

# THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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BY  
EDWARD GIBBON

VOLUME I  
(A. D. 180-476)



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# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE EXTENT AND MILITARY FORCE OF THE EMPIRE, IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES	I
II. OF THE UNION AND INTERNAL PROSPERITY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES	25
III. OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES (96-180 A.D.)	52
IV. THE CRUELTY, FOLLIES, AND MURDER OF COMMODUS —ELECTION OF PERTINAX—HIS ATTEMPTS TO RE- FORM THE STATE—HIS ASSASSINATION BY THE PRÆTORIAN GUARDS (180-193 A.D.)	73
V. PUBLIC SALE OF THE EMPIRE TO DIDIUS JULIANUS BY THE PRÆTORIAN GUARDS—CLODIUS ALBINUS IN BRITAIN, PESCENNIUS NIGER IN SYRIA, AND SEP- TIMIUS SEVERUS IN PANNONIA, DECLARE AGAINST THE MURDERERS OF PERTINAX—CIVIL WARS AND VICTORY OF SEVERUS OVER HIS THREE RIVALS— RELAXATION OF DISCIPLINE—NEW MAXIMS OF GOVERNMENT (193-197 A.D.)	90
VI. THE DEATH OF SEVERUS—TYRANNY OF CARACALLA— USURPATION OF MACRINUS—FOLLIES OF ELAGAB- ALUS—VIRTUES OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS—LICEN- TIOUSNESS OF THE ARMY—GENERAL STATE OF THE ROMAN FINANCES (208-235 A.D.)	110
VII. THE ELEVATION AND TYRANNY OF MAXIMIN—REBEL- LION IN AFRICA AND ITALY, UNDER THE AUTHOR- ITY OF THE SENATE—CIVIL WARS AND SEDITIONS —VIOLENT DEATHS OF MAXIMIN AND HIS SON, OF MAXIMUS AND BALBINUS, AND OF THE THREE GORDIANS—USURPATION AND SECULAR GAMES OF PHILIP (235-248 A.D.)	145

CHAP.	PAGE
VIII. OF THE STATE OF PERSIA AFTER THE RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY BY ARTAXERXES (165-240 A.D.)	169
IX. THE STATE OF GERMANY TILL THE INVASION OF THE BARBARIANS, IN THE TIME OF THE EMPEROR DECIUS	186
X. THE EMPERORS DECIUS, GALLUS, ÆMILIANUS, VALE-RIAN, AND GALLIENUS—THE GENERAL IRRUPTION OF THE BARBARIANS—THE THIRTY TYRANTS (248-268 A.D.)	206
XI. REIGN OF CLAUDIUS—DEFEAT OF THE GOTHs—VIC-TORIES, TRIUMPH, AND DEATH OF AURELIAN (268-275 A.D.)	245
XII. CONDUCT OF THE ARMY AND SENATE AFTER THE DEATH OF AURELIAN—REIGNS OF TACITUS, PRO-BUS, CARUS, AND HIS SONS (275-285 A.D.)	274
XIII. THE REIGN OF DIOCLETIAN AND HIS THREE ASSOCI-ATES, MAXIMIAN, GALERIUS, AND CONSTANTIUS—GENERAL RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF ORDER AND TRANQUILLITY—THE PERSIAN WAR, VICTORY AND TRIUMPH—THE NEW FORM OF ADMINISTRATION—ABDICATION AND RETIREMENT OF DIOCLETIAN AND MAXIMIAN (285-313 A.D.)	303
XIV. TROUBLES AFTER THE ABDICATION OF DIOCLETIAN—DEATH OF CONSTANTIUS—ELEVATION OF CON-stantine AND MAXENTIUS—SIX EMPERORS AT THE SAME TIME—DEATH OF MAXIMIAN AND GALERIUS—VICTORIES OF CONSTANTINE OVER MAXENTIUS AND LICINIUS—RE-UNION OF THE EMPIRE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CONSTANTINE (305-324 A.D.)	341
XV. THE PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION—SENTI-MENTS, MANNERS, NUMBERS, AND CONDITIONS OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS	382
XVI. THE CONDUCT OF THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE CHRISTIANS, FROM THE REIGN OF NERO TO THAT OF CONSTANTINE (180-313 A.D.)	444



# CONTENTS

vii

CHAP.	PAGE
XVII. FOUNDATION OF CONSTANTINOPLE—POLITICAL SYSTEM OF CONSTANTINE AND HIS SUCCESSORS—MILITARY DISCIPLINE — THE PALACE — THE FINANCES (300-500 A.D.)	505
XVIII. CHARACTER OF CONSTANTINE—GOTHIC WAR—DEATH OF CONSTANTINE—DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE AMONG HIS THREE SONS—PERSIAN WAR—TRAGIC DEATHS OF CONSTANTINE THE YOUNGER AND CONSTANS—USURPATION OF MAGNENTIUS—CIVIL WAR—VICTORY OF CONSTANTIUS (342-353 A.D.)	560
XIX. CONSTANTIUS SOLE EMPEROR—ELEVATION AND DEATH OF GALLUS—DANGER AND ELEVATION OF JULIAN—SARMATIAN AND PERSIAN WARS—VICTORIES OF JULIAN IN GAUL (351-360 A.D.)	598
XX. THE MOTIVES, PROGRESS, AND EFFECTS OF THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE—LEGAL ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN OR CATHOLIC CHURCH (306-438 A.D.)	634
XXI. PERSECUTION OF HERESY—THE SCHISM OF THE DONATISTS—THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY—ATHANASIUS—DISTRACTED STATE OF THE CHURCH AND EMPIRE UNDER CONSTANTINE AND HIS SONS—TOLERATION OF PAGANISM (312-362 A.D.)	671
XXII. JULIAN IS DECLARED EMPEROR BY THE LEGIONS OF GAUL—HIS MARCH AND SUCCESS—THE DEATH OF CONSTANTIUS — CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF JULIAN (360-361 A.D.)	727
XXIII. THE RELIGION OF JULIAN—UNIVERSAL TOLERATION—HE ATTEMPTS TO RESTORE AND REFORM THE PAGAN WORSHIP—TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM—HIS ARTFUL PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS — MUTUAL ZEAL AND INJUSTICE (351-363 A.D.)	756
XXIV. RESIDENCE OF JULIAN AT ANTIOCH—HIS SUCCESSFUL EXPEDITION AGAINST THE PERSIANS—PASSAGE OF THE TIGRIS—THE RETREAT AND DEATH OF	

CHAP.	PAGE
JULIAN—ELECTION OF JOVIAN—HE SAVES THE ROMAN ARMY BY A DISGRACEFUL TREATY (314– 390 A.D.)	797
XXV. THE GOVERNMENT AND DEATH OF JOVIAN—ELECTION OF VALENTINIAN, WHO ASSOCIATES HIS BROTHER VALENS, AND MAKES THE FINAL DIVISION OF THE EASTERN AND WESTERN EMPIRES—REVOLT OF PROCOPIUS—CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL ADMINIS- TRATION — GERMANY — BRITAIN — AFRICA — THE EAST—THE DANUBE—DEATH OF VALENTI- NIAN—HIS TWO SONS, GRATIAN AND VALENTI- NIAN II., SUCCEED TO THE WESTERN EMPIRE (343–384 A.D.)	841
XXVI. MANNERS OF THE PASTORAL NATIONS—PROGRESS OF THE HUNS FROM CHINA TO EUROPE—FLIGHT OF THE GOTHs—DEFEAT AND DEATH OF VALENS— GRATIAN INVESTS THEODOSIUS WITH THE EAST- ERN EMPIRE—PEACE AND SETTLEMENT OF THE GOTHs (365–395 A.D.)	899
XXVII. DEATH OF GRATIAN—RUIN OF ARIANISM—ST. AM- BROSE—FIRST CIVIL WAR, AGAINST MAXIMUS— CHARACTER, ADMINISTRATION, AND PENANCE OF THEODOSIUS—DEATH OF VALENTINIAN II.—SEC- OND CIVIL WAR, AGAINST EUGENIUS—DEATH OF THEODOSIUS (340–397 A.D.)	956
XXVIII. FINAL DESTRUCTION OF PAGANISM—INTRODUCTION OF THE WORSHIP OF SAINTS AND RELICS AMONG THE CHRISTIANS (378–420 A.D.)	1002
XXIX. FINAL DIVISION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE BETWEEN THE SONS OF THEODOSIUS—REIGN OF ARCADIUS AND HONORIUS—ADMINISTRATION OF RUFINUS AND STILICHO—REVOLT AND DEFEAT OF GILDO IN AFRICA (386–398 A.D.)	1027
XXX. REVOLT OF THE GOTHs—THEY PLUNDER GREECE— TWO GREAT INVASIONS OF ITALY BY ALARIC AND RADAGAIUS—THEY ARE REPULSED BY STILICHO —THE GERMANS OVERRUN GAUL—USURPATION OF CONSTANTINE IN THE WEST—DISGRACE AND DEATH OF STILICHO (395–408 A.D.)	1047

# CONTENTS

ix

CHAP.	PAGE
XXXI. INVASION OF ITALY BY ALARIC—ROME IS THRICE BESIEGED, AND AT LENGTH PILLAGED, BY THE GOTHs—DEATH OF ALARIC—THE GOTHs EVACUATE ITALY—FALL OF CONSTANTINE—GAUL AND SPAIN OCCUPIED BY THE BARBARIANS—INDEPENDENCE OF BRITAIN (408–449 A.D.)	1086
XXXII. ARCADIUS EMPEROR OF THE EAST—ADMINISTRATION AND DISGRACE OF EUTROPIUS—REVOLT OF GAINAS—PERSECUTION OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM—THEODOSIUS II. EMPEROR OF THE EAST—THE PERSIAN WAR, AND DIVISION OF ARMENIA (395–1453 A.D.)	1150
XXXIII. DEATH OF HONORIUS—VALENTINIAN III. EMPEROR OF THE WEST—ADMINISTRATION OF HIS MOTHER PLACIDIA—AËTIUS AND BONIFACE—CONQUEST OF AFRICA BY THE VANDALS (423–455 A.D.)	1181
XXXIV. THE CHARACTER, CONQUESTS, AND COURT OF ATTLA, KING OF THE HUNS—DEATH OF THEODOSIUS THE YOUNGER—ELEVATION OF MARCIAN TO THE EMPIRE OF THE EAST (376–453 A.D.)	1199
XXXV. INVASION OF GAUL BY ATTLA—HE IS REPULSED BY AËTIUS AND THE VISIGOTHS—ATTLA INVADES AND EVACUATES ITALY—THE DEATHS OF ATTLA, AËTIUS, AND VALENTINIAN THE THIRD (419–455 A.D.)	1225
XXXVI. SACK OF ROME BY GENSERIC—HIS NAVAL DEPREDATIONS—SUCCESSION OF THE LAST EMPERORS OF THE WEST, MAXIMUS, AVITUS, MAJORIAN, SEVERUS, ANTHEMIUS, OLYBRIUS, GLYCERIUS, NEPOS, AUGUSTULUS—TOTAL EXTINCTION OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE—REIGN OF ODOACER, THE FIRST BARBARIAN KING OF ITALY (439–490 A.D.)	1255

## CHAPTER IX

*The State of Germany till the Invasion of the Barbarians, in the time of the Emperor Decius*

THE government and religion of Persia have deserved some notice from their connection with the decline and fall of the Roman empire. We shall occasionally mention the Scythian or Sarmatian tribes, which, with their arms and horses, their flocks and herds, their wives and families, wandered over the immense plains which spread themselves from the Caspian Sea to the Vistula, from the confines of Persia to those of Germany. But the warlike Germans, who first resisted, then invaded, and at length overturned, the western monarchy of Rome, will occupy a much more important place in this history, and possess a stronger, and, if we may use the expression, a more domestic, claim to our attention and regard. The most civilised nations of modern Europe issued from the woods of Germany, and in the rude institutions of those barbarians we may still distinguish the original principles of our present laws and manners. In their primitive state of simplicity and independence the Germans were surveyed by the discerning eye, and delineated by the masterly pencil, of Tacitus, the first of historians who applied the science of philosophy to the study of facts. The expressive conciseness of his descriptions has deserved to exercise the diligence of innumerable antiquarians, and to excite the genius and penetration of the philosophic historians of our own times. The subject, however various and important, has already been so frequently, so ably, and so successfully discussed, that it is now grown familiar to the reader, and difficult to the writer. We shall therefore content ourselves with observing, and indeed with repeating, some of the most important circumstances of climate, of manners, and of institutions, which rendered the wild barbarians of Germany such formidable enemies to the Roman power.

Ancient Germany, excluding from its independent limits the province westward of the Rhine, which had submitted to the Roman yoke, extended itself over a third part of Europe. Almost the whole of modern Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, Prussia, and the greater part of Poland, were peopled by the various tribes of one great nation, whose complexion, manners, and language denoted a common origin and preserved a striking resemblance. On the west, ancient Germany was divided by the Rhine from the Gallic, and on the south by the Danube from the Illyrian, provinces of the empire. A ridge of hills, rising from the Danube, and called the Carpathian mountains, covered Germany on the side of Dacia or Hungary. The eastern frontier was faintly marked by the mutual fears of the Germans and the Sarmatians,

and was often confounded by the mixture of warring and confederating tribes of the two nations. In the remote darkness of the north, the ancients imperfectly descried a frozen ocean that lay beyond the Baltic Sea, and beyond the Peninsula, or islands,<sup>1</sup> of Scandinavia.

Some ingenious writers<sup>2</sup> have suspected that Europe was much colder formerly than it is at present; and the most ancient descriptions of the climate of Germany tend exceedingly to confirm their theory. The general complaints of intense frost, and eternal winter, are perhaps little to be regarded, since we have no method of reducing to the accurate standard of the thermometer the feelings or the expressions of an orator, born in the happier regions of Greece or Asia. But I shall select two remarkable circumstances of a less equivocal nature. 1. The great rivers which covered the Roman provinces, the Rhine and the Danube, were frequently frozen over, and capable of supporting the most enormous weights. The barbarians, who often chose that severe season for their inroads, transported, without apprehension or danger, their numerous armies, their cavalry, and their heavy wagons, over a vast and solid bridge of ice.<sup>3</sup> Modern ages have not presented an instance of a like phenomenon. 2. The reindeer, that useful animal, from whom the savage of the North derives the best comforts of his dreary life, is of a constitution that supports, and even requires, the most intense cold. He is found on the rock of Spitzberg, within ten degrees of the Pole; he seems to delight in the snows of Lapland and Siberia; but at present he cannot subsist, much less multiply, in any country to the south of the Baltic.<sup>4</sup> In the time of Cæsar, the reindeer, as well as the elk and the wild bull, was a native of the Hercynian forest, which then overshadowed a great part of Germany and Poland.<sup>5</sup> The modern improvements suf-

<sup>1</sup> The modern philosophers of Sweden seem agreed that the waters of the Baltic gradually sink in a regular proportion, which they have ventured to estimate at half an inch every year. Twenty centuries ago, the flat country of Scandinavia must have been covered by the sea; while the high lands rose above the waters, as so many islands of various forms and dimensions. Such indeed is the notion given us by Mela, Pliny, and Tacitus, of the vast countries round the Baltic. See in the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée*, tom. xl. and xlv. a large abstract of Dalin's History of Sweden, composed in the Swedish language.

<sup>2</sup> In particular, Hume, the Abbé du Bos, and M. Pelloutier, *Hist. des Celtes*, tom. i.

<sup>3</sup> Diodorus Siculus, l. v. p. 340, Edit. Wessel. Herodian, l. vi. p. 221. Jornandes, c. 55. On the banks of the Danube, the wine, when brought to table, was frequently frozen into great lumps, *fruste vini*. Ovid. *Epist. ex Ponto*, l. iv. 7, 9, 10. Virgil. *Georgic.* l. iii. 355. The fact is confirmed by a soldier and a philosopher, who had experienced the intense cold of Thrace. Xenophon, *Anabasis*, l. vii. p. 500. Edit. Hutchinson.

<sup>4</sup> Buffon *Histoire Naturelle*, tom. xii. p. 79, 116.

<sup>5</sup> Cæsar de Bell. Gallic. vi. 23, etc. The most inquisitive of the Germans were ignorant of its utmost limits, although some of them had travelled in it more than sixty days' journey.

ficiently explain the causes of the diminution of the cold. These immense woods have been gradually cleared, which intercepted from the earth the rays of the sun.<sup>6</sup> The morasses have been drained, and, in proportion as the soil has been cultivated, the air has become more temperate. Canada, at this day, is an exact picture of ancient Germany. Although situated in the same parallel with the finest provinces of France and England, that country experiences the most rigorous cold. The reindeer are very numerous, the ground is covered with deep and lasting snow, and the great river of St. Lawrence is regularly frozen, in a season when the waters of the Seine and the Thames are usually free from ice.<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain, and easy to exaggerate, the influence of the climate of ancient Germany over the minds and bodies of the natives. Many writers have supposed, and most have allowed, though, as it should seem, without any adequate proof, that the rigorous cold of the North was favourable to long life and generative vigour, that the women were more fruitful, and the human species more prolific, than in warmer or more temperate climates.<sup>8</sup> We may assert, with greater confidence, that the keen air of Germany formed the large and masculine limbs of the natives, who were, in general, of a more lofty stature than the people of the South,<sup>9</sup> gave them a kind of strength better adapted to violent exertions than to patient labour, and inspired them with constitutional bravery, which is the result of nerves and spirits. The severity of a winter campaign, that chilled the courage of the Roman troops, was scarcely felt by these hardy children of the North,<sup>10</sup> who in their turn were unable to resist the summer heats, and dissolved away in languor and sickness under the beams of an Italian sun.<sup>11</sup>

There is not anywhere upon the globe a large tract of country which we have discovered destitute of inhabitants, or whose first population can be fixed with any degree of historical certainty. And yet, as the most philosophic minds can seldom refrain from investigating the infancy of great nations, our curiosity consumes itself in toilsome and dis-

<sup>6</sup> Cluverius (*Germania Antiqua*, l. iii. c. 47) investigates the small and scattered remains of the Hercynian wood.

<sup>7</sup> Charlevoix *Histoire du Canada*.

<sup>8</sup> Olaus Rudbeck asserts that the Swedish women often bear ten or twelve children, and not uncommonly twenty or thirty; but the authority of Rudbeck is much to be suspected.

<sup>9</sup> *In hos artus, in hæc corpora, quæ miramur, excrescunt.* Tacit. *Germania*, 3, 20. Cluver. l. i. c. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Plutarch. in *Mario*. The Cimbri, by way of amusement, often slid down mountains of snow on their broad shields.

<sup>11</sup> The Romans made war in all climates, and by their excellent discipline were in a great measure preserved in health and vigour. It may be remarked, that man is the only animal which can live and multiply in every country from the equator to the poles. The hog seems to approach the nearest to our species in that privilege.

appointed efforts. When Tacitus considered the purity of the German blood, and the forbidding aspect of the country, he was disposed to pronounce those barbarians *Indigenæ*, or natives of the soil. We may allow with safety, and perhaps with truth, that ancient Germany was not originally peopled by any foreign colonies already formed into a political society;<sup>12</sup> but that the name and nation received their existence from the gradual union of some wandering savages of the Hercynian woods. To assert those savages to have been the spontaneous production of the earth which they inhabited would be a rash inference, condemned by religion and unwarranted by reason.

Such rational doubt is but ill-suited with the genius of popular vanity. Among the nations who have adopted the Mosaic history of the world, the ark of Noah has been of the same use as was formerly to the Greeks and Romans the siege of Troy. On a narrow basis of acknowledged truth an immense but rude superstructure of fable has been erected, and the "Wild Irishman,"<sup>13</sup> as well as the Wild Tartar,<sup>14</sup> could point out the individual son of Japhet, from whose loins his ancestors were lineally descended. The last century abounded with antiquarians of profound learning and easy faith, who by the dim light of legends and traditions, of conjectures and etymologies, conducted the great-grandchildren of Noah from the tower of Babel to the extremities of the globe. Of these judicious critics, one of the most entertaining was Olaus Rudbeck, professor in the University of Upsal.<sup>15</sup> Whatever is celebrated, either in history or fable, this zealous patriot ascribes to his country. From Sweden (which formed so considerable a part of ancient Germany) the Greeks themselves derived their alphabetical characters, their astronomy, and their religion. Of that delightful region

<sup>12</sup> Tacit. German. c. 3. The emigration of the Gauls followed the course of the Danube, and discharged itself on Greece and Asia. Tacitus could discover only one inconsiderable tribe that retained any traces of a Gallic origin.

[The Gothini, whom Tacitus distinguishes from the Gothi, and whom he places behind the Marcomanni and Quadi (Tacit. German. c. 43). But the improbability of an isolated Gallic people in this district is very great, and it has therefore been conjectured that they spoke the Galician. Cf. Latham's Germania of Tacitus.—O. S.]

<sup>13</sup> [According to Dr. Keating the giant Partholanus, who was the son of Seara, the son of Esra, the son of Sru, the son of Framant, the son of Fathaclan, the son of Magog, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah, landed on the coast of Munster, the 14 day of May, in the year of the world 1978. Though he was successful in his great enterprise, the loose behaviour of his wife rendered his domestic life very unhappy, and provoked him to such a degree that he killed—his favourite greyhound. This, as the learned historian observes, was the first instance of female falsehood and infidelity ever known in Ireland.—O. S.]

<sup>14</sup> [Genealogical History of the Tartars by Abulghazi Bahudar, Khan.—O. S.]

<sup>15</sup> His work, entitled *Atlantica*, is uncommonly scarce. Bayle has given two most curious extracts from it. *Republique des Lettres* Janvier et Fevrier, 1685.

(for such it appeared to the eyes of a native) the Atlantis of Plato, the country of the Hyperboreans, the gardens of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Islands, and even the Elysian Fields, were all but faint and imperfect transcripts. A clime so profusely favoured by Nature could not long remain desert after the flood. The learned Rudbeck allows the family of Noah a few years to multiply from eight to about twenty thousand persons. He then disperses them into small colonies to replenish the earth and to propagate the human species. The German or Swedish detachment (which marched, if I am not mistaken, under the command of Askenaz, the son of Gomer, the son of Japhet) distinguished itself by a more than common diligence in the prosecution of this great work. The northern hive cast its swarms over the greatest part of Europe, Africa, and Asia; and (to use the author's metaphor) the blood circulated from the extremities to the heart.

