facility which Alaric met with in effecting his conquest, and his views, which were directed to obtain an establishment in the empire as an imperial officer or feudatory governor, rendered the conduct of his army not that of avowed enemies. Yet it often happened that they laid waste everything in the line of their march, burnt villages, and massacred the inhabitants.[1]

Alaric passed the winter in the Peloponnesus without encountering any opposition from the people; yet many of the Greek cities still kept a body of municipal police, which might surely have taken the field, had the imperial officers performed their duty, and endeavoured to organise a regular resistance in the country districts.[2] The moderation of the Goth, and the treason of the Roman governor, seem both attested by this circumstance. The government of the Eastern Empire had fallen into such disorder at the commencement of the reign of Arcadius, that even after Rufinus had been assassinated by the army, the new ministers of the empire gave themselves very little concern about the fate of Greece. Honorius had a more able, active, and ambitious minister in Stilicho, and he determined to punish the Goths for their audacity in daring to establish themselves in the empire without the imperial authority. Stilicho had attempted to save Thessaly in the preceding year, but had been compelled to return to Italy, after he had reached Thessalonica, by an express order of the emperor Arcadius, or rather of his minister Rufinus. In the spring of the year 396, he assembled a fleet at Ravenna, and transported his army directly to Corinth, which the Goths do not appear to have garrisoned, and where, probably, the Roman governor still resided. Stilicho's army, aided by the inhabitants, soon cleared the open country of the Gothic bands, and Alaric drew together the remains of his diminished army, in the elevated plain of Mount Pholoe, which has since served as a point of retreat for the northern invaders of Greece.[3] Stilicho contented himself with occupying the passes with his army; but his carelessness, or the relaxed discipline of his troops, soon afforded the watchful Alaric an

condition to which the Roman government had reduced the Greeks: "Καὶ αὐτὴ δὲ ἡ Σπάρτα συναπήγετο τῇ κοινῇ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἁλώσει, μήτε ὅπλοις ἔτι μήτε ἀνδράσι μαχίμοις τετειχισμένη διὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων πλεονεξίαν."

[1] Eunapius, *in Prisc.* i. 17, edit. Boissonade.

[2] Procopius, *De Ædificiis*, iv. 2.

[3] The Albanian colony of Lalla, composed of the remains of the Albanian troops who ravaged the Morea after the defeat of the Russian invasion in 1770, and who retired to Mount Pholoe when defeated by Hassan Pasha, at Tripolitza, in 1779.

opportunity of escaping with his army, of carrying off all the plunder which they had collected, and, by forced marches, of gaining the Isthmus of Corinth.[1]

Alaric succeeded in conducting his army into Epirus, where he disposed his forces to govern and plunder that province, as he had expected to rule Peloponnesus. Stilicho was supposed to have winked at his proceedings, in order to render his own service indispensable by leaving a dangerous enemy in the heart of the Eastern Empire; but the truth appears to be, that Alaric availed himself so ably of the jealousy with which the court of Constantinople viewed the proceedings of Stilicho, as to negotiate a treaty, by which he was received into the Roman service, and that he really entered Epirus as a general of Arcadius. Stilicho was again ordered to retire from the Eastern Empire, and he obeyed rather than commence a civil war by pursuing Alaric. The conduct of the Gothic troops in Epirus was, perhaps, quite as orderly as that of the Roman legionaries; so that Alaric was probably welcomed as a protector when he obtained the appointment of Commander-in-chief of the imperial forces in Eastern Illyricum, which he held for four years.[2] During this time he prepared his troops to seek his fortune in the Western Empire.[3] The military commanders, whether Roman or barbarian, were equally indifferent to the fate of the people whom they were employed to defend; and the Greeks appear to have suffered equal oppression from the armies of Stilicho and Alaric.

The condition of the European Greeks underwent a great change for the worse, in consequence of this unfortunate plundering expedition of the Goths. The destruction of their property, and the loss of their slaves, were so great, that the evil could only have been slowly repaired under the best government, and with perfect security of their possessions. In the miserable condition to which the Eastern Empire was reduced, this was hopeless; and a long period elapsed before the mass of the population of Greece again attained the prosperous condition in which Alaric had found it; nor were some of the cities which he destroyed ever rebuilt. The ruin of roads, aqueducts, cisterns, and public buildings, erected by the accumulation of capital in prosperous and enterprising ages, was a loss which could never be repaired by a dimin-

[1] Zosimus, v. 7, 26. Clinton, *Fasti Romani*.
[2] Greece formed a part of Eastern Illyricum.
[3] Claudianus, *De Bell. Gil.* v. 535.

ished and impoverished population. History generally preserves but few traces of the devastations which affect only the people; but the sudden misery inflicted on Greece was so great, when contrasted with her previous tranquillity, that testimonies of her sufferings are to be found in the laws of the empire. Her condition excited the compassion of the government during the reign of Theodosius II. There exists a law which exempts the cities of Illyricum from the charge of contributing towards the expenses of the public spectacles at Constantinople, in consequence of the sufferings which the ravages of the Goths, and the oppressive administration of Alaric, had inflicted on the inhabitants. There is another law which proves that many estates were without owners, in consequence of the depopulation caused by the Gothic invasions; and a third law relieves Greece from two-thirds of the ordinary contributions to government, in consequence of the poverty to which the inhabitants were reduced.[1]

This unfortunate period is as remarkable for the devastations committed by the Huns in Asia, as for those of the Goths in Europe, and marks the commencement of the rapid decrease of the Greek race, and of the decline of Greek civilisation throughout the empire. While Alaric was laying waste the provinces of European Greece, an army of Huns from the banks of the Tanais penetrated through Armenia into Cappadocia, and extended their ravages over Syria, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia. Antioch, at last, resisted their assaults, and arrested their progress; but they took many Greek cities of importance, and inflicted an incalculable injury on the population of the provinces which they entered. In a few months they retreated to their seats on the Palus Mæotis, having contributed much to accelerate the ruin of the richest and most populous portion of the civilised world.[2]

Section IX

THE GREEKS ARRESTED THE CONQUESTS OF THE NORTHERN BARBARIANS

From the time of Alaric's ravages in the Grecian provinces, until the accession of Justinian, the government of the Eastern Empire assumed more and more that administrative character

[1] *Cod. Theodos.* xv. 5, 5; x. viii. 5; xi. l. 33.
[2] Philostorgius, ix. 8. Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, v. 101. Ammianus Marcellinus (xiv. 6; xxviii. 5) indicates the depopulation of the empire.

which it retained until the united forces of the Crusaders and Venetians destroyed it in the year 1204. A feeling that the interests of the emperor and his subjects were identical, began to become prevalent throughout the Greek population. This feeling was greatly strengthened by the attention which the government paid to improving the civil condition of its subjects. The judicial and financial administration received, during this period, a greater degree of power, as well as a more bureaucratic organisation; and the whole strength of the government no longer reposed on the military establishments. Rebellions of the army became of rarer occurrence, and usually originated in civil intrigues, or the discontent of unrewarded mercenaries. A slight glance at the history of the Eastern Empire is sufficient to show that the court of Constantinople possessed a degree of authority over its most powerful officers, and a direct connection with its distant provinces, which had not previously existed in the Roman empire.

Still the successful resistance which the Eastern Empire offered to the establishment of the northern nations within its limits, must be attributed to the density of the native population, to the number of the walled towns, and to its geographical configuration, rather than to the spirit of the Greeks, to the military force of the legions, or to any general measures of improvement adopted by the imperial government. Even where most successful, it was a passive rather than an active resistance. The sea which separated the European and Asiatic provinces opposed physical difficulties to invaders, while it afforded great facilities for defence, retreat, and renewed attack to the Roman forces, as long as they could maintain a naval superiority. These circumstances unfortunately increased the power of the central administration to oppress the people, as well as to defend them against foreign invaders, and allowed the emperors to persist in the system of fiscal rapacity which constantly threatened to annihilate a large portion of the wealth from which a considerable mass of the citizens derived their subsistence. At the very moment when the evils of the system became so apparent as to hold out some hope of reform, the fiscal exigencies of the government were increased by money becoming an important element in war, since it was necessary to hire armies as well as to provide facilities of transport, and means of concentration, in cases of danger, defeat, or victory;

so that it began to be a financial calculation in many cases, whether it was more prudent to defend or to ransom a province. The great distance of the various frontiers, though it increased the difficulty of preventing every hostile incursion, hindered any rebellious general from uniting under his command the whole forces of the empire The control which the government was thus enabled to exercise over all its military officers, secured a regular system of discipline, by centralising the services of equipping, provisioning, and paying the soldiers; and the direct connection between the troops and the government could no longer be counteracted by the personal influence which a general might acquire, in consequence of a victorious campaign. The power of the emperors over the army, and the complete separation which existed in the social condition of the citizen and the soldier, rendered any popular movement in favour of reform hopeless. A successful rebellion could only have created a new military power, it could not have united the interests of the military with those of the people, unless changes had been effected which were too great to be attempted by any individual legislator, and too extensive to be accomplished during one generation. The subjects of the empire were also composed of so many nations, differing in language, usages, and civilisation, that unity of measures on the part of the people was impossible, while no single province could expect to obtain redress of its own grievances by an appeal to arms.

The age was one of war and conquest, yet, with all the aspirations and passions of a despotic and military State, the Eastern Empire was, by its financial position, compelled to act on the defensive, and to devote all its attention to rendering the military subordinate to the civil power, in order to save the empire from being eaten up by its own defenders. Its measures were at last successful; the northern invaders were repulsed, the army was rendered obedient, and the Greek nation was saved from the fate of the Romans. The army became gradually attached to the source of pay and honour; and it was rather from a general feature of all despotic governments, than from any peculiarity in the Eastern Empire, that the soldiery frequently appear devoted to the imperial power, but perfectly indifferent to the person of the emperor. The condition of the Western Empire requires to be contrasted with that of the Eastern, in order to appreciate the danger of the crisis through which favourable circumstances, and some

prudence, carried the government of Constantinople. Yet, even in the West, in spite of all the disorganisation of the government, the empire suffered more from the misconduct of the Roman officers than from the strength of its assailants. Even Genseric could hardly have penetrated into Africa unless he had been invited by Boniface, and assisted by his rebellion; while the imperial officers in Britain, Gaul, and Spain, who, towards the end of the reign of Honorius, assumed the imperial title, laid those provinces open to the incursions of the barbarians. The government of the Western Empire was really destroyed, the frame of political society was broken in pieces, and the provinces depopulated, some time before its final conquest had been achieved by foreigners. The Roman principle of aristocratic rule was unable to supply that bond of union which the national organisation of the Greeks, aided by the influence of the established church, furnished in the East.

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

distinguished themselves by their hardihood and military propensities. In Asia, the Pamphylians, having obtained arms to defend themselves against the brigands who began to infest the provinces in large bands, employed them with success in opposing the Goths.[1] The Isaurians, who had always retained possession of their arms, began to occupy a place in the history of the empire, which they acquired by their independent spirit and warlike character. The Armenians, the Syrians, and the Egyptians, all began to engage in a rivalry with the Greeks, and even contested their superiority in literary and ecclesiastical knowledge. These circumstances exercised considerable influence in preventing the court of Constantinople from identifying itself with the Greek people, and enabled the Eastern emperors to cling to the maxims and pride of ancient Rome as the ground of their sovereignty over so many various races of mankind.

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

The commerce of the Eastern Empire, and the gold and silver mines of Thrace and Pontus, still furnished abundant

[1] Zosimus, v. 15, 16, p. 265, edit. Bonn.

supplies of the precious metals. We know that the mint of Constantinople was always rich in gold, for its gold coinage circulated through western and northern Europe for several centuries after the destruction of the Western Empire. The proportion in the value of gold to silver, which in the time of Herodotus was as one to thirteen, was, after a lapse of eight centuries, in the time of Arcadius and Honorius, as one to fourteen and two-fifths.[1] The commerce of Constantinople embraced, at this time, almost the trade of the world. The manufactories of the East supplied western Europe with many articles of daily use, and the merchants carried an extensive transport trade with central Asia. By means of the Red Sea, the productions of southern Africa and India were collected and distributed among numerous nations who inhabited the shores within and without the Straits of Babelmandeb—countries which were then far richer, more populous, and in a much higher state of civilisation than at present. The precious metals, which were becoming rare in Europe, from the stagnation of trade, and the circumscribed exchanges which take place in a rude society, were still kept in active circulation by the various wants of the merchants who brought their commodities from far distant lands. The island of Jotaba, which was a free city in the Red Sea, became a mercantile position of great importance; and from the title of the collectors of the imperial customs which were exacted in its port, the Eastern emperors must have levied a duty of ten per cent on all the merchandise destined for the Roman empire.[2] This island was occupied by the Arabs for some time, but returned under the power of the Eastern Empire during the reign of Anastasius.[3]

As the Eastern Empire generally maintained a decided naval superiority over its enemies, the commerce of the empire seldom suffered any serious interruption. The pirates who infested the Hellespont about the year 438, and the Vandals under Genseric who ravaged the coasts of Greece in 466 and 475, were more dreaded by the people on account of their cruelty than by the government or the merchants in consequence of their success, which was never great.[4] In the general disorder which reigned over the whole of western

[1] Herodotus, iii. 95. *Cod. Theod.* xiii. 2, 1. A.D. 397.
[2] Malchi, *Hist.* p. 232, edit. Bonn. Δεκατηλόγοι.
[3] Theophanes, *Chron.* p. 121, edit. Paris.
[4] Procopius, *De Bello Vand.* i, 5. Malchus, p. 260, edit. Bonn. Clinton's *Fasti Romani.*

Europe, the only depots for merchandise that could be formed in security were in the Eastern Empire. The emperors saw the importance of this commercial influence, and made considerable exertions to support the naval superiority of the empire. Theodosius II. assembled a fleet of eleven hundred transports when he proposed to attack the Vandals in Africa.[1] The armament of Leo the Great, for the same purpose, was on a still larger scale, and formed one of the greatest naval forces ever assembled by the Roman power.[2]

Section X

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

The ravages inflicted by the northern nations on the frontier provinces, during the century which elapsed from the defeat of Valens to the immigration of the Ostrogoths into Italy, were so continual that the agricultural population was almost destroyed in the countries immediately to the south of the Danube, and the inhabitants of Thrace and Macedonia were greatly diminished in number, and began to lose the use of their ancient languages from their admixture with foreign races. The declining trade caused by decreased consumption, poverty, and insecurity of property, also lowered the scale of civilisation among the whole Greek people. One tribe of barbarians followed another, as long as anything was left to plunder. The Huns, under Attila, laid waste the provinces to the south of the Danube for about five years, and were only induced to retreat, on receiving from the emperor six thousand pounds of gold, and the promise of an annual payment of two thousand.[3] The Ostrogoths, after obtaining an establishment to the south of the Danube, as allies of the empire, and receiving an annual subsidy from the Emperor Marcian to guard the frontiers, availed themselves of every pretext to plunder Mœsia, Macedonia, Thrace, and Thessaly. Their king, Theodoric, proved by far the most dangerous enemy that the Eastern Empire had yet encountered. Educated at the court of Constantinople as a hostage, his ten years' residence enabled him to acquire a complete knowledge of the languages, the politics, and the

[1] A.D. 441. Theophanes, *Chron.* 87.
[2] A.D. 468. See below, page 183.
[3] A.D. 442 to 447. Equal to £288,000 and £96,000.

administration of the imperial government.[1] Though he inherited an independent sovereignty over the Goths in Pannonia, he found that country so exhausted by the oppression of his countrymen, and by the ravages of other barbarians, that the whole nation of the Ostrogoths was compelled to emigrate, and Theodoric became a military adventurer in the Roman service, and acted as an ally, a mercenary, or an enemy, according as circumstances appeared to render the assumption of these different characters most conducive to his own aggrandisement.

It would throw little additional light on the state of the Greeks, to trace minutely the records of Theodoric's quarrels with the imperial court, or to narrate, in detail, the ravages committed by him, or by another Gothic mercenary of the same name, in the provinces, from the shores of the Black Sea to those of the Adriatic. These plundering expeditions were not finally terminated until Theodoric quitted the Eastern Empire to conquer Italy, and found the Ostrogothic monarchy, by which he obtained the title of the Great.[2]

It was certainly no imaginary feeling of respect which prevented Alaric, Genseric, Attila, and Theodoric, from attempting the conquest of Constantinople If they had thought the task as easy as the subjugation of Rome, there can be no doubt that the Eastern Empire would have been as fiercely assailed as the Western, and new Rome would have shared the fate of the world's ancient mistress. These warriors could only have been restrained by the great difficulties which the undertaking presented, and by the conviction that they would meet with a far more determined resistance on the part of the inhabitants, than the corrupt condition of the imperial court, and the disordered state of the public administration, appeared at first sight to promise. Their experience in civil and military affairs revealed to them the existence of an inherent strength in the population of the Eastern Empire, and a multiplicity of resources which their attacks might call into action but could not overcome. Casual encounters often showed that the people were neither destitute of courage nor military spirit, when circumstances favoured their display. Attila himself, the terror both of Goths and Romans—the Scourge of God—was defeated before the town of Asemous, a frontier fortress of Illyria. Though he regarded its conquest as a matter of the greatest importance to his plans, the

[1] A.D. 461 to 471. [2] A.D. 489.

inhabitants baffled all his attempts, and set his power at defiance.[1] Genseric was defeated by the inhabitants of the little town of Tænarus in Laconia.[2] Theodoric did not venture to attack Thessalonica, even at a time when the inhabitants, enraged at the neglect of the imperial government, drove out the officers of the emperor, overthrew his statues, and prepared to defend themselves against the barbarians with their own unassisted resources.[3] There is another remarkable example of the independent spirit of the Greek people, which saved their property from ruin, in the case of Heraclea, a city of Macedonia. The inhabitants, in the moment of danger, placed their bishop at the head of the civil government, and intrusted him with power to treat with Theodoric, who, on observing their preparations for defence, felt satisfied that it would be wiser to retire on receiving a supply of provisions for his army, than venture on plundering the country. Many other instances might be adduced to prove that the hordes of the northern barbarians were in reality not sufficiently numerous to overcome a determined resistance on the part of the Greek nation, and that the principal cause of their success within the Roman territories was the vicious nature of the Roman government.

Theodoric succeeded, during the year 479, in surprising Epidamnus by treachery; and the alarm which this conquest caused at the court of Constantinople shows that the government was not blind to the importance of preventing any foreign power from acquiring a permanent dominion over a Greek city. The emperor Zeno offered to cede to the Goths the extensive province of Dardania, which was then almost destitute of inhabitants, in order to induce Theodoric to quit Epidamnus. That city, the emperor declared, constituted a part of the well-peopled provinces of the empire, and it was therefore in vain for Theodoric to expect that he could keep possession of it.[4] This remarkable observation shows that the desolation of the northern provinces was now beginning to compel the government of the Eastern Empire to regard the countries inhabited by the Greeks, which were still comparatively populous, as forming the national territory of the Roman empire in Europe.

[1] Priscus, p. 143, edit. Bonn. Gibbon considers this to be the same place whose privilege of maintaining a native garrison is mentioned by Theophylactus, vii. c. 3. Gibbon, c. xlvi. note 36.

[2] Procopius, *De Bello Vand.* i. 22.

[3] Malchus, 255, edit. Bonn.

[4] Malchus, 254, edit. Bonn.

Section XI

Improvement in the Eastern Empire, from the Death of Arcadius to the Accession of Justinian

From the death of Arcadius to the accession of Justinian, during a period of one hundred and twenty years,[1] the empire of the East was governed by six sovereigns of very different characters, whose reigns have been generally viewed through the medium of religious prejudices; yet, in spite of the dissimilarity of their personal conduct, the general policy of their government is characterised by strong features of resemblance. The power of the emperor was never more unlimited, but it was never more systematically exercised. The administration of the empire, and of the imperial household, were equally regarded as a part of the sovereign's private estate, while the lives and fortunes of his subjects were considered as a portion of the property of which he was the master.[2] The absolute power of the emperor was now controlled by the danger of foreign invasions, and by the power of the church. The oppressed could seek refuge with the barbarians, and the persecuted might find the means of opposing the government by the power of the orthodox clergy, who were strong in the support of a great part of the population. The fear of divisions in the Church itself, which was now intimately connected with the State, served also in some degree as a restraint on the arbitrary conduct of the emperor. The interest of the sovereign became thus identified with the sympathies of the majority of his subjects; yet the difficulty of deciding what policy the emperor ought to follow in the ecclesiastical disputes of the heretics and the orthodox, was so great, as at times to give an appearance of doubt and indecision to the religious opinions of several emperors.

The decline of the Roman power had created an eager desire to remedy the disorders which had brought the empire to the brink of destruction. Most of the provinces of the West were inhabited by mixed races without union; the power of the military commanders was beyond the control of public opinion; and neither the emperor, the senate, nor the higher clergy, were directly connected with the body of the people.

[1] A.D. 408 to 527.

[2] *Cod. Theod.* ix. 14, 3—"Nam et ipsi pars corporis nostri sunt." *Cod. Just* ix. 8, 5.

In the East, the opinion of the people possessed some authority, and it was consequently studied and treated with greater deference. The importance of enforcing the impartial administration of justice was so deeply felt by the government, that the emperors themselves attempted to restrict the application of their legislative power in individual and isolated cases. At a later period the Emperor Anastasius ordered the judges to pay no attention to any private rescript, if it should be found contrary to the received laws of the empire, or to the public good; in such cases he commanded the judges to follow the established laws.[1] The senate of Constantinople possessed great authority in controlling the general administration, and the dependent position of its members prevented that authority from being regarded with jealousy. The permanent existence of this body enabled it to establish fixed maxims of policy, and to render these maxims the grounds of the ordinary decisions of government. By this means a systematic administration was firmly consolidated, in some degree under the influence of public opinion; and its steady and permanent regulations became a powerful check on the temporary and fluctuating views of the sovereign.

Theodosius II. succeeded his father Arcadius at the age of eight; and he governed the empire for forty-two years, during which he left the care of the public administration very much in the hands of others. His sister Pulcheria, though only two years older than her brother, exercised great influence over his education; and she seems, in all her actions, to have been guided by sentiments of philanthropy as well as piety. She taught him to perform the ceremonial portion of his imperial duties with grace and dignity, but she could not teach him, perhaps he was incapable of learning, how to act and think as became a Roman emperor. At the age of fifteen Pulcheria received the rank of Augusta, and assumed the direction of public affairs for her brother. Theodosius was naturally mild, humane, and devout. Though he possessed some manly personal accomplishments, his mind and character were deficient in strength. He cultivated the arts of writing and painting with such success as to render his skill in the illumination of manuscripts his most remarkable personal distinction. His Greek subjects, mingling kindness with contempt, bestowed on him the name of Kalligraphos. His incapacity for business was so great, that he is hardly accused of

[1] *Cod. Just.* i. 22, 6.

having augmented the misfortunes of his reign by his own acts. A spirit of reform, and a desire of improvement, had penetrated into the imperial administration; and his reign was distinguished by many internal changes for the better. Among these, the publication of the Theodosian code, and the establishment of the university of Constantinople, were the most important. The Theodosian code afforded the people the means of arraigning the conduct of their rulers before fixed principles of law, and the university of Constantinople established the influence of Greek literature, and gave the Greek language an official position in the Eastern Empire.[1] The reign of Theodosius was also distinguished by two great remissions of arrears of taxation. By these concessions the greatest possible boon was conferred on the people, for they extinguished all claim for unpaid taxation over a period of sixty years.[2] The weakness of the emperor, by throwing the direction of public business into the hands of the senate and the ministers, for a long period consolidated that systematic administration which characterises the government of his successors. He was the first of the emperors who was more a Greek than a Roman in his feelings and tastes; but his inactivity prevented his private character from exercising much influence on his public administration.

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

[1] *Cod. Theod.* xiv. 9, 3. *Cod. Just.* xi. 18, 1. See *infra*, p. 194.

[2] The first remission was in 414, for forty years ending in 408. The second in 443, for twenty years ending in 428. *Cod. Theod.* xi. 28, 9, 16, 17.

narrator to unfold a rich web of romance. Some circumstances in her history deserve notice, even in this volume, as they throw light incidentally on the state of society among the Greeks.

The beautiful Eudocia was the daughter of an Athenian philosopher, Leontios, who still sacrificed to the heathen divinities. Her heathen name was Athenais. She received a classical education, while she acquired the elegant accomplishments of that aristocratic society which had cultivated the amenities of life from the time of Plato, who made use of carpets in his rooms, and allowed ladies to attend his lectures.[1] Her extraordinary talents induced her father to give her a careful literary and philosophical education. All her teachers were gratified with her progress. Her native accent charmed the inhabitants of Constantinople, accustomed to pure Attic Greek by the eloquence of Chrysostom; and she also spoke Latin with the graceful dignity of a Roman lady. The only proof of rustic simplicity which her biography enables us to trace in Athenian manners, is the fact that her father, who was a man of wealth as well as a philosopher, believed that her beauty, virtue, and accomplishments, would obtain her a suitable marriage without any dowry. He left his whole fortune to his son, and the consequence was that the beautiful Athenais, unable to find a husband among the provincial nobles who visited Athens, was compelled to try her fortune at the court of Constantinople, under the patronage of Pulcheria, in the semi-menial position which we now term a maid of honour. Pulcheria was then only fifteen years old, and Eudocia was probably twenty.[2] The young Augusta was soon gratified by the conversion of her beautiful heathen protegée to Christianity; but time passed on, and the courtiers of Constantinople showed no better taste in matrimony than the provincial decurions. The dowerless Eudocia remained unmarried, until Pulcheria persuaded her docile brother to fall in love with the fair Athenian. At the ripe age of twenty-seven, she became the wife of Theodosius II., who was twenty, and the pagans might then boast that Leontios had acted as a seer, not as a pedant, in leaving her without a dowry.

Twenty years after her marriage, Eudocia was accused of a

[1] Diogenes Laertius. Diogenes, vi. 2, 26. Plato, iii. xxxi. sect. 46.

[2] A.D 414. Eudocia was married in 421, became Augusta in 423, and was exiled to Jerusalem in 444.—Clinton, *Fasti Romani;* Tables and Appendix, p. 136.

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

it deserves.[1] Eudocia on her death-bed declared that the reports of her criminal attachment to Paulinos were false. They must have been very prevalent, or she would not have considered it necessary to give them this solemn denial. Her death is placed in the year 460.

Marcian, a Thracian of humble birth, who had risen from a common soldier to the rank of senator, and had already attained the age of fifty-eight, was selected by Pulcheria as the man most worthy to fill the imperial throne on the death of her brother.[2] He received the rank of her husband merely to secure his title to the empire. She had taken monastic vows at an early age, though she continued to bear, during her brother's reign, a considerable part in the conduct of public business, having generally acted as his counsellor.[3] The conduct of Marcian, after he became emperor, justified Pulcheria's choice; and it is probable that he was one of the senators who had supported the systematic policy by which Pulcheria endeavoured to restore the strength of the empire; a policy which sought to limit the arbitrary exercise of the despotic power of the emperor by fixed institutions, well-regulated forms of procedure, and an educated and organised body of civil officials. Marcian was a soldier who loved peace without fearing war. One of his first acts was to refuse payment of the tribute which Attila had exacted from Theodosius. His reign lasted six years and a half, and was chiefly employed in restoring the resources of the empire, and alleviating its burdens. In the theological disputes which divided his subjects, Marcian attempted to act with impartiality; and he assembled the council of Chalcedon in the vain hope of establishing a system of ecclesiastical doctrine common to the whole empire. His attempt to identify the Christian church with the Roman empire only widened the separation of the different sects of Christians; and the opinions of the dissenters, while they were regarded as heretical, began to be adopted as national. Religious communities began everywhere to assume a national character. The Eutychian heresy became the

[1] The story is found in the *Chronicon Paschale*, 316; Theophanes, 85; Zonaras and Cedrenus; Gibbon, chap. xxxii. note 77, vol. iv. p. 165. The story of the three apples is probably an imitation of this Greek original. It is remarkable for the true picture it gives of the character of Haroun.

[2] Marcian had been taken prisoner by Genseric when he accompanied Aspar with an army to support Boniface.—Procopius, *De Bello Vand.* lib. i.

[3] It is singular to find hereditary rights and celibacy growing up together. During the fifth century, it was by no means unusual to take vows, and continue to bear an active part in public business.

religion of Egypt; Nestorianism was that of Mesopotamia. In such a state of things Marcian sought to temporise from feelings of humanity, and bigots made this spirit of toleration a reproach.

Leo the Elder, another Thracian, was elected emperor, on the death of Marcian, by the influence of Aspar, a general of barbarian descent, who had acquired an authority similar to that which Stilicho and Ætius had possessed in the West. Aspar being a foreigner and an Arian, durst not himself, notwithstanding his influence and favour with the army, aspire to the imperial throne; a fact which proves that the political constitution of the government, and the fear of public opinion, exercised some control over the despotic power of the court of Constantinople. The insolence of Aspar and his family determined Leo to diminish the authority of the barbarian leaders in the imperial service; and he adopted measures for recruiting the army from his native subjects. The system of his predecessors had been to place more reliance on foreigners than on natives; to employ mercenary strangers as their guards, and to form the best armed and highest paid corps entirely of barbarians. In consequence of the neglect with which the native recruits had been treated, they had fallen into such contempt that they were ranked in the legislation of the empire as an inferior class of military.[1] Leo could not reform the army, without removing Aspar; and, despairing of success by any other means, he employed assassination; thus casting, by the murder of his benefactor, so deep a stain on his own character that he acquired the surname of the Butcher. During his reign, the arms of the empire were generally unsuccessful; and his great expedition against Genseric, the most powerful and expensive naval enterprise which the Romans had ever prepared, was completely defeated.[2] As it was dangerous to confide so mighty a force to any general of talent, Basilicus, the brother of the empress, was intrusted with the chief command. His incapacity assisted the Vandals in defeating the expedition quite as much as the prudence and talents of Genseric. The Ostrogoths, in the mean time, extended their

[1] *Cod. Theodos.*

[2] Theophanes, *Chron.* 99. Gibbon, iv. 284. The fleet consisted of 1113 ships; the army and navy included 100,000 men. Gibbon estimates the expense of this expedition at a sum equal to £5,200,000 sterling, and Lydus (*De Magist.* iii. 43) confirms this estimate by stating that the expenditure amounted to 65,000 lb. of gold, and 700,000 lb. of silver. Compare Suidas, χειρίρω and *C. Scrip. Hist. Byz. excerpta e Menandri Historia*, edit. Niebuhr, p. 427.

ravages from the Danube as far as Thessaly, and there appeared some probability that they would succeed in establishing a permanent kingdom in Illyria and Macedonia, completely independent of the imperial power. The civil administration of Leo was conducted with great prudence. He followed in the steps of his predecessor in all his attempts to lighten the burdens of his subjects, and to improve their condition. When Antioch suffered severely from an earthquake, he remitted the public taxes to the amount of one thousand pounds of gold, and granted freedom from all imposts to those who rebuilt their ruined houses. In the disputes which still divided the church, he adopted the orthodox or Greek party, in opposition to the Eutychians and Nestorians. The epithet of Great has been bestowed on him by the Greeks—a title, it should seem, conferred upon him rather with reference to his being the first of his name, and on account of his orthodoxy, than from the pre-eminence of his personal actions.[1] He died at the age of sixty-three, and was succeeded by his grandson, Leo II., an infant, who survived his elevation only a few months, A.D. 474.

Zeno mounted the throne on the death of his son, Leo II. He was an Isaurian, whom Leo the Great had selected as the husband of his daughter Ariadne, when he was engaged in rousing the military spirit of his own subjects against the barbarian mercenaries. In the eyes of the Greeks, the Isaurians were little better than barbarians; but their valour had obtained for them a high reputation among the troops in the capital. The origin of Zeno rendered him unpopular with the Greeks; and as he did not participate in their nationality in religion, any more than in descent, he was accused of cherishing heretical opinions. He appears to have been unsteady in his views, and vicious in his conduct; yet the difficulties of his position were so great, and the prejudices against him so strong, that in spite of all the misfortunes of his reign, the fact of his having maintained the integrity of the Eastern Empire attests that he could not have been totally deficient in courage and talent. The year after he ascended the throne, he was driven from Constantinople by Basiliskos, the brother of Leo's widow Verina; but Basiliskos could only keep possession of the capital for about twenty months, and Zeno recovered his

[1] Leo was the author of the earliest law condemning to death converts to Christianity who relapsed to paganism. The Othoman Turks have only copied the bigotry of their Christian predecessors at Constantinople.—*Cod. Just.* i. xi. 10.

authority. The great work of his reign, which lasted seventeen years and a half, was the formation of an army of native troops to serve as a counterpoise to the barbarian mercenaries who threatened the Eastern Empire with the same fate as the Western. About the commencement of his reign he witnessed the final extinction of the Western Empire, and, for many years, the Theodorics threatened him with the loss of the greater part of the European provinces of the Eastern. Surely the man who successfully resisted the schemes and the forces of the great Theodoric could not have been a contemptible emperor, even though his orthodoxy were questionable. When it is remembered, therefore, that Zeno was an Isaurian, and a peacemaker in theological quarrels, it will not be surprising that the Greeks, who regarded him as a heterodox barbarian, should have heaped many calumnies on his memory. From his laws which have been preserved in the code of Justinian, he seems to have adopted judicious measures for alleviating the fiscal obligations of the landed proprietors, and his prudence was shown by his not proposing to the senate the adoption of his brother as his successor. The times were difficult; his brother was worthless, and the support of the official aristocracy was necessary. The disposal of the imperial crown was again placed in the hands of Ariadne.

Anastasius secured his election by his marriage with Ariadne. He was a native of Epidamnus, and must have been near the age of sixty when he ascended the throne. In the year 514, Vitalian, general of the barbarian mercenaries, and a grandson of Aspar, assumed the title of emperor, and attempted to occupy Constantinople.[1] His principal reliance was on the bigotry of the orthodox Greeks, for Anastasius showed a disposition to favour the Eutychians. But the military power of the mercenaries had been diminished by the policy of Leo and Zeno; and it now proved insufficient to dispose of the empire, as it could derive little support from the Greeks, who were more distinguished for ecclesiastical orthodoxy than for military courage. Vitalian was defeated in his attempt on Constantinople, and consented to resign the imperial title on receiving a large sum of money, and the government of Thrace. The religious opinions of Anastasius unfortunately rendered him always unpopular, and he had to encounter some serious seditions while the empire was involved in wars with the Persians, Bulgarians, and Goths. Anastasius

[1] Gold coins of Vitalian exist.

was more afraid of internal rebellions and seditions than of defeat by foreign armies, and he sub-divided the command of his troops in such a way, that success in the field of battle was almost impossible. In one important campaign against Persia, the intendant-general was the officer of highest rank in an army of fifty thousand men. Military subordination, and vigorous measures, under such an arrangement, were impossible; and it reflects some credit on the organisation of the Roman troops, that they were enabled to keep the field without total ruin.

Anastasius devoted his anxious care to alleviate the misfortunes of his subjects, and to diminish the taxes which oppressed them. He reformed the oligarchical system of the Roman curia, which had already received some modifications tending to restrict the ruinous obligation of mutual responsibility imposed on the curiales. The immediate consequence of his reforms was to increase the imperial revenue, a result which was probably effected by preventing the local aristocracy from combining with the officers of the fisc. Such changes, though they are extremely beneficial to the great body of the people, are rarely noticed with much praise by historians, who generally write under the influence of central prejudices.[1] He constructed the great wall, to secure from destruction the rich villages and towns in the vicinity of Constantinople. This wall extended from the Sea of Marmora, near Selymbria, to the Black Sea, forming an arc of about forty-two miles, at a distance of twenty-eight miles from the capital.[2] The rarest virtue of a sovereign is the sacrifice of his own revenues, and, consequently, the diminution of his own power, to increase the happiness of his people. The greatest action of Anastasius was this voluntary diminution of the revenues of the State. He abolished the chrysargyron, a lucrative but oppressive tax which affected the industry of every subject. The increased prosperity which this concession infused into society soon displayed its effects; and the brilliant exploits of the reign of Justinian must be traced back to the reinvigoration of the body politic of the Roman empire by Anastasius. He expended large sums in repairing the damages caused by war and earthquakes. He constructed a canal from the lake Sophon to the Gulf of Astacus, near Nicomedia, a work which

[1] Lydus, *De Magistratibus*, iii. 49. Lydus was a conservative, and a sufferer by the reforms in the imperial administration.—Evagrius, iii. 38.

[2] Traces of this wall are still visible, about twenty feet broad.

Pliny had proposed to Trajan, and which was restored by the Byzantine emperor Alexius I.;[1] yet so exact was his economy, and so great were the revenues of the Eastern Empire, that he was enabled to accumulate, during his reign, three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of gold in the public treasury.[2] The people had prayed at his accession that he might reign as he had lived; and, even in the eyes of the Greeks, he would probably have been regarded as the model of a perfect monarch, had he not shown a disposition to favour heresy. Misled, either by his wish to comprehend all sects in the established church,—as all nations were included in the empire,—or by a too decided attachment to the doctrines of the Eutychians, he excited the opposition of the orthodox party, whose domineering spirit troubled his internal administration by several dangerous seditions, and induced the Greeks to overlook his humane and benevolent policy. He reigned more than twenty-seven years.

