, with which in every country they who have no religion will easily incorporate. The churches were turned into mosques, and frequented as before. Ignorance, superstition, and apostacy from all Christian godliness had made the tran-

sition imperceptible ; and, as every worldly inducement was held out by the conquerors to seduce their subjects to Mahometanism, the number of those who professed Christianity, and dared on its account to suffer the loss of all things, was comparatively small. The rest were a too easy prey to delusion ; nor, indeed, did they either gain or lose spiritually by the change of their religion, as they continued exactly the same men : with regard to any real excellence, their former Christianity gave them none.

About the middle of this century, the pope of Rome became a temporal prince, with all the advantages incident to it, in addition to his many high privileges as the nominal head of the church. This was brought about in the following manner.

The monarchs descending from Clovis, the king of the Franks, were a feeble and degenerate race. The first officer under them, called the mayor of the palace, having all the administration of affairs lodged in his hands, grew by degrees above his masters. The famous Martel, mayor to Childeric, distinguished himself by his opposition to the Saracens, who, having conquered Spain, threatened to spread themselves over Europe, but were checked in their career by his victorious arms.

An. 752. Pepin, who succeeded Martel as mayor of the palace, thought he might now safely seize the throne, as he already possessed the power ; and, having secured the suffrage of the states in France, they advised him to consult the pope upon the lawfulness of the act, that so he might do it with a good conscience. Zachary, bishop of Rome, being previously gained, gave his opinion that " the divine law permitted the indolent monarch of a warlike people to be dethroned by one more worthy to rule." Under this sanction, Childeric was deposed, and Pepin stepped into the throne of his master, assuming the name of king, as he had before exercised the authority of that high office. As a most Christian king, therefore, he now became in duty bound to support the see of Rome, that had so cordially seconded his views.

The interests of the church were thus strongly secured by these aspiring pontiffs, and the kings of France became bound

to advance the spiritual dominion of those who had been such friendly casuists to seat them on the throne.

An. 726. The contest about images occasioned much tumult in Italy. The pope was in opposition to the emperor; the Lombard kings profited by the contentions, and seized Ravenna, and other Grecian possessions, and attempted the reduction of Rome and all Italy to their dominion. The affrighted pope, therefore, summoned Pepin to his assistance. Pepin, grateful for favours received, passed the Alps, and, having conquered the exarchate of Ravenna from the Lombard king, compelled him to cede that principality to the Roman pontiff. The king of Lombardy was afterwards compelled to evacuate a farther extent of territory. The king of France bestowed the whole on the Roman pontiff, and thereby laid the foundation of all the future greatness of his see.

On the death of Pepin, the Lombard monarch made a fresh attempt to recover his lost dominions. The fugitive pope fled for succour to Charles, the successor of Pepin, who with pleasure embraced the opportunity of passing the Alps, and carrying his victorious arms into Italy. His success was complete. He routed the Lombard army, seized the throne and person of the monarch, and put a final period to the Lombard kingdom in Italy. An. 768.

The pope came in for a large share of the spoil, and Charles added considerably to the former grants, with an especial view, as the holy pontiff suggests, that the king of France might thus atone for his sins in that age. No more effectual method could be suggested for obtaining the pardon of his sins than liberal donations to the church, thereby interesting her ministers to intercede for the royal culprit.

Charles, named Charlemagne, or the Great, meant by these acts of pious benevolence, not only to secure the salvation of his soul, but to advance his own ambitious designs; intending, with the pope's approbation, to raise himself to imperial state. Accordingly it was resolved, that Charles should be raised to the empire of the west. His election was speedily determined, and he was solemnly consecrated by the obsequious Roman pontiff.

During these expeditions, the Saxons revolted against Charles, and being vanquished after a severe struggle, he attempted to break their savage spirit by converting them to Christianity: but their resistance being obstinate, he resolved to compel them to come within the pale of the church. A missionary army accordingly drove the enslaved Saxons by troops to the missionary baptists. Caresses and rewards seconding the threats of vengeance, the nation in general accepted the offer to become Christians in preference to being made slaves, and were baptized by thousands.

Nothing could present a more dreary scene than the internal state of the church in this century, ravaged with war and the spreading conquests of the Saracens. Meanwhile the progress of superstition was rapid in proportion to the wealth and power to which the church rulers were advancing. The knowledge pursued was of the most superficial kind, the profoundest ignorance of the most important truths of real Christianity was universally prevalent, and the clergy were contaminated with the most scandalous vices.

The strongly inculcated doctrine of the high merit of liberal donations to the church poured in a flood of wealth and possessions upon it in every place. No man living or dying failed to interest some saint or other in his favour: and as the opulent, the warriors, and the monarchs, were usually the most profligate, and often tempted to the commission of the most atrocious crimes, they had it in their power to redeem their souls at an easy price by sharing with the church the fruits of their plunder, rapine, and murder; by founding monasteries, building churches, and enriching the ministers of religion. These in return not only pronounced their absolution, and relieved them from the pains due to their sins, but associated them in all the merits of saints and martyrs. Emperors, monarchs, and wealthy nobles, not only now gave them gold and silver vestments, but estates, dignities, and feudal tenures. Thus the bishops became dukes, counts, marquises, invested with the regalia in their own domains, administering supreme justice in their several seignories, and often heading armies which they levied to follow as feudal barons the quarrels of their liege lord, or to decide contentions

among themselves. Of these the Roman pontiffs had the most abundant share, and being set up as the object of prime veneration, and appealed to in all difficulties and quarrels in the western world, the immensity of wealth and power which flowed into them from a thousand channels is scarcely to be conceived. Every bishop, monastery, and priest, extended their claims over ignorance and superstition, and were sure to find support at Rome for the most extravagant pretensions, provided they took care to divide the spoil with her pontiff. All discipline necessarily relaxed, when impunity could thus be purchased, and the monasteries, filled with sloth, ignorance, and wealth, exhibited shocking scenes of voluptuousness, ambition, quarrels, and impurity.

Still, however, monkery maintained the highest character for sanctity, and the monasteries were multiplied and filled with inhabitants. It was esteemed the perfection of piety to retire to these seclusions: and, in those times of anarchy and confusion, when crimes of the most atrocious nature were daily perpetrated, no remedy was so effectual to efface all guilt, and to secure the sinner from all punishment, as to build or to inhabit them.

Knowledge, profane as well as scriptural, ceased to be cultivated, except by a few in the east. In the church, the most miserable homilies, like those of St. Eloi, afforded little instruction, whilst the wretched lives of the saints exhibited the most delusive patterns for imitation.

An. 735. In Italy, the dim twilight of science was but little removed from complete extinction. In Britain and Ireland, an asylum seems to have been still afforded to the little learning which survived. The venerable Bede and a few others maintained the honour of the Saxon church. From thence Charlemagne endeavoured to draw assistants, to revive the sciences which he encouraged and promoted. He founded schools throughout his dominions, and invited with great rewards the most learned men to his court. The famous Alcuin and others were of this honourable number, and gave hope of blowing up the expiring spark into a flame; but the issue corresponded not with the expectations of the monarch. Few of the pupils attained any eminence in science, though

the emperor himself was among the most ardent in the pursuit. In general the grossest ignorance prevailed. Bishops and priests could often neither read nor write, content to learn by rote the formularies of devotion and the ceremonies attending them, which now supplied the place of all spiritual worship. As the emperor's liberality had furnished the ministers of the church with abundance, so his establishment of uniformity lessened their labour, and his happy provision for ignorance in the homiliarium that bears his name rendered study unnecessary: a worthless and idle clergy, little disposed to copy their monarch's diligence, took their salaries, learnt their lesson by rote, and got through it as speedily as possible.

The sacred relics continued to afford a most profitable source of wealth, and were sought for with avidity, and purchased as inestimable treasures. What pilgrims brought from the holy land had peculiar value, but a host of saints and martyrs were unkennelled from the charnel-houses and ceteries at home, by men who made advantage of them in their various churches and monasteries, to which they attracted peculiar reverence, and procured the liberal donations of the superstitious. The grossest frauds were every day practised, and to them implicit credence was given by the ignorant and priest-ridden populace.

The supreme government of the church, and the power of appointing to many of the chief sees, and of deposing from them at pleasure, had hitherto been in the eastern emperors. But now the Roman pontiff formed, with the bishops under his influence, a strong party to thwart the emperor and his patriarch. At the beginning of this century, the contests and bickerings which had long been kept up received a peculiar exasperation from two causes, on which the Greek and Latin churches divided, and sharply disputed for victory.

An. 712. The first regarded the controversy respecting images. The progress of superstition had multiplied images and pictures in the churches. From a simple memorial, a high veneration grew for these representations of Christ, his mother, the saints, and martyrs; some of them acquired a peculiar sanctity, and were supposed to contain a peculiar in-

habitation and presence of the persons whom they represented. Bardanes, the emperor, determined to remove a picture of the sixth general council from the church of St. Sophia, and sent his orders to Rome to exclude all pictures and images from the churches. The pope, so far from complying with the requisition, ordered other paintings to be set up in St. Peter's church, and in a council summoned by him condemned the emperor and his abettors. The revolution which quickly ensued removed Bardanes from the throne, and for a while the quarrel became suspended. But Leo revived the dispute with imperial vigour. Shocked at the reproaches of Jews and Mahometans, he resolved to destroy this stumbling block, and issued an edict to remove images of every kind from the churches, and to forbid all worship being paid to them. The spark instantly kindled into an explosion. Fanatic zeal burst all bounds of allegiance, and the superstitious people were instigated to rebellion. They proclaimed the emperor an apostate, and the subjects released from all duty to such an enemy to God and his saints. The Roman pontiffs encouraged this spirit of revolt, and hoped to render themselves independent of the imperial edicts. The Roman and Italian provinces, at the instigation of the pope, rebelled, and murdered or banished the emperor's officers. Leo, enraged, hastened to revenge the insult, but was foiled, and compelled to retire in disgrace. In his fury, he vented his wrath on those around him who patronised the image worship. He degraded the patriarch Germanus, and substituted Anastasius in his place, commanding all the images to be collected from the churches, and publicly burned, while the severest punishment was denounced on those who should be found practising this idolatrous worship. The war was declared, and furiously prosecuted with arms spiritual and temporal, to the great distraction of the empire, and the strengthening the hands of the Saracens, less hated by the bishops of Rome, than Leo and his image-breakers. In these conflicts, many of the Grecian provinces in Italy were torn from the empire.

An. 741. The son of Leo succeeding to the throne, and inheriting his father's antipathy to images, exerted every effort in suppressing the hated worship. As the way of arms

had not succeeded, he summoned a seventh general council at Constantinople, in which images and their worship were solemnly condemned. But the decrees were despised by Rome and her partisans. To punish the Roman pontiffs for their obstinacy, all that church's possessions in Sicily and Calabria were confiscated, and these provinces with Illyricum withdrawn from the jurisdiction of Rome to Constantinople.

When the cause of image-worship appeared nearly extinct in the east, a revolution of the most horrid kind rendered the Roman pontiff triumphant. A cup of poison, ministered by Irene, the empress, to her husband, opened a way for her holding the reins of government during the minority of her son. This auspicious moment was seized by pope Adrian to league himself with this monster of a woman. A second Nicene council abrogated the former decisions, and sanctioned the worship of images, with anathemas against those who insisted on the worship of God alone. The adorers of images were called iconolâtes, and their opponents iconoclasts. They mutually resisted, detested, and persecuted one another.

A second and as fierce a controversy, about the procession of the Holy Ghost, revived and rose to an alarming height, and with the former on images tended to complete the separation of the eastern and western churches: the one adhering as pertinaciously to the words "proceeding from the Father and the Son" as the other to the rejection of them in the Nicene creed.

Thus, whilst the Roman pontiffs struggling for power, pre-eminence, and independence of any superior, artfully seized every occasion of exalting their own importance, religion sank into obscurity, and all its purity and vitality were lost in senseless rites and pompous ceremonies. No preaching remained but stupid unmeaning homilies; no public worship, but empty forms; the Lord's Supper was made a piece of pageantry; and private masses of a solitary priest for the souls of the dead added another lucrative source of sacerdotal pillage, as ample payment for these services was rigidly required from the relations of the deceased.

But amidst the desolations which spread on every side, some faint glimmerings of divine grace still appear. In England and Ireland traces of the truth as it is in Jesus remained, though blended with much superstition. Bede, Alcuin, and others, seem to be men fearing God and working righteousness.

The Nestorians, under the Saracenic government, evidently displayed their zeal for Christianity, and probably maintained some living spark of godliness among them.

An. 748. Clement, an Irishman, provoked the archbishop to procure his condemnation at Rome. His crime was the preferring the Scriptures, and appealing to them, in opposition to the dictates of the fathers and the decisions of councils.

The poor refugees in the vallies of Piedmont seem to have been left to themselves, probably too few and contemptible to attract notice, or too far removed from the observation of those proud prelates who could have got any thing by persecuting them.

Dispersed throughout the world; a few yet read the Scriptures, embraced the great and precious promises, and, amidst all the contentions and fooleries of the day, held fast the truth as it is in Jesus. The disputes about image worship would necessarily turn the attention of many to the true object of worship, and the renunciation of all false mediators would naturally lead to Christ, who is the only true mediator between God and man. His essential deity and glory was an article confidently maintained in the catholic church.

The few faithful were left indeed to grope their way to Heaven through thick darkness. If we look for a visible church of outward observation, it will be hard to find such in the Greek or Roman communion, unless among those whom "the world knew not."

A few individuals, indeed, of some respectability in the church, have been produced by the exemplary patience of the learned Milner. From the heap of chaff, he has sifted out some grains of evangelical excellence, sufficient to prove that the light of divine truth, however dim, was not utterly extinct. The extracts he produces from names almost un-

known, will be read with pleasure, but they are flowers culled from gardens overspread with weeds.

Century IX.

The countries professing the Christian name, continued to suffer the severest ravages from without, as well as the most distressing calamities from within. The conquests of its enemies in one part, rather exceed the spread of its dominion in another. The east submitted; Africa was subdued by the caliphs. They extended their conquests to India, and throughout the Persian empire. Sicily, Spain, and Sardinia, Crete, and the islands, fell before them. They entered and subdued Calabria; and Italy was ready to submit to the yoke. Amidst these conquests, severe were the sufferings of the vanquished. The people of the countries before professing Christianity were the sad victims of both parties, and multitudes, to avoid the loss of their property, secured their possessions and liberty by adopting the religion of their masters.

An. 832—900. From the northern hive a fresh swarm of piratical plunderers, Danes or Normans, infested the coasts of Germany, Britain, Gaul, Spain, and Italy, every where making prisoners of the inhabitants, and destroying their property. Europe suffered incredible misery from their long and repeated devastations. They often vented their peculiar rage on the religious communities and churches, as affording the richest booty.

On the other hand, attempts were made to extend the knowledge of what was called Christianity in Jutland and Cimbria, among the Danes and Swedes. The son of Charlemagne imitated his sire in spreading religion by his arms.

An. 850. Methodius and Cyril, two Greek monks, penetrated as far as Bohemia and Moravia, and, without the arm of power, seem to have been successful missionaries. From them the present Moravian church traces its descent. These

from the beginning resisted the jurisdiction of the Roman pontiffs.

An. 867. The Russians and Sclavonians received also from Constantinople a company of missionaries, who succeeded in sowing the seeds of Christianity. These converts in general were little instructed in the true principles of Christian doctrine. A superficial profession admitted them to baptism. The missionaries themselves displayed the first efforts of their zeal to gain subjects to the see of Rome, rather than proselytes to true religion, indulged them in their own superstitious practices, and only gave them a Christian name and form. They were satisfied with the slightest conformity to the profession and formalities of the reigning system of Christianity, so that the difference between the pagan and the Christian convert, respecting all that deserves that name, was scarcely perceptible.

The Nestorians continued their efforts among the Tartars, and spread the knowledge of Christianity far into the wilds of Scythia.

On the whole, though many attempts were made to spread Christianity among the northern savage nations, the success was inconsiderable. The Saracens, Othmans, and Normans, gained more than the missionaries, whether by the sword or persuasion, so that the outward state of the church appears equally calamitous and declining.

The progress of ignorance was deplorable. The knowledge of divine truth and of the Scriptures was lost in fanciful allegory and hidden senses. The contentions for power, and particularly for the sees of Rome and Constantinople, were bitter, and often bloody. The clergy, whose only object seemed to be the enriching and exalting the sacerdotal order, abandoned themselves to the most shameful licentiousness. Thus, though the Mahometans were spreading over Asia, and approaching the Thracian Bosphorus, the decay of all religion loosened the bands of society, and neither danger nor misery led men to repentance. Vast provinces were utterly separated from the dominion of the Grecian emperors. Egypt, Africa, Syria, Arabia, great part of Asia, all fell

under the Saracenic yoke, and became filled with apostates to Mahometanism.

In the west, religion bore an aspect equally hideous, and ignorance more profound prevailed. As to enrich the church was the surest way to cancel all crimes, and open the gates of purgatory and of Heaven, the superstitious, from the highest to the lowest, laboured to commute for their sins, and to share their wealth and possessions with their clerical mediators. These were so ignorant, that they could scarcely read the offices of devotion, and so profligate that their examples were still more fatal to the flock, whilst the idea that they held the keys of paradise made the senseless multitude look up to them with a veneration approaching to adoration. All things conspired to destroy every principle of Christian virtue. Many bishops, by their tenures become feudal barons, were called into the field with their military tenants, and lived in all the luxury and criminal indulgences of courts and camps. Their dioceses and clergy followed their pernicious examples. The private patrons of ecclesiastical preferences contributed to the common depravation of morals, by bestowing their benefices on priests like themselves, from whom they should be subject to no rebuke for their crimes, and obtain an easier absolution as they shared their rapine, and partook with them in their luxury, sports, and drunkenness.

The heads of the church at Rome exceeded in corruption the inferior members ; uniformly pursuing the one object of increasing their power, extending their jurisdiction, and drawing to themselves all the wealth they could collect. They rose fast to an astonishing altitude of station in the western parts of Europe, where, for a long while enthroned in the temple of God, they shewed themselves as God dictating to a prostrate world. Though some of these pontiffs were men of letters and of decent behaviour, multitudes of them (for the succession was rapid) were marked with the most atrocious crimes. Not an individual displayed a single trace of the mind of Christ, or his Spirit, though they assumed the character of his vicar or vicegerent.

Careful to improve every opportunity of rising to pre-eminence, they employed all their wealth and influence in subserviency to that end. As the successors of Charlemagne declined in power and authority, the popes rose in their pretensions, and when civil wars broke out among competitors for the empire, they failed not to improve the opportunity of procuring fresh privileges, by casting their weight into the scale, which would make it preponderate, till they assumed the right of bestowing the imperial crown. The multitude of candidates who struggled for the imperial throne, bid against each other at Rome for the papal suffrage, which was procured by the richest gifts, and the most abject concessions.

The princes thus raised by Romish influence contributed all in their power to establish the pontiff's dominions, and as their claims were boundless, they now endeavoured to support their assumed omnipotence in every thing relative to religion. The whole body of prelacy was subjugated to them, as deriving their authority solely from the pontiffs of Rome; the successors of Peter, the representative of Christ, and the only visible head of his church upon earth. Though these pretensions roused many a defendant of the prelatial order against such usurpations, the power and intrigues of the Roman see prevailed, being aided by the grossest forgeries of pretended decretals and councils, which men were then too ignorant to detect, or too feeble to resist. In vain the French bishops remonstrated, and wished to support their expiring liberties. The perseverance, power, and craft of the pontiffs triumphed over all opposition. They who could not be convinced, were at least compelled to be silent. Thus, by a subjugation of the ministers of Christianity in every region to a foreign pontiff, a great step was gained to claims of universal rule, and monarchs as well as people bowed down to pontifical dominion.

To this the legions of monks spread over Christendom also contributed their utmost. They were the devoted partisans of the Roman see, and grown into such credit as well as so multiplied in number, that kings and princes renounced the

world to retire to monasteries, and end their days in these holy solitudes, as the sure mode of redeeming their souls from all former abominations. They who had not the heart to renounce their dignities and grandeur when living, clothed themselves in the monk's cowl when dying, in hope of thus associating to themselves some share of the merit of that holy fraternity. These all strengthened the hands, and supported the most extravagant claims of Rome.

The zealous attempts of Charlemagne and his son to produce some beneficial change by the promotion of literature, failed of the hoped-for effect. Though a few men attempted to dispel the ignorance of their cotemporaries, hardly a trace remained of the benefit of their labours after their decease. The clergy, ignorant themselves, and the patrons of ignorance, had no desire that the people should be instructed. The more gross was the darkness which enveloped their superstitious minds, the easier dupes they were to their sacerdotal directors.

But though all knowledge, Christian or scientific, was at the lowest ebb, the veneration for saints was more profound than ever, and the greatest ingenuity of invention was employed in raising up a host of new names, many of them never till then heard of, whose wondrous lives afforded scope for the most outrageous fictions. Each contended for the honour of their adopted patron, and exhausted their imaginations in adorning them with every possible perfection, and so fast were they multiplied, that it became necessary to prevent the licentiousness of superstition from overstocking the world with more patron saints than there were clients. This was done by restricting the canonization of saints, first to provincial councils, and then to the Roman see itself, which contrived to be well paid for its sanction.

The precious relics, sought after with such avidity, could not fail to be discovered by such interested investigators, and as the most celebrated would attract the most liberal donations, it is impossible to recount the miracles wrought, the devils dispossessed, the diseases of all kinds removed, by these powerful operators. Each vied with their fellows in the transcendent efficacy of their own relics: monastery with

monastery, church with church, and priest with priest, trying who could attract the greatest concourse of deluded votaries. The farther fetched the relics, the more revered; especially if names of apostles and primitive martyrs were affixed to them.

That stupid veneration which was paid to the bones and carcasses of departed saints was carried to such a height, that none durst entertain hopes of finding the Deity propitious before they had assured themselves of the protection and intercession of some of this order. Hence every church and every private Christian had their particular patron among the saints, from an apprehension that their spiritual interests would be but indifferently conducted by those who were already employed respecting the souls of others. This notion rendered it necessary to multiply the number of saints, and to create daily new patrons for the deluded people. This was performed with sufficient zeal. The priests and monks peopled at discretion the invisible world with imaginary protectors. They invented both names and histories of saints who never had an existence, in order that they might not be at a loss to furnish the credulous multitude with objects proper to nourish their confidence.

This multiplication of saints became a new source of abuses and frauds. It was thought necessary to write the lives of these celestial patrons, in order to procure for them the veneration and confidence of a deluded multitude; and all the resources of forgery and fable were consequently exhausted to celebrate exploits which had never existed. There is yet extant a prodigious quantity of these trifling legends, the greater part of which were undoubtedly forged. The same impostors who peopled the celestial regions with fictitious saints, employed also their inventions in embellishing with false miracles and other forgeries the history of those who had been really martyrs or confessors in the cause of Christ.

Various were the motives which engaged different persons to propagate or countenance these impostures. Some were incited to it by a belief that departed saints were highly delighted with the applauses and veneration of mortals; and never failed to reward with peculiar marks of their favour

and protection such as were zealous in honouring their memories. The prospect of gain, and the ambitious desire of being revered by the multitude, engaged others to multiply and to maintain the credit of the legends or registers of the saints.

The churches which were dedicated to the saints were perpetually crowded with supplicants, who flocked to them with rich presents, in order to obtain their assistance. These saints were esteemed in proportion to their antiquity, and to the number and importance of the pretended miracles which had rendered their lives illustrious. This latter circumstance offered a strong temptation to such as were employed by the various churches in writing the lives of their tutelary saints, to supply by invention the defects of truth, and to embellish their legends with fictitious prodigies, in order to increase the reputation of their respective patrons.

All this, however, was insufficient to satisfy the demands of superstition. Many persons travelled during this age into the eastern provinces, and frequented the places which Christ and his disciples had honoured with their presence, in hopes that they might obtain the bones and other sacred remains of the first heralds of the Gospel. These travellers did not indeed return home empty. The dexterity and knavery of the Greeks found a rich prey in the credulity of the Latins, and made a profitable commerce of this new devotion. The latter paid considerable sums for legs and arms, skulls and jaw-bones (several of which were pagan and some not human), with other things supposed to have belonged to the primitive worthies of the Christian church; and thus the Latin churches came to the possession of those celebrated relics of St. Mark, St. James, St. Bartholomew, and others, which even at this day are exhibited with much ostentation.

The bodies of saints transported from foreign countries, or discovered at home by the industry and diligence of pious or designing priests, not only imposed a necessity on the rulers of the church to augment the number of festivals or holidays already established, but also to diversify the ceremonies, in such a manner that each saint might have his peculiar worship. As the credit of the clergy depended much upon the

high opinion which was entertained of the virtue and merit of the saints they had canonized, it was necessary to amuse and surprise them by a variety of pompous and striking ceremonies, by images, processions, and similar inventions.

Though the veneration for the remains of celebrated persons when carried to such an extreme is ridiculous, yet the passion itself has a foundation in the principles of human nature. It is impossible not to connect with the objects of our regard and admiration every thing which was originally connected with them. The spot on which general Washington was born, and where his remains lie, has been visited by many travellers, and, even in this enlightened age, articles attached to his person, if offered for sale, would command a price far beyond their intrinsic value.

An. 879. A new source of contention arose about the eucharist, and in what manner the body and blood of Christ were present in that Sacrament. Superstitious and unscriptural notions had long been gaining ground. A monk named Paschasius pretended, that after consecration the form of the elements only remained, and the same body born of the Virgin, crucified on Calvary, and raised from the dead, was really and locally present. This was opposed by Bertram, and yet more explicitly by Scotus, who argued that the bread and wine were only signs and symbols of the absent body of the Lord. The controversy has since swollen into a bulk that presents a fearful monument of human folly.

An. 847. A more important one, respecting the doctrines of predestination and grace, was renewed by Godeschalcus, a monk of Orbais, in France. Zealous for the evangelical doctrines, and desirous of reviving the knowledge of the grace of God, he laboured assiduously, and was heard with deep seriousness and attention. A flame was kindled by his preaching, and his popularity awakened the envy and enmity of Maurus, bishop of Mentz, before whom he was accused of heresy, and condemned in a council held in that city. For punishment he was sent to Hinemar his diocesan. Hinemar was in league with his brother the bishop of Mentz, and equally the enemy of Godeschalcus. The ablest arguments and unimpeached integrity of this persecuted man were of no

avail. In vain he maintained the truth of his opinions from Augustine, and from the Scriptures, which his adversaries less respected as authority. It was resolved to punish and silence him. Godeschalcus was degraded from the sacerdotal character, whipped till he was covered with a gore of blood and near expiring, and then cast into a miserable dungeon, where after years of suffering, he died a martyr for evangelical truth which no torments could engage him to forsake.

The sufferings of this martyr produced unexpected effects. His doctrines were canvassed, and his defences read. The cruelty of his enemies awakened compassion, and the divine truth for which he suffered found able advocates, who condemned the injustice with which Godeschalcus had been treated, and the unchristian severity of the punishments inflicted on him. But the party of Hincmar and his associates was far superior: they had the secular arm and the prelatial corps on their side. The decrees of the former councils were confirmed, and Godeschalcus and his doctrine were again anathematized.

But his Gallic friends resolved not to submit to this imperious prelate and his unjust decrees. A body of bishops, under the archbishop of Lyons, assembled at Valence, in Dauphiny, vindicated the condemned monk and his doctrine, and fourteen provinces, assembled at Langres, concurred in the same opinion, and pronounced the eulogium of the faithful witness, who had now expired in prison under the inhuman Hincmar.

This contest ended not with the men of that day. The truths which Godeschalcus maintained have since found most able defenders, who have repelled the false conclusions their adversaries pretended to draw from his premises; and have vindicated the God of all grace from the charges which the ignorant have presumed to cast upon him, as inferences which they suppose deducible from the predestinarian principles. Edwards on the Freedom of the Human Will, though published more than half a century, remains unanswered.

The government of the church was now approaching to despotism, especially in the western world. The church of

Rome attempted to concentrate the whole ecclesiastical power in herself.

Rites and ceremonies were multiplied, and in the same proportion the ministers of the sanctuary. These all looked to Rome as the centre of expectation. The greatest writers were now employed in explaining the profound mysteries contained in the farrago of forms and ceremonies which had overwhelmed the devotion of the christian world.

As new saints multiplied, invention was racked to find new offices and rites appropriate to each. Altars, images, vestments, processions, and masses accumulated.

New ceremonies were also enacted and introduced into civil life, and made the criteria of virtue and innocence. Thus the different ordeals by fire, water, and the cross now came into practice, and that dreadful and most anti-christian appeal to God by single combat: and horrible to tell, the pope and clergy sanctified all these abuses by the introduction of the most sacred solemnities on the occasion, even to the celebration of the holy sacrament, to add the greater dignity to these delusions.

The former heresies still subsisted. The Nestorians, fostered under the Saracenic wing, multiplied in Egypt, Persia, and wherever the Mahometan power prevailed. But another sect, the Paulicians, after alternate persecution and toleration, maintained their ground, and awakened the jealousy and enmity of the Grecian prelates and their emperor. These showed themselves in the most bloody and savage persecutions, designed to reduce them to conformity with the established churches. Driven to despair by their oppressors, and provoked by their cruelty to self-defence, they resolved to find safety in resistance. After many a furious conflict with their enemies, they retired into the dominions of the Saracens, and found protection under the crescent from the fury of those who pretended to fight under the cross.

An interval of peace invited them back to their former habitations in Armenia, when Theodora, who governed during the minority of her son, fell upon them, and compelled them to seek refuge again under the Mahometan government. Those who escaped were received by the Sara-

cens with great cordiality, and settled in the frontier city of Tibricæ, whence they issued forth on the adjacent Grecian provinces, and, wasting them with fire and sword, avenged as men, not as christians, the inhuman murders of their brethren.

To draw the line of comparison between the contenders, respecting their principles or practice, is difficult, as we have all our materials from one party, that of the persecutors; yet it is evident that they would have been faithful subjects, and strengthened the bands of government, had they been permitted to live in peace.

Afflicted with these miserable scenes, we look around for the true church of the redeemed, whose names are written in heaven, and feel no reluctance to go into the prison of Godeschalcus, and to the few that espoused his cause, and the truths for which he suffered, or to visit the valleys of Piedmont and Pais de Vaud, and the adjacent regions of the Gallic dominion, to find in the sequestered village the faithful pastor and the humble flock, contaminated perhaps with some of the prevailing superstitions, but maintaining the truth as it is in Jesus, and possessing the life of God in their souls. In this century, Claude, bishop of Turin, made a resolute stand against many of the abominations of the Roman pontiffs. His writings contain more evangelical truth than perhaps any other of that day.

The churches in Bohemia and Moravia planted by Cyril renounced the jurisdiction of Rome, and worshipped God, if not without superstitious rites, yet more in spirit and in truth than others. Indeed those most removed from the scenes of pride, contention, wealth, and ambition, were most likely to be preserved from evil, by their poverty and seclusion from the world.

We might expect to find in Britain and the Cambrian mountains a people not destitute of the traces of primitive religion. Thither many christians had retired from the ravages of the Danes. We hope, when the great Alfred recovered the kingdom, restored order, and erected the university of Oxford to revive religion and literature, that some

sparks of truth still survived amidst the reign of ignorance and superstition. An. 872.

The Nestorians appear not to have declined in zeal, and, under a liberal toleration, without royal revenues, to have maintained a greater portion of the gospel purity than their fellow-christians who excommunicated them.

Nor can we doubt but, among the persecuted Paulicians and their pastors, men of real christian simplicity would be found. The persecuted and the suffering professors of christianity have many presumptive evidences in their favour.

In the east and in the west the scriptures were still open to the inspection of all. And, amidst the scandalous contentions of that day, piety and purity were not utterly lost in the world: some real christians were found, in the retirement of private life or inferior stations in the church; even in monastic seclusion there were doubtless some who loved and served a pardoning God, perhaps with much darkness of view, or conformity to established superstitions, but yet with sincerity and truth.

Century X.

The barbarous Normans continued their devastations; but, becoming fixed in France, and more humanised, they at last received the christianity then taught. A Gallic queen engaged the famous Rollo to submit to baptism, and his warriors followed his example.

A like event produced a similar effect in Poland, where a daughter of the duke of Bohemia persuaded her uxorious husband to adopt her religion as his own, and to recommend it to his subjects. A host of monkish missionaries sallied forth to make converts, but the impatient queen-engaged her spouse to take a shorter way, and compel his reluctant subjects to bow their necks to the episcopal yoke, and receive

baptism from the host of clergy which issued from the court into the provinces.

An. 987. A third grand conversion of a more famed empire followed the marriage of the sister of the Grecian emperor with the Russian duke Wlodomir. The Christianity which had been preached in the former century had produced in Russia very few effects of a permanent nature. The duke and his subjects were still pagan. Ann persuaded her husband Wlodomir, who took the baptismal name of Basilus, to embrace Christianity. His subjects followed the example of their sovereign, and became nominally believers.

Hungary, which had before received some glimmerings of Christianity, became more enlightened. To this nothing contributed so powerfully as the marriage of Sarolta with Geysa, the Hungarian monarch. She was the daughter of Gylas, who, having been baptized at Constantinople, had established the profession of Christianity on the banks of the Danube. In their son's reign the work became general; churches and bishoprics were every where erected, and conversion to nominal Christianity at least was universal through the kingdom.

Harold of Denmark, conquered rather by the sword of Otho than the arguments of Poppon, consented with his subjects to become Christians, that they might possess their independence as a nation. His son Sueno, after some time, became a zealous advocate for Christianity.

Norway, after long resistance to her monarchs in rejecting the Christian profession, at last submitted to the strong arm of Olaus, who, finding all other efforts ineffectual, visited his provinces with an army capable of commanding obedience, and with apostles to baptize the multitude, who were driven to the font to receive the sign of the cross.

No man distinguished himself in zeal for Christianity beyond Otho (surnamed the Great), emperor of Germany. To secure the Germans, who were yet half pagan, to obedience to the faith, he established a variety of bishoprics, which he richly endowed. He supported with all his influence the prelates whom he placed in these different sees, and, erecting schools in various parts of his dominions, he beheld a gene-

ral submission to his will, and the profession of the Christian religion throughout his dominions. His bounty fell in showers on churches and monasteries. As he had been taught that these things were the most effectual means for the redemption of his soul, we shall the less wonder at his munificence.

The Saracens continued to advance rapidly in the cultivation of all the sciences, to which in the last century they had addicted themselves. In the east, the famous schools of Bagdad and Bassora flourished, and knowledge was propagated by them through Africa into Spain, where the mathematics, philosophy, physics, and the muses flourished more than any where else in Europe. Thither all the Christians resorted who sought improvement, and wished to emancipate themselves from the ignorance which prevailed.

Though all knowledge was not quite extinct in the west, the number of those who had any pretensions to learning was astonishingly small, and these had chiefly derived it from the Saracenic schools; for the science cultivated in the Christian seminaries, under monkish tuition, was trivial and puerile, and served only to foster the prevailing superstitions. Gerbert, a native of France, being elected pope at the close of this century, under the name of Sylvester II, endeavoured to rouse the expiring spark into a flame. He had been instructed in the various branches of science, and owed to his Arabian tutors a knowledge of the mathematics that was considerable for those days. He published a little elementary treatise to make plain the first lines of geometry. But in that superstitious age the very diagrams he drew exposed him to the charge of being a magician, and, though a pope, he was accused of dealing with the devil.

The profligacy and ignorance of the clergy must, in any other state of things, have rendered them despicable and detested; but in that day, the veneration for their sacred character was so established, and the people such dupes to their pious frauds and pretensions, that the grossest abominations in the highest order of prelates passed without exciting contempt. It is said of Theophylact, the Grecian patriarch, that his stud of two thousand horses was fed with grapes and

pistachio nuts, steeped in the most exquisite wines, and that news being brought him of a favourite mare having foaled, as he was celebrating high mass on Holy Thursday, he left the ceremony unfinished to run to the stable, and caress his darling and her progeny, and then returned to finish the service. To support the unclerical sports of dogs and horses, and all their expensive apparatus, he sold all ecclesiastical benefices in his disposal.

His brethren at Rome, during this century, kept him well in countenance ; where a succession of the most wretched, profligate, avaricious, and abandoned of mankind filled the holy see, whose histories are a disgrace to human nature.

Yet the grandeur and exaltation of the see was never forgotten, and every Pope failed not to seize the favourable moment to attach all power to the church, and to extend their pretensions over kings and emperors, as well as over their own clergy. Their parasites and partisans maintained their right of dominion universally, and that all episcopal authority, though divine in its original, could only be conveyed through St. Peter and his successors in the papal chair.

To compensate for what they lost by these exorbitant claims, the greater ecclesiastics endeavoured to enlarge the bounds of their authority. The kings and emperors frequently connived at their encroachments, reverencing their character, and presuming upon their influence with the people to establish their own more peaceable dominion.

Men living in luxury of every kind, and professing celibacy, could not but sink into the depth of impurity ; and they who might not have wives, maintained a more expensive haram of mistresses. For these the treasures of the church were squandered, and no difficulty made of purchasing lucrative ecclesiastical offices, or selling those at their disposal, to supply the cravings of lewdness and extravagance.