But all this well-laboured system of German antiquities is annihilated by a single fact, too well attested to admit of any doubt, and of too decisive a nature to leave room for any reply. The Germans, in the age of Tacitus, were unacquainted with the use of letters;<sup>16</sup> and the use of letters is the principal circumstance that distinguishes a civilised people from a herd of savages incapable of knowledge or reflection. Without that artificial help, the human memory soon dissipates or corrupts the ideas intrusted to her charge; and the nobler faculties of the mind, no longer supplied with models or with materials, gradually forget their powers; the judgment becomes feeble and lethargic, the imagination languid or irregular. Fully to apprehend this important truth, let us attempt, in an improved society, to calculate the immense distance between the man of learning and the *illiterate* peasant. The former, by reading and reflection, multiplies his own experience, and lives in distant ages and remote countries; whilst the latter, rooted to a single spot, and confined to a few years of existence, surpasses, but very little, his fellow-labourer the ox in the exercise of his mental faculties. The same, and even a greater, difference will be found between nations than between individuals; and we may safely pronounce that, without some species of writing, no people has ever preserved the faithful annals of their history, ever made any considerable progress in the abstract

<sup>16</sup> Tacit. Germ. ii. 19. *Literarum secreta viri pariter ac feminae ignorant.* We may rest contented with this decisive authority, without entering into the obscure disputes concerning the antiquity of the Runic characters. The learned Celsius, a Swede, a scholar, and a philosopher, was of opinion, that they were nothing more than the Roman letters, with the curves changed into straight lines for the ease of engraving. See Pelloutier, *Histoire des Celtes*, l. ii. c. 11. *Dictionnaire Diplomatique*, tom. i. p. 223. We may add, that the oldest Runic inscriptions are supposed to be of the third century, and the most ancient writer who mentions the Runic characters is Venantius Fortunatus (*Carm.* vii. 18), who lived towards the end of the sixth century—  
Barbara fraxineis pingatur RUNA tabellis.



sciences, or ever possessed, in any tolerable degree of perfection, the useful and agreeable arts of life.

Of these arts, the ancient Germans were wretchedly destitute. They passed their lives in a state of ignorance and poverty, which it has pleased some declaimers to dignify with the appellation of virtuous simplicity. Modern Germany is said to contain about two thousand three hundred walled towns.<sup>17</sup> In a much wider extent of country, the geographer Ptolemy could discover no more than ninety places, which he decorates with the name of cities;<sup>18</sup> though, according to our ideas, they would but ill deserve that splendid title. We can only suppose them to have been rude fortifications, constructed in the centre of the woods, and designed to secure the women, children, and cattle, whilst the warriors of the tribe marched out to repel a sudden invasion.<sup>19</sup> But Tacitus asserts, as a well-known fact, that the Germans, in his time, had *no* cities;<sup>20</sup> and that they affected to despise the works of Roman industry as places of confinement rather than of security.<sup>21</sup> Their edifices were not even contiguous, or formed into regular villas;<sup>22</sup> each barbarian fixed his independent dwelling on the spot to which a plain, a wood, or a stream of fresh water had induced him to give the preference. Neither stone, nor brick, nor tiles, were employed in these slight habitations. They were indeed no more than low huts of a circular figure, built of rough timber, thatched with straw, and pierced at the top to leave a free passage for the smoke. In the most inclement winter, the hardy German was satisfied with a scanty garment made of the skin of some animal. The nations who dwelt towards the North clothed themselves in furs; and the women manufactured for their own use a

<sup>17</sup> *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Americains*, tom. iii. p. 228. The author of that very curious work is, if I am not misinformed, a German by birth.

[The Runic characters have exercised the learning of Scandinavian scholars as to their origin. Three theories have been mooted, the first, by Schlözer, that the 16 Runic letters are corruptions of the Roman alphabet, post-Christian in date; the second, that by Frederick Schlegel, that these characters were left by the Phœnicians, preserved by the priestly castes and employed for purposes of magic; the last theory supposes them to be Indo-Teutonic, brought from the East ages before our era. Cf. *Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. ix. p. 438.—O. S.]

<sup>18</sup> The Alexandrian Geographer is often criticised by the accurate Cluverius.

<sup>19</sup> See Cæsar, and Whitaker's *History of Manchester*, vol. i.

<sup>20</sup> Tacit. Germ. 15.

<sup>21</sup> When the Germans commanded the Ubii of Cologne to cast off the Roman yoke, and with their new freedom to resume their ancient manners, they insisted on the immediate demolition of the walls of the colony. "Postulamus a vobis, muros colonie, munimenta servitii detrahatis; etiam fera animalia, si clausa teneas, virtutis obliviscuntur." Tacit. Hist. iv. 64.

<sup>22</sup> The straggling villages of Silesia are several miles in length. Cluver. l. i. c. 13.

<sup>23</sup> One hundred and forty years after Tacitus, a few more regular structures were erected near the Rhine and Danube. Herodian, l. vii. p. 234.

coarse kind of linen.<sup>24</sup> The game of various sorts, with which the forests of Germany were plentifully stocked, supplied its inhabitants with food and exercise.<sup>25</sup> Their monstrous herds of cattle, less remarkable indeed for their beauty than for their utility,<sup>26</sup> formed the principal object of their wealth. A small quantity of corn was the only produce exacted from the earth: the use of orchards or artificial meadows was unknown to the Germans; nor can we expect any improvements in agriculture from a people whose property every year experienced a general change by a new division of the arable lands, and who, in that strange operation, avoided disputes by suffering a great part of their territory to lie waste and without tillage.<sup>27</sup>

Gold, silver, and iron were extremely scarce in Germany. Its barbarous inhabitants wanted both skill and patience to investigate those rich veins of silver, which have so liberally rewarded the attention of the princes of Brunswick and Saxony. Sweden, which now supplies Europe with iron, was equally ignorant of its own riches; and the appearance of the arms of the Germans furnished a sufficient proof how little iron they were able to bestow on what they must have deemed the noblest use of that metal. The various transactions of peace and war had introduced some Roman coins (chiefly silver) among the borderers of the Rhine and Danube; but the more distant tribes were absolutely unacquainted with the use of money, carried on their confined traffic by the exchange of commodities, and prized their rude earthen vessels as of equal value with the silver vases, the presents of Rome to their princes and ambassadors.<sup>28</sup> To a mind capable of reflection, such leading facts convey more instruction than a tedious detail of subordinate circumstances. The value of money has been settled by general consent to express our wants and our property, as letters were invented to express our ideas; and both these institutions, by giving a more active energy to the powers and passions of human nature, have contributed to multiply the objects they were designed to represent. The use of gold and silver is in a great measure fictitious; but it would be impossible to enumerate the important and various services which agriculture, and all the arts, have received from iron, when tempered and fashioned by the operation of fire and the dexterous hand of man. Money, in a word, is the most universal incitement, iron the most powerful instrument, of human industry; and it is very difficult to conceive by what means a people, neither actuated by the one nor seconded by the other, could emerge from the grossest barbarism.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Tacit. Germ. 17.

<sup>25</sup> Tacit. Germ. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Cæsar de Bell. Gall. vi. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Tacit. Germ. 26. Cæsar, vi. 22.

<sup>28</sup> Tacit. Germ. 6.

<sup>29</sup> It is said that the Mexicans and Peruvians, without the use of either money or iron, had made a very great progress in the arts. Those arts, and the monuments they produced, have been strangely magnified. *Recherches sur les Américains*, tom. ii. p. 153, etc.

If we contemplate a savage nation in any part of the globe, a supine indolence and a carelessness of futurity will be found to constitute their general character. In a civilised state, every faculty of man is expanded and exercised; and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the several members of society. The most numerous portion of it is employed in constant and useful labour. The select few, placed by fortune above that necessity, can, however, fill up their time by the pursuits of interest or glory, by the improvement of their estate or of their understanding, by the duties, the pleasures, and even the follies of social life. The Germans were not possessed of their varied resources. The care of the house and family, the management of the land and cattle, were delegated to the old and the infirm, to women and slaves. The lazy warrior, destitute of every art that might employ his leisure hours, consumed his days and nights in the animal gratifications of sleep and food. And yet, by a wonderful diversity of Nature (according to the remark of a writer who had pierced into its darkest recesses), the same barbarians are by turns the most indolent and the most restless of mankind. They delight in sloth, they detest tranquillity.<sup>30</sup> The languid soul, oppressed with its own weight, anxiously required some new and powerful sensation; and war and danger were the only amusements adequate to its fierce temper. The sound that summoned the German to arms was grateful to his ear. It roused him from his uncomfortable lethargy, gave him an active pursuit, and, by strong exercise of the body, and violent emotions of the mind, restored him to a more lively sense of his existence. In the dull intervals of peace, these barbarians were immoderately addicted to deep gaming and excessive drinking; both of which, by different means, the one by inflaming their passions, the other by extinguishing their reason, alike relieved them from the pain of thinking. They gloried in passing whole days and nights at table; and the blood of friends and relations often stained their numerous and drunken assemblies.<sup>31</sup> Their debts of honour (for in that light they have transmitted to us those of play) they discharged with the most romantic fidelity. The desperate gamester, who had staked his person and liberty on a last throw of the dice, patiently submitted to the decision of fortune, and suffered himself to be bound, chastised, and sold into remote slavery, by his weaker but more lucky antagonist.<sup>32</sup>

Strong beer, a liquor extracted with very little art from wheat or barley, and *corrupted* (as it is strongly expressed by Tacitus) into a certain semblance of wine, was sufficient for the gross purposes of German debauchery. But those who had tasted the rich wines of Italy, and afterwards of Gaul, sighed for that more delicious species of intoxication. They attempted not, however (as has since been executed with

<sup>30</sup> Tacit. Germ. 15.

<sup>31</sup> Tacit. Germ. 22, 23.

<sup>32</sup> Tacit. Germ. 24. The Germans might borrow the *arts* of play from the Romans, but the *passion* is wonderfully inherent in the human species.

so much success), to naturalise the vine on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; nor did they endeavour to procure by industry the materials of an advantageous commerce. To solicit by labour what might be ravished by arms was esteemed unworthy of the German spirit.<sup>33</sup> The intemperate thirst of strong liquors often urged the barbarians to invade the provinces on which art or nature had bestowed those much envied presents. The Tuscan who betrayed his country to the Celtic nations attracted them into Italy by the prospect of the rich fruits and delicious wines, the productions of a happier climate.<sup>34</sup> And in the same manner the German auxiliaries, invited into France during the civil wars of the sixteenth century, were allured by the promise of plenteous quarters in the provinces of Champagne and Burgundy.<sup>35</sup> Drunkenness, the most illiberal, but not the most dangerous, of *our* vices, was sometimes capable, in a less civilised state of mankind, of occasioning a battle, a war, or a revolution.

The climate of ancient Germany has been mollified, and the soil fertilised, by the labour of ten centuries from the time of Charlemagne. The same extent of ground which at present maintains, in ease and plenty, a million of husbandmen and artificers, was unable to supply an hundred thousand lazy warriors with the simple necessities of life.<sup>36</sup> The Germans abandoned their immense forests to the exercise of hunting, employed in pasturage the most considerable part of their lands, bestowed on the small remainder a rude and careless cultivation, and then accused the scantiness and sterility of a country that refused to maintain the multitude of its inhabitants. When the return of famine severely admonished them of the importance of the arts, the national distress was sometimes alleviated by the emigration of a third, perhaps, or a fourth part of their youth.<sup>37</sup> The possession and the enjoyment of property are the pledges which bind a civilised people to an improved country. But the Germans, who carried with them what they most valued, their arms, their cattle, and their women, cheerfully abandoned the vast silence of their woods for the unbounded hopes of plunder and conquest. The innumerable swarms that issued, or seemed to issue, from the great storehouse of nations, were multiplied by the fears of the vanquished and by the credulity of succeeding ages. And from facts thus

<sup>33</sup> Tacit. Germ. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Plutarch. in Camillo. T. Liv. v. 33.

<sup>35</sup> Dubos. Hist. de la Monar. Franç., i. p. 193.

<sup>36</sup> The Helvetic nation, which issued from the country called Switzerland, contained, of every age and sex, 368,000 persons (Cæsar de Bell. Gall. i. 29). At present, the number of people in the Pays de Vaud (a small district on the banks of the Lemman Lake, much more distinguished for politeness than for industry) amounts to 112,591. See an excellent tract of M. Muret, in the Memoires de la Societ  de Bern.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Diaconus, c. 1, 2, 3. Machiavel, Davila, and the rest of Paul's followers, represent these emigrations too much as regular and concerted measures.

exaggerated, an opinion was gradually established, and has been supported by writers of distinguished reputation, that, in the age of Cæsar and Tacitus, the inhabitants of the North were far more numerous than they are in our days.<sup>38</sup> A more serious inquiry into the causes of population seems to have convinced modern philosophers of the falsehood, and indeed the impossibility, of the supposition. To the names of Mariana and of Machiavel,<sup>39</sup> we can oppose the equal names of Robertson and Hume.<sup>40</sup>

A warlike nation like the Germans, without either cities, letters, arts, or money, found some compensation for this savage state in the enjoyment of liberty. Their poverty secured their freedom, since our desires and our possessions are the strongest fetters of despotism. "Among the Suiones (says Tacitus), riches are held in honour. They are *therefore* subject to an absolute monarch, who, instead of intrusting his people with the free use of arms, as is practised in the rest of Germany, commits them to the safe custody not of a citizen, or even of a freedman, but of a slave. The neighbours of the Suiones, the Sitones, are sunk even below servitude; they obey a woman."<sup>41</sup> In the mention of these exceptions, the great historian sufficiently acknowledges the general theory of government. We are only at a loss to conceive by what means riches and despotism could penetrate into a remote corner of the North, and extinguish the generous flame that blazed with such fierceness on the frontier of the Roman provinces: or how the ancestors of those Danes and Norwegians, so distinguished in latter ages by their unconquered spirit, could thus tamely resign the great character of German liberty.<sup>42</sup> Some tribes, however, on the coast of the Baltic, acknowledged the authority of kings, though without relinquishing the rights of men;<sup>43</sup> but in the far greater part of Germany, the form of government was a democracy tempered indeed, and controlled, not so much by general and

<sup>38</sup> Sir William Temple and Montesquieu have indulged, on this subject, the usual liveliness of their fancy.

<sup>39</sup> Machiavel Hist. di Firenze, l. i. Mariana Hist. Hispan. l. v. c. i.

<sup>40</sup> Robertson's Charles V. Hume's Political Essays.

[It is a wise observation of Malthus that these nations were not populous in proportion to the land they occupied, but to the food they produced. They were prolific from their pure morals, but their institutions were not calculated to produce food.—O. S.]

<sup>41</sup> Tacit. German. 44, 45. Frénshenius (who dedicated his supplement to Livy to Christina of Sweden.) thinks proper to be very angry with the Roman who expressed so very little reverence for Northern queens.

<sup>42</sup> May we not suspect that superstition was the parent of despotism? The descendants of Odin (whose race was not extinct till the year 1060) are said to have reigned in Sweden above a thousand years. The temple of Upsal was the ancient seat of religion and empire. In the year 1153 I find a singular law, prohibiting the use and profession of arms to any except the king's guards. Is it not probable that it was coloured by the pretence of reviving an old institution? Dalling's History of Sweden in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée, xl. xlv.

<sup>43</sup> Tacit. Germ. c. 43.

positive laws, as by the occasional ascendant of birth or valour, of eloquence or superstition.<sup>44</sup>

Civil governments, in their first institutions, are voluntary associations for mutual defence. To obtain the desired end, it is absolutely necessary that each individual should conceive himself obliged to submit his private opinion and actions to the judgment of the greater number of his associates. The German tribes were contented with this rude but liberal outline of political society. As soon as a youth, born of free parents, had attained the age of manhood, he was introduced into the general council of his countrymen, solemnly invested with a shield and spear, and adopted as an equal and worthy member of the military commonwealth. The assembly of the warriors of the tribe was convened at stated seasons or on sudden emergencies. The trial of public offences, the election of magistrates, and the great business of peace and war, were determined by its independent voice. Sometimes, indeed, these important questions were previously considered and prepared in a more select council of the principal chieftains.<sup>45</sup> The magistrates might deliberate and persuade, the people only could resolve and execute; and the resolutions of the Germans were for the most part hasty and violent. Barbarians accustomed to place their freedom in gratifying the present passion, and their courage in overlooking all future consequences, turned away with indignant contempt from the remonstrance of justice and policy, and it was the practice to signify by a hollow murmur their dislike of such timid counsels. But whenever a more popular orator proposed to vindicate the meanest citizen from either foreign or domestic injury, whenever he called upon his fellow-countrymen to assert the national honour, or to pursue some enterprise full of danger and glory, a loud clashing of shields and spears expressed the eager applause of the assembly. For the Germans always met in arms, and it was constantly to be dreaded lest an irregular multitude, inflamed with faction and strong liquors, should use those arms to enforce, as well as to declare, their furious resolves. We may recollect how often the diets of Poland have been polluted with blood, and the more numerous party has been compelled to yield to the more violent and seditious.<sup>46</sup>

A general of the tribe was elected on occasions of danger; and, if the danger was pressing and extensive, several tribes concurred in the choice of the same general. The bravest warrior was named to lead his countrymen into the field, by his example rather than by his commands. But this power, however limited, was still invidious. It expired with the war, and in time of peace the German tribes acknowledged not any

<sup>44</sup> Tacit. Germ. c. 11, 12, 13, etc.

<sup>45</sup> Grotius changes an expression of Tacitus, *pertractantur* into *pratractantur*. The correction is equally just and ingenious.

<sup>46</sup> Even in *our* ancient parliament, the barons often carried a question, not so much by the number of votes, as by that of their armed followers.

supreme chief.<sup>47</sup> *Princes* were, however, appointed in the general assembly, to administer justice, or rather to compose differences,<sup>48</sup> in their respective districts. In the choice of these magistrates as much regard was shown to birth as to merit.<sup>49</sup> To each was assigned, by the public, a guard and a council of an hundred persons; and the first of the princes appears to have enjoyed a pre-eminence of rank and honour which sometimes tempted the Romans to compliment him with the regal title.<sup>50</sup>

The comparative view of the powers of the magistrates, in two remarkable instances, is alone sufficient to represent the whole system of German manners. The disposal of the landed property within their district was absolutely vested in their hands, and they distributed it every year according to a new division.<sup>51</sup> At the same time they were not authorised to punish with death, to imprison, or even to strike, a private citizen.<sup>52</sup> A people thus jealous of their persons, and careless of their possessions, must have been totally destitute of industry and the arts, but animated with a high sense of honour and independence.

The Germans respected only those duties which they imposed on themselves. The most obscure soldier resisted with disdain the authority of the magistrates. "The noblest youths blushed not to be numbered among the faithful companions of some renowned chief, to whom they devoted their arms and service. A noble emulation prevailed among the companions to obtain the first place in the esteem of their chief; amongst the chiefs, to acquire the greatest number of valiant companions. To be ever surrounded by a band of select youths was the pride and strength of the chiefs, their ornament in peace, their defence in war. The glory of such distinguished heroes diffused itself beyond the narrow limits of their own tribe. Presents and embassies solicited their friendship, and the fame of their arms often ensured victory to the party which they espoused. In the hour of danger it was shameful for the chief to be surpassed in valour by his companions; shameful for the companions not to equal the valour of their chief. To survive his fall in battle was indelible infamy. To protect his person and to adorn his glory with the trophies of their own exploits were the most sacred of their duties. The chiefs combated for victory, the companions for the chief. The noblest warriors, whenever their native country was sunk in the laziness of peace, maintained their numerous bands in some distant scene of action, to exercise their restless spirit and to acquire renown by voluntary dangers. Gifts worthy of soldiers, the warlike steed, the bloody and ever victorious lance, were the rewards which the companions claimed from the liberality of their chief. The rude plenty of his

<sup>47</sup> Cæsar de Bell. Gall. vi. 23.

<sup>48</sup> *Minuunt controversias* is a very happy expression of Cæsar's.

<sup>49</sup> *Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt.* Tacit. Germ. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Cluver. Germ. Ant. l. i. c. 38.

<sup>51</sup> Cæsar, vi. 22. Tacit. Germ. 26.

<sup>52</sup> Tacit. Germ. 7.

hospitable board was the only pay that *he* could bestow or *they* would accept. War, rapine, and the free-will offerings of his friends, supplied the materials of this munificence."<sup>53</sup> This institution, however it might accidentally weaken the several republics, invigorated the general character of the Germans, and even ripened amongst them all the virtues of which barbarians are susceptible; the faith and valour, the hospitality and the courtesy, so conspicuous long afterwards in the ages of chivalry. The honourable gifts, bestowed by the chief on his brave companions, have been supposed, by an ingenious writer, to contain the first rudiments of the fiefs, distributed, after the conquest of the Roman provinces, by the barbarian lords among their vassals, with a similar duty of homage and military service.<sup>54</sup> These conditions are, however, very repugnant to the maxims of the ancient Germans, who delighted in mutual presents; but without either imposing, or accepting, the weight of obligations.<sup>55</sup>

"In the days of chivalry, or more properly of romance, all the men were brave, and all the women were chaste;" and notwithstanding the latter of these virtues is acquired and preserved with much more difficulty than the former, it is ascribed, almost without exception, to the wives of the ancient Germans. Polygamy was not in use, except among the princes, and among them only for the sake of multiplying their alliances. Divorces were prohibited by manners rather than by laws. Adulteries were punished as rare and inexpiable crimes; nor was seduction justified by example and fashion.<sup>56</sup> We may easily discover that Tacitus indulges an honest pleasure in the contrast of barbarian virtue with the dissolute conduct of the Roman ladies; yet there are some striking circumstances that give an air of truth, or at least of probability, to the conjugal faith and chastity of the Germans.

Although the progress of civilisation has undoubtedly contributed to assuage the fiercer passions of human nature, it seems to have been less favourable to the virtue of chastity, whose most dangerous enemy is the softness of the mind. The refinements of life corrupt while they polish the intercourse of the sexes. The gross appetite of love becomes most dangerous when it is elevated, or rather, indeed, disguised by sentimental passion. The elegance of dress, of motion, and of manners gives a lustre to beauty, and inflames the senses through the imagination. Luxurious entertainments, midnight dances, and licentious spectacles, pre-

<sup>53</sup> Tacit. Germ. 13, 14.

<sup>54</sup> *Esprit des Loix*, l. xxx. c. 5. The brilliant imagination of Montesquieu is corrected, however, by the dry cold reason of the Abbé de Mably. *Observations sur l'Histoire de France*, tom. i. p. 356.

<sup>55</sup> *Gaudent muneribus, sed nec data imputant, nec acceptis obligantur.* Tacit. Germ. c. 21.

<sup>56</sup> The adulteress was whipped through the village. Neither wealth nor beauty could inspire compassion, or procure her a second husband. Germ. c. 18, 19.



sent at once temptation and opportunity to female frailty.<sup>57</sup> From such dangers the unpolished wives of the barbarians were secured by poverty, solitude, and the painful cares of a domestic life. The German huts, open on every side to the eye of indiscretion or jealousy, were a better safeguard of conjugal fidelity than the walls, the bolts, and the eunuchs of a Persian harem. To this reason, another may be added of a more honourable nature. The Germans treated their women with esteem and confidence, consulted them on every occasion of importance, and fondly believed that in their breasts resided a sanctity and wisdom more than human. Some of these interpreters of fate, such as Velleda, in the Batavian war, governed, in the name of the deity, the fiercest nations of Germany.<sup>58</sup> The rest of the sex, without being adored as goddesses, were respected as the free and equal companions of soldiers; associated even by the marriage ceremony to a life of toil, of danger, and of glory.<sup>59</sup> In their great invasions, the camps of the barbarians were filled with a multitude of women, who remained firm and undaunted amidst the sound of arms, the various forms of destruction, and the honourable wounds of their sons and husbands.<sup>60</sup> Fainting armies of Germans have more than once been driven back upon the enemy by the generous despair of the women who dreaded death much less than servitude. If the day was irrecoverably lost, they well knew how to deliver themselves and their children, with their own hands, from an insulting victor.<sup>61</sup> Heroines of such a cast may claim our admiration; but they were most assuredly neither lovely, nor very susceptible of love. Whilst they affected to emulate the stern virtues of *man*, they must have resigned that attractive softness in which principally consists the charm of *woman*. Conscientious pride taught the German females to suppress every tender emotion that stood in competition with honour, and the first honour of the sex has ever been that of chastity. The sentiments and conduct of these high-spirited matrons may, at once, be considered as a cause, as an effect, and as a proof of the general character of the nation. Female courage, however it may be raised by fanaticism, or confirmed by habit, can be only a faint and imperfect imitation of the manly valour that distinguishes the age or country in which it may be found.

