

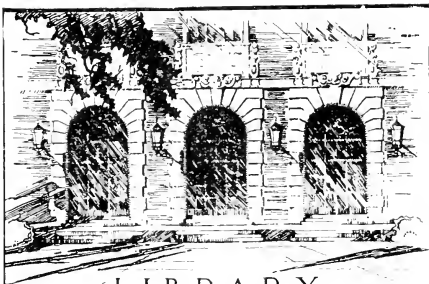
ALETHEA:

AT THE PARTING
OF THE WAYS



BY CYRIL





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A L E T H E A :

AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

Alethea :

AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

BY

CYRIL.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

	PAGE
CHAPTER XXVI.	
Photius in a Difficulty—A Mythical Assemblage -	1
CHAPTER XXVII.	
The Hippodrome—A Banquet of Buffoons - -	13
CHAPTER XXVIII.	
An Expedition—A Dream and its Fulfilment -	21
CHAPTER XXIX.	
A Disconsolate Woman—A Midnight Flight -	34
CHAPTER XXX.	
Prisoner among the Saracens—A Rescue - -	42
CHAPTER XXXI.	
A Lonely Soul - - - - -	5 ¹
CHAPTER XXXII.	
The Convent of St. Prisca - - - - -	64
CHAPTER XXXIII.	
Principle and Expediency - - - - -	74
CHAPTER XXXIV.	
The End of Michael III. - - - - -	81
CHAPTER XXXV.	
Basil the Macedonian - - - - -	89

	PAGE
CHAPTER XXXVI.	
The Eighth General Council - - - - -	107
CHAPTER XXXVII.	
The Slave Girl's Last Journey—Andrimades -	125
CHAPTER XXXVIII.	
The Ghost in the Wood - - - - -	135
CHAPTER XXXIX.	
Photius in Exile: Taken, but not Humbled -	143
CHAPTER XL.	
In the Tower of the City Gate - - - - -	155
CHAPTER XLI.	
A Farewell—Paternal Counsel—The Expedition -	164
CHAPTER XLII.	
The Greek Fire - - - - -	182
CHAPTER XLIII.	
Assandra - - - - -	197
CHAPTER XLIV.	
The Death of the Slave Girl - - - - -	202
CHAPTER XLV.	
Laurel-crowned - - - - -	211
CHAPTER XLVI.	
Farewell to Andrimades - - - - -	227
CHAPTER XLVII.	
The Reverie of Leo the Philosopher - - - -	234

Contents of Vol. II.

vii

CHAPTER XLVIII.

PAGE

A Golden Banquet - - - - - 244

CHAPTER XLIX.

Another Scene in St. Sophia - - - - - 255

CHAPTER L.

Conclusion - - - - - 261

APPENDIX - - - - - 269



A L E T H E A .



CHAPTER XXVI.

PHOTIUS IN A DIFFICULTY—A MYTHICAL ASSEMBLAGE.

PHOTIUS, driven to bay by these letters of the Pope, was not subdued, but all his fiercer instincts were aroused.

He now sent out the budget of charges against the Roman Church which he had put together at the suggestion of Bardas Cæsar. They were, as we have seen, of little account, and contained no serious imputation of error or evil-doing; but he tried to season them highly for the Eastern palate by introducing them under the following prologue:

“Heresies seemed to have died, and the Faith was spread abroad from this Imperial city over the infidel nations; the Armenians had left the errors of the Jacobites, to unite themselves to the Church; the Bulgarians, a barbarous nation, hostile to the Christian religion, had left their pagan superstitions to embrace the Faith. But they had not been two years converted when certain men, coming out of the darkness of the West, arrived on the scene to destroy these new plantations, and to corrupt in them the purity of the Faith by their errors.”