With regard to all scriptural criticism, or attempts to diffuse the knowledge of the divine oracles, the writings of that age are unworthy of notice. The conflicts of St. Dunstan with the devil, and the lives of the saints by Simeon the patriarch, afford a mortifying specimen of the spirit of the times. The great and precious promises of the word of God were

all sunk into oblivion, and even divine worship turned from the true Jehovah to numberless new mediators and saints. No man thought of addressing God, without having secured a patron saint, lighted some candles before a favourite image, or brought the Virgin Mary over to support him by some present or oblation.

But, though the clergy had little theological science, they were well trained in all the tricks of priestcraft, and knew how to make the received doctrine of a purgatory in the next world a source of great profit in the present. From the torments of this fearful purification, men were glad to redeem themselves, or abridge their sufferings, by purchasing the necessary masses, or procuring the superabundant merit of some eminent saint.

Nor was it a small addition to this sacerdotal engine of wealth and influence, as this century advanced, to apply the book of Revelations foretelling the approach of Anti-Christ and of the general judgment, as ready to commence at the expiration of the first thousand years. As all sublunary possessions could then be of little avail, the clergy failed not to improve the moment of expectation ; and multitudes, to secure some merit against that awful time, bequeathed all their estates and wealth to the church and her ministers, expressly assigning the reason "*appropinquante mundi termino,*" the end of all things being at hand. And so far had this delusion spread, that the noblest edifices were suffered to run to decay and tumble down, because repairs would so soon be useless. Many conveyed their lands and property, and with them subjugated their persons to the ministers of religion and the monasteries, hoping greater favour from Christ on account of this relationship to him : whilst others marched off for Palestine, leaving all behind them for holy uses, expecting Christ's descent there, and a more favourable reception from him, as the reward of their laborious pilgrimage to greet him at Jerusalem. If the evidences did not remain of such egregious folly, they would hardly be credited.

In this century the service of the Virgin Mary began to grow into especial repute, and, as she was supposed to have the first influence in heaven, celebrating masses to her honour,

and multiplying devotions in her name, became a favourite service. A beautiful rosary and crown were now invented, consisting of vociferous repetitions of particular prayers. The first contained a powerful round of fifteen repetitions of the Lord's prayer, and seven times ten salutations of the Virgin. It required indeed a good memory to keep the account ; but a number of beads strung on catgut or a cord, exhibiting a vast necklace, ingeniously provided for the task by dropping a bead at every prayer and salutation, so that they might not cheat the Virgin in the tale, nor impose on themselves the trouble of supernumerary offices. That men could invent such fooleries, and popes confirm the sanctity and availability of such offices, is among the most striking monuments of superstitious ignorance and sacerdotal imposition.

The controversies were still kept up between the Pelagians and the followers of Godeschalcus, and the Sacramentarians, who maintained the real presence, and those who admitted the elements to be only symbols of Christ's body. Though the empire of superstition generally prevailed, there were not wanting men who maintained the fundamentals of gospel truth, and lived by faith in the intelligent and sanctified use of divine ordinances.

In this, as in the preceding century, a few may be called out of the general body of the church, as flowers out of a garden overgrown with weeds, and these suffering from the contiguity of bad neighbours. Such were Unni, Nilus, and Giselbert. Yet, after the most inquisitive search into their works, the flowers themselves are so scentless, that they are scarce worth gathering. Small, indeed, and contracted does the pale of the true church appear ; dispersed throughout the world in some favoured individuals, who were chosen, and called, and faithful, but the congregations of such were thinly scattered, and scarcely any where so perceivable as to be pointed out to human observation. Probably their insignificance was their protection, and their sequestered abodes their preservative from the enmity of persecutors and the bigotry of the superstitious. A part of France and Switzerland, of Bohemia and Moravia, with the countries under the Saracenic dominions where the Nestorians and Paulicians had

taken refuge, afforded the principal living specimens of real religion. The followers of the good Godeschalcus and Claude, in the purity of their doctrine, doubtless experienced the effects of the grace for which they contended. The vital spark remained unextinguished, though its light and heat were grown almost imperceptible.

Century XI.

In this century began the bloody struggle between the western world and the Mahometan conquerors. Peter the Hermit, having visited the desolated plains of Palestine, and beheld the proud crescent displayed on mosques once famed for Christian sanctuaries, returned with a lively imagination of the wrongs done to the cross, and, painting with most pathetic eloquence the scenes he had witnessed, kindled a flame which burst forth as a volcano. At first indeed he solicited the patriarch of Constantinople and the crafty pope Urban in vain. But when the latter saw the wide-spreading effects of the hermit's oratory, seconded by a letter which he produced as sent down to him expressly from Heaven by an angel, to call the nations to the battle, there could be no longer any resistance or delay to execute the divine mandate.

An. 1095. A council called at Placentia by Urban received, however, at first the proposal but coldly. The cautious spirit of the Italians was not suited to the perilous enterprize: but the zealous pontiff, undismayed with difficulties and opposition, renewed the attack at Clermont the following year, in a second grand assembly, where the valorous spirit of the Franks, proud of deeds of chivalry, and full of zeal for the holy church, met the most sanguine wishes of their spiritual head, heard his pathetic discourses with all the mingled enthusiasm of the love of war and zeal for religion, and enlisted by millions under the banner of the cross.

After various attempts, and armies after armies perishing on the road, destroying the Christian countries through which they passed, and themselves by their excesses, one portion of them, under the famous Godfrey, succeeded in the object of their enterprize : and conquering a part of Syria and Palestine, founded the kingdom of Jerusalem. This was obtained at a rate of blood and treasure unspeakably greater than would have peopled a nobler dominion, and purchased a richer principality. But two things served to render this conquest transcendentally valuable in the eyes of the Christian conquerors : the supposed honour of their master recovered in the expulsion of the Saracens from the land of his nativity, and the cleansing the holy sepulchre from their profanations ; and, added to this, the abundance of inestimably precious relics, some found, and some purchased of Turks, Jews, and Syrians, and brought back to Europe in holy triumph.

Whether fanatic zeal, or deep-laid policy to encrease their power and accumulate wealth, actuated the Roman pontiffs, it is certain that they failed not to make profit of the prevailing madness of the times. The depopulation occasioned by the departure of many hundreds of thousands of the best blood of Europe, left whole provinces desolated, and their noblest defenders saw their native lands no more. To equip themselves for this expedition, princes, nobles, and people parted with their territories, dukedoms, and whatever they possessed, which were mortgaged and sold, to the utter impoverishment of their families. A change was made in the state of Europe, which the see of Rome craftily turned to its own advantage. The riches accumulated in churches and monasteries found advantageous purchasers in these adventurers, and the proceeds, added to the pious donations for the redemption of their souls, amazingly increased the possessions of the church.

The profligacy of manners which prevailed among the crusaders ; the rapes, murders, plunder, and desolation, that marked their track, were wretched specimens of the holiness of their purposes. Scarcely a man in that day doubted the lawfulness of the enterprize, nay, its meritoriousness was the

constant topic which resounded in every pulpit. It was sanctioned by the solemn absolution from all sins, granted by the representative of St. Peter to such as might fall in this glorious expedition; and it at least secured to them a place in the highest heavens, should they never live to enter the promised land. Thus every thing contributed to excite and continue the infatuation of the western world.

An. 1077. But Jerusalem was not the noblest conquest of the Christian warriors from the Saracenic dominion. Robert Guiscard, a valiant Norman, had subdued the dukedom of Apuglia, and, with his equally famous brother Roger, had received baptism, and submitted to the dominion of the Roman pontiff. The pope offered to confer on him the crown of Sicily if he would recover that beautiful island to the Christian pale, and obedience to the Roman see. Robert accepted the invitation, and accomplished the expulsion of the Saracens; and, as his reward, received the investiture of this new acquisition, and was crowned king of Sicily. He revived the Christian religion, which had been nearly extinct; and, according to the ideas of the times, founded and endowed bishoprics, abbeys, and churches in abundance, with revenues truly princely.

Boleslaus of Poland boasts of equal conquests in the north, where, along the borders of the Baltic, from Mecklinburg to Russia, a number of barbarous nations, Vandals, Prussians, and Sclavonians, still continued in the darkness of paganism. The Polish monarch, entering their country with an army which they were unable to resist, compelled the reluctant inhabitants to bow their necks to the Christian yoke, and receive baptism from the priests who attended him in the expedition. He left with them these instructors to inform their mind, but they fell sacrifices to the rage and enmity of their catechumens, and it was long before the deep-rooted practices of paganism were utterly extirpated.

Far nobler conquests are said to have been effected by persuasion through the labours of zealous apostles among the remaining tribes of Russians, Poles, Danes, and Hungarians, who still adhered to the pagan superstitions. But, of all the missionary efforts to propagate the Christian religion, none

seem to be more effectual, and to be founded on purer principles, than those of the Nestorians in the east, who penetrated still farther into Asia, and spread the knowledge of the truth among the vast hordes of northern Tartars.

Yet in the east and west Christianity lost nearly as much as it appeared to gain. The Turks and Saracens, still contending for dominion, inflicted the most abundant sufferings on the Christians. The Grecian empire, weakened by civil and religious discord, presented a feeble barrier against their inroads, and province after province was separated from the Christian pale. And, wherever their power prevailed, their religion became triumphant. The severity of their tributary exactions on the one hand, and the desire of procuring advancement and property on the other, tempted too many to submit to the profession of Mahometanism, and to blend their interest and religion with the prevailing party. Thus the populous nations under the Turkish and Saracenic government generally apostatized from the confession of the faith, and changed the cross for the crescent.

The same causes produced the same effects in Spain, and every territory under the Mahometan government; and there was good reason to apprehend the extirpation of the faith in the country, had not a little band of Christians, rallying round their petty king Pelagius, maintained their expiring cause, and ultimately extended their conquests in the recovery of their country.

The conversions to Christianity scarcely deserve the name, and sadly correspond with the means by which they were produced: all within the bosom of the church was corrupt and abominable. Domestic tumults wasted the strength and destroyed the resources of the Greeks; they had neither courage nor ability to resist the spreading inundation of their Mahometan foes without, and as little inclination to cultivate the interests of religion or of letters within. The contests for the patriarchate banished all Christian charity and piety. The palm of praise in the study as in the field was carried off beyond all competition by the Mahometans, in whose schools medicine, mathematics, and every branch of science most abundantly flourished. All learning among Christians was

chiefly confined to the monasteries, where a few of a literary turn amused themselves with the pursuits of knowledge.

The Normans, who had lately, from being illiterate pagans, become Christians and addicted to letters, carried with them into England, Italy, and Sicily, a relish for the literary pursuits to which they had lately devoted themselves. Schools, superior to the monastic and cathedral ones, were erected. In these schools, masters who had studied under the Arabic doctors of Spain successfully instructed their pupils in the most useful sciences. Physic was especially cultivated at Salamum, in the kingdom of the Normans, and astronomy with the mathematics made a considerable progress, which would have been still greater if the folly of the times had not turned the minds of many to the vain pursuits of astrology. Instead of a diligent observance of the heavenly luminaries and their revolutions, they attempted, from the motions and conjunctions of the planets, to read the fate of empires and of individuals.

The favourite studies of the western church were logic and Aristotle. The disputes generated between the nominalists and realists, however important at that time, to us appear absurd and contemptible: yet these exercised the acuteness and occupied the attention of many of the greatest scholars of the day.

The eminent prelate, Anselm of Canterbury, shone conspicuous in various treatises on metaphysics and natural religion; discussed the nature of God, his attributes, and mode of existence; and extended his researches to the divine prescience and human liberty. But all the superstitions of former ages continued: the same rage and reverence prevailed for relics as in the preceding century. Learned men and great prelates were the first to stamp importance and value on the wretched fragments of dead bodies, and rags of old linen.

The general behaviour of the clergy was scandalous in the extreme. The western bishops, being advanced to be counts, dukes, and barons, and enriched with the liberal donations of the faithful, fought under their own banners; in the camp commanded their liegemen, knights, and warriors; at the

courts of princes appeared with a magnificence and train of followers, which eclipsed all the nobility; and at their palaces lived so superbly, amidst a crowd of domestics, clergy, and laity, as if their kingdom was wholly of this world. Encouraged by such ghostly examples, the inferior orders put in for their share of luxury and indulgence, and, with their patrons, lived a life of sporting, pleasure, and sensual gratifications. A laborious preacher of God's word, a self-denied follower of the crucified Saviour, was scarcely to be found; vice and ignorance had nearly exterminated every trace of vital godliness.

The Roman pontiffs were now nearly arrived at the long-wished-for object of universal dominion, at least in the western world: they presided in all councils by their legates, and claimed the sole right of deciding all religious controversy. They asserted a right to confer all ecclesiastical honours and emoluments, as originally derived from them by divine authority. They assumed the disposition of kingdoms, and to be the granters of titles to monarchs. Their decisions were sought in all disputed rights. They absolved subjects from their allegiance, and set up kings and emperors as best suited their own ambitious designs. To review particularly the long list of popes would be more labour than profit. Suffice it to say, that a few were decent, the majority profligate, and all united in purposes of ambitious aggrandizement, and that an appearance of real piety and genuine Christianity is not to be found in the whole from first to last. The emperors, when strong, by their authority raised to the pontificate, and degraded from it; and when weak, or pusillanimous, stooped to the most humiliating debasement before it.

To exclude the nobility and people of Rome from the right of suffrage in electing to the holy see, with whom hitherto that privilege had vested in conjunction with the cardinals, or chief clergy of Rome, Nicholas II confined it wholly to the latter. The institution itself, and the persons entitled to this honour afforded frequent matter of dispute. In some periods one party prevailed, and in others the same was depressed. The contests about the elections and the electors

of popes were carried to such extremes, that in this century a schism took place in the papal chair. Each of the contending parties elected his several pope, and on his death for a long while filled up the vacancy. New anathemas and scenes of slaughter, treachery, and devastation followed to the end of the century. Thus the Christian world in the west was wasted with desolation and deluged with blood, to gratify the insolence and ambition of one great priest.

What the state of religion must be amidst such multiplied abuses, may easily be collected. The people, ignorant, superstitious, devout, and profligate, yielded implicit faith and obedience to their clerical superiors, who, furnishing them with absolutions and passports to St. Peter, thought themselves justly entitled to the plunder which they extorted. The endless rites and ceremonies, and the pageantry attending them, amused the people and diverted them from attending to the frauds and scandals of the clergy. The reverence for saints and relics rose to the altitude of deity. An oath upon a bone or a finger of a supposed saint, or even a nail of the cross, was supposed to be more solemn and binding than any simple appeal to God as the searcher of hearts. Indeed the scriptures of truth, and the nature of moral obligation, in this age found but miserable expositors: whilst the subtleties of Aristotle, and the scholastic divinity built upon them, bestowed upon the possessors of these attainments the dignity of Christian philosophers.

Forms and ceremonies multiplied abundantly, and were made of the most solemn importance. Gregory VII, among his other pretensions, required all worship to conform to the model of Rome. But a still more glaring abuse followed, in compelling all the western nations to use the Latin tongue in the public service of the church, though it was now a language no where spoken, nor commonly understood. And thus a new source of ignorance among the people was introduced, and their prayers, which had long been mere form, were henceforward unintelligible.

Matters were now fast verging to the utmost extremity. But God was providing for a revival of his own work. Some hidden ones remained in the valleys of the Alps. England still afforded sparks of light. A few had not wholly abandon-

ed truth and godliness. Berengarius, the archbishop of Angers, and some others, held many of the essential truths of God, though often compelled to conceal their sentiments, by the dreadful persecutions to which they knew they must subject themselves, hoping that they could do more good secretly than by raising a violent clamour against themselves and their doctrines. But it is probable, that the great body of those who still retained the true doctrine was to be found in the inferior stations of the church, and among the unlettered of the laity, who received the Scriptures in simplicity and truth.

The warmth with which the disputes were managed naturally awakened general enquiry, and, however the multitude were swayed by authority and enslaved with priestcraft, some no doubt considered the subjects with attention, and formed their conclusions according to common sense and the Scriptures. Whilst Augustine, Godeschalcus, and similar writers were read, some beams of gospel truth could not fail to dart through the prevailing gloom.

Century XII.

The success of the western warriors in Palestine made a strong but temporary impression. The Mahometans, recovering from their consternation, rallied their forces, and returning to the charge, threatened Antioch and Jerusalem itself. Europe heard the groans of their brethren with anguish, and trembled for the fate of the holy sepulchre. The Roman pontiffs sounded the alarm: princes, clergy, and people assembled to determine on what was proper to be done. The danger, the distance, the ill success of the former attempts, the dear-bought experience of Saracen valour, and the inability of any single kingdom to provide a sufficient force for such an enterprise; the reciprocal jealousy of the monarchs, the difficulty to collect the various nations under one leader: all seemed to present an insurmountable barrier to a second crusade. The dreadful effects of the former were still

felt and lamented. The pope's propositions and exhortations were therefore heard with caution. It required some flaming spirit to infuse new life into the dying cause of crusades, and such was found in the famous Bernard, Abbot of Clairval. His ardour and eloquence kindled the latent spark of zeal into a flame through France and Germany. His confident assurances of success, said to be promised to him from heaven, were heard and believed, not only by the credulous multitude, but by Lewis of France, his queen, and nobles. The emperor Conrad for a while demurred; but, vanquished by the powerful arguments of Bernard, joined in the enterprise, to reap the laurels and victory which God's inspired prophet had confidently promised. But the event corresponded not with the prediction. The spirit of discord alike prevailed in the crusading armies as among the leaders in Palestine. Tired of the fruitless and unhappy expedition, they had hardly set foot on the Holy Land ere they prepared to return to Europe, and not a tenth of their numerous warriors saw their native land again.

The famous Saladin, taking advantage of the weakness of the Christian cause, fell upon Judea, took the king of Jerusalem prisoner, and carried the city. The desolation was dreadful. Torrents of blood flowed. Thousands of miserable Christians were sold into captivity. Their power was humbled to the dust, and their name almost extinguished in the east.

These dreadful tidings reached the western world like the stroke of a thunderbolt. Astonishment, anguish, and despair overwhelmed the Christian nations; roused by the dreadfulfulness of the catastrophe, the mightiest monarchs of Europe seized their armour, and prepared themselves for the perilous conflict, resolved to conquer or perish beneath the walls of Jerusalem. But events corresponded not with their ardour. The first auspicious campaign of the emperor Frederic was quickly followed by his death. Disease, more fatal than the sword of the Mahometans, thinned the ranks of his warriors. The survivors, unequal to any great enterprize, retired from military service, and few returned to tell the dismal tale of their sufferings and disappointment.

An. 1191. The king of France, Philip Augustus, and the lion-hearted Richard of England, each pressed into the service. They endeavoured to shorten the voyage, and to lessen the danger of a long march, by an embarkation from Italy; and, arriving safe at the head of their several armies, the first successful contests promised them conquests and victory: but the French monarch weakened the cause by his return. All the heroic arts of Richard, after this defection, produced no solid advantages for his brethren. Tired with the bloody and unavailing conflict on both sides, a short truce afforded a breathing time of three years, three months, and three days. Saladin continued in possession of what he had conquered, and the Christians of the poor remains of their former possessions: whilst the noble Richard, returning to his own land to prepare for greater exploits, experienced cruel treatment from the Roman emperor of Germany, and lingered long under an inglorious captivity, till all hopes in the east were thus totally extinguished.

The miseries which these expeditions occasioned in the Christian world are incalculable: England, France, Germany, were exhausted of men and money: all the countries through which the armies passed suffered grievously, and those to whose succour they had hastened were now left to desolation and destruction.

These unhappy wars gave rise to three different orders of military knights, whose office it was to harass the Mahometans and assist the Christian pilgrims who visited the sacred spots of Canaan. The Hospitalers or order of St. John, took their name from an hospital of Jerusalem, dedicated to John the Baptist. Their business was to relieve with necessary supplies the indigent pilgrims that daily arrived at Jerusalem.

The second order was called the Templars, from a palace in which they resided, near to the place of the Jewish temple. Their office was to protect the public roads, and the pilgrims which came to Jerusalem, from the insults of the infidels.

The third order was called the Teutonic, because none but Germans of illustrious birth were admitted into it. They

devoted themselves by vow to defend the Holy Land, and to relieve the poor and needy.

The attempts of the Christian monarchs of the west on Palestine, naturally awakened the enmity of the Mahometans, and brought the severest sufferings on those who yet professed Christianity under Saracenic governments. They justly suspected a traitor in every Greek and Latin. The crusaders themselves also, by their brutality to their enemies, provoked retaliation. Thus almost all the eastern churches fell to the dust and were buried in ruins, either by the ravages of their Christian brethren, or by the fire of their Mahometan foes.

An. 1165. An event inauspicious to the Christian name, took place in the the north-east of Asia. The success of the Nestorian Christians had been raised to the highest pitch by a Tartar chieftain who had embraced the faith, and is supposed to have been ordained a presbyter, whence he is usually known by the name of Prester John. He had seized a favourable moment, and extended greatly his dominions. His successor continued under the same title the protector of his christian subjects. But the great conqueror of Asia, Genghis Khan, overran his country, carrying destruction through China, India, Persia, and Arabia, overwhelming alike Christians and Mahometans, and establishing a new empire in the conquered provinces; in all of which the Christian faith was greatly weakened by the ravages of the conquerors.

Such afflictive events were little compensated by any new acquisitions to the Christian faith, for these were indeed of so suspicious a nature as hardly to be reckoned in the scale. Among these are numbered the conversions wrought by the zealous Boleslaus of Poland, who granted peace to the vanquished Pomeranians, on condition of their embracing the gospel, and receiving the missionaries he sent.

Waldemar, king of Denmark, displayed the like zeal among the pagan tribes on the Baltic, against whom he led his victorious armies. Every where he destroyed all monuments of idolatry, and by the terror of his chastisements compelled them to submit to the Christian faith and worship.

The Finlanders received their profession nearly by the same means. The sword of Eric, king of Sweden, forced them to yield their reluctant necks to the Christian yoke.

The Esthonians and Livonians were converted by the same means. Mainard, a canon of St. Augustine, attempted in vain the conversion of the natives. A new commission with the episcopate was conferred on him by pope Urban III, and the zealous missionary bishop immediately levied an apostolic army to accomplish by the sword what he could not do by persuasion. Baptizing at the point of the spear, he wrought wonders. His successors followed his example, till a new military order of knights sword-bearers, instituted by pope Innocent III, for that express purpose, completed their conversion, and left scarce a pagan unbaptized. In return, the bishops and clergy with the knights took into their own possession the property of the converts.

Such acquisitions as these could hardly be called additions to the Christian pale. The converts only changed their idols for saints, and Frega for the Virgin Mary; and they worshipped them nearly with the same ceremonies. Of the doctrines of revelation they continued ignorant, and their lives were the reverse of the practice it enjoined: but they were all taught the sign of the cross, to make the proper genuflections and salutations, were brought to pay tithes and oblations to the clergy, and to bow the knee to the Roman pontiff.

Though profound ignorance generally prevailed, there were in the east and west men of genius and letters. The western world attempted some revival of literature. The desire of information brought a multitude of students from England and other parts of Europe to the famous Saracenic schools. From these seminaries a number of doctors issued forth to enlighten their countrymen with the sciences; and academies were opened for teaching them in the principal cities.

But, though many set themselves with zeal to excel, we shall be sadly disappointed if we expect to meet with experimental philosophy or sound divinity. The method of tuition in the schools was strangely absurd, and the matters which exercised the subtleties of disputation, and afforded fame to the combatants, were ridiculous and trifling. Such we may

reckon the great contests between the realists and nominalists, the subtle questions of scholastic theology, insignificant in their nature, and exciting an acrimony in their disputes as disgraceful as the subjects disputed were contemptible.

To be an acute disputant was much more coveted than to be an humble Christian, and victory won by the most intricate subtleties of sophisms crowned the warrior in the schools far beyond all the acquirements of the simplicity which is in Christ. The wisdom from above was in little request in that day. The most subtle in distinctions, the most violent in argument, and the most obstinate in perseverance were esteemed the most elevated theologians. True religion was lost, not merely in endless forms and ceremonies of worship paid to saints and angels, but in a labyrinth of intricate questions, and an ignorance of divine principles and practice.

The manners of the clergy afforded the most encouraging ground of licentiousness to their flocks. Simony and concubinage, however sharply condemned, continued to prevail. The monastic orders, as well as pontiffs and bishops, were sunk in profligacy and in superstition.

The government of the church in one despotic head was the darling object pursued by all the Roman pontiffs. Contests were numerous and unimportant. One of them was about the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. This was affirmed by some, and denied by others, and both supported their opinions with unchristian tempers.

The enormous wealth, insufferable pride, and evil examples of the priesthood, disgusted many. Lying for the honour of the church had long since been sanctioned by the authority of some of the fathers as no evil, but rather meritorious.

In the west a multitude of sectaries arose, holding a mixture of truth and error; wishing a reformation of many things in the church, and giving occasion to their adversaries to charge them with errors and crimes, sometimes as injurious as those from which they wished the church to be reformed.

The cathari, or puritans, were widely diffused through the south of France, Piedmont, Flanders, and the Milanese. Many things are laid to their charge by their enemies which they

knew not ; more are misrepresented ; but, even by the testimony of their persecutors, they were sound in doctrine and in conduct exemplary. Their rigid austerity is charged among their crimes. Most of the following reputed heretics were probably of the same denomination.

An. 1120. Peter de Bruges, in Provence, was at the head of the sect called from him Petrobrusians. He inveighed against the vices and superstitions of the times, and boldly attacked the ecclesiastical tyranny and abuses of Rome as anti-christian. The enraged clergy stirred up the populace, and he was burnt alive, not judicially, but in a tumult raised by the priests. Had he been heard, the most profitable articles of their trade would have been utterly depreciated. He denied the efficacy of indulgences, and affirmed that the prayers or oblations of the living could be of no avail to the dead. He asserted also that the body of Christ was only in the eucharist in figure, not in reality ; that crucifixes and all the objects of superstitious devotion were abominable ; that churches had no peculiar sanctity, but that God might every where be served acceptably by his spiritual worshippers. He maintained these, and other like tenets highly offensive to the priesthood, with such zeal as brought him to his untimely end. But the conviction of the truths which he preached did not die with him.

A monk named Henry turned itinerant, and went about declaiming against the clergy, their vices and superstitions. He was seized by pope Eugenius the third, condemned in a council at Rheims, and consigned to a prison, where his sufferings were quickly ended.

Arnold of Brescia, after causing much sedition, was seized, crucified, and burnt. His endeavour to strip the clergy of their possessions, and to reduce them to a moderate subsistence from the people, was high treason against the church, and punished accordingly.

But the most zealous and successful reformer of the age was Peter Waldus, or Valdus, a name derived from those whose principles he had adopted. He had been a merchant of Lyons, but imbibing from the Waldenses a taste for the scriptures, he procured a priest to translate for him the four

gospels, with other books of the New Testament, into French. The diligent perusal of these, not only opened his eyes to the reigning errors and profligate manners of the clergy, but animated him with holy zeal. He quitted his profession, distributed his whole substance to the poor, and began boldly to preach and teach the doctrines of vital Christianity, and to remonstrate against the ignorance and vices of the age. The archbishop of Lyons endeavoured to silence this new apostle. But the purity of his life, the disinterested charity he displayed, the simplicity of truth which he taught, and the zeal with which he enforced his exhortations, awakened deep concern in many, and procured him a number of faithful associates and fellow labourers. These formed numerous societies in France, Italy, and throughout Europe. Nor could the most furious persecutions raised against them depress their courage or reduce them to silence.

The doctrines which they taught, and the practices they recommended, were generally such as the protestants have since adopted, with the exception of some few things which they seem to have carried to extremes, as is too frequently the case with all, who, sore under the feeling of former abuses, have not learned to moderate the rigour of reform.

They admitted the established order of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, though under a different name ; but supposed they must be men dead to the world, earning by some honest occupation their own bread, without burdening the congregation. They regarded the riches which had been poured in upon the church as one of the chief sources of its corruption. They little esteemed the scientific pursuits or scholastic theology in vogue, preferring for the ministry the men of the most devoted zeal and exemplary piety to all the learning of the schools. They supposed that every man of the congregation who possessed ability, and felt himself so disposed, might exhort and pray. They denied all efficacy of relics, prayers, or penances to procure pardon for sin. They asserted that confession to a priest was useless ; they regarded with horror the idea of purchased dispensations and indulgences. They despised all services for the dead as useless ; regarded the purgatorial fire as a chimera, designed

only to rob the credulous ; and affirmed that the state of departed spirits was irrevocably fixed for hell or heaven the moment of their departure from the body. They renounced all dependence upon saints or martyrs, the crucifix or the Virgin, and only trusted upon the finished redemption of Jesus Christ for life and salvation.

Their Christian walk was remarkably circumspect. In some particulars they seem to have mistaken the directory of our Saviour. But their very errors had in them an amiable object, which, if we cannot vindicate, we must easily forgive. To all the generally received duties of gospel obedience, they added the unlawfulness of wars of any kind ; they forbade all self-defence and law suits ; they refused oaths of every sort ; questioned the right of putting the most criminal to death ; and condemned all accumulation of wealth. Some imposed on themselves peculiar self-denial in meat, drink, clothing, prayer, and fasting. Others, esteemed less perfect, conformed to the general customs in matters of indifference, but, with the utmost simplicity and frugality, avoided every appearance of pride, ostentation, or luxury. Indeed their laborious, industrious habits, engaged them nearly to approach each other with very little inequality of wealth or station.

Besides these poor and despised followers of Waldus, a variety of absurd and fanatical sects arose from the fermenting corruption of the age. The Pasagini, who used circumcision, and were half judaical. The Caputiati, who bore on their caps an image of the virgin, and pretended to level mankind to primitive equality, by the abolition of all distinctions of men in church and state. The apostolics, who professed to be truly apostolical, poor, laborious, illiterate, and living in celibacy, with unshorn beards.

The suppression of all these was the object of clerical jealousy and persecution. Many of them fell before the censures of the church and the sword of the civil power. But others took deep root and spread.

Abuses, advancing to the extreme, frequently produce their own reform. Such was the case at present. The exorbitant wealth and extravagant pretensions of the clergy awakened the attention of many, and some began to read the scriptures,

and discover the multitude of prevailing abuses, and boldly to remonstrate against them. These were branded with a variety of opprobrious names.

Among these, under their faithful leader, Peter, the Waldenses, who had long subsisted in the Pays de Vaud, were the most distinguished. It is certain, from the testimony of their inquisitorial enemies as well as their friends, that they subsisted for centuries past in the valleys of Piedmont. After all the havoc made by the bloody inquisitors, they continued so numerous, that the archbishops of Aix, of Arles, and of Narbonne, informed the pope that it was impossible to build prisons sufficiently capacious to hold the heretics, or to procure them food. From France they crossed the sea into England. Clark, in his *Martyrology*, records about twenty eminent witnesses in England before Wickliff. Thus in many lands the seeds of gospel truth and future reformation were dispersed, and the persecutions henceforth raised against them demonstrate the great extension of what the enemies of true Christianity branded as heresy. From their increasing numbers, and their attempts to stem the torrent of superstition, they grew into observation, and, though inferior in rank, and exposed to every insult and suffering, it was evident the Lord had not forsaken the earth, nor left himself without witnesses.

And not only among these and others which have been mentioned was a holy seed preserved, but in the east it is to be hoped that many yet served God in spirit and in truth, whether under the denomination of Mystics, Paulicians, or Nestorians.

The disputes that were afloat, though generally ridiculous and unprofitable, kept enquiry awake, and called for investigation of the fathers, and sometimes at least of the sacred records. Here and there, both in the east and west, a daring spirit ventured to promulgate what he believed to be true and important.

It is evident that in France, England, Switzerland, Lombardy, Moravia, and Bohemia there was still a poor and scattered people, who dared to be singular, and probably throughout the Christian world a generation of a like spirit

might be found, though their obscurity of station, dispersion, and fewness in number secured them from public notice, and of course from being exposed to such persecution as would render them objects of history. The true kingdom of God cometh not with the outward parade of human greatness. It is not of this world.

Century XIII.

The Roman pontiffs had reaped so many advantages from the zeal of the crusaders, that they pertinaciously adhered to these expeditions. They so abundantly filled their coffers by donations, or purchases of those who emigrated, or from the indulgences and absolutions granted to others, who chose to stay at home and reap the benefits, without sharing the toil and danger, that they had a strong interest in the continuance of the crusades. From their influence in the first half of this century, five or six crusading expeditions were set on foot, and prosecuted to a considerable extent, but they all failed in every part of their object. In the last of these, A. D. 1248, the king of France, St. Lewis, in consequence of a vow made on occasion of his recovery from a dangerous illness, sailed for Egypt at the head of a numerous army, with all the benedictions and assurances of success which Rome could bestow. But a momentary success was followed by famine, pestilence, and defeat; the king himself, his two brothers, and all his army were taken prisoners by the Saracens, and he was compelled to ransom himself by an immense sum of money, and to leave behind him in the sands of Egypt the corpses of his numerous host. Out of two thousand eight hundred knights of illustrious fame who accompanied him, only one hundred saw their native land again. The desolation and impoverishment which this caused in the kingdom of France must have been deplorable. The total failure of

the expedition rendered the state of Christianity in the east more desperate than ever.

An. 1270. Lewis meditated the recovery of his blasted fame by a renewed expedition against the infidels. Chusing Africa for the scene of his conquests, he sailed for the bay of Tunis, hoping to reduce to the Christian obedience that apostate country; but the same calamities overwhelmed him. Pestilence devoured more than the sword, and he died ingloriously on the bed of disease: his army reduced; his conquests abandoned; and the remnant glad to retire to their own coasts, and leave the victorious Saracens masters of the east. Thus ended these miserable and fanatic crusades, with the loss of millions of men, the desolation of the countries which were the scenes of conflict, the impoverishment of Europe, and the disgrace as well as destruction of all who engaged in them. The last of the eastern possessions, Ptolemais, yielded to the Mahometan yoke, and every vestige of the Christian power in that quarter was obliterated. An. 1291.

The northern Pagans had not yet wholly submitted. The barbarous Prussians obstinately retained the worship of their Gods. As missionary zeal failed, more effectual methods were pursued by Conrad, and the knights of the Teutonic order, who, driven from Palestine, were still ready to fight the battles of the church against all infidels. A long and bloody war followed. The superiority of military skill at last vanquished pagan valour. Such as would not be baptized in blood were compelled to submit to the water of baptism and the sign of the cross. Livonia is said to have received the same treatment, and its inhabitants became Christians and obedient to the Roman see, for that, in public opinion, was now the essence of Christianity.

Spain had long flourished under the dominion of the caliphs; but now divided into principalities, and weakened by quarrels among themselves, it became an easier conquest to its former masters. The Christians rallied under their leaders, and conquest followed conquest. The kings of Castille, Arragon, and Navarre, extended the limits of the Christian church, and prepared for the reduction of Valentia, Grenada,

and Murcia, which yet remained under the power of the Saracens. Those who refused to return to the Christian pale were by Clement IV compelled to abandon their country, and leave those fruitful fields which their industry cultivated. These soon became a desert, and such many of them remain unto this day.

The desolations of the Christians in Asia were scarcely less afflictive. Their Mogul masters, now became Mahometans, oppressed them, but employed not the bloody means which Christians used with Christians; they put them under tribute, they proposed to them every allurements to apostatize, but they neither burned nor dragooned them, as their own brethren in the west were doing.

The rising host of rebels against the holy see alarmed the pontiffs more than all the conquests of the Saracens, and therefore against them, during this century, the weapons of war, ecclesiastical and civil, were particularly sharpened. It would be too extensive a field to recount all the persons, names, and sects that called forth the Roman fury. The heaviest weight fell upon the south of France, where, under the general title of Albigenses and Waldenses, were comprised all who resisted the claims of papal dominion, or wished reformation in the church. Raymond VI, of Thoulouse, in whose territory was the seat of this supposed heresy, attempted, but in vain, to ward off destruction from himself by embracing the papal party. Montfort, who was commissioned to execute the papal decrees against these heretics, so zealously accomplished the mandates of his bloody employers, that he was rewarded with the dominions of Raymond for his support of the cause of the church. But the struggle ended not with the death of the first combatants. Another Raymond, and another earl of Montfort renewed the conflict; and the king of France, Lewis VIII, induced by the solicitations and promises of the pope, cast his enormous weight into the scale against the poor persecuted Christians, and he and the pope divided the spoil of the vanquished count of Toulouse. The inquisition laboured to extirpate by fire and imprisonment the remains of the reputed heretical crew. The plea was heresy, but the real moving cause was ambi-

tion, pride, and avarice. Yet, after thousands upon thousands were sacrificed by inquisitors, the cause had taken too deep root to be extirpated. Though suppressed in one part it rose in another.