The religious system of the Germans (if the wild opinions of savages can deserve that name) was dictated by their wants, their fears, and

<sup>57</sup> Ovid considers the theatre as the best adapted to collect the beauties of Rome, and to melt them into tenderness and sensuality.

<sup>58</sup> Tacit. Hist. iv. 61, 65.

<sup>59</sup> The marriage present was yoke of oxen, horses, and arms. Germ. c. 18. Tacitus is somewhat too florid on the subject.

<sup>60</sup> The change of *exigere* into *exugere* is a most excellent correction.

<sup>61</sup> Tacit. Germ. c. 7. Plutarch in Mario. Before the wives of the Teutones destroyed themselves and their children they had offered to surrender on condition that they should be received as the slaves of the vestal virgins.

their ignorance.<sup>62</sup> They adored the great visible objects and agents of nature, the Sun and the Moon, the Fire and the Earth; together with those imaginary deities, who were supposed to preside over the most important occupations of human life. They were persuaded that, by some ridiculous arts of divination, they could discover the will of the superior beings, and that human sacrifices were the most precious and acceptable offering to their altars. Some applause has been hastily bestowed on the sublime notion, entertained by that people, of the Deity, whom they neither confined within the walls of a temple, nor represented by any human figure; but when we recollect that the Germans were unskilled in architecture, and totally unacquainted with the art of sculpture, we shall readily assign the true reason of a scruple which arose not so much from a superiority of reason as from a want of ingenuity. The only temples in Germany were dark and ancient groves, consecrated by the reverence of succeeding generations. Their secret gloom, the imagined residence of an invisible power, by presenting no distinct object of fear or worship, impressed the mind with a still deeper sense of religious horror; <sup>63</sup> and the priests, rude and illiterate as they were, had been taught by experience the use of every artifice that could preserve and fortify impressions so well suited to their own interest.

The same ignorance, which renders barbarians incapable of conceiving or embracing the useful restraints of laws, exposes them naked and unarmed to the blind terrors of superstition. The German priests, improving this favourable temper of their countrymen, had assumed a jurisdiction, even in temporal concerns, which the magistrate could not venture to exercise; and the haughty warrior patiently submitted to the lash of correction, when it was inflicted, not by any human power, but by the immediate order of the god of war.<sup>64</sup> The defects of civil policy were sometimes supplied by the interposition of ecclesiastical authority. The latter was constantly exerted to maintain silence and decency in the popular assemblies; and was sometimes extended to a more enlarged concern for the national welfare. A solemn procession was occasionally celebrated in the present countries of Mecklenburgh and Pomerania. The unknown symbol of the *Earth*, covered with a thick veil, was placed on a carriage drawn by cows; and in this manner the goddess, whose common residence was in the isle of Rugen, visited several adjacent tribes of her worshippers. During her progress the sound of war was

<sup>62</sup> Tacitus has employed a few lines, and Cluverius one hundred and twenty-four pages, on this obscure subject. The former discovers in Germany the gods of Greece and Rome. The latter is positive, that under the emblems of the sun, the moon, and the fire, his pious ancestors worshipped the Trinity in unity.

<sup>63</sup> The sacred wood, described with such sublime horror by Lucan, was in the neighbourhood of Marseilles; but there were many of the same kind in Germany.

<sup>64</sup> Tacit. Germania, c. 7.

hushed, quarrels were suspended, arms laid aside, and the restless Germans had an opportunity of tasting the blessings of peace and harmony.<sup>66</sup> The *truce of God*, so often and so ineffectually proclaimed by the clergy of the eleventh century, was an obvious imitation of this ancient custom.<sup>66</sup>

But the influence of religion was far more powerful to inflame than to moderate the fierce passions of the Germans. Interest and fanaticism often prompted its ministers to sanctify the most daring and the most unjust enterprises, by the approbation of Heaven, and full assurances of success. The consecrated standards, long revered in the groves of superstition, were placed in the front of the battle;<sup>67</sup> and the hostile army was devoted with dire execrations to the gods of war and of thunder.<sup>68</sup> In the faith of soldiers (and such were the Germans) cowardice is the most unpardonable of sins. A brave man was the worthy favourite of their martial deities; the wretch, who had lost his shield, was alike banished from the religious and the civil assemblies of his countrymen. Some tribes of the north seem to have embraced the doctrine of transmigration,<sup>69</sup> others imagined a gross paradise of immortal drunkenness.<sup>70</sup> All agreed that a life spent in arms, and a glorious death in battle, were the best preparations for a happy futurity either in this or in another world.

The immortality so vainly promised by the priests was in some degree conferred by the bards. That singular order of men has most deservedly attracted the notice of all who have attempted to investigate the antiquities of the Celts, the Scandinavians, and the Germans. Their genius and character, as well as the reverence paid to that important office, have been sufficiently illustrated. But we cannot so easily express, or even conceive, the enthusiasm of arms and glory, which they kindled in the breast of their audience. Among a polished people, a taste for poetry is rather an amusement of the fancy than a passion of the soul. And yet, when in calm retirement we peruse the combats described by Homer or Tasso, we are insensibly seduced by the fiction, and feel a momentary glow of martial ardour. But how faint, how cold is the sensation which a peaceful mind can receive from solitary study! It was in the hour of battle, or in the feast of victory, that the bards celebrated the glory of heroes of ancient days, the ancestors of those warlike chieftains who

<sup>66</sup> Tacit. *Germania*, c. 40.

<sup>67</sup> Robertson's *Hist. of Charles V.* vol. i. note 10.

<sup>68</sup> Tacit. *Germ.* c. 7. These standards were only the heads of wild beasts.

<sup>69</sup> Tacit. *Annal.* xiii. 57.

<sup>70</sup> Cæsar, Diodorus, and Lucan seem to ascribe this doctrine to the Gauls, but M. Pelloutier (*Histoire des Celtes*, l. iii. c. 18) labours to reduce their expressions to a more orthodox sense.

<sup>71</sup> Concerning this gross but alluring doctrine of the Edda, see Fable xx. in the curious version of that book, published by M. Mallet, in his *Introduction to the History of Denmark*.

listened with transport to their artless but animated strains. The view of arms and of danger heightened the effect of the military song; and the passions which it tended to excite, the desire of fame and the contempt of death, were the habitual sentiments of a German mind.<sup>71</sup>

Such was the situation, and such were the manners, of the ancient Germans. Their climate, their want of learning, of arts, and of laws, their notions of honour, of gallantry, and of religion, their sense of freedom, impatience of peace, and thirst of enterprise, all contributed to form a people of military heroes. And yet we find that, during more than two hundred and fifty years that elapsed from the defeat of Varus to the reign of Decius, these formidable barbarians made few considerable attempts, and not any material impression on the luxurious and enslaved provinces of the empire. Their progress was checked by their want of arms and discipline, and their fury was diverted by the intestine divisions of ancient Germany.

I. It has been observed, with ingenuity, and not without truth, that the command of iron soon gives a nation the command of gold. But the rude tribes of Germany, alike destitute of both those valuable metals, were reduced slowly to acquire, by their unassisted strength, the possession of the one as well as the other. The face of a German army displayed their poverty of iron. Swords, and the longer kind of lances, they could seldom use. Their *franceæ* (as they called them in their own language) were long spears headed with a sharp but narrow iron point, and which, as occasion required, they either darted from a distance or pushed in close onset. With this spear, and with a shield, their cavalry was contented. A multitude of darts, scattered <sup>72</sup> with incredible force, were an additional resource of the infantry. Their military dress, when they wore any, was nothing more than a loose mantle. A variety of colours was the only ornament of their wooden or osier shields. Few of the chiefs were distinguished by cuirasses, scarce any by helmets. Though the horses of Germany were neither beautiful, swift, nor practised in the skilful evolutions of the Roman manege, several of the nations obtained renown by their cavalry; but, in general, the principal

<sup>71</sup> Tacit. Germ. c. 3. Diodor. Sicul. l. v. Strabo, l. iv. p. 197. The classical reader may remember the rank of Demodocus in the Phœacian court, and the ardour infused by Tyrtæus into the fainting Spartans. Yet there is little probability that the Greeks and the Germans were the same people. Much learned trifling might be spared if our antiquarians would condescend to reflect, that similar manners will naturally be produced by similar situations.

[Besides these battle-songs, the Germans sang at their festal banquets and around the bodies of their slain heroes. King Theodoric, of the tribe of the Goths, killed in a battle against Attila, was honoured by song while he was being borne from the field. The same honour was paid to Attila's remains. The Germans had songs also at their weddings, but this was not so common, for their marriages were only purchases.—O. S.]

<sup>72</sup> Missilia spargunt, Tacit. Germ. c. 6. Either that historian used a vague expression, or he meant that they were thrown at random.

strength of the Germans consisted in their infantry,<sup>73</sup> which was drawn up in several deep columns, according to the distinction of tribes and families. Impatient of fatigue or delay, these half-armed warriors rushed to battle with dissonant shouts and disordered ranks; and sometimes, by the effort of native valour, prevailed over the constrained and more artificial bravery of the Roman mercenaries. But as the barbarians poured forth their whole souls on the first onset, they knew not how to rally or to retire. A repulse was a sure defeat; and a defeat was most commonly total destruction. When we recollect the complete armour of the Roman soldiers, their discipline, exercises, evolutions, fortified camps, and military engines, it appears a just matter of surprise how the naked and unassisted valour of the barbarians could dare to encounter in the field the strength of the legions, and the various troops of the auxiliaries which seconded their operations. The contest was too unequal, till the introduction of luxury had exalted the vigour, and a spirit of disobedience and sedition had relaxed the discipline, of the Roman armies. The introduction of barbarian auxiliaries into those armies was a measure attended with very obvious dangers, as it might gradually instruct the Germans in the arts of war and of policy. Although they were admitted in small numbers and with the strictest precaution, the example of Civilis was proper to convince the Romans that the danger was not imaginary, and that their precautions were not always sufficient.<sup>74</sup> During the civil wars that followed the death of Nero, that artful and intrepid Batavian, whom his enemies condescended to compare with Hannibal and Sertorius,<sup>75</sup> formed a great design of freedom and ambition. Eight Batavian cohorts, renowned in the wars of Britain and Italy, repaired to his standard. He introduced an army of Germans into Gaul, prevailed on the powerful cities of Treves and Langres to embrace his cause, defeated the legions, destroyed their fortified camps, and employed against the Romans the military knowledge which he had acquired in their service. When at length, after an obstinate struggle, he yielded to the power of the empire, Civilis secured himself and his country by an honourable treaty. The Batavians still continued to occupy the islands of the Rhine,<sup>76</sup> the allies not the servants of the Roman monarchy.

II. The strength of ancient Germany appears formidable when we consider the effects that might have been produced by its united effort. The wide extent of country might very possibly contain a million of

<sup>73</sup> It was their principal distinction from the Sarmatians, who generally fought on horseback.

<sup>74</sup> The relation of this enterprise occupies a great part of the fourth and fifth books of the History of Tacitus, and is more remarkable for its eloquence than perspicuity. Sir Henry Saville has observed several inaccuracies.

<sup>75</sup> Tacit. Hist. iv. 13: like them he had lost an eye.

<sup>76</sup> It was contained between the two branches of the old Rhine, as they subsisted before the face of the country was changed by art and nature. Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii. c. 30, 37.

warriors, as all who were of age to bear arms were of a temper to use them. But this fierce multitude, incapable of concerting or executing any plan of national greatness, was agitated by various and often hostile intentions. Germany was divided into more than forty independent states; and even in each state the union of the several tribes was extremely loose and precarious. The barbarians were easily provoked; they knew not how to forgive an injury, much less an insult; their resentments were bloody and implacable. The casual disputes that so frequently happened in their tumultuous parties of hunting or drinking were sufficient to inflame the minds of whole nations; the private feud of any considerable chieftains diffused itself among their followers and allies. To chastise the insolent, or to plunder the defenceless, were alike causes of war. The most formidable states of Germany affected to encompass their territories with a wide frontier of solitude and devastation. The awful distance preserved by their neighbours attested the terror of their arms, and in some measure defended them from the danger of unexpected incursions.<sup>77</sup>

"The Bructeri (it is Tacitus who now speaks) were totally exterminated by the neighbouring tribes,<sup>78</sup> provoked by their insolence, allured by the hopes of spoil, and perhaps inspired by the tutelar deities of the empire. Above sixty thousand barbarians were destroyed; not by the Roman arms, but in our sight, and for our entertainment. May the nations, enemies of Rome, ever preserve this enmity to each other! We have now attained the utmost verge of prosperity,<sup>79</sup> and have nothing left to demand of Fortune, except the discord of these barbarians."<sup>80</sup> These sentiments, less worthy of the humanity than of the patriotism of Tacitus, express the invariable maxims of the policy of his countrymen. They deemed it a much safer expedient to divide than to combat the barbarians, from whose defeat they could derive neither honour nor advantage. The money and negotiations of Rome insinuated themselves into the heart of Germany; and every art of seduction was used with dignity to conciliate those nations whom their proximity to the Rhine or Danube might render the most useful friends as well as the most troublesome enemies. Chiefs of renown and power were flattered by the most trifling presents, which they received either as marks of distinction, or as the instruments of luxury. In civil dissensions, the weaker faction endeavoured to strengthen its interest by entering into secret connections with the governors of the frontier provinces. Every quarrel among the Germans was fomented by the intrigues of Rome;

<sup>77</sup> Cæsar de Bell. Gall. l. vi. 23.

<sup>78</sup> They are mentioned however in the fourth and fifth centuries by Nazarius, Ammianus, Claudian, etc., as a tribe of Franks. Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii. c. xiii.

<sup>79</sup> *Urgentibus* is the common reading, but good sense, Lipsius, and some MSS. declare for *Vergentibus*.

<sup>80</sup> Tacit. Germania, c. 33. The pious Abbé de la Bleterie is very angry with Tacitus, talks of the devil who was a murderer from the beginning, etc., etc.

and every plan of union and public good was defeated by the stronger bias of private jealousy and interest.<sup>81</sup>

The general conspiracy which terrified the Romans under the reign of Marcus Antoninus comprehended almost all the nations of Germany, and even Sarmatia, from the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube.<sup>82</sup> It is impossible for us to determine whether this hasty confederation was formed by necessity, by reason, or by passion; but we may rest assured that the barbarians were neither allured by the indolence, nor provoked by the ambition, of the Roman monarch. This dangerous invasion required all the firmness and vigilance of Marcus. He fixed generals of ability in the several stations of attack, and assumed in person the conduct of the most important province on the Upper Danube. After a long and doubtful conflict, the spirit of the barbarians was subdued. The Quadi and the Marcomanni,<sup>83</sup> who had taken the lead in the war, were the most severely punished in its catastrophe. They were commanded to retire five miles<sup>84</sup> from their own banks of the Danube, and to deliver up the flower of the youth, who were immediately sent into Britain, a remote island, where they might be secure as hostages, and useful as soldiers.<sup>85</sup> On the frequent rebellions of the Quadi and Marcomanni, the irritated emperor resolved to reduce their country into the form of a province. His designs were disappointed by death. This formidable league, however, the only one that appears in the two first centuries of the Imperial history, was entirely dissipated, without leaving any traces behind in Germany.

In the course of this introductory chapter, we have confined ourselves to the general outlines of the manners of Germany, without attempting to describe or to distinguish the various tribes which filled the great country in the time of Cæsar, of Tacitus, or of Ptolemy. As the ancient, or as new tribes successively present themselves in the series of this history, we shall concisely mention their origin, their situation, and their particular character. Modern nations are fixed

<sup>81</sup> Many traces of this policy may be discovered in Tacitus and Dion: and many more may be inferred from the principles of human nature.

<sup>82</sup> Hist. August. p. 31. Ammian. Marcellin. l. xxxi. c. 5. Aurel. Victor. The emperor Marcus was reduced to sell the rich furniture of the palace, and to enlist slaves and robbers.

<sup>83</sup> The Marcomanni, a colony, who, from the banks of the Rhine, occupied Bohemia and Moravia, had once erected a great and formidable monarchy under their king Maroboduus. Strabo, l. vii. Vell. Pat. ii. 105. Tacit. Annal. ii. 63.

[*Marc-o-manni*—the men of the marches—a name given to different tribes on the different marches of Germany, and not to have been the name of the Sæve people. There were Marcomanni in the army of Ariovistus that fought against Cæsar (*De Bello Gallico*, i. 51), and they could not be the same as those. See Latham, *Germania*.—O. S.]

<sup>84</sup> Wotton (*Hist. of Rome*, p. 166) increases the prohibition to ten times the distance. His reasoning is specious, but not conclusive. Five miles were sufficient for a fortified barrier.

<sup>85</sup> Dion. l. lxxi. and lxxii.

and permanent societies, connected among themselves by laws and government, bound to their native soil by arts and agriculture. The German tribes were voluntary and fluctuating associations of soldiers, almost of savages. The same territory often changed its inhabitants in the tide of conquest and emigration. The same communities, uniting in a plan of defence or invasion, bestowed a new title on their new confederacy. The dissolution of an ancient confederacy restored to the independent tribes their peculiar but long-forgotten appellation. A victorious state often communicated its own name to a vanquished people. Sometimes crowds of volunteers flocked from all parts to the standard of a favourite leader; his camp became their country, and some circumstance of the enterprise soon gave a common denomination to the mixed multitude. The distinctions of the ferocious invaders were perpetually varied by themselves, and confounded by the astonished subjects of the Roman empire.<sup>86</sup>

Wars, and the administration of public affairs, are the principal subjects of history; but the number of persons interested in these busy scenes is very different according to the different condition of mankind. In great monarchies, millions of obedient subjects pursue their useful occupations in peace and obscurity. The attention of the writer, as well as of the reader, is solely confined to a court, a capital, a regular army, and the districts which happen to be the occasional scene of military operations. But a state of freedom and barbarism, the season of civil commotions, or the situation of petty republics,<sup>87</sup> raises almost every member of the community into action, and consequently into notice. The irregular divisions, and the restless motions, of the people of Germany dazzle our imagination and seem to multiply their numbers. The profuse enumeration of kings and warriors of armies and nations inclines us to forget that the same objects are continually repeated under a variety of appellations, and that the most splendid appellations have been frequently lavished on the most inconsiderable objects.

## CHAPTER X

*The Emperors Decius, Gallus, Æmilianus, Valerian, and Gallienus—The general Irruption of the Barbarians—The thirty Tyrants*

FROM the great secular games celebrated by Philip to the death of the emperor Gallienus there elapsed (A.D. 248-268) twenty years of shame

<sup>86</sup> See an excellent dissertation on the origin and migrations of nations, in the *Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscriptions*, tom. xviii. p. 48-71. It is seldom that the antiquarian and the philosopher are so happily blended.

<sup>87</sup> Should we suspect that Athens contained only 21,000 citizens, and Sparta no more than 30,000? See Hume and Wallace on the number of mankind in ancient and modern times.



tenderness and regard to his infant colleague, he gradually confounded, in the administration of the Western empire, the office of a guardian with the authority of a sovereign. The government of the Roman world was exercised in the united names of Valens and his two nephews; but the feeble emperor of the East, who succeeded to the rank of his elder brother, never obtained any weight or influence in the councils of the West.<sup>158</sup>

## CHAPTER XXVI

*Manners of the Pastoral Nations—Progress of the Huns from China to Europe—Flight of the Goths—They Pass the Danube—Gothic War—Defeat and Death of Valens—Gratian invests Theodosius with the Eastern Empire—His Character and Success—Peace and Settlement of the Goths*

IN the second year of the reign of Valentinian and Valens, on the morning of the twenty-first day of July, the greatest part of the Roman world was shaken by a violent and destructive earthquake. The impression was communicated to the waters; the shores of the Mediterranean were left dry by the sudden retreat of the sea; great quantities of fish were caught with the hand; large vessels were stranded on the mud; and a curious spectator<sup>1</sup> amused his eye, or rather his fancy, by contemplating the various appearance of valleys and mountains which had never, since the formation of the globe, been exposed to the sun. But the tide soon returned with the weight of an immense and irresistible deluge, which was severely felt on the coasts of Sicily, of Dalmatia, of Greece, and of Egypt; large boats were transported and lodged on the roofs of houses, or at the distance of two miles from the shore; the people, with their habitations, were swept away by the waters; and the city of Alexandria annually commemorated the fatal day on which fifty thousand persons had lost their lives in the inundation. This calamity, the report of which was magnified from one province to another, astonished and terrified the subjects of Rome, and their affrighted imagination enlarged the real extent of a momentary evil. They recollected the preceding earthquakes, which had subverted the cities of Palestine and Bithynia; they considered these alarming strokes as the prelude only of still more dreadful calamities; and their fearful vanity was disposed to confound the symptoms of a

<sup>158</sup> Ammianus, xxx. 10. Zosimus, l. iv. [c. 19] p. 222, 223. Tillemont has proved (*Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. v. p. 707-709) that Gratian reigned in Italy, Africa, and Illyricum. I have endeavoured to express his authority over his brother's dominions, as he used it, in an ambiguous style.

<sup>1</sup> Such is the bad taste of Ammianus (xxvi. 10), that it is not easy to distinguish his facts from his metaphors. Yet he positively affirms that he saw the rotten carcase of a ship, *ad secundum lapidem*, at Methone, or Modon, in Peloponnesus.

declining empire and a sinking world.<sup>2</sup> It was the fashion of the times to attribute every remarkable event to the particular will of the Deity; the alterations of nature were connected, by an invisible chain, with the moral and metaphysical opinions of the human mind; and the most sagacious divines could distinguish, according to the colour of their respective prejudices, that the establishment of heresy tended to produce an earthquake, or that a deluge was the inevitable consequence of the progress of sin and error. Without presuming to discuss the truth or propriety of these lofty speculations, the historian may content himself with an observation, which seems to be justified by experience, that man has much more to fear from the passions of his fellow-creatures than from the convulsions of the elements.<sup>3</sup> The mischievous effects of an earthquake or deluge, a hurricane or the eruption of a volcano, bear a very inconsiderable proportion to the ordinary calamities of war, as they are now moderated by the prudence or humanity of the princes of Europe, who amuse their own leisure and exercise the courage of their subjects in the practice of the military art. But the laws and manners of modern nations protect the safety and freedom of the vanquished soldier; and the peaceful citizen has seldom reason to complain that his life or even his fortune is exposed to the rage of war. In the disastrous period of the fall of the Roman empire, which may justly be dated from the reign of Valens, the happiness and security of each individual were personally attacked, and the arts and labours of ages were rudely defaced by the barbarians of Scythia and Germany. The invasion of the Huns precipitated on the provinces of the West the Gothic nation, which advanced, in less than forty years, from the Danube to the Atlantic, and opened a way, by the success of their arms, to the inroads of so many hostile tribes more savage than themselves. The original principle of motion was concealed in the remote countries of the North, and the curious observation of the pastoral life of the Scythians<sup>4</sup> or Tartars<sup>5</sup> will illustrate the latent cause of these destructive emigrations.