Justin, the successor of Anastasius, had the merit of being strictly orthodox. He was a Thracian peasant from Tauresium, in Dardania, who entered the imperial guard as a common soldier. At the age of sixty-eight, when Anastasius died, he had attained the rank of commander-in-chief of the imperial guards, and a seat in the senate. It is said that he was intrusted with a large sum of money to further a court intrigue for the purpose of placing the crown on the head of some worthless courtier. He appropriated the money to secure his own election.[3] His reign tended to unite more closely the church with the imperial authority, and to render the opposition of the heterodox more national in the various provinces where a national clergy and a national language existed. Justin was without education, but he possessed experience and talents. In his civil government he imitated the wise and economical policy of his predecessor, and his military experience enabled him to improve the condition of the army. He furnished large sums to alleviate the misery caused by a terrible earthquake at Antioch, and paid great attention to

[1] Anna Comnena, 282, edit. Par. Pliny, *Ep.* x. 50. Ainsworth's *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor*, i. 26. The importance of this work has induced several Othoman Sultans to discuss projects for its restoration. An inscription, copied by Chandler, at Megara, informs us that its fortifications were repaired by Count Diogenes, an officer of Anastasius who had distinguished himself in the Isaurian rebellion.—Chandler's *Travels*, c. 43. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, ii. 390.

[2] £13,000,000. Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* 19. Gibbon, vii. 109.

[3] Constantine I. had established Sclavonian colonies in Thrace (Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* iv. 6); but Justin was perhaps of the old Thracian stock, then beginning to undergo the modifications which ultimately transformed it into the Vallachian race.

repairing the public buildings throughout the empire. His reign lasted nine years, A.D. 518–527.

It must be observed that the five emperors of whose character and policy the preceding sketch has described the prominent features, were men born in the middle or lower ranks of society; and all of them, with the exception of Zeno, had witnessed, as private individuals, the ravages of the barbarians in their native provinces, and suffered personally from the weak and disorganised state of the empire. They had all ascended the throne at a mature age, and these coincidences tended to imprint on their councils that unformity of policy which marks their history. They had all more of the feelings of the people than of the dominant class, and were, consequently, more subjects than Romans. They appear to have participated in popular sympathies to a degree natural only to men who had long lived without courtly honours, and rare, indeed, even among those of the greatest genius, who are born or educated near the steps of a throne. That some part of the merit of these sovereigns was commonly ascribed to the experience which they had gained by a long life, is evident from the reply which, it is said, the Emperor Justin gave to the senators, who wished him to raise Justinian, at the age of forty, to the dignity of Augustus: "You should pray," said the prudent monarch, "that a young man may never wear the imperial robes."[1]

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

The principles of political science and civil liberty were, indeed, very little understood by the people of the Roman

[1] Gibbon considers this a sneer at the senators who had sold their votes to Justinian. —v. 39. Zonaras, ii. 60, edit. Par.

empire. The legislative, executive, and administrative powers of government were confounded, as well as concentrated, in the person of the sovereign. The emperor represented the sovereignty of Rome, which, even after the establishment of Christianity, was considered as something superhuman, if not precisely a divine institution. But, so ill can despotism balance the various powers of the State, and so incapable is it of studying the condition of the governed, that even under the best emperors, seditions and rebellions were not rare. They constituted the only means whereby the people could make their petitions heard; and the moment the populace ceased to be overawed by military force, every trifling discontent might, from accident, break out into a rebellion. The continual abuse to which arbitrary power is liable was felt by the emperors; and several of them attempted to restrain its exercise, in order that the general principles of legislation might not be violated by the imperial ordinances. Such laws express the sentiments of justice which animate the administration, but they are always useless; for no law can be of any avail unless a right to enforce its observance exist in some tribunal, independent of the legislative and executive powers of the State; and the very existence of such a tribunal implies that the State possesses a constitution which renders the law more powerful than the prince. Much, however, as many of the Roman emperors may have loved justice, no one was ever found who felt inclined to diminish his own authority so far as to render the law permanently superior to his own will. Yet a strong impulse towards improvement was felt throughout the empire; and, if the middle and upper classes of society had not been already so far reduced in number as to make their influence almost nugatory in the scale of civilisation, there might have been some hope of the political regeneration of the Roman state. Patriotism and political honesty can, however, only become national virtues when the people possess a control over the conduct of their rulers, and when the rulers themselves publicly announce their political principles.

Erroneous views also of political economy led many of the emperors to increase the evil which they were endeavouring to remedy.[1] Had the Emperor Anastasius left the three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of gold which he accumulated in

[1] Julian caused a famine at Antioch, by fixing the price at which provisions were to be sold, and distributing four hundred thousand bushels of grain without judgment, as appears from his own account in the *Misopogon*.

the treasury circulating among his subjects, or had he employed it in works extending the industry of his people, and adding to the security of their property, it is probable that his reign would have very greatly augmented the population of the empire, and pressed back the barbarians on their own thinly peopled lands. If it had been in his power to have added to this boon some guarantee against arbitrary impositions on the part of his successors, and against the unjust exactions of the administration, there can be no doubt that his reign would have restored to the empire much of the pristine energy of the republic; and that, instead of giving a false brilliancy to the reign of Justinian, he would have increased the happiness of the most civilised portion of mankind, and given a new impulse to population.

Section XII

State of Civilisation, and Influence of National Feelings during this Period

The ravages of the Goths and Huns in Europe and Asia assisted in producing a great change in the state of society in the Eastern Empire, even though their efforts at conquest were successfully repulsed. In many provinces the higher classes were completely exterminated. The loss of their slaves and serfs, who had been carried away by the invaders, either reduced them to the condition of humble cultivators, or forced them to emigrate, and abandon their land, from which they were unable to obtain any revenue in the miserable state of cultivation to which the capture of their slaves, the destruction of their agricultural buildings, and the want of a market, had reduced the country. In many of the towns the diminished population was reduced to misery by the ruin of the district. The higher classes disappeared under the weight of the municipal duties which they were called upon to perform. Houses remained unlet; and even when let, the portion of rent which was not absorbed by the imperial taxes, was insufficient to supply the demands of the local expenditure. The labourer and the artisan alone could find bread; the walls of cities were allowed to fall into ruins; the streets were neglected; many public buildings had become useless; aqueducts remained unrepaired; internal communications ceased; and, with the extinction of the wealthy and educated classes,

the local prejudices of the lower orders became the law of society. Yet, on the other hand, even amidst all the evidences of decline and misery in many parts of the empire, there were some favoured cities which afforded evidence of progress. The lives and fortunes of the lower orders, and particularly of the slaves, were much better protected than in the most glorious periods of Greek and Roman history. The police was improved; and though luxury assisted the progress of effeminacy, it also aided the progress of civilisation by giving stability to order. The streets of the great cities of the East were traversed with as much security during the night as by day.

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

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

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

in checking the civil tyranny of the emperors and the religious despotism of the popes.

Though the emperor still maintained his supremacy over the clergy, and regarded and treated the popes and patriarchs as his ministers, still the church as a body had already rendered itself superior to the person of the emperor, and had established the principle, that the orthodoxy of the emperor was a law of the empire.[1] The Patriarch of Constantinople, suspecting the emperor Anastasius of attachment to the Eutychian heresy, refused to crown him until he gave a written declaration of his orthodoxy.[2] Yet the ceremony of the emperor's receiving the imperial crown from the Patriarch was introduced for the first time, on the accession of Leo the Great, sixty-six years before the election of Anastasius.[3] It is true that the church was not always able to enforce the observance of the principle that the empire of the East could only be governed by an orthodox sovereign. The aristocracy and the army proved at times stronger than the orthodox clergy.

The state of literature and the fine arts always affords a correct representation of the condition of society among the Greeks, though the fine arts, during the existence of the Roman empire, were more closely connected with the government and the aristocracy than with popular feelings. The assertion that Christianity tended to accelerate the decline of the Roman empire has been already refuted; but although the Eastern Empire received immeasurable benefits from Christianity, both politically and socially, still the literature and the fine arts of Greece received from it a mortal blow. The Christians soon declared themselves the enemies of all pagan literature. Homer, and the Attic tragedians, were prohibited books; and the fine arts were proscribed, if not persecuted. Many of the early fathers held opinions which were not uncongenial with the fierce contempt for letters and art entertained by the first Mohammedans. It is true that this anti-pagan spirit might have proved temporary, had it not occurred at a period when the decline of society had begun to render knowledge rarer, and learning of more difficult attainment than formerly.

[1] The Theodosian Code, and particularly the sixteenth book, proves the supremacy of the civil power.

[2] Eutyches taught that in Christ there was but one nature, namely, that of the Word, who became incarnate.—Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, translated by James Murdock, D.D.; edited by Soames; 4 vols., London, 1841; vol. i. 490. This excellent translation contains many valuable notes.

[3] Gibbon, ch. xxxvi. note 68.

Theodosius the Younger found the administration in danger of not procuring a regular supply of well-educated aspirants to civil offices; and in order to preserve the State from such a misfortune, he established a university at Constantinople, as has been already mentioned,[1] and which was maintained at the public expense. The composition of this university demonstrates the important political position occupied by the Greek nation: fifteen professors were appointed to teach Greek, grammar, and literature; thirteen only were named to give instruction in Latin; two professors of law were added, and one of philosophy. Such was the imperial university of Theodosius, who did everything in his power to render the rank of professor highly honourable. The candidate who aspired to a chair in the university was obliged to undergo an examination before the senate, and it was necessary for him to possess an irreproachable moral character, as well as to prove that his learning was profound. The term of twenty years' service secured for the professors the title of count, and placed them among the nobility of the empire. Learning, it is evident, was still honoured and cultivated in the East; but the attention of the great body of society was directed to religious controversy, and the greatest talents were devoted to these contests. The few philosophers who kept aloof from the disputes of the Christian church, plunged into a mysticism more injurious to the human intellect, and less likely to be of any use to society, than the most furious controversy. Most of these speculators in metaphysical science abandoned all interest in the fate of their country, and in the affairs of this world, from an idle hope of being able to establish a personal intercourse with an imaginary world of spirits. With the exception of religious writings, and historical works, there was very little in the literature of this period which could be called popular. The people amused themselves with chariot races instead of the drama; and, among the higher orders, music had long taken the place of poetry. Yet the poets wanted genius, not encouragement; for John Lydus tells us that one of his poetical effusions was rewarded by the patron in whose praise it was written, with a gold byzant for each line. Pindar probably would not have expected more.[2]

The same genius which inspires poetry is necessary to excellence in the fine arts; yet, as these are more mechanical in their execution, good taste may be long retained, after inspira-

[1] Page 179. [2] Lydus, *De Magistratibus*, iii. 27, p. 219, edit. Bonn.

tion has entirely ceased, by the mere effect of imitating good models. The very constitution of society seemed to forbid the existence of genius. In order to produce the highest degree of excellence in works of literature and art, it seems absolutely necessary that the author and the public should participate in some common feelings of admiration for simplicity, beauty, and sublimity. When the condition of society places the patron of works of genius in a totally different rank of life from their authors, and renders the criticisms of a small and exclusive circle of individuals the law in literature and art, then an artificial taste must be cultivated, in order to secure the applause of those who alone possess the means of rewarding the merit of which they approve. The very fact that this taste, which the author or the artist is called upon to gratify, is to him more a task of artificial study than an effusion of natural feeling, must of itself produce a tendency to exaggeration or mannerism. There is nothing in the range of human affairs so completely democratic as taste. Demosthenes spoke to the crowd; Phidias worked for the people.

Christianity engaged in direct war with the arts. The Greeks had united painting, sculpture, and architecture, in such a way, that their temples formed a harmonious illustration of the beauties of the fine arts. The finest temples were museums of paganism, and, consequently, Christianity repudiated all connection with this class of buildings until it had disfigured and degraded them. The courts of judicature, the basilicas, not the temples, were chosen as the models of Christian churches, and the adoption of the ideal beauty of ancient sculpture was treated with contempt. The earlier Fathers of the church wished to represent our Saviour as unlike the types of the pagan divinities as possible.[1]

Works of art gradually lost their value as creations of the mind; and their destruction commenced whenever the material of which they were composed was of great value, or happened to be wanted for some other purpose more useful in the opinion of the possessor. The Theodosian Code contains many laws against the destruction of works of ancient art and the plundering of tombs.[2] The Christian religion, when it deprived the temples and the statues of a religious sanction, permitted the avaricious to destroy them in order to appropriate the materials; and, when all reverence for antiquity was effaced, it became a

[1] Milman's *History of Christianity*, ii. 353; Paris edit.
[2] *Cod. Theodos.* ix. tit. 17.

profitable, though disgraceful occupation, to ransack the pagan tombs for the ornaments which they contained. The clergy of the new religion demanded the construction of new churches; and the desecrated buildings, falling into ruins, supplied materials at less expense than the quarries.

Many of the celebrated works of art which had been transported to Constantinople at its foundation, were destroyed in the numerous conflagrations to which that city was always liable. The celebrated statues of the Muses perished in the time of Arcadius. The fashion of erecting statues had not become obsolete, though statuary and sculpture had sunk in the general decline of taste; but the vanity of the ambitious was more gratified by the costliness of the material than by the beauty of the workmanship. A silver statue of the Empress Eudocia, placed on a column of porphyry, excited so greatly the indignation of John Chrysostom, that he indulged in the most violent invectives against the empress. His virulence caused the government to exile him from the patriarchal chair. Many valuable Grecian works of bronze were melted down, in order to form a colossal statue of the Emperor Anastasius, which was placed on a lofty column to adorn the capital;[1] others, of gold and silver, were melted, and coined into money, and augmented the sums which he laid up in the public treasury. Still it is unquestionable that a taste for painting had not entirely ceased among the educated and wealthy classes. Mosaics and engraved gems were fashionable luxuries, but the general poverty had decreased the numbers of the patrons of art, and the prejudices of the Christians had greatly restricted its range.

[1] Zeno erected an equestrian statue of his ally Theodoric in the palace.—Jornandes, *De Reb. Get.* 57. The senate of Rome erected a golden statue of Theodoric.—Isidor, *Chron. Æv.* 549. Procopius describes a rude mosaic statue representing Theodoric, which soon began to fall to pieces, and was considered by the people as an emblem of the Ostrogothic monarchy. Was this not probably a Gothic imitation of a chrys-elephantine statue?—Procop. *De Bell. Goth.* i. 24.

CHAPTER III

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

Influence of the imperial power on the condition of the Greek nation during the reign of Justinian—Military forces of the empire—Influence of Justinian's legislation on the Greek population of the empire—Internal administration, as it affected the Greek nation—Influence of Justinian's conquests on the Greek population, and the change effected by the conquest of the Vandal kingdom of Africa—Causes of the easy conquest of the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy by Belisarius, and of the conquests in Spain—Relations of the northern nations with the Roman empire and the Greek nation—Relations with Persia—Commercial position of the Greeks, and comparison with the other nations living under the Roman government—Influence of the orthodox church on the national feelings of the Greeks—State of Athens to the extinction of its schools by Justinian.

SECTION I

INFLUENCE OF THE IMPERIAL POWER ON THE CONDITION OF THE GREEK NATION DURING THE REIGN OF JUSTINIAN

IT happens not unfrequently, that, during long periods of time, national feelings and popular institutions escape the attention of historians; their feeble traces are lost in the importance of events, apparently the effect of accident, destiny, or the special intervention of Providence. In such cases, history becomes a chronicle of facts, or a series of biographical sketches; and it ceases to yield the instructive lessons which it always affords, as long as it connects events with local habits, national customs, and the general ideas of a people. The history of the Eastern Empire often assumes this form, and is frequently little better than a mere chronicle. Its historians hardly display national character or popular feeling, and only participate in the superstition and party spirit of their situation in society. In spite of the brilliant events which have given the reign of Justinian a prominent place in the annals of mankind, it is presented to us in a series of isolated and incongruous facts. Its chief interest is derived from the biographical memorials of Belisarius, Theodora, and Justinian; and its most instructive lesson has been drawn from the influence which its

legislation has exercised on foreign nations. The unerring instinct of mankind has, however, fixed on this period as one of the greatest eras in man's annals. The actors may have been men of ordinary merit, but the events of which they were the agents effected the mightiest revolutions in society. The frame of the ancient world was broken to pieces, and men long looked back with wonder and admiration at the fragments which remained, to prove the existence of a nobler race than their own. The Eastern Empire, though too powerful to fear any external enemy, was withering away from the rapidity with which the State devoured the resources of the people; and this malady or corruption of the Roman government appeared to the wisest men of the age so utterly incurable, that it was supposed to indicate the approaching dissolution of the globe. No dawn of a new social organisation had yet manifested its advent in any part of the known world. A large portion, perhaps the majority of the human race, continued to live in a state of slavery; and slaves were still regarded as intelligent domestic animals, not as men.[1] Society was destined to be regenerated by the destruction of predial slavery; but, to destroy predial slavery, the free inhabitants of the civilised world were compelled to descend to the state of poverty and ignorance in which they had, for ages, kept the servile population. The field for general improvement could only be opened, and the reorganisation of society could only commence, when slaves and freemen were so closely intermingled in the cares and duties of life as to destroy the prejudices of class; then, at last, feelings of philanthropy were called into action by the necessities of man's condition.

The reign of Justinian is more remarkable as a portion of the history of mankind, than as a chapter in the annals of the Roman empire or of the Greek nation. The changes of centuries passed in rapid succession before the eyes of one generation. The life of Belisarius, either in its reality or its romantic form, has typified his age. In his early youth, the world was populous and wealthy, the empire rich and powerful. He conquered extensive realms and mighty nations, and led kings captive to the footstool of Justinian, the lawgiver of civilisation. Old age arrived; Belisarius sank into the grave suspected and impoverished by his feeble and ungrateful master, and the world, from the banks of the Euphrates to

[1] "Oh demens, ita servus homo est?"—Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 221.

those of the Tagus, presented the awful spectacle of famine and plague, of ruined cities, and of nations on the brink of extermination. The impression on the hearts of men was profound. Fragments of Gothic poetry, legends of Persian literature, and the fate of Belisarius himself, still indicate the eager attention with which this period was long regarded.

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

It is impossible to form a correct idea of the position of the Greek population in the East, without taking a general, though cursory view of the nature of the Roman administration, and observing the effect which it produced on the whole population of the empire. The contrast presented by the increasing endeavours of the government to centralise every branch of the administration, and the additional strength which local feelings were gaining in the distant provinces, is a singular though natural consequence of the increasing wants of the sovereign, and the declining civilisation of the people. The civil organisation of the empire attained its highest degree of perfection in the reign of Justinian; the imperial power secured a practical supremacy over the military officers and beneficed clergy, and placed them under the control of the civil departments of the state; the absolute authority of

the emperor was fully established, and systematically exercised in the army, the church, and the state. A century of prudent administration had infused new vigour into the government, and Justinian succeeded to the means of rendering himself one of the greatest conquerors in the annals of the Roman empire. The change which time had effected in the position of the emperors, from the reign of Constantine to that of Justinian, was by no means inconsiderable. Two hundred years, in any government, must prove productive of great alterations.

It is true that in theory the power of the military emperor was as great as that of the civil monarch; and, according to the phrases in fashion with their contemporaries, both Constantine and Justinian were constitutional sovereigns, equally restrained, in the exercise of their power, by the laws and usages of the Roman empire.[1] But there is an essential difference between the position of a general and a king; and all the Roman emperors, until the accession of Arcadius, had been generals. The leader of an army must always, to a certain extent, be the comrade of his soldiers; he must often participate in their feelings, and make their interests and views coincide with his own. This community of sentiment generally creates so close a connection, that the wishes of the troops exercise great influence over the conduct of their leader, and moderate to them, at least, the arbitrary exercise of despotic power, by confining it within the usages of military discipline, and the habits of military life. When the civil supremacy of the Roman emperors became firmly established by the changes which were introduced into the imperial armies after the time of Theodosius the Great, the emperor ceased to be personally connected with the army, and considered himself quite as much the master of the soldiers whom he paid, as of the subjects whom he taxed. The sovereign had no longer any notion of public opinion beyond its existence in the church, and its display in the factions of the court or the amphitheatre. The immediate effects of absolute power were not, however, fully revealed in the details of the administration, until the reign of Justinian. Various circumstances have been noticed in the preceding chapter, which tended to connect the policy of several of the

[1] "Sub libertate Romana" was the expression which marked the regularity of the imperial administration, based on rules of procedure and law, as opposed to an arbitrary despotism.

emperors who reigned during the fifth century with the interests of their subjects. Justinian found order introduced into every branch of the public administration, immense wealth accumulated in the imperial treasury, discipline re-established in the army, and the church eager to support an orthodox emperor. Unfortunately for mankind, this increase in the power of the emperor rendered him independent of the goodwill of his subjects, whose interests seemed to him subordinate to the exigencies of the public administration; and his reign proved one of the most injurious, in the history of the Roman empire, to the moral and political condition of its subjects. In forming an opinion concerning the events of Justinian's reign, it must be borne in mind that the foundation of its power and glory was laid by Anastasius, while Justinian sowed the seeds of the misfortunes of Maurice; and, by persecuting the very nationality of his heterodox subjects, prepared the way for the conquests of the Mussulmans.

Justinian mounted the throne with the feelings, and in the position, of a hereditary sovereign, prepared, however, by every advantage of circumstance, to hold out the expectation of a wise and prudent reign. Born and educated in a private station, he had attained the mature age of forty-five before he ascended the throne.[1] He had received an excellent education. He was a man of honourable intentions, and of a laborious disposition, attentive to business, and well versed in law and theology; but his abilities were moderate, his judgment was feeble, and he was deficient in decision of character. Simple in his own habits, he, nevertheless, added to the pomp and ceremonial of the imperial court, and strove to make the isolation of the emperor, as a superior being, visible in the public pageantry of government. Though ambitious of glory, he was infinitely more attentive to the exhibition of his power than to the adoption of measures for securing the essentials of national strength.

The Eastern Empire was an absolute monarchy, of a regular and systematic form. The emperor was the head of the government, and the master of all those engaged in the

[1] It would answer no purpose to crowd the pages of this work with references to Procopius. The statements in the Anecdotes, the Edifices, and the Histories, are too dissimilar to be cited together without explanations. Yet Procopius seems a valuable authority even in his anecdotes, and he shows himself often credulous in his Histories. Justinian appears to have been descended from a Sclavonic family. His father's name was Istok, of which Sabbatios is a translation. His mother and sister were named Wiglenitza. His own native name was Uprawda, corresponding to *jus*, *justitia*. Schafarik, *Slavische Alterthümer*, ii. 160; and Aleman's notes to the *Hist. Arcana* of Procopius, p. 418, edit. Bonn.

public service; but the administration was an immense establishment, artfully and scientifically constructed in its details.[1] The numerous individuals employed in each ministerial department of the State consisted of a body of men appropriated to that special service, which they were compelled to study attentively, to which they devoted their lives, and in which they were sure to rise by talents and industry. Each department of the State formed a separate profession, as completely distinct, and as perfectly organised in its internal arrangements, as the legal profession is in modern Europe. A Roman emperor would no more have thought of suddenly creating a financier, or an administrator, than a modern sovereign would think of making a lawyer. This circumstance explains at once how education and official knowledge were so long and so well preserved in the Roman administration, where, as in the law and the church, they flourished for ages after the extinction of literary acquirements in all other classes of the people;[2] and it affords also an explanation of the singular duration of the Roman government, and of its inherent principle of vitality. If it wanted the energy necessary for its own regeneration, which could only have proceeded from the influence of a free people on the sovereign power, it at least escaped the evils of official anarchy and vacillating government. Nothing but this systematic composition of the multifarious branches of the Roman administration could have preserved the empire from dissolution during the period in which it was a prey to internal wars and foreign invasions; and this supremacy of the system over the will of individuals gave a character of immutability to administrative procedure, which warranted the boast of the subjects of Constantine and Justinian that they lived under the protection of the Roman constitution. The greatest imperfection of the government arose from the total want of any popular control over the moral conduct of the public servants. Political morality, like pure taste, cannot live without the atmosphere of public opinion.[3]

[1] No correct idea of the Roman administration can be formed, without consulting the *Notitia Dignitatum et Administrationum*, in the excellent edition of Dr. Bœcking, Bonn, 1839, &c.

[2] The law of Valentinian, forbidding students to remain in Rome after the twentieth year of their age, shows that restrictions were put on education.—*Cod. Theod.* xiv. 9, 1.

[3] When we blame the evils of the Roman government, we ought not to overlook the inconveniences which would result in a declining state of society, from the neglect of general interests in large representative assemblies, intent on temporary expedients, and incapable, at such a period, of attending to anything but local claims.

The state of society in the Eastern Empire underwent far greater changes than the imperial administration. The race of wealthy nobles, whose princely fortunes and independent bearing had excited the fears and the avarice of the early Cæsars, had been long extinct. The imperial court and household now included all the higher classes in the capital. The senate was now only a corps of officials, and the people had no position in the State but that of tax-payers. While the officers of the civil, finance, and judicial departments, the clergy and the military, were the servants of the emperor, the people, the Roman people, were his slaves.[1] No connecting link of common interest or national sympathy united the various classes as one body, and connected them with the emperor. The only bond of union was one of universal oppression, as everything in the imperial government had become subordinate to the necessity of supplying the treasury with money. The fiscal severity of the Roman government had for centuries been gradually absorbing all the accumulated wealth of society, as the possession of large fortunes was almost sure to entail their confiscation. Even if the wealth of the higher classes in the provinces escaped this fate, it was, by the constitution of the empire, rendered responsible for the deficiencies which might occur in the taxes of the districts from which it was obtained; and thus the rich were everywhere rapidly sinking to the level of the general poverty. The destruction of the higher classes of society had swept away all the independent landed proprietors before Justinian commenced his series of reforms in the provinces.

The effect of these reforms extended to future times, and exercised an important influence on the internal composition of the Greek people. In ancient times, a very large portion of society consisted of slaves. They formed the great body of the rural population; and, as they received no moral training, they were inferior, in every mental quality, to the barbarians of the north: from this very cause they were utterly incapable of making any exertion to improve their condition; and whether the province which they inhabited belonged to the Romans or Greeks, the Goths or the Huns, they remained equally slaves. The oppressive system of the Roman financial administration,

[1] The Roman people now consisted chiefly of Greeks; but Latin seems to have been spoken in Illyricum and Thrace by a very numerous portion of the population. Perhaps the original languages of these countries blended easily with Latin from being cognate tongues, and soon began to form dialects which time has now modified into the Vallachian and Albanian languages of the present day.

by depressing the higher classes, and impoverishing the rich, found the lower orders at last burdened with the great part of the land-tax. The labourer of the soil became an object of great interest to the treasury, and, as the chief instrument in furnishing the financial resources of the State, obtained almost as important a position in the eyes of the fisc as the landed proprietor himself. The first laws which conferred any rights on the slave, are those which the Roman government enacted to prevent the landed proprietors from transferring their slaves engaged in the cultivation of lands, assessed for the land-tax, to other employments which, though more profitable to the proprietor of the slave, would have yielded a smaller or less permanent, return to the imperial treasury.[1] The avarice of the imperial treasury, by reducing the mass of the free population to the same degree of poverty as the slaves, had removed one cause of the separation of the two classes. The position of the slave had lost most of its moral degradation, and occupied precisely the same political position in society as the poor labourer, from the moment that the Roman fiscal laws compelled any freeman who had cultivated lands for the space of thirty years to remain for ever attached, with his descendants, to the same estate.[2] The lower orders were from that period blended into one class: the slave rose to be a member of this body; the freeman descended, but his descent was necessary for the improvement of the great bulk of the human race, and for the extinction of slavery. Such was the progress of civilisation in the Eastern Empire. The measures of Justinian which, by their fiscal rapacity, tended to sink the free population to the same state of poverty as the slaves, really prepared the way for the rise of the slaves as soon as any general improvement took place in the condition of the human race.

Justinian found the central administration still aided and controlled by the municipal institutions and the numerous corporate communities throughout the empire, as well as by the religious assemblies of the orthodox and heterodox congregations. Many of these bodies possessed large revenues. The fabric of the ancient world still existed. Consuls were still named. Rome, though subject to the Goths, preserved its senate. Constantinople enjoyed all the license of the hippodrome; Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and

[1] *Cod. Theod.* xi. tit. 3, 1, 2. *Cod. Just.* xi. tit. 48.
[2] *Cod. Just.* xi. tit. 48, 1, 19; and 1, 23. See page 160.

many other cities, received public distributions of grain. Athens and Sparta were still governed as little states, and a body of Greek provincial militia still guarded the pass of Thermopylæ. The Greek cities possessed their own revenues, and maintained their roads, schools, hospitals, police, public buildings, and aqueducts; they paid professors and public physicians, and kept their streets paved, cleaned, and lighted. The people enjoyed their local festivals and games; and though music had supplanted poetry, the theatres were still open for the public amusement.

Justinian defaced these traces of the ancient world far more rapidly in Greece than Theodoric in Italy. He was a merciless reformer, and his reforms were directed solely by fiscal calculations.[1] The importance of the consulate was abolished, to save the expenses attendant on the installation of the consuls. The Roman senators were exterminated in the Italian wars, during which the ancient race of the inhabitants of Rome was nearly destroyed.[2] Alexandria was deprived of its supplies of grain, and the Greeks in Egypt were reduced in number and consideration. Antioch was sacked by Chosroes, and the position of the Greek population of Syria permanently weakened.

But it was in Greece itself that the Hellenic race and institutions received the severest blow. Justinian seized the revenues of the free cities, and deprived them of their most valuable privileges, for the loss of their revenues compromised their political existence. Poverty produced barbarism. Roads, streets, and public buildings could no longer be repaired or constructed unless by the imperial treasury. That want of police which characterises the middle ages, began to be felt in the East. Public instruction was neglected, but the public charities were liberally supported; the professors and the physicians were robbed of the funds destined for their maintenance. The municipalities themselves continued to exist in an enfeebled state, for Justinian affected to reform, but never attempted to destroy them; and even his libeller, Procopius, only accuses him of plundering, not of destroying them. The poverty of the Greeks rendered it impossible

[1] Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* p. 74, 76, edit. Par.

[2] When Rome was repeopled, a senate seems to have again arisen, but it only perpetuated the name, and a mortal blow was given to the power of the municipality. The Pope assumed the direction of civil affairs, and prepared the way for his future temporal sovereignty.—See *Geschichte des Roemischen Rechts im Mittelalter.* F. C. Von Savigny. Vol. i. p. 367.

for them to supply their municipalities with new funds, or even to allow local taxes to be imposed, for maintaining the old establishments. At this crisis, the population was saved from utter barbarism by the close connection which existed between the clergy and the people, and the powerful influence of the church. The clergy and the people being united by a community of language, feelings, and prejudices, the clergy, as the most powerful class of the community, henceforth took the lead in all public business in the provinces. They lent their aid to support the charitable institutions, to replace the means of instruction, and to maintain the knowledge of the healing art; they supported the communal and municipal organisation of the people; but, while preserving the local feelings of the Greeks, they strengthened the foundations of a national organisation. History supplies few materials to illustrate the precise period at which the clergy in Greece formed their alliance with the municipal organisation of the people, independent of the central authority; but the alliance became of great national importance, and began to exercise permanent effects on the social existence of the Greeks, after the municipalities had been impoverished by Justinian's reforms.

Section II

Military Forces of the Empire

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

governments, and exterminated several powerful nations, while, at the same time, it laid the foundation of the power of new states and nations, some of which have maintained their existence to the present times.

The Eastern Empire bore no inconsiderable part in raising this mighty storm in the West, and in quelling its violence in the East; in exterminating the Goths and Vandals, and in arresting the progress of the Avars and Turks. Yet the number and composition of the Roman armies have often been treated by historians as weak and contemptible. It is impossible, in this sketch, to attempt any examination of the whole military establishment of the Roman empire during Justinian's reign; but in noticing the influence exercised by the military system on the Greek population, it is necessary to make a few general observations.[1] The army consisted of two distinct classes,—the regular troops, and the mercenaries. The regular troops were composed both of native subjects of the Roman empire, raised by conscription, and of barbarians, who had been allowed to occupy lands within the emperor's dominions, and to retain their own usages on the condition of furnishing a fixed number of recruits for the army. The Roman government still clung to the great law of the empire, that the portion of its subjects which paid the land-tax could not be allowed to escape that burden by entering the army.[2] The proprietors of the land were responsible for the tribute; the cultivators of the soil, both slaves and serfs, secured the amount of the public revenues; neither could be permitted to forego their fiscal obligations for their military duties.[3] For some centuries it had been more economical to purchase the service of the barbarians than to employ native troops; and perhaps, if the oppressive system of the imperial administration had not impaired the resources of the State, and diminished the population by consuming the capital of the people, this might have long continued to be the case. Native troops were always drawn from the mountainous districts, which paid a scanty tribute, and in which the population found difficulty in procuring subsistence. The invasions

[1] Lord Mahon, in his *Life of Belisarius* (chap. i.), gives a sketch of the Roman armies in Justinian's reign.

[2] *Cod. Just.* x. 32, 17; xii. 32, 2, 4. He who quitted his civil position as servant of the fisc was to be sent back to his duty. Citizens were not allowed to possess arms, except for hunting and travelling.

[3] The exemption of the military from taxation was used as an argument for conceding a similar privilege to the clergy, who were members of the militia warring against the legions of Satan.

of the barbarians, likewise, threw numbers of the peasantry of the provinces to the south of the Danube out of employment, and many of these entered the army. A supply of recruits was likewise obtained from the idle and needy population of the towns.[1] The most active and intelligent soldiers were placed in the cavalry,—a force that was drilled with the greatest care, subjected to the most exact discipline, and sustained the glory of the Roman arms in the field of battle.[2] As the higher and middle classes in the provinces had, for ages, been excluded from the military profession, and the army had been at last composed chiefly of the rudest and most ignorant peasants, of enfranchised slaves, and naturalised barbarians, military service was viewed with aversion; and the greatest repugnance arose among the civilians to become soldiers. In the mean time, the depopulation of the empire daily increased the difficulty of raising the number of recruits required for a service which embraced an immense extent of territory, and entailed a great destruction of human life.

The troops of the line, particularly the infantry, had deteriorated considerably in Justinian's time; but the artillery and engineer departments were not much inferior, in science and efficiency, to what they had been in the best days of the empire. Military resources, not military knowledge, had diminished. The same arsenals continued to exist; mere mechanical skill had been uninterruptedly exercised; and the constant demand which had existed for military mechanicians, armourers, and engineers, had never allowed the theoretical instruction of this class to be neglected, nor their practical skill to decline from want of employment. This fact requires to be borne in mind.[3]

[1] Slaves were, of course, excluded from military service by the Roman laws.—*Cod. Just.* xii. 33. 6, 7. Yet, in the decline of the empire, they were sometimes enfranchised in order to be admitted as recruits; and Justinian declares the slave free who had served in the army with his master's consent. The enactment proves that slaves were rapidly attaining the level to which the free population had sunk.—*Novell.* 81. Colons were also excluded from military service.—*Cod. Just.* xi. 48, 18.

[2] The cavalry was carefully trained to act on foot, and its steady behaviour on dismounting, when surrounded by superior numbers, proves the perfection of the Roman discipline, even in the time of Justinian. Procopius mentions this trait in his description of the battle of Callinicum.—*De Bell. Pers.* i. 18. Salomon made use of the same formation of the cavalry on foot against the African Moors.—*Vand.* book. ii. c. 12. It was again employed at the battle of Solacon, in the reign of the emperor Maurice.—Theophylactus, *Simoc.* ii. 4. Hannibal ridiculed the conduct of Æmilius Paulus in ordering the Roman cavalry to dismount at the battle of Cannæ. But there is no invariable rule in war.

[3] The engineers of Theodoric the Great could not be superior to those of Justinian, for Theodoric had often been obliged to obtain artists from the East; yet the tomb of Theodoric, near Ravenna, rivals the remains of the ante-Homeric times at Mycenæ. The circular stone of the dome is 35 feet in diameter, and weighs 940,000 lb.; yet it is

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

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

supposed to have been brought from the quarries in Istria.—See the plates in the *Histoire de l'Art par les Monumens, depuis sa Décadence au IV^e Siècle*, par Seroux D'Agincourt, tom. i. pl. xviii.

dangerous rival.[1] Though the barbarian mercenaries in the service of Rome generally proved far more efficient troops than their free countrymen, yet they were on the whole unequal to the native Roman cavalry of Justinian's army, the Cataphracti, sheathed in complete steel on the Persian model, and armed with the Grecian spear, who were still the best troops in a field of battle, and were the real type of the chivalry of the middle ages.

Justinian weakened the Roman army in several ways by his measures of reform. His anxiety to reduce its expenditure induced him to diminish the establishment of camels, horses, and chariots, which attended the troops for transporting the military machines and baggage. This train had been previously very large, as it was calculated to save the peasantry from any danger of having their labours interrupted, or their cattle seized, under the pretext of being required for transport. Numerous abuses were introduced by diminishing the pay of the troops, and by neglecting to pay them with regularity and to furnish them with proper food and clothing. At the same time, the efficiency of the army in the field was more seriously injured, by continuing the policy adopted by Anastasius, of restricting the power of the generals; a policy, however, which, it must be confessed, was not unnecessary in order to avoid greater evils. This is evident from the numerous rebellions in Justinian's reign, and the absolute want of any national or patriotic feeling in the majority of the Roman officers. Large armies were at times composed of a number of corps, each commanded by its own officer, over whom the nominal commander-in-chief had little or no authority; and it is to this circumstance that the unfortunate results of some of the Gothic and Persian campaigns are to be attributed, and not to any inferiority of the Roman troops. Even Belisarius himself, though he gave many proofs of attachment to Justinian's throne, was watched with the greatest jealousy. He was treated with constant distrust, and his officers were at times encouraged to dispute his measures, and never punished for disobeying his orders.[2] The fact is, that

[1] Justinian, however, sometimes united the civil and military power.—*Novell.* 24-31.