The maxim established by the popes and their partisans was, that, "governors, civil and ecclesiastical, derived all lawful authority from the Roman see, and its pontiff as Christ's vicegerent upon earth." Emperors and bishops were alike to be subject to their controul, and all ecclesiastical benefices might be disposed of by them as they thought proper. But the monarchs in Germany, France, and England rejected these lordly claims, and struggled hard to repress the pretensions of the supposed successors of the fishermen of Galilee. The pragmatic sanction of Lewis the ninth erected a barrier against this tyranny of Rome, and provided for the liberties of the Gallican church, as the statutes of Clarendon had done before for the British, but the artful and imperious legates, seconding their ambitious masters, seized every occasion, and improved every opportunity to carry into effect their most insolent pretensions. They plundered the people, and shamefully trafficked with relics and indulgences to support their own enormous vices, and to furnish their lordly master with the treasures of the universe.

The pontiffs themselves, when contests between pretenders to the imperial throne gave them peculiar importance, sold their suffrage for valuable acquisitions. Thus Ancona, Spoleto, Assisi, and many other cities of Italy were reduced under their dominion; and Rodolph of Hapsburgh was not permitted to receive the imperial crown till he had confirmed all former gifts made to the holy see, and sanctioned all its later robberies.

The popes conferred royalty on such as they favoured. A king of Bohemia, of Bulgaria, of Armenia, obtained their regal titles from his holiness Innocent III. Peter of Aragon received in like manner his crown and dignity, in return for subjecting his dominions to the papal see. The thunders of excommunication were successively hurled by the same Innocent against the emperors Philip and Otho;

and against Augustus, king of France, whom he compelled to take back his repudiated queen.

But none received such insulting treatment as John the king of England. He had despised the pope's interference and insolent attempt to impose upon the realm his creature Langton, as archbishop of Canterbury, but the terrible excommunication shook the pillars of his throne. Nor did Innocent rest here ; but, after absolving the subjects of John from their oath of allegiance, he had the audacity to depose the British monarch, and bestow the crown on the French king, who was invited to execute the sentence, and take possession of the papal fief. The dauphin of France prepared to enter England with his army. The pope's legate so wrought upon the fears of the coward monarch, that he laid his crown at this proud prelate's feet, who retained it five days, and then restored it as a present to the worthless wearer, who agreed to hold it as a vassal of Rome, and as such to pay 1000 marks a year to his pontifical superior. The audacity which could presume on such an outrage can only be equalled by the pusillanimity which could submit to it.

It would be both tedious and useless to repeat in detail the series of papal exploits subversive of the sovereignty of independent sovereigns. Suffice it to observe, that Boniface VIII, who closed the century, surpassed all his predecessors. He pushed all their claims with an obstinacy approaching to madness, apparently resolved to try the patience of the prostrate world.

The pope's legates in every country exhibited a faithful representation of their masters, and their example corrupted as much as their rapaciousness devoured. Every tongue confessed the flagitious conduct of the clergy, who, armed with all the spiritual terrors, and possessed of the keys of Paradise, despised the slaves who crouched to them for absolution ; and, in the confidence of security, regarded not their enemies, but as persons whom they might plunder without remorse.

To check the rising spirit of rebellion against these ghostly teachers, and to nip in the bud what was reputed heresy, not only the secular arm was called in to destroy without mercy,

but a new monkish army was levied to support every extravagant pretension of the Roman see.

The different orders which arose are scarce worth enumeration. But one great society, the Mendicants, instituted by Innocent III, deserves particular notice. This new order, renouncing all possessions, begging their daily bread from door to door, coarsely clad, and girt with a rope ; some barefooted, and all affecting sanctity of the highest cast, filled the world. The extirpation of heresy and the support of the papal power were their grand objects. These were divided into four great bodies of Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and hermits of St. Augustine.

The influence which these beggars obtained was immense. Seduced by their sanctimonious appearance, their meritorious poverty, and the favour of the Roman pontiffs, the world bowed down before them. Intrusted generally with absolution and indulgences, they became universally the spiritual guides, and engrossed by degrees all power and all employments.

Their zeal was concentrated against heresy, and abundant occasion arose from its exercise, as heresy had then taken a new form, and was applied not so much to those who perverted the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, as to all who presumed to censure any of the abuses of the Romish church. The bloody Dominic, a Spaniard, was at the head of one of these begging fraternities : a man suited by nature for an inquisitor, acute, violent, unfeeling, overbearing, and indefatigable. He set out for France, and with his begging associates preached, caressed, threatened, and promised in behalf of the church. Those whom he could not prevail upon by the eloquence of his discourses, he subdued by the terrors of the secular arm. A numerous host, reduced by him to the strictest rules of poverty and obedience, enlisted under his banners ; they were, from their leader, named Dominicans ; from their labours, preaching friars ; and from their garb, black friars.

To this black and bloody regiment was chiefly intrusted the inquisitorial work ; and, for the benefit of their souls, men's bodies were committed to the flames. Wherever a

place was suspected of heresy, a court was erected, with powers to hunt out, examine, condemn, and extirpate all those who presumed to find fault with Rome or her minions. Suspicion was sufficient to justify torture: compelled to answer interrogatories, none were exempt from falling into their snares whom they chose to condemn. A new mode of judicial procedure invested them with power to find victims, and constitute crimes. The horrible edicts of Frederic the Second and of St. Lewis, issued at the instigation of Rome, make the blood run cold. That monarchs could so easily devote to racks, gibbets, and tortures, the most inoffensive of their subjects, merely under a charge of heresy, is astonishing. The atrocious barbarities of Conrad of Marpurg and of Pierre de Castelnau, are on record. By these and their fellows, the insolent pontiff expected to trample on the human race, and to root out every tongue that muttered against his blasphemies, tyranny, and hypocrisy. More innocent blood was now shed by the hand of these conspirators against the truth, than perhaps had ever flowed under the cruellest of the pagan persecutions.

The Franciscans were associates with their black brethren in this spiritual crusade for the extirpation of heresy. Francis of Assisi, an Italian, established the order which bears his name. Ignorant, fanatic, devout, zealous, devoted to Rome, his numerous followers embraced the rigid poverty he prescribed, and, clothed with the humiliating name of little brethren, or minors, united to bring down the mightiest monarchs and their kingdoms to the feet of the Roman pontiffs. The politic popes clothed these zealous partisans of St. Peter with extraordinary prerogatives, to confess, to absolve, and be the medium of distributing those wondrous indulgences that covered the transgressors from all apprehension of punishment for sins past, present, or to come.

Had these orders cordially united with each other and among themselves, dreadful had been the state of the Christian world. Their numbers, activity, power, and influence could hardly have been withstood. But these sturdy beggars could never agree. Jealousy for their order, claims of superior sanctity, pre-eminence, and the jarring interest where

two beggars met at the same door, raised a spirit of enmity not easily appeased. They loaded each other with the bitterest invectives and the foulest accusations, and could not peaceably divide the spoil they had extorted. They often treated all other orders and the whole body of clergy with sovereign contempt; pretending that the true method of salvation was peculiarly revealed to them and to their order only, and that they had an especial commission from God.

To vie with their brethren in excellence, the general of the Carmelite order produced a revelation expressly given him by the Virgin Mary, that whoever departed this life with the Carmelite scapulary on his shoulders, might go to Heaven's gate direct, and be admitted by St. Peter, and no questions asked. And this ridiculous story even pontiffs sanctioned and defended.

The austerities of their order divided the Franciscans among themselves. The original rule of absolute poverty had been dispensed with by the imperious Gregory the Ninth. But the most spiritual bigots would not permit even a pope to alter the constitutions of their founders, or receive the mitigation proposed of a right to the use of things given them, whilst the property vested in St. Peter and his successors. They would be absolute beggars, in defiance of the pope himself. Popes after popes were employed in regulating and restraining these ridiculous contests. By these and other disputes a spirit of opposition to papal wealth and tyranny was kept up, and served to keep alive the conflict with abused power, and led men to examine the claims of the pontifical see.

One of the Franciscans will be for ever dear to the friends of science. Roger Bacon, commonly called Friar Bacon, ranks above the greatest geniuses of that age: he displayed scientific attainments far beyond the times in which he lived, and laid the foundations for the noble superstructure that Boyle and Newton afterwards erected. Deep in astronomy, chemistry, optics, and mathematics, he was condemned as having intercourse with the devil, since no human faculties were supposed equal to his universal knowledge.

The learned works of moralists and theologians multiplied abundantly, while religious knowledge and practice were equally debased. No man ventured without danger to suspect the grossest frauds of superstition, or to doubt the efficacy of relics and the ceremonies of religion. The tyranny of Rome was submitted to with an acknowledgment of the most abject dependance on the holy see, and every prerogative of it defended with the most furious zeal, whilst the fundamental doctrines of the Bible were disregarded. Purity of heart and life was almost unknown; but the impious doctrine of human merit found monkish support, and it was affirmed, that whoever chose it might perform a more perfect obedience than God required, and lay up a store of works of supererogation to enrich the treasury of the church.

An. 1215. The pope, by his own authority, now claimed a right to establish articles of faith, and in the fourth Lateran council published his decrees, which the assembled bishops were to hear and obey. Then by his authority the term transubstantiation first became established, and auricular confession universally imposed: both were mighty engines in the hands of sacerdotal jugglers. The absurd notions of propitiating God by self-inflicted punishments produced the flagellantes, who filled the air with shrieks, and covered their bodies with gore, in honour of God and his saints, and acquired no small measure of veneration by these severities.

The wretched mode in which morals were taught by the most admired writers, such as Thomas Aquinas, tended to divert the mind from the acquisition of holy affections. Endless definitions of virtues and vices displayed their own deep logical subtleties, and the ideas affixed to their virtues and vices were so totally diverse from the real graces of the spirit and the works of the flesh, as described in the scriptures of truth, that it was impossible to discern any similitude between them.

Holiness and charity consisted not in pure affection and faith working by love, but in giving alms to the ragged fraternity of mendicants, building churches, endowing monasteries, and in perfect obedience to all the dictates of the holy

see. Humility, instead of a lowly sense of our unworthy selves, now stood in a tattered garment, bound with a cord, and bare feet, begging from door to door, to accumulate a store of merit for those who chose to purchase it. Justice implied not the defence of the natural rights of mankind, but the tormenting and plundering every man who was called a heretic, and who refused a blind submission to papal impositions.

This was the meridian of papal domination. Unresisting submission was paid to the pontifical decrees, the whole ecclesiastic corps was drilled to passive obedience, and even monarchs held a precarious sceptre, surrendering their kingdoms as voluntary fiefs, and becoming creatures of the holy see. The stoutest trembled before the papal anathemas, and the most stubborn was obliged to yield to the stern obstinacy of persevering ambition.

The clergy, sufficiently corrupt before, proceeded in luxury according to their affluence: and the new hosts of monks contributed to seize the fruits of industry to support the vices of beggary. That heretics abounded, in the eye of the church at least, is evident from the methods invented to suppress them throughout the Christian world. But of those who bore the name of heretic the characters were very different. In one thing they generally concurred, in rejecting the monstrous system of established superstitions, and in declaiming against the wealth, tyranny, and abuses, of the pope and his clergy. With various intermediate shades, the heretics seem to be of two sorts; men of genuine piety and religion, who, taking the word of God for their rule of life, adorned the doctrine of our Saviour in all things by a conversation becoming godliness. These treated with contempt the self-instituted rules of monastic superstition, and all the idle and useless ceremonials of religion, endeavouring to worship God in spirit and in truth. But there were others said to be of a different stamp, who, under affectation of liberty, and emancipation from all restraint, indulged opinions as fanatical and adverse to the purity of the gospel, as their lives were a disgrace to the name of Christian.

There were also many more, said to be highly enthusiastic, who imitated all the practices of the mendicants, and, with a still more squalid dress, if possible, and maniacal wildness, roamed about the world, and lived upon alms. These were all persecuted by the inquisitors with unrelenting cruelty, under the name of Albigenses, Beghards, Brethren of the free Spirit, Cathari, Petrobrusians, Apostolics, and other appellations, and many of these expired in torments, with the most sedate solemnity and the most resigned devotion. Whilst their enemies endeavoured to exaggerate their crimes, they were often compelled to bear a reluctant testimony to their exemplary virtue. Whatever was the crime charged, the real cause was revolt from papal tyranny and jurisdiction: had this been submitted to, all the rest would have been overlooked.

The dispute about the eucharist was not yet closed by the pope's adopting the word transubstantiation; many submitted to acknowledge a real presence, without admitting a change of the symbols.

The rites and ceremonies of the church continued to receive abundant additions. The wafer god* required a new pageantry of devotion to attend his shrine: the richest metals and jewels adorned the receptacle; the wax tapers burned unextinguished before it; and all the parade of bowing, kneeling, and fine clothes, attracted the veneration of the vulgar, and exalted the glory of the minister, who could make the god he devoured, and reproduce him at pleasure.

Another invention of Boniface VIII closed the present century: the celebration of the jubilee year. A proclamation was made of the wondrous benefits to be reaped from

* Wafers were used instead of common bread, which was liable to crumble, the consequences of which were deemed horrible by those who believed it to be after consecration transubstantiated into the real body of the Saviour. For a similar reason the council of Constance afterwards decreed, that the Sacrament should be administered to the laity only in bread, lest the blood of Christ might be lost or improperly applied.

visiting the church of St Peter and its relics every centenary year. Full remission of sins and showers of indulgences drew the fanatic world to the seat of holiness to obtain these inestimable blessings, and receive the benediction of the vicegerent of God on earth. Throughout the year 1300 the roads were filled with multitudes like armies coming and going. The number of strangers in Rome in that year was seldom less than 200,000.

The first essay was so gainful, that the space of a hundred years was thought by the successors of Boniface too long to wait, so they reduced the term to fifty, and then to five and twenty years, for the benefit of all Christians who might be deprived of the advantages of the festival, by not being so fortunate as to live more than a hundred years.

From the vallies of the Alps, where a holy seed had been preserved, the Waldenses had now not only spread into the southern provinces of France, but into Germany and Italy. George Morel affirms that those of the Waldensian confession in 1260, amounted to 800,000 persons.

The general name given them in Germany was Beghards, said to be derived from the earnestness of their prayers, and their fervour in religious duties.

When we consider the means employed to root out what was then called heresy, it is impossible to reflect without wonder how it was preserved in the fire ; when the power of monarchs combined with papal authority, seconded by all the craft and cruelty of inquisitors, and the whole mendicant tribe. A blessed body, however, remained as a sacred seed, and, moistened with blood, continued to grow, but its members had yet to struggle up hill for ages to come, scattered, depressed, persecuted, striving against the same strong arm of power and the wiles of monkery, till the days of the reformation.

In the east the light had become dim, and the churches, once numerous in Asia, were reduced to a few by the pagan and Mahometan ravagers. Still some faithful men were found, and in the west, among all the nations professing Christianity, God had his secret ones, though small and of

no reputation. The leaven was yet fermenting, and the lump not wholly unleavened.

Century XIV.

The zeal of the popes for crusading had not abated, but the courage of their vassals for such expeditions was wonderfully cooled; experience had taught them the difficulty of the enterprise, and the hypocrisy of its instigators.

Popes even offered a part of their own immense treasures to equip a fleet and army, and opening the chest of the church's store of indulgences, whereby the profligate might be accommodated, and enter paradise under the cross, without doing penance for or parting with any of their crimes, offered to dispose of them on the most liberal terms. Attempts to renew the crusades were made twice or thrice in the 14th century, the last in 1363; but all in vain: Mahometanism remained triumphant. Though, with regard to the reality of the Christian life, it was as little to be found among the crusaders as among the Saracens themselves.

Happier and more considerable success is said to have attended the missionary efforts of the pontiffs in Tartary and China. The papal see, eager to improve every opportunity of extending its dominions, had dispatched Dominican and Franciscan ambassadors to meet the host of Tartars, which, advancing from the east, had overrun Hungary, Poland, and Silesia. This brought an embassy in return, and a new corps of black and white barefooted envoys proceeded to the court of Kublai, the Tartar monarch. The reports which reached Europe were now so flattering, that the head missionary Corvino was raised to the archbishopric of Cambalu, or Peking, the capital, and seven new Franciscan bishops were dispatched to obey his orders and second his efforts in the conversion of the Tartars and Chinese. An intercourse being thus established with Rome, and permission given by the government

of China for the missionaries to labour in their vocation, the number of Latin churches is said to have been considerably increased. But we must receive with considerable allowance the reports of the missionaries, who, for the honour of the holy church and their own, were not at all backward in enhancing the greatness of their labours, and vaunting the abundance of their success. But, whatever it was, its continuance was short, and scarce a trace of the religion they planted hath ever since appeared in these vast regions.

The arms of the Teutonic knights in the north had nearly extirpated the last remains of paganism in Prussia and Livonia. Jagellon, duke of Lithuania, a pagan monarch, was strong in the valour and affections of his people. But the vacant throne of Poland, and the beautiful Hedwige, the daughter of the preceding monarch, had charms irresistible. As neither the one nor the other could be obtained by Jagellon without his submitting to baptism, and receiving the sign of the cross, and both were within his grasp by so doing, he was easily persuaded to become a Christian, and, bending the necks of his pagan subjects to the religion he had himself embraced, he united his duchy with the crown of Poland, and received the fair princess for his bride. Thus all the northern people at last submitted to the profession of Christianity, and, though in general they remained as much heathens as before, bishoprics were erected, and they learned to make the sign of the cross.

Numerous conversions of the Jews are also mentioned as having taken place in this century. They had spread through every part of Europe, engrossed a great share of its traffic, and, by their craft, their dexterity, and their usury, contrived to accumulate riches to an excess that could not but excite the envy of their enemies. These began by blackening their character with every atrocity: children crucified and eat by them; the fountains poisoned; the consecrated wafers pierced, bleeding, and abused by their impious hands; charges as ridiculous as horrid and untrue. It was their interest and object to live in peace among the Christians; but it was no difficult matter to persuade Christian magistrates and prelates to persecute an unfortunate race of people, and to exalt

their zeal in conversions, whilst they gratified their covetousness by the plunder of these devoted victims : a terrible persecution, therefore, generally rose against them. Death in every horrid form seized the obstinate, and those who saved their lives by baptism neither saved their property nor changed one of their sentiments. Yet even these horrid executions produced the high commendations of the church of Rome, and merited indulgences equal to the zeal of crusaders.

The Saracenic kingdoms of Spain had not yet entirely submitted to the Christian yoke, and it became dubious whether the Christian or Mahometan faith would prevail : but the courage of the Spanish Christians, aided by their brethren, whom the Roman pontiff roused to their assistance, by the same promises of heaven and indulgences which were bestowed on those who conflicted in the Holy Land, turned the balance against the infidels, and their fall and final expulsion speedily followed. These miserable wars wasted the finest country in Christendom : in consequence of which, and of the banishment of its numerous inhabitants, many of the most beautiful and fruitful territories lie uncultivated, and almost without an inhabitant.

Christianity lost more in the east than it gained in the west. The Tartars, become Mahometans under the mighty Tamerlane, deluged the eastern world with blood. To the whole Christian name this terrible conqueror was peculiarly fatal : not satisfied with subjugation and tribute, he resolved to compel his subjects to embrace the religion of their master. Death in its most tremendous forms rose up at his command to terrify into apostacy the wavering, or to exterminate the obstinate : whilst the mildest fate allotted to any Christian was slavery and exile. Thus few, very few, remained through the vast extent of this newly erected empire, and all fell prostrate before the sword of Tamerlane.

Before the end of the century, a change of government in China completely excluded the possibility of a missionary's entrance, and, by a fundamental law of the new dynasty, no stranger might pass the frontier line on penalty of death.

The numerous schools and universities established in this century promised an abundant harvest of literature. But the preposterous methods of tuition, and the scholastic theology, diverted the minds of the students from the primary objects of science to subtleties, puerilities, and discussions on subjects at once so intricate and useless, that the time and labour employed upon them produced only a kind of more pompous ignorance. Aristotle still maintained his empire in all the universities, and his opinions were held almost as sacred as the gospel.

The nobler sciences of geometry, astronomy, and the mathematics, though pursued with eagerness, were obscured by the passion for astrology, with which men of all ranks were infected. To read the destinies of men in the stars was the great object of astronomical students. Notwithstanding the frequent accusations of magic and witchcraft, which brought the adventurous under the bloody tribunal of the inquisition, many pursued these absurd researches into futurity.

Yet minds of a superior order arose in the republic of letters: Petrarch and Dante in poetry and eloquence might vie with the first of the Augustan age. The progress of polite literature and philosophy far exceeded the theological class, the productions of which scarce deserve to be mentioned. All who read the Bible, and relished the simplicity of truth, were branded as heretics, and delivered over to their tormentors.

The church of Rome was now at its summit of power. There was a regular descent from the pope to the lowest of the sacerdotal tribe. The begging regiments of monks and friars fought manfully under ecclesiastical banners, and the inquisitors watched over heretical pravity with the eyes of Argus, to keep down every spirit which breathed reform. Yet, under all these flattering appearances of triumphant dominion, secret causes were working to weaken and finally dissolve the papal tyranny.

An. 1305. The removal of the papal see to Avignon, in France, and the schisms which prevailed, loosened the bonds of spiritual obedience. Whilst at one time two and sometimes three popes claimed infallibility, and each to be the

sole head of the church, it was impossible for the common people to decide to whom obedience was due. This led many to think whether such claims were to be found in the Scriptures, or such obedience due to either of them; nay, whether a visible head was at all essential to a Christian church.

Another cause of weakening the secret springs of the Roman government was the resistance made to the arrogant claims of Boniface, so openly avowed in a letter to Philip, king of France, "That all power spiritual and temporal was vested by Jesus Christ in the Roman see;" that every being of the human race who dared disbelieve this fact, or withhold his obedience, was thereby constituted a heretic, and damned to all eternity. Philip was not a man to submit to these arrogant pretensions, and therefore wisely set himself to reduce within bounds these extravagant claims, which in his answer to the pope he treated with becoming contempt: in an assembly of his peers, he engaged them to concur with him in an accusation of heresy and simony against the pope himself, drawn up by an intrepid lawyer, Nogaret, and demanding an œumenical council to judge and depose him. The furious Boniface immediately launched all the thunders of the Vatican at his head. But Philip, supported by his states, prepared to carry his purposes into effect, and sent Nogaret with orders to seize the refractory pontiff, and bring him bound to Lyons to be judged. As Philip had a strong party at Rome, his envoy seized the pope at Anagni, where he expected no such visitant, and, treating him with every indignity, so wounded the head which bore the tiara with his gauntlet, that, though the pontiff was rescued by the people, and carried to Rome, he died of the wounds he had received, or the fever brought on by rage and vexation. An. 1303.

It was a bad example to shew that the popes might be resisted with impunity. Lewis of Bavaria followed the steps of Philip, and not only resisted himself, but taught others to resist. All who were persecuted by the Roman see and its inquisitors fled to him for protection, and ranged themselves under his banners. Among these were some called here-

tics, who, safe under imperial patronage, were taught by experience that papal anathemas which could not be enforced were not to be feared.

The disputes among the Franciscans, in which the popes so often and fruitlessly interfered, served greatly to rouse a spirit of resistance to their authority.

A great contest was maintained through all this century between the rigid and relaxed Franciscans, about the rules of their order. The rigid, who were called spiritual, would submit to no compromise, but would be beggars absolute, and destitute of all claim to any right of use, even to the rags they wore. The mitigated rule admitted of the use without the property, and that what they got by begging might be laid up in storehouses for a day of want. This ridiculous contest occasioned more trouble, vexation, disputes, and enmities, than all the essential doctrines of Christianity. Sometimes the popes favoured one of the parties, but wisely in general endeavoured to compromise the differences. The rigid could bear no abatement of the most austere rules of St. Francis, and determined they would be beggars in spite of all papal decisions. For this at intervals they were miserably persecuted, and four of the most zealous suffered in flames at Marseilles, whilst Delitiosi, their head, died in prison. These martyrs to their cause were adored by their brethren, and no decisions of popes or inquisitors could prevent the veneration in which they were held.

“That neither Christ nor his apostles possessed any thing in common or personally by right of property,” was asserted by one of the spirituals. This the Dominicans denied. The flame burst out with fresh violence. The popes sought to appease it. Silence was in vain enjoined upon the angry disputants; they would fight in spite of their father. Thus, Dominicans against Franciscans, and Franciscans against Dominicans, and, to make confusion more confused, Franciscans against Franciscans, waged irreconcilable war, which the holy pontiffs, siding sometimes with the one and sometimes with the other, could neither terminate nor allay.

To close these wounds, the popes at last consented to a division of the order, into those who persisted in the severer

rule of discipline, and those who admitted a mitigation of it. Yet even in this many refused to acquiesce, and professed to prefer St. Francis before popes and councils; his rule to the gospel; and his person, if not to a superiority, yet to an equality with Jesus Christ.

Notwithstanding these divisions and contests, the papacy maintained its proud claims of dominion over all persons. But, as this was disputed, a continual warfare was maintained by the princes who asserted their independence, and by all who presumed to find fault with the tyranny of Rome. The reverence acquired by long prescription, and supported by the suggestion of its being due to Christ's immediate vicar upon earth, cast a glory around the pontiffs not easily tarnished. The orders had advanced themselves so high in the courts of princes, were so dispersed through the world, and so united in the defence of their privileges, that the popes were compelled to respect the beggars they had made. Superstition had attached such sanctity to their habit, that multitudes in their dying hours purchased admission into their order, or remembered them liberally in their wills, that they might at least be buried in the mendicant's rags, and so bear some relation to the fraternity, in hopes at the day of judgment to stand a better chance in these beggars' weeds. Yet their advancement to the highest distinctions, and the diminution of power and wealth occasioned by their privileges, to the injury of the prelates and secular clergy, made them hated though feared, and stirred up many to dispute their rights, and to be jealous of their influence. The universities of Oxford and Paris resisted their claims: and many set themselves to write against their abuses, and some even to deny the papal authority to grant such privileges; but the monks triumphed at the court of Rome over all their adversaries.

An. 1360. The famous Wickliff particularly distinguished himself in this controversy, and seconded the opposition to the encroachments of these insolent beggars on the privileges and statutes of his university at Oxford, for which the archbishop of Canterbury, Langham, a creature of the papacy, deprived him of the wardenship of Canterbury Hall, now

Christ's church, and put a monk in his place. This decision the pope on appeal confirmed. Naturally incensed at this oppression as well as zealous for the honour of his university, Wickliff spared not the tyranny of Rome, or the abuses of that government, whilst he treated all the monkish order with equal severity and contempt. He exhorted all men to read the Scriptures for themselves, and resolved to procure them that opportunity, by translating the bible into his native tongue, and dispersing copies as widely as possible. A crime of this enormity could not escape episcopal cognizance, and, on the accusation of these monks, Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, summoned the heretic before a council at London, where nothing could have prevented his condemnation but the favour of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and other noblemen, who honoured the reformer, and protected him from violence. Though Wickliff's person yet escaped the flames, his books and opinions did not, being judged, in two councils held at London and Oxford, heretical and erroneous. He retired, however, to his benefice in the country, and shortly after finished his glorious career, leaving behind him the seeds which were to bring forth fruits of eternal life to millions yet unborn. His followers were not so happy as their leader. Many of them, under the denomination of Lollards and Wickliffites, were hunted out by the bishops and their inquisitors, and proceeded against with all the unrelenting cruelty of their ecclesiastical courts. The vengeance which Wickliff's living person escaped, fell upon his dead bones, which, in consequence of a decree of the council of Constance, were afterwards dug up and publicly burnt.

As the term Beghard, so the name Lollard, was imputed indiscriminately to all who fell under heretical suspicion; whether, like Wickliff, they were men of true zeal and Christian piety, or belonged to the multitude of reformers of every kind who sprang up to bear testimony against papal abuses. Many of these fell into the hands of the inquisitors; and others, to save themselves from prison and death, dispersed and fled wherever they could be hid or find protection. Bohemia received many of the fugitives. There they joined those who were discontented with the papal usurpations,

formed the party afterward called Hussites, and became the revivers of the Bohemian and Moravian brethren.

An. 1348. A dreadful scene presents itself in the execution of the various denominations of heretics, by the inquisitors of Christ's vicar upon earth. They were hunted out in every part of Christendom ; and, under the names of Beghards, Lollards, Wickliffites, Waldenses, Cathari, Apostolics, and Brethren of the Free Spirit, compelled to abjure or perish : these were equally criminal in the eyes of their persecutors whenever and wherever they stood connected with that greatest of all crimes, rejection of the tyranny, and complaint of the abuses of the church of Rome.

A sect called the Whippers also renewed their flagellations, to which they annexed the most meritorious virtues, as equal to baptism, and superseding the necessity of the blood of Christ. The fires of inquisitors strove in vain to extirpate these wandering fanatics.

An. 1373. A more joyous sect in Liege and Flanders exercised the judges of heretical pravity. These were the Jumpers, both sexes of whom assembled, and, holding hand in hand, displayed the most extraordinary gestures, till, exhausted with the violence of their continued motions, they fell breathless to the ground, pretending at these seasons to receive visions and revelations. The ignorant clergy regarded them as demoniacs, and by incense and exorcisms endeavoured to cast out the dancing devils from the deluded fraternity. There is nothing new under the sun. Yet folly is more tolerable than cruelty. At the one we can smile, at the other we shudder.

Amidst these dark and dreary scenes, we see a beam of light darting across the dismal gloom. Wickliff stands among the foremost whose labours tended to enlighten the sphere in which he moved, and to unbar the gates of truth, which had been shut by the seclusion of the oracles of God from the sight of the people.

The spreading sect of Lollards all united in examining the iniquitous claims of Rome, in discovering the delusions of the superstitions by which they had been enslaved, the priestcraft by which they had been plundered, and the unchristian

cruelty of their ecclesiastical persecutors. Attempts to quench the rising flame, though succeeding in one spot, only drove the persecuted to another, where it broke out afresh, and continued to spread, in spite of all efforts to extinguish it. The Waldenses and Albigenses increased in the south of France and Switzerland. The Beghards and Lollards wandered through Flanders and Germany. Bohemia received the persecuted refugees, and adopted them and their sentiments. The faithful were indeed comparatively few, and generally found in the lowest ranks of life, especially among the weavers of Antwerp and the Netherlands. Some, who bore the names of heretical infamy, probably deserved reproach, but there was a chosen generation, whom all the waters of error could not quench, nor the floods of persecution drown.

The university of Oxford had the honour of producing the first eminent English reformer, and the crime of persecuting and expelling him. The Dominicans and Franciscans, who then bore rule, could neither endure the light of the scripture truth, nor the purity of scripture conduct.

In the west of Europe, the numbers greatly increased of those who emancipated themselves from the yoke of bondage. A people arose, resolute to suffer any torments rather than submit to superstitious practices, zealous to spread through the Christian world the necessity of consulting the oracles of God, and renouncing all dominion of men over their faith.

Yet these were comparatively so few, and so inferior in all that the world calls good and great, that they gave no very alarming apprehensions to their lordly masters. Though power, wealth, wisdom, and numbers were leagued against them, they, like the burning bush, continued unconsumed amidst the flames.

Century XV.

The regions of Tartary and the adjacent provinces, with the vast empire of China, returned again to pagan darkness. The light which had been once kindled appeared nearly if not utterly extinct.

Nor did the conquests over the Saracens in Spain, or the persecution of the Jews, increase much the number of Christians. The Mahometans obstinately adhered to their prophet, and no temptation or terror could induce them to submit to the papal missionaries. Indeed, their teaching and cruelties were alike unsuited to produce conviction on minds sore with ill usage, and the final expulsion of the Mahometans from their country, by the famous archbishop of Toledo, was a step as impolitic as savage. The Jews also resisted and suffered; compelled to abjure Moses, many dissembled and submitted, but retained Judaism as tenaciously as ever, with the most implacable abhorrence of their persecutors. To this day they remain in Spain and Portugal, bowing the knee to the cross, and secretly renouncing him who bore it.

The discovery of a new world opened a noble entrance for gospel truth, had the missionaries been as evangelical as the mariners were adventurous: but Christianity shudders at the recital of Spanish cruelties and Portuguese conquests: thirst for gold seems to have extinguished every sensibility of the human heart. To compel the tortured to discover their wealth, and to submit to baptism for the salvation of their souls, displays an atrocity of character that must for ever be execrated: we turn from the scenes recorded with shame and indignation. As the reward for this discovery, and the encouragement to christianize the heathen nations, the imperial pontiff divided a world, the very geography of which he did not understand, between Spain and Portugal, and legalized the conquests they should make, by a solemn gift of all the countries they should discover on each side of the line of demarcation, as if the undisputed title of the universe had vested in himself. Thus Africa, India, and Ame-

rica received the first sounds of the name of Christ through a medium that must have excited their terror and abhorrence, instead of winning the warm affections of the heart. Such christians can hardly be said to have enlarged the pale of the church: they were indeed made slaves to Rome, but continued strangers to vital Christianity.

Soon after the fall of Constantinople, in 1453, the poor remains of the Grecian empire fell under the Mahometan yoke. The extinction of the sciences in the eastern empire, in consequence of its fall, drove a multitude of men of letters from Constantinople to Italy, who, under the patronage of the famed Medici family, revived the drooping cause of literature.

The Greek and Latin authors were now brought forth from obscurity, and ably explained, to which the discovery of the art of printing especially contributed. To it, under God, the revival of religion was more indebted than to any other cause whatever. Learning of every kind now made immense progress: the oriental languages were studied, antiquities explored, the muses cultivated, and all the branches of polite literature pursued with increasing success and eagerness. The darkness of superstition began to vanish from the presence of the light of truth. Daring spirits pleaded boldly the cause of Christ against his betrayers, charging the pride, avarice, and enormities of Rome and her clergy as ready to bring down the Divine vengeance on the head and the members. Meantime, the offensive schism of the papacy increased. The attempts to heal it by the deposition of the two contending pontiffs, and the election of one head in their room, added a third to the number. Each maintained his sole sovereignty, and condemned his antagonists and all their adherents to the flames of hell for ever. The scandal this occasioned, added to the furious progress of what was called heresy, roused the spirit of the emperor, the kings of France and England, and other princes, to attempt a reformation of the abuses which had become intolerable. Nothing appeared so effectual for these purposes as a general council. It was accordingly summoned, at the instigation of Sigismund, by the pope last chosen, John XXIII. This assem-

bly was opened at Constance, in the presence of the emperor, and an immensity of bishops and princes or ambassadors from all the western states professing the Christian name.

As among the first acts of this assembly the Roman pontiff was decreed subject to a general council, they proceeded to depose John XXIII for his crimes. Gregory XII sent in his resignation to prevent his deposition, and Benedict XIII, refractory and refusing to submit, was solemnly cast down from his eminence, and degraded. A fourth pope was chosen at the council, Martin V. The vanquished popes struggled for a while, and at last left the field to Martin: but when this first object was secured, the more difficult task still remained: the reformation of abuses in the pope himself and his clergy, the continuance of which the members of the council, with this pope at their head, were too interested not to maintain, nor could they endure the idea of consenting to any material suppression of claims, which, besides abridging their wealth and power, would subject their crimes to the cognizance of the civil governors. The crafty Martin, therefore, notwithstanding the hopes he had raised before his election, contrived to elude every effort of reformation, though generally allowed to be necessary: but the difficulty where to begin, what to amend, where to stop, and how to prevent the heretics from taking occasion of triumph from the confession of abuses, engaged the pope to dissolve this assembly, and to defer the work of reform to another council, to be shortly after held for this salutary purpose. An. 1418.

They took care not to part, however, without making some severe examples of heretical punishment. They were cordially united to suppress those who upbraided the clergy with their ignorance, avarice, and vice.

John Huss and Jerome of Prague, men of the most exemplary piety, highly eminent in Bohemia, and distinguished members in the university of that city, had made themselves enemies among the clergy, by the sharpness of their rebukes, and the fidelity of their remonstrances. These animadversions, and other co-operating causes, had raised such a flame as rendered it dangerous for Huss and Jerome to

venture to Constance, nor dared they trust themselves till fortified with the most solemn safe conduct from the emperor, for their journey thither and peaceable return. But the clergy contrived to have these revered reformers accused and imprisoned, and, after forty days' disputation, condemned to the flames, in opposition to the most sacred engagements. Huss was the first victim, and Jerome followed. The clergy had now the opportunity of vengeance, and they resolved not to lose it: a thousand crimes were charged upon these holy men. The real ones for which they suffered, were the offence given to the pope and clergy, by their free and vehement censures of their avarice, superstition, and tyranny, and the fearful effects produced by their preaching, in alienating the minds of multitudes from the church of Rome, and circulating the works and opinions of the great English heretic, Wickliff, to the detriment of the Roman Catholic faith and dominion.

Nothing short of flames could expiate such enormous crimes. The noble martyrs braved all their insults and torments. Jerome was at first staggered, and induced to make some concessions, but, recovering his fortitude, appeared before his persecutors with wisdom and eloquence that none of his adversaries could gainsay or resist; but his condemnation was decided, and the goodness of his cause only hastened his execution. Huss was burned, July 15, 1415.—Jerome burned, May 30, 1416.

These men were disciples of the English reformer, Wickliff, espoused his sentiments, and circulated his works. The council would gladly have executed the same vengeance on the principal author of heresy, but he had rested from his labours in the grave. His bones, therefore, were the only remains on which they could glut their impotent revenge. These were ordered to be dug up and burnt, and the ashes thrown into a river.

The pope would gladly have had no more to do with councils, if he could have avoided them; but the flame which the execution of Huss and Jerome had occasioned, compelled the reluctant pontiff to summon a new council at Pavia, whence it was ultimately removed to Basil, or Basle, in Switzerland.