<sup>2</sup>The earthquakes and inundations are variously described by Libanius (*Orat. de ulciscendâ Juliani nece*, c. x. in Fabricius, *Bibl. Græc.* tom. vii. p. 158, with a learned note of Olearius), Zosimus (l. iv. [c. 18] p. 221), Sozomen (l. vi. c. 2), Cedrenus (p. 310, 314 [tom. i. p. 543, 550, ed. Bonn]), and Jerom (in *Chron.* p. 186 [tom. viii. p. 809, ed. Vallars.], and tom. i. p. 250, in *Vit. Hilarion* [tom. ii. p. 36, ed. Vallars.]). Epidaurus must have been overwhelmed, had not the prudent citizens placed St. Hilarion, an Egyptian monk, on the beach. He made the sign of the cross; the mountain-wave stopped, bowed, and returned.

<sup>3</sup>Dicæarchus the Peripatetic composed a formal treatise to prove this obvious truth, which is not the most honourable to the human species (*Cicero*, de *Officiis*, ii. 5).

<sup>4</sup>The original Scythians of Herodotus (l. iv. c. 47-57, 99-101) were confined by the Danube and the Palus Mæotis within a square of 4000 stadia (400 Roman miles). See D'Anville (*Mém. de l'Académie*, tom. xxxv. p. 573-591). Diodorus Siculus (tom. i. l. ii. [c. 43] p. 155, edit. Wesseling) has marked the gradual progress of the name and nation.

<sup>5</sup>The *Tatars* or Tartars were a primitive tribe, the rivals, and at length the

The different characters that mark the civilised nations of the globe may be ascribed to the use and the abuse of reason, which so variously shapes and so artificially composes the manners and opinions of an European or a Chinese. But the operation of instinct is more sure and simple than that of reason; it is much easier to ascertain the appetites of a quadruped than the speculations of a philosopher; and the savage tribes of mankind, as they approach nearer to the condition of animals, preserve a stronger resemblance to themselves and to each other. The uniform stability of their manners is the natural consequence of the imperfection of their faculties. Reduced to a similar situation, their wants, their desires, their enjoyments still continue the same and the influence of food or climate, which, in a more improved state of society, is suspended or subdued by so many moral causes, most powerfully contributes to form and to maintain the national character of barbarians. In every age the immense plains of Scythia or Tartary have been inhabited by vagrant tribes of hunters and shepherds, whose indolence refuses to cultivate the earth, and whose restless spirit disdains the confinement of a sedentary life. In every age the Scythians and Tartars have been renowned for their invincible courage and rapid conquests. The thrones of Asia have been repeatedly overturned by the shepherds of the North, and their arms have spread terror and devastation over the most fertile and warlike countries of Europe.<sup>o</sup> On this occasion, as well as on many others, the sober historian is forcibly awakened from a pleasing vision, and is compelled, with some reluctance, to confess that the pastoral manners, which have been adorned with the fairest attributes of peace and innocence, are much better adapted to the fierce and cruel habits of a military life.

subjects, of the Moguls. In the victorious armies of Zingis Khan and his successors, the Tartars formed the vanguard; and the name which first reached the ears of foreigners was applied to the whole nation (Fréret, in the *Hist. de l'Académie*, tom. xviii. p. 60). In speaking of all or any of the northern shepherds of Europe or Asia, I indifferently use the appellations of *Scythians* or *Tartars*.

[The Tartars were a tribe nearly allied to the Mongols in race, who dwelt near Lake Bouyir to the eastward of Mongolia. They were among the first of the Mongol conquests, and they afterwards took so conspicuous a place in the army of Gengkes Khan that their name became synonymous with that of the Mongols. Their proper name was Tatars. It is said to have been changed into "Tartar" in consequence of an expression of St. Louis who, when he heard of the devastation of Gengkes Khan (which excited so much horror in Europe) said, "Erigat nos, mater, cœleste solatium, quia si proveniant ipsi, vel nos ipsos quos vocamus Tartaros ad suas Tartareas sedes, unde exierunt, retrudemus, vel hand ipsi nos omnes ad cœlum advehant." Prichard, *Physical History of Mankind*, vol. iv. p. 278-332; also Harmsworth's *History of the World*, vol. v.—O. S.]

Imperium Asiæ ter quæsiere: ipsi perpetuo ab alieno imperio, aut intacti, aut invicti, mansere. Since the time of Justin (ii. 3) they have multiplied this account. Voltaire, in a few words (tom. x. p. 64, *Hist. Générale*, c. 156), has abridged the Tartar conquests.

Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar  
Has Scythia breath'd the living cloud of war.

To illustrate this observation, I shall now proceed to consider a nation of shepherds and of warriors in the three important articles of, I. Their diet; II. Their habitation; and III. Their exercises. The narratives of antiquity are justified by the experience of modern times;<sup>7</sup> and the banks of the Borysthenes, of the Volga, or of the Selinga will indifferently present the same uniform spectacle of similar and native manners.<sup>8</sup>

I. The corn, or even the rice, which constitutes the ordinary and wholesome food of a civilised people, can be obtained only by the patient toil of the husbandman. Some of the happy savages who dwell between the tropics are plentifully nourished by the liberality of nature, but in the climates of the North a nation of shepherds is reduced to their flocks and herds. The skilful practitioners of the medical art will determine (if they are able to determine) how far the temper of the human mind may be affected by the use of animal or of vegetable food; and whether the common association of carnivorous and cruel deserves to be considered in any other light than that of an innocent, perhaps a salutary, prejudice of humanity.<sup>9</sup> Yet, if it be true that the sentiment of compassion is imperceptibly weakened by the sight and practice of domestic cruelty, we may observe that the horrid objects which are disguised by the arts of European refinement are exhibited in their naked and most disgusting simplicity in the tent of a Tartarian shepherd. The ox or the sheep are slaughtered by the same hand from which they were accustomed to receive their daily food; and the bleeding limbs are served, with very little preparation, on the table of their unfeeling murderer. In the military profession, and especially in the conduct of a numerous army, the exclusive use of animal food appears to be productive of the most solid advantages. Corn is a bulky and perishable commodity, and the large magazines, which are indispensably necessary for the subsistence of our troops, must be slowly transported by the labour of men or horses. But the flock and

<sup>7</sup> The fourth book of Herodotus affords a curious though imperfect portrait of the Scythians. Among the moderns, who describe the uniform scene, the Khan of Khowaresm, Abulghazi Bahadur, expresses his native feelings; and his Genealogical History of the *Tatars* has been copiously illustrated by the French and English editors. Carpin, Ascelin, and Rubruquis (in the *Hist. des Voyages*, tom. vii.), represent the Moguls of the fourteenth century. To these guides I have added Gerbillon and the other Jesuits (*Description de la Chine*, par Du Halde, tom. iv.), who accurately surveyed the Chinese Tartary, and that honest and intelligent traveller, Bell of Antermony (two volumes in 4to, Glasgow, 1763).

<sup>8</sup> The Uzbeks are the most altered from their primitive manners; 1, by the profession of the Mahometan religion; and 2, by the possession of the cities and harvests of the Great Bucharia.

<sup>9</sup> Il est certain que les grands mangeurs de viande sont en général cruels et féroces plus que les autres hommes. Cette observation est de tous les lieux, et de tous les tems: la barbarie Angloise est connue, etc. Emile de Rousseau, tom. i. p. 274. Whatever we may think of the general observation, we shall not easily allow the truth of his example. The good-natured complaints of Plutarch, and the pathetic lamentations of Ovid, seduce our reason by exciting our sensibility.

herds which accompany the march of the Tartars afford a sure and increasing supply of flesh and milk; in the far greater part of the uncultivated waste the vegetation of the grass is quick and luxuriant; and there are few places so extremely barren that the hardy cattle of the North cannot find some tolerable pasture. The supply is multiplied and prolonged by the undistinguishing appetite and patient abstinence of the Tartars. They indifferently feed on the flesh of those animals that have been killed for the table or have died of disease. Horseflesh, which in every age and country has been proscribed by the civilised nations of Europe and Asia, they devour with peculiar greediness, and this singular taste facilitates the success of their military operations. The active cavalry of Scythia is always followed, in their most distant and rapid incursions, by an adequate number of spare horses, who may be occasionally used either to redouble the speed or to satisfy the hunger of the barbarians. Many are the resources of courage and poverty. When the forage round a camp of Tartars is almost consumed, they slaughter the greatest part of their cattle, and preserve the flesh, either smoked or dried in the sun. On the sudden emergency of a hasty march, they provide themselves with a sufficient quantity of little balls of cheese, or rather of hard curd, which they occasionally dissolve in water, and this unsubstantial diet will support, for many days, the life, and even the spirits, of the patient warrior. But this extraordinary abstinence, which the Stoic would approve and the hermit might envy, is commonly succeeded by the most voracious indulgence of appetite. The wines of a happier climate are the most grateful present or the most valuable commodity that can be offered to the Tartars; and the only example of their industry seems to consist in the art of extracting from mare's milk a fermented liquor which possesses a very strong power of intoxication. Like the animals of prey, the savages, both of the old and new world, experience the alternate vicissitudes of famine and plenty, and their stomach is inured to sustain, without much inconvenience, the opposite extremes of hunger and of intemperance.

II. In the ages of rustic and martial simplicity, a people of soldiers and husbandmen are dispersed over the face of an extensive and cultivated country; and some time must elapse before the warlike youth of Greece or Italy could be assembled under the same standard, either to defend their own confines, or to invade the territories of the adjacent tribes. The progress of manufactures and commerce insensibly collects a large multitude within the walls of a city; but these citizens are no longer soldiers, and the arts which adorn and improve the state of civil society corrupt the habits of the military life. The pastoral manners of the Scythians seem to unite the different advantages of simplicity and refinement. The individuals of the same tribe are constantly assembled, but they are assembled in a camp, and the native spirit of these dauntless shepherds is animated by mutual support and emulation. The houses of the Tartars are no more than small tents, of an

oval form, which afford a cold and dirty habitation for the promiscuous youth of both sexes. The palaces of the rich consist of wooden huts, of such a size that they may be conveniently fixed on large waggons, and drawn by a team perhaps of twenty or thirty oxen. The flocks and herds, after grazing all day in the adjacent pastures, retire, on the approach of night, within the protection of the camp. The necessity of preventing the most mischievous confusion in such a perpetual concourse of men and animals must gradually introduce, in the distribution, the order, and the guard of the encampment, the rudiments of the military art. As soon as the forage of a certain district is consumed, the tribe, or rather army, of shepherds makes a regular march to some fresh pastures, and thus acquires, in the ordinary occupations of the pastoral life, the practical knowledge of one of the most important and difficult operations of war. The choice of stations is regulated by the difference of the seasons; in the summer the Tartars advance towards the North, and pitch their tents on the banks of a river, or, at least, in the neighbourhood of a running stream. But in the winter they return to the South, and shelter their camp, behind some convenient eminence, against the winds, which are chilled in their passage over the bleak and icy regions of Siberia. These manners are admirably adapted to diffuse among the wandering tribes the spirit of emigration and conquest. The connection between the people and their territory is of so frail a texture that it may be broken by the slightest accident. The camp, and not the soil, is the native country of the genuine Tartar. Within the precincts of that camp his family, his companions, his property, are always included, and in the most distant marches he is still surrounded by the objects which are dear or valuable or familiar in his eyes. The thirst of rapine, the fear or the resentment of injury, the impatience of servitude, have, in every age, been sufficient causes to urge the tribes of Scythia boldly to advance into some unknown countries, where they might hope to find a more plentiful subsistence or a less formidable enemy. The revolutions of the North have frequently determined the fate of the South; and in the conflict of hostile nations the victor and the vanquished have alternately drove, and been driven, from the confines of China to those of Germany.<sup>10</sup> These great emigrations, which have been sometimes executed with almost incredible diligence, were rendered more easy by the peculiar nature of the climate. It is well known that the cold of Tartary is much more severe than in the midst of the temperate zone might reasonably be expected; this uncommon rigour is attributed to the height of the plains, which rise, especially towards the east, more than half a mile above the level of the sea, and to the quantity of saltpetre with which

<sup>10</sup> These Tartar emigrations have been discovered by M. de Guignes (*Histoire des Huns*, tom. i. ii.), a skilful and laborious interpreter of the Chinese language, who has thus laid open new and important scenes in the history of mankind.

the soil is deeply impregnated.<sup>11</sup> In the winter season, the broad and rapid rivers that discharge their waters into the Euxine, the Caspian, or the Icy Sea, are strongly frozen, the fields are covered with a bed of snow, and the fugitive or victorious tribes may securely traverse, with their families, their waggons, and their cattle, the smooth and hard surface of an immense plain.

III. The pastoral life, compared with the labours of agriculture and manufactures, is undoubtedly a life of idleness; and as the most honourable shepherds of the Tartar race devolve on their captives the domestic management of the cattle, their own leisure is seldom disturbed by any servile and assiduous cares. But this leisure, instead of being devoted to the soft enjoyments of love and harmony, is usefully spent in the violent and sanguinary exercise of the chase. The plains of Tartary are filled with a strong and serviceable breed of horses, which are easily trained for the purposes of war and hunting. The Scythians of every age have been celebrated as bold and skillful riders, and constant practice had seated them so firmly on horseback that they were supposed by strangers to perform the ordinary duties of civil life, to eat, to drink, and even to sleep, without dismounting from their steeds. They excel in the dexterous management of the lance, the long Tartar bow is drawn with a nervous arm, and the weighty arrow is directed to its object with unerring aim and irresistible force. These arrows are often pointed against the harmless animals of the desert, which increase and multiply in the absence of their most formidable enemy—the hare, the goat, the roebuck, the fallow-deer, the stag, the elk, and the antelope. The vigour and patience both of the men and horses are continually exercised by the fatigues of the chase, and the plentiful supply of game contributes to the subsistence and even luxury of a Tartar camp. But the exploits of the hunters of Scythia are not confined to the destruction of timid or innoxious beasts: they boldly encounter the angry wild boar when he turns against his pursuers, excite the sluggish courage of the bear, and provoke the fury of the tiger as he slumbers in the thicket. Where there is danger, there may be glory; and the mode of hunting which opens the fairest field to the exertions of valour may justly be considered as the image and as the school of war. The general hunting matches, the pride and delight of the Tartar princes, compose an instructive exercise for their numerous cavalry. A circle is drawn, of many miles in circumference, to encompass the game of an extensive district; and the troops that form the circle regularly advance towards a common centre, where the captive animals, surrounded on every side, are abandoned to the darts of the

<sup>11</sup> A plain in the Chinese Tartary, only eighty leagues from the great wall, was found by the missionaries to be three thousand geometrical paces above the level of the sea. Montesquieu, who has used and abused the relations of travellers, deduces the revolutions of Asia from this important circumstance, that heat and cold, weakness and strength, touch each other without any temperate zone (*Esprit des Loix*, l. xvii. c. 3).

hunters. In this march, which frequently continues many days, the cavalry are obliged to climb the hills, to swim the rivers, and to wind through the valleys, without interrupting the prescribed order of their gradual progress. They acquire the habit of directing their eye and their steps to a remote object, of preserving their intervals, of suspending or accelerating their pace according to the motions of the troops on their right and left, and of watching and repeating the signals of their leaders. Their leaders study in this practical school the most important lesson of the military art, the prompt and accurate judgment of ground, of distance, and of time. To employ against a human enemy the same patience and valour, the same skill and discipline, is the only alteration which is required in real war, and the amusements of the chase serve as a prelude to the conquest of an empire.<sup>12</sup>

The political society of the ancient Germans has the appearance of a voluntary alliance of independent warriors. The tribes of Scythia, distinguished by the modern appellation of *Hords*, assume the form of a numerous and increasing family, which, in the course of successive generations, has been propagated from the same original stock. The meanest and most ignorant of the Tartars preserve with conscious pride the inestimable treasure of their genealogy, and, whatever distinctions of rank may have been introduced by the unequal distribution of pastoral wealth, they mutually respect themselves and each other as the descendants of the first founder of the tribe. The custom, which still prevails, of adopting the bravest and most faithful of the captives, may countenance the very probable suspicion that this extensive consanguinity is, in a great measure, legal and fictitious. But the useful prejudice which has obtained the sanction of time and opinion produces the effects of truth; the haughty barbarians yield a cheerful and voluntary obedience to the head of their blood, and their chief, or *mursa*, as the representative of their great father, exercises the authority of a judge in peace and of a leader in war. In the original state of the pastoral world, each of the *mursas* (if we may continue to use a modern appellation) acted as the independent chief of a large and separate family, and the limits of their peculiar territories were gradually fixed by superior force or mutual consent. But the constant operation of various and permanent causes contributed to unite the vagrant Hords into national communities, under the command of a supreme head. The weak were desirous of support, and the strong were ambitious of dominion; the power which is the result of union oppressed and collected the divided forces of the adjacent tribes; and, as the vanquished were

<sup>12</sup> Petit de la Croix (*Vie de Gengiscan*, l. iii. c. 7) represents the full glory and extent of the Mogul chase. The Jesuits Gerbillon and Verbiest followed the emperor Kamhi when he hunted in Tartary (*Du Halde, Description de la Chine*, tom. iv. p. 81, 290, etc., folio edit.). His grandson, Kienlong, who unites the Tartar discipline with the laws and learning of China, describes (*Eloge de Moukden*, p. 273-285), as a poet, the pleasures which he had often enjoyed as a sportsman.



freely admitted to share the advantages of victory, the most valiant chiefs hastened to range themselves and their followers under the formidable standard of a confederate nation. The most successful of the Tartar princes assumed the military command, to which he was entitled by the superiority either of merit or of power. He was raised to the throne by the acclamations of his equals, and the title of *Khan* expresses in the language of the North of Asia the full extent of the regal dignity. The right of hereditary succession was long confined to the blood of the founder of the monarchy; and at this moment all the Khans who reign from Crimea to the wall of China are the lineal descendants of the renowned Zingis.<sup>13</sup> But, as it is the indispensable duty of a Tartar sovereign to lead his warlike subjects into the field, the claims of an infant are often disregarded, and some royal kinsman, distinguished by his age and valour, is intrusted with the sword and sceptre of his predecessor. Two distinct and regular taxes are levied on the tribes to support the dignity of their national monarch and of their peculiar chief, and each of those contributions amounts to the tithe both of their property and of their spoil. A Tartar sovereign enjoys the tenth part of the wealth of his people; and as his own domestic riches of flocks and herds increase in a much larger proportion, he is able plentifully to maintain the rustic splendour of his court, to reward the most deserving or the most favoured of his followers, and to obtain from the gentle influence of corruption the obedience which might be sometimes refused to the stern mandates of authority. The manners of his subjects, accustomed, like himself, to blood and rapine, might excuse in their eyes such partial acts of tyranny as would excite the horror of a civilised people, but the power of a despot has never been acknowledged in the deserts of Scythia. The immediate jurisdiction of the khan is confined within the limits of his own tribe, and the exercise of his royal prerogative has been moderated by the ancient institution of a national council. The *Coroultai*,<sup>14</sup> or Diet, of the Tartars was regularly held in the spring and autumn in the midst of a plain, where the princes of the reigning family and the *mursas* of the respective tribes may conveniently assemble on horseback with their martial and numerous trains, and the ambitious monarch who reviewed the strength, must consult the inclination, of an armed people. The rudiments of a feudal government may be discovered in the constitution of the Scythian or Tartar nations, but the perpetual conflict of those hostile

<sup>13</sup> See the second volume of the Genealogical History of the Tartars, and the lists of the Khans at the end of the life of Gengis, or Zingis. Under the reign of Timur, or Tamerlane, one of his subjects, a descendant of Zingis, still bore the regal appellation of Khan; and the conqueror of Asia contented himself with the title of Emur or Sultan. Abulghazi, part v. c. 4. D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, p. 878.

<sup>14</sup> See the Diets of the ancient Huns (De Guignes, tom. ii. p. 26), and a curious description of those of Zingis (Vie de Gengiscan, l. i. c. 6, l. iv. c. 11). Such assemblies are frequently mentioned in the Persian history of Timur, though they served only to countenance the resolutions of their master.

nations has sometimes terminated in the establishment of a powerful and despotic empire. The victor, enriched by the tribute and fortified by the arms of dependent kings, has spread his conquests over Europe or Asia; the successful shepherds of the North have submitted to the confinement of arts, of laws, and of cities; and the introduction of luxury, after destroying the freedom of the people, has undermined the foundations of the throne.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Montesquieu labours to explain a difference, which has not existed, between the liberty of the Arabs and the *perpetual* slavery of the Tartars (*Esprit des Loix*, l. xvii. c. 5, l. xviii. c. 19. etc.).

[Since the time of Gibbon (as Dr. Smith says) our knowledge of the languages of the nomadic tribes of Asia has been enlarged, and we are now able to classify them with greater accuracy than was possible at an earlier period. The nomadic tribes of Asia inhabit the vast area reaching from the Uralian Mountains to the Chinese Sea and Japan, and from the northern limits of Persia and India to the frozen zone of Siberia, although a portion of the latter country is also occupied by other races. These various tribes were originally one race, as the evidence of their languages reveals, though, like the members of the Indo-European race, they are now divided into different families, speaking languages which, though in some cases mutually unintelligible, yet bear a strong resemblance to each other. They are divided into four great branches, called respectively the Mongolian, Tungusian, Turkish, and Ugrian.

I. THE MONGOLIAN RACE.—The Mongolians are the least numerous of the four, and were confined to a comparatively small territory till the time of their national hero, Genghis Khan, when they first occur in history. Even in his armies and those of his successors, most of the soldiers were Turks, while the officers were Mongolians. With the exception of a few scattered hordes, the Mongolians are still confined to the country north of the great Wall of China, and westward of the Manchu country.

II. THE TUNGUSIAN RACE.—Extends on the east from the Yenesei River to the Sea of Okhotsk, and on the north from the coast of the "Icy Sea," between the Yenesei and the Lena to the Yellow Sea on the south-east. Among the numerous tribes of the Tungusian race, some of which are very barbarous, the only one which has exercised an influence on the history of the world is that of the Manchus, the present rulers of China.

III. THE TURKISH RACE.—This is the most widely extended of the four, and is also one of the most considerable of the families of the world, occupying as it does the vast extent of country from Lake Baikal, 110° E. long. to the eastern boundaries of the Greek and Slavonic countries of Europe. One isolated tribe, the Yakuts, dwell in the remote east, on the River Lena and the coasts of the Icy Sea. The chief divisions of the Turks are, (1) the *Outigours*, on the west of the Mongol frontier, the most anciently civilised division of the Turkish race. (2) Turks of the Sandy Desert, conterminous with Mongolia and Tibet. (3) Turks of *Khoten*, *Kashgar*, and *Yarkend*, conterminous with Tibet. (4) The *Kirghis* in Independent Tartary. (5) The *Uzbeks*, the Turks of Bokhara. (6) The *Turkomans*, inhabiting the Persian frontier of Independent Tartary from Balk to the Caspian. (7) The *Osmanli*, or *Ottoman Turks*, those of the Turkish Empire. (8) The *Nogays*, dwelling north of the Caucasus, between the lower Don and lower Volga. (9) The Turks of the Russian Empire.