[2] Narses had evidently been sent to Italy by Justinian before the conquest of Witiges, expressly to watch Belisarius, and guard against his acquiring too much personal influence over the troops. The circumstance of officers of rank being allowed to maintain a large body-guard of cavalry, the members of which swore fidelity to their chief, as well as allegiance to the emperor, is a singular fact when contrasted with the imperial jealousy. The guards of Belisarius amounted to seven thousand horsemen

Belisarius might, if so disposed, have assumed the purple, and perhaps dethroned his master. Narses was the only general who was implicitly trusted and steadily supported; but Narses was an aged eunuch, and could never have become emperor.

The imperial military forces consisted of one hundred and fifty thousand men; and though the extent of the frontier which these troops were compelled to guard was very great, and lay open to the incursions of many active hostile tribes, still Justinian was able to assemble some admirably appointed armies for his foreign expeditions.[1] The armament which accompanied Belisarius to Africa consisted of ten thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and twenty thousand sailors. Belisarius must have had about thirty thousand troops under his command in Italy before the taking of Ravenna. Germanus, when he arrived in Africa, found that only one-third of the Roman troops about Carthage had remained faithful, and the rebels under Stozas amounted to eight thousand men. As there were still troops in Numidia which had not joined the deserters, the whole Roman force in Africa cannot have been less than fifteen thousand. Narses, in the year 551, when the empire began to show evident proofs of the bad effects of Justinian's government, could assemble thirty thousand chosen troops, an army which defeated the veterans of Totila, and destroyed the fierce bands of Franks and Alemanns which hoped to wrest Italy from the Romans. The character of the Roman troops, in spite of all that modern writers have said to depreciate them, still stood so high that Totila, the warlike monarch of the Goths, strove to induce them to join his standard by offers of high pay. No army had yet proved itself equal to the Roman on the field of battle; and their exploits in Spain, Africa, Colchis, and Mesopotamia, prove their excellence, though the defeats which they sustained, both from the Persians and on the Danube, reveal the fact that their enemies were improving in military

after his return from the conquest of Italy.—Procopius, *Gotth.* iii. c. 1, vol. iii. p. 283, edit. Bonn. Crassus is reported to have said that he only could be called a rich man who could maintain an army. The households of Piso and his wife Plancina were so numerous, that when Piso resisted the orders of Germanicus, he armed several thousand slaves and formed a corps equal to a Roman legion.—Tacitus, *Ann.* ii. 80.

[1] Agathias states that the military establishment of the empire once consisted of 645,000 men. The statement seems to have rested on official documents, as it is repeated by another writer. It probably included the local militia and the garrisons, as well as the regular army.—Agathias, v. 157. edit. Par. Joannes Antiochenus, *Frag. Historicorum Græc.* iv. 622, edit. Didot. See the note to the Anecdotes of Procopius, p. 164, edit. Par., and vol. iii. p. 454, of the edition of Bonn. Gibbon (i. 27) states the Roman forces, in the time of Hadrian, at 375,000, a number which seems too small for anything but the regular army.

science, and watching every opportunity of availing themselves of any neglect of the Roman government in maintaining the efficiency of the army.

Numerous examples could be cited of almost incredible disorders in the armies,—originating generally in the misconduct of the imperial government. Belisarius attempted, but found it impossible, to enforce strict discipline,[1] when the soldiers were unpaid, and the officers authorised to act independently of his orders. Two thousand Heruls ventured to quit his standard in Italy, and, after marching round the Adriatic, were pardoned by Justinian, and again engaged in the imperial service. Procopius mentions repeatedly that the conduct of the unpaid and unpunished troops ruined the provinces; and in Africa, no less than three Roman officers, Stozas, Maximin, and Gontharis, attempted to render themselves independent, and were supported by large bodies of troops.[2] The Greeks were the only portion of the population who were considered as sincerely attached to the imperial government, or, at least, who would readily defend it against every enemy; and accordingly, Gontharis, when he wished to secure Carthage, ordered all the Greeks to be murdered without distinction. The Greeks were, however, from their position and rank in society as burgesses or tax-payers, almost entirely excluded from the army, and though they furnished the greater part of the sailors for the fleet, they were generally an unwarlike population. Witiges, the Gothic king, calls the Roman army of Belisarius an army of Greeks, a band of pirates, actors, and mountebanks.[3]

One of the most unfortunate measures of Justinian was the disbanding all the provincial militia. This is incidentally mentioned in the Secret History of Procopius, who informs us that Thermopylæ had been previously guarded by two thousand of this militia; but that this corps was dissolved, and a garrison of regular troops placed in Greece.[4] As a general measure it was probably dictated by a plan of financial reform, and not by any fear of popular insurrection; but its

[1] At the commencement of his African expedition he executed two Huns for killing one of their companions in a drunken quarrel.—Procopius, *Vand.* i. c. 12. Belisarius, in addressing his troops, told them that the Persians did not surpass them in valour, but excelled them in discipline.—Procopius, *Pers.* i. c. 14.

[2] Constantine, one of the officers of the army in Italy, attempted to assassinate Belisarius, who had ordered him to restore property which he had plundered. The African army rebelled against John the patrician.—Corippus, vii. 50. The garrison of Petra entered the service of Chosroes.—Procopius, *Pers.* ii. 17. That of Spoleto joined Totila.—*Gotth.* iii. 12; iv. 26.

[3] Procopius, *Gotth.* i. c. 18, 29.

[4] Procopius, *Hist. An.* 26; vol. iii. 147, edit. Bonn. *Gotth.* iv. 26.

effects were extremely injurious to the empire in the declining state of society, and in the increasing disorganisation of the central power; and though it may possibly have prevented some provinces from recovering their independence by their own arms, it prepared the way for the easy conquests of the Avars and Arabs. Justinian was desirous of centralising all power, and rendering all public burdens uniform and systematic; and had adopted the opinion that it was cheaper to defend the empire by walls and fortresses than by a movable army. The practice of moving the troops with great celerity to defend the frontiers, had induced the officers to abandon the ancient practice of fortifying a regular camp; and at last, even the art of encamping was neglected.[1] The barbarians, however, could always move with greater rapidity than the regular troops of the empire.

To secure the frontiers, Justinian adopted a plan of constructing extensive lines supported by innumerable forts and castles, in which he placed garrisons, in order that they might be ready to sally out on the invading bands. These lines extended from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, and were farther strengthened by the long wall of Anastasius, which covered Constantinople by walls protecting the Thracian Chersonesus and the Peninsula of Pallene, and by fortifications at Thermopylæ, and at the Isthmus of Corinth, which were all carefully repaired. At all these posts permanent garrisons were maintained. The eulogy of Procopius on the public edifices of Justinian seems almost irreconcilable with the events of the latter years of his reign; for Zabergan, king of the Huns, penetrated through breaches he found unrepaired in the long wall, and advanced almost to the very suburbs of Constantinople.[2]

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

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

1 *Menandri Frag.* p. 440, edit. Bonn. 2 See *infra*, page 254.

It happened, during the siege of Auximum in Italy, that Belisarius was placed in difficulty from the want of an instantaneous means of communicating orders to the troops engaged in skirmishing with the Goths. On this occasion it was suggested to him by Procopius, his secretary and the historian of his wars, to replace the forgotten bugle-calls by making use of the brazen trumpet of the cavalry to sound a charge, and of the infantry bugle to summon a retreat.[1]

Foreigners were preferred by the emperors as the occupants of the highest military commands; and the confidence with which the barbarian chiefs were honoured by the court enabled many to reach the highest rank in the army. Narses, the most distinguished military leader after Belisarius, was a Pers-Armenian captive. Peter, who commanded against the Persians in the campaign of 528, was also a Pers-Armenian. Pharas, who besieged Gelimer in Mount Pappua, was a Herul. Mundus, who commanded in Illyria and Dalmatia, was a Gepid prince.[2] Chilbud, who, after several victories, perished with his army in defending the frontiers against the Sclavonians, was of northern descent, as may be inferred from his name. Salomon, who governed Africa with great courage and ability, was a eunuch from Dara. Artaban was an Armenian prince. John Troglita, the patrician, the hero of the poem of Corippus, called the Johannid, is also supposed to have been an Armenian.[3] Yet the empire might still have furnished excellent officers, as well as valiant troops; for the Isaurians and Thracians continued to distinguish themselves in every field of battle, and were equal in courage to the fiercest of the barbarians.

It became the fashion in the army to imitate the manners and habits of the barbarians, their headlong personal courage became the most admired quality, even in the highest rank, and nothing tended more to hasten the decay of the military art. The officers in the Roman armies became more intent on distinguishing themselves for personal exploits than for exact order and strict discipline in their corps. Even Belisarius himself appears at times to have forgotten the duties of a general in his eagerness to exhibit his personal valour on his

[1] Procopius, *Gotth.* ii. 24. The bugle of the infantry was composed of wood and leather. [2] Joan. Malalas, p. alt. 64, edit. Ven.

[3] Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, tom. ix. 91, 93. *Notes de Saint Martin.* Many more might be added. John, the Armenian, was killed in the pursuit of Gelimer. Akoum, a Hun, commanded the troops in Illyria.—Theoph. p. 184. Peran, son of a king of Iberia; Bessas, a Goth, but subject of the empire; Isak, an Armenian; Philemuth, a Hun, were all generals. See the Index to Procopius.

bay charger; though he may, on such occasions, have considered that the necessity of keeping up the spirits of his army was a sufficient apology for his rashness. Unquestionably the army, as a military establishment, had declined in excellence ere Justinian ascended the throne, and his reign tended to sink it much lower; yet it is probable that it was never more remarkable for the enterprising valour of its officers, or for their personal skill in the use of their weapons. The death of numbers of the highest rank in battles and skirmishes in which they rashly engaged, proves this fact. There was, however, one important feature of ancient tactics still preserved in the Roman armies, which gave them a decided superiority over their enemies. They had still the confidence in their discipline and skill to form their ranks, and encounter their opponents in line; the bravest of their enemies, whether on the banks of the Danube or the Tigris, only ventured to charge them, or receive their attack, in close masses.[1]

Section III

Influence of Justinian's Legislation on the Greek Population

The Greeks long remained strangers to the Roman law. The free cities continued to be governed by their own legal systems and local usages, and the Greek lawyers did not consider it necessary to study the civil law of their masters. But this state of things underwent a great modification, after Constantine transformed the Greek town of Byzantium into the Roman city of Constantinople. The imperial administration, after that period, came into more immediate connection with its eastern subjects; the legislative power of the emperors was more frequently exercised in the regulation of provincial business; and the Christian church, by uniting the whole Greek population into one body, often called forth general measures of legislation. While the confusion arising from the incongruity of old laws to the new exigencies of society was generally felt, the increasing poverty, depopulation, and want of education in the Greek cities, rendered it difficult to maintain the ancient tribunals. The Greeks were often compelled to study at the universities where Roman

[1] Even the rebel troops in Africa fought in bands, like barbarians, and not in regular ranks, like Romans.

jurisprudence alone was cultivated, and thus the municipal law-courts were at last guided in their decisions by the rules of Roman law. As the number of the native tribunals decreased, their duties were performed by judges named by the imperial administration; and thus Roman law, silently, and without any violent change or direct legislative enactment, was generally introduced into Greece.

Justinian, from the moment of his accession to the throne, devoted his attention to the improvement of every department of government, and carried his favourite plan, of centralising the direction of the complicated machine of the Roman administration in his own person, as far as possible. The necessity of condensing the various authorities of Roman jurisprudence, and of reducing the mass of legal opinions of eminent lawyers into a system of legislative enactments, possessing unity of form and facility of reference, was deeply felt. Such a system of legislation is useful in every country; but it becomes peculiarly necessary, after a long period of civilisation, in an absolute monarchy, in order to restrain the decisions of legal tribunals by published law, and prevent the judges from assuming arbitrary power, under the pretext of interpreting obsolete edicts and conflicting decisions. A code of laws, to a certain degree, serves as a barrier against despotism, for it supplies the people with the means of calmly confuting the acts of their government and the decisions of their judges by recognised principles of justice; and at the same time it is a useful ally to the absolute sovereign, as it supplies him with increased facilities for detecting legal injustice committed by his official agents.

The faults or merits of Justinian's system of laws belong to the lawyers intrusted with the execution of his project, but the honour of having commanded this work may be ascribed to the emperor alone. It is to be regretted that the position of an absolute sovereign is so liable to temptation from passing events, that Justinian himself could not refrain from injuring the surest monument of his fame, by later enactments, which mark too clearly that they emanated either from his own increasing avarice, or from weakness in yielding to the passions of his wife or courtiers.[1] It could not be expected that his political sagacity should have devised the means of securing the rights of his subjects against the arbitrary exercise of his own power; but he might have consecrated the great

[1] Justinian indicates that he was sensible of this.—*Cod. Just.* xii. 24, 7.

principle of equity, that legislation can never act as a retrospective decision; and he might have ordered his magistrates to adopt the oath of the Egyptian judges, who swore, when they entered an office, that they would never depart from the principles of equity (law), and that if the sovereign ordered them to do wrong, they would not obey. Justinian, however, was too much of a despot, and too little of a statesman, to proclaim the law, even while retaining the legislative power in his person, to be superior to the executive branch of the government. But in maintaining that the laws of Justinian might have been rendered more perfect, and have been framed to confer greater benefits on mankind, it is not to be denied that the work is one of the most remarkable monuments of human wisdom; and we should remember with gratitude, that for thirteen hundred years the Pandects served as the magazine or source of legal lore, and constitution of civil rights, to the Christian world, both in the East and in the West; and if it has now become an instrument of administrative tyranny in the continental monarchies of Europe, the fault is in the nations who refuse to follow out the principles of equity logically in regulating the dispensation of justice, and do not raise the law above the sovereign, nor render every minister and public servant amenable to the regular tribunals for every act he may commit in the exercise of his official duty, like the humblest citizen.[1]

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

[1] In Continental constitutions there is generally an article declaring that all citizens are equal before the law, and yet this is followed by others which allow the sovereign to establish exceptional tribunals for judging the conduct of government officials, according to a system of privileges and immunities called administrative law. Where true liberty exists, every agent of the administration, from the gendarme to the finance minister, must be rendered personally responsible to the citizen whom his act affects for the legality of every act he carries into execution. This is the real foundation of English liberty, and the great legal principle which distinguishes the law of England from the laws of the continental nations of Europe and that of Rome, from which they are derived.

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

The laws and legislation of Justinian throw only an indistinct and vague light on the state of the Greek population. They were drawn entirely from Roman sources, calculated for a Roman state of society, and occupied with Roman forms and institutions. Justinian was so anxious to preserve them in all their purity, that he adopted two measures to secure them from alteration. The copyists were commanded to refrain from any abridgment, and the commentators were ordered to follow the literal sense of the laws. All schools of law were likewise forbidden, except those of Constantinople, Rome, and Berytus, a regulation which must have been adopted to guard the Roman law from being corrupted, by falling into the hands of Greek teachers, and becoming confounded with the customary law of the various Greek provinces.[1] This restriction, and the importance attached to it by the emperor, prove that the Roman law was now the universal rule of conduct in the empire. Justinian took every measure which prudence could dictate to secure the best and purest legal instruction and administration for the Roman tribunals; but only a small number of students could study in the licensed schools, and Rome, one of these schools, was, at the time of the publication of the law, in the hands of the

[1] *Const. ad Antecessores*, and *De Confirm. Digestorum*. *Cod. Just.* i. 17, 3. Joan. Malalas (p. 63, edit. Ven.) says that Justinian sent a copy of his laws to Athens as well as to Berytus.

Goths. It is therefore not surprising that a rapid decline in the knowledge of Roman law commenced very shortly after the promulgation of Justinian's legislation.

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

Section IV

Internal Administration, as it Affected the Greeks

The internal administration of Justinian was remarkable for religious intolerance and financial rapacity.[1] Both assisted in increasing the deep-rooted hatred of the imperial power throughout the provinces, and his successors soon experienced the bitter effects of his policy. Even the commencement of his own reign gave some alarming manifestations of the general feeling. The celebrated sedition of the Nika, though it broke out among the factions of the amphitheatre, acquired its importance in consequence of popular dissatisfaction with the fiscal measures of the emperor. This sedition possesses an unfortunate celebrity in the annals of the empire, from the destruction of many public buildings and numerous works of ancient art, occasioned by the conflagrations raised by the

[1] Evagrius, iv. 29. Procopius, *Anecd.* II.

rebels. Belisarius succeeded in suppressing it with considerable difficulty after much bloodshed, and not until Justinian had felt his throne in imminent danger. The alarm produced a lasting impression on his mind; and more than one instance occurred during his reign to remind him that popular sedition puts a limit to despotic power. At a subsequent period, an insurrection of the people compelled him to abandon a project for recruiting the imperial finances, according to a common resource of arbitrary sovereigns, by debasing the value of the coin.[1]

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

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

[1] *Malalæ Ch.* pars. ii. p. 80, edit. Ven.

rather a distinct nation than a privileged class. They were scattered over all the provinces of Justinian's empire, from the Atlantic to the Euphrates, and constituted, at this period, the real nucleus of civil society in the Roman world. Of their influence, many distinct traces may be found, even after the extinction of the Roman power, both in the East and in the West.[1]

The population of the provinces, and more especially the proprietors and cultivators of the soil, stood completely apart from these representatives of the Roman supremacy, and almost in a state of direct opposition to the government. The weight of the Roman yoke had now pressed down all the provincials to nearly the same level. As a general rule, they were excluded from the profession of arms;[2] their poverty caused them to neglect the cultivation of arts, sciences, and literature, and their whole attention was absorbed in watching the increasing rapacity of the imperial treasury, and in finding means to evade the oppression which they saw no possibility of resisting. The land and capitation taxes formed the source of this oppression. No taxes were, perhaps, more equitable in their general principle, and few appear ever to have been administered, for so long a period, with such unfeeling prudence. Their severity had been so gradually increased, that but a very small annual encroachment had been made on the savings of the people, and centuries elapsed before its whole accumulated capital was consumed; but at last the whole wealth of the empire was drawn into the imperial treasury; fruit-trees were cut down, and free men were sold to pay taxes; vineyards were rooted out, and buildings were destroyed to escape taxation.

The manner of collecting the land and capitation taxes displays singular ingenuity in the mode of estimating the value of the property to be taxed, and an inhuman sagacity in framing a system capable of extracting the last farthing which that property could yield. The registers underwent a public revision every fifteenth year, but the *indictio*, or amount

[1] *Notitia Dignitatum*, edit. Boecking. Lydus, *De Magistratibus Reipub. Romanæ*, ii. 13. *C. T.* vi. tit. 5. *C. J.* xii. 8. "Ut dignitatum ordo servetur." The prefect of Africa was allowed by Justinian to have three hundred and ninety-six officers and clerks, and each of his lieutenants and deputies, fifty. *Cod. Just.* i. 27, 3. Arcadius had forbidden the Comes of the Orient, who was under the orders of the prefect of the East, to have more than six hundred. *Just. C.* xii. 57. Compare Lactantius, *De Mort. Pers.* 7, 4. Manso, *Leben Constantius*, p. 139.

[2] The states of Greece had preserved their local militia even to Justinian's time, as appears from the existence of the provincial guard for the defence of Thermopylæ, which he disbanded.—Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* c. 26.

of taxation to be paid, was annually fixed by an imperial ordinance. The whole empire was divided into *capita*, or hides of land.[1] The proprietors of these capita were grouped together in communities, the wealthier members of which were formed into a permanent magistracy, and rendered liable for the amount of the taxes due by their community. The same law of responsibility was applied to the senates and magistrates of cities and free states. Confiscation of private property had, from the earliest days of the empire, been regarded as an important financial resource. In the days of Tiberius, the nobles of Rome, whose power, influence, and character alarmed the jealous tyrant, were swept away. Nero attacked the wealthy to fill his exhausted treasury; and from that time to the days of Justinian, the richest individuals in the capital and the provinces had been systematically punished for every offence by the confiscation of their fortunes. The pages of Suetonius and Tacitus, of Zosimus and Procopius, attest the extent and duration of this war against private wealth. Now, in the eyes of the Roman government, the greatest political offence was the failure to perform a public duty; and the most important duty of a Roman subject had long been to furnish the amount of taxes required by the State. The increase of the public burdens at last proceeded so far, that every year brought with it a failure in the taxes of some province, and consequently the confiscation of the private property of the wealthiest citizens of the insolvent district, until at last all the rich proprietors were ruined, and the law became nugatory. The poor and ignorant inhabitants of the rural districts in Greece forgot the literature and arts of their ancestors; and as they had no longer anything to sell, nor the means of purchasing foreign commodities, money ceased to circulate.

But though the proud aristocracy and the wealthy votaries of art, literature, and philosophy, disappeared, and though independent citizens and proprietors now stood scattered over the provinces as isolated individuals, without exercising any direct influence on the character of the age, still the external framework of ancient society displayed something of its pomp

[1] The capita were not only assessed at different amounts in the different provinces, according to circumstances, but even in the same provinces, where they were assessed at the same amount, their size would differ according to the fertility of the district. They correspond to the modern ζευγάρια. In rich lands where a part is irrigable, a zevgari is sometimes not more than thirty acres, but in sterile Attica there are zevgaria of more than one hundred acres.

and greatness. The decay of its majesty and strength was felt; mankind perceived the approach of a mighty change, but the revolution had not yet arrived; the past glory of Greece shed its colouring on the unknown future, and the dark shadow which that future now throws back, when we contemplate Justinian's reign, was then imperceptible.

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

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

people, both in the towns and country. The mass of the Greeks naturally participated in the general hostility to the Roman administration; yet the immense numbers who were employed in the State, and in the highest dignities of the Church, neutralised the popular opposition, and prevented the Greek nation from aspiring at national independence.

It has been already observed that Justinian restricted the powers and diminished the revenues of the Greek municipalities, but that these corporations continued to exist, though shorn of their former power and influence. Splendid monuments of Grecian architecture, and beautiful works of Grecian art, still adorned the Agora and the Acropolis of many cities in Greece. Where the ancient walls were falling into decay, and the untenanted buildings presented an aspect of ruin, they were cleared away to construct the new fortifications, the churches, and the monasteries, with which Justinian covered the empire. The hasty construction of these buildings, rapidly erected from the materials furnished by the ancient structures around, accounts both for their number and for the facility with which time has effaced almost every trace of their existence. Still, even in architecture, the Roman empire displayed some traces of its greatness; the church of St. Sophia, and the aqueduct of Constantinople, attest the superiority of Justinian's age over subsequent periods, both in the East and in the West.

The superiority of the Greek population must at this time have been most remarkable in their regulations of internal government and police administration.[1] Public roads were still maintained in a serviceable state, though not equal in appearance or solidity of construction to the Appian Way in Italy, which excited the admiration of Procopius.[2] Streets were kept in repair by the proprietors of the houses forming them.[3] The *astynomoi* and the *agoranomoi* were still elected, but their number often indicated the former greatness of a diminished population. The post-houses, post-mansions, and every means of transport, were maintained in good order, but they had long been rendered a means of oppressing the people;

[1] Procopius, in the *Secret History*, accuses Justinian of neglecting the public aqueducts, but we have no data for ascertaining the precise changes he effected in the water police and administration. The names of the modern officers charged with the distribution of the water of the Cephissus for irrigation, and of the water of the ancient subterraneous aqueduct which supplies Athens, and which supplied it before the days of Pericles, are ποταμάρχης and νεροκράτης.

[2] *De Bello Gothi.* i. 14.

[3] *Dig.* xliii. 10. 11.

and, though laws had often been passed to prevent the provincials from suffering from the exactions of imperial officers when travelling, the extent of the abuses was beginning to ruin the establishment.[1] The Roman empire, to the latest period of its existence, paid considerable attention to the police of the public roads, and it was indebted to this care for the preservation of its military superiority over its enemies, and of its lucrative commerce.

The activity of the government in clearing the country of robbers and banditti, and the singular severity of the laws on this subject, show that the slightest danger of a diminution of the imperial revenues inspired the Roman government with energy and vigour.[2] Nor were other means of advancing the commercial interests of the people neglected. The ports were carefully cleaned, and their entry indicated by lighthouses, as in earlier times;[3] and, in short, only that portion of ancient civilisation which was too expensive for the diminished resources of the age had fallen into neglect. Utility and convenience were universally sought, both in private and public life; but solidity, taste, and the durability which aspires at immortality, were no longer regarded as objects of attainable ambition. The basilica, or the monastery, constructed by breaking to pieces the solid blocks of a neglected temple, and cemented together by lime burnt from the marble of the desecrated shrine, or from some heathen tomb, was intended to contain a certain number of persons; and the cost of the building, and its temporary sufficiency for the required purpose, were just as much the general object of the architect's attention in the time of Justinian as in our own.

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

[1] *Cod. Theod.* viii. tit. 5, "De Cursu Publico."
[2] *Cod. Just.* i. 55, 6, "De Defensoribus Civitatum"; 10, 75, "De Irenarchis;" ix. 47, 18, "De Pœnis."
[3] Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 12) shows that the provincial towns of Ostia and Ravenna had borrowed this Greek invention.

measures of the emperor.[1] When shame prevented the emperor himself from selling an official appointment, he did not blush to order the payment of a stated sum to be made to the empress Theodora.[2] This conduct opened a door to abuses on the part of the imperial ministers and provincial governors, and contributed, in no small degree, to the misfortunes of Justin II. It diminished the influence of the Roman administration in the distant provinces, and neutralised the benefits which Justinian had conferred on the empire by his legislative compilations. A strong proof of the declining condition of the Greek nation is to be found in the care with which every misfortune of this period is recorded in history. It is only when little hope is felt of repairing the ravages of disease, fire, and earthquakes, that these evils permanently affect the prosperity of nations. In an improving state of society, great as their ravages may prove, they are only personal misfortunes and temporary evils; the void which they create in the population is quickly replaced, and the property which they may destroy rises from its ruins with increased solidity and beauty. When it happens that a pestilence leaves a country depopulated for many generations, and that conflagrations and earthquakes ruin cities, which are never again reconstructed of their former size—these evils are apt to be mistaken by the people as the primary cause of the national decline, and acquire an undue historical importance in the popular mind. The age of Justinian was remarkable for a terrible pestilence which ravaged every province of the empire in succession, for many famines which swept away no inconsiderable portion of the population, and for earthquakes which laid waste no small number of the most flourishing and populous cities of the empire.[3]

Greece had suffered very little from hostile attacks after the departure of Alaric; for the piratical incursions of Genseric were neither very extensive nor very successful; and after the time of these barbarians, the ravages of earthquakes begin to figure in history, as an important cause of the impoverished and declining condition of the country. The Huns, it is true, extended their plundering expeditions, in the year 540, as far

[1] Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* c. 14, 21. *Cod. Just.* i. 27, 1, 2, "De Officio Præfecti Prætorio Africæ." *Nov.* 8. *Nov.* 24.

[2] *Nov.* 30, c. 6.

[3] Gibbon (ch. xliii.) gives an account of the earthquakes and of the great pestilence.—See notes 58, 60, 83 and 95. Procopius (*Gotth.* ii. c. 17) gives a fearful picture of the famine in Italy, and says that millions perished in Africa, which suffered less than Italy. —*Hist. Arc.* c. 18.

as the Isthmus of Corinth, but they do not appear to have succeeded in capturing a single town of any note.[1] The fleet of Totila plundered Corcyra, and the coast of Epirus, from Nicopolis up to Dodona; but these misfortunes were temporary and partial, and could have caused no irreparable loss, either of life or property. The fact appears to be, that Greece was in a declining condition; but that the means of subsistence were abundant, and the population had but an incorrect and vague conception of the means by which the government was consuming their substance, and depopulating their country. In this state of things, several earthquakes, of singular violence, and attended by unusual phenomena, made a deep impression on men's minds, by producing a degree of desolation which a declining state of society rendered irreparable. Corinth, which was still a populous city, Patras, Naupactus, Chæronea, and Coronea, were all laid in ruins. An immense assembly of Greeks was collected at the time to celebrate a public festival; the whole population was swallowed up in the midst of their ceremonies. The waters of the Maliac Gulf retired suddenly, and left the shores of Thermopylæ dry; but the sea, suddenly returning with violence, swept up the valley of the Sperchius, and carried away the inhabitants. In an age of ignorance and superstition, when the prospects of mankind were despondent, and at the moment when the emperor was effacing the last relics of the religion of their ancestors—a religion which had filled the sea and the land with guardian deities—these awful occurrences could not fail to produce an alarming effect on men's minds, and were not unnaturally regarded as a supernatural confirmation of the despair which led many to imagine that the ruin of our globe was approaching. It is not wonderful that many pagans believed with Procopius that Justinian was the demon destined to complete the catastrophe of the human race.[2]

The condition of the Greek population in Achaia seems to have been as little understood by the courtiers of Justinian as that of the newly-established Greek kingdom by its Bavarian masters and the protecting powers. The splendid appearance which the ancient monuments, shining in the clear sky with the freshness of recent constructions, gave to the Greek cities, induced the Constantinopolitans and other strangers who visited the country, to suppose that the aspect of elegance and

[1] Procopius, *Pers.* ii. 4. [2] Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* c. 18.

delicacy of finish, everywhere apparent, were the result of constant municipal expenditure. The buildings of Constantine and Theodosius in the capital were probably begrimed with dust and smoke, so that it was natural to conceive that those of Pericles and Epaminondas could retain a perpetual youth only by a liberal expenditure for their preservation. The celebrity of the city of Athens, the privileges which it still enjoyed, the society by which it was frequented, as an agreeable residence, as a school for study, or as a place of retirement for the wealthy literary men of the age, gave the people of the capital a far too exalted idea of the well-being of Greece. The cotemporaries of Justinian judged the Greeks of their age by placing them in too close a relation with the inhabitants of the free states of antiquity; we, on the contrary, are too apt to confound them with the rude inhabitants who dwelt in the Peloponnesus after it was filled with Sclavonian and Albanian colonies. Had Procopius rightly estimated the condition of the rural population, and reflected on the extreme difficulty which the agriculturist always encounters in quitting his actual employment in order to seek any distant occupation, and the impossibility of finding money in a country where there are no purchasers for extra produce, he would not have signalised the penurious disposition of the Greeks as their national characteristic.[1] The population which spoke the Greek language in the capital and in the Roman administration was now influenced by a very different spirit from that of the inhabitants of the true Hellenic lands; and this separation of feeling became more and more conspicuous as the empire declined in power. The central administration soon ceased to pay any particular attention to Greece, which was sure to furnish its tribute, as it hated the Romans less than it feared the barbarians. From henceforward, therefore, the inhabitants of Hellas become almost lost to the historians of the empire; and the motley and expatriated population of Constantinople, Asia Minor, Syria, and Alexandria, is represented to the literary world as forming the real body of the Greek nation—an error which has con-

[1] *De Ædificiis*, iv. 11. "Ταύτῃ τε τῇ σμικρολογίᾳ." The historical works of Procopius were written for the literary classes, the *Secret History* for the people. It is probable that many works like the *Secret History*, circulated in the Lower Empire, were particularly addressed to Greek readers. Compare the unwillingness to blame the Greeks in c. 24 with the above passage in the *Ædificiis*. "Ἐπικαλοῦντες τοῖς μὲν ὡς Γραικοὶ εἶεν, ὥσπερ οὐκ ἐξὸν τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τὸ παράπαν τινὶ γενναίῳ γενέσθαι."

cealed the history of a nation from our study, and replaced it by the annals of a court and the records of a government.

Section V

Influence of Justinian's Conquests on the Greek Population, and the Change Effected by the Conquest of the Vandal Kingdom of Africa

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

When the Goths, Sueves, and Vandals had completed their establishments in Spain, Africa, and Italy, and their armies were spread over these countries as landed proprietors, the smallness of their number became apparent to the mass of the conquered population; and the barbarians soon lost in individual intercourse as citizens the superiority which they had enjoyed while united in armed bands. The Romans, in spite of the confiscation of a portion of their estates to enrich their conquerors, and in spite of the oppression with which they were treated, still formed the majority of the middle

classes; the administration of the greater part of the landed property, the commerce of the country, the municipal and judicial organisation, all centred in the hands of the Roman population. In addition to this political existence, they were separated from their conquerors by religion. The northern invaders of the Western Empire were Arians, the Roman population was orthodox. This religious feeling was so strong, that the Catholic king of the Franks, Clovis, was often able to avail himself of the assistance of the orthodox subjects of the Arian Goths, in his wars with the Gothic kings.[1] As soon, however, as Justinian proved that the Eastern Empire had recovered some portion of the ancient Roman vigour, the eyes of all the Roman population in Spain, Gaul, Africa, and Italy, were directed to the imperial court; and there can be no doubt that the government of Justinian maintained extensive relations with the Roman population and the orthodox clergy over all Europe, to prepare for assisting his military operations.

Justinian had succeeded to the empire while it was embroiled in war with Persia, but he was fortunate enough to conclude a peace with Chosroes the Great, who ascended the Persian throne in the fourth year of his reign. In the East the emperor could never expect to make any permanent conquests; while in the West a large portion of the population of the countries which he proposed attacking was ready to receive his troops with open arms; and, in case of success, they were sure to form submissive and probably attached subjects. Both policy and religion induced Justinian to commence his attacks on the invaders of the Roman empire in Africa. The conquest of the northern coast of Africa by the Vandals, like the conquest of the other great provinces of the Western Empire by the Goths, the Burgundians, and the Franks, was gradually effected; for the number of Genseric's troops was too small to subdue and garrison the whole country in a series of consecutive campaigns. The Vandals, who quitted Spain in 428, could not arm more than 80,000 men. In the year 431, Genseric, having defeated Boniface, took Hippo; but it was not until 439 that he gained possession of Carthage; and the conquest of the whole African coast to the frontier of the Greek settlements in Cyrenaïca was not completed until after the death of Valentinian III., and the sack of Rome in 455. The Vandals were bigoted Arians, and their government was peculiarly

[1] *Gregory of Tours*, l. ii. c. 37.

tyrannical; they always treated the Roman inhabitants of Africa as political enemies, and persecuted them as religious opponents. The Visigoths in Spain had occupied two-thirds of the subjugated lands, the Ostrogoths in Italy had been satisfied with one-third; and both these people had acknowledged the civil rights of the Romans as citizens and Christians. The Vandals adopted a different policy. Genseric reserved immense domains to himself and to his sons. He divided the densely peopled and rich district of Africa proper among the Vandal warriors, exempting them from taxation, and binding them to military service. Eighty thousand lots were apportioned, clustered round the large possessions of the highest officers. They seized all the richest lands, and the most valuable estates, and exterminated the higher class of the Romans. Only the poorer proprietors were permitted to preserve the arid and distant parts of the country. Still the number of Romans excited the fears of the Vandals, who destroyed the walls of the provincial towns in order to prevent the people from receiving succours from the Eastern Empire, which might have supported a rebellion. The Roman population was enfeebled by these measures, but its hatred of the Vandal government was increased; and when Gelimer assumed the royal authority in the year 531, the people of Tripolis rebelled, and solicited assistance from Justinian.

Justinian could not overlook the great wealth of Africa at the time of its conquest by Genseric; the distributions of grain which it had furnished for Rome, and the immense tribute which it had once paid. Only a century had elapsed, so that he could hardly have supposed it possible that the wealth and population of the country had suffered to the extent of their actual diminution, from the oppressive government of the Vandal kings. On the other hand, he was doubtless perfectly aware of the neglected state of military discipline among the Vandals. The conquest of a civilised population by rude warriors must always be attended by the ruin, and often by the extermination, of the numerous classes which are supported by the profits of those manufactures which are destined for the consumption of the refined. The first conquerors despise the appearance and manners of the conquered, and never adopt immediately their costly dress, which is naturally considered as a sign of effeminacy and cowardice, nor do they adorn their dwellings with the same taste and refinement. The vanquished being deprived of the

wealth necessary to procure these luxuries, the ruin of a numerous class of manufacturers, and of a great portion of the industrious population, is an inevitable consequence of this cessation of demand. Thousands of artisans, tradesmen, and labourers, must either emigrate or perish by starvation; and the annihilation of a large commercial capital employed in supporting human life takes place with wonderful rapidity. Yet the conquerors may long live in wealth and luxury; the accumulated riches of the country will for many years be found amply sufficient to gratify all the desires of the victors, and the whole of this wealth will generally be consumed, and even the power of reproducing it be greatly diminished, before any signs of poverty are perceived by the conquerors. These facts are illustrated in the clearest manner by the history of the Vandal domination in Africa. The emigration of Vandal families from Spain did not consist of more than eighty thousand males of warlike age; and when Genseric conquered Carthage, his whole army amounted only to fifty thousand warriors; yet this small horde devoured all the wealth of Africa in the course of a single century, and, from an army of hardy soldiers, it was converted into a caste of luxurious nobles living in splendid villas round Carthage.[1] In order fully to understand the influence of the Vandals on the state of the country which they occupied, it must be observed that their oppressive government had already so far lowered the condition, and reduced the numbers of the Roman provincials, that the native Moors began to reoccupy the country from which Roman industry and Roman capital had excluded them. The Moorish population being in a lower state of civilisation than the lowest grade of the Romans, could exist in districts abandoned as uninhabitable after the destruction of buildings and plantations which the oppressed farmer had no means of replacing; and thus, from the time of the Vandal invasion, we find the Moors continually gaining ground on the Latin colonists, gradually covering an increased extent of country, and augmenting in numbers and power. As the property of the province was destroyed, its Roman inhabitants perished.