But Eugenius, the successor of Martin, alarmed at the vigorous steps with which the council opened, used all his artifices to suspend its operations. This exasperated the pontiff beyond all endurance, and a quarrel ensued. The fathers of the council summoned the pope before them; he presumed to dissolve them, and announce a new council to be held at Ferrara. Ecclesiastical thunders now roared afresh: the council deposed the pope, and the pope anathematised the council. Another pope was chosen, and a new schism divided the papal world.

The schism being once more healed by abdication, the papal claims rose as high as ever, and Pius II, advanced to the pontifical chair, retracted solemnly all that he had said and written as Eneas Sylvius; than whom in the council of Basle there had not been a more zealous partisan for the superiority of councils, and the necessity of reform. But the tiara no sooner encircled his brow, than his eyes were opened to see and lament the heresies of the simple prelate, and to display the zeal and orthodoxy of the sovereign pontiff. "As Eneas Sylvius," said he, "I was a damnable heretic, but as Pope Pius IV, I am an orthodox pontiff."

Borgia, the last who filled the papal chair in this century, was a monster of cruelty and impiety. If the church was corrupted and debased under other pontiffs, under him it became the abomination of desolation.

The monkish orders were sunk into the dregs of idleness and licentiousness; and all ranks of men, overwhelmed with ignorance and superstition, blindly followed their blind leaders.

The persecution of heretics raged with unabated fury. To kill all who resisted the Roman hierarchy was among the most meritorious of services. Thus princes readily aided the inquisitors, and merited titles of distinction from the sovereign pontiffs. New orders still arose; but heretics multiplied in spite of all the sufferings they endured. The learned and ancient John de Wessalia perished in confinement, whilst the more vehement Jerome Savanarola kindled a deep-rooted enmity against himself by his testimony against the prevailing abuses, which all his piety, learning, and eloquence could

not allay. Nothing short of burning his body in the fire could expiate his offences. Yet the truth had taken so deep a hold on the consciences of many, and Wickliff's works had been circulated and read with such avidity, that though the inquisitors sought them with eagerness, neither the fear of the inquisitors, nor any other consideration, deterred his followers from disseminating his books and his doctrines. These corresponded in substance with those which have since been received and established in all the churches of the reformed.

The Bohemians, after the burning of their apostolic chiefs, resolved to have teachers of their faith like their martyred Huss and Jerome, and to enjoy the ordinance of the Lord's Supper according to its primitive institution. Many of them retired to a steep mountain which they called Tabor, and, in despite of popes and councils, communicated together both in bread and wine. Their church increasing by fresh accessions under the famous Ziska, blind, but wise and intrepid, they defied their enemies, and asserted their liberty to worship God according to their consciences. A bloody war was raised against them. After dreadful carnage on both sides, they maintained their ground against all their enemies.

Huss and Savanarola have left works that speak the hearts of the writers, but they have been succeeded by men so much advanced in spiritual wisdom and knowledge that little attention hath been paid to them, or indeed to any of the writers before Luther. The church in general continued in great spiritual darkness, sunk in superstition; the people, dupes of sacerdotal jugglers, ready to receive the despotic mandates of popes, and to believe all the absurdities inculcated by priestly craft. Of all crimes, the most dangerous was the attempt to emancipate the souls of men from this yoke of bondage.

The government of the church was now generally admitted to be under one visible head. The Roman pontiff made it his undeviating design to subject to the holy see all persons, civil as well as ecclesiastical. With this view, he constantly inculcated "that all lawful power upon earth was derived from Christ through his vicegerent, the head of the Romish church." But to this the temporal sovereigns greatly de-

murred, and the prelatical order was much disposed to raise a barrier against despotism, by exalting a general council above the pope. This was a sharp bone of contention, and is not yet settled in the popish creed. But it was generally admitted as one of the heresies to be punished with fire, that the church of Christ could subsist (as many then zealously maintained) without a visible head at all, being sufficiently established under the spiritual and invisible guidance of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. These revolvers from the jurisdiction of Rome were pursued by the whole body of the clergy, supported by the secular arm of the princes, and the malignity and craft of inquisitors. Yet they continued to spread through every part of Christendom, and nothing contributed more to this than the obstinate determination of the ecclesiastics in power, to maintain inviolably their claims, as if they were all of divine authority. Nay, where the abuse was even incapable of vindication, it was still to be maintained, lest the heretics should triumph. Thus the matter became desperate, and necessarily hastened the great reformation which was preparing.

The Greeks and Latins contended as fiercely as ever. The east laid all its miseries to the insensibility of their brethren in not flying to their assistance, and complained, that whilst the Roman pontiffs were grasping at supremacy, Constantinople was lost.

The multitude of heretics afforded abundant labour for the inquisitors. The Waldenses were carefully hunted up, punished, and suppressed, wherever their meetings were discovered. The brethren of the free spirit wandered about Germany. The white brethren, so called from their dress, paraded with a cross at their head. They went in procession from city to city, in immense multitudes, praying and singing, and were received with much reverence and hospitality. In Italy, the pope contrived to seize their head, who was brought to Rome, and burnt as a heretic, and those who followed him were dispersed. In various places similar associations were formed by those who called themselves men of understanding. Whatever were their errors, we are sure the part most exceptionable to the inquisitors will have

our approbation rather than censure, viz: "That Christ alone merited eternal life for us by his obedience to death, even the death of the cross, and not man by his own doings or duties." "That Christ alone can absolve a sinner, and not a priest;" and, "that penance could never procure salvation."

The Flagellantes, or Whippers, also continued to disturb the peace and provoke inquisitorial animadversion: and not a few of them were cast into the fire. Such inhumanity was called zeal for the church: and to delay accusing or punishing heretics involved a suspicion of orthodoxy.

The church, loaded with ceremonies, needed the pruning-hook, but every pope exercised his invention to add something to the number, in order to distinguish his pontificate. Indeed the whole of religious worship was become a solemn mockery of trifling postures, vain repetitions, and a pageantry of dress and ceremony.

As we advance nearer to the dawn of the Reformation, the abuses of the Roman church force themselves more and more on observation. The flames with which the reputed heretics were encircled cast a luminous glory around the dying martyrs, and rendered their words and examples more deeply impressive on those who beheld their faith and patience. The good lord Cobham, a chief among the Wickliffites, was hanged and burnt without Temple Bar. His sufferings continued to quicken the zeal of the timid, and to rouse to the imitation of such exalted virtue. The immensity of tracts disseminated by Wickliff, as well as the translation of the scriptures, which the art of printing tended more easily to multiply, spread mightily the truth as it is in Jesus. Many of the great men in England highly approved the zealous reformer. The parliament itself remonstrated against the papal plunder, and king Henry VII resolutely set himself to resist the usurpations of Rome. But the dread of the anathemas of the holy see held the consciences of men in thralldom. A few, and but a few, emancipated their minds from these vain terrors.

The works of Wickliff crossed the seas, and were eagerly read and circulated on the continent of Europe. The famous

Huss and Jerome of Prague fell martyrs for the truth ; but multitudes in Bohemia steadily adhered to their doctrines. The books of their faithful pastors still circulated among them, and, though reduced as they were to an apparent external conformity, they were prepared to seize the first favourable moment for emancipating themselves from ecclesiastical tyranny.

The vallies of Piedmont contained a hidden treasure, which all the inquisition had not been able to discover or to carry off. The doctrines taught there, and which had spread through the south of France, were such as could not but produce the same divine effects wherever they were cordially embraced.

The enormities of the popish hierarchy, against which Wickliff, Huss, and their associates testified, were the great cause of the inveteracy of their enemies against them ; but the doctrines of free grace held by the reformers were no less abhorred by the ignorant and self-righteous. Wickliff was charged with teaching, " That the church consisted only of the elect ; that those, like Paul, belong to it, who are the predestined and chosen vessels, even before their conversion ; that the true members never fail finally, though for a time they may be tempted and turned aside ; that the eucharist is not the real body of Christ, but the sign of it ; that Rome hath no more right to jurisdiction than any other church ; that the gospel alone was sufficient to direct the Christian's faith and conduct ; that prelatical imprisonment was anti-christian tyranny ; and that in the conduct of his soul every man had a right to judge for himself."

The articles of accusation against Huss were in exact correspondence with these. He held also, that there was no necessity for a visible head of the church to govern it, nor the least colour for it in scripture.

Their disciples continued a faithful band, and, under the name of Taborites, they boldly resisted their persecutors, and sometimes retaliated upon them the cruelties which they had inflicted. These Taborites afterwards settled down into a more peaceable state, and put on a gentler spirit. Having new-modelled their church into a more evangelical system,

they were denoted Bohemian brethren, and from them the Moravian brethren of the present day derive their origin.

The most remarkable events of the 15th century appear to have been directed by Divine Providence with a particular subserviency to the reformation. In the year 1453, Constantinople was taken by the Turkish emperor Mahomet II. In consequence of that event, the Turks oppressed Europe with persevering cruelty, but Europe neither humbled itself before God, nor took any measures to check the ambition of the Mahometans. The Sovereign of the universe, however, was bringing order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. The learned men who emigrated from Greece revived the study of letters in Italy and other parts of Europe, and paved the way for that light of classical erudition which was one of the most powerful of the subordinate means which were employed in the demolition of idolatry and superstition. By a surprising concurrence of circumstances, the noble art of printing was invented about the year 1440. Learning was cultivated with incredible ardour: the family of the Medici was raised up to patronize science, and toward the end of this same century Erasmus arose, whose good sense, taste, and industry were uncommonly serviceable to the reformation. By his labours, monastic superstition received a wound, which has never since been healed, and learned men were furnished with critical skill and ingenuity for the instruction of mankind.

Thus, under the care of Divine Providence, materials were collected for that beautiful edifice which began to be erected in the next century. Yet the same corruptions, both of faith and of practice, which have so often been described still prevailed in all their horrors.

In the mean time there were individuals, who, though not connected with any particular Christian societies, evidenced the power of godliness.* Thus closed the fifteenth century,

* Among these, Thomas Rhedon, a Frenchman and a Carmelite friar, was distinguished. This man came to Rome with the Venetian ambassadors, in the hope of improving his understanding in religious

with superstition triumphant, power in the hands of oppressors, abuses grown inveterate by long ages of prescription,

concerns. He had hitherto no conception of the enormous corruptions of that venal city, and was therefore astonished to find that even the habitation of St. Peter was become a den of thieves. His zealous spirit was stirred up in him to give an open testimony to evangelical truth; and at length by continual preaching he incurred the hatred of the ruling powers. In fine, he was degraded from the priesthood, and was burnt in the year 1436. Several others who like him were enlightened, and like him were faithful to their God, though unconnected with any particular church, were executed in Germany not long after the burning of John Huss.

Jerome Savanarola, an Italian monk, by his zeal, learning, and piety incurred in an eminent manner the hatred of the court of Rome. Notwithstanding the repeated menaces of the pope, he continued to preach the word of God with great vehemence, and with a degree of light and knowledge which seems extraordinary for that age. In 1496, he upheld the standard of the gospel at Florence, though many warned him of the danger to which he was exposed by his great boldness. At length, in the year 1498, he and two other friars, named Dominic and Silvester, were imprisoned. The pope's legates arriving at Florence, Jerome and his two companions were charged with maintaining various heretical opinions, one of which was that they preached the doctrine of free justification through faith in Christ; they were degraded, delivered to the secular power at Florence, and burnt to death in the year 1499.

There were also some who knew what spirituality in religion meant, though from some particular circumstances they never were exposed to suffer in any considerable degree on its account. Among these was the famous Thomas à Kempis, who died in 1471. He was the reputed author of the well-known book of the Imitation of Jesus Christ, a work which abounds with the most devotional sentiments and could not have been written but by one well versed in christian experience.

Vincent Ferrer, though bred in the midst of darkness, and connected with the worst of ecclesiastical characters, was a shining model of piety. He was a Dominican friar, and a zealous preacher of the word of God. A quotation from his book on spiritual life will deserve the attention of students. "Do you desire to study to advantage? Consult God more than books, and ask him humbly to make you understand what you read. Study drains the mind and heart. Go from time to time to be refreshed at the feet of Christ under his cross. Some moments of repose there give fresh vigour and new light: interrupt your study by

the clergy corrupt beyond conception, and ignorance maintained with sacred jealousy among the people ; but at the same time, a feeble band struggled for life, and, preserved by Divine Providence, still kept alive the vital spark. The fire, long smothered, was now, however, ready to burst out into a flame.

short but fervent ejaculations. Science is the gift of the Father of lights." This holy person was retained in the service of Peter de Luna, who, as pope, took the name of Benedict XIII, and was one of three popes that were deposed by the Council of Constance. Vincent intreated his master to resign his dignity. Benedict rather artfully eluded than directly refused the request. A bishopric and a cardinal's hat were then offered to Vincent, but his heart was insensible to charms of a worldly nature. He very earnestly wished to become an apostolic missionary, and in this he was at length gratified by Benedict. At the age of forty-two he began to preach with great fervour in every town from Avignon towards Valentia. His word is said to have been powerful. After he had laboured in Spain, France, and Italy, he then, at the desire of Henry IV, king of England, exerted himself in the same manner throughout the chief towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Antoninus, archbishop of Florence, born in the year 1389, seems to have been a similar character. Great things are related of his pastoral labours and services. His secretary observing his indefatigable exertions, once said to him, "The life of a bishop is truly pitiable if he is doomed to live in such a constant hurry as you live." "To enjoy inward peace," replied he, "we must amidst all our affairs ever reserve as it were a closet in our hearts, where we are to remain retired within ourselves, and where no worldly business can enter." He died aged seventy, and is said to have frequently repeated in his last moments words which he had been accustomed to use in the time of his health, namely, "To serve God is to reign." It is pleasant to find even a few of such shining lights in this dark and dismal night.

*Century XVI.**The Reformation, under the conduct of Luther.*

The sixteenth century opened with a prospect most gloomy. Corruption, both in doctrine and in practice, had exceeded all bounds. The general face of Europe, though the name of Christ was every where professed, presented nothing that was properly evangelical. Great efforts indeed had been made to emancipate the church from the "powers of darkness," and many individuals had been conducted into the path of salvation. Still nothing like a general reformation had taken place in any part of Europe. The labours of Claude of Turin, of Wickliffe, and of Huss, had not been sufficiently directed against the predominant corruptions in doctrine, though the practical abuses of the popedom had been opposed with ingenuous freedom and disinterested courage. The external branches only, rather than the bitter root itself, which supported all the evils of false religion, being attacked, no permanent or extensive change had ensued. The Waldenses were too feeble to molest the popedom, and the Hussites, divided among themselves, were reduced to silence. Among both were found persons of undoubted godliness, but they appeared incapable of making effectual impressions on the kingdom of Antichrist. The Roman pontiffs were still the uncontrolled patrons of impiety. Their scandalous vices seem not to have lessened the dominion of the court of Rome, or to have opened the eyes of men, so as to induce them to make a sober investigation of the nature of true religion.

But, not many years after the commencement of this century, the world beheld an attempt to restore the light of the gospel, more evangelically judicious, more simply founded on the word of God, and more ably and more successfully conducted, than any which had ever been seen since the days of Augustine. Martin Luther, whom Divine Providence raised up for this purpose, was evidently the instrument rather than the

agent of this reformation. He was led from step to step by a series of circumstances far beyond his original intentions, and in a manner which might evince the excellency of the power to be of God, and not of man. The peculiar excellency of the revival of godliness now before us lay in this, that it was conversant in fundamentals of doctrine, rather than in correction of mere abuses of practice.

In a manuscript history, extending from the year 1524 to 1541, composed by Frederic Myconius, a very able coadjutor of Luther and Melancthon, the author describes the state of religion in the beginning of this century in the following striking terms: "The passion and satisfaction of Christ were treated as a bare history, like the *Odyssey* of Homer; concerning faith, there was the deepest silence; Christ was described as a severe judge, ready to condemn all who were destitute of the intercession of saints and of pontifical interest. In the room of Christ, were substituted as saviours and intercessors the Virgin Mary, like a pagan Diana, and other saints, who from time to time had been created by the popes. Nor were men entitled to the benefit of their prayers, unless they deserved it of them by their works. The sort of works necessary for this end was distinctly explained; not the works prescribed in the decalogue, and enjoined on all mankind, but such as enriched the priests and monks. Those who died neglecting these were consigned to hell, or at least to purgatory, till they were redeemed from it by a satisfaction, made either by themselves, or by their proxies. The frequent pronunciation of the Lord's prayer, and the salutation of the Virgin, and the recitations of the canonical hours, constantly engaged those who undertook to be religious. An incredible mass of ceremonious observances was every where visible, while gross wickedness was practised under the encouragement of indulgences, by which the guilt of crimes was easily expiated. The preaching of the word was the least part of the episcopal function: rites and processions employed the bishops perpetually when engaged in religious exercises. The number of clergy was enormous, and their lives were most scandalous." If we add to this the testimony of Pellicanus, "That a Greek Testament could not be procured at

any price in all Germany," what can be wanting to complete the picture of that darkness in which men lived, and in what did the Christian nations differ from pagans except in the name?

The popish doctrine of indulgences was then in the highest reputation. The foundation of this system was generally believed to be this: there was supposed to be an infinite treasure of merit in Christ and the saints, which was abundantly more than sufficient for themselves. Thus, what is strictly true of the Divine Saviour was asserted also of saints, namely that they had done works of supererogation. This treasure was deposited in the church, under the conduct of the see of Rome, and was literally sold for money at the discretion of that see, to those who were able and willing to pay for it, and few were found willing to undergo the course of a severe penance of unpleasant austerities, when they could afford to commute for it by pecuniary payments. The popes, and under them the bishops and the clergy, had the disposition of this treasure; and as the pontiffs had the power of canonizing new saints at their own will, the fund was ever growing, and, so long as the system could maintain its credit, the riches of their church, thus secularised under the appearance of religion, became a sea without a shore. As the moral evils which these indulgences encouraged were plain to every one, they were the first objects assaulted by the reformers.

But the views of those wise and holy personages were far more extensive. They saw that a practice so scandalously corrupt was connected with the grossest ignorance of the nature of gospel grace. The doctrine of justification in its explicit form had been lost for many ages to the Christian world. If men had really believed that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ salvation was obtained, and that God justifies the ungodly through faith alone, how could they have been imposed on by the traffic of indulgences? The papist was compelled by his system to hold, that by a compliance with the rules of the church, either in the way of indulgences, or by some severer mode, pardon was to be obtained, and that the satisfaction of Christ was not sufficiently meritorious for

this end. The preachers, whether popes themselves or their ministers, explicitly held out to the people that the inheritance of eternal life was to be purchased by indulgences. Pope Leo X, making use of that power which his predecessors had usurped over all christian churches, sent abroad into all kingdoms his letters and bulls, with ample promises of the full pardon of sins and of eternal salvation, to such as would purchase the same with money. It was evident that no reformation could take place through the medium of qualifying and correcting abuses of this traffic. The system itself was wholly impious, and the right knowledge of justification was the only remedy adequate to the evil. This, therefore, the reader is to look for as the most capital object of the reformation: and thus, in the demolition of one of the vilest perversions of superstition, there suddenly arose and revived in all its infant simplicity that apostolical doctrine in which is contained the great mystery of the Scriptures.

A correct knowledge of the doctrine of justification was farther necessary from the predominance of the Aristotelian philosophy in Europe at that period: a philosophy which knew nothing of original sin and native depravity, which allowed nothing to be criminal but certain external flagitious actions, and which was unacquainted with the idea of any righteousness of grace imputed to a sinner. Many in this age, as in former ones, who neither know nor value Aristotle, do yet altogether follow his self-righteous notions of religion. These are congenial to our fallen nature, and tend to lead men to build their hopes of salvation on a sandy foundation, essentially different from that which is revealed in the holy scriptures. From these preliminary observations we proceed to the history of the reformation, which is the leading event in the sixteenth century connected with the history of Christianity.

An. 1503—1516. Borgia, Julius, and Leo sat in succession on the papal throne, and, trampling on the prostrate world, defied their enemies, and despised their impotence. Not a nation but groaned under the papal exactions, to supply the rapine, the luxury, and the ambitious projects of the Roman prelates. Canon law, long prescription, and the re-

verence consecrated by the character assumed and universally admitted, of being Christ's vicegerent upon earth, surrounded the papacy with an apparently impenetrable barrier. The mighty pontiffs sat secure in the exercise of unlimited power, and knew that whatever redress was sought must come through their own hands as a favour, and granted under such conditions as they were pleased to dictate.

The most scandalous deceptions were employed, and the grossest frauds attempted to impose on the credulity of mankind. Sometimes they were detected and punished, as in the case of Jetzer*: but oftener the trick succeeded, and the foolish people cried, a miracle.

* Among the variety of frauds practised upon the credulity of the multitude, the page of history records none more extraordinary than the celebrated imposition which was performed at Berne in 1509. This stratagem was employed in consequence of the rivalry between the Franciscans and Dominicans, and particularly respecting the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. The former maintained that she was born without blemish of original sin: the latter asserted the contrary. The doctrine of the Franciscans, in an age of darkness and superstition, could not but be popular, and hence the Dominicans perceptibly lost ground. To support the credit of their order, they resolved, in a chapter held at Vimpfen in 1504, to have recourse to fictitious visions and dreams, and they determined to make Berne the scene of their operations. A person named Jetzer, who was extremely simple, was chosen as the instrument of the delusions they were contriving. One of the four Dominicans who had undertaken the management of this plot conveyed himself secretly into Jetzer's cell, and about midnight appeared to him in a tremendous form, surrounded with howling dogs, and seeming to blow fire from his nostrils, by means of a box of combustibles which he held near his mouth. In this alarming form he approached Jetzer's bed, told him that he was the ghost of a Dominican condemned to purgatory, adding, at the same time, that by his means he might be rescued from his misery, which was beyond expression. This story engaged the unfortunate Jetzer to promise to perform all in his power to deliver the Dominican from his torment. Upon this the impostor told him, that nothing but the most extraordinary mortifications, such as the discipline of the whip performed during eight days by the whole monastery, and Jetzer's lying prostrate in the form of one crucified in the chapel during mass, could contribute to his deliverance. He added, that the performing of these mortifications

Theological knowledge was sunk into quotations from the fathers, or disputes about trivial points, delivered in all the

would draw down upon Jetzer the peculiar protection of the Blessed Virgin, and concluded by saying, that he would appear to him again accompanied by two other spirits. Morning no sooner arrived than Jetzer gave an account of this apparition to the rest of the convent, who unanimously advised him to undergo the discipline which was enjoined, and each consented to bear his share of the task imposed. The deluded brother obeyed, and was admired as a saint, while the four friars who managed the imposture magnified in the most pompous manner the miracle of this apparition in their sermons and in their discourse. The following night the apparition was renewed, with the addition of two impostors dressed like devils, and Jetzer's faith was augmented by hearing from the spectre all the secrets of his life, and thoughts, which the impostors had learned from his confessor. In this and some subsequent scenes the impostor conversed much with Jetzer; he added that the Virgin knew herself to be conceived in original sin; that she abhorred the Franciscans for making her equal with her Son, and that the town of Berne would be destroyed for harbouring such pests within her walls. The prior appeared in various forms, at length he assumed that of the Virgin Mary, and for that purpose clothed himself in the habits which were employed to adorn the statue of the Virgin in the great festivals. The Virgin, thus equipped, addressed a long discourse to Jetzer, in which, among other things, she told him, that she was conceived in original sin; and, after various visits, she told Jetzer, that she would add the most affecting and undoubted marks of her Son's love, by imprinting on him the five wounds that pierced Jesus on the cross. Accordingly, she took his hand and struck a large nail through it, which threw the poor fanatic into the greatest agony. The next night this pretended Virgin brought, as she said, some of the linen in which Christ had been buried, to soften the wound, and gave Jetzer a soporific draught. This threw the poor wretch into a sort of lethargy, during which the monks imprinted on his body the other four wounds of Christ, in such a manner that he felt no pain. When he awaked he found these impressions on his body, and came at last to fancy himself a representative of Christ in the various parts of his passion. He was in this state exposed to the admiring multitude. The Dominicans gave him other draughts, which threw him into convulsions, and were followed by a voice conveyed through a pipe into the mouths of two images, one of Mary and another of the child Jesus, the former of which had tears painted upon its cheek in a lively manner. The little Jesus asked his mother, by means of this voice (which was that of the prior), why she wept; and she an-

jargon of scholastic philosophy. And, though science revived in a number of literati, such as Erasmus and others, who read and thought for themselves, yet the current of education still flowed through these polluted channels, and left the miserable pupils blindly groping for the wall, and burdening their memories with unmeaning words, definitions, and distinctions, which communicated nothing of real knowledge.

All the pulpits were occupied with panegyrics on the saints, the transcendant glories and power of the Virgin, the efficacy of the relics for the expulsion of demons from the possessed, and the cure of all diseases of body and mind. The fire of purgatory afforded an inexhaustible fund of the terrific, and the safety of indulgences was displayed in the most moving strains of plaintive eloquence: whilst the building a church or a convent, or some rich endowment of them, cancelled every crime, and infallibly secured salvation. But above all,

swered that her tears were owing to the impious manner in which the Franciscans attributed to her the honour that was due to him, in saying that she was conceived and born without sin.

The apparitions, prodigies, and stratagems of the Dominicans were repeated every night, and the matter was at length so grossly over-acted, that, simple as Jetzer was, he at last discovered it, and had almost killed the prior. The Dominicans, fearing by his discovery to lose the fruits of their imposture, concluded that the best method would be to confess the whole to Jetzer, and to engage him by the most seducing promises of opulence and reputation, to prosecute the cheat. Jetzer was persuaded, or at least appeared to be so. But the Dominicans, suspecting that he was not entirely to be depended upon, resolved to poison him. His constitution, however, was so vigorous, that, though they gave him poison several times, he was not destroyed by it. One day they poisoned the host or consecrated wafer, but as he vomited it up soon after he had swallowed it, he escaped. Finding at last an opportunity of escaping from the convent, he threw himself into the hands of the magistrates, to whom he made a full discovery of the whole plot. The affair being brought to Rome, commissaries were sent to examine the matter; and the whole deception being fully proved, the four friars were burnt alive, on the last day of May, 1509. Jetzer died some time after at Constance, having poisoned himself, as was believed by some, while others charged his death on his adversaries.—*Burnet's Travels*, p. 31.

the honour of the clergy, the sanctity of the church, her unity and visibility in one head, and unlimited submission to his decrees, was thought the perfection of Christian excellence. It was the depth of heretical pravity, and sure to be followed with the destruction of body and soul in hell, to doubt of one of the dogmas of Rome, or to withdraw a title of obedience from the holy see and its pontiffs.

The miserable people, bound in chains of ignorance and superstition, submitted to be priest-ridden with patience almost unlimited. The clergy, with all their art, fostered an ignorance so favourable to their empire, and carefully watched over every attempt to enlighten the minds of the people with gospel truth. The more profligate they were, the more they needed absolution, and the greater was the necessity of their frequent recurrence to their ghostly guides for peace and pardon. Thus the church reaped the richest harvest from the greatest immorality of its members.

But, as the darkest moment of the night precedes the dawn of day, so, when the church appeared in the most desperate situation, her deliverance was approaching. We have seen, during the preceding ages, here and there a spark struck from the scriptures of truth that gave a momentary gleam. Though the inquisition and the slavish submission of the monarchs of Christendom seemed to uphold the pillars of the Roman see, the utter rottenness of the foundation awaited only a bold and resolute hand to make the mighty fabric totter. The silent and unnoticed dispensations of God had been preparing for the event. A variety of attempts at reformation had been made, and, though generally suppressed, the spirit of opposition remained. The abuses generally prevalent were secretly deplored by multitudes, who, without any purpose of change in the ecclesiastical government, sighed for salutary reform. The diffusion of knowledge, by means of the art of printing, removed the veil which had been spread over all people. The scriptures themselves were not so inaccessible as before*, and many dared to read and think for themselves.

* Before the art of printing was introduced, manuscript copies of the Bible cost a sum equal to four or five hundred dollars.

An. 1513. Such was the state of Christendom, when the increasing wants and rapaciousness of the Roman see made it necessary to attempt replenishing her coffers. Orders were accordingly issued to find the best qualified instruments to preach and dispense the rich indulgences which Leo X was disposed to grant to all Christian people who had money to purchase them. The mendicant monks were invited to undertake this lucrative commission, and the Dominicans engaged in it with peculiar zeal and activity. As the legates were only careful how to get the most money, and little scrupulous about the means, they selected for this service men of popular talents, unblushing effrontery, and perfect devotedness to the Romish see. Among these was found the famous monk John Tetzel, who undertook the task with alacrity. He exalted the value of the indulgences which he was dispersing with such exaggerated commendations of their efficacy, as could not but produce among the superstitious multitude, many purchasers. He could supply all deficiencies, and cancel all crimes. He boasted his ability to save even the ravisher of the blessed Virgin herself, and affirmed that he, John Tetzel, had rescued more souls from hell and purgatory by these indulgences than ever St. Peter himself had converted to Christianity by his preaching. The gaping crowd heard these bold assertions with wonder, and with eagerness sent up their money to the stage to purchase these panaceas which were to set their consciences at rest*.

Martin Luther, an inconsiderable monk at Wittemberg, heard with indignation these hyperbolical pretensions, and

* This formula of absolution was written by Tetzel's own hand, and in these words, "I, by the authority of Jesus Christ, through the merits of his most holy passion, and by the authority of his blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of our most holy pope, delegated to me as commissioner, do absolve thee: first, from all ecclesiastical censures, however incurred; secondly, from all sins committed by thee, however enormous, for so far the keys of the sacred church extend: and I do this by remitting to thee all the punishments due to thee in purgatory on account of thy crimes; and I restore thee to the innocence and purity in which thou wast when baptized, so that the gates of punishment may be shut to thee when dying, and the gates of paradise be opened."

resolved to check this mountebank in his career. He therefore challenged him, in ninety-five propositions, to defend himself and his pontifical employers, whom Luther censured as accomplices, for countenancing such abominable frauds and impositions on the people. An. 1517.

Thus was struck the first blow of that battle which hath continued ever since. Never was a man better formed for the contest in which he was engaged with the see of Rome than this brave Saxon. His faculties were singularly great; his memory prodigious; his mind fraught with the richest stores of ancient wisdom and literature; but, above all, he was deeply read in the oracles of God, and conversant with the best of the fathers and their writings, particularly St. Augustine, the patron of his order. His natural temper was strong and irascible; his courage invincible; his eloquence powerful; his voice, both sonorous and majestic, forcibly impressed on his confounded opponents whatever he uttered. No dangers intimidated him, no emergencies deprived him of self-possession; in perseverance unshaken, in labours indefatigable. He did not know his own strength, or suspect or intend the consequences which resulted from this small beginning.

The propositions maintained at Wittemberg not only offended Tetzl, but his order, and all the furious partisans of Rome. A host rushed into the battle, to bear down the despised monk of Saxony with their eloquence, their arguments, and church authority. But Luther hurled back upon them the thunders they darted at him; refuted their arguments, and treated their persons with contempt. Yet to the pope he held the most respectful language as a dutiful son, and as advancing nothing which he would not retract the moment he was convinced of its contrariety to the catholic faith.

Whether the pope thought this one of the many quarrels which would die away of itself, as others had done before, or that it was beneath his dignity to pay attention to so inconsiderable an individual, no reply was made to Luther's letters, and Leo was only roused from his security by the information that all Germany was in a flame, and that something must be immediately done to extinguish it.

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Teazed with these remonstrances, the indignant pontiff ordered to his presence the impertinent reformer. But Luther prevailed on the elector of Saxony, who favoured him and his opinions, to apply to the pope for the decision of the cause in Germany before the proper tribunal, where it had originated. Leo, unwilling to offend a man of whose influence he might stand in need, consented to refer the matter to his legate Cajetan, the declared friend of Tetzal, and the enemy of Luther. Before him, however, the intrepid monk pleaded his cause. Instead of being heard with candour, and answered with temper, the legate, with the tone of insolent authority, commanded him to abjure his opinions as erroneous, and submit humbly to the penance that should be enjoined him by the holy see.

Luther was not at all disposed to submit to such arrogant dictates, and, convinced how fruitless it was to reason, and how dangerous to resist, he silently decamped, and took refuge in Saxony, lodging his appeal with Leo.

The pope, too late perceiving the error of appointing Cajetan, recalled him, and sent in his place Miltitz, a man admirably calculated to repair the breach by his dexterity and gentleness. By him Leo sent the consecrated golden rose to Frederic, the peculiar mark of his favour. Miltitz, softening down the rigid temper of the reformer by complaisance, engaged him to write a submissive letter to the pope, from whom he received a most condescending epistle in return. The strongest hopes were now entertained that the matter would end to the satisfaction of the Roman see, and this disturbance be quelled as easily as the former ones: but God had otherwise ordained.

Luther, whose views had not yet probably reached to any extended reformation, and who would have been well satisfied with the removal of the grosser abuses of indulgences, was so won upon by the frankness and kind treatment of Miltitz and Leo, that he consented to be silent on the subject in dispute, if his adversaries were obliged to the same: and he offered to write a general circular letter to all whom he could influence reverentially to obey the church of Rome. So near to an accommodation were matters brought, through the pru-

dence of Miltitz : when the fury of bigotry happily precluded all reconciliation. An. 1519.

Eckius, the partisan of Rome, had challenged Carolostadt, the faithful colleague of Luther, to dispute at Leipsic on the deep subject of free will. The day was fixed ; the champions advanced to the field of battle : the university and a splendid auditory attended the solemn decision respecting the powers and freedom of the human will. Luther appeared as second to his friend.

Carolostadt maintained, that since the fall we had no ability for good, but what was derived from divine grace. Eckius asserted a native power of self-determining volition to concur with or resist the divine operations. The one was the advocate for the sovereignty and efficacy of grace, the other for the power and merit of man in his co-operation.

A second conflict followed between Eckius and Luther, on the authority of the Roman see over the consciences of men. Eckius, once the intimate friend, now became the implacable adversary of Luther, and sought to blacken him by every imputation of heretical pravity. Hoffman, the rector of the university, and the moderator of the disputes, dared not to decide on these difficult subjects and dangerous enquiries. Both parties retired from the contest with most determined adherence to their own opinion, and pretended triumph over their adversaries, and abundantly more distant from and embittered against each other than when they began.

The amiable and gentle Melancthon was among the auditors of this renowned dispute. He had before approved of Luther's scriptural mode of treating theological subjects, and this great conflict confirmed him in the rectitude of the positions which Luther maintained. For ever afterwards he ranked on the side of the reformers, though his yielding temper, his love of peace, and some prejudices respecting church unity and schism, led him sometimes into concessions injurious to the cause which he defended. Naturally of a timorous spirit, he dreaded the consequences of division : but in an hour of danger no man looked death in the face with greater intrepidity. He was a character more suited to a

peaceable state of the church than to bustle and contend in the days of difficulty and turbulence.

Zuinglius, ardent in the cause of God and truth, had already sprung up in Switzerland. He had from early youth been shocked at the established superstitions around him, and having devoted himself to the church, he began before Luther to explain the Scriptures to the people, and to censure with great fidelity, though with becoming temper, the errors of the church of Rome. His scientific attainments and holy conversation commanded the distinguishing respect of his countrymen. The very causes which roused the zeal of Luther acted upon him in a similar way, and on the like occasion. An impudent Italian was carrying on the same shameful traffic of indulgences, and met with as warm an opposer in Zuinglius as Tetzal had done in Luther. Nor was he a man of a less intrepid spirit, though tempered with greater self-command. To him Switzerland was chiefly indebted for the light of the gospel.

While the holy flame was kindling at different corners of the earth, and the wiles of the crafty, as well as the arm of power employed to extinguish it, Eckius hastened to Rome, and, backed by all the influence of the Dominicans and the inquisitors, carried to Leo his bitter accusations against Luther, and urged the necessity of suppressing so dangerous a heretic by the papal anathemas, before the contagion should spread so wide as not to admit of a remedy. Leo, too indolent to resist the importunities of those who surrounded him, signed the bull which fulminated excommunication against Luther's person, and ordered all his writings to be burnt. Sixty days respite only were allowed him to abjure, repent, and cast himself upon the mercy of the pontiff.

Luther was filled with indignation when this sentence was notified to him. Having taken a decided resolution, he determined to separate from the Romish communion, and in the most public manner to testify his contempt of the pope and his authority, whilst he renewed his appeal to the next general council for his justification. Before the sixty days, therefore, were expired, he summoned a vast concourse of all ranks, and kindling a fire, he, by the hands of the hang-

man, committed to it in their presence the pope's bull, with the sacerdotal code of canons and decretals, as renouncing henceforth all authority of Rome and her pontiffs ; a step suited to his daring spirit, and wise as undaunted. Tempting measures were as uncongenial to the man, as ill-suited to the object he had in view. He wished to rouse a spirit of resolute opposition to these tyrannical mandates, to show they might be despised with impunity ; whilst, by his appeal to a general council, he interested in his favour all who regarded that as the supreme judge of controversy, agreeably to what had been decided at the councils of Basil and Constance. Thus his renunciation of Leo's authority prevented not his professing firm attachment to the catholic church, and readiness to abide by the impartial decisions of an unprejudiced council.