IV. THE UGRIAN RACE.—Also called the Finnish or Tschudish. This people left the great eastern plateau and settled in the north-west of Asia and the north of Europe at a period long antecedent to all historical documents. They extend as a continuous population from the Yenesei on the east to Norway on the west. The eastern branches of this race are the Voguls and

The memory of past events cannot long be preserved in the frequent and remote emigrations of illiterate barbarians. The modern Tartars are ignorant of the conquests of their ancestors;<sup>16</sup> and our knowledge of the history of the Scythians is derived from their intercourse with the learned and civilised nations of the South—the Greeks, the Persians, and the Chinese. The Greeks, who navigated the Euxine, and planted their colonies along the sea-coast, made the gradual and imperfect discovery of Scythia, from the Danube and the confines of Thrace, as far as the frozen Mæotis, the seat of eternal winter, and Mount Caucasus, which, in the language of poetry, was described as the utmost boundary of the earth. They celebrated, with simple credulity, the virtues of the pastoral life:<sup>17</sup> they entertained a more rational apprehension of the strength and numbers of the warlike barbarians,<sup>18</sup> who contemptuously baffled the immense armament of Darius, the son of Hystaspes.<sup>19</sup> The Persian monarchs had extended their western conquests to the banks of the Danube and the limits of European Scythia. The eastern provinces of their empire were exposed to the Scythians of Asia, the wild inhabitants of the plains beyond the Oxus and the Jaxartes, two mighty rivers, which direct their course towards the Caspian Sea. The long and memorable quarrel of Iran and Touran is still the theme of history or romance: the famous, perhaps the fabulous, valour of the Persian heroes, Rustan and Asfendiar, was signalled, in the defence of their country, against the Afrasiabs of the North;<sup>20</sup> and the invincible spirit of the same barbarians resisted, on the Ostiaks, between the Ural mountains and the Yenesei, inhabiting the country formerly called Ugrien, Jugrien, or Jugoria, the most important of the western branches being the Finns and Lapps. The Magyars of Hungary are also members of the Ugrian race. Cf. Latham, *The National History of the Varieties of Man*.—O. S.]

<sup>16</sup> Abulghazi Khan, in the two first parts of his Genealogical History, relates the miserable fables and traditions of the Uzbek Tartars concerning the times which preceded the reign of Zingis.

<sup>17</sup> In the thirteenth book of the Iliad, Jupiter turns away his eyes from the bloody fields of Troy to the plains of Thrace and Scythia. We would not, by changing the prospect, behold a more peaceful or innocent scene.

<sup>18</sup> Thucydides, l. ii. c. 97.

<sup>19</sup> See the fourth book of Herodotus. When Darius advanced into the Moldavian desert, between the Danube and the Dniester, the king of the Scythians sent him a mouse, a frog, a bird, and five arrows; a tremendous allegory!

<sup>20</sup> These wars and heroes may be found under their respective titles, in the Bibliothèque Orientale of D'Herbelot. They have been celebrated in an epic poem of sixty thousand rhymed couplets, by Ferdusi, the Homer of Persia. See the history of Nadir Shah, p. 145, 165. The public must lament that Mr. Jones has suspended the pursuit of Oriental learning.

[Ferdusi, the Persian poet, circa 940-1020, was the poetical title of Abu Kasim Mansur, author of the *Shahnamah*, or Book of Kings, which contains the legendary annals of the ancient monarchs of Persia, down to the Arab invasion of 641 A.D. Ferdusi, who was a native of Tus, laboured on the *Shahnamah* for thirty-five years, and then presented the poem to Mahmud. Displeased by the reward given by the latter, he fled to the caliph of Bagdad, for whom he wrote the poem, *Yusaf and Zuleikha*, describing the loves of Joseph and Potiphar's wife.—O. S.]

the same ground, the victorious arms of Cyrus and Alexander.<sup>21</sup> In the eyes of the Greeks and Persians, the real geography of Scythia was bounded, on the east, by the mountains of Imaus or Caf; and their distant prospect of the extreme and inaccessible parts of Asia was clouded by ignorance, or perplexed by fiction. But those inaccessible regions are the ancient residence of a powerful and civilised nation,<sup>22</sup> which ascends, by a probable tradition, above forty centuries;<sup>23</sup> and which is able to verify a series of near two thousand years by the perpetual testimony of accurate and contemporary historians.<sup>24</sup> The

<sup>21</sup> The Caspian Sea, with its rivers and adjacent tribes, are laboriously illustrated in the *Examen Critique des Historiens d'Alexandre*, which compares the true geography and the errors produced by the vanity or ignorance of the Greeks.

<sup>22</sup> The original seat of the nation appears to have been in the north-west of China, in the provinces of Chensi and Chansi. Under the two first dynasties the principal town was still a movable camp; the villages were thinly scattered; more land was employed in pasture than in tillage; the exercise of hunting was ordained to clear the country from wild beasts; Petcheli (where Pekin stands) was a desert; and the southern provinces were peopled with Indian savages. The dynasty of the *Han* (before Christ 206) gave the empire its actual form and extent.

<sup>23</sup> The era of the Chinese monarchy has been variously fixed from 2952 to 2132 years before Christ; and the year 2637 has been chosen for the lawful epoch by the authority of the present emperor. The difference arises from the uncertain duration of the two first dynasties; and the vacant space that lies beyond them, as far as the real, or fabulous, times of Fohi or Hoangti. Sematsien dates his authentic chronology from the year 841: the thirty-six eclipses of Confucius (thirty-one of which have been verified) were observed between the years 722 and 480 before Christ. The *historical period* of China does not ascend above the Greek Olympiads.

[The ablest Chinese scholars in Europe accept the statements of Chinese authors respecting the antiquity of their monarchy. Remusat says that the history of China goes back with certainty to the twenty-second century before our era, and that traditions, entitled to respect, enable us to date its commencement four centuries earlier, in the year 2637 B.C., in the sixty-first year of the reign of Hoang-ti. But the laws of historical criticism oblige us to reject this ancient date. The earliest extant history of China is by Ssema-Thsian (called by Gibbon Sematsien), who was born B.C. 145, and published his work about the beginning of the first century before our era. Even if Ssema-Thsian recovered most of the ancient annals, we do not know anything of their value, whether they were written by contemporaries of the deeds they record, or whether, like the Greek genealogies of the heroic ages, they were the invention of a later period. At all events we cannot, with certainty, place the commencement of the historical period in China earlier than B.C. 206, the beginning of the Han dynasty.—O. S.]

<sup>24</sup> After several ages of anarchy and despotism, the dynasty of the Han (before Christ 206) was the era of the revival of learning. The fragments of ancient literature were restored; the characters were improved and fixed; and the future preservation of books was secured by the useful inventions of ink, paper, and the art of printing. Ninety-seven years before Christ, Sematsien published the first history of China. His labours were illustrated and continued by a series of one hundred and eighty historians. The substance of their works is still extant; and the most considerable of them are now deposited in the king of France's library.

annals of China<sup>26</sup> illustrate the state and revolutions of the pastoral tribes, which may still be distinguished by the vague appellation of Scythians or Tartars—the vassals, the enemies, and sometimes the conquerors of a great empire, whose policy has uniformly opposed the blind and impetuous valour of the barbarians of the North. From the mouth of the Danube to the sea of Japan, the whole longitude of Scythia is about one hundred and ten degrees, which, in that parallel are equal to more than five thousand miles. The latitude of these extensive deserts cannot be so easily or so accurately measured; but, from the fortieth degree, which touches the wall of China, we may securely advance above a thousand miles to the northward, till our progress is stopped by the excessive cold of Siberia. In that dreary climate, instead of the animated picture of a Tartar camp, the smoke which issues from the earth, or rather from the snow, betrays the subterraneous dwellings of the Tongouses and the Samoiedes: the want of horses and oxen is imperfectly supplied by the use of reindeer and of large dogs; and the conquerors of the earth insensibly degenerate into a race of deformed and diminutive savages, who tremble at the sound of arms.<sup>26</sup>

The Huns, who under the reign of Valens threatened the empire of Rome, had been formidable, in a much earlier period, to the empire of China.<sup>27</sup> Their ancient, perhaps their original, seat was an extensive, though dry and barren, tract of country immediately on the north side of the great wall. Their place is at present occupied by the forty-nine Hordes or Banners of the Mongous, a pastoral nation, which consists of about two hundred thousand families.<sup>28</sup> But the valour of the Huns had extended the narrow limits of their dominions; and their rustic chiefs, who assumed the appellation of *Tanjou*, gradually became

<sup>26</sup> China has been illustrated by the labours of the French; of the missionaries at Peking, and Messrs. Freret and De Guignes at Paris. The substance of the three preceding notes is extracted from the *Chou-king*, with the preface and notes of M. de Guignes, Paris, 1770; The *Tong-Kien-Kang-Mou*, translated by the P. de Mailla, under the name of Hist. Générale de la Chine, tom. i. p. xlix.-cc.; the *Memoires sur la Chine*, Paris, 1776, etc., tom. i. p. 1-323, tom. ii. p. 5-364; the *Histoire des Huns*, tom. i. p. 1-131, tom. v. p. 345-362; and the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. x. p. 377-402, tom. xv. p. 495-564, tom. xviii. p. 178-295, tom. xxxvi. p. 164-238.

<sup>27</sup> See the *Histoire Générale des Voyages*, tom. xviii.; and the *Genealogical History*, vol. ii. p. 620-664.

<sup>28</sup> M. de Guignes (tom. ii. p. 1-124) has given the original history of the ancient Hiong-nou, or Huns. The Chinese geography of their country (tom. i. part ii. p. lv.-lxiii.) seems to comprise a part of their conquests.

[Much controversy has been waged with regard to the origin of the Huns. But three theories may be said to represent all that has been said. (1) Niebuhr's theory that they were Mongols. (2) That they were Ugrians, which is maintained by Humboldt and the chief writers on the subject. (3) That they were Turks, which is upheld by Zeuss, Prichard, and Latham. The last is the one now generally accepted. De Guignes identifies the Hiong-nou or Hiong-nú with the Huns, the word signifying "revolted slaves."—O. S.]

<sup>29</sup> See in Du Halde (tom. iv. p. 18-65) a circumstantial description, with a correct map, of the country of the Mongous.

# THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE



BY  
EDWARD GIBBON

VOLUME II  
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# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
XXXVII. ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND EFFECTS OF THE MONASTIC LIFE—CONVERSION OF THE BARBARIANS TO CHRISTIANITY AND ARIANISM—PERSECUTION OF THE VANDALS IN AFRICA—EXTINCTION OF ARIANISM (305-712 A.D.)	I
XXXVIII. REIGN AND CONVERSION OF CLOVIS—HIS VICTORIES OVER THE ALFMANNI, BURGUNDIANS, AND VISIGOTHS—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY IN GAUL—LAWS OF THE BARBARIANS—STATE OF THE ROMANS—THE VISIGOTHS OF SPAIN—CONQUESTS OF BRITAIN BY THE SAXONS (449-582 A.D.)	37
XXXIX. ZENO AND ANASTASIUS, EMPERORS OF THE EAST—BIRTH, EDUCATION, AND FIRST EXPLOITS OF THEODORIC THE OSTROGOTH—HIS INVASION AND CONQUEST OF ITALY—THE GOTHIC KINGDOM OF ITALY—STATE OF THE WEST—MILITARY AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT—THE SENATOR BOTTHIUS—LAST ACTS AND DEATH OF THEODORIC (455-526 A.D.)	98
XL. ELEVATION OF JUSTIN THE ELDER—REIGN OF JUSTINIAN—I. THE EMPRESS THEODORA—II. FACTIONS OF THE CIRCUS, AND SEDITION OF CONSTANTINOPLE—III. TRADE AND MANUFACTURE OF SILK—IV. FINANCES AND TAXES—V. EDIFICES OF JUSTINIAN—CHURCH OF ST. SOPHIA—FORTIFICATIONS AND FRONTIERS OF THE EASTERN EMPIRE—ABOLITION OF THE SCHOOLS OF ATHENS AND THE CONSULSHIP OF ROME (482-565 A.D.)	128
XLI. CONQUEST OF JUSTINIAN IN THE WEST—CHARACTER AND FIRST CAMPAIGNS OF BELISARIUS—HE IN-	



CHAP.		PAGE
	VADES AND SUBDUES THE VANDAL KINGDOM OF AFRICA—HIS TRIUMPH—THE GOTHIC WAR—HE RECOVERS SICILY, NAPLES, AND ROME—SIEGE OF ROME BY THE GOTHS—THEIR RETREAT AND LOSSES—SURRENDER OF RAVENNA—GLORY OF BELISARIUS—HIS DOMESTIC SHAME AND MISFORTUNES (522–620 A.D.)	182
XLII.	STATE OF THE BARBARIC WORLD—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LOMBARDS ON THE DANUBE—TRIBES AND INROADS OF THE SCLAVONIANS—ORIGIN, EMPIRE, AND EMBASSIES OF THE TURKS—THE FLIGHT OF THE AVARS—CHOSROES I., OR NUSHIRVAN, KING OF PERSIA—HIS PROSPEROUS REIGN AND WARS WITH THE ROMANS—THE COLCHIAN OR LAZIC WAR (500–582 A.D.)	240
XLIII.	REBELIONS OF AFRICA—RESTORATION OF THE GOTHIC KINGDOM BY TOTILA—LOSS AND RECOVERY OF ROME—FINAL CONQUEST OF ITALY BY NARSES—EXTINCTION OF THE OSTROGOTHS—DEFEAT OF THE FRANKS AND AUFMANNI—LAST VICTORY, DISGRACE, AND DEATH OF BELISARIUS—DEATH AND CHARACTER OF JUSTINIAN—COMET, EARTHQUAKES, AND PLAGUE (531–594 A.D.)	281
XLIV.	IDEA OF THE ROMAN JURISPRUDENCE—THE LAWS OF THE KINGS—THE TWELVE TABLES OF THE DECENVIRS—THE LAWS OF THE PEOPLE—THE DECREES OF THE SENATE—THE EDICTS OF THE MAGISTRATES AND EMPERORS—AUTHORITY OF THE CIVILIANS—CODI, PANDICTS, NOVELLS, AND INSTITUTES OF JUSTINIAN:—I. RIGHTS OF PERSONS—II. RIGHTS OF THINGS—III. PRIVATE INJURIES AND ACTIONS—IV. CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS (527–565 A.D.)	322
XLV.	REIGN OF THE YOUNGER JUSTIN—EMBASSY OF THE AVARS—THEIR SETTLEMENT ON THE DANUBE—CONQUEST OF ITALY BY THE LOMBARDS—ADOPTION AND REIGN OF TIBERIUS—OF MAURICE—STATE OF ITALY UNDER THE LOMBARDS AND THE	

# CONTENTS

vii

CHAP.		PAGE
	EXARCHS—OF RAVENNA—DISTRESS OF ROME— CHARACTER AND PONTIFICATE OF GREGORY THE FIRST (565-643 A.D.)	383
XLVI.	REVOLUTIONS OF PERSIA AFTER THE DEATH OF CHOSROES OR NUSHIRVAN—HIS SON HORMOUZ, A TYRANT, IS DEPOSED—USURPATION OF BAHRAM —FLIGHT AND RESTORATION OF CHOSROES II.— HIS GRATITUDE TO THE ROMANS—THE CHAGAN OF THE AVARS—REVOLT OF THE ARMY AGAINST MAURICI—HIS DEATH—TYRANNY OF PHOCAS— ELEVATION OF HERACLIUS—THE PERSIAN WAR —CHOSROES SUBDUES SYRIA, EGYPT, AND ASIA MINOR—SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY THE PERSIANS AND AVARS—PERSIAN EXPEDITIONS— VICTORIES AND TRIUMPH OF HERACLIUS (570- 642 A.D.)	413
XLVII.	THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION—THE HUMAN AND DIVINE NA- TURE OF CHRIST—ENMITY OF THE PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA AND CONSTANTINOPLE—ST. CYRIL AND NESTORIUS—THIRD GENERAL COUN- CIL OF EPHESUS—HERESY OF EUTYCHES— FOURTH GENERAL COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON— CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL DISCORD—INTOIFR- ANGL OF JUSTINIAN—THE THREE CHAPTERS— THE MONOTHEISTIC CONTROVERSY—STATE OF THE ORIENTAL SECTS—I. THE NESTORIANS—II. THE JACOBITES—III. THE MARONITES—IV. THE ARMINIANS—V. THE COPTS AND ABYSSIN- IANS (412-1632 A.D.)	459
XLVIII.	PLAN OF THE LAST TWO [QUARTO] VOLUMES—SUC- CESSION AND CHARACTERS OF THE GREEK EM- PERORS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, FROM THE TIME OF HERACLIUS TO THE LATIN CONQUEST (641- 1185 A.D.)	519
XLIX.	INTRODUCTION, WORSHIP, AND PERSECUTION OF IMAGES—REVOLT OF ITALY AND ROME—TEM- PORAL DOMINION OF THE POPES—CONQUEST OF ITALY BY THE FRANKS—ESTABLISHMENT	

CHAP.	PAGE
OF IMAGES—CHARACTER AND CORONATION OF CHARLEMAGNE—RESTORATION AND DECAY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST—INDEPENDENCE OF ITALY—CONSTITUTION OF THE GERMANIC BODY (726-1378 A.D.)	578
L. DESCRIPTION OF ARABIA AND ITS INHABITANTS—BIRTH, CHARACTER, AND DOCTRINE OF MOHAMMED—HE PREACHES AT MECCA—FLIES TO MEDINA—PROPAGATES HIS RELIGION BY THE SWORD—VOLUNTARY OR RELUCTANT SUBMISSION OF THE ARABS—HIS DEATH AND SUCCESSORS—THE CLAIMS AND FORTUNES OF ALI AND HIS DISCENDANTS (569-680 A.D.)	634
LI. THE CONQUEST OF PERSIA, SYRIA, EGYPT, AFRICA, AND SPAIN, BY THE ARABS OR SARACENS—EMPIRE OF THE CALIPHS, OR SUCCESSORS OF MOHAMMED—STATE OF THE CHRISTIANS, ETC., UNDER THEIR GOVERNMENT (632-718 A.D.)	709
LII. THE TWO SIEGES OF CONSTANTINOPE BY THE ARABS—THEIR INVASION OF FRANCE, AND DEFEAT BY CHARLES MARTIN—CIVIL WAR OF THE OMAYYADS AND ABBASSIDS—LARNING OF THE ARABS—LUXURY OF THE CALIPHS—NAVAL ENTERPRISES ON CRETE, SICILY, AND ROME—DECAY AND DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE OF THE CALIPHS—DEFEATS AND VICTORIES OF THE GREEK EMPERORS (668-1055 A.D.)	780
LIII. STATE OF THE EASTERN EMPIRE IN THE TENTH CENTURY—EXISTENCE AND DIVISION—WEALTH AND REVENUE—PALACE OF CONSTANTINOPE—TITLES AND OFFICES—PRIDE AND POWER OF THE EMPERORS—TACTICS OF THE GREEKS, ARABS, AND FRANKS—LOSS OF THE LATIN TONGUE—STUDIES AND SOLITUDE OF THE GREEKS (733-988 A.D.)	839
LIV. ORIGIN AND DOCTRINE OF THE PAULICIANS—THEIR PERSECUTION BY THE GREEK EMPERORS—REVOLT IN ARMENIA, ETC.—TRANSPLANTATION	

# CONTENTS

ix

CHAP.	PAGE
INTO THRACE—PROPAGATION IN THE WEST— THE SEEDS, CHARACTER, AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE REFORMATION (660—1200 A.D.)	879
LV. THE BULGARIANS—ORIGIN, MIGRATIONS, AND SET- TLEMENT OF THE HUNGARIANS—THEIR INROADS IN THE EAST AND WEST—THE MONARCHY OF RUSSIA—GEOGRAPHY AND TRADE—WARS OF THE RUSSIANS AGAINST THE GREEK EMPIRE—CON- VERSION OF THE BARBARIANS (640—1100 A.D.)	893
LVI. THE SARACENS, FRANKS, AND GREEKS, IN ITALY— FIRST ADVENTURES AND SETTLEMENT OF THE NORMANS—CHARACTER AND CONQUESTS OF ROBERT GUISCARD, DUKE OF APULIA—DELIVER- ANCE OF SICILY BY HIS BROTHER ROGER—VIC- TORIES OF ROBERT OVER THE EMPERORS OF THE EAST AND WEST—ROGER, KING OF SICILY, INVADES AFRICA AND GREECE—THE EMPEROR MANUEL COMNENUS—WARS OF THE GREEKS AND NORMANS—EXTINCTION OF THE NORMANS (840—1204 A.D.)	922
LVII. THE TURKS OF THE HOUSE OF SELJUK—THEIR REVOLT AGAINST MAHMUD, CONQUEROR OF HINDOSTAN—TOGRUL SUBDUES PERSIA, AND PROTECTS THE CALIPHS—DEFEAT AND CAP- TIVITY OF THE EMPEROR ROMANUS DIAGENES BY ALP ARSLAN—POWER AND MAGNIFICENCE OF MALIK SHAH—CONQUEST OF ASIA MINOR AND SYRIA—STATE AND OPPRESSION OF JERUSALEM (1080—1152 A.D.)	968
LVIII. ORIGIN AND NUMBERS OF THE FIRST CRUSADE— CHARACTERS OF THE LATIN PRINCES—THEIR MARCH TO CONSTANTINOPLE—POLICY OF THE GREEK EMPEROR ALEXIUS—CONQUEST OF NICÆ, ANTIOCH, AND JERUSALEM, BY THE FRANKS— DELIVERANCE OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE—GOD- FREY OF BOHUN, FIRST KING OF JERUSALEM (1095—1369 A.D.)	995

CHAP		PAGE
LIX.	PRESERVATION OF THE GREEK EMPIRE—NUMBERS, PASSAGE, AND EVENT OF THE SECOND AND THIRD CRUSADES—ST. BERNARD—REIGN OF SALADIN IN EGYPT AND SYRIA—HIS CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM—NAVAL CRUSADES—RICHARD THE FIRST OF ENGLAND—POPE INNOCENT THE THIRD; AND THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CRUSADES—THE EMPEROR FREDERIC THE SECOND—LOUIS THE NINTH OF FRANCE, AND THE TWO LAST CRUSADES—EXPULSION OF THE LATINS OR FRANKS BY THE MAMAIUKES (1091-1517 A.D.)	1047
LX.	SCHISM OF THE GREEKS AND LATINS—STATE OF CONSTANTINOPLI—REVOLT OF THE BULGARIANS—ISAAC ANGELUS DETHRONED BY HIS BROTHER ALEXIUS—ORIGIN OF THE FOURTH CRUSADE—ALLIANCE OF THE FRENCH AND VENETIANS WITH THE SON OF ISAAC—THEIR NAVAL EXPEDITION TO CONSTANTINOPLI—THE TWO SIEGES AND FINAL CONQUEST OF THE CITY (697-1204 A.D.)	1082
LXI.	PARTITION OF THE EMPIRE BY THE FRENCH AND VENETIANS—FIVE LATIN EMPERORS OF THE HOUSES OF FLANDERS AND COURTENAY—THEIR WARS AGAINST THE BULGARIANS AND GREEKS—WEAKNESS AND POVERTY OF THE LATIN EMPIRE—RECOVERY OF CONSTANTINOPLI BY THE GREEKS—GENERAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRUSADES (1020-1261 A.D.)	1119
LXII.	THE GREEK EMPERORS OF NICE AND CONSTANTINOPLI—ELEVATION AND REIGN OF MICHAEL PALÆOLOGUS—HIS FAULSE UNION WITH THE POPE AND THE LATIN CHURCH—HOSTILE DESIGNS OF CHARLES OF ANJOU—REVOLT OF SICILY—REVOLUTIONS AND PRESENT STATE OF ATHENS (1204-1456 A.D.)	1152
LXIII.	CIVIL WARS, AND RUIN OF THE GREEK EMPIRE—REIGNS OF ANDRONICUS THE ELDER AND YOUNGER, AND JOHN PALÆOLOGUS—REGENCY,	