When Justinian attacked the Vandals they had become one of the most luxurious nations in the world; but as they continued to affect the character of soldiers, they were admirably armed, and ready to take the field with their whole male population. The neglect of military discipline and science

[1] Procopius, *Vand.* i. c. 5.

rendered their armies very inefficient in spite of their splendid equipments. Hilderic, the fifth monarch of the Vandal kingdom, the grandson of Genseric, and son of Eudocia, the daughter of the emperor Valentinian III, showed himself inclined to protect his orthodox and Roman subjects.[1] This disposition, and his Roman descent, excited the suspicion of his Vandal and Arian countrymen, without attaching the orthodox provincials to his hated race. Gelimer, the great-grandson of Genseric, availed himself of the general discontent to dethrone Hilderic, but the revolution was not effected without manifestations of dissatisfaction. The Roman inhabitants of the province of Tripolis availed themselves of the opportunity to throw off the Vandal yoke, and solicit assistance from Justinian; and a Gothic officer who commanded in Sardinia rebelled against the usurper.

The treason of Gelimer afforded Justinian an excellent pretext for invading the Vandal kingdom. Belisarius, a general already distinguished by his conduct in the Persian war, was selected to command an expedition of considerable magnitude, though by no means equal to the great expedition which Leo I. had sent to attack Genseric.[2] Ten thousand infantry, and five thousand cavalry, were embarked in a fleet of five hundred transports, which was protected and escorted by ninety-two light galleys of war. The troops were all veterans, inured to discipline, and the cavalry was composed of the choicest soldiers in the imperial service. After a long navigation, and some delay at Methone and in Sicily, they reached Africa. The Vandals, who, in the time of Genseric, had been redoubted pirates, and as such were national enemies of the commercial Greeks, were now too wealthy to court danger, and were ignorant of the approach of the Roman armament, until they received the news that Belisarius was marching towards Carthage. They were numerous, and doubtless brave, but they were no longer trained to war, or accustomed to regular discipline, and their behaviour in the field of battle was contemptible. Two engagements of cavalry,

[1] The succession of the Vandal monarchs was as follows:—

They invaded Africa	A.D. 428
Genseric ascended the throne	429
Hunneric	477
Gundamund	484
Thorismund	496
Hilderic	523
Gelimer seized the crown	531

[2] See page 183.

in the bloodiest of which the Vandals lost only eight hundred men, decided the fate of Africa, and enabled Belisarius to subjugate the Vandal kingdom. The brothers of Gelimer fell gallantly in the field. His own behaviour renders even his personal courage doubtful,—he fled to the Moors of the mountainous districts; but the misery of barbarous warfare, and the privations of a besieged camp, soon extinguished his feelings of pride, and his love of independence. Belisarius led him prisoner to Constantinople, where he appeared in the pageantry of a triumphal procession. A conquering general, a captive monarch, and a Roman triumph, offered strong temptations to romantic fancies; but we are informed by Procopius that Gelimer received from Justinian large estates in Galatia, to which he retired with his relations. Justinian offered him the rank of patrician, and a seat in the senate; but he was attached to his Arian principles, and believing that his personal dignity would be best maintained by avoiding to appear in a crowd of servile senators, he refused to join the orthodox church.[1]

The Vandals displayed as little patriotism and fortitude as their king. Some were slain in the war, the rest were incorporated in the Roman armies, or escaped to the Moors. The provincials were allowed to reclaim the lands from which they had been expelled at the conquest; the Arian heresy was proscribed, and the race of these remarkable conquerors was in a short time exterminated. A single generation sufficed to confound their women and children in the mass of the Roman inhabitants of the province, and their very name was totally forgotten. There are few instances in history of a nation disappearing so rapidly and so completely as the Vandals of Africa. After their conquest by Belisarius, they vanish from the face of the earth as completely as the Carthaginians after the taking of Carthage by Scipio. Their first monarch, Genseric, had been powerful enough to plunder both Rome and Greece, yet his army hardly exceeded fifty thousand men. His successors, who held the absolute sovereignty of Africa for one hundred and seven years, do not appear to have commanded a larger force. The whole Vandals seem never to have multiplied beyond the oligarchical position in which their sudden acquisition of immense wealth had placed them.[2]

[1] Procopius, *Vand.* ii. c. 9.

[2] The Vandal domination in Spain has left a permanent memorial in the name of Andalusia from Vindelicia.

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

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

pressed more heavily on the industry and well-being of the provincials, and enabled the barbarous Moors to extend their encroachments on Roman civilisation.[1]

The glory of Belisarius deserves to be contrasted with the oblivion which has covered the exploits of John the Patrician, one of the ablest generals of Justinian. This experienced general assumed the command in Africa when the province had fallen into a state of great disorder; the inhabitants were exposed to a dangerous coalition of the Moors, and the Roman army was in such a state of destitution that their leader was compelled to import the necessary provisions for his troops.[2] Though John defeated the Moors, and restored prosperity to the province, his name is almost forgotten. His actions and talents only affected the interests of the Byzantine empire, and prolonged the existence of the Roman province of Africa; they exerted no influence on the fate of any of the European nations whose history has been the object of study in modern times, so that they were utterly forgotten, when the recently discovered poetry of Corippus, one of the last and worst of the Roman poets, rescued them from complete oblivion.

Section VI

Causes of the easy conquest of the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy by Belisarius

The empire of the Ostrogoths, though established on principles of a just administration by the wisdom of the great Theodoric, soon began to suffer as complete a national demoralisation as that of the Vandals, though the Goths themselves, from being more civilised, and living more directly under the restraint of laws which protected the property of their Roman subjects, had not become individually so corrupted by the possession of wealth. The conquest of Italy had not produced any very great revolution in the state of the country. The Romans had long been accustomed to be defended in name, but, in fact, to be ruled, by the commanders of the mercenary troops in the emperor's service. The Goths, even after the conquest, allowed them to retain two-thirds of their landed estates, with all their movable property; and as they had really been as completely excluded from military

[1] Procopius, *De Bello Vand.* ii. 14–28; *Hist. Arc.* 18. Corippus, *Johannides.*
[2] Corippus, *Johannides*, v. 384.

service under their own emperors, their social condition underwent but little change.[1] Policy induced Theodoric to treat the inhabitants of Italy with mildness. The permanent maintenance of his conquests required a considerable revenue, and that revenue could only be supplied by the industry and civilisation of his Italian subjects. His sagacity told him that it was wiser to tax the Romans than to plunder them, and that it was necessary, in order to secure the fruits of a regular system of taxation, to leave them in the possession of those laws and privileges which enabled them to defend their civilisation. It is singular that the empire of Theodoric, the most extensive and most celebrated of those which were formed by the conquerors of the Roman provinces, should have proved the least durable. The justice of Theodoric, and the barbarity of Genseric, were equally ineffectual in consolidating a permanent dominion. The civilisation of the Romans was more powerful than the mightiest of the barbarian monarchs; and until that civilisation had sunk nearly to the level of their conquerors, the institutions of the Romans were always victorious over the national strength of the barbarians. Under Theodoric, Italy was still Roman. The senate of Rome, the municipal councils of the other cities, the old courts of law, the parties of the circus, the factions in the church, and even the titles and the pensions attached to nominal offices in the State, all still existed unchanged, men still fought with wild beasts in the Coliseum.[2] The orthodox Roman lived under his own law, with his own clergy, and the Arian Goth only enjoyed equal liberty. The powerful and the wealthy, whether they were Romans or Goths, were equally sure of obtaining justice; the poor, whether Goths or Romans, were in equal danger of being oppressed.[3]

[1] Odoacer and Theodoric divided amongst their followers one-third of the Roman estates in Italy.—Procopius, *De Bello Gotth.* i. c. 1. For an account of the Ostrogothic government of Italy, see *Essai sur l'état, civil et politique, des Peuples d'Italie sous le gouvernement des Goths*, par Sartorius, Paris, 1811; and *Geschichte des Ost-Gothischen Reichs in Italien*, Von Manso, Breslau, 1824. It is remarkable that the barbarians, on establishing themselves in Italy, adopted the ancient Roman usage of appropriating a third of the conquered lands. This resemblance to the old Roman colonies cannot have been accidental in a people who imitated so much of the laws of Rome in their territorial administration. The Goths constituted themselves the military defenders of the unarmed tax-payers, and both as such, and as the conquerors of the country, they could claim under the Roman laws all the privileges which Augustus had bestowed on his colonies of veterans. The Romans at last suffered the evils they had inflicted on others. That Romans served in the Gothic armies, though the case may have been rare, appears from the passages pointed out by Sartorius.—P. 248.

[2] Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* c. 24, 26. Manso (p. 140) observes that Theodoric only tolerated the shows of the amphitheatre, of which he disapproved. Cassiodorus, *Variæ*, v. 42.

[3] Theodoric says, in his edict, "Quod si orsitan persona potentior, aut ejus pro-

The kingdom which the great Theodoric left to his grandson Athalaric, under the guardianship of his daughter Amalasonta, embraced not only Italy, Sicily, and a portion of the south of France; it also included Dalmatia, a part of Illyricum, Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhætia. In these extensive dominions, the Gothic race formed but a small part of the population; and yet the Goths, from the privileges which they enjoyed, were everywhere regarded with jealousy by the bulk of the inhabitants. Dissensions arose in the royal family; Athalaric died young; Amalasonta was murdered by Theodatus, his successor; and as she had been in constant communication with the court of Constantinople, this crime afforded Justinian a decent pretext for interfering in the affairs of the Goths. To prepare the way for the reconquest of Italy, Belisarius was sent to attack Sicily, which he invaded with an army of seven thousand five hundred men, in the year 535, and subjected without difficulty. During the same campaign, Dalmatia was conquered by the imperial arms, recovered by the Goths, but again reconquered by Justinian's troops. A rebellion of the troops in Africa arrested, for a while, the progress of Belisarius, and compelled him to visit Carthage; but he returned to Sicily in a short time, and crossing over to Rhegium, marched directly to Naples. As he proceeded, he was everywhere welcomed by the inhabitants, who were then almost universally Greeks; even the Gothic commander in the south of Italy favoured the progress of the Roman general.[1]

The city of Naples made a vigorous defence; but after a siege of three weeks it was taken by introducing into the place a body of troops through the passage of an ancient aqueduct. The conduct of Belisarius, after the capture of the city, was dictated by policy, and displayed very little humanity. As the inhabitants had shown some disposition to assist the Gothic garrison in defending the city, and as such conduct would

curator, vel vicedominus ipsius, aut certe conductor seu barbari, seu Romani, in aliquo genere causæ præsentia non permiserint edicta servari," etc. Sartorius, 284. A great improvement took place in the condition of the rural population of Italy during the thirty years' reign of Theodoric. A considerable part of the land previously in pasturage was restored to agriculture, in consequence of the grain trade being left free by the cessation of distributions and maximum of market prices. Italy again began to produce enough for its own consumption. This change led to the formation of a free class of cultivators of the soil—Romans, who farmed the landed estates of the Gothic warriors.

[1] Evermor, or Eurimond (for Jornandes gives him one name in his History of the Goths, and another in his Chronicle), was the son-in-law of the King Theodatus, yet he joined Belisarius. The Romans had a party among the Goths; and, after the conquest, many Goths were converted from Arians to Catholics. Jornandes speaks of himself: "Ego item, quamvis agrammatus, Jornandes, ante conversionem meam notarius fui." This, however, implies perhaps that he had embraced the clerical life. His Roman attachments are strongly shown in his works.—*De Rebus Geticis*, p. 382.

have greatly increased the difficulty of his campaign in Italy, in order to intimidate the population of other cities he appears to have winked at the pillage of the town, to have tolerated the massacre of many of the citizens in the churches, where they had sought an asylum, and to have overlooked a sedition of the lowest populace, in which the leaders of the Gothic party were assassinated. From Naples, Belisarius marched forward to Rome.

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

The Gothic war forms an important epoch in the history of the city of Rome; for, within the space of sixteen years, it changed masters five times, and suffered three severe sieges.[1] Its population was almost destroyed; its public buildings and its walls must have undergone many changes, according to the exigencies of the various measures required for its defence.

1 Rome was taken by Belisarius . . . A.D. 536
Besieged by Witiges . . . 537
Besieged and taken by Totila . . . 546
Retaken by Belisarius . . . 547
Again besieged and retaken by Totila . . . 549
Taken by Narses 552
—Clinton, *Fasti Romani.*

It has, consequently, been too generally assumed that the existing walls indicate the exact position of those of Aurelian. This period is also memorable for the ruin of many monuments of ancient art, which the generals of Justinian destroyed without compunction. With the conquest of Rome by Belisarius the history of the ancient city may be considered as terminating; and with his defence against Witiges commences the history of the middle ages,—of the times of destruction and of change.[1]

Witiges laid siege to Rome with an army said by Procopius to have amounted to 150,000 men, yet this army was insufficient to invest the whole circuit of the city.[2] The Gothic king distributed his troops in seven fortified camps; six were formed to surround the city, and the seventh was placed to protect the Milvian bridge. Five camps covered the space from the Prenestine to the Flaminian gates, and the remaining camp was formed beyond the Tiber, in the plain below the Vatican. By these arrangements the Goths only commanded about half the circuit of Rome, and the roads to Naples and to the ports at the mouth of the Tiber remained open. The Roman infantry was now the weakest part of a Roman army. Even in the defence of a fortified city it was subordinate to the cavalry, and the military superiority of the Roman arms was sustained by mercenary horsemen. It is strange to find the tactics of the middle ages described by Procopius in classic Greek. The Goths displayed an utter ignorance of the art of war; they had no skill in the use of military engines, and they could not even render their numerical superiority available in assaults. The leading operations of the attack and defence of Rome consisted in a series of cavalry engagements fought under its walls; and in these the superior discipline and skill of the mercenaries of Belisarius generally secured them the victory. The Roman cavalry, —for so the mixture of Huns, Heruls, and Armenians which

[1] Honorius made changes and repairs in the walls. Theodoric repaired them. Cassiodorus, *Var.* 1. ep. 25, 11; ep. 34. Belisarius found them in a ruinous state, the ditch filled up in some places. In general the sieges during the Gothic War required the reduction of the size of the place, where this was practicable. The feebleness of the outer wall of the Vivarium indicates that this was not the original external wall. Totila destroyed about one-third of the wall of Rome. Procop. *Gotth.* iii. 22. Marcell. *Chron. ap. Sermond.* ii. 385. Belisarius must have made changes in repairing this destruction; and Diogenes, who defended Rome against Totila in 548, could hardly fail to do so. Totila added to the walls near the Mole of Adrian.—Procop. *Gotth.* iii. 36; iv. 33. The whole defences must have been remodelled by Narses, as they then consisted in great part of temporary works and hasty repairs.—*De Romæ veteris Muris atque Portis.* Scripsit G. A. Becker, Prof. Lips.; Leipsic, 1842. Pope Gregory II. began to repair the walls from the gate of St. Lawrence.—Anastasius, *Bibl.*, "De Vitis Pont. Roman." 67; edit. Ven.

[2] *De Bello Gotth.* i. 14.

formed the élite of the army must be termed,—trusted chiefly to the bow, while the Goths placed their reliance on the lance and sword, which the able manœuvres of their enemies seldom allowed them to use with effect. The infantry of both armies usually remained idle spectators of the combat. Belisarius himself considered it of little use in a field of battle; and when he once reluctantly admitted it, at the pressing solicitation of its commanders, to share in one of his engagements, its defeat, after the exhibition of great bravery on the part both of the officers and men, confirmed him in his preference of the cavalry.

In spite of the prudent arrangements adopted by Belisarius to insure supplies of provisions from his recent conquests in Sicily and Africa, Rome suffered very severely from famine during the siege; but the Gothic army was compelled to undergo equal hardships, and suffered far greater losses from disease. The communications of the garrison with the coast were for a time interrupted, but at last a body of five thousand fresh troops, and an abundant supply of provisions, despatched by Justinian to the assistance of Belisarius, entered Rome. Shortly after the arrival of this reinforcement, the Goths found themselves constrained to abandon the siege, in which they had persevered for a year. Justinian again augmented his army in Italy, by sending over seven thousand troops under the command of the eunuch Narses, a man whose military talents were in no way inferior to those of Belisarius, and whose name occupies an equally important place in the history of Italy. The emperor, guided by the prudent jealousy which dictated the strictest control over all the powerful generals of the empire, had conferred on Narses an independent authority over his own division, and that general, presuming too far on his knowledge of Justinian's feelings, ventured to throw serious obstacles in the way of Belisarius. The dissensions of the two generals delayed the progress of the Roman arms. The Goths availed themselves of the opportunity to continue the war with vigour; they succeeded in reconquering Milan, which had admitted a Roman garrison, and sacked the city, which was second only to Rome in wealth and population. They massacred the whole male population, and behaved with such cruelty that three hundred thousand persons were said to have perished—a number which probably only indicates the whole population of Milan at this period.[1]

1 Procopius, *De Bello Gothi.* ii. 21. A.D. 539.

A state of warfare soon disorganised the ill-cemented government of the Gothic kingdom; and the ravages caused by the wide-extended military operations of the armies, which degenerated into a succession of sieges and skirmishes, created a dreadful famine in the north of Italy. Whole provinces remained uncultivated; great numbers of the industrious natives perished by actual starvation, and the ranks of the Goths were thinned by misery and disease. Society advanced one step towards barbarism. Procopius, who was himself in Italy at the time, records a horrible story of two women who lived on human flesh, and were discovered to have murdered seventeen persons, in order to devour their bodies.[1] This famine assisted the progress of the Roman arms, as the imperial troops drew their supplies of provisions from the East, while the measures of their enemies were paralysed by the general want.

Witiges, finding his resources inadequate to check the conquests of Belisarius, solicited the aid of the Franks, and despatched an embassy to Chosroes to excite the jealousy of the Persian monarch. The Franks, under Theodebert, entered Italy, but they were soon compelled to retire; and Belisarius, being placed at the head of the whole army by the recall of Narses, soon terminated the war. Ravenna, the Gothic capital, was invested; but the siege was more remarkable for the negotiations which were carried on during its progress than for the military operations. The Goths, with the consent of Witiges, made Belisarius the singular offer of acknowledging him as the Emperor of the West, on condition of his joining his forces to theirs, permitting them to retain their position and property in Italy, and thus insuring them the possession of their nationality and their peculiar laws. Perhaps neither the state of the mercenary army which he commanded, nor the condition of the Gothic nation, rendered the project very feasible. It is certain that Belisarius only listened to it, in order to hasten the surrender of Ravenna, and secure the person of Witiges without farther bloodshed. Italy submitted to Justinian, and the few Goths who still maintained their independence beyond the Po pressed Belisarius in vain to declare himself emperor. But even without these solicitations, his power had awakened the fears of his sovereign, and he was recalled, though with honour, from his command in Italy. He returned to Constantinople leading Witiges captive, as he had formerly appeared conducting Gelimer.

[1] *De Bello Gothi.* ii. 30.

Great as the talents of Belisarius really were, and sound as his judgment appears to have been, still it must be confessed that his name occupies a more prominent place in history than his merits are entitled to claim. The accident that his conquests put an end to two powerful monarchies, of his having led captive to Constantinople the representatives of the dreaded Genseric and the great Theodoric, joined with the circumstance that he enjoyed the singular good fortune of having his exploits recorded in the classic language of Procopius, the last historian of the Greeks, have rendered a brilliant career more brilliant from the medium through which it is seen. At the same time the tale of his blindness and poverty has extended a sympathy with his misfortunes into circles which would have remained indifferent to the real events of his history, and made his name an expression for heroic greatness reduced to abject misery by royal ingratitude. But Belisarius, though he refused the Gothic throne and the empire of the West, did not despise nor neglect wealth; he accumulated riches which could not have been acquired by any commander-in-chief amidst the wars and famines of the period, without rendering the military and civil administration subservient to his pecuniary profit. On his return from Italy he lived at Constantinople in almost regal splendour, and maintained a body of seven thousand cavalry attached to his household.[1] In an empire where confiscation was an ordinary financial resource, and under a sovereign whose situation rendered jealousy only common prudence, it is not surprising that the wealth of Belisarius excited the imperial cupidity, and induced Justinian to seize great part of it. His fortune was twice reduced by confiscations. The behaviour of the general under his misfortunes, and the lamentable picture of his depression which Procopius has drawn, when he lost a portion of his wealth on his first disgrace, does not tend to elevate his character. At a later period his wealth was again confiscated on an accusation of treason, and on this occasion it is said that he was deprived of his sight, and reduced to such a state of destitution that he begged his bread in a public square, soliciting charity with the exclamation, "Give Belisarius an obolus!" But ancient historians were ignorant of this fable, which has been rejected by every modern authority in Byzantine history. Justinian, on calm reflection, disbelieved the treason imputed to a man who, in his younger days, had refused to ascend a throne; or else he

1 Procopius, *De Bello Gotth.* iii. 1.

pardoned what he supposed to be the error of a general to whose services he was so deeply indebted; and Belisarius, reinstated in some part of his fortune, died in possession of wealth and honour.[1]

Belisarius had hardly quitted Italy when the Goths re-assembled their forces. They were accustomed to rule, and nourished in the profession of arms. Justinian sent a civilian, Alexander the logothete, to govern Italy, hoping that his financial arrangements would render the new conquest a source of revenue to the imperial treasury. The fiscal administration of the new governor soon excited great discontent. He diminished the number of the Roman troops, and put a stop to those profits which a state of war usually affords the military; while at the same time, he abolished the pensions and privileges which formed no inconsiderable portion of the revenue of the higher classes, and which had never been entirely suppressed during the Gothic domination. Alexander may have acted in some cases with undue severity in enforcing these measures; but it is evident, from their nature, that he must have received express orders to put an end to what Justinian considered the lavish expenditure of Belisarius.

A part of the Goths in the north of Italy retained their independence after the surrender of Witiges. They raised Hildibald to the throne, which he occupied about a year, when he was murdered by one of his own guards. The tribe of Rugians then raised Erarich their leader to the throne; but on his entering into negotiations with the Romans he was murdered, after a reign of only five months. Totila was then elected king of the Goths, and had he not been opposed to the greatest men whom the declining age of the Roman empire produced, he would probably have succeeded in restoring the Gothic monarchy in Italy.[2] His successes endeared him to his countrymen, while the justice of his administration contrasted with the rapacity of Justinian's government, and gained him the respect and submission of the native provincials. He was on the point of commencing the siege of Rome, when

[1] See Appendix No. 1. On the Blindness of Belisarius.

[2] Chronology of the Kings of the Ostrogoths.

	A.D.		A.D.
Theodoric	493–526	Hildibald	540–541
Athalaric	526–534	Erarich	541–541
Amalasontha.		Totila[3]	541–552
Theodatus	534–536	Theias	552–553
Witiges	536–540		

[3] Totila is named Baduila on his coins.

Belisarius, who, after his departure from Ravenna, had been employed in the Persian war, was sent back to Italy to recover the ground already lost. The imperial forces were completely destitute of that unity and military organisation which constitute a number of different corps into one army. The various bodies of troops were commanded by officers completely independent of one another, and obedient only to Belisarius as commander-in-chief. Justinian, acting on his usual maxims of jealousy, and distrusting Belisarius more than formerly, had retained the greater part of his body-guard, and all his veteran followers, at Constantinople; so that he now appeared in Italy unaccompanied by a staff of scientific officers and a body of veteran troops on whose experience and discipline he could rely for implicit obedience to his orders. The heterogeneous elements of which his army was composed made all combined operations impracticable, and his position was rendered still more disadvantageous by the change that had taken place in that of his enemy. Totila was now able to command every sacrifice on the part of his followers, for the Goths, taught by their misfortunes, and deprived of their wealth, felt the importance of union and discipline, and paid the strictest attention to the orders of their sovereign. The Gothic king laid siege to Rome, and Belisarius established himself in Porto, at the mouth of the Tiber; but all his endeavours to relieve the besieged city proved unsuccessful, and Totila compelled it to surrender under his eye, and in spite of all his exertions.

The national and religious feelings of the orthodox Romans rendered them the irreconcilable enemies of the Arian Goths. Totila soon perceived that it would not be in his power to defend Rome against a scientific enemy and a hostile population, in consequence of the great extent of the fortifications, and the impossibility of dislodging the imperial troops from the forts at the mouth of the Tiber. But he also perceived that the Eastern emperors would be unable to maintain a footing in central Italy without the support of the Roman population, whose industrial, commercial, aristocratic, and ecclesiastical influence was concentrated in the city population of Rome. He therefore determined to destroy the "Eternal City," and if policy authorise kings on great occasions to trample on the precepts of humanity, the king of the Goths might claim a right to destroy the race of the Romans. Even the statesman may still doubt whether the decision of Totila, if it had been carried into execution in the most

merciless manner, would not have purified the moral atmosphere of Italian society. He commenced the destruction of the walls; but either the difficulty of completing his project, or the feelings of humanity which were inseparable from his enlightened ambition, induced him to listen to the representations of Belisarius, who conjured him to abandon his barbarous scheme of devastation.[1] Totila, nevertheless, did everything in his power to depopulate Rome; he compelled the inhabitants to retire into the Campania, and forced the senators to abandon their native city. It is to this emigration that the utter extinction of the old Roman race and civic government must be attributed; for when Belisarius, and, at a later period, Totila himself, attempted to repeople Rome, they laid the foundations of a new society, which connects itself rather with the history of the middle ages than with that of preceding times.

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

As soon as Totila was freed from the restraint imposed on his movements by the fear of Belisarius, he quickly recovered Rome; and the loss of Italy appeared inevitable,

[1] As far as a feeling for ancient art was concerned, it may be doubted whether Belisarius had more taste than Totila for classic purity.

when Justinian decided on making a new effort to retain it. As it was necessary to send a large army against the Goths, and invest the commander-in-chief with great powers, it is not probable that Justinian would have trusted any other of his generals more than Belisarius had he not fortunately possessed an able officer, the eunuch Narses, who could never rebel with the hope of placing the imperial crown on his own head. The assurance of his fidelity gave Narses great influence in the interior of the palace, and secured him a support which would never have been conceded to any other general. His military talents, and his freedom from the reproach of avarice or peculation, augmented his personal influence, and his diligence and liberality soon assembled a powerful army. The choicest mercenary troops—Huns, Heruls, Armenians, and Lombards — marched under his standard with the veteran Roman soldiers. The first object of Narses after his arrival in Italy was to force the Goths to risk a general engagement, trusting to the excellence of his troops, and to his own skill in the employment of their superior discipline. The rival armies met at Tagina, near Nocera, and the victory of Narses was complete.[1] Totila and six thousand Goths perished, and Rome again fell under the dominion of Justinian. At the solicitation of the Goths, an army of Franks and Germans was permitted by Theobald, king of Austrasia, to enter Italy for the purpose of making a diversion in their favour.[2] Bucelin, the leader of this army, was met by Narses on the banks of the Casilinus, near Capua. The forces of the Franks consisted of thirty thousand men, those of the Romans did not exceed eighteen thousand, but the victory of Narses was so complete that but few of the former escaped. The remaining Goths elected another king, Theïas, who perished with his army near the banks of the Sarno. His death put an end to the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, and allowed Narses to turn his whole attention to the civil government of his conquests, and to establish security of property and a strict administration of justice. He appears to have been a man singularly well adapted to his situation—possessing the highest military talents, combined with a perfect knowledge of the civil and financial administration; and he was consequently able to estimate with exactness the sum which he could levy on the province, and remit to Constantinople, without arresting the

1 Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xliii. note 34.
2 Theobald reigned from A.D. 543 to 555.

gradual improvement of the country. His fiscal government was, nevertheless, regarded by the Italians as extremely severe, and he was unpopular with the inhabitants of Rome.

The existence of a numerous Roman population in Spain, connected with the Eastern Empire by the memory of ancient ties, by active commercial relations, and by a strong orthodox feeling against the Arian Visigoths, enabled Justinian to avail himself of these advantages in the same manner as he had done in Africa and Italy. The king Theudes had attempted to make a diversion in Africa by besieging Ceuta, in order to call off the attention of Justinian from Italy. His attack was unsuccessful, but the circumstances were not favourable at the time for Justinian's attempting to revenge the injury.[1] Dissensions in the country soon after enabled the emperor to take part in a civil war, and he seized the pretext of sending a fleet and troops to support the claims of a rebel chief, in order to secure the possession of a large portion of the south of Spain.[2] The rebel Athanagild having been elected king of the Visigoths, vainly endeavoured to drive the Romans out of the provinces which they had occupied. Subsequent victories extended the conquests of Justinian from the mouth of the Tagus, Ebora, and Corduva, along the coast of the ocean, and of the Mediterranean, almost as far as Valentia; and at times the relations of the Romans with the Catholic population of the interior enabled them to carry their arms almost into the centre of Spain.[3] The Eastern Empire retained possession of these distant conquests for about sixty years.

Section VII

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

The reign of Justinian witnessed the total decline of the power of the Gothic race on the banks of the Danube, where a void was created in the population which neither the Huns nor the Sclavonians could fill. The consequence was that new races of barbarians from the East poured into the countries between the Black Sea and the Carinthian Alps;

[1] A.D. 545. Procop. *De Bello Gotth.* ii. c. 30.
[2] Agila was elected king A.D. 549; he was murdered, and the rebel Athanagild elected in 554.
[3] Aschbach, *Geschichte der Westgothen*, p. 192. Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, ix. 306,—Saint Martin's notes.

and the military aristocracy of the Goths, whose social arrangements conformed to the system of the ancient world, was succeeded by the ruder domination of nomade tribes. The causes of this change are to be found in the same great principle which was modifying the position of the various races of mankind in every region of the earth; and by the destruction of all the elements of civilisation in the country immediately to the south of the Danube, in consequence of the repeated ravages to which it had been exposed; and in the impossibility of any agricultural population, not sunk very low in the scale of civil society, finding the means of subsistence where villages, farm-houses, and barns were in ruins; where the fruit trees were cut down; where the vineyards were destroyed, and the cattle required for cultivating the land were carried off. The Goths, who had once ruled all the country from the Lake Mæotis to the Adriatic, and who were the most civilised of all the invaders of the Roman empire, were the first to disappear. Only a single tribe, called the Tetraxits, continued to inhabit their old seats in the Tauric Chersonese, where some of their descendants survived until the sixteenth century.[1] The Gepids, a kindred people, had defeated the Huns, and established their independence after the death of Attila.[2] They obtained from Marcian the cession of a considerable district on the banks of the Danube, and an annual subsidy in order to secure their alliance in defending the frontier of the empire against other invaders. In the reign of Justinian their possessions were reduced to the territories lying between the Save and the Drave, but the alliance with the Roman empire continued in force, and they still received their subsidy.

The Heruls, a people whose connection with Scandinavia is mentioned by Procopius,[3] and who took part in some of the earliest incursions of the Gothic tribes into the empire, had, after many vicissitudes, obtained from the emperor Anastasius a fixed settlement; and in the time of Justinian they possessed the country to the south of the Save, and occupied the city of Singidunum (Belgrade). The Lombards, a Germanic people, who had once been subject to the Heruls, but who had subsequently defeated their masters, and driven them within the bounds of the empire for protection, were induced by Justinian to invade the Ostrogothic kingdom, and establish themselves

[1] Busbequius, *Epist.* iv. p. 321; edit. Elz. 1669. Gibbon. ch. xl. note 126.
[2] Jornandes, *De Rebus Geticis*, xvii.
[3] Procopius, *De Bello Gothi.* ii. 15.

in Pannonia, to the north of the Drave. They occupied the country between the Danube and the Teisse, and, like their neighbours, received an annual subsidy from the Eastern Empire.[1] These Gothic nations never formed the bulk of the population in the lands which they occupied; they were only the lords of the soil, who knew no occupations but those of war and hunting. But their successes in war, and the subsidies by which they had been enriched, had accustomed them to a degree of rude magnificence which became constantly of more difficult attainment, as their own oppressive government, and the ravages of their more barbarous neighbours, depopulated all the regions around their settlements. When they became, like the other northern conquerors, a territorial aristocracy, they suffered the fate of all privileged classes which are separated from the mass of the people. Their luxury increased, and their numbers diminished. At the same time, incessant wars and ravages of territory swept away the unarmed population, so that the conquerors were at last compelled to abandon these possessions to seek richer seats, as the Indians of the American continent quit the lands where they have destroyed the wild game, and plunge into new forests.

Beyond the territory of the Lombards, the country to the south and east was inhabited by various tribes of Sclavonians, who occupied the country between the Adriatic and the Danube, including a part of Hungary and Vallachia, where they mingled their settlements with the Dacian tribes who had dwelt in these regions from an earlier period.[2] The independent Sclavonians were, at this time, a nation of savage robbers, in the lowest condition of social civilisation, whose ravages and incursions were rapidly tending to reduce all their neighbours to the same state of barbarism. Their plundering expeditions were chiefly directed against the rural population of the empire, and were often pushed many days' journey to the south of the Danube. Their cruelty was dreadful; but neither their numbers nor their military power excited, at this time, any alarm that they would be able to effect permanent conquests within the bounds of the empire.[3]

[1] The Lombards are mentioned by Strabo, lib. vii. Velleius Paterculus, ii. 106. Tacitus, *De M. G.* c. 40; *Annal.* ii. 45. Procopius, *De Bello Gotth.* iii. 33.

[2] Schafarik, *Slavische Alterthümer*, Deutsch. Von Mosig Von Aehrenfeld, herausgegeben Von H. Wuttke. For the Sclavonians, see vol. i. pp. 44, 68, 159, 199, 252; for the Dacians, pp. 31, 292, ii. 199. Thunmann, *Untersuchungen über die Geschichte der östliche Europäischen Völker*, Leipsig 1774, where the authorities are always cited with care.

[3] Procopius, *Gotth.* iii. c. 14, iv. c. 25.

The Bulgarians, a nation of Hunnish or Turkish race, occupied the eastern parts of ancient Dacia, from the Carpathian mountains to the Dniester. Beyond them, as far as the plains to the east of the Tanais, the country was still ruled by the Huns, who had now separated into two independent kingdoms: that to the west was called the Kutigur; and the other, to the east, the Utugur. The Huns had conquered the whole Tauric Chersonese except the city of Cherson. The importance of the commercial relations which Cherson kept up between the northern and southern nations was so advantageous to all parties, that while the carrying trade of the Black Sea secured wealth and power to these distant Greek colonists, it also maintained them in possession of their political independence.[1]

In the early part of Justinian's reign (A.D. 528) the city of Bosporus was taken and plundered by the Huns. It was soon recovered by an expedition fitted out by the emperor at Odyssopolis (Varna); but these repeated conquests of a mercantile emporium, and an agricultural colony, by pastoral nomades like the Huns, and by mercenary soldiers like the imperial army, must have had a very depressing effect on the remains of Greek civilisation in the Tauric Chersonesus.[2] The increasing barbarism of the inhabitants of these regions diminished the commerce which had once flourished in the neighbouring lands, and which was now almost entirely centred in Cherson. The hordes of plundering nomades, who never remained long in one spot, had little to sell, and did not possess the means of purchasing foreign luxuries; and the language and manners of the Greeks, which had once been prevalent all around the shores of the Euxine, began from this time to fall into neglect.[3] The various Greek cities which still maintained some portion of their ancient social and municipal institutions received many severe blows during the reign of Justinian. The towns of Kepoi and Phanagoris, situated near the Cimmerian Bosphorus, was taken by the Huns.[4] Sebastopolis, or Dios-

[1] Procopius, *De Bello Gotth.* iv. 18. For proofs that the Huns at one time possessed all the Crimea, *De Ædificiis*, iii. 7; *De Bello Pers.* i. 12. That Roman garrisons occupied Cherson and Bosporus in the time of Justin, *Pers.* i. 12, and of Justinian, Theophanes, *Chron.* p. 159. Procopius (*De Bello Pers.* i. 12) speaks of Cherson, the last city of the Roman empire, as twenty days' journey from the city of Bosporus. To what Cherson does he allude? There was a city of this name near the modern Warna. Theophanes, *Chron.* 153.

[2] Theophanes, 150, edit. Par. Lebeau, viii. 105.

[3] Procopius, *De Bello Gotth.* iv. 7. Ἑλληνίζοντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι. Agathias (l. iv. p. 103) mentions that the chiefs of the Lazes understood Greek.