A second bull, as soon as the sixty days expired, sealed the condition of the obstinate heretic, and met the same contempt as the former. So far from intimidating the zealous reformer, it sharpened his resentment, and roused him to the most vigorous exertions to form a church, more resembling the apostolic model in doctrine and discipline, than that which he had formally denounced. He found a number of the ablest scholars, as well as most excellent men of the age, ready to join in the necessary reform, to which the weight of Melancthon's influence greatly contributed. The more the subject was canvassed, the more the groundless pretensions of the papacy were detected, and the frauds and superstitions of its supporters brought to light and exposed to the people, who received with avidity the doctrine of the reformers, and formed a phalanx around them which defended them from their bloody pursuers. Nor were the princes of the empire, though catholics, averse to see some of the pontifical claims disputed ; whilst Frederic of Saxony afforded them all the protection in his power, without committing himself entirely as a partisan.

An. 1519. Charles the Fifth of Spain, raised to the imperial throne chiefly by the zeal and favour of Frederic, in opposition to his competitor Francis the First, king of France, was unwilling to disoblige a friend to whom he was so greatly

indebted, and therefore, though hard pressed by the pope to seize and execute this daring rebel against authority, Charles, at the request of Frederic, consented that Luther should be judged by a German tribunal, for which purpose a diet of the ecclesiastical and temporal princes assembled at Worms. There the culprit, fenced with a safe conduct from the emperor, boldly appeared in person to plead his own cause. Many of his friends, dreading the encounter, fearing his own impetuosity would provoke enmity, and knowing the savage cruelty of his judges, ready to violate the safe conduct as in the case of Huss and Jerome, dissuaded him from appearing; but his confidence in the goodness of his claims made him court rather than shun such a public opportunity of pleading the cause of God and truth. He declared, that "if he met as many devils at Worms as there were tiles on the houses, they should not deter him from his duty."

He charmed his friends and confounded his enemies by the firmness and temperance of his defence, as well as by the eloquence and force of argument which he displayed on this occasion. Charles, who was compelled to flatter Leo, sought by every soothing caress and earnest solicitation to engage Luther to submit to the pope. But, when he found him inflexible, he menaced him with all the wrath of Rome and the empire. The undaunted champion firmly but coolly replied, that "whenever his opinions were proved erroneous from the word of God, and his conduct criminal against Christ or his church, he would ask nothing more to testify the deepest humiliation; but, till then, no man had a right to censure or condemn him." The emperor, too generous to violate his safe conduct, permitted him to depart: but the unanimous suffrage of the diet denounced the most condign punishment on the obstinate heretic, and on all who should entertain, support, or conceal him; deciding absolutely, that the pope was the sole judge of religious controversy in the Christian world. A tenet so expressly contrary to the Germanic liberties, and the received councils, shocked many of those who would not at all have cared about the case of an individual.

Frederic, who dreaded the consequence of Luther's falling into the hands of his enemies, contrived to waylay him as he returned from the diet. He was seized by men in masks who were in the secret, and carried off to the castle of Wartenberg, and hid for ten months from all pursuit and discovery. There he employed his leisure and retirement in translating the New Testament, and keeping up the spirit of his friends by letters. His disappearing in this sudden manner raised a strong suspicion of his being destroyed by his enemies, and tended to increase the general odium of the people against them, whilst his zealous disciples exerted themselves with greater activity than ever in spreading the principles of the reformation.

Carlostadt, the friend and colleague of Luther, during his retirement at Wartenberg, took the lead in the work of reformation, and, as its progress was rapid, he improved the advantage of the influence which he had acquired, and resolved to cast down the images which had been so long the objects of popular adoration in the churches, and to expel the idolatrous mass. His intemperate zeal, or rather that of his followers, occasioned much matter of offence by proceeding in a tumultuary manner. Luther himself sharply condemned their conduct; and, unable to lie any longer concealed, left his hiding-place, and set himself again at the head of the reformed.

During these commotions, one great character, which all desired to draw over to their party, conscious of the weight of his influence, maintained a suspicious neutrality. Erasmus, distinguished for wit and learning, had, before Luther arose, begun to sharpen the shafts of ridicule against the monkish ignorance and abuses. By his writings he had greatly loosened the shackles of blind veneration for the mendicant tribes, and prepared men's minds for the reformation. To him, Luther Melancthon, and other reformers, warmly addressed themselves. He answered them with civility, but with the most wary caution not to commit himself as a favourer of their cause, though he professed to admit the chief doctrines which they promulged, and to acknowledge the necessity of reform, to which no man had more contributed

by their writings than himself. Yet he dreaded a rupture with the pontiff, and flattered himself the object would be accomplished without violence. He would have been content with some concessions, and trembled at the rude hand of hasty reform. In all essential doctrines, Erasmus was with the reformers, and saw clearly the necessity of correcting the abuses which prevailed in the church of Rome. But he was a man of a timid spirit, and, however much his mind inclined to one side, his dread of consequences bent him as much to the other. Thus, feared by both parties, cordially loved by neither, suspected by all, he obtained not the favour of Rome, and shared none of the glory of reformation, by meanly shrinking from the cross. He was a great, a good, and an admired man, but, not daring to take a decided part, he was the victim of his own cautious timidity.

Luther's translation of the Bible had now circulated through Germany, and cast a flood of light upon the benighted minds of men. His works were diffused through Christendom. England and the Low Countries received great edification from them. They fanned the fires which had been previously kindled, though kept under by the strong arm of authority and clerical tyranny. The Saxons and many of their neighbours had taken the liberty to reform their own abuses. The mass was abolished, the convents evacuated, and the priests chose wives, that they might live in the holy state of marriage, instead of unnatural and criminal celibacy. The chief of the reformers set the example, and he was quickly followed by many of his brethren.

A host of authors now arose to overwhelm the daring reformer with their arguments and invectives. Among these, the eminence of his station has made the king of England most remarkable. Henry VIII, in the abundance of his zeal, undertook to write a confutation of Luther's "Babylonish Captivity," with "A Defence of the Romish Church, and the Catholic Faith." This royal volume, presented with great pomp to Leo, procured for the zealous monarch the papal benediction, and the title of Defender of the Faith, in which Henry peculiarly gloried. It has been retained by his

successors, the kings of England, as late as the eighteenth century.

Luther, whose feelings were as keen as his spirit was elevated, looked down upon the puny monarchical champion, and answered him with a contempt and asperity which many condemned as disrespectful to majesty, but which Luther vindicated. He contended, that no respect of persons in controversy was due to a king more than to another man, who dared to blaspheme the King of kings, and to tarnish the glory of his person and gospel.

In the midst of this turbid state of the church, Leo X died. Adrian VI, was his successor.

Adrian had been Charles's tutor, and was favoured by him in the conclave, and raised to the see by his influence. He saw and lamented the disorders of the clergy, and made some feeble attempts to reform them. But the disease was too inveterate. Less happy, as he declared, on the papal throne than in his professor's chair at Louvain, he bore the load of dignity with reluctance, and quickly devolved the burden on one more suited to the times.

An. 1523. The diet at Nuremberg was assembled, in the absence of the emperor, to compose the disturbances to which the reformation had given occasion. Adrian sent thither his legate, but, on his demise, Clement VI selected a man more congenial with his own spirit, the famous cardinal Campegio. He breathed against Luther and his adherents nothing but threatenings and slaughter, and blamed the tardy lenity of the princes that had neglected to enforce the decisions of the diet at Worms. They, on the contrary, presented a long list of their grievances, and prohibited all changes in ecclesiastical matters till a general council should be assembled to decide the points in controversy.

Disputes which broke out among the reformers themselves greatly retarded their progress. The controversy began between Luther and Carlostadt about the manner in which the body and blood of Christ were to be regarded in the eucharist. Though Luther had rejected the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, he supported one little less absurd, that

Christ was in the sacrament after consecration by a real presence, as heat in iron when ignited. This has received the name of consubstantiation. Carlostadt embraced the simpler and more scriptural idea, that the bread and wine were only signs and symbols, and in this he was cordially supported by the able Zuinglius. The obstinacy of Luther's character is indefensible. He claimed the authority to dictate, which he was himself so averse to allow the pope. Bitterness of controversy, indeed, ill became such men, nor was the subject of dispute worthy such a contest. Let us drop a tear over human infirmity: and learn by experience to bear and forbear.

Another and most grievous scourge arose collaterally from the spreading light of truth. The peasants, who had been the subjects of grievous oppressions, together with their emancipation from spiritual bondage, received a taste for civil liberty, and detected many gross abuses of the power of their tyrannical nobles. Real oppressions were at the bottom of their just complaints. Two malecontents set themselves at the head of the irritated peasants, and for a long while wasted the empire with fire and sword. Munster and Stork induced the credulous multitude to follow their banners. A battle, in which they were defeated, and their leaders put to death, for a while appeased the troubles which they had occasioned.

Luther, at whose door the catholics laid every commotion, defended himself victoriously, and addressed the insurgents to recover them by argument, but without success. The strong arm of power alone could subdue them. Among this host of peasants, all were not fanatic nor of ill intentions. Many were deceived by their leaders, and sought only exemptions from burdens too heavy to be borne. But when once the barrier of authority is cast down, a deluge of unintended evils rushes in, which cannot easily be restrained.

An. 1525. Frederic died, and left his brother John the successor to his dominions, and the head of the Lutheran cause. Frederic had always acted with singular moderation, and, though he protected the fervent reformer from his enemies, he did not wholly break with Rome. He hoped by gentle methods to obtain relief from all the miseries com-

plained of, without a schism in the church. John was of a different opinion. Sensible of the pride and unyielding obstinacy of Rome and her pontiffs, he thought he could not take too decided a part, and therefore by his own authority undertook to regulate all ecclesiastical matters within the extent of his jurisdiction. Luther and Melancthon were employed to draw up a code of ecclesiastical directory for Saxony and its dependencies. Many of the princes and free cities followed the example of the elector John, and thus first a complete Lutheran establishment was erected through a considerable part of the empire, and the yoke of Rome broken from their necks.

But neither the pope, the emperor, nor the catholic princes could be unconcerned spectators of these dreaded innovations. Temporal interests, as well as religious zeal, roused them to concert the means of preventing the spreading evil. This concert of the catholics and their designs were not hid from the Lutherans, and they resolved on a provisional plan of union and self-defence.

An. 1526. A diet held at Spires separated with an agreement that every prince should order ecclesiastical matters in his own dominions as he judged best, till a general council should be assembled to decide upon the controverted subjects. Than this resolution nothing could be more favourable to the cause of reformation, which only asked peace and tolerance to prosper. Another favourable event took place at this time: the fears of the pope led him to embrace the interests of Francis the First after the battle of Pavia, and to form a league against the preponderating influence of the emperor in Italy. On this Charles became cool in the persecution of the protestants, besieged and took the pope prisoner, and, amidst these conflicts of the superior powers, the protestants in Germany had leisure and opportunity to cement their union, and to strengthen themselves against all future opposition.

But Charles had no sooner carried his designs in Italy into effect, and humbled Clement to submission, than he made a treaty with the pontiff, in which the destruction of the protestants was designed, and the establishment of the dominion

of Charles in Germany became a principal object. To this end a second diet was convoked at Spires, where the emperor caused the former resolutions to be rescinded by a majority, though they had been before decreed unanimously ; and, till a general council should be assembled, he forbade any departure to be permitted from the Roman established religion.

The elector of Saxony and others perceived the snare that was laid for the supporters of Lutheranism. If no alteration was allowed till sanctioned by a general council, they saw that their cause must be desperate. They therefore entered their solemn protest against the resolution of the diet, and resolved to maintain the changes they had made. From this protest, they, with all who rejected the papal government, have ever since received the name of protestants. An. 1529.

The protestant princes by their ambassadors communicated to the emperor the resolutions which they had adopted. Charles, by insolently arresting these representatives of their sovereigns, proclaimed to them the necessity of their uniting for mutual defence. But the differences of opinion which prevailed among them prevented their coming to a decisive resolution. All that could be gained was to bear with each other in the points of difference.

Meantime the elector of Saxony directed Luther, Melancthon, and other divines to draw up a clear summary of the protestant doctrines. This produced the famed Confession of Augsburg, ever since appealed to as the standard of protestantism. In awful suspense, both parties awaited the result of this assembly, and prepared their forces for the contest, whether of the pen, the tongue, or the sword. An. 1530.

This confession was laid before a council at Augsburg, and was read by Bayer to the emperor and princes, and heard with profound attention.

The catholics, with Echius at their head, produced a refutation of the protestant confession : and the emperor and catholic princes, with the pope's legate, demanded the submission of the protestants to their champions' arguments. But as these carried not the least conviction to their antago-

nists, they requested a copy of this pretended refutation, that they might answer it. This was denied, their obedience to Rome was peremptorily enjoined, and silence imposed on them for the future. Such proceedings necessarily increased their opposition. They presented to Charles a reply to Echius and his colleagues, which he refused to receive. The protestants had therefore no alternative but to defend themselves by force, or submit to the oppression.

When Charles found them resolute, he hesitated to drive matters to extremities: an attempt was made by conferences to conciliate the opponents. Melancthon, too conceding, would have gone great lengths to prevent a rupture, but durst not yield the great truths of God, whilst the papists urged their party to insist on terms impossible to be complied with. These were accordingly rejected. The Hessian and Saxon princes withdrew. The emperor dictated the decree suppressing the changes which had been made in religion, and commanding all men to return to the papal obedience, at the peril of his imperial wrath: in the execution of which the catholic princes and their party engaged to support the emperor with all their forces.

The protestant princes now stood upon their defence, and seeing remonstrance in vain, met at Smalkald, and formed a common league for the support of their liberties, in which they earnestly invited all those to unite who had cast off the tyranny of Rome, and wished to preserve their brethren from being compelled to return to the house of bondage. Luther was averse to the way of arms, but the necessity of the case compelled his consent.

The electors of the Palatinate and Mentz dreaded the approaching and apparently inevitable rupture in the Germanic body, and endeavoured to reconcile the parties, or at least to suspend the fatal blow. Such was the emperor's situation, that he was compelled to listen to the proposal for withdrawing his decrees. The Turks threatened Germany, and the protestants refused all assistance till the edicts of Worms and Augsburg were recalled. Nor would they ratify the succession of his brother Ferdinand to the imperial throne, notwithstanding his majority of votes, but on this condition.

Necessity bends the most obstinate politician. Charles, to carry these two points, was obliged to yield, and leave the Lutherans to themselves, till the promised council should assemble to settle the differences in religion.

The peace obtained was highly advantageous to the cause of Lutheranism. Many states now openly avowed its principles, who had been before restrained from doing so by apprehensions of the imperial decrees. Clement, though urged by the emperor, contrived to evade the assembling of a general council, which he so much dreaded, and died before any place could be fixed upon agreeable to the several parties.

The emperor, finding his efforts to obtain a general council constantly thwarted by the crafty pontiff, resolved to attempt settling matters himself in a diet. For this end he ordered a conference at Worms between Melancthon and Eckius for several days, but the disputants appeared as far from from each other as ever: no final decision could be obtained. The pope by his legate proposed that the council should assemble at Trent. The protestant princes objected to the place, as well as to the papal claim of summoning the persons who should constitute that body, which they alleged must in that case be partial: but as the emperor and catholic princes consented, the letters of convocation were issued. The protestants refused to submit, and Charles, confiding in his power, determined to compel them. Both sides prepared for battle.

The council of Trent assembled. The protestants disclaimed their authority. The emperor prepared to enforce their decrees by arms. The Saxon elector and the prince of Hesse boldly prevented him, and, penetrating into Bavaria, were ready to force the emperor in his camp at Ingolstadt, when the treacherous Maurice, the nephew of the elector, debauched by the promise of the electorate, and yielding to the cravings of criminal ambition, fell upon Saxony, and compelled John to retire from Bavaria, in order to defend his own dominions. Pursued and surrounded in this retreat, deserted by a considerable part of his army, and compelled to fight at disadvantage, he lost the battle of Mühlberg and his liberty together. And Philip of Hesse, his colleague, persuaded by his son-in-law Maurice to cast himself upon

the emperor's clemency, was detained prisoner, in breach of the most solemn engagement.

The protestant cause, to human view, now appeared desperate. The emperor with an army overawed the diet. Maurice, gained by the emperor with the protestant leaders, consented to submit to the decisions of Trent. That they would be hostile to the protestants no one could doubt. But it pleased God to disappoint the devices of the emperor, by the very means planned for their accomplishment.

The plague breaking out at Trent, a few fathers went to Bologna, and the rest dispersed: nor could all the remonstrances of the emperor engage the pope to bring them back again. Vexed to the heart at these tricks of papal management, Charles resolved to mortify the pontiff, by shewing him that he could act without him. He caused therefore a formulary to be drawn up, such as he hoped might be accepted by both parties, because its wording was so ambiguous that each might give it their own interpretation. Hereupon he called a diet, read the decrees which he had ordered to be prepared, and, without any suffrage of the princes, enacted this as the rule, till a general council should otherwise direct. Hence this decree received the name of the Interim, as it was merely designed to be a temporary expedient. This, though intended to satisfy both parties, pleased neither. The papists exclaimed against the authority assumed without the pope; the protestants complained that all the essentials of popery were left in full force.

The politic Maurice saw through the designs of Charles, and his intention of erecting his sovereignty on the humiliation of the princes. He was glad of an opportunity of redeeming his credit with the protestant powers, among whom he still numbered himself, and he was particularly provoked by the imprisonment of his father-in-law, the prince of Hesse, whom he had unintentionally betrayed, and whom Charles refused to release. When, therefore, on the death of Clement and the succession of Julius to the pontificate, Charles had prevailed on the new pontiff to re-assemble the council at Trent, and with his army compelled the diet held at Augsburg to engage themselves implicitly to obey their decrees,

Maurice dared to qualify his consent with conditions judged so derogatory to the papal authority, that the archbishop of Mentz refused to enter them on the register of the diet.

Meantime the protestants at the close of the diet commenced their preparations for whatever might happen. The brave reformers, with Melancthon and Brechtius at their head, drew up their confessions of faith to be presented to the council, and Maurice, who merely meant to amuse the emperor by apparent submission, prepared for effectually resisting his ambitious projects. Charles was no more of a Catholic than Maurice was of a protestant. He not only intended to humble the princes of the empire, and particularly the protestants, but also to set such limits to the papal jurisdiction, as would prevent the pope from interrupting his schemes for establishing the same despotic power in Germany and Italy, as he had already done in his own hereditary dominions.

In the midst of his imaginary triumph and self confident security, the emperor was surprised at Inspruck with the sudden approach of a mighty army under Maurice, who had secretly leagued with him many German princes together with the king of France, and rushed upon the unsuspecting monarch. As he had no equal army to oppose, he was glad to obtain his safety by the pacification of Passau, containing a solemn grant of perfect liberty to the princes and the protestant cause. The Interim was revoked, all edicts against the Lutherans annulled, the prisoners set at liberty, and all who had suffered for the league of Smalkald re-instated in their honours and possessions; and a certain number of Lutherans admitted into the council-chamber of Spires, where the same impartial justice should be henceforth administered to protestants as to catholics.

Thus the very man on whom Charles had depended for the entire subversion of the Lutheran cause became its firmest bulwark, and established it upon a basis which could no more be overturned.

A diet was to be held to confirm all these concessions. After various delays, it assembled at Augsburg, and there, after long deliberations, the equitable conditions were ad-

justed which received the name of the Religious peace. The protestants were discharged from all papal jurisdiction; the states and free cities were to be unmolested in whatever ecclesiastical establishment they chose to form; animosities were to cease; no persecutions to be admitted on account of religious opinions; and whoever attempted to violate any of these articles was to be treated as a disturber of the public peace.

In this manner the protestants were confirmed in their rights, and the peace of Germany was established, An. 1555, thirty-seven years after Luther began his public attack on indulgences.

Except in the matter of Christ's presence in the eucharist, all the eminent men among the reformers of that day concurred in the same fundamental truths:

1. Of God's eternal purpose and predestination of an elect people, ordained to life and glory eternal.

2. That man had lost all ability to do good, and freedom of will to choose it; and was in his nature as fallen, only inclined to evil.

3. That nothing ever did or can alter this propensity of the human heart but the Holy Ghost, by his own immediate agency upon the souls of men.

4. That a sinner is and can be justified by faith only, and this not of himself; being unable either to comprehend or receive the things that be of the Spirit of God, and therefore the faith itself must be the gift of God.

5. That merit in creature there is none, nor ever can be. From first to last a sinner must be saved by grace.

6. That the vicarious atonement by the one oblation of Christ upon the cross is effectual, not for the many called, but for the few chosen.

These are the doctrines the reformers uniformly held. Nothing in the institutes of Calvin speaks a stronger language than the answer of Luther to Erasmus, entitled *De Servo Arbitrio**.

* Erasmus had attacked Luther on the doctrines of predestination and grace, and urged, "What can be more useless than to publish this

While these great events were pending in Germany, the great work of reformation made a wonderful progress on every side.

paradox to the world? namely, That whatever we do, is done not by virtue of our own free will, but in a way of necessity, &c. What a wide gap does the publication of this tenet open among men for the commission of all ungodliness? What wicked person will reform his life? Who will dare to believe himself a favourite of heaven? Who will fight against his own corrupt inclinations? Therefore where is either the need or the utility of spreading these notions, whence so many evils seem to flow?"

To this Luther replied, "If, my Erasmus, you consider these paradoxes (as you term them) to be no more than the inventions of men, why are you so extraordinarily heated on the occasion? In that case, your arguments affect not me, for there is no person now living in the world who is a more avowed enemy to the doctrines of men than myself. But if you believe the doctrines in debate between us to be (as indeed they are) the doctrines of God, you must have bid adieu to all sense of shame and decency thus to oppose them. I will not ask whether is the modesty of Erasmus fled? but, which is much more important, where, alas! are your fear and reverence of the Deity, when you roundly declare that this branch of truth, which he has revealed from heaven, is at best useless and unnecessary to be known? What! shall the glorious Creator be taught by you, his creature, what is fit to be preached, and what to be suppressed? Is the adorable God so very defective in wisdom and prudence as not to know, till you instruct him, what would be useful, and what pernicious? Or could not he, whose understanding is infinite, foresee, previous to his revelation of this doctrine, what would be the consequences of his revealing it, till those consequences were pointed out by you? You cannot, you dare not say this. If, then, it was the divine pleasure to make known these things in his word, and to bid his messengers publish them abroad, and to leave the consequences of their so doing to the wisdom and providence of Him in whose name they speak, and whose message they declare; who art thou, O Erasmus, that thou shouldst reply against God, and say to the Almighty, What doest thou? St. Paul, discoursing of God, declareth peremptorily "whom he will he hardeneth," and again, "God, willing to show his wrath," &c. And the apostle did not write this to have it stifled among a few persons, and buried in a corner, but wrote it to the Christians at Rome: which was in effect bringing this doctrine upon the stage of the whole world, stamping a universal *imprimatur* upon it, and publishing it to believers at large throughout the earth. What can sound harsher in the ears of carnal men than those words of

Denmark and Norway had received early the Lutheran doctrine. Christiern II, among other objects in his way to despotic power, wished to humble the clergy. To sap the

Christ, "Many are called, but few are chosen?" and elsewhere, "I know whom I have chosen." Now these and similar assertions of Christ and his apostles are the very positions which you, O Erasmus, brand as useless and hurtful. You object, if these things are so, who will amend his life? I answer, without the Holy Ghost no man can amend his life to purpose. Reformation is but varnished hypocrisy, unless it proceed from grace. The elect and truly pious are amended by the Spirit of God, and those of mankind who are not amended by him will perish. You ask, moreover, who will dare to believe himself a favourite of heaven? I answer, it is not in a man's own power to believe himself such upon just grounds, till he is enabled from above. But the elect shall be so enabled: they shall be enabled to believe themselves to be what indeed they are. As for the rest, who are not endued with faith, they shall perish raging and blaspheming, as you do now. But, say you, these doctrines open a door to ungodliness. I answer, whatever door they may open to the impious and profane, yet they open a door of righteousness to the elect and holy, and shew them the way to heaven, and the path of access unto God. Yet you would have us abstain from the mention of these grand doctrines, and leave our people in the dark as to their election of God. The consequence of which would be, that every man would bolster himself up with a delusive hope of a share in that salvation which is supposed to lie open to all, and thus genuine humility and the practical fear of God would be kicked out of doors. This would be a pretty way indeed of stopping up the gap Erasmus complains of! Instead of closing up the door of licentiousness, as is falsely pretended, it would be in fact opening a gulf into the nethermost hell. Still you urge, where is either the necessity or utility of preaching predestination? God himself teaches it, and commands us to teach it; and that is answer enough. We are not to arraign the Deity, and bring the motives of his will to the test of human scrutiny, but simply to revere both him and it. He who alone is all wise and all just can in reality (however things appear to us) do wrong to no man; neither can he do any thing unwisely or rashly. And this consideration will suffice to silence all the objections of truly religious persons. However, let us for argument's sake go a step farther. I will venture to assign, over and above two very important reasons, why these doctrines should be publicly taught: 1st. For the humiliation of our pride, and the manifestation of divine grace. God hath assuredly promised his favours to the truly humble. By the truly humble I mean those who are endued with repentance, and despair of

foundation of their power, he invited Reinard, a convert of Carolstadt, and afterwards that reformer himself, to visit him. These laid the foundations of the reformation in Den-

saving themselves: for a man can never be said to be truly penitent and humble, till he is made to know that his salvation is not suspended in any measure whatever on his own strength, machinations, endeavours, free-will, or works; but entirely depends on the free pleasure, purpose, determination, and efficiency of another, even of God alone. Whilst a man is persuaded that he has it in his own power to contribute any thing, be it ever so little, to his own salvation, he remains in carnal confidence; he is not a self-despairer, and therefore he is not duly humbled before God; so far from it, that he hopes some favourable juncture or opportunity will offer, when he may be able to lend a helping hand to the business of his salvation. On the contrary, whoever is truly convinced that the whole work depends singly and absolutely on the will of God, who alone is the author and finisher of salvation, such a person despairs of self-assistance; he renounces his own will and his own strength; he waits and prays for the operation of God: nor waits and prays in vain. For the elect's sake, therefore, these doctrines are to be preached: that the chosen of God being humbled by the knowledge of his truths, self-emptied and sunk into nothing as it were in his presence, may be saved in Christ with eternal glory. This then is one inducement to the publication of the doctrine, that the penitent may be made acquainted with the promise of grace, and plead it in prayer to God, and receive it as their own. 2d. The nature of the Christian faith requires it. Faith has to do with things not seen. And this is one of the highest degrees of faith, stedfastly to believe that God is infinitely merciful, though he saves comparatively few, and condemns so many; and that he is strictly just, though of his own will he makes such numbers of mankind necessarily liable to damnation. Now these are some of the unseen things whereof faith is the evidence. Whereas, was it in my power to comprehend them, or clearly to make out how God is both inviolably just and infinitely merciful, notwithstanding the display of wrath and seeming inequality in his dispensations respecting the reprobate, faith would have little or nothing to do. But now since these matters cannot be adequately comprehended by us in the present state of imperfection, there is room for the exercise of faith. The truths, therefore, respecting predestination in all its branches, should be taught and published. They, no less than the other mysteries of Christian doctrines, being proper objects of faith on the part of God's people."

These extracts are the most conclusive proof of the sentiments of Luther. No theory can be more explicit; no words can be less equi-

mark. It was alike favoured by his successor, and, in the course of a few years, the final change was accomplished, and popery, root and branch, overturned, in the diet of Odensee, in 1529.

An. 1527. The great Gustavus Vasa, who, from the depths of the mines of Dalecarlia rose to the throne of Sweden by the suffrages of his countrymen,—not only rescued their bodies from tyranny, but their souls from the more dreadful bondage of popery. During this conflict with the Danes for liberty, two noble champions, Olaus Petri and his brother, had set up the standard of truth in Sweden, and all men flocked to it. The German auxiliaries, who came to his help, brought also the Lutheran faith and Bibles with them. And, as the bitterest enemies of their country were found in the prelatical order, it became necessary to clip the wings of their ambition, before the liberties of Sweden could be fixed on a durable basis. Vasa, whose interest exactly coincided with his inclinations, encouraged with all his influence and authority these zealous reformers: and, on the settlement of the kingdom, the fabric of popery was utterly demolished, and a purer evangelical establishment fixed, through the labours of Olaus and his colleagues.

An. 1539. The great master of the Teutonic order, the ancestor of the kings of Prussia, following the example of Luther and the reformers, took to himself a wife, and set up the Lutheran profession through Prussia, Magdeburg, and the dominions which he possessed in the North.

In France, even at court, many of the nobility espoused the new doctrines, and a vast multitude embraced the protestant faith, notwithstanding the bitter enmity which Francis I is said to have expressed against it. His political interests compelling him to unite sometimes with the protestant princes in Germany, they engaged him to a momentary reluctant to-

vocal. It is admitted that the doctrines of the reformation have very much gone out of vogue in most of the protestant churches, but that does not give us the liberty to put a meaning upon their articles of faith the very reverse of what they were intended to convey.

leration of their brethren in France. But his connections with the pope, and his own inclinations, oftener led him to indulge his bigotry, in committing the protestants to the flames, and suppressing the profession of the gospel by the most atrocious acts of cruelty and oppression.

Spain, the most ignorant, bigotted, and servile to the Roman see, was penetrated by the light of truth, in spite of all the fires of inquisitors, and their watchfulness to suppress the first approaches of what Rome called heresy. It even passed the mountains, and spread into many parts of Italy, but obtained no legal establishment in either.

In Switzerland it triumphed in many cantons. It entered Hungary, Transylvania, Poland, and every where produced a plenteous harvest, amidst the bitterest persecutions from the ruling powers and the bloody bishops, whose ecclesiastical courts were crowded with prosecutions, and their prisons filled with confessors. The enemies of truth and godliness pretended not to confine themselves to the Bible, but every where had recourse to torments, racks, and gibbets, to check the course of what they called heresy. The church of Rome tottered from its foundation. Nothing but the strong arm of power, and the interest which the rich and proud had in maintaining its usurpations, propped up the trembling fabric.

In England, the great work of reformation originated in a very remarkable manner. Henry VIII, after a long solicitation at Rome for a sentence of divorce from his queen Catherine, in order to marry Anna Bulleyn, wearied with the duplicity of the pope, threw off the papal authority altogether. The pope had solemnly promised the king of France, that if Henry would send his submission to the holy see, he would sanction the divorce, especially as all the universities had concurred in their suffrage of the unlawfulness of the king's marriage with his brother's widow. But as she was the near relation of the emperor, and her cause warmly espoused by him, the pope, who dreaded the emperor's resentment, and had promised him to support the queen, was in the most unhappy dilemma. Clement cared neither about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the marriage, and had as little thought about religion in the matter as the king had of

conscience, notwithstanding all his pretended scruples: but, pushed hard by the imperialists, he pronounced the fatal sentence of the validity of the marriage, with the dire threats of anathemas if the king was refractory. The pope durst not retract for fear of the emperor; and Henry was a man of too violent a temper to be thus thwarted. He withdrew himself, therefore, and his kingdom wholly from the papal dominion, and cut off all intercourse with Rome, which his parliament confirmed: and conferred on their monarch the supremacy in church as well as state. But it must not be imagined that Henry became a protestant by ceasing to be a papist. He was exactly the same unprincipled tyrannical despot as before.

The hope with which Henry VIII had inspired the protestants was greatly disappointed. He had separated from the pope, but not from popery. The cause of truth durst not lift up its head. The iron rod of power held down every bold spirit which presumed to dispute the king's supremacy or infallibility. Yet the authority of the clergy was greatly reduced, and the translation of the Bible by Tyndal contributed to open men's eyes, and wonderfully spread the light of truth. The number of ministers and people who had embraced the evangelical doctrines was great: and some of them fell victims to episcopal persecution, and died in flames.

The death of this inhuman and capricious monarch opened a more pleasing prospect. Edward VI, his son, though very young, had drunk deeply into the principles of the reformation, under the tuition of the faithful Cranmer, who, during his reign, chiefly guided ecclesiastical matters, and filled the sees with men of singular zeal and piety, as Ridley, Latimer, and others. A short reign of felicity to the protestant cause was succeeded by the accession of the bloody Mary. Yet, the cause of truth had so firmly fixed itself in the land, that all the fires kindled in Smithfield, at Oxford, or elsewhere, were insufficient to consume the seed of the faithful, though they destroyed many great and eminent individuals. Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, were consigned to the flames, but their blood produced a plenteous increase.

Mary was a bigot to the popish party. She thought to avenge her mother's quarrels by sacrificing every protestant to her resentments, but the reformation had taken such root as not to be eradicated. Though the chief men in church and state were generally swayed by their interests to embrace the courtly religion, a noble army of martyrs, bishops, priests, and laymen, chose rather to die for Christ, than commit idolatry and countenance superstition. On the termination of Mary's short but bloody reign, the crown, in 1558, devolved on Elizabeth, the daughter of the unhappy Boleyn. She inherited a portion of her mother's goodness and protestantism, though mixed with a greater measure of her father's despotism.

The Scotch, always warlike, and men of acute minds, had many of them returned from the foreign countries where the reformation had been introduced, and brought to their native land the books and tenets of the reformers. Long had the truth struggled against the power and craft of popish tyranny, and many a martyr and many a confessor consented to go to prison and to death rather than abjure the faith once delivered to the saints. No monarch had yet attempted to break the yoke, and the priesthood was triumphant till the intrepid Knox arose, rude as the bleak climate which gave him birth. Having formed the strictest friendship with Calvin, at Geneva, and adopted all his opinions respecting church government, he returned to his native land, and, with his rough eloquence, and a hardihood that knew no fear, he bore down all opposition, overturned the whole popish hierarchy, and established the presbyterian government in its stead, to which the church of Scotland still adheres.

The Belgic provinces early received the light of gospel reformation, and none suffered more severely for their adherence to the faith than the inhabitants of that afflicted country. The obdurate bigot Philip resolved to extirpate all who refused subjection to Rome. The bloody inquisition was set up in the provinces, and the more cruel duke of Alva, his general, poured out the protestant blood as water on every side. Revolt against this oppressive dominion rent the provinces in twain. A part defied their enemies, and

maintained their liberties, and triumphed at last over their persecutors. The Dutch republic, under the famous William of Orange, stood as high in majesty against the humbled Spaniard as they were distinguished for the purity of their religious faith and practice.

Spain and the Spanish dominions in Italy had received some rays of the light of reformation. The very doctors brought by Charles V to combat Luther, caught the fire from his lips, and carried back to their country the heresy they came to subdue. But there the bigoted monarchs and superstitious clergy fiercely set all their engines at work to suppress the hated innovations, and, after torrents of bloodshed by martyrs innumerable, tortures, racks, and gibbets succeeded in extinguishing the flame. The light of truth was put out, and obscure darkness has there reigned ever since with debasing superstition beyond that of any other country. In Portugal the same steps, under the same monarch, produced the same miserable effect, to the utter subversion of all gospel grace and truth.

The Spanish dominions in Italy shared nearly the same fate, and, though Naples would not admit the inquisition, the persecution of the reformers was equally inveterate. The brave Ochino and the excellent Peter Martyr exerted their zeal and eloquence not quite in vain, but without being able to effect a national change.

Through all regions under papal jurisdiction, every effort of craft and cruelty was employed, and, from the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, the name of protestant was exterminated.

At the close of the sixteenth century, the account between protestants and papists in Europe stood thus: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Brandenburg, Prussia, England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, all protestant governments. Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Belgic provinces under the Spanish yoke, all papal. Germany, with its vast dependencies, divided and nearly poised in interest between both; in some protestantism was tolerated, in others persecuted. Switzerland divided, but the preponderating weight and greater numbers protestant. France, more than once on the equilibrium, ready to change

its dominant religion ; and at last returning to the house of bondage, though with millions of its inhabitants firm in the protestant faith.

The numbers were still on the side of the catholics, and their union under one visible head was greatly in their favour, whilst the protestants quickly separated into two great bodies, besides other subdivisions. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the far larger part of the German empire, followed the Augaburg confession, whilst the British islands, Holland, Switzerland, Geneva, France, and several states of Germany, adopted the confession of faith which hath since obtained the name of the reformed or Calvinistic.

The general conflict which now agitated the Christian world contributed exceedingly to excite enquiry in every branch of knowledge. Never was there a more vivid light of learning displayed, and the number of men of the first abilities was uncommonly great. Every where seminaries and universities were endowed, erected, or enlarged, and the number of students was immense. The mode of tuition also in all protestant countries became amazingly improved ; and all the sciences as well as theology were placed on a better footing.

The immense impressions of ancient classical writings, through the indefatigable labour of editors, and the happy invention of printing, widely disseminated knowledge, and excited a great love of learning through all the nations, especially those which were reformed. Science of every sort was eagerly cultivated, but biblical knowledge in particular was pursued with pre-eminent avidity. Not only was the Bible in every hand in the native tongue of its multiplied readers, but the comments and expositions of it by the reformers were so able and judicious, as to continue to attract the attention of many theological students of the present day. The Comment of Luther on the Epistle to the Galatians is an enduring monument of sound divinity and biblical erudition ; and the Institutes of Calvin are equally admirable for their argument as for their latinity. Calvin and Shakspeare were nearly cotemporaries ; for the death of the one and the

birth of the other were only ten years asunder, and they both were pre-eminent in their respective lines.