# CONTENTS

xi

CHAP.		PAGE
	REVOLT, REIGN, AND ABDICATION OF JOHN CANTACUZENE—ESTABLISHMENT OF A GENOESE COLONY AT PERA OR GALATA (1282-1391 A.D.)	1179
LXIV.	CONQUESTS OF ZINGIS KHAN AND THE MOGULS FROM CHINA TO POLAND—ESCAPE OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE GREEKS—ORIGIN OF THE OTTOMAN TURKS IN BITHYNIA—REIGNS AND VICTORIES OF OTTHMAN, ORCHAN, AMURATH THE FIRST, AND BAJAZET THE FIRST—FOUNDATION AND PROGRESS OF THE TURKISH MONARCHY IN ASIA AND EUROPE—DANGER OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE GREEK EMPIRE (1206-1425 A.D.)	1201
LXV.	ELEVATION OF TIMOUR OR TAMERLANE TO THE THRONE OF SAMARCAND—HIS CONQUESTS IN PERSIA, GEORGIA, TARTARY, RUSSIA, INDIA, SYRIA, AND ANATOLIA—HIS TURKISH WAR—DEFEAT AND CAPTIVITY OF BAJAZET—DEATH OF TIMOUR—CIVIL WAR OF THE SONS OF BAJAZET—RESTORATION OF THE TURKISH MONARCHY BY MOHAMMED THE FIRST—SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY AMURATH THE SECOND (1361-1451 A.D.)	1231
LXVI.	APPLICATIONS OF THE EASTERN EMPERORS TO THE POPE—VISITS TO THE WEST OF JOHN THE FIRST, MANUEL, AND JOHN THE SECOND. PAULOLOGUS—UNION OF THE GREEK AND LATIN CHURCHES PROMOTED BY THE COUNCIL OF BASH, AND CONCLUDED AT FERRARA AND FLORENCE—STATE OF LITERATURE AT CONSTANTINOPLE—ITS REVIVAL IN ITALY BY THE GREEK FUGITIVES—CURIOSITY AND EMULATION OF THE LATINS (1339-1500 A.D.)	1264
LXVII.	SCHISM OF THE GREEKS AND LATINS—REIGN AND CHARACTER OF AMURATH THE SECOND—CRUSADE OF LADISLAUS, KING OF HUNGARY—HIS DEFEAT AND DEATH (1421-1467 A.D.)	1304

CHAP	PAGE
LXVIII. REIGN AND CHARACTER OF MOHAMMED THE SECOND —SIEGE, ASSAULT, AND FINAL CONQUEST OF CONSTANTINOPIE BY THE TURKS—DEATH OF CONSTANTINE PALAIOLOGUS—SERVITUDE OF THE GREEKS—EXTINCTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE EAST—CONSTERNATION OF EUROPE— CONQUESTS AND DEATH OF MOHAMMED THE SECOND (1451-1481 AD)	1325
LXIX. STATE OF ROME FROM THE TWELFTH CENTURY— TEMPORAL DOMINION OF THE POPES—SEDITIONS OF THE CITY—POLITICAL HERESY OF ARNOLO OF BRESCIA—RESTORATION OF THE REPUBLIC— THE SENATORS—PRIDE OF THE ROMANS—THEIR WARS—THEY ARE DEPRIVED OF THE ELECTION AND PRESENCE OF THE POPES, WHO RETIRE TO AVIGNON—THE JUBILEE—Noble FAMILIES OF ROME—FEUD OF THE COLONNA AND URSINI (800-1500 AD)	1364
LXX. CHARACTER AND CORONATION OF PETRARCH—RESTO- RATION OF THE FREEDOM AND GOVERNMENT OF ROME BY THE TRIBUNE RIENZI—HIS VIRTUES AND VICES, HIS EXPULSION AND DEATH—RE- TURN OF THE POPES FROM AVIGNON—GREAT SCHISM OF THE WEST—REFORM OF THE LATIN CHURCH—LAST STRUGGLES OF ROMAN LIBERTY —STATUTES OF ROME—FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE (1304-1590 AD)	1400
LXXI. PROSPECT OF THE RUINS OF ROME IN THE FIF- TEENTH CENTURY—FOUR CAUSES OF DECAY AND DESTRUCTION—EXAMPLE OF THE COLISEUM —RENOVATION OF THE CITY—CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE WORK (1332-1430 AD)	1438

barbarians, who supinely renounced all the commercial advantages of their insular situation. Seven independent kingdoms were agitated by perpetual discord; and the *British world* was seldom connected, either in peace or war, with the nations of the continent.<sup>107</sup>

I have now accomplished the laborious narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, from the fortunate age of Trajan and the Antonines to its total extinction in the West, about five centuries after the Christian era. At that unhappy period the Saxons fiercely struggled with the natives for the possession of Britain: Gaul and Spain were divided between the powerful monarchies of the Franks and Visigoths and the dependent kingdoms of the Suevi and Burgundians: Africa was exposed to the cruel persecution of the Vandals and the savage insults of the Moors: Rome and Italy, as far as the banks of the Danube, were afflicted by an army of barbarian mercenaries, whose lawless tyranny was succeeded by the reign of Theodoric the Ostrogoth. All the subjects of the empire, who, by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved the name and privileges of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe. The majesty of Rome was faintly represented by the princes of Constantinople, the feeble and imaginary successors of Augustus. Yet they continued to reign over the East, from the Danube to the Nile and Tigris; the Gothic and Vandal kingdoms of Italy and Africa were subverted by the arms of Justinian; and the history of the *Greek* emperors may still afford a long series of instructive lessons and interesting revolutions.

#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST

'THE Greeks, after their country had been reduced into a province, imputed the triumphs of Rome, not to the merit, but to the FORTUNE, of the republic. The inconstant goddess who so blindly distributes and resumes her favours, had *now* consented (such was the language of envious flattery) to resign her wings, to descend from her globe, and to fix her firm and immutable throne on the banks of the Tiber.<sup>1</sup> A wiser Greek,

<sup>107</sup> In the copious history of Gregory of Tours we cannot find any traces of hostile or friendly intercourse between France and England, except in the marriage of the daughter of Caribert, king of Paris, quam in Cantia regis *cujusdam* filius matrimonio copulavit (I ix. c. 26, in tom. ii. p. 348). The bishop of Tours ended his history and his life almost immediately before the conversion of Kent.

<sup>1</sup> Such are the figurative expressions of Plutarch (Opera, tom. ii. p. 318, edit. Wechel [Frankf. 1620]), to whom, on the faith of his son Lamprias (Fabricius, Bibliot. Græc. tom. iii. p. 341), I shall boldly impute the malicious declamation, *περὶ τῆς Ρωμαίων τύχης*. The same opinions had prevailed among the



who has composed, with a philosophic spirit, the memorable history of his own times, deprived his countrymen of this vain and delusive comfort, by opening to their view the deep foundations of the greatness of Rome.<sup>2</sup> The fidelity of the citizens to each other and to the state was confirmed by the habits of education and the prejudices of religion. Honour, as well as virtue, was the principle of the republic; the ambitious citizens laboured to deserve the solemn glories of a triumph; and the ardour of the Roman youth was kindled into active emulation as often as they beheld the domestic images of their ancestors.<sup>3</sup> The temperate struggles of the patricians and plebeians had finally established the firm and equal balance of the constitution, which united the freedom of popular assemblies with the authority and wisdom of a senate and the executive powers of a regal magistrate. When the consul displayed the standard of the republic, each citizen bound himself, by the obligation of an oath, to draw his sword in the cause of his country till he had discharged the sacred duty by a military service of ten years. This wise institution continually poured into the field the rising generations of freemen and soldiers; and their numbers were reinforced by the warlike and populous states of Italy, who, after a brave resistance, had yielded to the valour and embraced the alliance of the Romans. The sage historian, who excited the virtue of the younger Scipio and beheld the ruin of Carthage,<sup>4</sup> has accurately described their military system; their levies, arms, exercises, subordination, marches, encampments; and the invincible legion, superior in active strength to the Macedonian phalanx of Philip and Alexander. From these institutions of peace and war Polybius has deduced the spirit and success of a people incapable of fear and impatient of repose. The ambitious design of conquest, which might have been defeated by the seasonable conspiracy of mankind, was attempted and achieved, and the perpetual violation of justice was maintained by the political virtues of prudence and courage. The arms of the republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the Ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to

Greeks two hundred and fifty years before Plutarch; and to confute them is the professed intenuon of Polybius (Hist. l. i. [c 63] p. 90, edit. Gronov. Amstel. 1670).

<sup>2</sup> See the inestimable remains of the sixth book of Polybius, and many other parts of his general history, particularly a digression in the seventeenth book [l. xviii. c. 12-15], in which he compares the phalanx and the legion

<sup>3</sup> Sallust, de Bell. Jugurthin. c. 4 Such were the generous professions of P. Scipio and Q. Maximus. The Latin historian had read, and most probably transcribes, Polybius, their contemporary and friend

<sup>4</sup> While Carthage was in flames Scipio repeated two lines of the Iliad, which express the destruction of Troy, acknowledging to Polybius, his friend and preceptor (Polyb. [Fragm. l. xxix. *sub fin*] in Excerpt de Virtut et Vit. tom. ii. p. 1455-1465), that while he recollected the vicissitudes of human affairs he inwardly applied them to the future calamities of Rome (Appian. in Libycis [l. viii. c. 132], p. 136, edit. Toll.).

represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome.<sup>5</sup>

The rise of a city, which swelled into an empire, may deserve, as a singular prodigy, the reflection of a philosophic mind. But the decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight. The story of its ruin is simple and obvious; and instead of inquiring *why* the Roman empire was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it had subsisted so long. The victorious legions, who, in distant wars, acquired the vices of strangers and mercenaries, first oppressed the freedom of the republic, and afterwards violated the majesty of the purple. The emperors, anxious for their personal safety and the public peace, were reduced to the base expedient of corrupting the discipline which rendered them alike formidable to their sovereign and to the enemy; the vigour of the military government was relaxed and finally dissolved by the partial institutions of Constantine; and the Roman world was overwhelmed by a deluge of barbarians.

The decay of Rome has been frequently ascribed to the translation of the seat of empire; but this history has already shown that the powers of Government were *divided* rather than *removed*. The throne of Constantinople was erected in the East; while the West was still possessed by a series of emperors who held their residence in Italy, and claimed their equal inheritance of the legions and provinces. This dangerous novelty impaired the strength and fomented the vices of a double reign: the instruments of an oppressive and arbitrary system were multiplied; and a vain emulation of luxury, not of merit, was introduced and supported between the degenerate successors of Theodosius. Extreme distress, which unites the virtue of a free people, embitters the factions of a declining monarchy. The hostile favourites of Arcadius and Honorius betrayed the republic to its common enemies; and the Byzantine court beheld with indifference, perhaps with pleasure, the disgrace of Rome, the misfortunes of Italy, and the loss of the West. Under the succeeding reigns the alliance of the two empires was restored; but the aid of the Oriental Romans was tardy, doubtful, and ineffectual; and the national schism of the Greeks and Latins was enlarged by the perpetual difference of language and manners, of interests, and even of religion. Yet the salutary event approved in some measure the judgment of Constantine.

<sup>5</sup> See Daniel ii. 31-40. "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things." The remainder of the prophecy (the mixture of iron and clay) was accomplished, according to St. Jerom, in his own time. *Sicut enim in principio nihil Romano Imperio fortius et durius, ita in fine rerum nihil imbecillius; quum et in bellis civilibus et adversus diversas nationes, aliarum gentium barbararum auxilio indigemus* (Opera, tom. v. p. 572).

During a long period of decay his impregnable city repelled the victorious armies of barbarians, protected the wealth of Asia, and commanded, both in peace and war, the important straits which connect the Euxine and Mediterranean seas. The foundation of Constantinople more essentially contributed to the preservation of the East than to the ruin of the West.

As the happiness of a *future* life is the great object of religion, we may hear without surprise or scandal that the introduction, or at least the abuse of Christianity, had some influence on the decline and fall of the Roman empire. The clergy successfully preached the doctrines of patience and pusillanimity; the active virtues of society were discouraged; and the last remains of military spirit were buried in the cloister: a large portion of public and private wealth was consecrated to the specious demands of charity and devotion; and the soldiers' pay was lavished on the useless multitudes of both sexes who could only plead the merits of abstinence and chastity. Faith, zeal, curiosity, and more earthly passions of malice and ambition, kindled the flame of theological discord; the church, and even the state, were distracted by religious factions, whose conflicts were sometimes bloody and always implacable; the attention of the emperors was diverted from camps to synods; the Roman world was oppressed by a new species of tyranny; and the persecuted sects became the secret enemies of their country. Yet party-spirit, however pernicious or absurd, is a principle of union as well as of dissension. The bishops, from eighteen hundred pulpits, inculcated the duty of passive obedience to a lawful and orthodox sovereign; their frequent assemblies and perpetual correspondence maintained the communion of distant churches; and the benevolent temper of the Gospel was strengthened, though confirmed, by the spiritual alliance of the catholics. The sacred indolence of the monks was devoutly embraced by a servile and effeminate age; but if superstition had not afforded a decent retreat, the same vices would have tempted the unworthy Romans to desert, from baser motives, the standard of the republic. Religious precepts are easily obeyed which indulge and sanctify the natural inclinations of their votaries; but the pure and genuine influence of Christianity may be traced in its beneficial, though imperfect, effects on the barbarian proselytes of the North. If the decline of the Roman empire was hastened by the conversion of Constantine, his victorious religion broke the violence of the fall, and mollified the ferocious temper of the conquerors.

This awful revolution may be usefully applied to the instruction of the present age. It is the duty of a patriot to prefer and promote the exclusive interest and glory of his native country: but a philosopher may be permitted to enlarge his views, and to consider Europe as one great republic, whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and cultivation. The balance of power will continue to fluctuate, and the prosperity of our own or the neighbouring kingdoms

may be alternately exalted or depressed; but these partial events cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the system of arts, and laws, and manners, which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of mankind, the Europeans and their colonies. The savage nations of the globe are the common enemies of civilised society; and we may inquire, with anxious curiosity, whether Europe is still threatened with a repetition of those calamities which formerly oppressed the arms and institutions of Rome. Perhaps the same reflections will illustrate the fall of that mighty empire, and explain the probable causes of our actual security.

I. The Romans were ignorant of the extent of their dangers and the number of their enemies. Beyond the Rhine and Danube the northern countries of Europe and Asia were filled with innumerable tribes of hunters and shepherds, poor, voracious, and turbulent; bold in arms, and impatient to ravish the fruits of industry. The barbarian world was agitated by the rapid impulse of war, and the peace of Gaul or Italy was shaken by the distant revolutions of China. The Huns, who fled before a victorious enemy, directed their march towards the West, and the torrent was swelled by the gradual accession of captives and allies. The flying tribes who yielded to the Huns assumed in *their* turn the spirit of conquest; the endless column of barbarians pressed on the Roman empire with accumulated weight, and, if the foremost were destroyed, the vacant space was instantly replenished by new assailants. Such formidable emigrations no longer issue from the North, and the long repose, which has been imputed to the decrease of population, is the happy consequence of the progress of arts and agriculture. Instead of some rude villages thinly scattered among its woods and morasses, Germany now produces a list of two thousand three hundred walled towns: the Christian kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Poland have been successively established; and the Hanse merchants, with the Teuton knights, have extended their colonies along the coast of the Baltic as far as the Gulf of Finland. From the Gulf of Finland to the Eastern Ocean, Russia now assumes the form of a powerful and civilised empire. The plough, the loom, and the forge are introduced on the banks of the Volga, the Oby, and the Lena; and the fiercest of the Tartar hordes have been taught to tremble and obey. The reign of independent barbarism is now contracted to a narrow span; and the remnant of Calmucks or Uzbecks, whose forces may be almost numbered, cannot seriously excite the apprehensions of the great republic of Europe.<sup>o</sup> Yet this apparent security

<sup>o</sup> The French and English editors of the Genealogical History of the Tartars have subjoined a curious, though imperfect, description of the present state. We might question the independence of the Calmucks, or Eluths, since they have been recently vanquished by the Chinese, who, in the year 1759, subdued the lesser Bugharia, and advanced into the country of Badakshan, near the sources of the Oxus (*Mémoires sur les Chinois*, tom i p. 325-400). But these conquests are precarious, nor will I venture to ensure the safety of the Chinese empire.

should not tempt us to forget that new enemies and unknown dangers may *possibly* arise from some obscure people, scarcely visible in the map of the world. The Arabs or Saracens, who spread their conquests from India to Spain, had languished in poverty and contempt till Mahomet breathed into those savage bodies the soul of enthusiasm.

II. The empire of Rome was firmly established by the singular and perfect coalition of its members. The subject nations, resigning the hope and even the wish of independence, embraced the character of Roman citizens; and the provinces of the West were reluctantly torn by the barbarians from the bosom of their mother country.<sup>7</sup> But this union was purchased by the loss of national freedom and military spirit; and the servile provinces, destitute of life and motion, expected their safety from the mercenary troops and governors who were directed by the orders of a distant court. The happiness of an hundred millions depended on the personal merit of one or two men, perhaps children, whose minds were corrupted by education, luxury, and despotic power. The deepest wounds were inflicted on the empire during the minorities of the sons and grandsons of Theodosius; and, after those incapable princes seemed to attain the age of manhood, they abandoned the church to the bishops, the state to the eunuchs, and the provinces to the barbarians. Europe is now divided into twelve powerful, though unequal kingdoms, three respectable commonwealths, and a variety of smaller, though independent states: the chances of royal and ministerial talent are multiplied, at least, with the number of its rulers; and a Julian, or Semiramis, may reign in the North, while Arcadius and Honorius again slumber on the thrones of the South. The abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame; republics have acquired order and stability; monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or, at least, of moderation; and some sense of honour and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times. In peace, the progress of knowledge and industry is accelerated by the emulation of so many active rivals: in war, the European forces are exercised by temperate and undecisive contests. If a savage conqueror should issue from the deserts of Tartary, he must repeatedly vanquish the robust peasants of Russia, the numerous armies of Germany, the gallant nobles of France, and the intrepid freemen of Britain; who, perhaps, might confederate for their common defence. Should the victorious barbarians carry slavery and desolation as far as the Atlantic Ocean, ten thousand vessels would transport beyond their pursuit the remains of civilised society; and Europe would revive and flourish in the American world, which is already filled with her colonies and institutions.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The prudent reader will determine how far this general proposition is weakened by the revolt of the Isaurians, the independence of Britain and Armorica, the Moorish tribes, or the Bagaudæ of Gaul and Spain (vol. i. p. 414, vol. iv. pp. 130, 178, 252).

<sup>8</sup> America now contains about six millions of European blood and descent;

III. Cold, poverty, and a life of danger and fatigue fortify the strength and courage of barbarians. In every age they have oppressed the polite and peaceful nations of China, India, and Persia, who neglected, and still neglect, to counterbalance these natural powers by the resources of military art. The warlike states of antiquity, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome, educated a race of soldiers; exercised their bodies, disciplined their courage, multiplied their forces by regular evolutions, and converted the iron which they possessed into strong and serviceable weapons. But this superiority insensibly declined with their laws and manners: and the feeble policy of Constantine and his successors armed and instructed, for the ruin of the empire, the rude valour of the barbarian mercenaries. The military art has been changed by the invention of gunpowder; which enables man to command the two most powerful agents of nature, air and fire. Mathematics, chemistry, mechanics, architecture, have been applied to the service of war; and the adverse parties oppose to each other the most elaborate modes of attack and of defence. Historians may indignantly observe that the preparations of a siege would found and maintain a flourishing colony;<sup>9</sup> yet we cannot be displeased that the subversion of a city should be a work of cost and difficulty; or that an industrious people should be protected by those arts which survive and supply the decay of military virtue. Cannon and fortifications now form an impregnable barrier against the Tartar horse; and Europe is secure from any future irruption of barbarians; since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous. Their gradual advances in the science of war would always be accompanied, as we may learn from the example of Russia, with a proportionable improvement in the arts of peace and civil policy; and they themselves must deserve a place among the polished nations whom they subdue.

Should these speculations be found doubtful or fallacious, there still remains a more humble source of comfort and hope. The discoveries of ancient and modern navigators, and the domestic history or tradition of the most enlightened nations, represent the *human savage* naked both in mind and body, and destitute of laws, of arts, of ideas, and almost of

and their numbers, at least in the North, are continually increasing. Whatever may be the changes of their political situation, they must preserve the manners of Europe; and we may reflect with some pleasure that the English language will probably be diffused over an immense and populous continent.

<sup>9</sup>On avoit fait venir (for the siege of Turin) 140 pièces de canon; et il est à remarquer que chaque gros canon monté revient à environ 2000 écus: il y avoit 100,000 boulets; 106,000 cartouches d'une façon, et 300,000 d'une autre; 21,000 bombes; 27,700 grenades, 15,000 sacs à terre, 30,000 instruments pour la pionnage; 1,200,000 livres de poudre. Ajoutez à ces munitions le plomb, le fer, et le fer-blanc, les cordages, tout ce qui sert aux mineurs, le soufre, le salpêtre, les outils de toute espèce. Il est certain que les frais de tous ces préparatifs de destruction suffiroient pour fonder et pour faire fleurir la plus nombreuse colonie. Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.* c. xx. in his Works, tom. xi. p. 391.

language.<sup>10</sup> From this abject condition, perhaps the primitive and universal state of man, he has gradually arisen to command the animals, to fertilise the earth, to traverse the ocean, and to measure the heavens. His progress in the improvement and exercise of his mental and corporeal faculties<sup>11</sup> has been irregular and various; infinitely slow in the beginning, and increasing by degrees with redoubled velocity: ages of laborious ascent have been followed by a moment of rapid downfall; and the several climates of the globe have felt the vicissitudes of light and darkness. Yet the experience of four thousand years should enlarge our hopes and diminish our apprehensions: we cannot determine to what height the human species may aspire in their advance towards perfection; but it may safely be presumed that no people, unless the face of nature is changed, will relapse into their original barbarism. The improvements of society may be viewed under a threefold aspect. 1. The poet or philosopher illustrates his age and country by the efforts of a *single* mind; but these superior powers of reason or fancy are rare and spontaneous productions; and the genius of Homer, or Cicero, or Newton, would excite less admiration if they could be created by the will of a prince or the lessons of a preceptor. 2. The benefits of law and policy, of trade and manufactures, of arts and sciences, are more solid and permanent; and *many* individuals may be qualified, by education and discipline, to promote, in their respective stations, the interest of the community. But this general order is the effect of skill and labour; and the complex machinery may be decayed by time, or injured by violence. 3. Fortunately for mankind, the more useful, or, at least, more necessary arts, can be performed without superior talents or national subordination; without powers of *one*, or the union of *many*. Each village, each family, each individual, must always possess both ability and inclination to perpetuate the use of fire<sup>12</sup> and of metals, the propagation and service of domestic animals, the methods of hunting and fishing, the rudiments of navigation; the imperfect cultivation of corn or other nutritive grain;

<sup>10</sup> It would be an easy, though tedious, task to produce the authorities of poets, philosophers, and historians. I shall therefore content myself with appealing to the decisive and authentic testimony of Diodorus Siculus (tom. i. l. i p. 11, 12, l. iii. [c. 14 sqq.] p. 184, etc, edit Wesseling) The Ichthyophagi, who in his time wandered along the shores of the Red Sea, can only be compared to the natives of New Holland (Dampier's Voyages, vol i p. 464-469). Fancy, or perhaps reason, may still suppose an extreme and absolute state of nature far below the level of these savages, who had acquired some arts and instruments.