[4] Procopius, *De Bello Gotth.* iv. 5.

polis, and Pityontis, distant two days' journey from one another, on the eastern shores of the Euxine, were abandoned by their garrisons during the Colchian war; and the conquests of the Avars at last confined the influence of the Roman empire, and the trade and civilisation of the Greeks, to the cities of Bosporus and Cherson.[1]

It is necessary to record a few incidents which mark the progress of barbarism, poverty, and depopulation, in the lands to the south of the Danube, and explain the causes which compelled the Roman and Greek races to abandon their settlements in these countries. Though the commencement of Justinian's reign was illustrated by a signal defeat of the Antes, a powerful Sclavonian tribe, still the invasions of that people were soon renewed with all their former vigour. In the year 533 they defeated and slew Chilbudius, a Roman general of great reputation, whose name indicates his northern origin. In 538 a band of Bulgarians defeated the Roman army charged with the defence of the country, captured the general Constantiolus, and compelled him to purchase his liberty by the payment of one thousand pounds of gold,—a sum which was considered sufficient for the ransom of the flourishing city of Antioch by the Persian monarch Chosroes.[2] In 539 the Gepids ravaged Illyria, and the Huns laid waste the whole country from the Adriatic to the long wall which protected Constantinople. Cassandra was taken, and the peninsula of Pallene plundered; the fortifications of the Thracian Chersonese were forced, and a body of the Huns crossed over the Dardanelles into Asia, while another, after ravaging Thessaly, turned Thermopylæ, and plundered Greece as far as the Isthmus of Corinth. In this expedition, the Huns are said to have collected and carried away one hundred and twenty thousand prisoners, chiefly belonging to the rural population of the Greek provinces.[3] The fortifications erected by Justinian, and the attention which the misfortunes of his arms compelled him to pay to the efficiency of his troops on the northern frontier, restrained the incursions of the barbarians for some years after this fearful foray; but in 548, the Sclavonians again ravaged Illyria to the very walls of Dyrrachium, murdering the inhabitants, and carrying them away as slaves in face

[1] In the reign of Justin II. (A.D. 575) a Turkish army besieged and took Bosporus, and established itself for some time in the Chersonesus.—Menander, 404, edit. Bonn.

[2] A. D. 540. Chosroes offered to leave Antioch unattacked for 1000 lb. of gold; his offer was refused, and he took the city. See *infra*, page 263.

[3] Procopius, *De Bello Pers.* ii. 4.

of a Roman army of fifteen thousand men, which was unable to arrest their progress.[1] In 550 fresh incursions desolated Illyria and Thrace. Topirus, a flourishing city on the Ægean Sea, was taken by assault. Fifteen thousand of the inhabitants were massacred, while an immense number of women and children were carried away into captivity. In 551 an eunuch named Scholasticus, who was intrusted with the defence of Thrace, was defeated by the barbarians near Adrianople. Next year, the Sclavonians again entered Illyria and Thrace, and these provinces were reduced to such a state of disorder, that an exiled Lombard prince, who was dissatisfied with the rank and treatment which he had received from Justinian, taking advantage of the confusion, fled from Constantinople with a company of the imperial guards and a few of his own countrymen, and, after traversing all Thrace and Illyria, plundering the country as he passed, and evading the imperial troops, at last reached the country of the Gepids in safety. Even Greece, though usually secure from its distance and its mountain passes against the incursions of the northern nations, did not escape the general destruction. It has been mentioned that Totila despatched a fleet of three hundred vessels from Italy to ravage Corfou and the coast of Epirus, and this expedition plundered Nicopolis and Dodona.[2] Repeated ravages at last reduced the great plains of Mœsia to such a state of desolation that Justinian allowed even the savage Huns to form settlements to the south of the Danube.

Thus the Roman government began to replace the agricultural population by hordes of nomade herdsmen, and abandoned the defence of civilisation as a vain struggle against the increasing strength of barbarism.[3]

The most celebrated invasion of the empire at this period, though by no means the most destructive, was that of Zabergan, the king of the Kutigur Huns, who crossed the Danube in the year 559. Its historical fame is derived from its success in approaching the walls of Constantinople, and because its defeat was the last military exploit of Belisarius. Zabergan had formed his army into three divisions, and he found the country everywhere so destitute of defence, that he ventured to advance on the capital with one division, amounting to only seven thousand men. After all the lavish and

1 Procopius, *De Bello Gotth.* iii. 29.
2 Ibid. *De Bello Gotth.* iv. 22. See above, page 227.
3 Procopius, *De Bello Gotth.* iv. 27.

injudicious expenditure of Justinian in building forts and erecting fortifications, he had allowed the long wall of Anastasius to fall into such a state of dilapidation, that Zabergan passed it without difficulty, and advanced to within seventeen miles of Constantinople, before he encountered any serious resistance. The modern historian must be afraid of conveying a false impression of the weakness of the empire, and of magnifying the neglect of the government, if he venture to transcribe the ancient accounts of this expedition. Yet the miserable picture which ancient writers have drawn of the close of Justinian's reign is authenticated by the calamities of his successors. As soon as the wars with the Persians and Goths ceased, Justinian dismissed the greater part of those chosen mercenaries who had proved themselves the best troops of the age, and he neglected to fill up the vacancies in the native legions of the empire by enrolling new conscripts. His immense expenditure in fortifications, civil and religious buildings, and court pageants, forced him at times to be as economical and rapacious as he was at others careless and lavish. The army which had achieved so many foreign conquests was now so reduced, and the garrison of Constantinople, where Belisarius had appeared with seven thousand horsemen, was so neglected, that the great wall was left unguarded. Zabergan established his camp at the village of Melantias, on the river Athyras, which flows into the lake now called Buyuk Tchekmedjee, or the great bridge.

At this crisis the fate of the Roman empire depended on the ill-paid and neglected troops of the line, who formed the ordinary garrison of the capital, and on the veterans and pensioners who happened to reside at Constantinople, and who immediately resumed their arms. The corps of imperial guards called Silentiarioi, Protectores, and Domestikoi, shared with the chosen mercenaries the duty of mounting guard on the fortifications of the imperial palace, and of protecting the person of Justinian, not only against the barbarian enemy, but also against any attempt which a rebellious general or a seditious subject might make, to profit by the general confusion. After the walls of Constantinople were properly manned, Belisarius marched out of the city with his army. The principal body of his troops, from the regularity of its organisation and the splendour of its equipments, was the legion of Scholarians. Their ordinary duty was to guard the outer court and the avenues of the emperor's residence, and

their number amounted to 3500. They may be considered as the representatives of the prætorian guards of an earlier period of Roman history, and the manner in which their discipline was ruined by Justinian affords a curious parallel to many similar bodies in other despotic states. The scholarians received higher pay than the troops of the line. Previous to the reign of Zeno, they had been composed of veteran soldiers, who were appointed to vacancies in the corps as a reward for good service. Armenians were generally preferred by Zeno's immediate predecessors, because the volunteers of this warlike nation were considered more likely to remain firmly attached to the emperor's person in case of any rebellious movement in the empire, than native subjects who might participate in the exasperation caused by the measures of the government. The instability of Zeno's throne induced him to change the organisation of the scholarians. His object was to form a body of troops whose interests secured their fidelity to his person. Instead of veteran soldiers who brought their military habits and prejudices into the corps, he filled its ranks with his own countrymen, from the mountains of Isauria. These men were valiant, and accustomed to the use of arms. Though they were ignorant of tactics and impatient of discipline, their obedience to their officers was secured by their attachment to Zeno as their countryman and benefactor, and by their absolute dependence on his power as emperor for the enjoyment of their enviable position. The jealousy with which these rude mountaineers were regarded by the whole army, and the hatred felt to them by the people of Constantinople, kept them separate from the rest of the world, secluded in their barracks and steady to their duty in the palace. Anastasius and Justin I. introduced the practice of appointing the scholarians by favour, without reference to their military services; and Justinian is accused of establishing the abuse of selling places in their ranks to wealthy citizens, and householders of the capital who had no intention of following a military life, but who purchased their enrolment in the scholarians to enjoy the privilege of the military class in the Roman empire. It is remarkable that absolute princes, whose power is so seriously endangered by the inefficiency of their army, should be so often themselves the corrupters of its discipline. The abuses which render chosen troops useless as soldiers are generally introduced by the sovereign, as in this example of the scholarians of Justinian, but they are sometimes caused by the

power of the soldiers, who convert their corps into a hereditary corporation, as in the case of the janissaries of the Othoman empire.[1]

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

There can be no doubt that the historians of this campaign misrepresent the facts when they state that the Roman army was inferior in number to the division of the Huns which Zabergan led against Constantinople. This inferiority could only exist in the cavalry, but we know that Belisarius had no confidence in the Roman infantry, and the ill-disciplined troops then under his orders must have excited his contempt. They, on the other hand, were confident in their numbers, and their general was fearful lest their rashness should compromise his plan of operations. He therefore addressed them in a speech, which modified their precipitation by assuring them of success after a little delay. A cavalry engagement, in which Zabergan led 2000 Huns in person to beat up the quarters of the Romans, was completely defeated. Belisarius allowed the enemy to approach without opposition, but before they could

Agathias, lib. v. p. 159, edit. Par. Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* c. 24. Compare what Tacitus (*Hist.* 1. 46) says of the abuses in the prætorian guards, caused by the officers selling leave of absence to the soldiers. Corruption would have appeared to him natural in Greek prætorians. "Mox donati civitate Romana, signa armaque in nostrum modum, desidiam licentiamque Græcorum retinebant."

extend their line to charge, they were assailed in flank by the unexpected attack of a body of two hundred chosen cavalry, which issued suddenly from a woody glen, and at the same moment Belisarius charged them in front. The shock was irresistible. The Huns fled instantly, but their retreat was embarrassed by their position, and they left four hundred men dead on the field. This trifling affair finished the campaign. The Huns, finding that they could no longer collect supplies, were anxious to save the booty in their possession. They broke up their camp at Melantias, retired to St. Stratonikos, and hastened to escape beyond the long wall. Belisarius had no body of cavalry with which he could venture to pursue an active and experienced enemy. An unsuccessful skirmish might still compromise the safety of many districts, and the jealousy of Justinian was perhaps as dangerous as the army of Zabergan. The victor returned to Constantinople, and there heard himself reproached by courtiers and sycophants for not bringing back the king of the Kutigurs a prisoner, as in other days he had presented the kings of the Vandals and of the Ostrogoths captives before Justinian's throne. Belisarius was ungratefully treated by Justinian, suspected of resenting the imperial ingratitude, accused of treason, plundered, and pardoned.

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

Justinian, who had seen a barbarian at the head of an army of twenty thousand men ravage a considerable portion of his empire, instead of pursuing and crushing the invader, engaged the king of the Utugur Huns, by promises and money, to attack Zabergan. These intrigues were successful, and the

dissensions of the two monarchs prevented the Huns from again attacking the empire. A few years after this incursion the Avars invaded Europe, and, by subduing both the Hunnish kingdoms, gave the Roman emperor a far more dangerous and powerful neighbour than had lately threatened his northern frontier.

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

The original seats of the Turks were in the country round the great chain of Mount Altai. As subjects of the Avars, they had been distinguished by their skill in working and tempering iron; their industry had procured them wealth, and wealth had inspired them with the desire for independence. After throwing off the yoke of the Avars, they waged war with that people, and compelled the military strength of the nation to fly before them in two separate bodies. One of these divisions fell back on China; the other advanced into western Asia, and at last entered Europe. The Turks engaged in a career of conquest, and in a few years their dominions extended from the Wolga and the Caspian Sea to the shores of the ocean, or the Sea of Japan, and from the banks of the Oxus (Gihoun) to the deserts of Siberia. The western army of the Avars, increased by many tribes who feared the Turkish government, advanced into Europe as a nation of conquerors, and not as a band of fugitives. The mass of this army is supposed to have been composed of people of the Turkish race, because those who afterwards bore the Avar name in Europe seem to have belonged to that family. It must not,

however, be forgotten, that the mighty army of Avar emigrants might easily, in a few generations, lose all national peculiarities, and forget its native language, amidst the greater number of its Hunnish subjects, even if we should suppose the two races to have been originally derived from different stocks. The Avars, however, are sometimes styled Turks, even by the earliest historians. The use of the appellation Turk, in an extended sense, including the Mongol race, is found in Theophylactus Simocatta, a writer possessing considerable knowledge of the affairs of eastern Asia, and who speaks of the inhabitants of the flourishing kingdom of Taugus as Turks.[1] This application of the term appears to have arisen from the circumstance, that the part of China to which he alluded was subject at the time to a foreign, or, in his phrase, a Turkish dynasty.

The Avars soon conquered all the countries as far as the banks of the Danube, and before Justinian's death they were firmly established on the borders of Pannonia. Their pursuers, the Turks, did not visit Europe until a later period; but they extended their conquests in central Asia, where they destroyed the kingdom of the Ephthalite Huns to the east of Persia, a part of which Chosroes had already subdued.[2] They engaged in long wars with the Persians; but it is sufficient to pass over the history of the first Turkish empire with this slight notice, as it exercised but a very trifling direct influence on the fortunes of the Greek nation. The wars of the Turks and Persians tended, however, greatly to weaken the Persian empire, to reduce its resources, and increase the oppression of the internal administration, by the call for extraordinary exertions, and thus prepared the way for the easier conquest of the country by the followers of Mahomet.

The sudden appearance of the Avars and Turks in history, marks the singular void which a long period of vicious government and successive conquests had created in the population of regions which were once flourishing. Both these nations took a prominent part in the destruction of the frame of ancient society in Europe and Asia; but neither of them con-

[1] Theoph. Sim. vii. 7. Ἔθνος ἀλκιμώτατον καὶ πολυανθρωπότατον καὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἔθνεσί, διὰ το μέγεθος, ἀπαράλληλον. He calls the Avars Scythians, vii. c. 8. Menander (298, edit. Bonn) mentions that the Turks used the Scythian character (?) in the letter they addressed to Justin II. What alphabet was called Scythian in the sixth century is a question.

[2] Vivien de Saint Martin, *Les Huns Blanc ou Ephthalites des Historiens Byzantins*, p. 77. This work shows the uncertainty of modern inquiries concerning the ethnological history of the Huns.

tributed anything to the reorganisation of the political, social, or religious condition of the modern world. Their empires soon fell to decay, and the very nations were again almost lost to history. The Avars, after having attempted the conquest of Constantinople, became at last extinct; and the Turks, after having been long forgotten, slowly rose to a high degree of power, and at length achieved the conquest of Constantinople, which their ancient rivals had vainly attempted.

Section VIII

Relations of the Roman Empire with Persia

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

Armenia, as an independent kingdom, had long formed a slight counterpoise between the Roman and Persian empires. In the reign of Theodosius II. it had been partitioned by its powerful neighbours; and about the year 429, it had lost the shadow of independence which it had been allowed to retain. The greater part of Armenia had fallen to the share of the Persians; but as the people were Christians, and possessed their own church and literature, they had maintained their nationality uninjured after the loss of their political government. The western, or Roman part of Armenia, was bounded by the mountains in which the Araxes, the Boas, and the Euphrates take their rise; and it was defended against Persia by the fortress of Theodosiopolis (Erzeroum), situated on the very frontier of Pers-Armenia.[1] From Theodosiopolis the

[1] Saint Martin, *Mémoires Historiques et Géographiques sur l'Arménie*, i. 67.

empire was bounded by ranges of mountains which cross the Euphrates and extend to the River Nymphæus, and here the city of Martyropolis, the capital of Roman Armenia, east of the Euphrates, was situated.[1] From the junction of the Nymphæus with the Tigris the frontier again followed the mountains to Dara, and from thence it proceeded to the Chaboras and the fortress of Kirkesium.

The Arabs or Saracens who inhabited the district between Kirkesium and Idumæa, were divided into two kingdoms: that of Ghassan, towards Syria, maintained an alliance with the Romans; and that of Hira, to the east, enjoyed the protection of Persia. Palmyra, which had fallen into ruins after the time of Theodosius II., was repaired and garrisoned;[2] and the country between the Gulfs of Ailath and Suez, forming a province called the Third Palestine, was protected by a fortress constructed at the foot of Mount Sinai, and occupied by a strong body of troops.[3]

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

1 This was called the Fourth Armenia.—*Justiniani Nov.* xxxi.
2 *Malalæ Ch.* pr. ii. p. 53, edit Venet.
3 Procopius, *Ædific.* v. 8. Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, viii. 115.

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

The avarice of Justinian, or his inconstant plans, often induced him to leave the eastern frontier of the empire very inadequately garrisoned; and this frontier presented an extent of country against which a Persian army, concentrated behind the Tigris, could choose its point of attack. The option of carrying the war into Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, or Colchis, generally lay with the Persians; and Chosroes attempted to penetrate into the empire by every portion of this frontier during his long wars. The Roman army, in spite of the change which had taken place in its arms and organisation, still retained its superiority.

The war in which Justinian found the empire engaged on his succession, was terminated by a peace which the Romans purchased by the payment of eleven thousand pounds of gold to Chosroes. The Persian monarch required peace to regulate the affairs of his own kingdom; and the calculation of Justinian, that the sum which he paid to Persia was much less than the expense of continuing the war, though correct, was injudicious, as it really conveyed an admission of inferiority and weakness. Justinian's object had been to place the great body of his military forces at liberty, in order to direct his exclusive attention to recovering the lost provinces of the Western Empire. Had he availed himself of peace with Persia to diminish the burdens on his subjects, and consolidate the defence of the empire instead of extending its frontiers, he might perhaps have re-established the Roman power. As soon as Chosroes heard of the conquests of

Justinian in Africa, Sicily, and Italy, his jealousy induced him to renew the war. The solicitations of an embassy sent by Witiges are said to have had some effect in determining him to take up arms.

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

The weakness of the Roman empire, and the necessity of finding allies in the East, in order to secure a share of the lucrative commerce of which Persia had long possessed a monopoly, induced Justinian to keep up friendly communications with the king of Ethiopia (Abyssinia). Elesboas, who then occupied the Ethiopian throne, was a prince of great power, and a steady ally of the Romans. The wars of this Christian monarch in Arabia are related by the historians of the empire; and Justinian endeavoured, by his means, to transfer the silk trade with India from Persia to the route by

the Red Sea. The attempt failed from the great length of the sea voyage, and the difficulties of adjusting the intermediate commerce of the countries on this line of communication; but still the trade of the Red Sea was so great, that the king of Ethiopia, in the reign of Justin, was able to collect a fleet of seven hundred native vessels, and six hundred Roman and Persian merchantmen, which he employed to transport his troops into Arabia.[1] The diplomatic relations of Justinian with the Avars and Turks, and particularly with the latter nation, were influenced by the position of the Roman empire with regard to Persia, both in a commercial and political point of view.[2]

Section IX

Commercial position of the Greeks, and comparison with the other nations living under the Roman government

Until the northern nations conquered the southern provinces of the Western Empire, the commerce of Europe was in the hands of the subjects of the Roman emperors; and the monopoly of the Indian trade, its most lucrative branch, was almost exclusively possessed by the Greeks.[3] But the invasions of the barbarians, by diminishing the wealth of the countries which they subdued, greatly diminished the demand for the valuable merchandise imported from the East; and the financial extortions of the imperial government gradually impoverished the Greek population of Syria, Egypt, and Cyrenaïca, the greater portion of which had derived its prosperity from this now declining trade. In order to comprehend fully the change which must have taken place in the commercial relations of the Greeks with the western portion of Europe, it is necessary to compare the situation of each province, in the reign of Justinian, with its condition in the time of Hadrian. Many countries which had once supported an extensive trade in articles of luxury imported from the East, became incapable of purchasing any foreign

[1] Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, viii. 60. Acta Martyr. Metaphrast. ap. Surium, tom. v. p. 1042.

[2] Theophanes, *Ch.* 196. *Malalæ Ch.* pars 2 p. 81, edit. Venet. Menander, *Exc. Leg.* p. 282. edit. Bonn. Theophanes, *Ch.* 203.

[3] "Minimaque computatione millies centena millia sestertiûm annis omnibus India et Seres, peninsulaque illa, Arabia, imperio nostro adimunt, tanto nobis deliciæ et feminæ constant."—Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* lib. xii. c. xviii.

production, and could hardly supply a diminished and impoverished population with the mere necessaries of life.[1] The wines of Lesbos, Rhodes, Cnidus, Thasos, Chios, Samos, and Cyprus, the woollen cloths of Miletus and Laodicea, the purple dresses of Tyre, Getulia, and Laconia, the cambric of Cos, the manuscripts of Egypt and Pergamus, the perfumes, spices, pearls, and jewels of India, the ivory, the slaves, and tortoise-shell of Africa, and the silks of China, were once abundant on the banks of the Rhine and in the north of Britain. Treves and York were long wealthy and flourishing cities, where every foreign luxury could be obtained. Incredible quantities of the precious metals in coined money then circulated freely, and trade was carried on with activity far beyond the limits of the empire. The Greeks who traded in amber and fur, though they may have rarely visited the northern countries in person, maintained constant communications with these distant lands, and paid for the commodities which they imported in gold and silver coin, in ornaments, and by inducing the barbarians to consume the luxuries, the spices, and the incense of the East. Nor was the trade in statues, pictures, vases, and objects of art in marble, metals, earthenware, ivory, and painting, a trifling branch of commerce, as it may be conjectured from the relics which are now so frequently found, after having remained concealed for ages beneath the soil.

In the time of Justinian, Britain, Gaul, Rhætia, Pannonia, Noricum, and Vindelicia, were reduced to such a state of poverty and desolation, that their foreign commerce was almost annihilated, and their internal trade reduced to a trifling exchange of the rudest commodities. Even the south of Gaul, Spain, Italy, Africa, and Sicily, had suffered a great decrease of population and wealth under the government of the Goths and Vandals; and though their cities still carried on a considerable commerce with the East, that commerce was very much less than it had been in the times of the empire.[2] As the greater part of the trade of the Mediterranean was in the hands of the Greeks, this trading population was often regarded in the West as the type of the inhabitants of

[1] The emperor Julian says, "Ex immensis opibus egentissima est tandem Romana Respublica, impetitum ærarium est, urbes exinanitæ, populatæ provinciæ."—Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. c. 3.

[2] Vides universa Italiæ loca originariis viduata cultoribus, et illa mater humanæ messis Liguria, cui numerosa agricolarum solebat constare progenies, orbata atque sterilis jejunum cespitem nostris monstrat obtutibus."—Ennodius, v. *St. Epiph. Opera*, edit. J. Sirmondi: Paris, 1611, p. 358.

the eastern Roman empire. The mercantile class was generally regarded by the barbarians as favouring the Roman cause, and probably not without reason, for its interests must have required it to keep up constant communications with the empire. When Belisarius touched at Sicily, on his way to attack the Vandals, Procopius found a friend at Syracuse, who was a merchant, carrying on extensive dealings in Africa, as well as with the East. The Vandals, when they were threatened by Justinian's expedition, threw many of the merchants of Carthage into prison, as they suspected them of favouring Belisarius. The laws adopted by the barbarians for regulating the trade of their native subjects,[1] and the dislike with which most of the Gothic nations viewed trade, manufactures, and commerce, naturally placed all commercial and money transactions in the hands of strangers. When it happened that war or policy excluded the Greeks from participating in these transactions, they were generally conducted by the Jews. We find, indeed, after the fall of the Western Empire, that the Jews, availing themselves of their commercial knowledge and neutral political character, began to be very numerous in all the countries gained by conquest from the Romans, and particularly so in those situated on the Mediterranean, which maintained constant communications with the East.

Several circumstances, however, during the reign of Justinian contributed to augment the commercial transactions of the Greeks, and to give them a decided preponderance in the Eastern trade. The long war with Persia cut off all those routes by which the Syrian and Egyptian population had maintained their ordinary communications with Persia; and it was from Persia that they had always drawn their silk, and great part of their Indian commodities, such as muslins and jewels. This trade now began to seek two different channels, by both of which it avoided the dominions of Chosroes; the one was to the north of the Caspian Sea, and the other by the Red Sea. This ancient route through Egypt still

[1] "Prætia debent communi deliberatione constitui: quia non est delectatio commercii quæ jubetur invitis." Sartorius, in citing this passage from a letter of king Athalaric, addressed to Gildia, comte of Syracuse, observes very justly, "J'entends par les mots *deliberatio communis*, non pas ce dont les acheteurs et vendeurs conviennent entre eux, ce qui serait un commerce libre; mais comme il est prouvé par tout ce qui précède, une vente et un achat d'après les prix fixés d'un commun accord entre les magistrat, l'évêque, et le peuple, ce qui est précisement le contraire."—See Cassiodorus, *Variæ*, xi. 14. Sartorius, *Essai sur l'Etat civil et politique des Peuples d'Italie, sous le gouvernement des Goths*, 333.

continued to be that of the ordinary trade. But the importance of the northern route, and the extent of the trade carried on by it through different ports on the Black Sea, are authenticated by the numerous colony of the inhabitants of central Asia established at Constantinople in the reign of Justin II. Six hundred Turks availed themselves, at one time, of the security offered by the journey of a Roman ambassador to the Great Khan of the Turks, and joined his train.[1] This fact affords the strongest evidence of the great importance of this route, as there can be no question that the great number of the inhabitants of central Asia, who visited Constantinople, were attracted to it by their commercial occupations.

The Indian commerce through Arabia and by the Red Sea was still more important; much more so, indeed, than the mere mention of Justinian's failure to establish a regular importation of silk by this route might lead us to suppose. The immense number of trading vessels which habitually frequented the Red Sea shows that it was very great.

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

As the whole trade of western Europe, in Chinese and Indian productions, passed through the hands of the Greeks, its amount, though small in any one district, yet as a whole must have been large. The Greek mercantile population of the Eastern Empire had declined, though perhaps not yet in the same proportion as the other classes, so that the relative importance of the trade remained as great as ever with regard to the general wealth of the empire; and its profits were probably greater than formerly, since the restricted nature of the transactions in the various localities must have discouraged competitors and produced the effects of a monopoly, even in those countries where no recognised privileges were granted to the merchants. Justinian was also fortunate enough to secure to the Greeks the complete control of the silk trade, by enabling them to share in the production and manufacture of this precious commodity. This trade had excited the attention

[1] Menander, p. 398, edit. Bonn.

of the Romans at an early period. One of the emperors, probably Marcus Aurelius, had sent an ambassador to the East, with the view of establishing commercial relations with the country where silk was produced, and this ambassador succeeded in reaching China.[1] Justinian long attempted in vain to open direct communications with China; but all his efforts to obtain a direct supply of silk either proved unavailing or were attended with very partial success.[2] The people of the Roman empire were compelled to purchase the greater part of their silk from the Persians, who alone were able to supply the Chinese and Indian trade with the commodities suitable for that distant market. The Persians were, however, unable to retain the monopoly of this profitable commerce; for the high price of silk in the West during the Persian wars induced the nations of central Asia to avail themselves of every opportunity of opening direct communications by land with China, and conveying it, by caravans, to the frontiers of the Roman empire. This trade followed various channels, according to the security which political circumstances afforded to the traders. At times it was directed towards the frontiers of Armenia, while at others it proceeded as far north as the Sea of Asof. Jornandes, in speaking of Cherson at this time, calls it a city whence the merchant imports the produce of Asia.[3]

At a moment when Justinian must almost have abandoned the hope of participating in the direct trade with China, he was fortunate enough to be put in possession of the means of cultivating silk in his own dominions. Christian missions had been the means of extending very widely the benefits of civilisation. Christian missionaries first maintained a regular communication between Ethiopia and the Roman empire, and they had frequently visited China.[4] In the year 551 two monks, who had studied the method of rearing silkworms and winding silk in China, succeeded in conveying the eggs of the moth to Constantinople, enclosed in a cane. The emperor, delighted with the acquisition, granted them every assistance which they required, and encouraged their undertaking with great zeal. It would not, therefore, be just to deny to

[1] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xl. Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, ix. 222. Saint Martin.

[2] Procopius, *De Bello Pers.* i. 20.

[3] Jornandes, *De Rebus Geticis*, c. ii. "Juxta Chersonem, quo Asiæ bona avidus mercator importat."

[4] *Versuch einer allgemeinen Missions Geschichte der Kirche von Blumhardt.*—Basel, iii. 40.

Justinian some share in the merit of having founded a flourishing branch of trade, which tended very materially to support the resources of the Eastern Empire, and to enrich the Greek nation for several centuries.[1]

The Greeks, at this time, maintained their superiority over the other people in the empire only by their commercial enterprise, which preserved that civilisation in the trading cities which was rapidly disappearing among the agricultural population. The Greeks in general were now reduced almost to the same level with the Syrians, Egyptians, Armenians, and Jews. The Greeks of Cyrenaïca and Alexandria had suffered from the same government, and declined in the same proportion as the native population. Of the decline of Egypt we possess exact information, which it may not be unprofitable to pass in review. In the reign of Augustus, Egypt furnished Rome with a tribute of twenty millions of modii of grain annually,[2] and it was garrisoned by a force rather exceeding twelve thousand regular troops.[3] Under Justinian the tribute in grain was reduced to about five millions and a half modii, that is 800,000 artabas; and the Roman troops, to a cohort of six hundred men.[4] There can be little doubt that even the reduced production and diminished prosperity of Egypt were prevented from sinking still lower by the exportation of a portion of its grain to supply the trading population on the shores of the Red Sea. The canal connecting the Nile with the Red Sea afforded the means of exporting an immense quantity of the inferior qualities of grain to the arid coasts of Arabia, and formed a great artery for the civilisation and commerce of Arabia and Ethiopia.

About this period the Jewish nation attained a degree of importance which is worthy of attention, as explaining many circumstances connected with the history of the human race. It appears unquestionable that the Jews had increased very much in the age immediately preceding Justinian's reign. This increase is to be accounted for by the decline of the rest of the population in the countries round the Mediterranean,

1 Aristotle (*Hist. Animalium*, v. c. xvii. 6) mentions that the art of manufacturing the silk of some species of caterpillars was known in Cos.

2 Aurelius Victor, ep. c. 1, "Ducenties centena millia modiorum."

3 More, certainly, under Augustus; but under Tiberius, Nero, and Vespasian, the garrison was two legions.—Tacitus, *Ann.* 4, 5. Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* ii. 16, 4. Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 16. Varges, *De Statu Ægypti*, 69.

4 Justinian, *Edict.* xiii. Ptolemy Philadelphus had only received 1,500,000 artabas of grain as tribute, but he received a money revenue of 14,800 talents, about £2,500,000 sterling. Egypt was now incapable of making any such payments. The customs of its ports, and the taxes of its towns, must have formed a comparatively small sum.

and by the general decay of civilisation, in consequence of the severity of the Roman fiscal system, which trammelled every class of society with regulations restricting the industry of the people. These circumstances afforded an opening for the Jews, whose social position had been previously so bad, that the decline of their neighbours, at least, afforded them some relative improvement. The Jews, too, at this period, were the only neutral nation who could carry on their trade equally with the Persians, Ethiopians, Arabs, and Goths; for, though they were hated everywhere, the universal dislike was a reason for tolerating a people never likely to form common cause with any other. In Gaul and Italy they had risen to considerable importance; and in Spain they carried on an extensive trade in slaves, which excited the indignation of the Christian church, and which kings and ecclesiastical councils vainly endeavoured to destroy. The Jews generally found support from the barbarian monarchs; and Theodoric the Great granted them every species of protection. Their alliance was often necessary to render the country independent of the wealth and commerce of the Greeks.[1]

To commercial jealousy, therefore, as well as religious zeal, we must attribute some of the persecutions which the Jews sustained in the Eastern Empire. The cruelty of the Roman government nourished that bitter nationality and revengeful hatred of their enemies, which have always marked the energetic character of the Israelites; but the history of the injustice of one party, and of the crimes of the other, does not fall within the scope of this inquiry, though the position of the Jews and Greeks in modern times offers many points of similarity and comparison.

The Armenians, who at present take a large share in the trade of the East, were then entirely occupied with war and religion, and appeared in Europe only as mercenary soldiers in the pay of Justinian, in whose service many attained the highest military rank. In civilisation and literary attainments, the Armenians held, however, as high a rank as any of their contemporaries. In the year 551 their patriarch, Moses II., assembled a number of their learned men, in order to reform their calendar; and they then fixed on the era which the Armenians have since continued to use.[2] It is true that

[1] *Ed. Theod.* art. 143. Cassiod. *Var.* ep. 33, v. 37.

[2] Saint Martin, *Mémoires sur l'Armenie*, i. 330. C. F. Neumann, *Versuch einer Geschichte der Armenischen Literatur:* Leipzig, 1836, 8vo, p. 92.

the numerous translations of Greek books which distinguished the literature of Armenia were chiefly made during the preceding century, for the sixth only produced a few ecclesiastical works. The literary energy of Armenia is remarkable, inasmuch as it excited the fears of the Persian monarch, who ordered that no Armenian should visit the Eastern Empire to study at the Greek universities of Constantinople, Athens, or Alexandria.

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

The universities of the other cities of the empire were intended for the education of the higher classes destined for the public administration, or for the church. That of Constantinople possessed a philosophical, philological, legal, and theological faculty. Alexandria added to these a celebrated medical school. Berytus was distinguished for its school of jurisprudence, and Edessa was remarkable for its Syriac, as well as its Greek faculties. The university of Antioch suffered a severe blow in the destruction of the city by Chosroes, but it again rose from its ruin. The Greek poetical literature of this age is utterly destitute of popular interest, and shows that it formed only the amusement of a class of society, not the portrait of a nation's feelings. Paul the *Silentiary*, and Agathias the historian, wrote many epigrams, which exist in the Anthology. The poem of "Hero and Leander," by Musæus, is generally supposed to have been composed about

the year 450, but it may be mentioned as one of the last Greek poems which displays a true Greek character; and it is peculiarly valuable, as affording us a testimony of the late period to which the Hellenic people preserved their correct taste. The poems of Coluthus and Tryphiodorus, which are almost of the same period, are very far inferior in merit; but as both were Egyptian Greeks, it is not surprising that their poetical productions display the frigid character of the artificial school. After this period, the verses of the Greeks are entirely destitute of the spirit of poetry, and even the curious scholar finds their perusal a wearisome task.

The prose literature of the sixth century can boast of some distinguished names. The commentary of Simplicius on the manual of Epictetus has been frequently printed, and the work has even been translated into German. Simplicius was a pupil of Damascius, and one of the philosophers who, with that celebrated teacher, visited Persia on the dispersion of the Athenian schools. The collection of Stobæus, even in the mutilated form in which we possess it, contains much curious information; the medical works of Aetius and Alexander of Tralles have been printed several times, and the geographical writings of Hierocles and Cosmas Indicopleustes possess considerable interest. In history, the writings of Procopius and Agathias are of great merit, and have been translated into several modern languages. Many other names of authors, whose works have been preserved in part and published in modern times, might be cited; but they possess little interest for the general reader, and it does not belong to our inquiry to enter into details, which can be found in the history of Greek literature, nor does it fall within our province to signalise any of the legal and ecclesiastical writers of the age.[1]

Section X

Influence of the Orthodox Church on the National Feelings of the Greeks

It is necessary here to advert to the effect which the existence of the established Church, as a constituted body, and forming a part of the State, produced both on the government

[1] *Geschichte der Griechischen Literatur*, (a German translation, by J. Schwarze and Dr. Pinder, of Schoell's *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque*: the French original is in 8 vols. 8vo; the German translation in 3 vols.); and Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology and Biography*.

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

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

Egyptians, and Armenians found themselves placed in opposition to the Greeks by their national language and literature.

The Scriptures had, at a very early period, been translated into all the spoken languages of the East; and the Syrians, Egyptians, and Armenians, not only made use of their own language in the service of the church, but also possessed at this time a provincial clergy in no ways inferior to the Greek provincial clergy in learning and piety, and their ecclesiastical literature was fully equal to the portion of the Greek ecclesiastical literature which was accessible to the mass of the people. This use of the national language gave the church of each province a national character; the ecclesiastical opposition which political circumstances created in these national churches against the established church of the emperors, furnished a pretext for the imputation of heresy, and, probably, at times gave a heretical impulse to the opinions of the provincials. But a large body of the Armenians and the Chaldæans had never submitted to the supremacy of the Greek church in ecclesiastical matters, and a strong disposition to quarrel with the Greeks had always displayed itself among the natives of Egypt. Justinian carried his persecutions so far that in several provinces the natives separated from the established church and elected their own bishops, an act which, in the society of the time, was a near approach to open rebellion. Indeed, the hostility to the Roman government throughout the East was everywhere connected with an opposition to the Greek clergy. The Jews revived an old saying indicating a national as well as political and religious animosity,—"Cursed is he who eateth swine's flesh, or teacheth his child Greek." [1]

Power, whether ecclesiastical or civil, is so liable to abuse, that it is not surprising that the Greeks, as soon as they had succeeded in transforming the established church of the Roman empire into the Greek church, should have acted unfairly to the provincial clergy of the eastern provinces of the empire, in which the Greek liturgy was not used; nor is it surprising that the national differences should have soon been identified with opposite opinions in points of doctrine. As soon as any question arose, the Greek clergy, from their

[1] Yet, even among the Jews, there was a government party who wished to introduce the use of the Greek Scriptures in the synagogues, and a reasonable party who wished the people to understand the Scriptures. "Vel etiam patria forte—Italica hac dicimus—lingua," &c.—*Justiniani Nov.* 146. *Auth. Const.* 125.

alliance with the State, and their possession of the ecclesiastical revenues of the Church, were sure of being orthodox; and the provincial clergy were in constant danger of being regarded as heterodox, merely because they were not Greeks. There can be no doubt that several of the national churches of the East owe some increase of their hostility to the Roman government to the circumstances adverted to. The sixth century gave strong proofs of the necessity that each country which possessed a language and literature should possess also its national church; and the struggle of the Roman empire and of the Greek ecclesiastical establishment against this attempt at national independence on the part of the Armenians, Syrians, Egyptians, Africans, and Italians, involved the empire in many difficulties, and opened a way, first for the Persians to push their invasions into the heart of the empire, and afterwards for the Mohammedans to conquer the eastern provinces, and virtually to put an end to the Roman power.

Section XI

State of Athens during the decline of paganism, and until the extinction of its schools by Justinian

Ancient Greek literature and Hellenic traditions expired at Athens in the sixth century. In the year 529 Justinian closed the schools of rhetoric and philosophy, and confiscated the property devoted to their support.[1] The measure was probably dictated by his determination to centralise all power and patronage at Constantinople in his own person; for the municipal funds appropriated annually by the Athenian magistrates to pay the salaries of public teachers could not have excited the cupidity of the emperor during the early part of his reign, while the imperial treasury was still overflowing with the savings of Anastasius and Justin. The conduct of the great lawgiver must have been the result of policy rather than of rapacity.