In Europe, scarcely any people now remained, who had not assumed the outward profession of Christianity. Even in Finland and Lapland, thinly scattered amidst their mossy mountains and everlasting snows, the inhabitants received from some zealous Swedish missionaries the gospel light. But it is feared that several continue in heathenism unto this day. In these inhospitable regions magic and witchcraft have taken their last refuge.

But the discoveries made in both the Indies opened a new and extensive field for the propagation of the gospel. The Spaniards and Portuguese, eager to extend the pale of popery, as well as their own dominion, not only used fire, sword, and the inquisition, as means for that purpose, but enlisted under their missionary banners regiments of friars, black and white, Franciscans and Dominicans, and, above all the rest, the newly instituted and more specious company of Jesuits. These penetrated into the depths of America, Africa, and Asia, and endeavoured to erect the banner of the cross in China and Japan. Nor were their labours without the appearance of vast success : but the religion which they taught was far removed from the truth as it is in Jesus. The methods these men pursued tended much more to make disciples to themselves and the pontiffs of Rome, than to form the mind to the reception of evangelical truth, or the heart to the love and service of a reconciled God. The zeal of these apostles, fiercely as it burned to make converts to their opinions, burned more fiercely in inquisitorial flames against all who wished to worship God in the way they called heresy.

When the reformation became established, the different nations professing the Christian name divided. Three great bodies, each claiming to be the true church, composed the Christian world. The most ancient, the Greek church ; the more modern, the Latin, or western church ; and the last vast rent made from it is now called the protestant church.

The Greek church, the eldest branch of Christianity, still subsists, though reduced by the Mahometan power to the lowest distress and deprived of all its former splendour.

After the taking of Constantinople, the glory of her patriarch faded, and his dominion was reduced. Russia, the present chief member of his communion, has long withdrawn herself from his obedience, and is governed by her own patriarch, who acknowledges no dependence on Constantinople. The very abased state of the Greeks, their ignorance and superstition, renders their history little interesting where the object is the enquiry into the living church.

The right arm of popish power and dominion was cut off by the reformation. Every attempt to regain their lost authority has proved abortive. Though many efforts have been made to heal the deadly wound, it remains incurable.

Yet the pontifical see remained eminent in power, wealth, and dignity, and lorded it, though not with such despotic power as before, over the nations under its obedience.

The monarchs of Europe gained greatly by the reformation. The fulminations of the pontifical see lost their efficacy. As the pontiff could proceed no longer in the way of open war, it became more needful to provide secret but mighty agents to prop up the pillars of their tottering throne. Auxiliaries were wanted who should unite learning, zeal, and genius with devoted submission to Rome and her pontiffs; whose abilities might introduce them into the cabinets of monarchs as confessors; whose science might dispel ignorance from the schools; and whose unlimited obedience might render them, in the capacity of missionaries, proper tools to spread the Roman supremacy through the old world and the new. Such were found in the order of Jesuits. Loyola was their founder, in 1550, and the Roman see adopted them with cordial affection as its devoted satellites, imposing on them, among other common vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, an additional engagement, "to hasten without hesitation to any part of the earth, and for any purpose which the pontiff should enjoin them." For this end a choice selection was made of the most ingenious, the most learned, and the best skilled in mechanic arts, as well as mathematics, painting, and philosophy.

The accommodating manners of this new order, their profound dissimulation, their artful insinuation into the

courts of princes and the secrets of men, their penetration in the discovery of the best means of effecting their purposes, and their easiness in relaxing the severity of penance and morals, according to the rank of the penitent, soon procured them a general preference. The favour of Rome, but much more their own policy and cunning, preserved and increased the credit of the order, and, by their activity and artifice, they supported and enlarged the bounds of the papal jurisdiction.

A variety of other orders arose, all professing to revive the ancient sanctity of manners, and to exhibit a purer model than the debased state of the monastic orders and the clergy in general afforded. This decline was a favourite topic of the reformers. Indeed their rebukes roused the whole sacerdotal tribe to a greater decency of conduct. The clergy put on a face of gravity, external sobriety, and seriousness, and the different orders entered upon various reforms.

So far indeed the church of Rome itself highly profited by the reformation. The honour of their vocation, and the desire to remove the reproaches of the Lutherans, produced much more beneficial effects than all the canons of the council of Trent. Nor did the same cause less operate in stimulating them to excel in literature, wherein the Jesuits set an admirable example. Indefatigable in pursuit of knowledge, they became the preceptors to others in all polite literature as well as theological learning. Hence the Romish church furnished a host of men high in reputation for attainments in science of every kind. They were as much indebted to the reformation for the revival of literature as for the amendment of their morals. Yet this amendment was more visible among the inferior than the superior clergy.

An. 1545. The council of Trent had assembled to ascertain the doctrines, restore the discipline, and correct the manners of the church; but the remedies it applied were ineffectual. Though the papal power swayed all the deliberations, and the legates dictated the decrees of this body, still the popes arrogated to themselves the sole right of interpreting them. The result of the labours of this council was the maintenance of the despotic power of the Roman prelate, and the

confirmation of all past abuses with the addition of many more. Its decrees were admitted only partially in some states, and with modifications and salvos in others. Nor did its determinations put an end to the disputes of catholics among themselves. Their boasted unity of doctrine was very weak indeed ; and the reproach cast on the protestants, and which they deserved for their religious disputes, was equally as applicable to the papists. Franciscans against Dominicans, and Thomists against Scotists, maintained unceasing battle. The bishops contended for their divine right and jurisdiction against the pope, who denied them both but as favours of the holy see. The power and jurisdiction of the see of Rome, the subjects of the catholic church, the nature, necessity, and efficacy of grace, the principles of morals, the operation of the sacraments, the best mode of Christian instruction : these and many other points were disputed with abundant acrimony.

The council of Trent made no alteration in rites and ceremonies. Idolatry, images, relics, and fraud, maintained their ground. Where the protestants were numerous, or their proximity made more circumspection needful, the more offensive acts of idolatry, and the grosser frauds were avoided. But in the more priest-ridden catholic countries, such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, and their colonies, there superstition continued to reign triumphant.

The Bible was one of the forbidden books, which the people might not consult without permission. And no man must comment on the scriptures, even in private, in any way different from the language of the church, nor print without a license. The key of knowledge was reserved by the popes in their own custody.

The state of pure religion in a church where godliness consisted in implicit obedience to the holy see, and exact attention to the formularies of devotion, the performance of penance, and the purchase of indulgences, may easily be conceived. Yet we must not suppose that the whole body was destitute of the life of Christianity. The writings of some of their divines show that they cultivated the religion of the heart. But these were few and hidden : in silence and re-

tirement they avoided observation, and therefore escaped the charge of heresy, which would have certainly fastened upon them if they had not been content to keep their religion to themselves.

In the church reformed from the errors of popery, we find much to lament, and much to condemn. Yet there subsisted the living body of pure and undefiled religion.

The body of protestants who separated from the Romish communion may be comprised under three grand divisions, the Lutherans, the Calvinists, and the heterodox, or such as departed from their brethren in those articles of faith which both the others had laid down as fundamental and essential to salvation.

I. *The Lutheran Church.*

The great reformer Luther left his name as the mark of union in that church, which was in a peculiar manner indebted to his labours. The leading principle of the reformation is, that the Bible alone contains the religion of protestants, which every man is to read and consider, and thence alone to draw all the articles of his faith and practice: and nothing is binding upon the conscience but what is clearly revealed in, or necessarily deducible from, the scriptures. These are generally admitted principles; but the protestant churches have severally differed in the application of some of them, and manifested a most blameable bigotry and severity towards their brethren, in enforcing their own interpretations of the scripture.

To maintain nearer union of sentiment and worship among themselves, each church had adopted particular confessions and formularies.

The Lutheran doctrine is avowed to be comprised in the Augsburg confession. The leading doctrines in it are the true and essential divinity of the Son of God; his substitution and vicarious sacrifice; and the necessity, freeness, and efficacy of divine grace upon the human heart.

With respect to the government of the church, its rites, ceremonies, and form of worship, a discreet latitude is allow-

ed: As theological science was peculiarly pursued, many eminent expositors of scripture appeared, none more esteemed than the great reformer himself. The doctrines of absolute predestination, irresistible grace, and human impotence, were by him ably defended.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone never had a clearer expositor than Luther; he adhered to the plain and literal sense of the scripture, and contended that it was to be always followed in preference to allegorical and fanciful interpretations. His morals were as pure as his doctrines were evangelical.

Whatever faults men were pleased to find with Luther's doctrine on the points above mentioned when he was dead, none of his followers murmured disapprobation whilst he was alive. As to the nature of the eucharist, Carolstadt dissented from him. In the rest they were unanimous. Luther was a sharp disputant, and hardly brooked opposition. The summit of eminence to which he was deservedly advanced, tempted him to treat those who differed from him with too much asperity. He was a man of vehement spirit; the times were rude; and differences of opinion were not met with the candour and politeness of more modern days. He was a man of like passions with other sinners, exposed to peculiar provocations, and of a temper naturally irascible. Let those who blame him avoid his mistakes, and imitate his excellencies.

In the Lutheran church were found men great in erudition and piety. But the multitude were only simple believers. The generality of clergy in every established church enter it as a profession, and are too like their fellows in all worldly pursuits and human passions. The faithful and really godly, who regard their work as their wages, are every where comparatively few. The living members of Christ's body within the Lutheran pale in that day were many and glorious. At the first dawn of reformation, strict piety was universally cultivated among the professors: but declensions early crept in with a peaceable establishment, and when they were no longer under the cross, a departure from truth and purity presently appeared. Before the close of the century, Mosheim acknowledged, that "the manners of the Lutherans were re-

markedly depraved, that multitudes offended the public by audacious irregularities; that discipline vanished either through the carelessness or impotence of the clerical arm." And those who distinguished themselves from their brethren, by deadness to the world, heavenly-mindedness, and spirituality of conversation, gained a name of peculiarity that separated them from their fellows, and were content to bear a testimony by their lives and labours to a kingdom neither Lutheran nor Calvinist exclusively, but consisting in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

II. *Of the Churches called Reformed, or Calvinistic.*

The name of protestants equally applied to all dissenters from the church of Rome. As these separated into different communities, they were distinguished by different denominations. The several churches which adopted the sentiments of Calvin generally bore his name, as the Lutherans that of their great reformer. The Calvinistic churches, though united in the confession of the same fundamental articles of faith, were formed on very different models, and chiefly followed the several forms of government which subsisted in the countries where the reformation prevailed, and the different views which the rulers in different nations entertained of the most scriptural church order. The greater body adopted the model of the Helvetic churches, and especially of Geneva, where Calvin presided, and had a chief influence over all those of the reformed profession. Switzerland, Germany, France, Scotland, Holland, and all the foreign Calvinistic churches erected the form of government in which a parity of rank was established among the ministers themselves. Yet this establishment was not exactly similar in any two churches who held the same confession of faith, and maintained in the general outline the same form of discipline and government.

The churches of England and Ireland chose to retain episcopacy in their government, as in their apprehension more congenial with monarchical government and primitive practice, whilst in all the great articles of faith they held with their foreign brethren, and maintained communion with them.

In ceremonies, the reformed churches differed greatly. The first and great reformer Zuinglius, who began before Luther his bold attack on popery, carried his reform far beyond him. Whilst Luther tolerated images, tapers, altars, exorcism, and auricular confession, Zuinglius swept all the trappings of superstition away, reducing the worship to the standard of utmost simplicity, divested alike of garb or ornament. The other churches have admitted some ceremonies, the episcopal churches the most, as more conformed to the dignity of the hierarchy.

Different opinions also prevailed among the reformed churches respecting the eucharist, the connection between the church and state, the subjects and mode of baptism, and other matters of minor consequence; but the great point which distinguished Calvin* and his adherents from others

* Calvin was a native of Picardy. He was intended for the church, but, in compliance with his father's wishes, applied himself to the law. The reigning controversies early engaged his attention. He read the scriptures with the greatest solemnity and diligence, and no sooner examined than he embraced the doctrines of truth, which he adorned by a conversation the most exemplary, and promoted with an eloquence that charmed the ear, whilst it carried conviction to the heart. His mental powers were great, his diligence indefatigable, his erudition equal to the first of that age, his style perspicuous and admirably pure. As a minister of the sanctuary, as a professor of divinity, his labours were immense. Yet in the zenith of his power his annual income was less than 120 dollars. His morals were strictly exemplary, his piety fervent, his zeal against offenders in doctrine or manners rigid. He had much opposition to encounter, but he subdued it by persevering ardour and dignity of conduct. His influence at Geneva was great, and he was looked up to by the reformed as their oracle. Every where his name was mentioned with reverence. Tenacious in point of doctrine, he met a host of opponents who rejected the system of unconditional decrees. Controversy sharpened his spirit, and he is accused of abusing his power and influence in acts of oppression towards his adversaries. The sufferings of Gruet, Bolsec, Castalio, Ochinus, but particularly of Servetus, put to death by the Genevan magistrates for his Socinian opinions, have brought an odium on Calvin's name as having instigated them to such acts of violence, or at least not having exerted the authority which he was known to possess to prevent the shedding of blood. If this is a just charge, let the reproach rest upon him.

who separated from the church of Rome respected the decrees of God, and their consequences on the everlasting state of men, as flowing from his own sovereign pleasure and will. Nothing that Calvin advanced was stronger than Luther had previously maintained on the subject of predestination and grace, the impotence of the human will to good, and the utter corruption of our fallen nature. But, after his decease, the Lutherans in general departed from the tenets of their great reformer to the semi-Pelagian system of co-operation. Against this the Genevan apostle, ably seconded by his colleagues, Beza, Zanchius, and others, strongly contended, and supported the system since called the Calvinistic with such force of argument, that it was universally adopted through all the reformed churches, and became their discriminating feature.

The predestinarian sentiments contained in these formulas of the reformed churches have since been attacked by men of the greatest learning, and the result is, that for a considerable time past many of the teachers and people in the reformed churches have been departing farther and farther from the free grace and predestinarian system, and yet these doc-

However dangerous such opinions may be to the souls of men, the right of any penal inflictions for them, and much more the justice of putting any man to death on that account, is now universally denied. But the rights of conscience were as little understood in that day by the protestants as the papists. These charges, if true, are the foulest blot in Calvin's otherwise fair escutcheon. The spirit of the times seems no exculpation for violating the dictate of the word of God and of common sense, that "liberty of conscience and private judgment are every man's birthright."

Calvin's advice to the English puritans respecting conformity was singularly conciliating. He wished them in all matters of indifference to submit, and where they could not, to give as little offence as possible. Supposing with the wisest part of the reformed church, that "Jesus Christ having left no express directions respecting ecclesiastical government, every nation might establish the form most agreeable to itself, provided nothing was enjoined contrary to the word of God." That he was a great man his enemies will not deny; that he was a good man, they who knew him best universally acknowledge.



trines in their several formularies and confessions of faith remain exactly as they were fixed from the beginning.

Amidst these disputes and contentions, a great and glorious number of living evidences of pure Christianity appeared. Many of the writings which have reached us witness the excellence of their authors, while the exemplariness of their conduct, and their zeal for their Master's service, demonstrate that the reformed churches were then a praise in the earth.

A third body of protestants, who are formed into church order, and profess Christianity, we have classed under the title of Heterodox, as they differed so essentially and fundamentally from the rest of the reformed, who have generally been distinguished by the epithet orthodox.

It was hardly possible, when the spirit of reformation, after years of darkness, invited to the perusal of the scriptures, and to the most unlimited freedom of enquiry into their meaning, that a diversity of sentiments should not arise among the learned. Of the multitudes therefore of those who rose up in opposition to the popish abuses, some pushed their objections even to the Bible itself, and rejected revelation. The old heresies of Arian and Pelagian origin revived, and various shades of degradation of Christ's divinity brought him down from essential godhead to the lowest state of humanity in the system called Socinianism. The gradations scarcely deserve consideration, as the difference between the true God and no God is such as hardly to admit of any thing intermediate. The leading principle of the sect appears to be, that "whatever surpasses the limits of human comprehension is to be excluded from the Christian profession." The mystery of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the deity of the Spirit, are therefore renounced in their creed.

Though their numbers have not been great in any place, they have maintained an existence and gained proselytes in countries into which at first they found no admission. The prevailing indifference to all religion has favoured their peaceable existence, but has been unfavourable to their progress. Their opinions suit not the multitude, and many of those who chuse to be freethinkers, rather prefer to make no profession of Christianity at all. Several of this

sect are eminent for their great attainments in literature, and more for their philanthropy and orderly moral lives.

Century XVII.

The struggle in Europe between truth and error had been long and obstinate. It had produced wars which desolated the face of many countries. On the restoration of peace, Christendom was for the most part partitioned between the catholics and protestants, and they began to plan how they might extend their influence over the regions which had been lately discovered.

The catholics possessed a great and manifest advantage, not only as united under one spiritual head, but also because the grand discoveries had been made by those who professed the faith of Rome, and continued under her obedience. These all equally wished with the popes themselves to propagate their own religion. A host of missionaries came forward, zealously disposed to spread the knowledge of such Christianity as they held through all the countries into which the arms or commerce of Spain and Portugal had penetrated.

To direct their efforts most effectually for spreading the popish religion, the pope established, in 1662, a congregation of Cardinals *de propaganda fide*, whose name expressed their office. To defray every expense, a vast endowment furnished the most ample means. Missionaries, supplied with every necessary, were ready for embarkation, however distant the voyage or perilous the service.

The Jesuits claimed the first rank, as due to their zeal, learning, and devotedness to the holy see. The Dominicans, Franciscans, and other orders disputed the palm with them, and impeached the purity of their motives, imputed their zeal to ambitious purposes, and accused them of subjecting their converts to their own order, with a view to make merchandise of them. Into these accusations probably much

truth entered, but more envy. The steps of the Jesuits were directed with the most consummate skill, and crowned with astonishing success. They studied the characters of those with whom they had to do, and suited themselves alike to the peasant as the noble. They selected from their society the instruments best qualified for their several spheres of action. They were physicians, astronomers, mathematicians, painters, musicians, artists in every occupation that could render their talents subservient to missionary purposes. They made themselves not only agreeable but useful to the superior ranks: they condescended to instruct the meanest, they consulted the different inclinations and habits of the several nations and the individuals of each. In short they determined to become all things to all men, that they might obtain the great object in view. The new world and the Asiatic regions were the chief field of their labours. They penetrated into the uncultivated recesses of America, civilised the savages, and won them to habits of industry. They visited the untried regions of Siam, Tonkin, and Cochinchina. They entered the vast empire of China itself, insinuated themselves into the confidence of that suspicious people, and numbered millions among their converts. They risked the dangers of the tyrannical government of Japan, and even there extended their conquests in a manner almost incredible. In India they assumed the garb and austerities of the Brahmins, and boasted on the coasts of Malabar of a thousand converts baptized in one year by a single missionary. They could alike familiarise themselves with the magnificence and luxury of the court of Peking, or live on water and vegetables. But the disputes among the missionaries affected their converts, and every where produced contentions. The jealousy of the governments was roused. A dreadful persecution arose in Japan. The teachers as well as the disciples fell victims to the fury and suspicion of that savage people, and the name of Christian there is no more had in remembrance but to abhor it.

In China a flourishing era gave brighter hopes of perpetuity, but they too were blasted. The same causes produced the same effects: and, though the seventeenth century left the Jesuits possessed of a noble church at Peking, and their mis-

sionaries spread through all that country and the Mongol Tartary, the next saw them utterly expelled the empire.

The jealousy of the Jesuits, and the final prevalence of their enemies, led to the suppression of their order, and almost to the extinction of all missionary labours among the papists.

In Africa, where the Portuguese power prevailed, the Capuchins were chiefly employed; less artful and able than the disciples of Loyola, but equally zealous. They relate the wonders wrought by their ministry at Benin, Soffala, and the west and southern coasts of Africa: but those who have seen these negro Christians will with difficulty admit them to a place in the church of Christ. Though they have been baptized, and learned to make the sign of the cross, in all the essentials of Christianity, whether of doctrine or practice, they differ little from their countrymen.

Not much more can be said for all the catholic conversions made from Mexico to the Straits of Magellan. There Spaniards and Portuguese are alike buried in ignorance, superstition, and profligacy, even below their bigoted countrymen in Europe. With such examples and such instructors, the state of the poor natives must be wretched. Immersed in their ancient superstitions, they have added all the ceremonies and follies of their new religion to the absurdities of the old.

Among the protestants, the efforts to spread the gospel in the heathen world were few and feeble. The two great nations of the English and Dutch were too much engrossed at this period with their commercial concerns to take religion into their view, and utterly neglected this great object. All that can be called missionary labour at that time must be ascribed to the puritans and non-conformists, who fled to America to escape the persecutions of government at home. Some of these men of God distinguished their zeal in labours among the poor Indians, which were crowned with tokens of divine favour. It must be remembered, that, between 1607 and 1681, the gospel, chiefly according to the system of the reformers, was planted along more than 1000 miles of the sea-coast of North America, by emigrants who fled from the

persecutions of fellow Christians in Europe that they might enjoy religious liberty in the woods of the new world. These have spread themselves far and wide, and Christianity in its purest forms has been planted over a vast extent of country, in which a Bible had never been seen, nor the name of the Saviour heard anterior to the sixteenth century, and in that only in a very few instances.

Progress in all scientific attainments peculiarly marks this age: a constellation of sages arose, who improved philosophy on a new plan, and carried it far beyond what their predecessors had done. Amidst this vast accession to the stock of human knowledge, many reputed genuises arose, whose fame was built upon the most daring attacks on revelation, or the most insidious attempts to undermine it. Of these, whilst France furnished her Vanina, and Holland, Spinoza, England exhibited, under Charles II, some of the most impious writers, who took abundant pains to disseminate their pernicious tenets. Such were Hobbes, Toland, and the lords Herbert, Rochester, and Shaftesbury, who endeavoured, partly by reasoning, partly by ridicule, to overturn the faith of the unstable professor. Many indeed instantly arose to lift up the shield against their fiery darts. The great luminaries of the age, Newton, Locke, Boyle, and others, were the strenuous defenders of divine revelation. The last of these, as zealous for divine truth as eminent in philosophical discoveries, instituted a constant annual course of lectures in defence of that religion, which these sceptical philosophers endeavoured to supplant and destroy.

The indignant pontiffs beheld the loss of their flocks and the defalcation of their revenues in consequence of the late reformation, and meditated the means of their recovery. The peace of Augsburg had bound up the arm of violence from persecution, and every where proclaimed peace and tolerance among the contending princes. But the first object of Rome and of those who filled the papal chair was to break this bond of union, and to reclaim those who had emancipated themselves from the yoke of bondage.

This was the uniform pursuit and spirit of all the successive pontiffs, and they employed the most powerful engines

to effect their purposes. The means they possessed were but too well suited to the end. The house of Austria with the other catholic princes, the devoted partisans of the holy see, were especially courted. Their co-operation was eagerly sought, and great exertions made to rouse them to aid the pontiff in recovering their past influence.

Another powerful engine was found in the wily and indefatigable order of Jesuits. These were dispersed through all lands, and seized every opportunity to pervert the ignorant or oppress the feeble. In the courts of princes whose confessors they chiefly were, the laxity of their moral system recommended their prescriptions for quieting guilty consciences. Zeal for the conversion of heretics, and the employments of any means to effect it cancelled all crimes.

The pens of these artful casuists were first employed to prove the nullity of the peace of Augsburg, and to charge upon the protestants various pretended infractions, in order to justify the attack meditated against them.

The house of Austria endeavoured to prevail upon the protestants to return to the Romish pale by caresses and promises. To bend the stubborn, and to subdue the daring, innumerable acts of oppression were exercised. The protestants had no choice but to submit or fly their country.

Bohemia next experienced the arm of popish tyranny. Despair drove the Bohemians to resistance, and to wreak on their persecutors vengeance for the wrongs they had received. On the death of the emperor Matthias, the Bohemians resolved to chuse a king of their own faith, and to preserve their civil and religious liberties against the all-grasping arm of Austria. For this purpose they offered their crown to the illustrious elector palatine, a protestant, and son-in-law to the king of England, hoping to strengthen themselves greatly by such an election. In an unfortunate hour Frederic accepted the crown, and prepared to defend himself and his new subjects against the claims and arms of Ferdinand of Austria. The issue of the conflict was unfavourable. Frederic not only lost his crown and kingdom, but his own electorate. The ruin of the poor protestants in Bohemia and the Palatinate quickly followed.

The emperor now cast off the mask, and in direct breach of the peace of Augsburg, issued an edict for the restoration of all that had been taken from the church in virtue of the former treaty. Whatever priests and monks chose to claim, the imperial soldiers were at hand to seize. Resistance was vain. The wise and considerate of the papists remonstrated that the inevitable consequence would be to rouse the Bohemians by despair to resistance, and to leave the country ravaged, ruined, and destitute of inhabitants. But Ferdinand replied, *Malamus regnum vastatum quam damnatum*. "I had rather see the kingdom a desert than damned." Terror and dismay spread over the remaining princes. The protestant cause was reduced to the lowest ebb; its final overthrow in the empire seemed inevitable: but God determined otherwise.

The magnanimous king of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, heard the groans of his brethren with anguish. He resolved to rescue them from oppression, or perish in the attempt. The court of France instigated Gustavus to the enterprise, and promised him assistance. He boldly, therefore, drew the sword, and with a small but chosen army crossed the sea, and landed in Germany, to maintain the liberty of his brethren, and check the encroachments of Austria and Rome. Victory crowned the hero. The insolent pride of Ferdinand was humbled, his generals defeated. And though the king of Sweden fell at Lutzen, his death arrested not the vigour of the Swedes. The generals who succeeded Gustavus maintained their superiority; till worn out with a war of thirty years of misery, all parties became disposed to heal the wounds of this unhappy country, by the peace of Westphalia. In vain the pope and the Jesuits endeavoured to put every obstacle in the way of its conclusion. Necessity obliged both parties to compromise their differences. The emperor, indeed, refused to grant their former liberty to the protestants in Austria and Bohemia, or to restore the palatinate; yet all the other claims of the protestants were solemnly admitted and guaranteed. The restitution edict was revoked, and the protestant and reformed interest settled on a basis not easily to be shaken.

As open violence was restrained, the Jesuits and prelates endeavoured, under pretence of reconciling, to soften down the grosser features of popery. They professed a willingness to grant almost any indulgences to the scrupulous, if they would return to the bosom of the Romish church, and heal the schism. For this end conferences were held, disputations on the points of controversy managed with great mildness and dexterity, every winning artifice was employed, and every tempting offer made, which could either surprise the conscience or tempt the worldly-minded.

But these arts, through the watchfulness of the protestants, were in a measure disappointed. Yet several of the great and learned joined the popish communion. The fire of the reformation was damped : a spirit of formality and security grew upon them. All the great preferments were in the apostolic church. The hopes of Rome thus continued to be supported, and their secret practices in all nations were attended with considerable success. In Poland, the protestants, under a variety of pretexts, were robbed and plundered, ejected from their churches, deprived of their schools, and cruelly punished, in order to engage them to renounce their faith and profession. The same scene was acted in Hungary. The dukes of Savoy and Piedmont were instigated to hunt out the poor remains of the Waldenses from the fastnesses of the mountains, and to waste by fire and sword the feeble but patient and unresisting remains of this faithful people. An. 1632—1685.

In Spain, as the number of Morescoes was so great, and their attachment to Mahomet inveterate, the enmity of the clergy and the intolerance of bigotry compelled them to quit their country or their religion. Millions of the Moors, faithful to their prophet, sacrificed all their substance, relatives, and native land, and were transported into Africa : carrying their diligence and arts to enrich the soil of Fez and Morocco, and leaving a desert behind them yet unpeopled. But the church gained, whatever might be the losses of the state.

In France, a constant infringement of the protestant liberties reduced the numbers and awakened the complainings of the oppressed. Every art was used to stimulate the ruling powers to persecution ; and every wile of cunning to sur-

prise the consciences of the monarchs, surrounded by Jesuits, confessors, priests, and bishops, all in league to bring back the Hugonots to their former state. After being long harassed by persecution, the revocation of the edict of Nantz compelled many hundreds of thousands of French protestants to seek refuge in foreign lands.

Nor were the artifices of popery confined to the nations under her own obedience. England, long a fief of Rome, was now cut off root and branch from all connection or communication with the holy see. No faith was to be kept with such heretics, and killing them was esteemed no murder. Such were the maxims of popery, such Garnet the Jesuit, superior in England, taught. Garnet surprised the conscientious papist sir Everard Digby and others into a plot, the most horrible in its nature, and which threatened to be the most dreadful in its effects; no less than to blow up the king and both houses of parliament with gunpowder, and, in the confusion of the nation, to set up the Roman catholic religion. Just at the moment of its execution a gracious Providence discovered the infernal design.

Disappointed, but not discouraged, the pontiffs and Jesuits pursued their object with more caution and deeper-laid schemes. What could not be effected under James I, was attempted under his successor Charles I. He had taken a bigoted papist for his queen, and with her a legion of Jesuits followed. He had promoted the violent Laud to the see of Canterbury, who was strongly suspected of leaning to popery, and constantly endeavouring to enlarge the ritual, and bring it to a greater conformity with Rome. We have abundant reason to conclude, that both Charles I and his archbishop would have been well content to come to terms and be reconciled with Rome. This fatal event was prevented by one little less to be deplored, the civil wars which broke out, and brought these unhappy bigots to a fearful end.

An. 1660. The restoration of Charles the Second once more revived the most sanguine hopes of Rome. He was a man of the most profligate character and corrupt principles; and, during his exile, he had embraced popery, and become the pupil of the jesuits. When he had recovered the throne

of his ancestors, the love of ease and pleasure palsied his secret desire for the restoration of the religion he had embraced. Not that his purpose was altered, or his plans laid aside. His treaty with the king of France had the restoration of popery for its grand object. But his indolence, his cowardice, and the pursuit of his scandalous amours, occupied his time and thoughts, and diverted him from venturing upon any steps of danger and difficulty.

An. 1685. The church of Rome had a more faithful and zealous son in his successor James II. Open in his profession, he no sooner succeeded to the throne than he unveiled his intention, and thus defeated his own designs. Too sincere to be a hypocrite, and too confident of his own power to carry his purposes into execution, he wantonly trampled on the laws of the land, affronted the church by all the trumpery of the mass restored in his chapel, and the nation by acts of despotism. His craftier associates would have checked the rapidity of his movements, and the pontiff himself wished to rein in the impetuous monarch ; but the merit and the glory after which he aspired of saving the nation from hell and heresy drove him on furiously to his own destruction. The generous William of Holland, who had married his daughter the next protestant heiress to the throne, obeyed the call of the people, and hastened to their deliverance. James flattered himself with the fidelity of his army and navy, but no sooner was the protestant deliverer landed, than every man, even his dearest friends and his own daughter, deserted the bigoted king, and left him destitute of all help. Thus once more, in the critical moment, a gracious interposition of Providence preserved the purity of religion and the liberties of the land. Rome sought to arm her avengers to restore the abdicated monarch, and allured the governments of France and Spain to second her schemes of subjection, but in vain. William, firm in the affections of his people, lifted up the banner of victory, and in Ireland and England humbled all his enemies*.

* The catholics of the present day are an enlightened, liberal, and humane people compared with their ancestors. Though historical truth

The state of learning in popish countries was highly improved. But high as the attainments of the learned rose, the state of morals sank very low. The dignitaries of the church were the creatures of courts, and as they gained their preferments by the servile arts of flattery and interest in great men's favour, so they used their emoluments accordingly in a life of indolence, pleasure, and magnificence. The care of souls was a consideration which entered not into their views. The inferior clergy in their gradations followed the same steps, and procured patrons by the same means. Some happy exceptions were found to the general depravity.

Among those places pre-eminent for authors and theologians, who wished to improve the heart by their writings, and the world by their example, we may justly reckon the seminary of Port Royal: from which issued the works of Pascal, Arnaud, and Nicole. To these we may add the excellent Fenelon, archbishop of Cambray, and the fathers of the Jansenists, among whom a considerable band appears of faithful confessors, whose works are still read with admiration, and whose real piety deserves to be imitated.

When, on the death of Cromwell, Charles II was restored, the former persecutions of the puritans and dissenters were renewed, as soon as Charles was well settled on the throne. Episcopal government was also set up in Scotland as well as in England; and, by the act of uniformity in 1662, all ministers who objected to prelatical government and to be re-ordained by bishops, were ejected from their cures and prohibited from teaching. This form of expression was used, because, in the opinion of the dominant party, no mode of ordination except the episcopal conferred any clerical power, or raised its subject above the rank of a layman. What was lost by England in consequence of this anti-christian ejection was gained by America. Several of the ejection

requires that the foul deeds of their predecessors be told, yet the present set are not answerable for, nor should they be reproached with them. There are no better citizens of the United States than Roman catholics.

ed ministers, who were pious and able divines, repaired to New England, and there lighted up a blaze of knowledge and godliness, which continues to this day, and has been instrumental in diffusing both learning and piety far and wide over the British colonies, now the United States of America.

A decline was observable in vital Christianity towards the end of this century. It had made rapid strides in the reign of Charles, at whose accession the profligate manners of the court encouraged every abomination. The rigid maxims of the puritans, with their starched persons, were held in aversion, and turned into ridicule. Men easily and rapidly passed to the extremes of vice, to avoid the suspicion of the semblance of piety. As a life of dissipation was in fashion, religion began to be a contemptible thing. Peculiar seriousness branded a man as puritanical, and effectually prevented all church advancement. The clergy took peculiar care to escape as far as possible from what must destroy their hopes of preferment, and not to be righteous over much.

Theological subjects also began exceedingly to give place to literature more polite and knowledge more scientific. The candidates for the ministry at the universities made vast progress in all branches of human learning, while biblical studies, especially in any devotional way, were little attended to.

But a far more pregnant cause of this declension than any other arose from the new method of preaching adopted by divines, who, being chiefly Arminians in opinion, wished to avoid the peculiar and characteristic doctrines of Christianity, so much dwelt upon formerly, and to confine their instructions to the beauty of virtue and the force of moral obligation. Thus, without the great mainspring of Christianity, they laboured in admired compositions to teach men to be virtuous, till all power of godliness was lost; and an awful demonstration was given, that when the love of God is not taught and felt, all other endeavours to correct the morals of mankind will be impotent and vain.

Though religion at the end of the century appeared to decline, yet England produced many able writers on sacred subjects of every kind. Of these the works of many will live to edify the latest posterity: among them some of the

English bishops maintain a high rank. The puritan divines were remarkably laborious and deep in biblical literature. But latterly a great change was perceivable. A new race of finer polish arose, less attached to the characteristic doctrines of Christianity. The great doctrines of the fall and its consequences, the corruption of human nature, the redemption by atonement, the justification of a sinner by faith alone, and the necessity of the influences of the Holy Ghost to produce all purity of heart and life ; these and the like topics were unfashionable, and gave place to the more philosophic system of moral suasion, metaphysical reasoning, and ethical essays on virtue, its beauty and obligations. Yet there remained many faithful adherents to the Calvinistic doctrines of the articles of the established church.

The reformation, after a sharp struggle, had been established in Scotland, and that kingdom had cast off the popish yoke. During the residence of James in Scotland, the bitter disputes about prelacy and presbyterianism were rather compromised than conclusively settled. But on the accession of the Scottish monarch to the English crown, they revived with an unchristian temper. Gained to the hierarchy, James cast his weight into that scale, to the great disgust of the majority of his northern subjects, and compelled them reluctantly to submit to the episcopal yoke. But a convulsion followed, which terminated in the overthrow of monarchy and episcopacy. By dire experience the unhappy Charles the First now found, that he had no refuge among subjects whose affections he had alienated by supporting an ecclesiastical form of government which they abhorred. The very army to whom he fled for protection delivered him into the hands of his enemies.

During the protectorate, Scotland enjoyed many and great blessings ; the gospel was diligently preached, and the number of the faithful multiplied. The restoration brought back episcopacy and disgust to all the presbyterian party. During this and the succeeding reign, Scotland was a perpetual scene of discontent and irritating measures. Many of the best men and ministers in the nation were persecuted and driven from their country by ecclesiastical power, exerted rigor-

ously to impose an establishment to which the great body of the ministers and people were averse. The bishops sent into Scotland, with archbishop Sharp at their head, served by their insolence and ill conduct to strengthen the prejudices against episcopacy. The peaceful and seraphic Leighton, after doing all the good and preventing all the evil in his power, convinced of the improper steps taken to enforce an episcopal government, to which the body of people was averse, resigned his archbishopric, and retired to a private station. His works will long live a monument of evangelical piety. Archbishop Sharp, who had rejected every mild and conciliating step suggested by his truly apostolical coadjutor, fell the victim of his own violence, and died by the hands of assassins, detested even by those who most condemned the bloody deed. The revolution under William the Third brought back to the Scots their favourite ecclesiastical government and discipline, which continues to the present period.