<sup>11</sup> See the learned and rational work of the President Goguet, de l'Origine des Loix, des Arts, et des Sciences. He traces from facts or conjectures (tom. i p. 147-337, edit. 12mo) the first and most difficult steps of human invention.

<sup>12</sup> It is certain, however strange, that many nations have been ignorant of the use of fire. Even the ingenious natives of Otahite, who are destitute of metals, have not invented any earthen vessels capable of sustaining the action of fire and of communicating the heat to the liquids which they contain.

and the simple practice of the mechanic trades. Private genius and public industry may be extirpated, but these hardy plants survive the tempest, and strike an everlasting root into the most unfavourable soil. The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance; and the barbarians subverted the laws and palaces of Rome. But the scythe, the invention or emblem of Saturn,<sup>14</sup> still continued annually to mow the harvests of Italy; and the human feasts of the Læstrigons<sup>15</sup> have never been renewed on the coast of Campania.

Since the first discovery of the arts, war, commerce, and religious zeal have diffused among the savages of the Old and New World these inestimable gifts: they have been successively propagated, they can never be lost. We may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion that every age of the world has increased and still increases the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race.<sup>16</sup>

## CHAPTER XXXIX

*Zeno and Anastasius, Emperors of the East—Birth, Education, and first Exploits of Theodoric the Ostrogoth—His Invasion and Conquest of Italy—The Gothic Kingdom of Italy—State of the West—Military and Civil Government—The Senator Boethius—Last Acts and Death of Theodoric*

AFTER the fall of the Roman empire in the West, an interval of fifty years, till the memorable reign of Justinian, is faintly marked by the obscure names and imperfect annals of Zeno, Anastasius, and Justin, who successively ascended the throne of Constantinople. During the same period, Italy revived and flourished under the government of a Gothic king who might have deserved a statue among the best and bravest of the ancient Romans.

Theodoric the Ostrogoth, the fourteenth in lineal descent of the royal

<sup>14</sup> Plutarch *Quæst. Rom.* in tom. ii. p. 275 [tom. vii. p. 112, ed. Reiske]. Macrobius *Saturnal.* l. i. c. 7, p. 152, edit. London. The arrival of Saturn (of his religious worship) in a ship may indicate that the savage coast of Latium was first discovered and civilised by the Phœnicians.

<sup>15</sup> In the ninth and tenth books of the *Odyssey*, Homer has embellished the tales of fearful and credulous sailors who transformed the cannibals of Italy and Sicily into monstrous giants.

<sup>16</sup> The merit of discovery has too often been stained with avarice, cruelty, and fanaticism, and the intercourse of nations has produced the communication of disease and prejudice. A singular exception is due to the virtue of our own times and country. The five great voyages, successively undertaken by the command of his present Majesty, were inspired by the pure and generous love of science and mankind. The same prince, adapting his benefactions to the different stages of society, has founded a school of painting in his capital, and has introduced into the islands of the South Sea the vegetables and animals most useful to human life.



Holy Land, and it is under the Comnenian dynasty that a faint emulation of knowledge and military virtue was rekindled in the Byzantine empire.

## CHAPTER LIV

*Origin and Doctrine of the Paulicians—Their Persecution by the Greek Emperors—Revolt in Ilium, etc—Transplantation into Thrace—Propagation in the West—The Seeds, Character, and Consequences of the Reformation*

IN the profession of Christianity the variety of national characters may be clearly distinguished. The natives of Syria and Egypt abandoned their lives to lazy and contemplative devotion. Rome again aspired to the dominion of the world, and the wit of the lively and loquacious Greeks was consumed in the disputes of metaphysical theology. The incomprehensible mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation, instead of commanding their silent submission, were agitated in vehement and subtle controversies, which enlarged their faith at the expense, perhaps, of their charity and reason. From the council of Nice to the end of the seventh century, the peace and unity of the church was invaded by these spiritual wars, and so deeply did they affect the decline and fall of the empire, that the historian has too often been compelled to attend the synods, to explore the creeds, and to enumerate the sects, of this busy period of ecclesiastical annals. From the beginning of the eighth century to the last ages of the Byzantine empire the sound of controversy was seldom heard; curiosity was exhausted, zeal was fatigued, and in the decrees of six councils the articles of the Catholic faith had been irrevocably defined. The spirit of dispute, however vain and pernicious, requires some energy and exercise of the mental faculties, and the prostrate Greeks were content to fast, to pray, and to believe in blind obedience to the patriarch and his clergy. During a long dream of superstition the Virgin and the saints, their visions and miracles, their relics and images, were preached by the monks, and worshipped by the people, and the appellation of people might be extended, without injustice, to the first ranks of civil society. At an unseasonable moment the Isaurian emperors attempted somewhat rudely to awaken their subjects under their influence; reason might obtain some proselytes, a far greater number was swayed by interest or fear, but the Eastern world embraced or deplored their visible deities, and the restoration of images was celebrated as the feast of orthodoxy. In this passive and unanimous state the ecclesiastical rulers were relieved from the toil, or deprived of the pleasure, of persecution. The Pagans had disappeared, the Jews were silent and obscure, the disputes with the Latins were rare and remote hostilities against a national enemy, and the sects of Egypt and Syria enjoyed a free toleration under the shadow of the Arabian caliphs. About the

middle of the seventh century a branch of Manichæans was selected as the victims of spiritual tyranny: their patience was at length exasperated to despair and rebellion; and their exile has scattered over the West the seeds of reformation. These important events will justify some inquiry into the doctrine and story of the PAULICIANS;<sup>1</sup> and, as they cannot plead for themselves, our candid criticism will magnify the *good*, and abate or suspect the *evil*, that is reported by their adversaries.

The Gnostics, who had distracted the infancy, were oppressed by the greatness and authority of the church. Instead of emulating or surpassing the wealth, learning, and numbers of the Catholics, their obscure remnant was driven from the capitals of the East and West, and confined to the villages and mountains along the borders of the Euphrates. Some vestige of the Marcionites may be detected in the fifth century;<sup>2</sup> but the numerous sects were finally lost in the odious name of the Manichæans: and these heretics, who presumed to reconcile the doctrines of Zoroaster and Christ, were pursued by the two religions with equal and unrelenting hatred. Under the grandson of Heraclius, in the neighbourhood of Samosata, more famous for the birth of Lucian than for the title of a Syrian kingdom, a reformer arose, esteemed by the *Paulicians* as the chosen messenger of truth. In his humble dwelling of Mananalis, Constantine entertained a deacon who returned from Syrian captivity, and received the inestimable gift of the New Testament, which was already concealed from the vulgar by the prudence of the Greek, and perhaps of the Gnostic, clergy.<sup>3</sup> These books became the measure of his studies and the rule of his faith; and the Catholics, who dispute his interpretation, acknowledge that his text was genuine and sincere. But he attached himself with peculiar devotion to the writings and character of St. Paul: the name of the Paulicians is derived by their enemies from some unknown and domestic teacher; but I am confident that they gloried in their affinity to the apostle of the Gentiles. His disciples, Titus, Timothy, Sylvanus, Tychichus, were represented by Constantine, and his fellow-labourers: the names of the apostolic churches were applied to the congregations

<sup>1</sup> The errors and virtues of the Paulicians are weighed, with his usual judgment and candour, by the learned Mosheim (Hist. Ecclesiast. seculum ix. p. 311, etc.). He draws his original intelligence from Photius (contra Manichæos, l. i.) and Peter Siculus (Hist. Manichæorum). The first of these accounts has not fallen into my hands; the second, which Mosheim prefers, I have read in a Latin version inserted in the Maxima Bibliotheca Patrum (tom. xvi. p. 754-764) from the edition of the Jesuit Raderus (Ingolstadii, 1604, in 4to).

<sup>2</sup> In the time of Theodoret, the diocese of Cyrrhus, in Syria, contained eight hundred villages. Of these, two were inhabited by Arians and Eunomians, and eight by *Marcionites*, whom the laborious bishop reconciled to the Catholic church (Dupin, Biblioth. Ecclésiastique, tom. iv. p. 81, 82).

<sup>3</sup> Nobis profanis ista (*sacra Evangelia*) legere non licet sacerdotibus duntaxat, was the first scruple of a Catholic when he was advised to read the Bible (Petr. Sicul. p. 761).

which they assembled in Armenia and Cappadocia; and this innocent allegory revived the example and memory of the first ages. In the Gospel and the Epistles of St. Paul his faithful follower investigated the creed of primitive Christianity; and, whatever might be the success, a Protestant reader will applaud the spirit of the inquiry. But if the Scriptures of the Paulicians were pure, they were not perfect. Their founders rejected the two Epistles of St. Peter,<sup>4</sup> the apostle of the circumcision, whose dispute with their favourite for the observance of the law could not easily be forgiven.<sup>5</sup> They agreed with their Gnostic brethren in the universal contempt for the Old Testament, the books of Moses and the prophets, which have been consecrated by the decrees of the Catholic church. With equal boldness, and doubtless with more reason, Constantine, the new Sylvanus, disclaimed the visions which in so many bulky and splendid volumes had been published by the Oriental sects;<sup>6</sup> the fabulous productions of the Hebrew patriarchs and the sages of the East; the spurious gospels, epistles, and acts, which in the first age had overwhelmed the orthodox code; the theology of Manes, and the authors of the kindred heresies; and the thirty generations, or æons, which had been created by the fruitful fancy of Valentiné. The Paulicians sincerely condemned the memory and opinions of the Manichæan sect, and complained of the injustice which impressed that invidious name on the simple votaries of St. Paul and of Christ.

Of the ecclesiastical chain, many links had been broken by the Paulician reformers; and their liberty was enlarged, as they reduced the number of masters at whose voice profane reason must bow to mystery and miracle. The early separation of the Gnostics had preceded the establishment of the Catholic worship; and against the gradual innovations of discipline and doctrine they were as strongly guarded by habit and aversion as by the silence of St. Paul and the evangelists. The objects which had been transformed by the magic of superstition appeared to the eyes of the Paulicians in their genuine and naked colours. An image made without hands was the common

<sup>4</sup> In rejecting the *second* Epistle of St. Peter, the Paulicians are justified by some of the most respectable of the ancients and moderns (see Wetstein ad loc., Simon, *Hist. Critique du Nouveau Testament*, c. 17). They likewise overlooked the Apocalypse (Petr. Sicul. p. 756); but as such neglect is not imputed as a crime, the Greeks of the ninth century must have been careless of the credit and honour of the Revelations.

<sup>5</sup> This contention, which has not escaped the malice of Porphyry, supposes some error and passion in one or both of the apostles. By Chrysostom, Jerome, and Erasmus, it is represented as a sham quarrel, a pious fraud, for the benefit of the Gentiles and the correction of the Jews (*Middleton's Works*, vol. ii. p. 1-20).

<sup>6</sup> Those who are curious of this heterodox library may consult the researches of Beausobre (*Hist. Critique du Manichéisme*, tom. i. p. 305-437). Even in Africa, St. Austin could describe the Manichæan books, *tam multi, tam grandes, tam pretiosi codices* (contra Faust. xiii. 14); but he adds, without pity, *Incendite omnes illas membranas*: and his advice has been rigorously followed.

workmanship of a mortal artist, to whose skill alone the wood and canvas must be indebted for their merit or value. The miraculous relics were a heap of bones and ashes, destitute of life or virtue, or of any relation, perhaps, with the person to whom they were ascribed. The true and vivifying cross was a piece of sound or rotten timber; the body and blood of Christ, a loaf of bread and a cup of wine, the gifts of nature and the symbols of grace. The mother of God was degraded from her celestial honours and immaculate virginity; and the saints and angels were no longer solicited to exercise the laborious office of mediation in heaven and ministry upon earth. In the practice, or at least in the theory, of the sacraments, the Paulicians were inclined to abolish all visible objects of worship, and the words of the Gospel were, in their judgment, the baptism and communion of the faithful. They indulged a convenient latitude for the interpretation of Scripture: and as often as they were pressed by the literal sense, they could escape to the intricate mazes of figure and allegory. Their utmost diligence must have been employed to dissolve the connection between the Old and the New Testament; since they adored the latter as the oracles of God, and abhorred the former as the fabulous and absurd invention of men or demons. We cannot be surprised that they should have found in the Gospel the orthodox mystery of the Trinity: but instead of confessing the human nature and substantial sufferings of Christ, they amused their fancy with a celestial body that passed through the virgin like water through a pipe; with a fantastic crucifixion, that eluded the vain and impotent malice of the Jews. A creed thus simple and spiritual was not adapted to the genius of the times;<sup>7</sup> and the rational Christian, who might have been contented with the light yoke and easy burden of Jesus and his apostles, was justly offended that the Paulicians should dare to violate the unity of God, the first article of natural and revealed religion. Their belief and their trust was in the Father, of Christ, of the human soul, and of the invisible world. But they likewise held the eternity of matter; a stubborn and rebellious substance, the origin of a second principle, of an active being, who has created this visible world, and exercises his temporal reign till the final consummation of death and sin.<sup>8</sup> The appearances of moral and physical evil had established the two principles in the ancient philosophy and religion of the East, from whence this doctrine was transfused to the various swarms of the Gnostics. A thousand shades may be devised in the nature and character of *Ahriman*, from a rival god to a subordinate demon, from passion and frailty to pure and perfect malevolence: but, in spite of our efforts, the goodness and the power of Ormusd are placed at the opposite extremities of the

<sup>7</sup>The six capital errors of the Paulicians are defined by Peter Siculus (p. 756) with much prejudice and passion.

<sup>8</sup>*Primum illorum axioma est, duo rerum esse principia; Deum malum et Deum bonum, aliumque hujus mundi conditorem et principem, et alium futuri ævi* (Petr. Sicul. p. 756).

line; and every step that approaches the one must recede in equal proportion from the other.<sup>9</sup>

The apostolic labours of Constantine-Sylvanus soon multiplied the number of his disciples, the secret recompense of spiritual ambition. The remnant of the Gnostic sects, and especially the Manichæans of Armenia, were united under his standard; many Catholics were converted or seduced by his arguments; and he preached with success in the regions of Pontus<sup>10</sup> and Cappadocia, which had long since imbibed the religion of Zoroaster. The Paulician teachers were distinguished only by their Scriptural names, by the modest title of Fellow-pilgrims, by the austerity of their lives, their zeal or knowledge, and the credit of some extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. But they were incapable of desiring, or at least of obtaining, the wealth and honours of the Catholic prelacy: such anti-Christian pride they bitterly censured; and even the rank of elders or presbyters was condemned as an institution of the Jewish synagogue. The new sect was loosely spread over the provinces of Asia Minor to the westward of the Euphrates; six of their principal congregations represented the churches to which St. Paul had addressed his epistles; and their founder chose his residence in the neighbourhood of Colonia,<sup>11</sup> in the same district of Pontus which had been celebrated by the altars of Bellona<sup>12</sup> and the miracles of Gregory.<sup>13</sup> After a mission of twenty-seven years, Sylvanus, who had retired from the tolerating government of the Arabs, fell a sacrifice to Roman persecution. The laws of the pious emperors, which seldom touched the lives of less odious heretics, proscribed without mercy or disguise the tenets, the books, and the per-

<sup>9</sup> Two learned critics, Beausobre (*Hist Critique du Manichéisme*, l. i. iv. v. vi) and Mosheim (*Institut. Hist. Eccles. and de Rebus Christianis ante Constantinum*, sec. 1. ii. iii), have laboured to explore and discriminate the various systems of the Gnostics on the subject of the two principles.

<sup>10</sup> The countries between the Euphrates and the Halys were possessed above 350 years by the Medes (*Herodot. l. i. c. 103*) and Persians, and the kings of Pontus were of the royal race of the Achæmenides (*Sallust Fragment, l. iii.* with the French supplement and notes of the President de Brosses).

<sup>11</sup> Most probably founded by Pompey after the conquest of Pontus. This Colonia, on the Lycus above Neo-Cæsarea, is named by the Turks Couleli-hisar, or Chonac, a populous town in a strong country (*D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne*, tom. ii. p. 34; *Tournefort, Voyage du Levant*, tom. iii. lettre xxi. p. 203).

<sup>12</sup> The temple of Bellona, at Comana in Pontus, was a powerful and wealthy foundation, and the high priest was respected as the second person in the kingdom. As the sacerdotal office had been occupied by his mother's family, Strabo (*l. xii. p. 809, 835, 836, 837* [p. 535, 557, *sqq.*, ed. Casaub.]) dwells with peculiar complacency on the temple, the worship, and festival, which was twice celebrated every year. But the Bellona of Pontus had the features and character of the goddess, not of war, but of love.

<sup>13</sup> Gregory, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea (A.D. 240-265), surnamed Thaumaturgus, or the Wonder-worker. A hundred years afterwards, the history or romance of his life was composed by Gregory of Nyssa, his namesake and countryman, the brother of the great St Basil.

sons of the Montanists and Manichæans: the books were delivered to the flames; and all who should presume to secrete such writings, or to profess such opinions, were devoted to an ignominious death.<sup>14</sup> A Greek minister, armed with legal and military powers, appeared at Colonia to strike the shepherd, and to reclaim, if possible, the lost sheep. By a refinement of cruelty, Simeon placed the unfortunate Sylvanus before a line of his disciples, who were commanded, as the price of their pardon and the proof of their repentance, to massacre their spiritual father. They turned aside from the impious office; the stones dropped from their filial hands; and of the whole number only one executioner could be found, a new David, as he is styled by the Catholics, who boldly overthrew the giant of heresy. This apostate, Justus was his name, again deceived and betrayed his unsuspecting brethren, and a new conformity to the acts of St. Paul may be found in the conversion of Simeon: like the apostle, he embraced the doctrine which he had been sent to persecute, renounced his honours and fortunes, and acquired among the Paulicians the fame of a missionary and a martyr. They were not ambitious of martyrdom,<sup>15</sup> but in a calamitous period of one hundred and fifty years their patience sustained whatever zeal could inflict; and power was insufficient to eradicate the obstinate vegetation of fanaticism and reason. From the blood and ashes of the first victims a succession of teachers and congregations repeatedly arose: amidst their foreign hostilities they found leisure for domestic quarrels: they preached, they disputed, they suffered; and the virtues, the apparent virtues, of Sergius, in a pilgrimage of thirty-three years, are reluctantly confessed by the orthodox historians.<sup>16</sup> The native cruelty of Justinian the Second was stimulated by a pious cause; and he vainly hoped to extinguish, in a single conflagration, the name and memory of the Paulicians. By their primitive simplicity, their abhorrence of popular superstition, the Iconoclast princes might have been reconciled to some erroneous doctrines; but they themselves were exposed to the calumnies of the monks, and they chose to be the tyrants, lest they should be accused as the accomplices, of the Manichæans. Such a reproach has sullied the clemency of

<sup>14</sup> Hoc cæterum ad sua egregia facinora, divini atque orthodoxi Imperatores addiderunt, ut Manichæos Montanosque capitali puniri sententiâ juberent, eorumque libros, quocunque in loco inventi essent, flammis tradi; quod siquis uspiam eosdem occultasse deprehenderetur, hunc eundem mortis pœnæ addici, ejusque bona in fiscum inferri (Petr. Sicul. p. 759). What more could bigotry and persecution desire?

<sup>15</sup> It should seem that the Paulicians allowed themselves some latitude of equivocation and mental reservation, till the Catholics discovered the pressing questions which reduced them to the alternative of apostacy or martyrdom (Petr. Sicul. p. 760).

<sup>16</sup> The persecution is told by Petrus Siculus (p. 579-763) with satisfaction and pleasantry. Justus *justa* persolvit. Simeon was not *τιρος* but *κηρος* (the pronunciation of the two vowels must have been nearly the same), a great whale that drowned the mariners who mistook him for an island. See likewise Cedrenus (p. 432-435 [tom. i. p. 756-761, ed. Bonn]).

Nicephorus, who relaxed in their favour the severity of the penal statutes, nor will his character sustain the honour of a more liberal motive. The feeble Michael the First, the rigid Leo the Armenian, were foremost in the race of persecution; but the prize must doubtless be adjudged to the sanguinary devotion of Theodora, who restored the images to the Oriental church. Her inquisitors explored the cities and mountains of the lesser Asia, and the flatterers of the empress have affirmed that, in a short reign, one hundred thousand Paulicians were extirpated by the sword, the gibbet, or the flames. Her guilt or merit has perhaps been stretched beyond the measure of truth: but if the account be allowed, it must be presumed that many simple Iconoclasts were punished under a more odious name; and that some who were driven from the church, unwillingly took refuge in the bosom of heresy.

The most furious and desperate of rebels are the sectaries of a religion long persecuted, and at length provoked. In a holy cause they are no longer susceptible of fear or remorse: the justice of their arms hardens them against the feelings of humanity; and they revenge their fathers' wrongs on the children of their tyrants. Such have been the Hussites of Bohemia and the Calvinists of France, and such, in the ninth century, were the Paulicians of Armenia and the adjacent provinces.<sup>17</sup> They were first awakened to the massacre of a governor and bishop, who exercised the Imperial mandate of converting or destroying the heretics; and the deepest recesses of Mount Argæus protected their independence and revenge. A more dangerous and consuming flame was kindled by the persecution of Theodora, and the revolt of Carbeas, a valiant Paulician, who commanded the guards of the general of the East. His father had been impaled by the Catholic inquisitors; and religion, or at least nature, might justify his desertion and revenge. Five thousand of his brethren were united by the same motives; they renounced the allegiance of anti-Christian Rome; a Saracen emir introduced Carbeas to the caliph; and the commander of the faithful extended his sceptre to the implacable enemy of the Greeks. In the mountains between Siwas and Trebizond he founded or fortified the city of Tephric, <sup>18</sup> which is still occupied by a fierce and licentious people, and the neighbouring hills were covered with the Paulician fugitives, who now reconciled the use of the Bible and the sword. During more than thirty years Asia was afflicted by the calamities of foreign and domestic war: in their hostile inroads the disciples of St. Paul were joined with those of Mohammed; and the peaceful Christians, the aged parent and tender virgin, who were delivered into barbarous servitude, might justly accuse the intolerant spirit of their

<sup>17</sup> *Petrus Siculus* (p. 763, 764), the continuator of *Theophanes* (l. iv. c. 4 [c. 16], p. 103, 104 [p. 165-167, ed. Bonn]), *Cedrenus* (p. 541, 542, 545 [tom. ii. p. 153 sqq.]), and *Zonaras* (tom. ii. l. xvi. [c. 2] p. 156), describe the revolt and exploits of Carbeas and his Paulicians.