It seems to be generally supposed that Athens had dwindled into a small town; that its schools were frequented only by a few lazy pedants, and that the office of professor had become a sinecure before Justinian closed for ever the gates of the Academy, the Lyceum, and the Stoa, and allowed the last Athenian philosophers to wander to Persia in search of the

1 Joan. Malales, 64, edit. Ven. Theophanes, 153. Agathias, ii. 30.

votaries they were no longer allowed to seek among the citizens of the Roman empire.[1] A passage of Synesius, who was compelled to touch at the port of the Piræus without having any desire to visit Athens, has been cited to prove the decay of learning, and the decline of population. The African philosopher says that the deserted aspect of the city of Minerva reminded him of the skin of an animal which had been sacrificed, and whose body had been consumed as an offering. Athens had nothing to boast of but great names. The Academy, the Lyceum, and the Stoa, were indeed still shown to travellers, but learning had forsaken these ancient retreats, and, instead of philosophers in the agora, you met only dealers in honey.[2] The Dorian prejudices of the Cyrenian, who boasted of his descent from Spartan kings, evidently overpowered the candour of the visitor. His spleen may have been caused by some neglect on the part of the Athenian literary aristocracy to welcome their distinguished guest, but it does little honour to the taste of Synesius that he could see the glorious spectacle of the Acropolis in the rich hue of its original splendour, and walk along surrounded by the many noble monuments of architecture, sculpture, and painting, which then adorned the city, without one expression of admiration. The time of his visit was not the most favourable for one who sought Athenian society, for it was only two years after the invasion of Alaric; but, after every allowance has been made for the peevishness of the writer, and for the deserted state of the city in consequence of the Gothic invasion, there exists ample proof that this description is a mere flourish of rhetorical exaggeration. History tells us that Athens prospered, and that her schools were frequented by many eminent men long after the ravages of Alaric and the visit of Synesius. The empress Eudocia (Athenaïs) was a year old, and Synesius might have seen in a nurse's arms the infant who received at Athens the education which made her one of the most accomplished and elegant ladies of a brilliant and luxurious court, as well as a person of learning, even without reference to her sex and rank.

Athens was not then a rude provincial town. St. John Chrysostom informs us that, in the court of Pulcheria's mother, a knowledge of dress, embroidery, and music, were

[1] *Cod. Just.* i. xi. 10. Procopius, *Arc. Hist.* 74, 77, edit. Par.
[2] *Synesii Epist.* 135. Gibbon, ch. xxx. note 8; Neander, ii. 84,—who both refer to this passage.

considered as the most important objects on which taste could be displayed; but that to converse with elegance, and to compose pretty verses, were regarded as necessary proofs of intellectual superiority.[1] Pulcheria, though born in this court, against which Chrysostom declaimed with eloquent but sometimes unseemly violence, lived the life of a saint. Yet she adopted the elegant heathen maiden Athenaïs as a protegée, and, when she converted her, bestowed on her the name of her own mother Eudocia. Though history tells us nothing of the fashionable society of Athens at this time, it supplies us with some interesting information concerning the social position of her learned men, and we know that they were generally gentlemen whose chief pride was that they were also scholars.

When the members of the native aristocracy in Greece found that they were excluded by the Romans from the civil and military service of the State, they devoted themselves to literature and philosophy. It became the tone of good society to be pedantic. The wealth and the fame of Herodes Atticus have rendered him the type of the Greek aristocratic philosophers.[2] The Emperor Hadrian had revived the importance and augmented the prosperity of Athens by his visits, and he gave additional consequence to its schools by appointing an official professor of the branch of learning called Sophistics. Lollianus, who first occupied this chair, was a native of Ephesus; but he was welcomed by the Athenians, for the strong remedies the Romans had applied to diminish their pride had at least cured them of the absurd vanity of autochthonism. Lollianus not only received the rights of citizenship, he was elected strategos, then the highest office in the local magistracy. During his term of service he employed his own wealth and his personal credit to alleviate the sufferings caused by a severe famine; and he discharged all the debts contracted for this purpose from his private fortune. The Athenians rewarded him for his generosity by erecting two statues to his memory.[3]

Antoninus Pius increased the public importance, and gave

[1] See the Memoir on the manners of the age of Theodosius I. and Arcadius, which Montfaucon wrote while editing the works of Chrysostom.—*Mémoires de l'Academie des Inscrip.* xiii. 474.

[2] See the Memoir on the Life of Herodes Atticus, by Burigny. *Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscrip.* xxx. 1.

[3] Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* 225, edit. Kayser. Before the corn arrived, the people would have stoned their strategos if Pankratios the cynic had not turned aside their anger by asking them whether they did not know that the trade of Lollianus was to supply words, not bread.

an official character to the schools, by allowing the professors named by the emperor an annual salary of ten thousand drachmas.[1] Marcus Aurelius, who visited Athens on his return from the East after the rebellion of Avidius Cassius, established official teachers of every kind of learning then publicly taught, and organised the philosophers into an university. Scholarchs were appointed for the four great philosophical sects of the stoics, platonists, peripatetics, and epicureans, who received fixed salaries from the government.[2] The wealth and avarice of the Athenian philosophers became after this a common subject of envy and reproach. Many names of some eminence in literature might be cited as connected with the Athenian schools during the second and third centuries; but to show the universal character of the studies pursued, and the freedom of inquiry that was allowed, it is only necessary to mention the Christian writers Quadratus, Aristeides, and Athenagoras, who shared with their heathen contemporaries the fame and patronage of which Athens could dispose.

It appears that even before the end of the second century the population of the city had undergone a great change, in consequence of the constant immigration of Asiatic and Alexandrian Greeks who visited it in order to frequent its schools, and make use of its libraries. The attendants and followers of these wealthy strangers settled at Athens in such numbers as to modify the spoken dialect, which then lost its classic purity; and it was only in the depopulated demoi, and among the impoverished landed proprietors of Attica, who were too poor to purchase foreign slaves or to associate with wealthy sophists, that pure Attic Greek was any longer heard.[3] Strangers filled the chairs of eloquence and philosophy, and rhetoricians were elected to be the chief magistrates. In the third century, however, we find the Athenian Dexippus, a rhetorician, a patriot, and a historian, holding the highest offices in the local administration with honour to himself and to his country.[4]

Both Athens and the Piræus had completely recovered from the ravages committed by the Goths before the time of Constantine. The large crews which were embarked in ancient

[1] Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* 245, edit. Kayser.
[2] Dion Cassius, lxxi. 31. Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* 245. Lucian, *Eunuch.* 3. Ellisen *Zur Geschichte Athens nach dem Verluste seiner Selbstandigkeit.*
[3] Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* 238.
[4] *Corpus Script. Hist. Byz.*, "De Dexippo," p. xiv. edit. Bonn.

galleys, and the small space which they contained for the stowage of provisions, rendered it necessary to select a station well supplied either from its own resources or from its being a centre of commercial communication, in order to assemble a great naval force. The fact that Constantine selected the Piræus as the harbour at which his son Crispus concentrated the large force with which he defeated Licinius at the Hellespont, proves at least that the Athenian markets afforded abundant supplies of provisions.

The heathen city of Minerva enjoyed the favour and protection of the Christian emperors. Constantine continued the salaries of the scholarchs and professors. He enlarged their privileges, and exempted them from many onerous taxes and public burdens. He furnished the city with an annual supply of grain for distribution, and he accepted the title of strategos, as Hadrian had accepted that of archon, to show that he deemed it an honour to belong to its local magistrature.[1] Constantius granted a donative of grain to the city as a special mark of favour to Proæresius; and during his reign we find its schools extremely popular, crowded with wealthy students from every province of the empire, and attended by all the great men of the time.[2] Four celebrated men resided there nearly at the same period—the future Emperor Julian, the sophist Libanius, St. Basil, and St. Gregory Nazianzenus. Athens then enjoyed the inestimable blessing of toleration. Heathens and Christians both frequented her schools unmolested, in spite of the laws already promulgated against some pagan rites, for the regulations against soothsayers and diviners were not supposed to be applicable to gentlemen and philosophers. Athenian society consequently suffered for some time very little from the changes which took place in the religious opinions of the emperors. It gained nothing from the heathenism of Julian, and lost nothing by the Arianism of Valens.

Julian, it is true, ordered all the temples to be repaired, and regular sacrifices to be performed with order and pomp; but his reign was too short to effect any considerable change, and his orders met with little attention in Greece, for Christianity had already made numerous converts among the priests of the temples, who, strange to say, appear to have embraced the

[1] Julian, *Orat. in Laud. Constantii*, p. 8, edit. Spanheim. Eunapius, *Vit. Soph.* 22, edit. Boissonade. *Cod. Theod.* xiii. 3, 1 and 3.
[2] Eunapius, *Vit. Soph.* 90, edit. Boissonade.

doctrines of Christianity much more readily and promptly than the philosophers. Many priests had already been converted to Christianity with their whole families, and in many temples it was difficult to procure the celebration of the heathen ceremonies.[1] Julian attempted to inflict one serious wound on Christianity at Athens, by issuing an unjust and arbitrary edict forbidding Christians from giving instruction publicly in rhetoric and literature. By this law he believed that it would be in his power to reduce the Christians to a state of ignorance. His respect for the character of Proæresius, an Armenian, who was then a professor at Athens, induced him to exempt that teacher from his ordinance; but Proæresius refused to avail himself of the emperor's permission, for, as new ceremonies were prescribed in the resorts of public teaching, he considered it his duty to cease lecturing rather than appear tacitly to conform to heathen usages.[2]

The supremacy of paganism was of short duration. About two years after Julian had proclaimed it the established religion of the Roman empire, Valentinian and Valens published an edict forbidding incantations, magical ceremonies, and offerings by night, under pain of death.[3] The application of this law, according to the letter, would have prevented the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries, and rendered life intolerable to many fervid votaries of Hellenic superstition, and of the Neo-platonic philosophy. The suppression of the great heathen festivals, of which some of the rites were celebrated during the night, would have seriously injured the prosperity of Athens, and some other cities in Greece. The celebrated Prætextatus, a heathen highly esteemed for his integrity and administrative talents, was then proconsul of Achaia. His representations induced the emperors to make some necessary modifications in the application of the edict, and the Eleusinian mysteries continued to be celebrated until Alaric destroyed the temple.[4]

Paganism rapidly declined, but the heathen philosophers at Athens continued to live as a separate class of society, refusing to embrace Christianity, though without offering any opposition to its progress. They considered their own religious opinions

[1] *Panegyrici Veteres. Mamertini gratiarum actio Juliano*, c. 9; quoted by Zinkeisen, *Geschichte Griechenlands*, p. 621. The priests had begun to forget or to neglect the ancient rites in the time of Apollonius of Tyana.—Philostratus, iii. 58.

[2] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxv. 4. See the article "Proæresius," in Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*.

[3] *Cod. Theod.* ix. 16, 7. A.D. 364.

[4] Zosimus, iv. 3. Lasaulx, *Der Untergang des Hellenismus*, p. 84, note 242.

as too elevated for the vulgar, so that there existed no community of feeling between the aristocratic Neo-platonists of the schools, the burgesses of the towns, whether they were heathens or Christians, and the agriculturists in the country, who were generally pagans. Hence the emperors entertained no political dislike to the philosophers, and continued to employ them in the public service. Neither Christian emperors nor Christian bishops felt any rancour against the amiable scholars who cherished the exclusive prejudices of Hellenic civilisation, and who considered the philanthropic spirit of Christianity as an idle dream. The Neo-platonists viewed man as by nature a brutal creature, and they deemed slavery to be the proper condition of the labouring classes. They scorned equally the rude idolatry of corrupted paganism, and the simple doctrines of pure Christianity. They were deeply imbued with those social prejudices which have for centuries separated the rural and urban population in the East; prejudices which were first created by the prevalence of predial slavery, but which were greatly increased by the fiscal system of the Romans, which enthralled men to degraded employment in hereditary castes. Libanius, Themistius, and Symmachus, were favoured even by the orthodox emperor Theodosius the Great. St. Basil corresponded with Libanius. Musonius, who had taught rhetoric at Athens, was imperial governor of Asia in the year 367; but, as it is possible that he had then embraced Christianity, this circumstance can only be cited to prove the social rank still maintained by the teachers of the Athenian schools.[1]

The last breath of Hellenic life was now rapidly passing away, and its dissolution conferred no glory on Greece. The Olympic games were celebrated until the reign of Theodosius I. The last recorded victor was an Armenian. Alexander, son of Amyntas, king of Macedon, had not been allowed to become a competitor for a prize until he had proved his Hellenic descent; but the Hellenes were at this time prouder of being Romaioi than of being Greeks, and the Armenian Varastad, whose name closes the long list which commences with demi-gods, and is filled with heroes, was a Romaios.[2] Hellenic art also fled from the soil of Hellas. The chrys-elephantine statue of the Olympian Jupiter was transported to

1 Clinton, *Fasti Romani*. See Musonius, and the citations relating to him.

2 Moses Chorenensis, iii. 40, cited by Lasaulx, note 310. The suppression of the Olympic games, overlooked by Clinton (*Fasti Romani*), is mentioned by Cedrenus, i. 326. A.D. 394 (?)

Constantinople, where it was destroyed in one of the great fires which so often laid waste that city. The statue of Minerva, which the pagans believed had protected her favourite city against Alaric, was carried off about the same time, and thus the two great works of Phidias were exiled from Greece.[1] The destruction of the great temple of Olympia followed soon after, but the exact date is unknown. Some have supposed that it was burned by the Gothic troops of Alaric; others think that it was destroyed by Christian bigotry in the reign of Theodosius II. The Olympiads, which for generation after generation had served to record the noble emulation of the Greeks, were now supplanted by the notation of the indiction. Glory resigned her influence over society to taxation.

The restrictions which Julian had placed on public instruction in order to acquire the power of injuring Christianity, had not been productive of permanent effects.[2] Theodosius II. was the first emperor who interfered with public instruction for the direct object of controlling and circumscribing public opinion. While he honoured those professors who were appointed by his own authority, and propagated the principles of submission, or rather of servility, to the imperial commands, he struck a mortal blow at the spirit of free inquiry by forbidding private teachers to give public lectures under pain of infamy and banishment.[3] Private teachers of philosophy had hitherto enjoyed great freedom in teaching throughout Greece; but henceforth thought was enslaved even at Athens, and no opinions were allowed to be taught except such as could obtain a license from the imperial authorities. Emulation was destroyed, and genius, which is always regarded with suspicion by men of routine, for it sheds new light even on the oldest subject, was now officially suppressed. Men not having the liberty of uttering their thoughts soon ceased to think.

Though we are acquainted with very few precise facts relating to the state of society in Athens from the time of Theodosius II. to the suppression of the schools of philosophy by Justinian, we are, nevertheless, able to form some idea of

[1] Marinus, *Vit. Procli.* c. 29, 30, edit. Boissonade; cited by Chastel, *Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme dans l'Empire d' Orient*, p. 235. See the description of the statue of Minerva in Codinus, *De Orig. Constant.* p. 13. Other statues were carried off from Athens to adorn Constantinople in the time of Theodosius II.—See Codinus, p. 26, 32, edit. Par.

[2] *Cod. Just.* xiii. 3, 5; x. 52, 7.

[3] *Cod. Theod.* xiv. 9, 3; *Cod. Just.* xi. 18, 1.

the peculiarities which distinguished it from the other provincial cities of the empire. The privileges and usages transmitted from the time when Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius treated Athens as a free city, were long tolerated by the Christian emperors. Some Hellenic pride was still nourished at Athens, from the tradition of its having been long an ally and not a subject of Rome. A trace of this memory of the past seems discernible in the speech of the Empress Eudocia to the people of Antioch, as she was on her pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It closed with a boast of their common Hellenic origin.[1] The spirit of emulation between the votaries of the Gospel and the schools undoubtedly tended to improve the morality of Athens. Paganism, after it had been driven from the mind, survived in the manners of the people in most of the great cities of the empire. But at Athens the philosophers distinguished themselves by purity of morals; and the Christians would have been ashamed in their presence of the exhibitions of tumult and simony which disgraced the ecclesiastical elections at Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople. In the mean time, the civilisation of the ancient world was not extinct, though many of its vices were banished. Public hotels for strangers existed on the model which the Mohammedans have gained so much honour by imitating; almshouses for the destitute, and hospitals for the sick, were to be found in due proportion to the population, or the want would have been justly recorded to the disgrace of the wealthy pagans. The truth is, that the spirit of Christianity had penetrated into heathenism, which had become virtuous and unobtrusive, as well as mild and timid. The habits of Athenian society were soft and humane; the wealthy lived in palaces, and purchased libraries. Many philosophers, like Proclus, enjoyed ample revenues, and perhaps, like him, received rich legacies.[2] Ladies wore dresses of silk embroidered with gold. Both sexes delighted in boots of thick silk ornamented with tassels of gold fringe. The luxurious drank wine of Cnidus and Thasos, as we find attested by the inscribed handles of broken amphoræ still scattered in the fields round the modern city.[3] The luxury and folly against which Chrysostom declaimed at Constantinople were perhaps not unknown at Athens, but, as there was less wealth, vice could

1 Evagrius, *Hist. Eccles.* i. 20.
2 Chastel, *Hist. de la Destruction du Paganisme*, 260.
3 Those of Rhodes are rarely of a late period.

not exhibit itself so shamelessly in the philosophic as in the orthodox city. It is not probable that the Bishop of Athens found it necessary to preach against ladies swimming in public cisterns, which excited the indignation of the saint at Constantinople, and which continued to be a favourite amusement of the fair sex for several generations, until Justinian suppressed it by admitting it as a ground of divorce.[1]

Theodosius I., Arcadius, and Theodosius II., passed many laws prohibiting the ceremonies of paganism, and ordering the persecution of its votaries. It appears that many of the aristocracy, and even some men in high official employment, long adhered to its delusions. Optatus, the prefect of Constantinople in 404, was a heathen. Isokasios, questor of Antioch, was accused of the same crime in 467; and Tribonian, the celebrated jurist of Justinian, who died in 545, was supposed to be attached to philosophic opinions hostile to Christianity, though he made no scruple in conforming outwardly to the established religion. His want of religious principle caused him to be called an atheist.[2] The philosophers were at last persecuted with great cruelty, and anecdotes are related of their martyrdom in the reign of Zeno.[3] Phocas, a patrician, poisoned himself in the reign of Justinian to avoid being compelled to embrace Christianity, or suffer death as a criminal.[4] Yet the most celebrated historians of this period were heathens. Of Eunapius and Zosimus there is no doubt, and the general opinion refuses to regard Procopius as a Christian.

At last, in the year 529, Justinian confiscated all the funds devoted to philosophic instruction at Athens, closed the schools, and seized the endowments of the academy of Plato, which had maintained an uninterrupted succession of teachers for nine hundred years. The last teacher enjoyed an annual revenue of one thousand gold solidi, but it is probable that he wandered in a deserted grove, and lectured in an empty hall.[5] Seven Athenian philosophers are celebrated for exiling themselves to Persia, where they were sure to escape the persecu-

[1] Montfaucon, *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscrip.* xiii. 482. *Cod. Just.* v. 17, 9. This state of manners renders the picture of Theodora's conduct, and that of her companions, as given by Procopius, evidence concerning the state of society, though it may be individually calumnious.

[2] Suidas, ii. 1204, edit. Bernhardi.

[3] Lasaulx, 140. Suidas, Ἱεροκλῆς, i. 953, edit. Bernh.

[4] Lasaulx, 147.

[5] The same property yielded only three gold pieces in the time of Plato. Suidas, Πλάτων, ii. 297, edit. Bernh.

tions of Justinian, and where they hoped to find disciples. But they met with no sympathy among the followers of Zoroaster, and they were soon happy to avail themselves of the favour of Chosroes, who obtained for them permission to return and spend their lives in peace in the Roman empire.[1] Toleration rendered their declining influence utterly insignificant, and the last heathen fancies of the philosophic schools disappeared from the conservative aristocracy, where they had found their last asylum.[2]

1 Neander, *Hist. of the Christian Religion and Church*, ii. 84.

2 Clinton, *Fasti Romani*. A.D. 529–531. Agathias (69, edit. Par.) gives the names of the seven philosophers. Simplicius is the best known. Clinton (*Fasti Romani*, Appendix) furnishes us with lists of their writings.

Justinian considered Athens as a city of so much importance that he sent a copy of his laws. See before, page 218, note.

CHAPTER IV

CONDITION OF THE GREEKS FROM THE DEATH OF JUSTINIAN TO THE RESTORATION OF ROMAN POWER IN THE EAST BY HERACLIUS. A.D. 565-633.

The reign of Justin II.—Disorganisation of all political and national influence during the reigns of Tiberius II. and Maurice—Maurice causes a revolution, by attempting to re-establish the ancient authority of the imperial administration—Phocas was the representative of a revolution, not of a national party—The empire under Heraclius—Change in the position of the Greek population, produced by the Sclavonic establishments in Dalmatia—Influence of the campaigns of Heraclius in the East—Condition of the native population of Greece.

SECTION I

THE REIGN OF JUSTIN II.

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

The inhabitants of the various provinces of the Roman empire were everywhere forming local and religious associations, independent of the general government, and striving to recur as rarely as possible to the central administration at Constantinople. National feelings daily exerted additional

force in separating the subjects of the empire into communities, where language and religious opinions operated with more power on society than the political allegiance enforced by the emperor. This separation of the interests and feelings soon put an end to every prospect of regenerating the empire, and even presented momentary views of new political, religious, and national combinations, which seemed to threaten the immediate dissolution of the Eastern Empire. The history of the West offered the counterpart of the fate which threatened the East; and, according to all human calculations, Armenia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Hellas, were on the point of becoming independent states. But the inexorable principle of Roman centralisation possessed an inherent energy of existence very different from the unsettled republicanism of Greece, or the personality of the Macedonian monarchies. The Roman empire never relaxed its authority over its own subjects, nor did it ever cease to dispense to them an equal administration of justice, in every case in which its own fiscal demands were not directly concerned, and even then it authorised injustice by positive law. It never permitted its subjects to bear arms, unless those arms were received from the State, and directed by the emperor's officers; and when the imperial forces were defeated by the Avars and the Persians, its pride was unconquered. The emperors displayed the same spirit when the enemy was encamped before Constantinople as the senate had shown when Hannibal marched from the field of Cannæ to the walls of Rome.

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

The Roman emperors of the East appear to have fancied that the strict administration of justice in civil and criminal

affairs superseded the necessity of carefully watching the ordinary proceedings of the government officers in the administrative department, forgetting that the legal establishment could only take cognisance of the exceptional cases, and that the well-being of the people depended on the daily conduct of their civil governors. It soon became apparent that Justinian's reforms in the legislation of the empire had produced no improvement in the civil administration. That portion of the population of the capital, and of the empire, which arrogated to itself the title of Romans, turned the privileges conferred by their rank in the imperial service into a means of living at the expense of the people. But the emperor began to perceive that the central administration had lost some of its former control over the people; and Justin II. seemed willing to make the concessions necessary to revive the feeling that civil order, and security of property, flowed, as a natural result, from the mere existence of the imperial government,—a feeling which had long contributed powerfully to support the throne of the emperors.[1]

The want of a fixed order of succession in the Roman empire was an evil severely felt, and the enactment of precise rules for the hereditary transmission of the imperial dignity would have been a wise and useful addition to the *lex regia*, or constitution of the State.[2] This constitution was supposed to have delegated the legislative power to the emperor; for the theory, that the Roman people was the legitimate source of all authority, still floated in public opinion. Justinian, however, was sufficiently versed both in the laws and constitutional forms of the empire, to dread any precise qualification of this vague and perhaps imaginary law; though the interests of the empire imperiously required that measures should be adopted to prevent the throne from becoming an object of civil war.

[1] The Novell cxlix. is ascribed to Justin. It is altogether a curious document for the illustration of the history of his reign. The following passage is worthy of attention: "Hortamur cujusque provinciæ sanctissimos episcopos, eos etiam qui inter possessores et incolas principatum tenent, ut per communem supplicationem ad potentiam nostram eos deferant, quos ad administrationem provinciæ suæ idoneos existiment."—*Ed. Just.* iv.

[2] "Sed et, quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem; cum lex regia quæ de ejus imperio lata est, populus ei, et in eum, omne imperium suum et potestatem concedat."—Just. *Inst.* i. 2, 6. This *lex regia* alluded to by Justinian was therefore equivalent to an act of parliament, vesting the legislative power in the Crown, but it cannot have been unconnected in the opinion of the Romans with the *lex curiata de imperio*, which conferred the sovereignty on Romulus. It indicated that the commonwealth whose will was expressed in this law, was something greater than the emperor; and in consequence of this feeling, the Romans always, even under the empire, regarded themselves as a free people, over whom the law was the sovereign authority.

A successor is apt to be a rival, and a regency in the Roman empire would have revived the power of the senate, and probably converted the government into an oligarchical aristocracy. Justinian, as he was childless, naturally felt unwilling to circumscribe his own power by any positive law, lest he should create a claim which the authority of the senate and people of Constantinople might have found the means of enforcing, and thus a legal control over the arbitrary exercise of the imperial power would have been established. A doubtful succession was also an event viewed with satisfaction by most of the leading men in the senate, the palace, and the army, as they might expect to advance their private fortunes, during the period of intrigue and uncertainty inseparable from such a contingency. The partisans of a fixed succession would only be found among the lawyers of the capital, the clergy, and the civil and financial administrators in the provinces; for the Roman citizens and nobility, forming a privileged class, were generally averse to the project, as tending to diminish their importance. The abolition of the ceremony attending the sanction of the emperor's election by the senate and the people, would have been viewed as an arbitrary change in the constitution, and as an attempt to rob the inhabitants of the Eastern Empire of the boast "that they lived under a legal monarch, and not under a hereditary despot like the Persians,"—a boast which they still uttered with pride.

The death of Justinian had so long threatened the empire with civil war, that all parties were anxious to avert the catastrophe; and Justin, one of his nephews, who held the office of master of the palace, was peaceably installed as his uncle's successor. The energy of his personal character enabled him to turn to his advantage the traces of ancient forms that still survived in the Roman state; and the momentary political importance thus given to these forms, serves to explain to us that the Roman government was even then very far from a pure despotism. The phrase, "the senate, and the Roman people," still exerted so much influence over public opinion, that Justin considered their formal election as constituting his legal title to the throne. The senate was instructed by his partisans to solicit him to accept the imperial dignity, though he had already secured both the troops and the treasury; and the people were assembled in the hippodrome, in order to enable the new emperor to deliver an oration, in which he assured them that their happiness, and not his own repose, should

always be the chief object of his government.[1] The character of Justin II. was honourable, but it is said to have been capricious; he was, however, neither destitute of personal abilities nor energy.[2] Disease, and temporary fits of insanity, compelled him at last to resign the direction of public business to others, and in this critical conjuncture his choice displayed both judgment and patriotism. He passed over his own brothers and his son-in-law, in order to select the man who appeared alone capable of re-establishing the fortunes of the Roman empire by his talents. This man was Tiberius II.

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

The country occupied by the Lombards on the Danube was exhausted by their oppressive rule; and they found great difficulty in maintaining their position, in consequence of the neighbourhood of the Avars, the growing strength of the Sclavonians, and the perpetual hostility of the Gepids. The diminished population and increasing poverty of the surrounding countries no longer supplied the means of supporting a numerous body of warriors in that contempt for every useful occupation which was essential to the preservation of the national superiority of the Gothic race. The Sclavonic neighbours and subjects of the Gothic tribes were gradually becoming as well armed as their masters; and as many of those neighbours combined the pursuits of agriculture with their pastoral and predatory habits, they were slowly rising to a

[1] Corippus, *De Laud. Justini Minoris*, l. ii. v. 337. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulæ Byzantinæ*, i. c. 93. vol. i. p. 429, edit. Bonn. Justin says, Τῇ τοῦ πανταδυνάμου, Θεοῦ κρίσει, τῇ τε ὑμετέρᾳ κοινῇ ἐκλογῇ πρὸς τὴν βασιλείαν χωρήσαντες, τὴν οὐράνιον πρόνοιαν ἐπικαλούμεθα. His principles of administration are also developed in the *Novells*, cxlviii. and cxlix.

[2] Theophanes, *Chron.* p. 208.

national equality. Pressed by these circumstances, Alboin, king of the Lombards, resolved to emigrate, and to effect a settlement in Italy, the richest and most populous country in his neighbourhood. To secure himself during the expedition, he proposed to the Avars to unite their forces and destroy the kingdom of the Gepids, agreeing to abandon all claims to the conquered country, and to remain satisfied with half the movable spoil.

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

The historians of this period, on the authority of Paul the Deacon, a Lombard chronicler, have asserted that Narses invited the Lombards into Italy in order to avenge an insulting message with which the empress Sophia had accompanied an order of her husband Justin for the recall of the ancient eunuch to Constantinople.[1] The court was dissatisfied with the expense of Narses in the administration of Italy, and required that the province should remit a larger sum to the imperial treasury than it had hitherto done. The Italians, on the other hand, complained of the military severity and fiscal oppression of his government. The last acts of the life of Narses are, however, quite incompatible with treasonable designs; and probably the knowledge which the emperor Justin and his cabinet must have possessed of the impossibility of deriving any surplus revenue from the agricultural districts of Italy, offers the simplest explanation of the indifference manifested at Constantinople to the Lombard invasion. It would be apparently nearer the truth to affirm that the Lombards entered Italy with the tacit sanction of the empire, than that Narses acted as a traitor.

As soon as Narses received the order of recall, he proceeded to Naples, on his way to Constantinople; but the advance of

[1] Paulus Diaconus, *De Gestis Langobardorum*, iii. 5. The Lombards were accompanied by twenty thousand Saxons, who were defeated by the Burgundians in the Valais.

the Lombards alarmed the Italians to such a degree, that they despatched a deputation to beg him to resume the government. The Bishop of Rome repaired to Naples, to persuade Narses of the sincere repentance of the provincials, who now perceived the danger of losing a ruler of talent at such a crisis. No suspicion, therefore, could have then prevailed amongst the Italians of any communications between Narses and the Lombards, nor could they have suspected that an experienced courtier, a wise statesman, and an able general, would, in his extreme old age, allow revenge to get the better of his reason, else they would have trembled at his return to power, and dreaded his vengeance instead of confiding in his talents. And even in examining history at this distance of time, we ought certainly to weigh the conduct and character of a long public life against the dramatic tale of an empress sending to a viceroy a grossly insulting message, and the improbability that the viceroy should publicly proclaim his thirst for revenge. The story that the empress Sophia sent a distaff and spindle to the ablest soldier in the empire, and that the veteran should have declared in his passion that he would spin her a thread which she should not easily unravel, seems a fable, which bears a character of fancy and of simplicity of ideas, marking its origin in a ruder state of society than that which reigned at the court of Justin II. A Gothic or Lombard origin of the fable is farther supported by the fact, that it must have produced no ordinary sensation among the Germanic nations, to see a eunuch invested with the highest commands in the army and the State, and the sensation could not fail to give rise to many idle tales. The story of Narses's treason may have arisen at the time of his death; but it is remarkable that no Greek author mentions it before the tenth century; and what is still more extraordinary, and countenances in some degree the inference of at least tacit consent on the part of the Roman emperor, is the fact, that no earlier account of the conquest of Italy by the Lombards occurs in any Greek writer.[1] Narses really accepted the invitation of the Italians to return to Rome, where he commenced the necessary preparations for resisting the Lombards, but his death occurred before their arrival in Italy.

[1] A.D. 949. Constantine Porph. *De Adm. Imperio*, 17. The emperor's extreme want of exactness in his account of this event, proves that he had no authentic document to copy. It confounds chronology and persons; mentions an empress Irene, and a patriarch Zacharias the Athenian, as cotemporaries of Narses, and never names the emperor Justin. See Banduri's Note, vol. iii. p. 331, edit. Bonn.

The historians of Justin's reign are full of complaints of the abuses which had infected the administration of justice, yet the facts which they record tend distinctly to exculpate the emperor from any fault, and prove incontestably that the corruption had its seat in the vices of the whole system of the civil government of the empire. The most remarkable anecdote selected to illustrate the corruption of the judicial department, indicates that the real cause of the disorder lay in the increasing power of the official aristocracy connected with the civil administration. A man of rank, on being cited before the prefect of the city for an act of injustice, ridiculed the summons, and excused himself from appearing to answer it, as he was engaged to attend an entertainment given by the emperor.[1] In consideration of this circumstance, the prefect did not venture to arrest him; but he proceeded immediately to the palace, entered the state apartments, and addressing Justin, declared that, as a judge, he was ready to execute every law for the strict administration of justice, but since the emperor honoured criminals, by admitting them to the imperial table, where his authority was of no avail, he begged to be allowed to resign his office. Justin, without hesitation, asserted that he would never defend any act of injustice, and that even should he himself be the person accused, he would submit to be punished. The prefect, thus authorised, seized the accused, and carried him to his court for trial. The emperor applauded the conduct of his judge; but this act of energy is said to have so completely astonished the inhabitants of Constantinople, that, for thirty days, no accusation was brought before the prefect. This effect of the impartial administration of justice on the people seems strange, if the historians of the period are correct in their complaints of the general injustice. The anecdote is, however, valuable, as it reveals the real cause of the duration of the Eastern Empire, and shows that the crumbling political edifice was sustained by the judicial administration. Justin also paid every attention to relieve his subjects from the burden which the arrears of the public taxes were always causing to the people, without enriching the treasury.[2]

If Justin engaged rashly in a quarrel with Persia, he

[1] Μάγιστρός τις. Cedrenus, vol. i. 389. Τῶν ἐπισημοτέρων συγκλητικῶν ἕνα. Zonaras, ii. 71. Manasses, *Chron.* p. 69.

[2] See *Novell.* cxlviii. and cxlix., both ascribed to Justin. Also *Novell.* cxli. of Tiberius, who says, "Ab avaritia eorum, qui magistratus emunt magis, quam accipiunt."

certainly omitted no means of strengthening himself during the contest. He formed alliances with the Turks of central Asia, and with the Ethiopians who occupied a part of Arabia; but, in spite of his allies, the arms of the empire were unsuccessful in the East. A long series of predatory excursions were carried on by the Romans and the Persians, and many provinces of both empires were reduced to a state of desolation by this barbarous species of warfare. Chosroes succeeded in capturing Dara, the bulwark of Mesopotamia, and in ravishing Syria in the most terrible manner; half a million of the inhabitants of this flourishing province were carried away as slaves into Persia. In the meantime the Avars consolidated their empire on the Danube, by compelling the Huns, Bulgarians, Sclavonians, and the remains of the Goths, to submit to their authority. Justin vainly attempted to arrest their career, by encouraging the Franks of Austrasia to attack them. The Avars continued their war with the empire, and defeated the Roman army under Tiberius the future emperor.

The misfortunes which assailed the empire on every side, and the increasing difficulties of the internal administration, demanded exertions, of which the health of Justin rendered him incapable. Tiberius seemed the only man competent to guide the vessel of the State through the storm, and Justin had the magnanimity to name him as successor, with the dignity of Cæsar, and the sense to commit to him the entire control over the public administration. The conduct of the Cæsar soon changed the fortune of war in the East, though the European provinces were still abandoned to the ravages of the Sclavonians.[1] Chosroes was defeated at Melitene, though he commanded his army in person, and the Romans, pursuing their success, penetrated into Babylonia, and plundered all the provinces of Persia to the very shores of the Caspian Sea.

It is surprising that we find no mention of the Greek people, nor of Greece itself, in the memorials of the reign of Justin. Justinian had plundered Greece of as large a portion of her revenues as he could; Justin and his successors utterly neglected her defence against the Sclavonian incursions, yet it appears that the Greeks contrived still to retain so much of their ancient spirit of independence and their exclusive nationality, as to awaken a feeling of jealousy amongst that more aristocratic portion of their nation which assumed the

[1] Menander, pp. 124, 164, edit. Paris; 327, 404, edit. Bonn.

Roman name. That the imperial government overlooked no trace of nationality among any section of its subjects, is evident from a law which Justin passed to enforce the conversion of the Samaritans to Christianity, and which apparently was successful in exterminating that people, as, though they previously occupied almost as important a place in the history of the Eastern Empire as the Jews, they cease to be mentioned from the time of Justin's law.[1]

Section II

Disorganisation of all political and national influence during the reigns of Tiberius II. and Maurice

The reigns of Tiberius and Maurice present the remarkable spectacle of two princes, of no ordinary talents, devoting all their energies to improve the condition of their country, without being able to arrest its decline, though that decline evidently proceeded from internal causes. Great evils arose in the Roman empire from the discord existing between the government and almost every class of its subjects. A powerful army still kept the field, the administration was perfectly arranged, the finances were not in a state of disorder, and every exertion was made to enforce the strictest administration of justice; yet, with so many elements of good government, the government was bad, unpopular, and oppressive. No feeling of patriotism existed in any class; no bond of union united the monarch and his subjects; and no ties of common interest rendered their public conduct amenable to the same laws. No fundamental institution of a national character enforced the duties of a citizen by the bonds of morality and religion; and thus the emperors could only apply administrative reforms as a cure for an universal political palsy. Great hopes of improvement were, however, entertained when Tiberius mounted the throne; for his prudence, justice, and talents, were the theme of general admiration. He opposed the enemies of the empire with vigour, but as he saw that the internal ills of the State were infinitely more dangerous than the Persians and the Avars, he made peace the great object of his exertions, in order that he might devote his exclusive attention and the whole power of the empire to the reform of the civil and military administration. But he solicited peace from

[1] A.D. 572. *Novell.* cxliv.