During all this century the Scots may be considered as a remarkably religious people. And though the life of real godliness can never be supposed universal in any nation, yet the number of evangelical and zealous ministers in the kirk was great, and their faithful followers numerous. Remarkable instances of great revivals of religion in various places are also on record. And though many instances of undue heat and intolerance occur in their history, yet, with every thing which can be pointed out as censurable, the kirk was eminently distinguished by purity of doctrine, holiness of practice, the learning of its clergy, and general information of its laity.

It may be a matter of some doubt whether the kingdom of Ireland can be reckoned among the protestants or catholics, for, though the government was in the hands of the former, the far greater part of the subjects continued in papal superstition and ignorance. Kept under by the strong arm of power, they waited the opportunity of emancipating themselves from this restraint, and restoring the popish religion. The rising discontents under Charles I. afforded the moment of revolt. The troops being employed in the fatal contest between the king and the parliament, the Irish rose with sa-

vage fury, and massacred great numbers of protestants in cold blood. The irresistible arm of Cromwell reduced them to obedience, and punished them for their rebellion.

The names of archbishop Usher, bishop Babington, Downham, and others, will ever be mentioned as the ornaments of that day, and of the church which their labours edified. On the restoration, the episcopal government was restored with the regal, but the court of Charles II produced few such prelates as had blessed the land in the commencement of the century. The same fearful decay among the churchmen was to be observed in Ireland as in England; and the bigoted James II wished to suspend all laws against those of his own faith, and to encourage its progress. He found also among them his most strenuous supporters: But little was done effectually to diffuse the principles of protestantism. The papists, far the superior number, though under disabilities, adhered to Rome and her superstitions. Satisfied with all the civil and ecclesiastical emoluments, the nominal protestants expressed very little zeal for the real conversion of their popish neighbours. Between protestants and papists a strongly marked political line was drawn, but as to the life of godliness the difference was very little.

Though religious toleration was no where more extensive than in Holland, the reformed religion was the only one established by the state. About the commencement of this century, a sect arose among them which hath received the name of Arminians, from its author, a professor of divinity at Leyden, whose opinions produced the most unhappy dissensions. He had been educated at Geneva in the Calvinistic doctrines, but early in life began to be offended with the decrees as unconditional and absolute, and pleaded for the system of universal redemption. What he himself adopted he publicly taught, and as those tenets militated so strongly against the religion of his country, he was soon branded with heretical pravity, and the sound divines of that communion, with Gomarus his colleague at their head, expressed their high disapprobation of his doctrines. The controversy was sharply maintained, and many ecclesiastics of the Dutch church and others adopted the opinions of Armi-

nus, who died in the midst of these contests ; but he left able and resolute defenders, who carried on the war with redoubled vigour ; among these were the famous Episcopius, Grotius, and Barneveldt. The Arminians claimed toleration, and a compromise was offered, provided they would renounce the principles of Socinianism, of which they were suspected, and to which it was supposed their tenets led. Repeated conferences, however, were ineffectual to restore the broken bonds of charity. The Calvinistic divines, fully persuaded that the Arminian principles tended to destroy the most important peculiarities of the religion of God incarnate, urged the magistrates to interpose their authority.

The peculiar sentiments of the Arminians, as contained in the writings of their leader and founder, turned on five points.

1. That salvation was bestowed on the elect on account of faith and perseverance foreseen : and damnation inflicted for unbelief and impenitence likewise foreseen.

2. That every individual is equally redeemed by Christ, though believers and good men only finally receive the benefit.

3. That true faith is only from the operation of the Holy Ghost, not from natural powers, or the self-wrought exertions of the human will ; but that a general sufficiency of divine grace is given to all.

4. That the divine grace or power of the Holy Ghost begins and carries to perfection all that is good in the creature ; though the will of the impenitent does resist, and often renders the spirit's operations ineffectual.

5. That real saints may fall from a state of grace.

The doctrines stated above were the avowed pillars of the Arminian creed ; but they maintained, that as Christians were only responsible to God for their religious opinions, no other confession of faith was necessary than the admission of the Scriptures to be the word of God.

Political differences in Holland ranged the different parties under opposite leaders. Maurice, prince of Orange, and those who supported him, were opposed by Barneveldt, Grotius, and Hoogerbeets, men in the highest places of the republic, and jealous of Maurice, as aspiring after undue

power and influence. Gomarus and his friends attached themselves to Maurice; the Arminians to Barneveldt and his associates. The party of Maurice prevailing, Barneveldt lost his head, and Grotius and Hoogerbeets were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The Arminians, though not exposed to suffer for their opinions as yet, were thus deprived of their former protectors and supporters, and were probably regarded with an evil eye by Maurice and the prevailing party.

An. 1618. A national synod was demanded by the Calvinists to judge the points in dispute. The states general issued their edicts for its assembling; and deputies from all the provinces of Holland were joined by their brethren sent from the other eminent reformed churches of England, Switzerland, Hesse, Bremen, and the palatinate, to decide the matters in controversy. Episcopius, a man of high abilities and eloquence, was the head of the Arminian party, and appeared foremost to defend their opinions against the accusations of Gomarus and his associates: but the synod had hardly commenced its deliberations, before a dispute on the mode of proceeding drove the Arminian party from the assembly. The Arminians insisted upon beginning with a refutation of the Calvinistic doctrines, especially that of reprobation, whilst the synod determined that as the remonstrants were accused of departing from the reformed faith, they ought first to justify themselves by scriptural proof of their own opinions.

All means to persuade the Arminians to submit to this procedure having failed, they were banished the synod for their refusal, and retired with bitter abuse of the partiality with which they were treated. The synod, however, proceeded in their examination of the Arminian tenets, and, as the Arminian doctors had left the assembly, their writings underwent a strict scrutiny in their absence. Their opinions were condemned, and their persons excommunicated. Nothing can vindicate the rigour and asperity with which they were treated, and the unchristian persecution which followed, and drove these men from their churches and their country into exile and poverty. Such are not the weapons

of a Christian's warfare. In the whole of this proceeding ecclesiastical intolerance was made the instrument of political artifice to crush the party of their adversaries.

The neighbouring countries received the exiles with hospitality. But the death of Maurice, their persecutor, opened a door for their return under his less prejudiced successor, and they were admitted to free toleration and peaceable enjoyment of their opinions. Though in Holland the professedly Arminian congregations are by no means numerous, yet, thence the spread of the Arminian tenets through all the neighbouring nations has been prodigious; the generality in all protestant countries embrace them.

The protestants in France, from the exaltation of Henry IV to the throne, formed a kind of republic within the monarchy, by the privileges they had obtained, and the fortified places, as Rochelle, Sedan, and others, which were given them as securities for the uninterrupted enjoyment of their religious liberties. But treaties are feeble cords to bind the strong arm of power. The protestant leaders were too often ambitious men, and the enemies of the Hugonots always watched for an occasion to deprive them of those privileges which necessity only had extorted; nor was that occasion long wanting. Cardinal Richelieu perceived that his master was but lord of half his kingdom, whilst the protestants held Rochelle. After hard struggles to subdue their independent spirit, therefore, in 1628, he besieged and took their capital. Lying now wholly at the will of their enemies, the protestants in France sank very low under oppression and violation of privileges which they no longer had the power to maintain. The insidious cardinal and the imperious monarch united with the Jesuits for their extirpation. Every artifice and promise, joined with threats and sufferings of various kinds, were first used to engage them to apostatize from the faith of their forefathers, which indeed too many did. Those who were steady in adhering to the protestant religion were dragooned into compliance, or delivered up to the bishops and clergy, who persecuted them with unrelenting cruelty. Multitudes fled their country, and sought an

asylum in foreign lands ; and others, unable or unwilling to fly, endured all the evils that abused power could inflict.

An. 1685. The edict of Nantz was revoked, and Lewis XIV murdered and plundered thousands of his protestant subjects, and compelled the rest to seek refuge in exile. To add insult to cruelty, an edict commanded them without delay to return to the bosom of the church, whilst guards were stationed on the frontiers to prevent the escape of those who for conscience sake were willing to leave all behind them. Yet hundreds of thousands found their way into the neighbouring nations, where they were received with friendship and affection, as exiles, as persecuted, as brethren. They left their country, and carried their industry and resentment to strengthen the hands of her enemies. Many of the catholics condemned so gross a violation of solemn engagements, and all but bigots considered the step impolitic as unjust. It must be confessed that the protestants deserved the scourge by the awful declensions evident among them. Some of their principal teachers had departed grievously from the reformed doctrines, and wished to bend to a nearer state of union with the Romish church which they had renounced ; whilst the body of French protestants approached the Arminian tenets, and softened down their professions in conformity thereto. Switzerland also adopted them ; and Geneva, the cradle of the reformed churches, before the end of the century, degenerated fast into the Arminian and Pelagian system.

The spirit of truth and godliness was not likely to flourish under such circumstances. The cause of the protestants in France was reduced very low ; and those who remained, instead of brightening in the furnace of affliction, degenerated from the purity of the faith, as well as the spirituality of practice. The remaining protestantism was little more than an inveterate hatred of popery or attachment to a name and the honour of a party.

An. 1655, 1686, 1696. The poor Waldenses, still maintaining in their sequestered valleys the protestant doctrine, were hunted out by Jesuitical malice, and cruelly treated by their popish duke of Savoy : their utter extinction was threat-

ened. The kind interposition of the English, Dutch, and Swiss governments preserved a few of them.

The once flourishing church of the Palatinate was in like manner reduced very low. Under a catholic elector, and a series of oppressions, it hardly maintained a name among the nations where it had been first in honour. Nor were the other reformed communities exempt from the general declension. Hesse and the rest of the Calvinistic churches in Germany exhibited few or no specimens of life and activity: settling like their neighbours into deadness of profession and formality of devotion.

We may with grief lament the sad decay visible among all the reformed churches towards the expiration of the century. Great inroads made on the purity of the faith, a growing neglect of all holy ordinances, a grievous departure from the spirituality of a heavenly walk, and an almost utter extinction of zeal for promoting the salvation of men's souls; the ministry less evangelical and the people lukewarm. A spirit of infidel philosophy also arose, that tended to sap the vitals of revealed truth, whilst a growing immorality and dissipation produced a contempt of all strictness of religious profession.

There were still vast nations bearing the Christian name, chiefly under governors of the Romish pale, where a great mixture of protestants and others were to be found that classed neither with the Lutheran nor reformed. Of these the Socinians were at the beginning of this century a considerable body in Poland and Transylvania; and thence, as their head quarters, dispatched missionaries to the other parts of Europe; but they proceeded in a line different from the other protestants, not affecting to lead the multitude, by popular discourses, but to gain the great and learned, by professing themselves the advocates for the noble powers of reason, calling it the all-sufficient guide to truth, and its uncontrolled exercise the dignity of human nature.

But the hopes entertained from these ingenious missionaries were not realised. Their university at Racow was dissolved and dispersed by the diet of Poland, for an insult offered by some of the wild students to a crucifix, which so rou-

sed the wrath of the catholics, that the Socinians were banished the kingdom. This edict was executed with the most unchristian severity.

Dispersed and exiled, they fled into different countries, and, after various efforts to obtain an establishment, were viewed with too suspicious an eye to gain any settled resting-place. The denial of Christ's divinity was then regarded as a crime so blasphemous as no Christian state should tolerate: milder maxims have since prevailed: intolerance becomes not the advocates for truth and meekness.

But few communities of Socinians were known out of England. There Biddle had a congregation under Cromwell and Charles II. Nor hath there been wanting a succession of those who have maintained the leading features of their system of doctrines, though not exactly agreed respecting the person of the Son of God. But all concur in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, denying the godhead of Christ, and in renouncing all vicarious satisfaction from the sufferings of a Redeemer.

In the seventeenth century, christian churches were first formed in North America by emigrants from Europe. These have extended and increased astonishingly. They not only provided for the support of the gospel among themselves, but, especially in New England, made considerable exertions for diffusing its benefits among the aborigines. The Revd. Mr. Eliot instructed them with unwearied attention in the principles of the Christian religion, and also taught them husbandry and mechanic arts. His zeal procured for him the title of the apostle of New England. For the use of the Indians he translated the Bible into their language. This was published about the year 1664. In the last half of this century, there were in New England twenty-four congregations, and several hundreds of praying Indians, but these, in common with others of the native tribes, have gradually dwindled away almost to total extinction. Mr. Mayhew and several others laboured industriously and successfully in this heavenly work.

The rights of conscience were here first practically established by government. Lord Baltimore in Maryland, Roger
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Williams in Rhode Island, and William Penn in Pennsylvania, made liberty of conscience and an equality of rights to all sects the basis of their respective governments. A great proportion of the first settlers of the British colonies in North America were driven from their native countries in Europe by cruel persecutions on account of their religion. The Puritans of England, the Hugonots of France, the Palatines of Germany, now found an asylum in the new world. Great numbers of these were friends to the religion of the heart, and members of the true spiritual church. They not only planted but watered vital christianity, by instructing their families and churches in gospel truths, but by walking before them with exemplary purity of life and conversation.

Century XVIII.

Europe was now divided into two great communions, those who adhered to the church of Rome, and those who acquired the name of protestants by their departure from it; the one forming a great and numerous body, under a visible head resident in the ancient metropolis of the Roman empire; the other a body vast and extended also, but in numbers apparently inferior, and neither connected by homogeneous members, nor under a visible chief, yet solidly united in some fundamental principles, which formed a powerful though invisible bond of attraction. Amidst all apparent differences of opinion, this kept them in a state of determined aversion to popery, and placed them in a constant sphere of repulsion from any approach to this great body. The tyranny of Rome, the idolatry and superstitions, too glaring ever to be softened down into any point of contact, made the rent between them for ever irreparable, without some prodigious change in the sentiments and views of the one or of the other. In some particulars the balance vibrated unequally. In point of profound learning, the perfect freedom allowed to enquiry of

every kind, and the general diffusion of knowledge through all protestant countries, gave them vastly the preponderance in the scale. Not but that singular advances were made in the same studies in the catholic countries, and philosophy cultivated with the greatest ardour; but it was confined to a particular number of literati, and too much shackled by the dogmas of popery. It is amazing how much the reading the Scriptures in the mother tongue of every protestant nation, and the freedom of discussion of every subject, has led all ranks of men to a very great comparative superiority over papists in this respect.

On the other hand, a decided inclination of the balance was still on the side of popery. Not only the inveteracy of ancient habits gave a strong impulse to all the monastic orders, who must live on the emoluments of superstition, but the society of Jesuits, instituted on purpose to support the sinking cause of Rome, particularly exerted themselves for that purpose. They displayed an unwearied activity. They stimulated the torpid zeal of Dominicans, Franciscans, and Capuchins, and called them to share in the merit and glory of bringing back the heretical deserters to the fold again, or of enlarging the bounds of popish dominion in heathen and distant lands. On the contrary, the love of protestants was become lukewarm. Secure in their own enjoyments, they sat down in the pursuit of science, commerce, or gain, and too unconcerned about their own souls, entertained very little anxiety about the souls of others. The ministers of the different communions watched over their own flocks, but they too frequently slumbered and slept. Few had zeal to labour extensively. Besides, in the protestant churches, little or no provision being made for the particular purpose of extending the pale of evangelical truth, the papists had an unspeakable advantage. They maintained a host of missionaries in every protestant country for making converts to Rome: always secretly at work, often openly, men of the most insinuating manners, trained up for this very object in the wiles of controversy to undermine the protestant faith, and to place the popish opinions in the most favourable light.

The great weight of influence lay also on the popish side. A thousand allurements and advantages were held out by zealous papists, in order to make converts, while protestants were restrained by their principles from using any other motives than argument and conviction on scriptural grounds. Nor did the idea of any meritorious service stimulate their efforts, whilst every papist gained a proportionate offset for all his own offences, and a fund of merit against the day of judgment, by every convert he made to popery, whatever were the means of conversion. Hence, not only in all the countries under popish governors was every effort used with peculiar advantage to extend the dominion of Rome over the consciences of men, but in the protestant kingdoms continual inroads were made and converts gained from them.

The commencement of this century beheld the church of Rome apparently fixed upon an immoveable basis in Europe, stretching out her arms to the new world, and embracing both the Indies.

Rome, the centre of Italy, looked round with exultation upon all the countries from the Alps to Calabria, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and other isles of the Mediterranean and Adriatic sea, and therein no tongue dared to mutter heretical pravity. The inquisition and the priests had effectually laid the axe to the root of the tree, and left not a trace of protestantism remaining.

Spain and Portugal had exerted equal vigour, and Jesuits and inquisitors ferreted out every lurking hole of heresy. Even the poor Jews were compelled to cross themselves, and to cover their hypocrisy with an apparently great zeal for superstition and the ceremonies of the church.

In France, the popish clergy and dragoons supplied the place of inquisitors. Not a congregation remained of all the flourishing protestant churches which once spread over the bosom of that vast country: their worship interdicted, their marriages declared illegal, and oppression in every shape and form weighing them into the dust of death. Though their numbers, especially in the south of France, were great, they were compelled to hide all profession of their religion. It was death for a protestant minister to exercise his functions,

and imprisonment and confiscation awaited those who attended or concealed him. The despotic Lewis XIV, with his Jesuit confessor and their crew, plotted day and night the utter extinction of the protestant name, and indeed had nearly effected it: and, what is equally to be lamented, these sufferings of the protestants, though they increased their abhorrence of popery, produced no spiritual change for the better. The peculiar doctrines of the reformed had unhappily been debased from primitive purity, by an admixture of the Arminian leaven. Their souls lost the vigour of religion, as their persons became more enslaved by despotism. The amazing increase of popery in France is incalculable; from a third of the kingdom which had been enlightened, there were but few protestants left, and those driven into holes and hiding places.

Whether policy or candour contributed to the change, after the death of Louis XIV the protestants met with milder treatment in France. Their meetings were connived at by the government, and thus, without toleration, nay, in the face of the most tyrannical laws, they assembled, and often in great multitudes.

It is very natural that the protestants, so long and grievously oppressed, should lend a cordial hand to a revolution which must restore them to an equality with their fellow citizens, and that their hatred of Rome should make them rejoice in her fall.

Nothing can be more desolate than the present state of the church in France. On the side of godliness scarcely any appear. If there be any real Christianity remaining, it is concealed: the torrent still runs strong against all religion. On the side of morals, nothing can be more deplorable. A military government and its supporters share the spoils of the crown, the nobles, and ecclesiastics. The churches are deserted and shut up, new play-houses and places of entertainment are opened and crowded. Divorce is allowed on the most frivolous pretexts, and thus the sanctity of marriage destroyed: the dissolution of manners produces no shame when countenanced by general practice and approbation. Republican virtue in France is very different from the stern, austere,

and frugal manners of ancient Rome. The general established and fashionable system evidently is to live without God in the world, and to eat and drink because to-morrow they die.

The sovereigns of the house of Austria persecuted the profession of protestantism. Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, the Low Countries, and all their other fiefs or dependencies, scarcely permitted a protestant to breathe the vital air.

The other countries of popery, particularly the palatinate, though once famous for protestantism, used the same arts and oppressions. Often no help remained for the poor people but to forsake the land of their nativity, and seek an asylum among strangers, and even to transport themselves into the new world, in order to escape the malice of their persecutors.

In the countries where papists and protestants were still mixed, the weight of power, and the wiles of Jesuitism and monkery, bore hard upon the consciences of men, and produced very lamentable effects in the perversion of many from the faith. Thus Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania suffered, and other countries in similar situations, and many converts to popery are said to have enlarged the Romish pale. The same took place in protestant countries, but on a smaller scale.

Poland once subsisted subject to the papal dominion. It hath ceased to be numbered among the nations. The three mighty monarchs of Russia, Austria, and Prussia agreed to divide the whole between them for the good of the people, dethroned the worthy Poniatowski, and parcelled out his dominions according to their several conveniences and contiguity. Religion could be no object of theirs, but eventually the cause of God and truth was benefited by their ambition. Popery no longer possessed the power or revenues which could make it formidable. Each sovereign took what he liked, and only left such a provision for religious worship as his own liberality allowed. Toleration was a necessary consequence. A protestant and a Greek must protect their subjects from the oppressions of popery, and a catholic monarch himself was compelled politically to afford the same indulgence, that he might not lose the protestants or Greeks, who

could so easily have taken refuge with their neighbours and countrymen. Thus "the earth helped the woman." No more money went to Rome, no more dominion could be exerted by her in that country. They who had seized the lands chose themselves to exercise the supremacy. Thus Poland became lost to Rome as a kingdom of its dependence, and the subjects became capable of enjoying more religious liberty than before. In this view we hope that much has been gained by the subjugation of Poland; and that in the great system of true religion, this event may be reckoned among those which are auspicious, as casting down the barriers of papal power and persecution, and opening a freer course for the word of God where it may run and be glorified.

Britain held still in her bosom many popish recusants, and enemies to the protestant faith. In some of her dominions the catholics exceeded the protestants, three, four, or five to one, as in Ireland. Numerous bodies remained in Scotland and England, which, though kept down by laws too severe in many particulars, the lenity of the government scarcely ever put in execution. Hence their worship, though forbidden, was openly maintained; their houses of meeting were as well known as those of other dissenters, and the tolerating spirit universally prevalent, not only protected them from insult, but embraced them with all the civilities of friendly intercourse. The balances were kept pretty nearly even, not so much by any conversions wrought through protestant efforts, as by interested motives. Nobles, in order to possess a hereditary seat in parliament, or the politic and ambitious, to enter the house of commons or the magistracy, from which by the profession of popery they were excluded, occasionally renounced one religion to embrace the other, without any real change of sentiments whatever. Men of no principle embraced that profession of religion which most corresponded with their avarice or ambition. To these causes in protestant countries, the conversions from popery were chiefly to be traced. The case was much the same in Holland and Switzerland.

The progress of popery in Europe, though great, bore a small proportion to the spread of it in distant lands. From

Canada to Louisiana the French had erected an empire that threatened the British colonies, and their numerous emissaries among the Indian tribes had brought many of them to baptism ; and, in order to make them surer tools for their grand monarch, had enlisted them under the banners of Rome.

But the vast foreign empires were those of Portugal and Spain, especially the latter, comprehending the whole continent of America on the Pacific ocean from north to south, at least from California to the extremities of Chili, and on the other side all the immense regions that lie round the bay of Mexico, with the vast and numerous islands, besides the unknown boundless regions to the south. Portugal occupied the Brazils with their dependencies. Both nations were the obsequious votaries of Rome. With inquisitorial watchfulness hosts of Jesuits and friars of every rank and colour took care that not a spark of protestanism should ever enter their dominions, determined to maintain inviolate the catholic faith in these favoured lands. The vast Phillipine islands enjoyed the same advantages, and every where negroes or Indians, slaves or freemen, increased the number of Romish subjects.

China was now filled with missionaries and converts. In the East Indies, especially on the coasts of Malabar, and even to the gulf of Ormus, the zealous missionaries erected their cross, and enlisted a numerous host under their banners. Africa afforded gold, ivory, slaves, and converts. The coasts of Mozambique, and those westward washed by the waves of the Atlantic, heard and received the disciples of Loyola. In all these countries, at the beginning of this century, popery had erected her dominion, and that principally by the means of her Jesuit missionaries.

Amidst all the apparent greatness and glory of Rome, various secret causes were working her destruction. The kings of the earth in a variety of contests had learned the contemptibility of papal anathemas. The reformation had generally produced this benefit, that the popish monarchs were become less submissive and more decisive. Though they continued to kiss the feet of the pontiff, and profess the

most devoted reverence for his person, they made no scruple to despise the mandates issued by him : making a difference between the pope and the papal see.

The sharp disputes which reigned between the members of the church, Jesuits and Dominicans, Jesuits and Jansenists, contributed greatly, by the writings on both sides, to open men's eyes, and to lead them to the exercise of their own understanding in the matters disputed. The jealousy of the monkish tribes backed the bitter accusations against the Jesuits respecting their foreign missions. China, by these disputes, became subject to different decisions ; sometimes the pontiff's mandates were obeyed, sometimes the Jesuits resisted. The issue was the expulsion of all the missionaries.

Their bitter persecution of the Jansenists awakened a return of enmity. Thus there was roused up a spirit of resentment against these Jesuitical persecutors, that only waited the moment of vengeance.

The famous book of Quesnel which produced the bull "Unigenitus," so called from the word with which it begins, deserves attention, as probably to this eventually the fall of this society may be traced. Into this book were elegantly introduced the principles for which Jansenius had been already condemned ; and the style was so pleasing that it was read with the greatest delight. The eagle eyes of the Jesuits had seen through the design of Quesnel, to give weight and consequence to their Jansenist enemies whom they wished to crush. Their cries therefore of heresy surrounded the pontiff, and though the book was before so excellent, they extracted from it and condemned one hundred and one propositions as heretical, or of heretical tendency. This bull kindled the flames of contention in France. A vast number had read and approved the work of father Quesnel, and could discover nothing like heresy in it. The moderate papists, who were not Jansenists, were highly offended to see those doctrines of predestination and grace so peremptorily condemned as heresy, which the fathers, St. Augustine, and the church had been supposed to hold as orthodox.

The dispute was long and sharp in France. The Jesuits carried the day. It became the law of the land : you

must subscribe the bull *Unigenitus*, or have no sacraments. Oppressions, banishments, excommunications followed. The Jansenists laid open the moral system of the Jesuits, and stamped it with deserved infamy. They awakened the attention of the popish powers to their political conduct and designs. They charged them with erecting in Paraguay an independent sovereignty, and that, under pretence of preserving their converts from the contaminating examples of Portuguese and Spaniards, the Jesuits had excluded the Jansenists from entering within the limits of their missions. The mercantile transactions of the Jesuits excited the jealousy of the commercial world. Under the cloak of piety and conversions, they endeavoured to monopolize the trade of the country which they had reduced to their obedience. The gain of the merchant as well as the authority of the monarch thus trenched upon, raised a host of irritated and powerful opponents. Suspicious connexions with those who attempted to assassinate the king of Portugal, and open resistance to the Spanish and Portuguese forces on fixing the limits of their several settlements in South America, issued in their complete destruction. By a sudden and unexpected stroke, without consulting Rome, the catholic princes conspired their ruin, and they were all seized and banished in the same moment from Spain, Portugal, and France; brought home by ship loads from all the foreign dominions of these powers, and sent to Rome, now unable to defend them. After some time, the concurrent demands of the popish monarchs compelled the reluctant pontiff Ganganeli to dissolve the society in 1773.

The great barrier was now broken down which held the consciences of men enslaved to the Roman see, and freer scope was given to the prevailing philosophy to lift up its head with confidence.

Of all the causes which have contributed to the humiliation of Rome, none so effectually operated as the prevailing tenets of infidelity, which diffused themselves among all the literati of the Romish church. The progress was silent but wide. Rousseau, D'Alembert, Helvetius, and Voltaire contributed to charge the mine and lay the train, which, when

kindled, could not fail to overturn all the trumpery of popery, and to raise a spirit threatening a universal revolution in society. The superior orders of the Romish clergy themselves, having drank into this philosophical spirit, made no vigorous efforts to suppress its progress, and little apprehended the fatal consequences to themselves to which it was imperceptibly leading. The life of dissipation which prevailed, contrary to every precept of the gospel, also prepared willing disciples for infidel principles. It was abundantly easier and more rational to suppose that there was nothing after death, and thus to quiet every uneasy apprehension, than to receive the absurdities of purgatory, and be at the pains of penance, or submit to the purchase of indulgences.

The priests themselves began to blush at their own tricks, and all the men of intelligence would cordially have wished to get rid of them; but they feared the people, whose credulity required imposition. So they tolerated the prevailing superstitions, to avoid what they regarded as the greater evil, the acknowledging papal fallibility, the loosening the pontifical dominion, and emboldening the prying eye of curiosity to look into its abuses.

Owing to these and a variety of other causes, the papal throne sank in its revenues as in its authority: little flowed into its coffers. One kingdom after another stopped the fatal drain which had poured from every land the wealth of nations into that gulph.

But the most powerful causes of the humiliation of papal power have arisen from the ambitious rulers of France, who, overturning every ancient establishment at home, abolishing the convents, shutting up the churches, banishing or murdering all the ecclesiastics who refused to bow to their dictates, they burst as a torrent on the neighbouring nations, every where desolating the Romish church, and sweeping away its trumpery, melting down the silver saints and their shrines, casting the bells into cannon, and converting the churches and convents into barracks or work shops. Thus suddenly all the immense wealth of the clergy dissolved as snow before the sun. The whole ecclesiastical property seized, sold, and dissipated, religion was left to take care of it-

self. The bigoted country of the Netherlands has shared the same fate with Savoy, the sad scenes of former bloody persecutions. Germany dismembered, Switzerland subjugated, and all Italy plundered from Milan to Naples, and crumbled into pieces under the fleeting name of republics. Kings hurled from their thrones, the pope himself a prisoner, and Rome reduced to be an inconsiderable appendage to the vaunted great nation.

On the whole, from this review of the Romish church, it evidently appears, that the cause of God and truth has wonderfully advanced in the general scale of the nations owning subjection to, or rather in union with Rome. Her power is weakened, her riches dissipated, and her subjects diminished.

The state of the Moravian church in the present century forms a prominent feature in its history. The church of the brethren, in the beginning of the century, overwhelmed by the persecutions of popery in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia had nearly disappeared: but few men were left, and they of little estimation, and no where could they find rest or establishment. In this extremity three or four poor families migrated from Moravia into upper Lusatia, in search of some sequestered corner of the earth, where, hid from popish persecution, they might worship God in peace and purity. At the village of Berthelsdorf, belonging to the well-known count Zinzendorff, they met a hospitable reception. The count, on being informed of the arrival of the emigrants, gave orders to encourage them. They were assisted to build cottages for their families, and some uncultivated lands were allotted to them, which their industry soon rendered productive.

The count had been educated at the University of Halle, and was distinguished for his piety. The manners of the refugees were so congenial with his own as to engage his fostering affection: this drew others of the same fraternity to join their brethren, and a new village arose, called Hernhuth, the cradle of the reviving church of the Moravians.

Under the patronage of count Zinzendorff, the infant colo-

ny continued to prosper, and spread its branches through Germany, Denmark, Holland, England, and America.

They have houses where they live together in community. The single men and single women, widows and widowers, apart, each under the superintendence of elderly persons of their own class. In these houses, every person who is able, and has not an independent support, labours in his own occupation, and contributes a stipulated sum for his maintenance.

The children of each sex are educated with peculiar care by brethren and sisters appointed for that service : their object is to preserve them from the corruption that is in the world, and to prevent as much as possible the knowledge of evil from ever reaching their eyes or ears. Trained up under discipline from their tenderest years, their subjection to their superiors and elders is singular, and appears particularly striking in their missions and marriages.

In the former, those who have offered themselves for the service, and are approved as candidates, wait their several calls, referring themselves entirely to the decision of the lot, and never hesitate when that hath decided the place of their destination.

In marriage, they may only form a connection with those of their own communion. A brother may make his own choice of a partner in the society ; but as all intercourse between the different sexes is carefully avoided, very few opportunities of forming particular attachments are found, and they usually rather refer their choice to the church than decide for themselves. And, as the lot must be cast to sanction their union, each receives his partner as a divine appointment : and, however strange this method may appear to those who consult only their passions or their interest, it is observable that few unhappy marriages are found among the brethren.

This frequent appeal to the lot seems the peculiar characteristic of the Moravian church. The missionary zeal of these brethren is unparalleled. In this century they have successfully made twenty-six different missions, besides a va-

riety of attempts made in other places, which by providential hindrances were defeated.

The Danish islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix have by their ministry received the light of the gospel, and that especially among the most pitiable and oppressed of human beings, the negro slaves. To them their labours have been singularly blessed.

In as abundant a manner also have their efforts been crowned with success in the English islands of Jamaica, Antigua, Nevis, Barbadoes, and St. Kitt's, where many thousands of the blacks have been called by their preaching and conversation to love and worship God in spirit and in truth.

The Greenland and Labradore congregations formed by them afford objects of wonder, delight, and thankfulness. Even in these inhospitable climes, and amidst those savage manners, the power of the gospel is become more eminently displayed.

The Arrowack Indians, and the negroes at Surinam and Berbice, have been collected into bodies of faithful people by the brethren's patience and perseverance.

Canada and the United States of North America furnish happy evidences of the powerful word of a crucified Jesus, among the wild and copper-coloured wanderers in the forests and boundless plains of that vast continent.

Even those who are esteemed the last of human beings in brutishness and ignorance, the Hottentots, have owned the crucified man on Calvary for their God and Saviour, have been formed into Christian societies, and upwards of seven hundred are said to be now worshipping him with their faithful pastors near the Cape of Good Hope, and living under their tuition and in their happy communion.

In all these various regions no less than a hundred and forty missionaries are now employed, besides the host who have counted not their lives dear unto themselves, and died in the arduous service. These in general support themselves, and work by the assiduous labour of their own hands in their several arts and occupations; and, like the apostle Paul, toil day and night that they may require nothing from the heathen, and have to give to him that needeth.

By the persevering zeal of these men of God, upwards of twenty-three thousand of the most destitute of mankind in different regions of the earth adorn the doctrine of Jesus by a conversation such as becometh godliness.

Their efforts to illumine the distant east, the coast of Coromandel, and the Nicobar Islands with the light of the sun of righteousness; their attempts to penetrate into Abyssinia, to carry the gospel to Persia and Egypt, and to ascend the mountains of Caucasus, have been great; and to all these regions, and many others, hath love for immortal souls carried these indefatigable missionaries.

How so small a body as the Moravian church is equal to such exertions, and capable of providing so many missionaries, and furnishing an expence so necessarily great, is surprising. The whole number of their members in Europe, it is said, does not exceed twelve thousand brethren, of whom about three thousand are in Great Britain and Ireland, and these not in general the most opulent or high in any mercantile line. But their liberality aboundeth; and it is pleasing to remark the support which their missions receive from the cordial affection of Christian brethren of all denominations. The good providence of God continues to raise up for them new helpers, and to furnish annual supplies for the support of so noble an undertaking.

They have demonstrated the practicability of establishing the everlasting gospel in regions the most dreary and inhospitable, and among nations the most rude and ferocious.

This revival of religion among the Moravians has produced the most happy effects at home, as well as among the heathen. Many of their Lutheran and reformed brethren have greatly profited by their fraternal intercourse, without connecting themselves in their church order. A spirit of more animated Christianity has been revived in Germany and its vicinity. They have formed a large association of ministers, from the frozen hills of Norway to the Carpathian mountains, who assemble annually at Hernhutt, in Lusatia, and those who cannot attend communicate with their brethren by letters. These all endeavour to strengthen each other's hands in the work of the Lord, without distinction of Lu-

theran or Calvinist. They are growing into a host, and though not many in any one country, yet, when collected, form a glorious body of confessors, whose light cannot but shine before men, and whose zealous labours tend to revive true Christianity.

Some other missionary efforts within the Lutheran pale deserve mention. The Danish government started among the first, and have been successful in this glorious career. Their ministers visited Greenland with the gospel, and their mission to the coast of Malabar commenced early in this century. It hath been pursued with unwearied zeal, and God hath crowned the labours with singular tokens of his approbation.

The nations who maintain the Lutheran faith are the same as from the beginning of the reformation. Various changes have happened in the several kingdoms, but none in their religious profession. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holstein, and all the coasts of the Baltic to the Vistula, chiefly continue within this pale. Saxony, with the other states who first embraced this doctrine, hath steadily persevered in the same confession of faith to this day. It is singular, however, that the two great original pillars of Lutheranism have gone back to the Romish church. The elector of Saxony bartered his religion for the crown of Poland, and the prince of Hesse, not long ago, for other considerations. Yet this made no change in the government of their countries, which preserved their faith inviolate. A power, hardly known in the commencement of the century, has spread from Brandenburg his vast acquisitions on every side, and is become in Germany nominally the head of the protestant cause. In point of personal religion, it would be superfluous to say any thing of Frederick the Great, or his successors; nevertheless, the monarch who extends and supports religious toleration on the broadest basis, whether heathen or philosopher, may be owned as the church's nursing father. The true church asks no support but peace and tolerance.

Thus departed as the body of the Lutheran church is from the tenets of their great reformer, a precious seed is still preserved in the midst of her, through all the land of her com-

munion. The word of God is in every hand. The formula of doctrine and worship is sound, and those only are to be blamed who depart from the purity of the one and the spirituality of the other.

A noble attempt to evangelize the islands in the vast Pacific Ocean hath recently been made, by a society formed by ministers and others of all denominations, who, agreeing to merge their several peculiarities in the one sacred name of Christian, have united, without preference of churches or party, to send forth faithful men to preach and teach Jesus Christ among the heathen. By the liberal contributions of individuals, who have formed the London Missionary Society, a sum of twelve thousand pounds was expended in the purchase of a large vessel of three hundred tons, conveying thirty missionaries, with five sisters, wives to the brethren, and two little children, furnished with every thing needful for one or two settlements, and to secure them a favourable reception among the natives.

After a course of many thousand miles, the whole body of missionaries was landed in the places of their several destination, at Otaheite, at Tongataboo, and the Marquesas, in perfect health, and the ship returned by Canton with a cargo of tea into the port of London in about one and twenty months, and brought back every seaman in as good health as she had received them. Not an individual was lost on the passage; no disease ever visited the crew; nor was the least want of any comfort felt during the whole of the voyage.