<sup>18</sup> *Otter* (*Voyage en Turquie et en Perse*, tom. ii.) is probably the only Frank who has visited the independent barbarians of Tephric, now Divrigni, from whom he fortunately escaped in the train of a Turkish officer.

sovereign. So urgent was the mischief, so intolerable the shame, that even the dissolute Michael, the son of Theodora, was compelled to march in person against the Paulicians: he was defeated under the walls of Samosata; and the Roman emperor fled before the heretics whom his mother had condemned to the flames. The Saracens fought under the same banners, but the victory was ascribed to Carbeas; and the captive generals, with more than a hundred tribunes, were either released by his avarice or tortured by his fanaticism. The valour and ambition of Chrysocheir,<sup>10</sup> his successor, embraced a wider circle of rapine and revenge. In alliance with his faithful Moslems, he boldly penetrated into the heart of Asia; the troops of the frontier and the palace were repeatedly overthrown; the edicts of persecution were answered by the pillage of Nice and Nicomedia, of Ancyra and Ephesus; nor could the apostle St. John protect from violation his city and sepulchre. The cathedral of Ephesus was turned into a stable for mules and horses; and the Paulicians vied with the Saracens in their contempt and abhorrence of images and relics. It is not unpleasing to observe the triumph of rebellion over the same despotism which has disdained the prayers of an injured people. The emperor Basil, the Macedonian, was reduced to sue for peace, to offer a ransom for the captives, and to request, in the language of moderation and charity, that Chrysocheir would spare his fellow-Christians, and content himself with a royal donative of gold and silver and silk garments. "If the emperor," replied the insolent fanatic, "be desirous of peace, let him abdicate the East, and reign without molestation in the West. If he refuse, the servants of the Lord will precipitate him from the throne." The reluctant Basil suspended the treaty, accepted the defiance, and led his army into the land of heresy, which he wasted with fire and sword. The open country of the Paulicians was exposed to the same calamities which they had inflicted; but when he had explored the strength of Tephrike, the multitude of the barbarians, and the ample magazines of arms and provisions, he desisted with a sigh from the hopeless siege. On his return to Constantinople he laboured, by the foundation of convents and churches, to secure the aid of his celestial patrons, of Michael the archangel and the prophet Elijah; and it was his daily prayer that he might live to transpire, with three arrows, the head of his impious adversary. Beyond his expectations, the wish was accomplished: after a successful inroad Chrysocheir was surprised and slain in his retreat; and the rebel's head was triumphantly presented at the foot of the throne. On the reception of this welcome trophy, Basil instantly called for his bow, discharged three arrows with unerring aim, and accepted the applause of the court, who hailed

<sup>10</sup> In the history of Chrysocheir, Genesius (*Chron.* p. 67-70, edit. Venet.) has exposed the nakedness of the empire. Constantine Porphyrogenitus (*Vit. Basil.* c. 37-43, p. 166-171 [p. 266-276, ed. Bonn]) has displayed the glory of his grandfather. Cedrenus (p. 570-573 [tom. ii. p. 209-212, ed. Bonn]) is without their passions or their knowledge.



the victory of the royal archer. With Chrysocheir, the glory of the Paulicians faded and withered:<sup>20</sup> on the second expedition of the emperor, the impregnable Tephrike was deserted by the heretics, who sued for mercy or escaped to the borders. The city was ruined, but the spirit of independence survived in the mountains: the Paulicians defended, above a century, their religion and liberty, infested the Roman limits, and maintained their perpetual alliance with the enemies of the empire and the Gospel.

About the middle of the eighth century, Constantine, surnamed Copronymus by the worshippers of images, had made an expedition into Armenia, and found, in the cities of Melitene and Theodosiopolis, a great number of Paulicians, his kindred heretics. As a favour, or punishment, he transplanted them from the banks of the Euphrates to Constantinople and Thrace; and by this emigration their doctrine was introduced and diffused in Europe.<sup>21</sup> If the sectaries of the metropolis were soon mingled with the promiscuous mass, those of the country struck a deep root in a foreign soil. The Paulicians of Thrace resisted the storms of persecution, maintained a secret correspondence with their Armenian brethren, and gave aid and comfort to their preachers, who solicited, not without success, the infant faith of the Bulgarians.<sup>22</sup> In the tenth century they were restored and multiplied by a more powerful colony which John Zimisces<sup>23</sup> transported from the Chalybian hills to the valleys of Mount Hæmus. The Oriental clergy, who would have preferred the destruction, impatiently sighed for the absence, of the Manichæans: the warlike emperor had felt and esteemed their valour: their attachment to the Saracens was pregnant with mischief; but, on the side of the Danube, against the barbarians of Scythia, their service might be useful, and their loss would be desirable. Their exile in a distant land was softened by a free toleration: the Paulicians held the city of Philippopolis and the keys of Thrace; the Catholics were their subjects; the Jacobite emigrants their associates: they occupied a line of villages and castles in Macedonia and Epirus; and many native Bulgarians were associated to the communion of arms and heresy. As long as they were awed by power and treated with moderation, their voluntary bands were distinguished in the armies of the empire; and the courage of these *dogs*, ever greedy of war, ever thirsty of human blood, is noticed

<sup>20</sup> *Συναπεμάρανθη πᾶσα ἡ ἀνοδοῦσα τῆς Τεφρικῆς εὐανδρία* [p. 212]. How elegant is the Greek tongue, even in the mouth of Cedrenus!

<sup>21</sup> Copronymus transported his *συγγενεῖς*, heretics; and thus *ἐπ'λατύνθη αἵρεσις τῶν Παυλικιανῶν*, says Cedrenus (p. 463 [tom. ii. p. 10, ed. Bonn]), who has copied the annals of Theophanes.

<sup>22</sup> Petrus Siculus, who resided nine months at Tephrike (A.D. 870) for the ransom of captives (p. 764), was informed of their intended mission, and addressed his preservative, the *Historia Manichæorum*, to the new archbishop of the Bulgarians (p. 754).

<sup>23</sup> The colony of Paulicians and Jacobites transplanted by John Zimisces (A.D. 970) from Armenia to Thrace is mentioned by Zonaras (tom. ii. l. xvii. [c. 1] p. 209) and Anna Comnena (Alexiad, l. xiv. p. 450, etc. [ed. Par 1651]).

with astonishment, and almost with reproach, by the pusillanimous Greeks. The same spirit rendered them arrogant and contumacious: they were easily provoked by caprice or injury; and their privileges were often violated by the faithless bigotry of the government and clergy. In the midst of the Norman war, two thousand five hundred Manichæans deserted the standard of Alexius Comnenus,<sup>24</sup> and retired to their native homes. He dissembled till the moment of revenge; invited the chiefs to a friendly conference; and punished the innocent and guilty by imprisonment, confiscation, and baptism. In an interval of peace the emperor undertook the pious office of reconciling them to the church and state: his winter quarters were fixed at Philippopolis; and the thirteenth apostle, as he is styled by his pious daughter, consumed whole days and nights in theological controversy. His arguments were fortified, their obstinacy was melted, by the honours and rewards which he bestowed on the most eminent proselytes; and a new city, surrounded with gardens, enriched with immunities, and dignified with his own name, was founded by Alexius, for the residence of his vulgar converts. The important station of Philippopolis was wrested from their hands; the contumacious leaders were secured in a dungeon, or banished from their country; and their lives were spared by the prudence, rather than the mercy, of an emperor, at whose command a poor and solitary heretic was burnt alive before the church of St. Sophia.<sup>25</sup> But the proud hope of eradicating the prejudices of a nation was speedily overturned by the invincible zeal of the Paulicians, who ceased to dissemble or refused to obey. After the departure and death of Alexius they soon resumed their civil and religious laws. In the beginning of the thirteenth century their pope or primate (a manifest corruption) resided on the confines of Bulgaria, Croatia, and Dalmatia, and governed by his vicars the filial congregations of Italy and France.<sup>26</sup> From that era a minute scrutiny might prolong and perpetuate the chain of tradition. At the end of the last age the sect or colony still inhabited the valleys of Mount Hæmus, where their ignorance and poverty were more frequently tormented by the Greek clergy than by the Turkish government. The modern Paulicians have lost all memory of their origin; and their religion is disgraced by the worship of the cross, and the practice of bloody sacrifice, which some captives have imported from the wilds of Tartary.<sup>27</sup>

In the West the first teachers of the Manichæan theology had been

<sup>24</sup> The Alexiad of Anna Comnena (l. v. p. 131 [t. i. p. 232, ed. Bonn], l. vi. p. 154, 155 [p. 272 *sq.*, ed. Bonn], l. xiv. p. 450-457 [ed. Par. 1651], with the Annotations of Ducange) records the transactions of her apostolic father with the Manichæans whose abominable heresy she was desirous of refuting.

<sup>25</sup> Basil, a monk, and the author of the Bogomiles, a sect of Gnostics who soon vanished (Anna Comnena, Alexiad, l. xv. p. 486-494 [ed. Par.]; Mosheim, Hist. Ecclesiastica, p. 420).

<sup>26</sup> Matt. Paris, Hist. Major, p. 267. This passage of our English historian is alleged by Ducange in an excellent note on Villehardouin (No. 208), who found the Paulicians at Philippopolis the friends of the Bulgarians.

<sup>27</sup> See Marsigli, Stato Militare dell' Imperio Ottomano, p. 24.

repulsed by the people or suppressed by the prince. The favour and success of the Paulicians in the eleventh and twelfth centuries must be imputed to the strong, though secret, discontent which armed the most pious Christians against the church of Rome. Her avarice was oppressive, her despotism odious: less degenerate perhaps than the Greeks in the worship of saints and images, her innovations were more rapid and scandalous: she had rigorously defined and imposed the doctrine of transubstantiation: the lives of the Latin clergy were more corrupt, and the Eastern bishops might pass for the successors of the apostles if they were compared with the lordly prelates who wielded by turns the crosier, the sceptre, and the sword. Three different roads might introduce the Paulicians into the heart of Europe. After the conversion of Hungary the pilgrims who visited Jerusalem might safely follow the course of the Danube: in their journey and return they passed through Philippopolis; and the sectaries, disguising their name and heresy, might accompany the French or German caravans to their respective countries. The trade and dominion of Venice pervaded the coast of the Adriatic, and the hospitable republic opened her bosom to foreigners of every climate and religion. Under the Byzantine standard the Paulicians were often transported to the Greek provinces of Italy and Sicily: in peace and war they freely conversed with strangers and natives, and their opinions were silently propagated in Rome, Milan, and the kingdoms beyond the Alps.<sup>28</sup> It was soon discovered that many thousand Catholics of every rank, and of either sex, had embraced the Manichæan heresy; and the flames which consumed twelve canons of Orleans was the first act and signal of persecution. The Bulgarians,<sup>29</sup> a name so innocent in its origin, so odious in its application, spread their branches over the face of Europe. United in common hatred of idolatry and Rome, they were connected by a form of episcopal and presbyterian government; their various sects were discriminated by some fainter or darker shades of theology; but they generally agreed in the two principles—the contempt of the Old Testament, and the denial of the body of Christ either on the cross or in the eucharist. A con-

<sup>28</sup> The introduction of the Paulicians into Italy and France is amply discussed by Muratori (*Antiquitat. Italæ mediæ Ævi*, tom. v. dissert. lx. p. 81-152) and Mosheim (p. 379-382, 419-422). Yet both have overlooked a curious passage of William the Apulian, who clearly describes them in a battle between the Greeks and Normans, A.D. 1040 (in Muratori, *Script. Rerum Ital.* tom. v. p. 256):

Cum Græcis aderant quidam, quos pessimus error  
Fecerat amentes, et ab ipso nomen habebant.

But he is so ignorant of their doctrine as to make them a kind of Sabellians or Patripassians.

<sup>29</sup> *Bulgari*, *Boulgres*, *Bougres*, a national appellation, has been applied by the French as a term of reproach to usurers and unnatural sinners. The *Paterini*, or *Patelini*, has been made to signify a smooth and flattering hypocrite, such as *l'Avocat Patelin* of that original and pleasant farce (Ducange, *Gloss. Latinitat. mediæ et infimæ Ævi*). The Manichæans were likewise named *Cathari*, or the pure, by corruption, *Gasari*, etc.

fession of simple worship and blameless manners is extorted from their enemies; and so high was their standard of perfection, that the increasing congregations were divided into two classes of disciples, of those who practised and of those who aspired. It was in the country of the Albigeois,<sup>30</sup> in the southern provinces of France, that the Paulicians were most deeply implanted; and the same vicissitudes of martyrdom and revenge which had been displayed in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates were repeated in the thirteenth century on the banks of the Rhône. The laws of the Eastern emperors were revived by Frederic the Second. The insurgents of Tephrike were represented by the barons and cities of Languedoc: Pope Innocent III. surpassed the sanguinary fame of Theodora. It was in cruelty alone that her soldiers could equal the heroes of the Crusades, and the cruelty of her priests was far excelled by the founders of the Inquisition<sup>31</sup>—an office more adapted to confirm than to refute the belief of an evil principle. The visible assemblies of the Paulicians, or Albigeois, were extirpated by fire and sword; and the bleeding remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or Catholic conformity. But the invincible spirit which they had kindled still lived and breathed in the Western world. In the state, in the church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul, who protested against the tyranny of Rome, embraced the Bible as the rule of faith, and purified their creed from all the visions of the Gnostic theology. The struggles of Wickliff in England, of Huss in Bohemia, were premature and ineffectual; but the names of Zuinglius, Luther, and Calvin are pronounced with gratitude as the deliverers of nations.

A philosopher, who calculates the degree of their merit and the value of their reformation, will prudently ask from what articles of faith, *above* or *against* our reason, they have enfranchised the Christians; for such enfranchisement is doubtless a benefit so far as it may be compatible with truth and piety. After a fair discussion we shall rather be surprised by the timidity than scandalised by the freedom of our first reformers.<sup>32</sup> With the Jews, they adopted the belief and defence of all the Hebrew Scriptures, with all their prodigies, from the garden of

<sup>30</sup> Of the laws, crusade, and persecution against the Albigeois, a just, though general, idea is expressed by Mosheim (p. 477-481). The detail may be found in the ecclesiastical historians, ancient and modern, Catholics and Protestants; and among these Fleury is the most impartial and moderate.

<sup>31</sup> The Acts (*Liber Sententiarum*) of the Inquisition of Toulouse (A.D. 1307-1323) have been published by Limborch (Amstelodami, 1692), with a previous History of the Inquisition in general. They deserved a more learned and critical editor. As we must not calumniate even Satan, or the Holy Office, I will observe that, of a list of criminals which fills nineteen folio pages, only fifteen men and four women were delivered to the secular arm.

<sup>32</sup> The opinions and proceedings of the reformers are exposed in the second part of the general history of Mosheim; but the balance, which he has held with so clear an eye and so steady a hand, begins to incline in favour of his Lutheran brethren.

Eden to the visions of the prophet Daniel; and they were bound, like the Catholics, to justify against the Jews the abolition of a divine law. In the great mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation the reformers were severely orthodox: they freely adopted the theology of the four or the six first councils; and with the Athanasian creed they pronounced the eternal damnation of all who did not believe the Catholic faith. Transubstantiation, the invisible change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, is a tenet that may defy the power of argument and pleasantry; but instead of consulting the evidence of their senses, of their sight, their feeling, and their taste, the first Protestants were entangled in their own scruples, and awed by the words of Jesus in the institution of the sacrament. Luther maintained a *corporeal*, and Calvin a *real*, presence of Christ in the eucharist; and the opinion of Zuinglius, that it is no more than a spiritual communion, a simple memorial, has slowly prevailed in the reformed churches.<sup>33</sup> But the loss of one mystery was amply compensated by the stupendous doctrines of original sin, redemption, faith, grace, and predestination, which have been strained from the epistles of St. Paul. These subtle questions had most assuredly been prepared by the fathers and schoolmen; but the final improvement and popular use may be attributed to the first reformers, who enforced them as the absolute and essential terms of salvation. Hitherto the weight of supernatural belief inclines against the Protestants; and many a sober Christian would rather admit that a wafer is God than that God is a cruel and capricious tyrant.

Yet the services of Luther and his rivals are solid and important; and the philosopher must own his obligations to these fearless enthusiasts.<sup>34</sup> I. By their hands the lofty fabric of superstition, from the abuse of indulgences to the intercession of the Virgin, has been levelled with the ground. Myriads of both sexes of the monastic profession were restored to the liberty and labours of social life. A hierarchy of saints and angels, of imperfect and subordinate deities, were stripped of their temporal power, and reduced to the enjoyment of celestial happiness: their images and relics were banished from the church; and the credulity of the people was no longer nourished with the daily repetition of miracles and visions. The imitation of paganism was supplied by a pure and spiritual worship of prayer and thanksgiving, the most worthy of man, the least unworthy of the Deity. It only remains to observe whether such sublime simplicity be consistent with popular devotion; whether the vulgar, in the absence of all visible objects, will not be inflamed by enthusiasm or insensibly subside in languor and indiffer-

<sup>33</sup> Under Edward VI. our reformation was more bold and perfect: but in the fundamental articles of the church of England, a strong and explicit declaration against the real presence was obliterated in the original copy, to please the people, or the Lutherans, or Queen Elizabeth (Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. ii. p. 82, 128, 302).

<sup>34</sup> "Had it not been for such men as Luther and myself," said the fanatic Whiston to Halley the philosopher, "you would now be kneeling before an image of St. Winifred."

ence. II. The chain of authority was broken, which restrains the bigot from thinking as he pleases, and the slave from speaking as he thinks: the popes, fathers, and councils were no longer the supreme and infallible judges of the world; and each Christian was taught to acknowledge no law but the Scriptures, no interpreter but his own conscience. This freedom, however, was the consequence rather than the design of the Reformation. The patriot reformers were ambitious of succeeding the tyrants whom they had dethroned. They imposed with equal rigour their creeds and confessions; they asserted the right of the magistrate to punish heretics with death. The pious or personal animosity of Calvin proscribed in Servetus <sup>16</sup> the guilt of his own rebellion,<sup>16</sup> and the flames of Smithfield, in which he was afterwards consumed, had been kindled for the Anabaptists by the zeal of Cranmer.<sup>17</sup> The nature of the tiger was the same, but he was gradually deprived of his teeth and fangs. A spiritual and temporal kingdom was possessed by the Roman pontiff: the Protestant doctors were subjects of a humble rank, without revenue or jurisdiction. *His* decrees were consecrated by the antiquity of the Catholic church, *their* arguments and disputes were submitted to the people; and their appeal to private judgment was accepted, beyond their wishes, by curiosity and enthusiasm. Since the days of Luther and Calvin a secret reformation has been silently working in the bosom of the reformed churches, many weeds of prejudice were eradicated; and the disciples of Erasmus <sup>18</sup> diffused a spirit of freedom and moderation. The liberty of conscience has been claimed as a common benefit, an inalienable right.<sup>19</sup> the free governments of

<sup>16</sup> The article of *Servet* in the *Dictionnaire Critique* of *Chauffepié* is the best account which I have seen of this shameful transaction. See likewise the *Abbé d'Artigny*, *Nouveaux Memoires d'Histoire*, etc, tom ii p 55-154.

<sup>17</sup> I am more deeply scandalised at the single execution of Servetus than at the hecatombs which have blazed in the *Auto da Fés* of Spain and Portugal. 1. The zeal of Calvin seems to have been envenomed by personal malice, and perhaps envy. He accused his adversary before their common enemies, the judges of Vienne, and betrayed, for his destruction, the sacred trust of a private correspondence. 2. The deed of cruelty was not varnished by the pretence of danger to the church or state. In his passage through Geneva Servetus was a harmless stranger, who neither preached, nor printed, nor made proselytes. 3. A Catholic inquisitor yields the same obedience which he requires, but Calvin violated the golden rule of doing as he would be done by, a rule which I read in a moral treatise of Isocrates (in *Niccole*, tom i p 93, edit. Battie), four hundred years before the publication of the Gospel. *Ἄ πασχωντες ὑφ' ἑτέρων ὀργίζεσθε, ταῦτα τοῖς ἄλλοις μὴ ποιεῖτε*.

<sup>18</sup> See Burnet, vol ii p 84-86. The sense and humanity of the young king were oppressed by the authority of the primate.

<sup>19</sup> Erasmus may be considered as the father of rational theology. After a slumber of a hundred years, it was revived by the Arminians of Holland, Grotius, Limborch, and Le Clerc in England by Chillingworth, the latitudinarians of Cambridge (Burnet, *Hist. of own Times*, vol. i p. 261-268, octavo edition), Tillotson, Clarke, Hoadley, etc.

<sup>20</sup> I am sorry to observe that the three writers of the last age, by whom the rights of toleration have been so nobly defended, Bayle, Leibnitz, and Locke, are all laymen and philosophers.

Holland <sup>40</sup> and England <sup>41</sup> introduced the practice of toleration; and the narrow allowance of the laws has been enlarged by the prudence and humanity of the times. In the exercise the mind has understood the limits of its powers, and the words and shadows that might amuse the child can no longer satisfy his manly reason. The volumes of controversy are overspread with cobwebs: the doctrine of a Protestant church is far removed from the knowledge or belief of its private members; and the forms of orthodoxy, the articles of faith, are subscribed with a sigh, or a smile, by the modern clergy. Yet the friends of Christianity are alarmed at the boundless impulse of inquiry and scepticism. The predictions of the Catholics are accomplished: the web of mystery is unravelled by the Arminians, Arians, and Socinians, whose numbers must not be computed from their separate congregations; and the pillars of Revelation are shaken by those men who preserve the name without the substance of religion, who indulge the licence without the temper of philosophy.<sup>42</sup>

## CHAPTER LV

*The Bulgarians—Origin, Migrations, and Settlement of the Hungarians—Their Inroads in the East and West—The Monarchy of Russia—Geography and Trade—Wars of the Russians against the Greek Empire—Conversion of the Barbarians*

UNDER the reign of Constantine, the grandson of Heraclius, the ancient barrier of the Danube, so often violated and so often restored, was irretrievably swept away by a new deluge of barbarians. Their progress was favoured by the caliphs, their unknown and accidental auxiliaries: the Roman legions were occupied in Asia; and after the loss of Syria, Egypt, and Africa, the Cæsars were twice reduced to the danger and disgrace of defending their capital against the Saracens. If, in the account of this interesting people, I have deviated from the strict and original line of my undertaking, the merit of the subject will hide my transgression, or solicit my excuse. In the East, in the West, in war, in religion, in science, in their prosperity, and in their decay,

<sup>40</sup> See the excellent chapter of Sir William Temple on the Religion of the United Provinces. I am not satisfied with Grotius (*de Rebus Belgicis*, *Annal.* 1. i. p. 13, 14, edit. in 12mo), who approves the Imperial laws of persecution, and only condemns the bloody tribunal of the Inquisition.

<sup>41</sup> Sir William Blackstone (*Commentaries*, vol. iv. p. 53, 54) explains the law of England as it was fixed at the Revolution. The exceptions of Papists, and of those who deny the Trinity, would still leave a tolerable scope for persecution, if the national spirit were not more effectual than a hundred statutes.

<sup>42</sup> I shall recommend to public animadversion two passages in Dr. Priestley which betray the ultimate tendency of his opinions. At the first of these (*Hist. of the Corruptions of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 275, 276) the priest, at the second (vol. ii. p. 484) the magistrate, may tremble!