Hormisdas, the son of Chosroes, in vain. When he found all reasonable terms of accommodation rejected by the Persian, he attempted, by a desperate effort, to terminate the war. The whole disposable military force of the empire was collected in Asia Minor, and an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men was, by this means, assembled. The Avars were allowed to seize Sirmium, and the emperor consented to conclude with them an inglorious and disadvantageous peace, so important did it appear to him to secure success in the struggle with Persia. The war commenced with some advantage, but the death of Tiberius interrupted all his plans. He died after a short reign of four years, with the reputation of being the best sovereign who had ever ruled the Eastern Empire, and he bequeathed to his son-in-law Maurice the difficult task of carrying into execution his extensive schemes of reform.

Maurice was personally acquainted with every branch of the public administration—he possessed all the qualities of an excellent minister—he was a humane and honourable man,—but he wanted the great sagacity necessary to rule the Roman empire in the difficult times in which he reigned. His private character merited all the eulogies of the Greek historians, for he was a good man and a true Christian. When the people of Constantinople and their bigoted patriarch determined to burn an unfortunate individual as a magician, he made every effort, though in vain, to save the persecuted man.[1] He gave a feeling proof of the sincerity of his faith after his dethronement; for when the child of another was offered to the executioners instead of his own, he himself revealed the error, lest an innocent person should perish by his act. He was orthodox in his religion, and economical in his expenditure, virtues which his subjects were well qualified to appreciate, and much inclined to admire. The one ought to have endeared him to the people, and the other to the clergy; but unfortunately, his want of success in war was connected with his parsimony, and his humanity was regarded as less orthodox than Christian. The impression of his virtues was thus neutralised, and he could never secure to his government the great political advantages which he might have derived from popularity. As soon as his reign proved unfortunate he was called a miser and a Marcionite.[2]

By supporting the Bishop of Constantinople in his assump-

[1] Theophylactus Simocatta, *Hist.* i. xi. Evagrius, vi. 2.

[2] The Marcionites held, that an intermediate deity of a mixed nature, neither perfectly good nor perfectly evil, is the creator of the world.—Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History.*

tion of the title of œcumenical patriarch, Maurice excited the violent animosity of Pope Gregory I.; and the great reputation of that sagacious pontiff has induced Western historians to examine all the actions of the Eastern emperor through a veil of ecclesiastical prejudice. Gregory, in his letters, accuses Maurice of supporting the venality of the public administration, and even of selling the high office of exarch. These accusations are doubtless correct enough when applied to the system of the Byzantine court; but no prince seems to have felt more deeply than Maurice the evil effects of that system, or made sincerer efforts to reform it. That personal avarice was not the cause of the financial errors of his administration, is attested by numerous instances of his liberality recorded in history, and from the fact that even during his turbulent reign he was intent on reducing the public burdens of his subjects, and actually succeeded in his plans to a considerable extent.[1] The flatteries heaped by Gregory the Great on the worthless tyrant Phocas, show clearly enough that policy, not justice, regulated the measure of the pope's praise and censure.

Maurice had been selected by Tiberius as his confidential agent in the projects adopted for the reform of the army; and much of the new emperor's misfortune originated from attempting to carry into execution plans which required the calm judgment, and the elevation of character, of their author, in order to create throughout the empire the feeling that their adoption was necessary for the salvation of the Roman power. The enormous expense of the army, and the independent existence, unaffected by any national feeling, which it maintained, now compromised the safety of the government, as much as it had done before the reforms of Constantine. Tiberius had begun cautiously to lay the foundation of a new system, by adding to his household troops a corps of fifteen thousand heathen slaves, whom he purchased and disciplined.[2]

[1] Theophylactus Simocatta says that Maurice reduced the taxes one-third, but the assertion is too general to induce us to admit that so important a change could remain unnoticed by every other authority. The phrase almost warrants the inference that a remission of arrears was the concession accorded by the emperor, but only a Byzantine panegyrist could ascribe any great merit to the remission of one-third of a bad debt. Ἀναφέρεται δὲ καὶ τὴν τρίτην μοίραν τῶν φόρων συγχωρῆσαι τοῖς ὑπηκόοις τὸν βασιλέα Μαυρίκιον.—lib. viii. 13.

[2] Theophanes, *Chron.* 273. The words of Theophanes show that this corps perfectly resembled the Janissaries in their earliest organisation, and adds another to the many examples already noticed, of the powerful influence exercised on the policy of the rulers of Constantinople by the singular position of that city, both political and geographical. Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Τιβέριος ἀγοράσας σώματα ἐθνικῶν, κατέστησε στράτευμα εἰς ὄνομα ἴδιον ἀμφίασας καὶ καθοπλίσας αὐτούς. The formation of this corps of slaves indicates the isolated position and the irresponsible power of the

He placed this little army under the immediate command of Maurice, who had already displayed an attachment to military reforms, by attempting to restore the ancient mode of encamping Roman armies. This taste for improvements appears to have created a feeling of dissatisfaction in the army, and there seems every reason to ascribe the unsuccessful operations of Maurice on the Iberian frontier, in the year 580, to a feeling of discontent among the soldiers.[1] That he was a military pedant, may be inferred from the fact that he found time to write a work on military tactics, without succeeding in acquiring a great military reputation; and it is certain that he was suspected by the soldiers of being an enemy to the privileges and pretensions of the army, and that by them all his actions were scanned with a jealous eye.[2] During the Persian war, also, he rashly attempted to diminish the pay and rations of the troops, and this ill-timed measure caused a sedition, which was suppressed with the greatest difficulty, but which left feelings of ill-will in the minds of the emperor and the army, and laid the foundation of the ruin of both.[3]

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

Roman emperor, and the degraded position of the Greek nation. Natives could not be trusted, yet good soldiers were required to overawe the foreign mercenaries. The position of the Roman emperor and of the Roman empire, at this time, was not unlike that of the caliphate of Bagdat, three centuries later, and in military matters, somewhat similar to the Othoman empire after the termination of its period of conquest.

[1] Theophylactus Sim. *Hist.* iii. 1. *Menandri Fr.* p. 435, edit. Bonn.

[2] *Arriani Tactica cum Mauricii Artis Militaris*, lib. xii. primus edid. vers. lat. notisque illustr. J. Scheffer. Upsal, 1664, 8vo. I possess a copy of this work, which Gibbon says was to him an inaccessible book. It deserves a new edition with notes by a tactician. The military language of the time was a curious mixture of Roman, Greek, and barbarian terms.

[3] A.D. 588.

Section III

Maurice causes a revolution, by attempting to re-establish the ancient authority of the imperial administration

As soon as Maurice had established tranquillity in the Asiatic provinces, he directed his whole force against the Avars, in order to restrain the ravages which they were annually committing in all the country between the Danube and the coast of the Mediterranean. The Avar kingdom now embraced all that portion of Europe which extends from the Carnian Alps to the Black Sea; and the Huns, Sclavonians, and Bulgarians, who had previously lived under independent governments, were either united with their conquerors, or submitted, if not as subjects, at least as vassals, to own the superiority of the Avar monarch. After the conclusion of peace with Persia, the sovereign of the Avars was the only dangerous enemy to the Roman power then in existence; but the Avars, in spite of their rapid and extensive conquests, were unable to assemble an army capable of encountering the regular forces of the empire in the open field. Maurice, confident in the superiority of Roman discipline, resolved to conduct a campaign against the barbarians in person; and there appeared no doubt of its proving successful. His conduct, on this important occasion, is marked by the most singular vacillation of purpose. He quitted Constantinople apparently with the firmest determination to place himself at the head of the army, yet, when a deputation from the court and senate followed him, and entreated that he would take care of his sacred person, he made this solicitation a pretext for a change of resolution, and returned back to his capital. His courage was very naturally called in question, and both his friends and enemies attributed his alarm to sinister omens. It seems, however, not improbable, that his firmness was really shaken by more alarming proofs of his unpopularity, and by the conviction that he would have to encounter far greater difficulties than he had previously expected, in enforcing his projects of reform among the troops. As very often happens to weak and obstinate men, he became distrustful of the success of his measures when he had committed himself to attempt their execution; and he shrank from the effort to perform the task

in person, though he must have doubted whether an undertaking requiring so rare a combination of military skill and political sagacity could ever succeed, unless conducted under the eye of its author, and supported by the personal influence and prompt authority of the emperor. His conduct excited the contempt of the soldiers; and whether he trembled at omens, or shrank from responsibility, he was laughed at in the army for his timidity: so that even had nothing occurred to awaken the suspicion or rouse the hatred of the troops employed against the Avars, their scorn for their sovereign would have brought them to the very verge of rebellion.

Though the Roman army gained several battles, and displayed considerable skill, and much of the ancient military superiority in the campaigns against the Avars, still the inhabitants of Mœsia, Illyria, Dardania, Thrace, Macedonia, and even Greece, were exposed to annual incursions of the hostile hordes, who crossed the Danube to plunder the proprietors and cultivators of the soil, so that, at last, whole provinces were left uncultivated, and remained almost entirely depopulated. The imperial armies were generally ill commanded, for the generals were usually selected, either from among the relations of the emperor, or from among the court aristocracy. The spirit of opposition which had arisen between the camp and the court, made it unsafe to intrust the chief command of large bodies of troops to soldiers of fortune, and the most experienced of the Roman officers, who had been bred to the profession of arms, were only employed in secondary posts.[1]

Priscus, who was one of the ablest and most influential of the Roman generals, carried on the war with some success, and invaded the country of the Avars and Sclavonians; but his successes appear to have excited the jealousy of the emperor, who, fearing his army more than the forces of his enemies, removed Priscus from the command, in order to intrust it to his own brother. The first duty of the new general was to remodel the organisation of the army, to prepare for the reception of the emperor's ulterior measures of reform. The commencement of a campaign was most unwisely selected as the time for carrying this plan into execution, and a new sedition among the soldiery was the conse-

[1] The court generals of the time were Maurice himself, his brother Peter, his son-in-law Philippicus, Heraclius, the father of the emperor of that name, Comentiolus, and probably Priscus, who appears to be the same person as Crispus.—See Gibbon, ch. xlvi. note 52. The professional soldiers, who attained high commands, were Droctulf, a Sueve, Apsich, a Hun, and Ilifred, whose name proves his Gothic or Germanic origin.

quence. The troops being now engaged in continual disputes with the emperor and the civil administration, selected from among their officers the leaders whom they considered most attached to their own views, and these leaders began to negotiate with the government, and consequently to undermine the existing discipline. The mutinous army was soon defeated by the Avars, and Maurice was constrained to conclude a treaty of peace.[1] The provisions of this treaty were the immediate cause of the ruin of Maurice. The Avars had taken prisoners about twelve thousand of the Roman soldiers, and offered to ransom their captives for twelve thousand pieces of gold. It is even said, that when Maurice refused to pay this sum they reduced their demand, and asked only four pieces of silver for each captive; but the emperor, though he consented to add twenty thousand pieces of gold to the former subsidy, refused to pay anything in order to ransom the Roman prisoners.[2]

By this treaty, the Danube was declared the frontier of the empire, and the Roman officers were allowed to cross the river, in order to punish any ravages which the Sclavonians might commit within the Roman territory—a fact which seems to indicate the declining power of the Avar monarch, and the virtual independence of the Sclavonic tribes, to whom this provision applied. It may be inferred also from these terms, that Maurice could easily have delivered the captive Roman soldiers had he wished to do so; and it is natural to conclude that he left them in captivity to punish them for their mutinous behaviour and neglect of discipline, to which he attributed both their captivity and the misfortunes of the empire.[3] It was commonly reported, however, at the time, that the emperor's avarice induced him to refuse to ransom the soldiers, though it is impossible to suppose that Maurice would have

[1] A.D. 600.

[2] Twelve of the silver coins called Miliaresia were equal to one gold solidus. See Appendix, No. II., tables.

[3] It is not improbable that many of the prisoners were really deserters. Desertion was very prevalent among the native conscripts, and Maurice had found it necessary, some years before, to issue an edict prohibiting soldiers and recruits from receiving shelter in monasteries when they deserted their standards. This edict caused much dissatisfaction among the clergy. Gregory the Great considered it an impious setting up of the service of the creature against that of the Creator. He wrote to Maurice, "I, your unworthy servant, know many converted soldiers who in our days have worked miracles and done many signs and wonders." The Pope, it appears, did not think that the most appropriate miracle for these military saints would have been to drive back the barbarians, and save the provinces from pillage and the provincials from starvation or slavery among the heathen.—See Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, i. 459. Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, iii. 97, American edit.

committed an act of inhumanity for the paltry saving which thereby accrued to the imperial treasury. The Avars, with singular, and probably unexpected barbarity, put all their prisoners to death. Maurice certainly never contemplated the possibility of their acting with such cruelty, or he would have felt all the impolicy of his conduct, even if it be supposed that passion had, for a time, extinguished the usual humanity of his disposition.[1] The murder of these soldiers was universally ascribed to the avarice of the emperor; and the aversion which the army had long entertained to his government was changed into a deep-rooted hatred of his person; while the people participated in the feeling from a natural dislike to an economical and unsuccessful reformer.

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

[1] Theophylactus Sim. *Hist.* vii. 15. Theophanes, *Ch.* 235, compared with the notice in the *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 379; A.D. 602.

as the centre of the whole administration, and as he had shown too clearly to all men that his increased authority, when attained, was to be directed against more than one section of the government agents, he lost all influence from the moment he lost his power; and when he found it necessary to abandon Constantinople, he was deserted by every follower. He was soon captured with his family by the agents of Phocas, who ordered them to be immediately executed.[1] The conduct of Maurice at his death affords proof that his private virtues could not be too highly eulogised. He died with fortitude and resignation, after witnessing the execution of his children; and when an attempt, which has been already alluded to, was made to substitute the infant of a nurse instead of his youngest child, he himself revealed the deceit, in order to prevent the death of an innocent person.

The sedition which put an end to the reign of Maurice, though it originated in the camp, became, as the army advanced towards the capital, a popular as well as a military movement. Many causes had long threatened a conflict between official power and popular feeling, for the people hated the administration, and the discordant elements of society in the East had latterly been gaining strength. The central government had found great difficulty in repressing religious disputes and ecclesiastical party feuds. The factions of the amphitheatre, and the national hatred of various classes in the empire, frequently broke out into acts of violence which caused bloodshed. Monks, charioteers, and usurers, could all raise themselves above the law; and the interests of particular bodies of men proved often more powerful to produce disorder and disorganisation than the provincial and local government to enforce tranquillity. The administrative institutions were everywhere too weak to replace the declining strength of the central authority. A persuasion of the absolute necessity of reinvigorating the Roman government had gone abroad; but the power of a rapacious aristocracy, and the corruption of an idle populace in the capital, fed by the State, presented insuperable obstacles to the tranquil adoption of any reasonable plan of political reformation. The provincials were too poor and ignorant to originate any scheme of amelioration, and it was dangerous even for an emperor to attempt the task, as no national institutions enabled the sovereign to unite any powerful body of his subjects in a systematic opposition to

1 At the Eutropian port beyond Chalcedon, now Mundi Bournou.

the venality of the aristocracy, the corruption of the capital, and the license of the army. Those national feelings which began to acquire force in some provinces, and in a few municipalities where the attacks of Justinian had proved ineffectual, tended more to awaken a desire for independence than a wish to support the emperor, or a hope of improvement in the Roman administration.

The arbitrary and illegal conduct of the imperial officers, while it rendered sedition venial, very often insured its partial success and complete impunity.[1] The measures of reform proposed by Maurice appear to have been directed, like the reforms of most absolute monarchs, rather to increase his own authority than to establish a system of administration so firmly established on a legal basis, as to prove even more powerful than the despotic will of the emperor himself. To confine the absolute power of the emperor to the executive administration, to make the law supreme, and to vest the legislative authority in some responsible body or senate, were not projects suitable to the age of Maurice, and perhaps hardly possible in the state of society. Maurice resolved that his first step in the career of improvement should be to render the army, long a licentious and turbulent check on the imperial power, a well-disciplined and efficient instrument of his will; and he hoped in this manner to repress the tyranny of the official aristocracy, restrain the license of the military chiefs, prevent the sects of Nestorians and Eutychians from forming separate states, and render the authority of the central government supreme in all the distant provinces and isolated cities of the empire. In his struggle to obtain this result he was compelled to make use of the existing administration; and, consequently, he appears in the history of the empire as the supporter and protector of a detested aristocracy, equally unpopular with the army and the people; while his ulterior plans for the improvement of the civil condition of his subjects were never fully made known, and perhaps never clearly framed even by himself, though it is evident that many of them ought to have preceded his military changes. This view of the political position of Maurice, as it could not escape the observation of his contemporaries, is alluded to in the quaint expression of Evagrius, that Maurice expelled from his mind the democracy of the passions, and established the aristocracy of reason, though the ecclesiastical historian, a cautious courtier, either

[1] The sedition of Asimus.—Theophylactus Sim. *Hist.* vii. 3.

could not or would not express himself with a more general application, or in a clearer manner.[1]

Section IV

Phocas was the representative of a revolution, not of a national party

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

The government of Phocas convinced the majority of his subjects that the rebellion of a licentious army, and the sedition of a pampered populace, were not the proper instruments for ameliorating the condition of the empire. In spite of the hopes of his followers, of the eulogium on the column which still exists in the Roman forum, and of the praises of Pope Gregory the Great, it was quickly discovered that Phocas was a worse sovereign than his predecessor. Even as a soldier he was inferior to Maurice, and the glory of the Roman arms was stained by his cowardice or incapacity. Chosroes, the king of Persia, moved, as he asserted, by gratitude, and the respect due to the memory of his benefactor Maurice, declared war against the murderer. A war commenced between the Persian and Roman empires, which proved the last and bloodiest of their numerous struggles, and its violence and strange vicissitudes contributed in a great degree to the

1 Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, xlv. note 31. Evagrius, vi. 1. Proof that the fabric of the imperial administration was felt to be in danger before the accession of Maurice is given by Theophylactus Simocatta, p. 11, edit. Par. An angel appeared to Tiberius II. in a dream, and informed him that days of anarchy should not commence during his reign.

dissolution of both these ancient monarchies. The success of Chosroes compelled Phocas to conclude an immediate peace with the Avars, in order to secure himself from being attacked in Constantinople.[1] The treaty which he concluded is of great importance in the history of the Greek population in Europe, but, unfortunately, we can only trace it in its effects at a later period. The whole of the agricultural districts of the Roman empire in Europe were virtually abandoned to the ravages of the northern nations, and, from the Danube to the Peloponnesus, the Sclavonian tribes ravaged the country with impunity, or settled in the depopulated provinces. Phocas availed himself of the treaty to transport into Asia the whole military force which he could collect, but the Roman armies, having lost their discipline, were everywhere defeated. Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Phœnicia, Cappadocia, Galatia, and Paphlagonia were laid waste; and nothing appears to have saved the Roman empire from complete conquest by the Persians, but the wars carried on at the time by Chosroes with the Armenians and the Turks, which prevented his concentrating his whole force against Constantinople. The tyranny and incapacity of Phocas rapidly increased the disorders in the civil and military administration; seditions broke out in the army, and rebellions in the provinces. The emperor, either because he partook of the bigotry of his age, or because he desired by his measures to secure the support of the clergy and the applause of the populace, determined to prove his orthodoxy by ordering all the Jews in the empire to be baptised. The Jews, who formed a wealthy and powerful class in many of the cities of the East, resisted this act of oppression, and caused a bloody sedition, which contributed much to aid the progress of the Persian arms.

Various districts and provinces in the distant parts of the empire, observing the confusion which reigned in the central administration, and the increasing weakness of the imperial power, availed themselves of the opportunity to extend the authority of their municipal institutions. The dawn of the temporal authority of the Popes, and of the liberty of the Italian cities, may be traced to this period, though they were still hardly perceptible. Pope Gregory the Great only cavilled at the conduct of Maurice, who allowed the Bishop of Constantinople to assume the title of œcumenical patriarch, and he eulogised the virtues of Phocas, who compelled the patriarch

[1] Theophanes, *Chron.* 245, 251.

to lay aside the irritating epithet.[1] Phocas at last exhausted the patience even of the timid aristocracy of Constantinople, and all classes directed their attention to seek a successor to the tyrant. Heraclius, the exarch of Africa, had commanded with success in the former war with Persia, and had long governed Africa, in which his family possessed great influence, almost as an independent sovereign.[2] To him the leading men at Constantinople addressed their complaints, and prayed him to deliver the empire from ruin, and dethrone the reigning tyrant.

The exarch of Africa soon collected a considerable army, and fitted out a numerous fleet. The command of this expedition was given to his son Heraclius; and as the possession of Egypt, which supplied Constantinople with provisions for its idle populace, was necessary to secure tranquillity after conquest, Nicetas, the nephew of the exarch, was sent with an army to support his cousin, and secure both Egypt and Syria. Heraclius proceeded directly to Constantinople, and the fate of Phocas was decided in a single naval engagement, fought within sight of his palace. The disorder which reigned in every branch of the administration, in consequence of the folly and incapacity of the ignorant soldier who ruled the empire, was so great, that no measures had been concerted for offering a vigorous resistance to the African expedition. Phocas was taken prisoner, stripped of the imperial robes, covered with a black cloak, and, with his hands tied behind him, was carried on board the ship of Heraclius. The young conqueror indignantly addressed him: "Wretch! in what manner have you governed the empire?" The dethroned tyrant, roused by the tone which seemed to proclaim that his successor would prove as cruel as he had been himself, and perhaps feeling the difficulties of the task to be insurmountable, answered with a sneer, "You will govern it better!" Heraclius lost his temper at the advantage which his predecessor had gained in this verbal contest; and showed that it was very questionable whether he himself would prove either a wiser sovereign or a better man than Phocas, by ordering the dethroned emperor to be immediately decapitated, and his mutilated members to be exhibited to the populace of Constantinople. All the leading partisans of Phocas were executed,

[1] On the subject of the supposed concession of the title of universal bishop to pope Boniface III., see Hallam, *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, i. 520; and Supp. Notes, 189.

[2] Ducange, *Historia Byzantina*, 117.

as if to afford evidence that the cruelty of that tyrant had been as much a national as a personal vice. Since his death, he has been fortunate enough to find defenders, who consider that his alliance with Pope Gregory, and his leaning towards the Latin party in the church, are to be regarded as signs of virtue, and proofs of a capacity for government.[1]

Section V

THE EMPIRE UNDER HERACLIUS

The young Heraclius became Emperor of the East, and his father continued to rule Africa, which the family appear to have regarded as a hereditary domain. For several years the government of the new emperor was quite as unsuccessful as that of his predecessor, though, doubtless, it was more popular and less tyrannical. There are reasons, however, for believing that this period of apparent misgovernment and general misfortune was not one of complete neglect. Though defeats and disgraces followed one another with rapidity, the causes of these disasters had grown up during the preceding reigns; and Heraclius was compelled to labour silently in clearing away many petty abuses, and in forming a new corps of civil and military officers, before he could venture on any important act. His chief attention was of necessity devoted to prepare for the great struggle of restoring the Roman empire to some portion of its ancient strength and power; and he had enough of the Roman spirit to resolve, that, if he could not succeed, he would risk his own life and fortune in the attempt, and perish in the ruins of civilised society. History has preserved few records of the measures adopted by Heraclius during the

[1] Several works have been published concerning the emperor Phocas, but in 1843 I found them wanting in the Bibliothèque du Roi, and in the library of the British Museum: A. de Stoppelaar, *Oratio pro Phoca Imperatore*; and Simon Van der Brink, *Oratio in Phocam Imperatorem*, Amstel. 1732. *Vertheididung des K. Phocas, in Erlangischen gelehrten Anzeigen auf das Jahr* 1749, pp. 321, 328, 409, 414. This last work defends him against the accusation of having founded the power of the popes—a virtue, and not a crime, in the eyes of some. D. Cyprian, *Vom Ursprung des Papsthums*, c. xvii. 812.

See *Bibliotheca Historica instructa a Struvio, aucta a Budero, nunc vero a Muselio digesta*. Lipsiæ, Weidmann, 1790, 11 vols.

Both Phocas and Maurice were Cappadocians, and the verses in the Anthology probably were not very advantageous to the tranquillity of these emperors,

Καππαδόκαι φαῦλοι μὲν ἀεί· ζώνης δὲ τυχόντες,
φαυλότεροι· κέρδους δ' εἵνεκα φαυλότατοι. κ. τ. λ.

Anthology. iii. 54, edit. Tauch. Joannes Lydus, *De Magist. P. R.* p. 250, edit. Bonn.

early years of his reign; but their effect in restoring the strength of the empire, and in reviving the energy of the imperial administration, is testified by the great changes which mark the subsequent period.

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

The loss of many extensive provinces, and the destruction of numerous large armies since the death of Justinian, had given rise to a persuasion that the end of the Roman empire was approaching; and the events of the earlier part of the reign of Heraclius were not calculated to remove this impression. Fanaticism and avidity were the prominent social features of the time. The civil government became more oppressive in the capital as the revenues of the provinces conquered by the Persians were lost. The military power of the empire declined to such a degree, from the poverty of the imperial government, and the aversion of the people to military service, that the Roman armies were nowhere able to keep the field. Heraclius found the treasury empty, the civil administration demoralised, the agricultural classes ruined, the army disorganised, the soldiers deserting their standards to become monks, and the richest provinces occupied by his enemies. A review of the position of the empire at his accession attests the extraordinary talents of the man who could emerge from

the accumulated disadvantages of this situation, and achieve a career of glory and conquest almost unrivalled. It proves also the wonderful perfection of the system of administration which admitted of reconstructing the fabric of the civil government, when the very organisation of civil society had been completely shattered. The ancient supremacy of the Roman empire could not be restored by human genius; the progress of mankind down the stream of time had rendered a return to the past condition of the world impracticable; but yet the speed of the vessel of the State in descending the torrent was moderated, and it was saved from being dashed to pieces on the rocks. Heraclius delivered the empire and the imperial city of Constantinople from almost certain destruction by the Persians and the Avars; and though his fortune sank before the first fury of Mahomet's enthusiastic votaries, his sagacious administration had prepared those powerful means of resistance which enabled the Greeks to check the Saracen armies almost at the threshold of their dominions; and the caliphs, while extending their successful conquests to the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic, were for centuries compelled to wage a doubtful war on the northern frontiers of Syria.

It was perhaps a misfortune for mankind that Heraclius was by birth a Roman rather than a Greek, as his views were from that accident directed to the maintenance of the imperial dominion, without any reference to the national organisation of his people. His civilisation, like that of a large portion of the ruling class in the Eastern Empire, was too far removed from the state of ignorance into which the mass of the population had fallen, for the one to be influenced by the feelings of the other, or for both to act together with the energy conferred by unity of purpose in a variety of ranks. Heraclius, being by birth and family connections an African noble, must have regarded himself as of pure Roman blood, superior to all national prejudices, and bound by duty and policy to repress the domineering spirit of the Greek aristocracy in the State, and of the Greek hierarchy in the Church.[1] Language and manners began to give to national feelings almost as much power in forming men into distinct societies as political arrangements. The influence of the clergy followed the divisions established by language, rather than the political organisation adopted by the government: and as the clergy now formed the most popular and the ablest portion of society,

[1] Ducange, *Historia Byzantina*, 117.

the church exerted more influence over the minds of the people than the civil administration and the imperial power, even though the emperor was the acknowledged sovereign and master of the patriarchs and the pope. It is necessary to observe here, that the established church of the empire had ceased to be the universal Christian church. The Greeks had rendered themselves the depositaries of its power and influence; they had already corrupted Christianity into the Greek church; and other nations were rapidly forming separate ecclesiastical societies to supply their own spiritual wants. The Armenians, Syrians, and Egyptians, were induced by national aversion to the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Greeks, as well as by spiritual preference of the doctrines of Nestorius and Eutyches, to oppose the established church. At the time Heraclius ascended the throne, these national and religious feelings already exercised their power of modifying the operations of the Roman government, and of enabling mankind to advance one step towards the establishment of individual liberty and intellectual independence. Circumstances, which will be subsequently noticed, prevented society from making any progress in this career of improvement, and effectually arrested its advance for many centuries. In western Europe, this struggle never entirely lost its important characteristic of a moral contest for the enjoyment of personal rights, and the exercise of individual opinion; and as no central government succeeded in maintaining itself permanently independent of all national feelings, a check on the formation of absolute authority always existed, both in the Church and State. Heraclius, in his desire to restore the power of the empire, strove to destroy these sentiments of religious liberty. He persecuted all who opposed his political power in ecclesiastical matters; he drove the Nestorians from the great church of Edessa, and gave it to the orthodox. He banished the Jews from Jerusalem, and forbade them to approach within three thousand paces of the Holy City. His plans of coercion or conciliation would evidently have failed as completely with the Nestorians, Eutychians, and Jacobites, as they did with the Jews; but the contest with Mohammedanism closed the struggle, and concentrated the whole strength of the unconquered population of the empire in support of the Greek church, and Constantinopolitan government.

In order fully to comprehend the lamentable state of weakness to which the empire was reduced, it will be necessary to

take a cursory view of the condition of the different provinces. The continual ravages of the barbarians who occupied the country beyond the Danube had extended as far as the southern shores of the Peloponnesus. The agricultural population was almost exterminated, except where it was protected by the immediate vicinity of fortified towns, or secured by the fastnesses of the mountains. The inhabitants of all the countries between the Archipelago and the Adriatic had been greatly diminished, and fertile provinces remained everywhere desolate, ready to receive new occupants. As great part of these countries yielded very little revenue to the government, they were considered by the court of Constantinople as of hardly any value, except in so far as they covered the capital from hostile attacks, or commanded the commercial routes to the west of Europe. At this time the Indian and Chinese trade had in part been forced round the north of the Caspian Sea, in consequence of the Persian conquests in Syria and Egypt, and the disturbed state of the country immediately to the east of Persia. The rich produce transported by the caravans, which reached the northern shores of the Black Sea, was then transported to Constantinople, and from thence distributed through western Europe. Under these circumstances Thessalonica and Dyrrachium became points of great consequence to the empire, and were successfully defended by the emperor amidst all his calamities. These two cities commanded the extremities of the usual road between Constantinople and Ravenna, and connected the towns on the Archipelago with the Adriatic and with Rome.[1] The open country was abandoned to the Avars and Sclavonians, who were allowed to effect permanent settlements even to the south of the Via Egnatia; but none of these settlements were suffered to interfere with the lines of communication, without which the imperial influence in Italy would have been soon annihilated, and the trade of the West lost to the Greeks. The ambition of the barbarians was inclined to dare any attempt to encroach on the wealth of the Eastern Empire, and they tried to establish a system of maritime depredations in the Archipelago; but Heraclius was able to frustrate their schemes, though it is probable that he owed his success more to the exertions of the mercantile population of the Greek cities, than to the exploits of his own troops.[2]

[1] Tafel, *De Thessalonica*, proleg. cviii. p. 221. Hüllman, *Geschichte des Byzantin. Handels*, 76.

[2] Paul. Diaconus, iv. 21.

When disorder reigned in the territory nearest to the seat of government, it cannot be supposed that the administration of the distant provinces was conducted with greater prudence or success. The Gothic kingdom of Spain was, at this time, ruled by Sisebut,[1] an able and enlightened monarch, whose policy was directed to gain over the Roman provincials by peaceful measures, and whose arms were employed to conquer the remaining territories of the empire in the Peninsula. He soon reduced the imperial possessions to a small extent of coast on the ocean, embracing the modern province of Algarve, and a few towns on the shores of the Mediterranean. He likewise interrupted the communications between the Roman troops and Spain and Africa, by building a fleet, and conquering Tangiers and the neighbouring country. Heraclius concluded a treaty with Sisebut, in the year 614, and the Romans were thus enabled to retain their Spanish territories until the reign of Suintilla, who, while Heraclius was engaged in his Persian campaigns, finally expelled the Romans (or the Greeks, as they were generally termed in the West) from the Spanish continent.[2] Seventy-nine years had elapsed since the Roman authority had been re-established in the south of Spain by the conquests of Justinian. Even under the disadvantages to which the imperial power was exposed, the commercial superiority of the Greeks still enabled them to retain possession of the Balearic Islands until a later period.[3]

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

1 A.D. 610–619. 2 A.D. 623.

3 Roman and Greek interests, and party feelings, continued to maintain some influence in the Peninsula for many years. In 673, the Duke Flavius Paulus, a provincial in the service of the Goths, almost succeeded in seizing the crown of Spain.—*History of Spain and Portugal*, i. 137. *Cabinet Cyclop.* Aschbach's *Geschichte der Westgothen*, 279.

patriotic attempts of the popes to acquire political power, and punished equally the seditions of the people and the rebellions of the chiefs, who, like John Compsa of Naples, and the exarch Eleutherinus, aspired at independence.

Africa alone, of all the provinces of the empire, continued to use the Latin language in ordinary life; and its inhabitants regarded themselves, with some reason, as the purest descendants of the Romans. After the victories of John the Patrician, it had enjoyed a long period of tranquillity, and its prosperity was undisturbed by any spirit of nationality adverse to the supremacy of the empire, or by schismatic opinions hostile to the church. The barbarous tribes to the south were feeble enemies, and no foreign State possessed a naval force capable of troubling its repose or interrupting its commerce. Under the able and fortunate administration of Heraclius and Gregoras, the father and uncle of the emperor, Africa formed the most flourishing portion of the empire. Its prosperous condition, and the wars raging in other countries, threw great part of the commerce of the Mediterranean into the hands of the Africans. Wealth and population increased to such a degree, that the naval expedition of the emperor Heraclius, and the army of his cousin Nicetas, were fitted out from the resources of Africa alone. Another strong proof of the prosperity of the province, of its importance to the empire, and of its attachment to the interests of the Heraclian family, is afforded by the resolution which the emperor adopted, in the ninth year of his reign, of transferring the imperial residence from Constantinople to Carthage.

The immense population of Constantinople gave great inquietude to the government. Constantine the Great, in order to favour the increase of his new capital, had granted daily allowances of bread to the possessors of houses. Succeeding emperors, for the purpose of caressing the populace, had largely increased the numbers of those entitled to this gratuity. In 618, the Persians overran Egypt, and by their conquest stopped the annual supplies of grain destined for the public distributions in the capital. Heraclius, ruined in his finances, but fearing to announce the discontinuance of these allowances, so necessary to keep the population of Constantinople in good humour, engaged to continue the supply, on receiving a payment of three pieces of gold from each claimant. His necessities, however, very soon became so great, that he ceased to continue the distributions, and thus

defrauded those citizens of their money whom the fortune of war had deprived of their bread.[1] The danger of his position must have been greatly increased by this bankruptcy, and the dishonour must have rendered his residence among the people whom he had deceived galling to his mind. Shame, therefore, may possibly have suggested to Heraclius the idea of quitting Constantinople; but his selection of Carthage, as the city to which he wished to transfer the seat of government, must have been determined by the wealth, population, and security of the African province. Carthage offered military resources for recovering possession of Egypt and Syria, of which we can only now estimate the extent by taking into consideration the expedition that placed Heraclius himself on the throne. Many reasons connected with the constitution of the civil government of the empire, might likewise be adduced as tending to influence the preference.

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

[1] *Chronicon Paschale*, 389. The abolition of these public distributions of provisions appears to have infused new life into the administration. The ebb in the fortunes of the empire changed when liberty of commerce and the abolition of ancient privileges gave labour additional value. The condition of nations is oftener changed by an addition to the wages of labour than by the political theories of philosophers, yet history often records the idle speculation and overlooks the practical improvement.

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

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

Egypt, from its wonderful natural resources, and its numerous and industrious population, had long been the most valuable province of the empire. It poured a very great portion of its gross produce into the imperial treasury; for its

agricultural population, being destitute of all political power and influence, were compelled to pay, not only taxes, but a tribute, which was viewed as a rent for the soil, to the Roman government. At this time, however, the wealth of Egypt was on the decline. The circumstances which had driven the trade of India to the north, had caused a great decrease in the demand for the grain of Egypt on the shores of the Red Sea, and for its manufactures in Arabia and Ethiopia. The canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, whose existence is intimately connected with the prosperity of these countries, had been neglected during the government of Phocas. A large portion of the Greek population of Alexandria had been ruined, because an end had been put to the public distributions of grain, and poverty had invaded the fertile land of Egypt. John the Almsgiver, who was patriarch and imperial prefect in the reign of Heraclius, did everything in his power to alleviate this misery. He established hospitals, and devoted the revenues of his See to charity; but he was an enemy to heresy, and consequently he was hardly looked on as a friend by the native population. National feelings, religious opinions, and local interests, had always nourished, in the minds of the native Egyptians, a deep-rooted hatred of the Roman administration and of the Greek church; and this feeling of hostility only became more concentrated after the union of the offices of prefect and patriarch by Justinian. A complete line of separation existed between the Greek colony of Alexandria and the native population, who during the decline of the Greeks and Jews of Alexandria intruded themselves into political business, and gained some degree of official importance. The cause of the emperor was now connected with the commercial interests of the Greek and Melchite parties, but these ruling classes were regarded by the agricultural population of the rest of the province as interlopers on their sacred Jacobite soil.[1] John the Almsgiver, though a Greek patriarch, and an imperial prefect, was not perfectly free from the charge of heresy, nor, perhaps, of employing the revenues under his control with more attention

[1] The Melchites were those Christians in Syria and Egypt who, though not Greeks, followed the doctrines of the Greek church. They were called Melchites (royalists, from Melcha, Syriac, a king) by their adversaries, on account of their implicit obedience to the edict of Marcian in favour of the Council of Chalcedon. Jacob Baradæus, or Zanzalus, bishop of Edessa, the great heterodox apostle of the East, blended the various sects of Eutychians and Monophysites into a powerful church, whose followers were generally called, after his death, Jacobites. He died A.D. 578. Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, Soames' edit. ii. 56.