Nor was this all. With his unclouded brain he sat down to plan and devise a Council which should

be a set-off against that lately held in Rome ; but it was not, nor did he intend it to be, a real Council, but rather an assembly of ghosts and shadows. His fertile fancy made the Emperors Michael and Basil preside over this Council, with the legates of the three great Sees of the East. All the senators were supposed to be present, and the Bishops of the Province of Constantinople. Imaginary accusers came forward, and told with flowing tears the crimes of Pope Nicholas, and asked the Council to pronounce upon them. Witnesses were present to sustain the charges ; but Photius was there to take the part of Nicholas, and to beseech the Council not to condemn an absent man. In spite of his remonstrances, however (so he reported), the Council forthwith entered upon the trial of the absent Pontiff, and unhesitatingly condemned him. These bishops, who had no existence outside the imagination of the man who put them into Council, condemned the Pope as guilty of a thousand crimes, and pronounced sentence of deposition against him ; they hurled him from his position of head of the Universal Church. They went so far as even to declare excommunicate all those who should hold themselves in his communion. Not a bad day's work for those spirits of the air !

Now, though the actors in this Council were myths, its Acts were realities, drawn up by Photius' running pen. Hence he had them nominally signed by twenty-one bishops ; but the company of the shadows was so dear to him that he brought them forward again, to the number of one thou-

sand, under the guise of senators, abbots, ecclesiastics of divers degrees, and even members of the reigning family, and made them attach their signatures, too, to the Acts of this imaginary assemblage.

This Council seemed to Photius' mind a satisfactory device. He wound it up with plaudits pronounced, not only for the Emperor of the East, but for Louis, the successor of Charlemagne, whom he hoped by this unexpected compliment to draw to his side in the dispute with the Pope ; and, having laid this foundation for interchange of views and civilities with the monarch of the West, his next step was to write to Ingelberga, his wife, a letter, in which he besought her to persuade her husband to drive Nicholas out of Rome, as a miscreant condemned by a General Council of the Church.

We dwell in detail on the acts and conduct of Photius at this time because it was a crucial period. In fact, it was the crisis in which the foundation of the Greek Schism was laid, that Schism which has produced effects abiding to the present day. For though there may be truth in the assertion that there would have arisen a severance between the East and West, even if Photius had never appeared on the scene, there can be little doubt that his action at this time, wide and far-reaching all over the Eastern world, blinding and deceiving as to the cause and nature of the dispute with the Pope, raising the selfish passions of the East against the West, opened a wound which, though for a time staunched in the centuries that followed, and seem-

ing to disappear altogether at certain moments under the influence of joint Councils assembled for its healing, was never effectually closed.

Photius must at this time have had from the Emperor Michael free permission to use the powers of the State for the advancement of his schemes ; in no other sense can we understand his high-handed audacity. Seeing that many persons separated themselves from his communion since his condemnation by Pope Nicholas, and that his letters and other artifices failed to bring them over to him, he persecuted them with atrocious cruelty. Some he deprived of their titles, others he robbed of their goods ; some he put into prison, some he sent into banishment ; and when he found his opportunity, he threatened, and in some cases cruelly persecuted, even Orthodox women and children.

Meeting, while in this overbearing mood, Melanus and Theophylact, one evening coming out of the house of the former, he addressed them abruptly and rudely on the subject that was in his thoughts.

“I must ask you both,” he said, “to lend me your support ; or, as I am in a position to enforce obedience, I must order you to withdraw from Ignatius.”

The patrician and the soldier looked sternly at him.

“You do not speak. Do you doubt my power ? Have you not heard of my treatment of the hermits of Mount Olympus, who refused to communicate with me.”

Still the others were silent and contemptuous.

“Theophylact,” said Melanus, turning directly to his companion and ignoring Photius’ presence, “I would ask you to ascertain for me the churches of the city, if any, that are served by Orthodox clergy. My chariot is in waiting ; I go to meet and console, perhaps also to take into my house, certain monks of Mount Olympus, who have been beaten, driven from their cells, and reduced to abject poverty, because they would not join in the Schism.”

“Do you, too, fly like a coward !” said Photius, directing his looks to Theophylact.

“What would you ?” said Theophylact.

“I have said what I would and what I demand.”