Encouraged by so promising a beginning, a second equipment was immediately begun. Thirty-nine brethren and sisters, with seven children, cheerfully entered on the service. But they were captured by a French privateer as they were entering the harbour of Rio Janeiro, and have since returned home.

Whatever the final event may be of these endeavours to evangelize the heathen world, the attempt is glorious. It is now demonstrated that a mission to these distant and desirable lands is practicable, is easy, and the means within the power of individuals.

This society has not confined its views to one region of the heathen world. They have wished to embrace the habitable globe as far as their means shall be found adequate to their desires. Africa, the seat of servitude, the region of darkness, and the most unexplored of all the continents, has especially attracted the attention of the society. Their first efforts were directed, through the colony of Sierra Leone, to penetrate into the Foulah country, and communicate the blessings of the gospel to the interior. Their efforts, as well as some made before by the Westleyan methodists, and the baptists, with similar views, have hitherto been without any considerable effect.

A mission to the Cape of Good Hope, and the country of the Caffres and Boshemen, which lies in a more genial climate, has commenced with more auspicious prospects, and for which Divine Providence has provided suitable instruments in Dr. Vanderkemp and his associates.

Dr. Vanderkemp was a Hollander; a man of talents and improved understanding, about fifty years of age. He had been bred a physician, and spoke the English, French, and Latin languages. A singular affliction in his family, occasioned by the sudden death of his wife and child, engaged him more deeply and seriously to consider his ways. This led him to a careful reperusal of the word of God, and the happy effect was a solid conviction of revealed truth, and real conversion of his heart to God.

He resolved henceforward to devote himself wholly to Christ, and to the service of men's souls, and his heart was particularly led out to desire to communicate the knowledge of salvation to the poor heathen, whom none had cared for. He was for some time in this state of mind, without a determined object, till he read of the rise and progress of the London Missionary Society. He immediately communicated to them the desire of his soul to devote himself to the service of the heathen. After proper enquiries into his character and abilities, his offer was embraced with great delight, and he was invited to England, where the interview issued in the most cordial welcome of his services. His native lan-

guage fitting him peculiarly for the Cape of Good Hope and its vicinity, that was fixed as the place of his destination.

On his return to Holland, he took with him and circulated in Dutch an address from the London Missionary Society to the faithful in his own country. This immediately produced the happiest effects. During his stay a society was formed at Rotterdam, on the same plan with that of London. A Dutch minister was sent by them; to these were joined two English missionaries, and they all embarked in one of the English convict ships. Their diligence and zeal produced such happy effects among the convicts, as prove the power of the gospel to be great, even on the most obdurate of mankind.

The labours of these missionaries at the Cape have been also useful. They appropriated four evenings in a week to the instruction of the slaves, who attended them in great numbers. But the most pleasing trait attending this mission is the earnest application from the most savage of all the tribes, the Boshemen, to obtain one of the brethren to teach them the knowledge of the true God.

A missionary society instituted at the Cape, under the title of the South African Missionary Society, is the first fruit of these exertions. Its commencement is most auspicious and the subscription considerable, one lady having given fifteen thousand florins. These are the actual efforts which have been made, and still greater are in the intention of the society, for which adequate preparations are making.

In the commencement of this century, the church in Great Britain was chiefly governed and filled by divines whose sermons and writings were learned, able, and ingenious, but rarely presenting the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel. Through the moralists in the pulpit, and the deists in the press, Christianity was reduced to a very emaciated figure. Even the dissenters, who affected greater purity of religion, sank into a worldly careless spirit, and several of them diverged into the errors of Arianism.

The rising prosperity of the nation, with increasing wealth and commerce, tended to increase the corruption of the kingdom; and morals, though strongly inculcated, woefully

decayed. In this state of torpor and departure from truth and godliness, a few, chiefly young men at Oxford, began to feel the deplorable spiritual ignorance and corruption around them. They were conscious something ought to be done to revive a sense of religion in principle and practice, from the decay into which it was fallen.

John and Charles Wesley, the first and most distinguished leaders in this revival of evangelical truth, were brothers. With these associated a number of other students, whose minds were similarly affected. Mr. Ingham, Mr. Whiffield, and Mr. Harvey, were afterwards particularly distinguished. They all entered into solemn engagements with each other to lead a stricter life of holiness and self-denial than they had ever yet done, and to separate from every thing unbecoming their character. They agreed to meet frequently together at each others rooms, for prayer and reading the Scriptures; to keep stated times of fasting, and to receive the communion every Lord's Day. They visited the prisons and the sick; they sought out and relieved distressed objects; and, by these and other peculiarities, they rendered themselves very notorious in the university, and acquired the name of methodists.

As they all set out with profession of strict adherence to the church of England, the distinguishing tenets of her articles and homilies were particularly enforced by them; and, as this was utterly unlike the manner of preaching which then chiefly obtained, they attracted very numerous audiences, and their lively manner of address, as well as the matter of their discourses, exceedingly struck the hearers.

The multitudes which followed them were much affected; a great and visible change was produced in the minds of many. They were always at their work, preaching wherever they could procure admittance into the churches.

At first they appeared united in sentiment, but they had not long laboured before it was evident that they differed in important points. Mr. Wesley, the father of methodism, with his brother, leaned to the Arminian doctrine; strong against irrelative decrees, but firmly maintaining the fall and its consequences, the necessity of justification by faith

alone, and the operations of the Holy Ghost to produce all righteousness and true holiness ; but they taught the universality of Christ's redemption, and the offering of his body alike for those who are lost as for those who are saved ; and in point of free will, they supposed, though still as a gift of grace, that every man had some powers of will within the sphere of his own exertion, which first led to conversion ; that the benefits of Christ's redemption extended to those who had never heard of his name ; that, by improving the measure of light and grace within him, every man might be saved ; but that no man could be sure of persevering in grace ; and that, notwithstanding what Christ has done and suffered, all might reject the remedy provided, and perish eternally.

Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Hervey, and those who united with them in sentiment, held the articles of the church in the sense usually termed Calvinistic. Though in age Mr. Whitfield was younger than the Wesleys, in zeal and labours he had no superior. His amazing exertions are well known, and the effects of them were prodigious through the whole land. He confined not his ministry to his native land. Scotland and America enjoyed the benefit of his visits, and furnished innumerable evidences of the power with which he spake. By the labours of these indefatigable men a flood of gospel light broke upon the nation. At first they were wholly confined to the church of England, as their attachment to it by education was strong. The churches being inadequate to contain the crowds which flocked after them, Mr. Whitfield resolved to visit and preach to the wild colliers in the wood, who had seldom attended any worship ; and his signal success among them encouraged him to persevere in the same mode. On his return to London, he used the same means of field preaching at Kennington Common and Moorfields.

Nor were Mr. John Wesley and his brother Charles less zealously employed. They also took the field and preached every where. The congregations under the canopy of heaven were prodigious. By these labours multitudes were daily added to the church.

Hitherto the principal leaders had maintained apparent fellowship, but the difference of their sentiments respecting the doctrines of predestination and grace began to awaken unpleasant disputes. Yet the corruption of human nature, justification by faith alone, and the necessity of a divine change of heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, were professed and zealously taught by both; nor did the division which followed between them retard the progress of the work. Unable to supply the numberless places and congregations collected by their labours with a regularly ordained ministry, they each associated with lay preachers the best informed and qualified whom they could find, and thus multiplied themselves over the face of the whole land. Their societies increased by thousands, and their ministry was blessed to the great revival of religion wherever they itinerated.

This immense body of methodists, from the difference of doctrines each maintained respecting the decrees of God and free will, necessarily divided into two separate communions, the Calvinistic and Arminian: both of them professed predilection to the church, and not at all objecting to episcopal government, but from the necessity of supplying the congregations which they had collected, Wesley and Whitfield appointed for their spiritual edification local and itinerant preachers: themselves continuing the apostolic plan of itinerancy, and visiting in rotation the churches which their ministry had raised. They repeatedly travelled over a space more than the circumference of the globe, wherever they moved leaving a train of evangelical light behind them. They were, in preaching, unwearied; lecturing two, three, and sometimes four times a day, and this often in places many miles distant from each other. Notice having been previously given of their coming, thousands awaited and heard them with reverence. Thus immense congregations were formed through all parts of the kingdom, especially in the great manufacturing towns, among the tin mines and the collieries. The aggregate amount of auditors in the kingdom must have been several hundred thousand. All these continued occasionally to communicate with the church of England, but their modes of pro-

cedure being charged as irregular, they had every discouragement from the heads of the church, and no hope of a settlement in it. Hence, having erected places of worship of their own, they by degrees became more seldom occasional communicants in their parish churches, and confined themselves to their own ministers and places of worship. Yet for a long while they were very reluctant to appear to separate from the church established, and to this day the great body is episcopalian.

At the time the methodists arose, all the various denominations of dissenters from the established church had suffered a great decline from evangelical principles and real godliness. But many being awakened and revived by the labours of the itinerant evangelists, especially those of Mr. Whitfield, a spirit of renewed godliness returned in several congregations, and their stated pastors were roused to greater zeal and activity. The dissenters thus evidently profited by the flame originally kindled by the ministers bred in the established church.

These itinerant preachers were men of lively and popular talents, and were often endued with great eloquence. They were in general men of good natural understanding, well read in the scriptures of their mother tongue, the chief book indeed which they studied. They were experimentally acquainted with the great and fundamental truths of religion; they possessed a natural faculty of elocution, increased by the habit of frequent preaching; and they appeared deeply affected with the truths which they delivered, and as exemplary in their walk and conversation as laborious in the work of the ministry.

Whilst Wesley and Whitfield were thus proceeding with increasing zeal in their several spheres of usefulness, the great head of the church was pleased to raise up another singular personage, who contributed exceedingly to enlarge the pale of what was called methodism.

Lady Huntingdon had lived in the highest circle of fashion, by birth a daughter of the house of Shirley, by marriage united with the earl of Huntingdon, both bearing the royal arms of England, as descendants from her ancient monarchs.

In her high estate she maintained a peculiar seriousness of conduct. Though sometimes at court, and visiting in the higher circles, she took no pleasure in the fashionable follies of the great. After her recovery from a dangerous illness, which brought her to the brink of the grave, she determined thenceforward to devote herself to the service of the Redeemer, and sent a kind message to the Wesleys, that she was one with them in heart, cordially wishing them good speed in the name of the Lord, and assuring them of her determined purpose of living for him who had died for her.

The change thus wrought on her ladyship became observable to all in the zealous support she began to give to the work of God, amidst all the reproach with which it was attended. To the noble circle in which lady Huntingdon moved such conduct appeared strange, but she had set her face as a flint, and refused to be ashamed of Christ and his cross.

Lady Huntingdon now resolved to her best ability to lay herself out to do good. The poor around her were the natural objects of her attention. These she bountifully relieved in their necessities, visited in sickness, conversed with and led them to their knees, praying with them and for them.

During lord Huntingdon's life, she warmly espoused the cause of God and truth, though her means of usefulness were necessarily circumscribed, and her family engagements occupied much of her time and attention. On his demise she was left the entire management of her children, and of their fortunes, which she improved with the greatest fidelity. Become her own mistress, she resolved to devote herself wholly to the service of Christ, and the souls redeemed by his blood. Her zealous heart embraced cordially all whom she esteemed real Christians, whatever their denomination or opinions might be, but being herself in sentiment more congenial with Whitfield than the Wesleys, she favoured those especially who were the ministers of the Calvinistic persuasion, according to the literal sense of the articles of the church of England. And, with an intention of giving them a greater scene of usefulness, she opened her house in Park street for the preaching of the gospel, supposing, as a peeress of the realm, that she had an indisputable right to employ as her

family chaplains those ministers of the church whom she patronised. On the week days her kitchen was filled with the poor of the flock, for whom she provided instruction, and on the Lord's day the great and noble were invited to spend the evening in her drawing-room, where Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Romaine, Mr. Jones, and other ministers of Christ addressed them.

The illness of her younger son, which proved fatal, had led her to Brighthelmstone for the sake of sea-bathing. There her active spirit having produced some awakening among the people, she erected a little chapel contiguous to her house, that the gospel might be preached to them. This was the first fruits of her great increase: it was enlarged, and that not sufficing to contain the congregation, it was a third time taken down and rebuilt. The success attending this first effort encouraged greater. Bath, the resort of fashion, beheld an elegant and commodious place of worship raised by the same liberal hand. Oathall, Breby, and various other places received the gospel by her means. At first she confined herself to the ministers of the established church as her preachers, but her zeal enlarging with her success, and a great variety of persons throughout the kingdom begging her assistance, she set up the standard of the gospel, and purchased, built, or hired chapels vast and commodious for the performance of divine service. These multiplied so exceedingly through England, Ireland, and Wales, that the ministers who had before laboured for her ladyship were unequal to the task. As the work greatly enlarged, it was beyond her power to supply the chapels with regular ministers. Lady Huntingdon therefore resolved to employ the same methods as Wesley and Whitfield had pursued with so much success before. She accordingly invited laymen of piety and abilities to exhort and keep up the congregations she had established.

In order to provide proper persons for the work, she retired into Wales, where she erected a college for training up young men to the ministry. Thence she dispatched the requisite supplies for the increased congregations under her patronage, and, as the calls were often urgent, her students

were too frequently thrust forth into the harvest before they had made any considerable proficiency in the languages or sacred literature, in which it had been her intention they should be instructed. Few of them knew much more than their native tongue, yet, being men of strong sense and real devotedness to God, their ministry was greatly blessed. The accounts of their success animated her to greater exertions. They were itinerant; moved from congregation to congregation in an established rotation; and her correspondence with them to regulate and provide a constant supply, was a labour to which her active spirit alone was equal.

Though Lady Huntingdon devoted the whole of her substance to the gospel, yet it is not a little surprising how her income sufficed for the immensity of expence in which she was necessarily involved. Her jointure was no more than twelve hundred pounds a year, and not until the death of her son a few years preceding her own, did she receive the addition of another thousand. She often involved herself in expences for building chapels which she found it burthensome to discharge. But the Lord brought her always honourably through her engagements, and provided a supply when her own was exhausted.

To the age of fourscore and upwards she maintained all the vigour of youth, and her spirits never seemed to fail her, and to the very last days of her life her active mind was planning still greater and more extensive schemes of usefulness, for the universal spread of the gospel of Christ.

Lady Huntingdon's address was singularly engaging, her intelligence acute, her diligence indefatigable, and the constant labour of her thoughts and correspondence inconceivable. Never was any one apparently more dead to all self-indulgence; or more liberally disposed to supply the calls of the gospel. She often possessed no more than the gown she wore. She might be said to be one of the poor who lived on her own bounty, but her most distinguishing excellence was the fervent zeal which always burned in her bosom to diffuse the knowledge of gospel truth, which no disappointments quenched, no labours slackened, no opposition discouraged, no progress of years abated: it flamed strongest in her last

moments. The world has seldom seen such a character ; thousands and tens of thousands will have reason living and dying to bless her memory, as having been the happy instrument of bringing them out of darkness into marvellous light.

At her death lady Huntingdon left her chapels to trustees and executors for the continuance of the same plan, which they have pursued with some measure of the same disinterested zeal, and with increasing success. Not less than one hundred thousand persons continue to have the gospel preached to them by their means. The same steps are pursued in England, Wales, and Ireland.

The seminary in Wales ceased at her ladyship's death, the lease being just expired, and no endowment left, her income dying with her : but a new college, on a plan more promising for literature, has been established at Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire, near London, and under the superintending care of trustees appointed for that purpose. A number of students have been already educated there, and many are gone forth from this seminary, who are now preaching the gospel with much acceptance. Into this seminary none are admitted but after strict inquiry of their characters, and repeated examinations into their Christian experience and natural abilities. They are expected to give the most satisfactory account of their own real conversion to God, and of the reasons which engage them to devote themselves to the ministry. They must appear possessed of acute, or at least, of promising faculties for improvement. As the greatest attention is paid to their education, and the disposition with which they are admitted secures the most unremitting application to study, their improvement hath been hitherto remarkably rapid.

This institution promises the greatest utility. The education and maintenance of the students is entirely free : and at the expiration of the term of their studies, when they have been examined and judged fit to proceed to the ministry, they are under no restrictions, but may apply for admission into the established church, or any other denomination of Christians. If Christ be but preached, the end of the seminary is answered..

The body of Arminian methodists, who derive their name and order from Mr. Wesley, pursue the plan laid down by him. During his life, such was his personal influence, that it rendered his recommendations the general rule of their society, so that all his people looked up to him as their president and director. His time was spent in one continued voyage or journey, visiting regularly every society in the vast circle of his connection, and usually preaching every day, and frequently twice or thrice. He accustomed all his congregations to his plan of itinerancy, and a frequent change of ministers. A general conference annually fixed the stations of the preachers, and settled two or three within a certain district, round which they moved in the course of a fortnight or three weeks, generally preaching somewhere every evening, and holding societies for prayer and mutual exhortation. All who joined in these contributed a small sum weekly for the support of the general work. This was regularly accounted for by stewards appointed for that purpose. Provision was thus made for the maintenance of the preachers, according to the number of their families or occasional necessities. The profits arising from publications circulated from a press of their own very considerably increased the fund for the support of their cause. Sometimes the stay of the preachers in their rounds is continued for more than one year, but this is fixed at the general conference. The same steps have been pursued since Mr. Wesley's death. Their zeal, their activity, and usefulness continue undiminished, and the impulse given to this great machine is continued in the same line of direction by those who sit in the annual conference. For some time past they have had an ordination among themselves, by bishops of their own selection from among their most distinguished preachers.

The followers of Mr. Whitfield are in the aggregate a body nearly as numerous as the former, but not so compact and united. Their principles being Calvinistic, recommended them especially to the various denominations of dissenters, and to those of the reformed religion. A great number of these joined Mr. Whitfield, as well as multitudes who left the established church. These were formed into congrega-

tions in different places, who, though considering themselves as one body, have not the same union and interchange as the followers of Mr. Wesley. The first and principal of the churches at Tottenham court observes the church ceremonial and liturgy, the others use in general free prayer. Yet these consider themselves not as distinct independent churches, but formed under a federal connexion, and some of these have no stated pastor, but are supplied by a rotation of ministers. They have an ordination among themselves, and where there is a stationary ministry they still hold connexion with each other, and come up as invited or called upon to the greater congregations for a fixed space, according to an appointed routine. All these places of worship are supported, not like Mr. Wesley's, by a general fund, but the expences of the meeting and salaries of ministers are provided for by the several congregations, and collected and expended in each by stewards chosen out of the principal people. The great chapels in London are managed by trustees, who were first appointed by Mr. Whitfield himself, and on their several demises the survivors have most faithfully and disinterestedly devolved the trust on others. So far from diminishing since Mr. Whitfield's death, the numbers who have joined them are greatly increased. No where is the life of godliness more apparently preserved. The body is not governed by a general conference, nor the work supported by a common stock: each congregation provides for its own expences, but the richer congregations are always ready to assist the poorer in building or enlarging places of worship, and in helping a recent and weaker society till they become sufficiently numerous, and able to defray their own expences. As the countess of Huntingdon left all her numerous chapels in the hands of devisees, they pursued exactly the same method of procedure as she did.

Such has been the progress of what is called methodism, in the greater bodies that more immediately bear that name: but it hath spread in a prodigious manner both among those of the church as well as the dissenters from it, and has been the means of rekindling the zeal of very many, so as to pro-

duce a vast alteration for the better in the conduct of thousands.

It is a pleasing feature of the present day, that the spirit of toleration and candour appears of late more diffused, and persecution discountenanced, though not utterly discontinued. During the first struggles of methodism, many harsh and severe measures were taken, but of late they have almost wholly slept, and those who were formerly despised and hated, at present are more respected by their brethren. Their numbers have given them consequence in the national scale.

The orthodox dissenters maintain a respectable profession. The Arian and Socinian congregations, which a few men of learning and philosophic attainments sought to support, have dwindled almost to nothing, and the only large and zealous bodies are those in which the ancient reformed doctrines are vigorously maintained.

The London Missionary Society, already mentioned as instituted to send the gospel among the heathen, has produced happy effects. An endeared union and cordiality hath been by means thereof restored among the various denominations of Christians. They have agreed to sacrifice prejudices and bigotry on the altar of Christian love. English and Scots, episcopalians and presbyterians, methodists and independents, have united in the great object of missions to heathen countries, and solemnly pledged themselves to each other that neither politics nor different peculiarities shall mingle with gospel truth, but that all who go on this self-denying service shall have but one injunction, to preach and teach Jesus Christ in primitive simplicity, prescribing no exclusive church order, or form of discipline.

John Wesley was of the inferior size ; his visage marked with intelligence. His understanding, naturally excellent and acute, was highly stored with the attainments of literature : and he possessed a fund of anecdote and history that rendered his company as entertaining as instructive. His mode of address in public was chaste and solemn, though not illumined with those flashes of eloquence which marked the

discourses of George Whitfield, but there was a divine simplicity, a zeal, a venerableness in his manner, which commanded attention, and never forsook him in his latest years. At fourscore he retained all the freshness of vigorous old age. His health was remarkably preserved amidst a scene of labour and perpetual exertions of mind and body, to which few would have been equal. Never man possessed greater personal influence over the people connected with him. This was acquired and could only be maintained by the fullest conviction impressed on his people, that he was an eminently favoured servant of God, and as distinguished for his holy walk as for his vast abilities, indefatigable labour, and singular usefulness.

Never was a more disinterested character ; but he was a man, and he must have been more than man, if, with the consciousness of his own powers, the divine blessing on his labours, and the high admiration in which he was held by his followers, he had not sometimes thought of himself more highly than he ought to think.

George Whitfield was the son of an innkeeper at Gloucester. From his early youth he had received deep impressions of religion, and he carried with him to the university of Oxford a seriousness of mind very uncommon. He began his active career even before he was in orders, visiting the prisons, and instructing the poor. Bishop Benson was so delighted with his early piety, that he ordained him at the age of twenty-one. His person was manly, and grew large as he advanced in years ; his voice remarkably musical, and capable of the most various modulations, with a natural eloquence too singular not to command the most profound attention. His manner was often highly graceful and oratorical. No man ever possessed a greater command of the human passions, or better knew the way to the hearts and consciences of his hearers : he had arrows in his quiver that himself only knew how to use. His literary attainments were moderate, though not defective in the learned languages, but his thorough acquaintance with the scripture, and a peculiar art of introducing and illustrating every subject he treated, not only won the ear to listen, but left an impression on the

mind never to be effaced. His labours in both hemispheres were immense, his courage undaunted, his zeal unquenchable. Perhaps no man, since the days of St. Paul, not even Luther himself, was ever personally blest to the conversion of so many souls from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, as George Whitfield. The immense collections he made for charitable purposes sharpened the tongue of slander. Time hath affixed the seal of integrity to all his pecuniary transactions. He had his spots, and so has the sun. He would have himself acknowledged many more than the nearest of his friends or the bitterest of his enemies could discover.

In his preaching he sometimes pushed the ludicrous to the degradation of the dignity of the sacred ministry. He told a story so well, that it seduced him occasionally to pursue a vein of humour more suited to excite risibility than to awaken seriousness, though some impressive reflection always closed the narrative.

After more than thirty years of incessant labour, he entered into his rest in New England, which had peculiarly benefited by his visits. He had crossed the Atlantic thirteen times to preach the everlasting gospel. So great was his influence, that he had the hearts and purses of thousands at his command, and yet so disinterested, that he died poor. His sole object through life was to do good for its own sake.

As the Scottish church grew by degrees more and more into a worldly sanctuary, the abuses of patronage and other things, which grieved and disgusted many of her most excellent pastors, produced divisions. These led to the presbytery of relief, the seceders, the burghers, and anti-burghers. Among these much of the power of real godliness remained. A host arose, with the famed Erskines at their head, who were zealous advocates for the truth as it is in Jesus, and sought to revive the life of religion in their several congregations. Their labours were eminently blessed.

Among these separatists of various denominations, the greatest zeal to promote the evangelical doctrines hath been displayed. The established church also furnished many

eminent witnesses for God, who were not ashamed of the cross of Christ. Under their ministry a numerous and chosen people in the Scottish kirk, as well as among the dissidents, continue to adorn their Christian profession. In proportion to their numbers, the members of the kirk are generally better informed and more evangelical in profession than the people of England. But great and awful declensions from gospel purity must be acknowledged and lamented. The increase of wealth and fashionable manners have not improved their moral system. None have more cordially come forward to encourage the missionary spirit than the people of Scotland.

In Geneva, the cradle of the reformation, attachment to the peculiar doctrines of Calvin has long been greatly weakened by the spread of the Arminian tenets, and by the progress of the new philosophy. Through all the protestant cantons great decays are visible. Though a decency and sobriety of manners is yet preserved, the power of evangelical religion is far from being general among the ministers or the people. Very few of either adhere to the doctrine or practice of Calvin. The lowest form of moral essay and Socinian Christianity prevails. The convulsions of contending parties have tended greatly to increase the general apostacy.

France, once distinguished for the purity of the reformed faith, is sunk very low in every religious view. The protestants themselves have drunk deeply in the infidel philosophy. Long ago they had greatly declined from the purity of doctrine and the spirituality of religion. The late revolutions have produced no beneficial change. Their hatred of popery is now gratified to the uttermost, and none more cordially help forward the desolation of every ecclesiastic and monastic institution than the protestants: but of any zeal for advancing the interests of living Christianity, there is among them very little evidence.

Holland. The United Provinces have constantly maintained the reformed faith as the national profession, but in the multitude the love of gold has generally prevailed over the love of godliness, and the philosophic pride of reasoning hath sent forth from their universities teachers too wise to submit to the reformed opinions of Luther and Calvin.

They are more intent on gain than given to dissipation, yet religion in its vital power is in general little known. The public services at church for the most part are performed with an icy coldness and dull formality. French influence, French manners, and French government, now afford little prospect of amelioration. The profession of the nation continues unchanged. Yet one step has been taken to abolish that, by withdrawing the stipends from the ministers of the national establishment. True religion can well subsist without any establishment; but if the power of godliness is lost, the form of it will quickly follow, when no longer supported by the state. The priest who prays for hire, will hardly continue his function when his salary ceases.

Germany, the pillar of the reformation, is grievously defaced with respect to vital religion. The Calvinists as well as Lutherans have too generally imbibed the principles of the infidel philosophy. Those who are trained up for the ministry in the universities and seminaries of learning, too often in their public discourses explain away the faith, which they are obliged to engage solemnly to maintain. From preachers thus educated and thus ministering, much advancement of the true spiritual church cannot be expected. Even where opposition to the fundamental doctrines of christianity does not lift up its banner, a state of lifeless torpor and indifference prevails. The forms of religion are hastily and carelessly discharged, whilst a life of worldly conformity or scientific pursuits leaves scarce a visible trace of a conversation in heaven.

There are, without doubt, men of true hearts found in many places of that vast country, whose lives are conformable to the precepts of the Holy Scriptures. But among ministers and people these happy exceptions are too few, whilst the general body is carried down with the torrent of infidelity and dissipation, worldly pursuits, or science falsely so called.

From the whole of the preceding view of the reformed church, we may perceive every where throughout its extent a peculiar people, often indeed thinly dispersed, and in some countries apparently declining, in others exhibiting stronger symptoms of vitality, but in a comparative view of the days

which are past the present cannot be counted inauspicious. The end of the eighteenth century hath produced as plentiful a harvest in the gospel field as any of the seasons of revival since the time of the reformation.

In no æra have the doctrines of the gospel been more clearly opened, and probably at no time since the days of the apostles can we produce a greater number of Christians who could give an equally sound reason of the hope that is in them.

In following the church of Christ through the wilderness of this world, we have beheld scenes highly glorious and deeply afflictive: the mighty power of the great head of the church preserving it through the fires, and the constant opposition of the god of this world to disturb its peace, and sully its purity. That in the unequal struggle a body of such evident inferiority hath been preserved, is an illustrious evidence of his care, and the fulfilment of his promises who hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

The first age exhibited the blaze of gospel light in all its purity and vigour, and the triumphs of the cross over the power, craft, and malice of men. But clouds soon obscured the face of day. The profession growing general, and the power of godliness declining, no sooner had Christianity gained an establishment than we see the church sinking into a worldly sanctuary; and ambition, pride, and avarice seated in the high places, and claiming unhallowed dominion over the consciences of men. For more than ten centuries things continued to grow from bad to worse, till all religion at last seemed lost and buried in name and form, in superstition and tyranny. A few, indeed, in every age, continued prophesying in sackcloth to a world lying in wickedness. But God remembered mercy. A day of revival burst forth. The light diffused itself on every side. A beam of it hath passed unto the ends of the earth. We have much more encouragement for exertion than in the first days of reformation. It appears much more practicable now to preach the gospel among all nations than at that day to evangelize a small district. This will appear from a general view of the world and of the great events which have lately taken place in it.

Russia is but little advanced in evangelical knowledge or practice, yet it may justly be regarded as a favourable circumstance, that its growing intercourse with the more polished nations of Europe naturally leads to a higher state of civilization, and to a more extensive cultivation of literature. And as the most intimate connections of Russia are with those protestant nations in which the power of godliness most prevails, it cannot but afford many and great opportunities for the admission of truth and godliness among them, especially as the policy of the government holds out encouragement to the settlement of foreigners, and indulges all protestants with free toleration. This has already produced some happy effects in the little colony of Germans on the Wolga. It is a great advantage that Christianity is the general profession, that the orthodox creeds are professedly the national belief, and, however low the present state of spiritual religion may be among them, a door of hope is open for the admission of farther light and truth. The Bible is in their hands, and they are at liberty to read and study its important contents.

Sweden, Lutheran in profession, enjoying the free use of the word of God, holding the Augsburg confession, and filled with Christian ministers, affords prospects of a greater revival. It is said that recent efforts are making to spread the knowledge of evangelical doctrines among the poor of the flock.

Denmark and Norway are in a state similar to their neighbours of the same religious profession. They retain in their established church the true principles, and are not destitute of faithful witnesses, who preach and teach Jesus Christ, know the power of his resurrection, and seek to make him known to others. Their missions to Greenland and the coast of Malabar evince an attention to the Christian doctrine.

Germany, the cradle of reformation, affords in many places strong symptoms of awakened zeal for the cause of Christ, From it the good Moravians have gone forth to spread eminently the gospel among the heathen. In the north, which is chiefly protestant, much true religion is yet to be found. Efforts have been recently made to send forth men of faith and truth to address the poor, and spread religious tracts.

Of late a spirit of zeal and life seems awakened in divers places.

Poland, no longer a separate kingdom, has certainly by its partition lost nothing on the side of evangelical religion, and at least gained greater facilities for its admission. Those under Russian and Prussian dominion will probably meet no obstacle from government in the introduction of the true gospel, and if they are good subjects they will without doubt be permitted to choose their own religious profession.

United Provinces. Of all the nations of the continent professing the reformed religion, its living power seems to have been best preserved in these provinces. The spirit of life and truth still burns among them with an unextinguished ardour. Greatly as they may have suffered by preceding declensions, there is a precious seed preserved in the midst of both ministers and people. The convulsions they have undergone, and the sufferings they have endured, have purified many in the fires. They have awakened from the torpor of indifference. A spirit of zeal and activity is excited. At Rotterdam many have united for the purpose of extending the gospel among the heathen. In Friesland a considerable number of ministers have associated for the same blessed end. Some happy symptoms of a deeper concern about eternal things has appeared in different places, and these awakenings augur future blessings.

Switzerland. The Swiss cantons, however declined in religion, or ravaged by invaders, are not destitute of the living power of godliness, and many are associated for the revival of real Christianity. At Basil and Zurich men are found in whom is the Spirit of the living God, who are united to spread his glorious gospel around them, and are zealously disposed to forward missionary efforts among the heathen.

In France, in the present convulsed and turbid state of that great nation, it is difficult to say what true religion is yet hidden among them. Many protestants are found holding fast the faithful word. In Languedoc, an earnest desire has been expressed for ministers who should preach the pure gospel of Christ. This good is likely to arise out of all the evils which have preceded, that men's minds will be more prepared for the gospel, and greater liberty in religious matters will in fu-

ture be admitted. The very kindness shewn to their exiles will teach at least a more tolerant spirit. When the barriers of bigotry are broken down, and the stumbling blocks are removed out of the way, divine truth will find easier access. Persecution on account of conscience is no longer probable. Free enquiry on religious subjects will doubtless be continued. Truth needs nothing more. Left to itself, it must and will prevail.

From this review of the protestant cause on the continent of Europe, there appears a body ready for active service, though small, and of little present reputation.

In all the catholic countries a state of great debility has been apparent. The ecclesiastics, the convents, and all the wealth and magnificence attached to them, have been in an especial manner the objects of destruction, and are so fallen as probably never to rise again to their former weight and importance. The prevalence of impiety and infidelity, however greatly to be deplored, has loosened the bonds of all men from that servitude of opinion in which they had been so long held. To read and think for himself is a liberty now generally taken by every one. Interest as well as humanity now prescribes greater indulgence to men of different sentiments, whilst they are useful, peaceable, and industrious subjects, than was formerly the case.

The British isles. The amazing increase of gospel truth among the inhabitants; the spirit of activity which hath been of late exerted to make known the glory, and to erect the kingdom of Emmanuel in the hearts of men; the many and increasing associations to diffuse the knowledge of Christ Jesus in all countries to which their commerce extends; the vast number of faithful witnesses rising up, and the readiness of a multitude to devote themselves to the service of the heathen whenever found; all indicate an era highly auspicious to the more extensive spread of true Christianity, than any of the ages that are past have presented to our view. Though there is too much ground for lamenting the eager pursuit of dissipation which abounding wealth affords; and the irreligion of the many, the wise, the mighty, and the noble; yet in the British isles there is found a great and active body, who have the kingdom of Christ supremely at

heart, and are willing to spend and be spent in its service. At no time since the reformation hath there been found a more diffused knowledge of the truths of the gospel, or a more apparent disposition to extend the communication of them to the ends of the earth.

In the public seminaries of learning open infidelity meets no encouragement. The universities profess orthodoxy; and, however they have shared in the general taint, there is still found in the midst of them a precious seed of those who are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is also a singular token for good, that several highly promising seminaries are erected, entirely with a view to maintain the purity of gospel truth, into which none are intentionally admitted, nor are any sent out but such as give reasonable ground of confidence that they have tasted of vital Christianity, and are supremely devoted to the advancement of its interests. About two thousand such are regularly heard with serious attention by about six hundred thousand auditors.

Though difficulties and disappointments have retarded the attempts made for evangelising the isles of the great southern ocean, yet such a commencement hath been made, such a fund provided, such evidence obtained of the practicability of the attempt, and such facilities for the execution of it, that it can hardly be doubted, but that in a very few years these southern regions will turn to the Sun of Righteousness, and enjoy the brightness of his shining. Circumstances peculiarly favourable invite attention to these isles. The fertility of the soil; the beauty and healthiness of the climate; the facility wherewith settlements may be formed; and the easiness with which they can be maintained; all encourage efforts to civilize the inhabitants, and plant the gospel among them. It is not improbable that the germ of civilized population, and the gospel lately planted there, will take root and spread, till, in some not very far distant day, these isles may be what the United States of North America now are.

Asia, teeming with an immense population, offers through the settlements of the Europeans, a door of hope for the entrance of the everlasting gospel. In Bengal, a noble attempt has been made by the baptists, which, though yet a day of small things, we hope will have great increase. Other at-

tempts, though feeble, are making to send the light of truth into that benighted quarter of the globe, where, though the thousands and ten thousands of Europeans have settled for the objects of gain, few have thought those of godliness worth pursuing. On the Malabar coast, a few, and but a few, labour under the patronage of the great society in London for propagating the gospel. In these extensive and populous countries idolatry reigns. Much bodily torture is undergone, and many human beings are yearly sacrificed, in consequence of the prevalence of ignorance and superstition. From the Thracian Bosphorus to Japan, the inhabitants are for the most part destitute of every spark of Christianity, and lying in the darkness of spiritual death.

Africa, dark as her sooty inhabitants, and overwhelmed with heathen ignorance or the Mahometan delusion, waits for the Sun of Righteousness. A gleam has darted on her coasts at Sierra Leone and the Cape of Good Hope. We trust that it is the harbinger of a blessed day. At present, however, few, very few, are found labourers in this uncultivated vineyard. The report from Sierra Leone affords no sanguine expectation from that quarter. The labours of the good Moravians at the Cape present a more promising appearance. The attempt of Dr. Vanderkemp and his associates has already been blessed; and, if the increase be answerable to the commencement, the harvest will be plentiful. From the whole of this review, it cannot but strike the attentive observer, how very circumscribed is the extent of the church of the living God. But the prospect of its enlargement is unusually promising.

It is one of the singular features of the present day, that there appears to be an uncommon concern awakened to this subject throughout the Christian world. The societies formed in different countries of Christendom, animated by the same spirit, and pursuing the same design, give some hope that this is the dawn of that glorious day which we expect and so devoutly pray for when we cry, "Thy kingdom come." This spirit has already produced great and important plans for an extensive diffusion of the light of life among the benighted inhabitants of the earth.

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