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

For ten years the province owned allegiance to Persia, though it enjoyed a certain degree of doubtful independence under the immediate government of a native intendant-general of the land revenues, named Mokaukas, who subsequently, at the time of the Saracen conquest, acted a conspicuous part in the history of his country. During the Persian supremacy, he became so influential in the administration, that he is styled by several writers the Prince of Egypt.[1] Mokaukas, under the Roman government, had conformed to the established church, in order to hold an official situation, but he was, like most of his countrymen, at heart a Monophysite, and consequently inclined to oppose the imperial administration, both from religious and political motives. Yet, it appears that a portion of the Monophysite clergy steadily refused to submit to the Persian government; and Benjamin, their patriarch, retired from his residence at Alexandria when that city fell into the hands of the Persians, and did not return until Heraclius had recovered possession of Egypt.[2] Mokaukas established himself in the city of Babylon, or Misr, which had grown up, on the decline of Memphis, to be the native capital

[1] P. Rahebi, *Chronicon Orientale*, à J. S. Assemano, 85; edit. Venet. The mission of the Patrician Nicetas to seize the wealth of John the Charitable must have taken place before the year 616, as in that year he died on his way to Constantinople. Lebeau and Gibbon, on the authority of Baronius in his *Annales Ecclesiasticæ*, place this event in the year 620; but Petau, in his Notes to Nicephorus the Patriarch, had observed the anachronism of five years. *Nicephori Pat. Hist. Notæ*, 64. See also Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, xi. 53. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, c. xlvii. note 147. Assemani, *Biblioth. Orient.* iv. l. *Chronicon Orientale*, 126, edit. Venet.

[2] *Chronicon Orientale*, 127. "Abfuit autem sede sua profugus per annos 13, decem scilicet sub imperio Heraclii quibus Persæ, Egyptum et Alexandriam possederant, et tres sub imperio Mohametanorum," &c. Yet Benjamin is said to have been banished by Heraclius for ten years.—Renaudot, *Historia Patriarchorum Alexandrinorum Jacobitorum*.

of the province, and the chief city in the interior.[1] The moment appears to have been extremely favourable for the establishment of an independent state by the Monophysite Egyptians, since, amidst the conflicts of the Persian and Roman empires, the immense revenues and supplies of grain formerly paid to the emperor might have been devoted to the defence of the country. But the native population appears, from the conduct of the patriarch Benjamin, not to have been united in its views; and probably the agricultural classes, though numerous, living in abundance, and firm in their Monophysite tenets, had not the knowledge necessary to aspire at national independence, the strength of character required to achieve it, or the command of the precious metals necessary to purchase the service of mercenary troops and provide the materials of war. They had been so long deprived of arms and of all political rights, that they had probably adopted the opinion prevalent among the subjects of all despotic governments, that public functionaries are invariably knaves, and that the oppression of the native is more grievous than the yoke of a stranger. The moral defects of the people could certainly, at this favourable conjuncture, alone have prevented the establishment of an independent Egyptian and Jacobite state.

In Syria and Palestine, the different races who peopled the country were then, as in our own day, extremely divided, and their separation, by language, manners, interests, and religion, rendered it impossible for them to unite for the purpose of gaining any object opposed by the imperial government. The Persians had penetrated into Palestine, plundered Jerusalem, burned the church of the holy sepulchre, and carried off the holy cross with the patriarch Zachurias into Persia in the year 614.[2] The native Syrians, though they retained their language and literature, and showed the strength of their national character by their opposition to the Greek church, seemed not to have constituted the majority of the inhabitants of the province. They were farther divided by their religious opinions; for, though generally Monophysites, a part was attached to the Nestorian church. The Greeks appear to have formed the most numerous class of the population, though they were almost entirely confined within the walls

[1] Strabo (lib. xvii. c. 1. tom. iii. p. 447, edit. Tauch.) mentions Babylon as a fortified town, and one of the stations of the Roman garrison in Egypt. It occupied the site of Old Cairo, and is famous in the history and poetry of the middle ages.—Lebeau, xi. 277, notes de S. M.

[2] *Chronicon Pasch.* 385.

of the cities. Many of them were, doubtless, the direct descendants of the colonies which had prospered and increased under the domination of the Seleucidæ. The protection and patronage of the civil and ecclesiastical administration of the Eastern Empire had preserved these Greek colonies separate from the natives, and supported them by a continual influx of Greeks engaged in the service of the Church and State. But though the Greeks probably formed the most numerous body of the population, yet the circumstances of their composing the ruling class in the land, united all the other classes in opposition to their authority. Being, consequently, deprived of the support of the agricultural population, and unable to recruit their numbers by an influx from their rural neighbours, they became more and more aliens in the country, and were alone incapable of offering a long and steady resistance to any foreign enemy, without the constant support of the imperial treasury and armies.

The Jews, whose religion and nationality have always supported one another, had, for more than a century, been increasing very remarkably, both in numbers and wealth, in every part of the civilised world. The wars and rivalry of the various nations of conquerors, and of conquered people, in the south of Europe, had opened to the Jews a freedom of commercial intercourse with all parties, which each nation, moved by national jealousy, refused to its own neighbours, and only conceded to a foreign people, of whom no political jealousy could be entertained. This circumstance explains the extraordinary increase in the number of the Jews, which becomes apparent, in the seventh century, in Greece, Africa, Spain, and Arabia, by referring it to the ordinary laws of the multiplication of the human species, when facilities are found for acquiring augmented supplies of the means of subsistence, without inducing us to suppose that the Jews succeeded, during this period, in making more proselytes than they had done at other times. This increase of their numbers and wealth soon roused the bigotry and jealousy of the Christians; while the deplorable condition of the Roman empire, and of the Christian population in the East, inspired the Jews with some expectations of soon re-establishing their national independence under the expected Messiah. It must be confessed that the desire of availing themselves of the misfortunes of the Roman empire, and of the dissensions of the Christian church, was the natural consequence of the oppression to

which they had long been subjected, but it not unnaturally tended to increase the hatred with which they were viewed, and added to their persecutions.

It is said that about this time a prophecy was current, which declared that the Roman empire would be overthrown by a circumcised people. This report may have been spread by the Jews, in order to excite their own ardour, and assist their projects of rebellion; but the prophecy was saved from oblivion by the subsequent conquests of the Saracens, which could never have been foreseen by its authors. The conduct of the Jews excited the bigotry, as it may have awakened the fears, of the imperial government, and both Phocas and Heraclius attempted to exterminate the Jewish religion, and if possible to put an end to the national existence.[1] Heraclius not only practised every species of cruelty himself to effect this object within the bounds of his own dominions, but he even made the forced conversion or banishment of the Jews a prominent feature in his diplomacy. He consoled himself for the loss of most of the Roman possessions in Spain, by inducing Sisebut to insert an article in the treaty of peace concluded in 614, engaging the Gothic monarch to force baptism on the Jews; and he considered, that even though he failed in persuading the Franks to co-operate with him against the Avars, in the year 620, he had rendered the empire and Christianity some service by inducing Dagobert to join in the project of exterminating the unfortunate Jews.[2] The other portions of the Syrian population aspired at independence, though they did not openly venture to assert it; and during the Persian conquest, the coast of Phœnicia successfully defended itself under the command of its native chiefs.[3] At a later period, when the Mohammedans invaded the province, many chiefs existed who had attained a considerable degree of local power, and exercised an almost independent authority in their districts.[4]

1 Eutychii *Annales Ecclesiast. Alexand.* ii. 216, 236. The number of the Jews at Tyre was 40,000. Their riches appear to have caused their oppression, and the tyranny of their rulers drove them to rebellion. The policy of Heraclius contrasts very unfavourably with that of the Gothic king, Theodoric the Great, who, about a century before, addressed the Jews of Genoa in these words, "We cannot command religion, for no one can be compelled to believe if he be unwilling."—Cassiodorus, *Var.* lib. xii. c. ii. ep. 27.

2 There were still Christians who disapproved of the forced conversion of the Jews. Saint Isidore says, "Sisebutus Judæos ad fidem Christianam permovens æmulationem quidem Dei habuit, sed non scientiam."—Isidor. Hisp. *Ch. Goth.* See Aschbach's *Geschichte der Westgothen*, 240.

3 Assemani *Bib. Orient.* iii. 421; and his *Bibliotheca Juris Orientalis*, vol. vi. c. 20, p. 393.

4 Ockley's *History of the Saracens*, i. 233; for Edessa, Theophanes, *Ch.* 283, and Abou'lfaradj, *Ch. Syr.* 119.

As the Roman administration grew weaker in Syria, and the Persian invasions became more frequent, the Arabs gradually acquired many permanent settlements amidst the rest of the inhabitants; and from the commencement of the seventh century, they must be reckoned as an important class of the population. Their power within the Roman provinces was increased by the existence of the two independent Arab kingdoms of Ghassan and Hira, which had been formed in part from territories gained from the Roman and Persian empires. Of these kingdoms, Ghassan was the constant ally or vassal of the Romans; and Hira was equally attached to, or dependent on Persia. Both were Christian states, though the conversion of Hira took place not very long before the reign of Heraclius, and the greater part of the inhabitants were Jacobites, mixed with some Nestorians.[1] It may be remarked that the Arabs had been gradually advancing in moral and political civilisation during the sixth century, and that their religious ideas had undergone a very great change. The decline of their powerful neighbours had allowed them to increase the importance of the commerce which they retained in their own hands, and its extension gave them more enlarged views of their own importance, and suggested ideas of national unity which they had not previously entertained. These causes had produced powerful effects on the whole of the Arab population during the century which preceded the accession of Heraclius; and it must not be overlooked that Mahomet himself was born during the reign of Justin II., and that he was educated under the influence of this national excitement.

The country between Syria and Armenia, or that part of ancient Chaldea which was subject to the Romans, had been so repeatedly laid waste during the Persian wars, that the agricultural population was nearly exterminated, or had retired into the Persian provinces. The inhabitants of no portion of the empire were so eager to throw off their allegiance as the Chaldaic Christians, called by the Greeks Nestorians, who formed the majority of the population of this country.[2] They had clung firmly to the doctrine of the two natures of Christ,

[1] Sale's *Preliminary Discourse to the Koran*, 30.

[2] The Chaldaic Christians considered, and still consider, theirs the real apostolic church, though, like all other Christian churches, it partook largely of a national character. They used the Syriac language in public worship. Their patriarch resided at Seleucia in Persia. He now resides at a monastery near Mossul. They had many bishops in Syria and Armenia, as well as in Mesopotamia. They were charged with confounding the divine and human natures of Christ, and they wished the Virgin Mary to be called the mother of Christ, not, as was then usual, the mother of God. They worshipped no images, and they venerated Nestorius.

after its condemnation by the council of Ephesus (A.D. 449), and when they found themselves unable to contend against the temporal power and spiritual influence of the Greeks, they had established an independent church, which directed its attention, with great zeal, to the spiritual guidance of those Christians who dwelt beyond the limits of the Roman empire. The history of their missions, by which churches were established in India and China, is an extremely interesting portion of the annals of Christianity.[1] Their zealous exertions, and their connection with the Christian inhabitants of Persia, induced the Roman emperors to persecute them with great cruelty, from political as well as religious motives; and this persecution often insured them the favour of the Persian monarchs. Though they did not always escape the bigotry and jealousy of the Persians, still they usually enjoyed equitable protection, and became active enemies both of the Greek church and the Roman empire, though the geographical position and physical configuration of their country afforded them little hope of being able to gain political independence.[2]

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

[1] Blumhardh, *Versuch einerallgem einen Missions geschichte der Kirche*, vol. iii.

[2] The Jacobites appear not to have been so cruelly persecuted as the Nestorians, for they were very numerous in Mesopotamia. When the Persians took Edessa they gave up all the churches to the Jacobites.—Elmacin, *Hist. Sarac.* 14.

to their church a national character, and separated it from that of the Jacobites. Their history is worthy of a more attentive examination than it has yet met with in English literature. Armenia was the first country in which Christianity became the established religion of the land; and the people, under the greatest difficulties, long maintained their independence with the most determined courage; and after the loss of their political power, they have defended their manners, language, religion, and national character with success, against Persians, Greeks, Saracens, and Turks.[1]

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

The power of the central administration over its immediate officers was almost as completely destroyed in Asia Minor as in the more distant provinces of the empire. A remarkable proof of this general disorganisation of the government is found in the history of the early years of the reign of Heraclius; and one deserving particular attention from its illustrating both his personal character and the state of the empire. Crispus, the son-in-law of Phocas, had materially assisted Heraclius in obtaining the throne; and as a recompense, he was charged with the administration of Cappadocia, one of the richest provinces of the empire, along with the chief command of the troops in his government.[2] Crispus, a man of influence, and

[1] *History of Armenia*, by Father Michael Chamich, translated from the Armenian by J. Avdall: Calcutta, 1827, 2 vols. 8vo. M. de Saint Martin, *Mémoires Historiques et Géographiques sur l'Arménie*, 2 vols. Paris, 1818; and numerous additions to the edition of Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, Paris, 1824, &c., 21 tomes, by the same author. Neumann, *Versuch einer Geschichte der Armenischen Literatur nach den werken der Mechitaristen.*

[2] Justinian attests the wealth and importance of Cappadocia.—*Novell.* xxx.

of a daring, heedless character, soon ventured to act, not only with independence, but even with insolence, towards the emperor.[1] He neglected the defence of his province; and when Heraclius visited Cesarea to examine into its state and prepare the means of carrying on the war against Persia in person, he displayed a spirit of insubordination and an assumption of importance which amounted to treason. Heraclius, who possessed the means of restraining his fiery temperament, visited the too powerful officer in his bed, which he kept under a slight or affected illness, and persuaded him to visit Constantinople. On his appearance in the senate, he was arrested, and compelled to become a monk. His authority and position rendered it absolutely necessary for Heraclius to punish his presumption, before he could advance with safety against the Persians. Many less important personages, in various parts of the empire, acted with equal independence, without the emperor's considering that it was either necessary to observe, or prudent to punish, their ambition. The decline of the power of the central government, the increasing ignorance of the people, the augmented difficulties in the way of communication, and the general insecurity of property and life, effected extensive changes in the state of society, and threw political influence into the hands of the local governors, the municipal and provincial chiefs, and the whole body of the clergy.

Section VI

Change in the position of the Greek population, which was produced by the Sclavonic establishments in Dalmatia

Heraclius appears to have formed the plan of establishing a permanent barrier in Europe against the encroachments of the Avars and Sclavonians. For the furtherance of this project, it was evident that he could derive no assistance from the inhabitants of the provinces to the south of the Danube. The imperial armies, too, which, in the time of Maurice, had waged an active war in Illyria and Thrace, and frequently invaded the territories of the Avars, had melted away during

[1] His character warrants Gibbon's conjecture that he may have been the Priscus who figured in the reign of Maurice.—*Decline and Fall*, xlvi, note 52. Nicephorus Pat. (4), and Cedrenus (i. 406, edit. Par.) call the son-in-law of Phocas, Crispus. Theophanes (246, 248) and Zonaras (ii. 81) call him Priscus; but Zonaras (p. 82, 83) distinguishes the governor of Cappadocia, whom he calls Crispus.

the disorders of the reign of Phocas. The loss was irreparable: for, in Europe, no agricultural population remained to supply the recruits required to form a new army.[1] The only feasible plan for circumscribing the ravages of the northern enemies of the empire which presented itself, was the establishment of powerful colonies of tribes hostile to the Avars and their eastern Sclavonian allies, in the deserted provinces of Dalmatia and Illyria. To accomplish this object, Heraclius induced the Serbs, or western Sclavonians, who occupied the country about the Carpathian Mountains, and who had successfully opposed the extension of the Avar empire in that direction, to abandon their ancient seats, and move down to the south into the provinces between the Adriatic and the Danube. The Roman and Greek population of these provinces had been driven towards the sea coast by the continual incursions of the northern tribes, and the desolate plains of the interior had been occupied by a few Sclavonian subjects and vassals of the Avars. The most important of the western Sclavonian tribes who moved southward at the invitation of Heraclius were the Servians and Croatians, who settled in the countries still peopled by their descendants. Their original settlements were formed in consequence of friendly arrangements, and, doubtless, under the sanction of an express treaty; for the Sclavonian people of Illyria and Dalmatia long regarded themselves as bound to pay a certain degree of territorial allegiance to the Eastern Empire.[2]

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

[1] The Dalmatian cities sent every year 1000 cavalry to assist in guarding the passage of the Danube.—Constantinus Porphyr. *De Adm. Imp.* c. 30, p. 141, edit. Bonn.
[2] Const. Porphyr. *De Administrando Imperio*, c. 31–36.

munities and independent states, which offered a firm barrier to the Avars and other hostile nations.

It may here be observed, that if the original population of the countries colonised by the Servian nations had at an earlier period been relieved from the weight of the imperial taxes, which encroached on their capital, and from the jealous oppression of the Roman government, which prevented their bearing arms; in short, if they had been allowed to enjoy all the advantages which Heraclius was compelled to concede to the Servians, we may reasonably suppose that they could have successfully defended their country. But after the most destructive ravages of the Goths, Huns, and Avars, the imperial tax-gatherers had never failed to enforce payment of the tribute as long as anything remained undestroyed, though, according to the rules of justice, the Roman government had really forfeited its right to levy the taxes, as soon as it failed to perform its duty in defending the population.

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

But, although the ancient provinces of Dalmatia, Illyricum, and Mœsia, received a new race of inhabitants, and new geographical divisions and names, still several fortified towns on the Adriatic continued to maintain their immediate connection with the imperial government, and preserved their original population, augmented by numbers of Roman citizens whose wealth enabled them to escape from the Avar invasions and gain the coast. These towns long supported their municipal independence by means of the commerce which they

carried on with Italy, and defended themselves against their Servian neighbours by the advantages which they derived from the vicinity of the numerous islands on the Dalmatian coast. For two centuries and a half they continued, though surrounded by Servian tribes, to preserve their direct allegiance to the throne of Constantinople, until at length, in the reign of the Emperor Basil I., they were compelled to become tributary to their Sclavonic neighbours.[1] Ragusa alone ultimately obtained and secured its independence, which it preserved amidst all the vicissitudes of the surrounding countries, until its liberty was finally destroyed by the French, when the conquests of Napoleon annihilated the existence of most of the smaller European republics.

It seems hardly possible that the western Sclavonians, who entered Dalmatia under the various names of Servians, Croatians, Narentins, Zachloumians, Terbounians, Diocleans, and Decatrians, constituted the whole stock of the population. Their numbers could hardly be sufficient to form more than the dominant race at the time of their arrival; and, depopulated as the country was, they probably found some remains of a primitive Sclavonian people who had inhabited the same countries from the earliest periods of history. The remnant of these ancient inhabitants, even if they had been reduced to the condition of agricultural serfs or slaves, would survive the miseries which exterminated their masters; and they had doubtless mingled with the invaders of a kindred race from the northern banks of the Danube, who, ever since the reign of Justinian, had pushed their incursions into the empire. With these people the ruling class of Servian Sclavonians would easily unite without violating any national prejudice. The consequence was natural; the various branches of the population were soon confounded, and their numbers rapidly increased as they melted into one people. The Romans, who at one period had formed a large portion of the inhabitants of these countries, gradually died out, while the Illyrians, who were the neighbours of these colonies to the south, were ultimately pushed down on that part of the continent occupied by the Greeks.

[1] A.D. 867–886. Const. Porphyr. *De Adm. Imp.* c. 30 (vol. iii. 147, edit. Bonn). The small annual tribute paid by these towns to the Eastern emperors, and afterwards to the Sclavonian princes, may be considered as a proof of their poverty on the one hand, and of their virtual independence on the other. In either case it is deserving of particular attention, as an illustration of the state of society. Aspalathus (Spalatro) paid 200 pieces of gold; Tetrangurium (Trau), Opsara, Arbe, Vekla, each 100; Jadera, which is represented by the modern Zara, 110; and Ragusa, for the rural district possessed by its citizens, 72.

From the settlement of the Servian Sclavonians within the bounds of the empire, we may therefore venture to date the earliest encroachments of the Illyrian or Albanian race on the Hellenic population. The Albanians or Arnauts, who are now called by themselves Skiptars, are supposed to be remains of the great Thracian race which, under various names, and more particularly as Paionians, Epirots, and Macedonians, take an important part in early Grecian history.[1] No distinct trace of the period at which they began to be co-proprietors of Greece with the Hellenic race can be found in history; but it is evident that, at whatever time it occurred, the earliest Illyrian or Albanian colonists who settled among the Greeks did so as members of the same political state, and of the same church; that they were influenced by precisely the same feelings and interests, and, what is even more remarkable, that their intrusion occurred under such circumstances that no national prejudices or local jealousies were excited in the susceptible minds of the Greeks. A common calamity of no ordinary magnitude must have produced these wonderful effects; and it seems very difficult to trace back the history of the Greek nation, without suspecting that the germs of their modern condition, like those of their neighbours, are to be sought in the singular events which occurred in the reign of Heraclius.[2]

The power of the Avar monarchy had already declined, but the prince or great khakan was still acknowledged as suzerain, from the frontiers of Bavaria to the Dacian Alps, which bound Transylvania and the Bannat, and as far as the shores of the Black Sea, about the mouth of the Danube. The Sclavonian, Bulgarian, and Hunnish tribes, which occupied the country between the Danube and the Wolga, and who had been the earliest subjects of the Avars in Europe, had re-asserted their independence. The actual numerical strength of the Avar nation had never been very great, and their barbarous government everywhere thinned the original

[1] The numbers of the Albanian race are at present estimated by Schafarik not to exceed one million and a half. The Wallachians, Moldavians, and Transylvanians, are composed of a mixture of the true Thracians with Romans and Sclavonians.—Schafarik, *Slavische Alterthumer*, vol. i. p. 31.

[2] The great social distinction which has always existed in the East between the population of the city and of the country, has facilitated the changes and translocations of the rural population.

Some valuable works have been lately published on the history and language of Albania. *Albanesische Studien*, by Dr. Von Hahn, who resided in the country as Austrian Consul, is a valuable volume on this almost unknown subject. Bopp has published a Memoir on the Albanian language in the *Memoirs of the Academy of Berlin*.

population of the lands which they conquered. The remnant of the old inhabitants, driven by poverty and desperation to abandon all industrious pursuits, soon formed bands of robbers, and quickly became as warlike and as numerous as the Avar troops stationed to awe their districts. In a succession of skirmishes and desultory engagements, the Avars soon ceased to maintain their superiority, and the Avar monarchy fell to pieces with nearly as great rapidity as it had arisen. Yet, in the reign of Heraclius, the khakan could still assemble a variety of tribes under his standard whenever he proposed to make a plundering expedition into the provinces of the empire.[1]

It seems impossible to decide, from any historical evidence, whether the measures adopted by Heraclius to circumscribe the Avar power, by the settlement of the Servian Sclavonians in Illyria, preceded or followed a remarkable act of treachery attempted by the Avar monarch against the emperor. If Heraclius had then succeeded in terminating his arrangements with the Servians, the dread of having their power reduced may have appeared to the Avars some apology for an attempt at treachery, too base even for the ordinary latitude of savage revenge and avidity, but which we find repeated by a Byzantine emperor against a king of Bulgaria two centuries later.[2] In the year 619, the Avars made a terrible incursion into the heart of the empire. They advanced so far into Thrace, that when Heraclius proposed a personal meeting with their sovereign, in order to arrange the terms of peace, Heraclea (Perinthus), on the Sea of Marmora, was selected as a convenient spot for the interview. The emperor advanced as far as Selymbria, accompanied by a brilliant train of attendants; and preparations were made to amuse the barbarians with a theatrical festival. The avarice of the Avars was excited, and their sovereign, thinking that any act by which so dangerous an enemy as Heraclius could be removed was pardonable, determined to seize the person of the emperor, while his troops plundered the imperial escort. The great wall was so carelessly guarded, that large bodies of Avar soldiers passed it unnoticed or unheeded; but their movements at last awakened the suspicion of the court, and Heraclius was compelled to fly in disguise to Constantinople, leaving his tents, his theatre, and his household establishment, to be pillaged by his

[1] Georgii Pisidæ *Bellum Avaricum*, v. 197.
[2] A.D. 813. *Byzantine Empire*, vol. i. 135.

treacherous enemies. The followers of the emperor were pursued to the very walls of the capital, and the crowd assembled to grace the festival, became the slaves of the Avars, who carried off an immense booty, and two hundred and seventy thousand prisoners.[1] The weakness of the empire was such, that Heraclius considered it politic to overlook even this insult, and instead of attempting to efface the stain on his reputation, which his ridiculous flight could not fail to produce, he allowed the affair to pass unnoticed. He continued his preparations for attacking Persia, as it was evident that the fate of the Roman empire depended on the success of the war in Asia. To secure himself as much as possible from any diversion in Europe, he condescended to renew his negotiations with the Avars, and by making many sacrifices, he succeeded in concluding a peace on what he vainly hoped might be a lasting basis.

Several years later, however, when Heraclius was absent on the frontiers of Persia, the Avars considered the moment favourable for renewing hostilities, and formed the project of attempting the conquest of Constantinople, in conjunction with a Persian army, which advanced to the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus.[2] The khakan of the Avars, with a powerful army of his own subjects, aided by bands of Sclavonians, Bulgarians, and Huns, attacked the capital by land, while the Persian army endeavoured to afford him every possible assistance by investing the Asiatic suburb and cutting off all supplies on that side. Their combined attacks were defeated by the garrison of Constantinople, without Heraclius considering it necessary to retrace his steps, or turn back from his career of conquest in the East. The naval superiority of the Roman government prevented the junction of its enemies, and the Avars were at last compelled to effect a precipitate retreat. This siege of Constantinople is the last memorable exploit of the Avar nation recorded by the Byzantine historians; their power rapidly declined, and the people soon became so completely lost amidst the Sclavonian and Bulgarian inhabitants of their dominions, that an impenetrable veil is now cast over the history of their race and language. The Bulgarians, who had already acquired some degree of power, began to render themselves the ruling people among the Hunnish

[1] Nicephorus, *De Rebus post Mauricium gestis*, p. 10. It is difficult to read this account of the numbers of the prisoners without a suspicion that some important fact is concealed.

[2] A.D. 626.

nations between the Danube and the Don; and, from this time, they appear in history as the most dangerous enemies of the Roman empire on its northern frontier.

Before Heraclius commenced the arrangements by which he induced the western Sclavonians to settle in Illyria, numerous bodies of the Avars and their Sclavonic subjects had already penetrated into Greece, and established themselves even as far south as the Peloponnesus.[1] No precise evidence of the extent to which the Avars succeeded in pushing their conquests in Greece can now be obtained; but there are testimonies which establish with certainty that their Sclavonic subjects retained possession of these conquests for many centuries. The political and social condition of these Sclavonic colonies on the Hellenic soil, utterly escapes the research of the historian; but their power and influence in Greece was, for a long time, very great. The passages of the Greek writers which refer to these conquests are so scanty, and so vague in expression, that it becomes the duty of the modern historian to pass them in review, particularly since they have been employed with much ability by a German writer, to prove that "the Hellenic race in Europe has been exterminated," and that the modern Greeks are a mixed race composed of the descendants of Roman slaves and Sclavonian colonists.[2] This opinion, it is true, has been combated with great learning by one of his countrymen, who asserts that the ingenious dissertation of his predecessor is nothing more than a plausible theory.[3] We must therefore examine for ourselves the scanty records of historical truth during this dark period.

The earliest mention of the Avar conquests in Greece occurs in the Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius of Epiphania, in Cœle-Syria, who wrote at the end of the sixth century.[4] He mentions that, while the forces of the emperor Maurice were engaged in the East, the Avars advanced to the great wall before Constantinople, captured Singidon, Anchialus, and all Greece, and laid waste everything with fire and sword.[5] These

[1] Leake's *Researches in Greece*, 376. Tafel, *De Thessalonica Proleg.* lxxviii. lxxxvii. 70. Theophanes, *Ch.* 385.

[2] *Geschichte der halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters*, von Prof. Fallmerayer, preface, and pp. 179–99.

[3] *Geschichte Griechenlands*, von J. W. Zinkeisen, p. 837.

[4] His history ends with the year 593, and he is supposed to have died not long afterwards.

[5] Evagrii *Hist. Eccles.* vi. 10, cum adnotat. Valesii. Tafel, *Thessalonica Proleg.* lxx. Zinkeisen, 699. Fallmerayer, i. 185. Evagrius appears to mention Singidon, on the extreme western frontier of the empire, and Anchialus, on the Black Sea, in con-

incursions took place in the years 588 and 589, but no inference could be drawn from this vague and incidental notice of an Avar plundering incursion so casually mentioned in favour of the permanent settlement of Sclavonian colonies in Greece, had this passage not received considerable importance from later authorities. The testimony of Evagrius is confirmed in a very remarkable manner by a letter of the patriarch of Constantinople, Nicolaus, to the emperor Alexius Comnenus in the year 1081.[1] The patriarch mentions that the emperor Nicephorus (A.D. 802–811) had granted various concessions to the episcopal see of Patras, in consequence of the miraculous aid which Saint Andrew had afforded that city in destroying the Avars, who had held possession of the greater part of the Peloponnesus for two hundred and eighteen years, and had so completely separated their conquests from the Roman empire that no Roman (that is to say Greek connected with the imperial administration) dared to enter the country. Now this siege of Patras is mentioned by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and its date is fixed in the year 807; consequently, these Avars, who had conquered the Peloponnesus two hundred and eighteen years before that event, must have arrived precisely in the year 589, at the very period indicated by Evagrius.[2] The emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus repeatedly mentions the Sclavonian colonies in the Peloponnesus, though he never affords any accurate information concerning the period at which they entered the country. In his work on the provinces of the empire, he informs us that the whole country was subdued and rendered barbarous after the great plague in the reign of Constantine Copronymus, an observation which implies that the complete extermination of the rural population of Hellenic race, and the establishment of the political power of the Sclavonic colonies, and their assumption of total independence in Greece, dated from that period.[3] It is evident that they acquired great power, and became an object of alarm to the emperors, a few years later. In the reign of Constantine VI., an expedition was sent against

junction with all Greece, because his rhetoric and his courtly tone prevented him from telling his readers plainly that the Avars laid waste every province in Europe. A proof that some considerable change took place in the condition of the Greek population of the Peloponnesus during the reign of Maurice, exists in the fact that Monemvasia was then raised to the rank of a Metropolitan see.—Phrantzes, 398, edit. Bonn. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, ii. 216.

[1] Leunclavius, *Jus Græco-Romanum*, i. 278.

[2] Constantinus Porphyr. *De Adm. Imp.* c. 49, iii. 217; edit. Bonn.

[3] A.D. 746. Const. Porphyr. *De Thematibus*, ii. c. 6.

them at a time when they possessed great part of the country from the frontiers of Macedonia to the southern limits of the Peloponnesus.[1] Indeed the fortified towns alone appear to have remained in the possession of the Greeks.[2]

It seems surprising that no detailed account of the important change in the condition and fortunes of the Greek race, which these facts imply, is contained in the Byzantine historians. Yet, when we reflect that these Sclavonic colonies never united into one state, nor pursued any fixed line of policy in their attacks on the empire; and when we recall to mind also that the Byzantine historians occupied themselves so little with the real history of mankind as to pass over the Lombard invasion of Italy without notice, our wonder must cease. All the Greek writers who mention this period of history were men connected either with the Constantinopolitan government, or with the orthodox church; and they were consequently destitute of every feeling of Greek nationality, and viewed the agricultural population of ancient Hellas as a rude and degenerate race of semi-barbarians, little superior to the Sclavonians, with whom they were carrying on a desultory warfare. As comparatively little revenue could, in the time of Heraclius, be drawn from Greece, that emperor never seems to have occupied himself about its fate; and the Greeks escaped the extermination with which they were threatened by their Avar and Sclavonian invaders, through the neglect, and not in consequence of the assistance, of the imperial government. The Avars made considerable exertions to complete the conquest of Greece by carrying their predatory expeditions into the Archipelago. They attacked the eastern coast, which had hitherto been secure from their invasions, and, to execute this design, they obtained shipbuilders from the Lombards, and launched a fleet of plundering barks in the Ægean Sea. The general danger of the islands and commercial cities of Greece roused the spirit of the inhabitants, who united for the defence of their property, and the plans of the Avars proved unsuccessful.[3] The Greeks, however, were long exposed to the plundering Sclavonians on one side, and to the rapacity of the imperial government on the other; and their success in preserving some portion of their commercial wealth and political

[1] A.D. 783. Theophanes, *Ch.* 385. See also the *Epitome* to Strabo, in the edition of Almeloveen. Amst. 1707, pp. 1251, 1261.

[2] Joannina maintained itself always as a Greek city.—Leake's *Travels in Northern Greece*, iv. 202.

[3] Paulus Diaconus, *De Gestis Langob.* iv. 21. Tafel, *Thessalonica Proleg.* lxxiii. lxxix.

influence, is to be attributed to the efficacy of their municipal organisation, and to the weakness of the central government, which could no longer prevent their bearing arms for their own defence.

Section VII

Influence of the Campaigns of Heraclius in the East

The personal character of Heraclius must have exercised great influence on the events of his reign. Unfortunately, the historians of his age have not conveyed to posterity any very accurate picture of the peculiar traits of his mind. His conduct shows that he possessed judgment, activity, and courage; and, though he was sometimes imprudent and rash, at others he displayed an equanimity and force of character in repressing his passion, which mark him to have been really a great man.[1] In the opinion of his contemporaries, his fame was sullied by two indelible stains. His marriage with his niece Martina was regarded as incestuous, and his religious edicts, by which he proposed to regulate the faith of his subjects, were branded as heretical. Both were serious errors of policy in a prince who was so dependent on public opinion for support in his great scheme of restoring the lost power of the Roman empire; yet the constancy of his affection for his wife, and the immense importance of reconciling all the adverse sects of Christians within the empire in common measures of defence against external enemies, may form some apology for these errors. The patriarch of Constantinople remonstrated against his marriage with his niece; but the power of the emperor was still absolute over the persons of the ecclesiastical functionaries of the empire; and Heraclius, though he allowed the bishop to satisfy his conscience by stating his objections, commanded him to practise his civil duties, and celebrate the marriage of his sovereign. The pretensions of papal Rome had not yet arisen in the Christian church.[2] The Patriarch Sergius

[1] His cruelty to Phocas only proves that he partook of the barbarous feelings of his age. A religious strain runs through his letters, which are preserved in the *Paschal Chronicle*, and in the speeches reported by Theophanes, which have an air of authenticity. It is true that this style may have been the official language of an emperor, who felt himself so peculiarly the head of the Christian church, and the champion of the orthodox faith. Persia was his ecclesiastical as well as his political enemy.

[2] The power of Gregory the Great was so small that he durst not consecrate a bishop without the consent of his enemy the emperor Maurice; and he was forced to obey the edict forbidding all persons to quit public employments in order to become monks, and prohibiting soldiers during the period of their service from being received into monasteries.—Fleury, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* . 35, 59; 36, 43

does not appear to have been deficient in zeal or courage, and Heraclius was not free from the religious bigotry of his age. Both knew that the established church was a part of the State, and that though in matters of doctrine the general councils put limits to the imperial authority, yet, in the executive direction of the clergy, the emperor was nearly absolute, and possessed full power to remove the patriarch had he ventured to disobey his orders. As the marriage of Heraclius with Martina was within the prohibited degrees, it was an act of unlawful compliance on the part of Sergius to celebrate the nuptials, for the duty of the patriarch as a Christian priest was surely, in such a case, of more importance than his obedience as a Roman subject.

The early part of the reign of Heraclius was devoted to reforming the administration and recruiting the army. He tried every means of obtaining peace with Persia in vain, and even allowed the senate to make an independent attempt to enter into negotiations with Chosroes.[1] For twelve years, the Persian armies ravaged the empire almost without encountering any opposition, from the banks of the Nile to the shores of the Bosphorus. It is impossible to explain in what manner Heraclius employed his time during this interval, but it is evident that he was engaged by many cares besides those of preparing for his war with Persia. The independent negotiation which the senate attempted with Persia, seems to indicate that the Roman aristocracy had succeeded in encroaching on the emperor's authority during the general confusion which reigned in the administration after the fall of Maurice, and that he may have been occupied with a political contest at home, before he could attend to the exigencies of the Persian war. As no civil hostilities appear to have broken out, the circumstance is not recorded in the meagre chronicles of his reign. This may perhaps seem a random conjecture, which ought not to find a place in a historical work; but when the state of the Roman administration at the close of the reign of Heraclius is compared with the confusion in which he found it at his accession, it is evident that he had succeeded in effecting a great political change, and in infusing new vigour into the weakened fabric of the government.

When Heraclius had settled the internal affairs of his empire, filled his military chest, and re-established the discipline of the Roman armies, he commenced a series of campaigns,

[1] *Chronicon Paschale*, 387.