“Then repeat it : I was paying no attention.”

“Designedly, I think.”

“Perhaps.”

“You are of Ignatius’ party ?”

“Yes !”

“You must detach yourself from it.”

“I shall not,” said Theophylact with a curl of contempt on his lip ; “and I regard the demand as unreasonable.”

“Are you aware of my power ?”

“It does not give me a moment’s thought.”

“But it should, since I have it direct from the Emperor.”

“The sources of your power, like the power itself, are of no account.”

“The Emperor of no account !”

“Not in his character as schismatic and promoter of the Schism.”

“I shall not fail to let him know the estimate at which you hold him.”

“As you please.”

“I make no progress with men like you by words. I must proceed to acts.”

“I am amazed at your language,” said Theophylact in a tone of perfect unconcern. “It seems to me to lack alike dignity and discretion.”

Photius turned to go in great disgust, but seeing Gregory of Syracuse approaching, he stopped and waited until he came up, when he said to him, putting question after question rapidly :

“Have you been around? Have you visited the churches, seen the clergy, separated the goats from the sheep, and driven the former from the pastures?”

“I have found in the city churches more black sheep than I expected,” said Gregory, “and I have laid a heavy hand upon some of them.”

“Some! Why not all?”

“Would you have me arrest a hundred evil-doers in a day? The number of priests opposed to you is far beyond that number, and I have been only a day and a-half at the work.”

“All must go,” said Photius, “all without exception, old and young, pious and careless, learned and unlearned; all, of every shade of character and surroundings, who are for Ignatius and against me, must give up their livings, and must leave Constantinople at once.”

“You will have to make some exceptions, I think,” said Gregory thoughtfully, “in this wholesale slaughter of the innocents.”

“No exception,” said Photius, “not even one shall be allowed to remain.”

“ If you had my present experience, you would not be of that mind.”

“ What do you mean to convey ? ”

“ That there are in the city a few of the clergy who are so loved by all that it would be dangerous to touch them. There is the young priest of St. Mocus : I found him surrounded by a body-guard of the poor and afflicted, and even noble ladies hovering around him ; among them your own ward, to protect him. Why, had I attempted his arrest, I should have raised the city in rebellion.”

Theophylact, who stood by still, was amused at this check to the tyrant's plans, and waited, now much interested in the conversation, to hear what would follow ; but Photius did not reply to Gregory, but seemed to fall into a reflective mood, from which, however, he was soon aroused by the arrival of a rough man on the scene. This new-comer was one of the two men he had met stealing out of the Tomb of Constantine Copronymus, on the occasion of Ignatius' imprisonment there. Theophylact, to make himself sure, gazed closely into the ill-omened face, and then said, turning to Photius :

“ I have already seen this man with you ; and he is bad company for anyone.”

“ Merely an instrument,” said Photius, “ where-with to do certain work.”

“ He is, I think, incapable of doing any but a work of darkness,” said the Turmarch.

“ You shall hear what he has done and judge. You have been to Olympus, man ; and no doubt taken a part in the work of destruction. Anything beyond the burning of cells and chasing the inmates ? ”

“Yes ; we buried a monk to the middle, and left him to grow or rot.”

“Miscreant !” said Theophylact, advancing upon him. “You shall be punished as a murderer.”

“Patience, Turmarch,” said Photius ; “he is my agent, doing my work.”

“Your work is not human,” said Theophylact, “but Satanic.”

“In this particular case it seems, I admit, disagreeable ; but not without good reason, I opine. It is not always that we gain adherents by severity : I often work by other methods. I have brought over a large number to my side by giving them lucre in return for a written promise that they would be of my communion, as against that of the Pope. I have also by my alms-giving added crowds of needy persons to my Church.”

“But the money you gave was not your own.”

“In one sense, I allow, it was not.”

“In no sense,” said Theophylact severely. “You have, it is well known, persuaded the Emperor to make a rule of law that all pious and charitable legacies pass through your hands for distribution, and you make a character for yourself on the generosity of others.”

“But for a good purpose.”

“What purpose could make acceptable the alms-giving of the Pharisee ?”

“But I don’t act like the Pharisee ; for I give, not to gain a reputation, but a following.”

“To gain a following, as it seems to me, by proving that you are ‘not like other men.’”

“O, well,” said Photius, “the end justifies the

means used to attain it. My end, just now, is to complete the severance of the Eastern from the Western Church. I have advanced so far on the way to that end that I cannot turn back, and I must strain every nerve to attain it. You will probably say that the end is even more unworthy than the means, which I shall not admit without positive demonstration."

"I am but a rough soldier, who knows more of the weapons of war than of religious controversy; but I may assert that I have weighed this matter with the utmost impartiality."

"May I have your view of the case?"

"Willingly; it is this: You go to war with the spiritual head of this city; and because you are not allowed to crush him, you go to war with his defender. There is on your side no principle at stake; you fight for neither faith nor morality, but for Photius. I have followed you in all your moves from the beginning of this contest, and before it began. Years ago, while you were yet a layman, you made little of the Patriarch of Constantinople; you wrote captious treatises against him, and you supported Gregory of Syracuse in his revolt against his authority. Then you took advantage of the hostility of the Emperor and his uncle to the prelate, so that when they drove him from his throne you induced them to appoint yourself to his place. Your guilt is added to by the facts, well known through the Empire, that Ignatius lost his throne for his strict adherence to principle. Am I exaggerating?"

"You are hitting hard, and I compliment you on your power of direct speech."

“ I am but stating well-known facts ; it is for you to put them side by side and draw the inference.”

“ If adverse, I should much prefer to have it drawn by another.”

“ Adverse it is and must be: your conduct has been prompted throughout by selfish ambition. Witness your attacks on Ignatius arising out of your desire to show your superiority to him ; your usurpation of his throne, with a view to appropriating his income and position ; and your rebellion against the Pope. All selfishness and pride !”

“ Cease to taunt me,” said Photius in an imperious tone. Do not add to the pangs of a conscience which already suffers. I have thrown down the gauntlet, and I will fight to the death. I have thrown the dice, and will await the counterthrow. I will play to the bitter end. I look into futurity, and I seem to see the effects of this recklessness of mine. I see it in the abandonment of the Christians of the East to the savage Mohammedan wolves. I see it in the destruction of our beautiful capital, and in the reign of infidelity all over Asia, from Constantinople to the Southern Sea. But what care I for the passing away of cities and empires, and the human ruin of their inhabitants ; for it is not out of wealth or grandeur that virtue is made, nor is the greatest earthly kingdom the vestibule of the kingdom of Heaven.

“ Though by thus rending the Church in twain I weaken her position, since I diminish the friends of my fellow-Christians in this Eastern world, yet I do

not rob them of their spiritual treasures or friends. I leave them the saints and angels to protect them, the Sacraments to nourish their souls with grace, and the Holy Eucharist to gather them together in grand and simple worship before the altar, 'from the rising to the setting of the sun.' And when the Christians of the Eastern and Western worlds look back upon Photius through a vista of many centuries, they will see him standing alone, neither heretic nor schismatic, calling into dispute no article of faith, not even the supremacy of the Bishops of Rome, but engaged in a death struggle with one of them, Nicholas, the present occupant of that See."

"All the time," said Theophylact, "you rend the Eastern Church from the centre of unity and lay the foundation of an everlasting separation."

If Photius had lived in the sixteenth century, instead of in the ninth, and had disputed with Leo X., instead of Nicholas I., would he have pursued the course of Martin Luther? The question suggests itself by reason of a certain similarity between the two men. He certainly would not have lacked courage to adopt the *rôle* of the modern reformer; nor would he have fallen short in ability or mental culture. Yet it is impossible for us even to imagine Photius to have been a reformer after the fashion of Luther.

He had no suggestion of Luther's plans in the errors of preceding ages. He found the Church's belief and practices springing from Scripture seed, and developing in the Christian atmosphere; and he took them as he found them. It never even oc-

curred to him to throw off the traditions of eight centuries. No man could handle a Scripture text with more dexterity than Photius ; no man could more serviceably compare, assort, and apply it : and yet he saw nothing in the sacred writings inconsistent with the belief and religious usages of the primitive Christian nations subjected to him, who had received their religion faithfully from their fathers.

So that if Photius had been thrown forward six hundred years, and had lived in the sixteenth instead of in the ninth century, he would never have been a rebel in the sense of Luther. There is not in the East, nor was there in him, a tendency to change the long sanctioned usages of the Church. Constantinople was a centre where the belief and practices of the East and West stood side by side. The primitive Uses of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria met there the primitive Use of Rome ; flowers similar in hue and odour, they were mingled in that garden of the East and bloomed side by side.

What Eastern Churchman would have thought of plucking out the imported species in favour of the indigenous plant ? Not Photius.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE HIPPODROME—A BANQUET OF BUFFOONS.

MICHAEL, aided by Photius and the Cæsar, had now thrown down the religious edifice, and all was ruin around him ; he had wrestled with a Titan, and, in a certain sense, brought him to the ground. If he had not dragged the Pope a prisoner to Constantinople, he had at least scattered his army ; he had curtailed the dominion of the head of the Christian world, by setting half his subjects free from their allegiance.

What more could he do? What further could be expected from him by even the most exacting schismatic?

He felt relieved of a great burden. He was no longer in the humour for business, and he felt that he was entitled to a long round of dissipation, and so he plunged with greater zest than ever into his old habits of frivolity, boisterous conversation, and profanity.

Gossip, of which he was the subject, was of daily occurrence at the hippodrome, for he was well known there even to the lowest of the stable-boys. His conduct in this place of amusement was not only undignified, but calculated to degrade him in the eyes of the populace. He was well-nigh insane on the subject of horses, buying them for enormous prices, and regarding it as a valuable quality in the animal if he was vicious,

and likely to put in peril the life or limbs of the man whom he deputed to train him. He was singularly injudicious and devoid of self-respect. He joked and laughed with the charioteers of the circus, and adopted their slang, becoming one of them in coarseness and vulgarity. It was a deplorable spectacle when this dissipated man, the ruler of what was still a mighty empire, was seen to take an active part in the races; to drive, and whip, and urge on his horses with all the ardour of a paid charioteer, and to strive for the prize as if his character or fortune were at stake.

"This Emperor of ours," began Septimus, a horse-trainer, "has no respect for himself."

"Rather you should say," said Peter, a charioteer, "he has little respect for your neck or your skull."

"What matter," said George, a stable-boy, "so long as he spends money amongst us."

"He does not spend much of it," answered Peter; "or if he does, little enough of it finds its way into my purse."

"He throws a good many michaels among us," said George, "when he visits the stables."

"And is that often?" asked Peter.

"As often as we get a savage horse," replied the other.

"I believe the horses from the plains of Macedonia are wild," said Septimus.

"Wild as the Devil," replied George concisely.

"Then I suppose," said Septimus, "that his latest purchase is a Macedonian; for, if ever a horse had Satan in him, he has. He came near to killing me two days ago."

“Exactly,” responded Peter ; “ Michael puts your life as nothing compared to the fun of breaking in a wild horse.”

“ Have you heard of the Macedonian fellow who has turned up lately in the city ? ” inquired Peter. “ They say he would tame a tiger.”

“ Do you refer to the bull-necked chap,” said George, “ who is always loafing about the hippodrome ? ”

“ I don’t know about his neck,” said Peter, “ but he has a head as big as a bag of wine.”

Their conversation was interrupted by the unexpected appearance of the Emperor, attended by a single official, and followed by a crowd of noisy boys. He carried a stout whip in his hand, and seemed to be a good deal under the influence of drink. Turning to the boys, he said : “ Prepare for a good laugh, but not too loud, and keep at a distance, as you would from a lion. The horse that I will have trained just now not only kicks and plunges, but rears and bites. Halloo ! there,” he cried, addressing a group of stable-men. “ Bring out that chained brute, that we may see what he is made of to-day.”

By this time the hippodrome began to fill with spectators ; for it had gone through the city that there was to be a great feat of horsemanship, and the Emperor had been seen passing in the direction of the racecourse.

A large horse, with fire in his eyes and foaming at his bit, was brought out between two grooms. He was bound up in an extraordinary fashion, one fore leg being attached by ropes to the neck, and

the other having just freedom enough to move conjointly with a hind leg to which it was chained. Though scarcely able to move forward, the animal was in no way subdued, but swelled with rage and nervousness, and roared like a wild beast.

"Harness him to a chariot," said the Emperor. "Come, Camus"—addressing himself to a charioteer—"and mount the car. We will loose his fastenings."

"Your Majesty will excuse me," said Camus; "I'm afraid of that horse."

"What do you say, Septimus!" said the Emperor, "will you venture again?"

"Not for your Majesty's crown," replied Septimus. "It's a miracle I was not killed on Tuesday."

"Coward!" said Michael. "Who mounts the car?" asked he, addressing himself to a knot of charioteers standing by. "Someone must go: otherwise, I will go myself."

"I," said a youth, "to save the Emperor's life."

"Mount, then," said the Emperor, "and take your chance. You will be no great loss at the worst."

"Forgive me, Most August," said a man of herculean build, advancing from the crowd, "forgive me if I intrude. That boy alone is like a dog against a lion. With my aid he may escape with his life."

"And pray who are you?" demanded the Emperor. "You appear a strong animal. Have you any experience of wild horses?"

"They call me Basil," said the stranger. "I have come from Macedonia, and I have been subduing

and riding the horses of that country from my boyhood."

"Lucky dog!" said the Emperor, "to have got such an opportunity of distinguishing yourself. Mount the car, and if he breaks your neck, or dashes out your brains, you will have died in the service of the Emperor."

"Cut the ropes," said Basil, as he threw himself on the animal's neck and held him with the strength of a Samson. The horse appeared at first to shrink under that iron grasp; but recovering from the shock after awhile, he was beginning to resume his old tricks of rearing, kicking, and biting, when Basil, drawing from his side a stout elastic stick, which was bound there, dealt him a single blow from the head to the shoulder, with such strength and judgment that the animal shook all over and nearly fell to the ground. He then produced a sweetmeat of some kind, which he administered to the horse, gently stroking his head. The animal received it nervously, and an understanding seemed to be at once established between horse and man.

"Get down, boy," said Basil, "and let me have the reins." Then mounting the chariot, he drove the horse around the circus, amidst the deafening plaudits of the spectators, the cheers of the boys, and the heartily expressed approval of the Emperor.

"All praise to you, Macedonian," cried Michael. "You have done more to establish yourself in the Emperor's favour than if you had led the army to victory. Be assured, I will not overlook your skill and daring. You shall be my future master of the Imperial stables; and even higher rewards are in

store for you. Meanwhile, come and sup with me, and I will present you to my Patriarch, who will, no doubt, receive you as a distinguished neophyte, and impart to you an episcopal benediction."

The scenes that we describe in this chapter are so strange, and imply such silliness in the principal actor, that they would be quite incredible if they had not a solid foundation in the history of the period. But we have it, on the authority of contemporary writers of veracity and eminence, that Constantinople, in the middle of the ninth century, was the theatre almost every day of some such instance of gross vulgarity or atrocity on the part of its ruler. It is perfectly true that Michael was a sot and a tyrant, and could descend for companionship to the lowest level in the social scale, and that he even went so far as to entertain buffoons at table in the Imperial Palace; while the story of the introduction of Basil the Macedonian (who was afterwards Emperor of the East) to Michael III. and the populace of the Imperial city, is substantially if not literally true. The surprise of the adventurer, Basil, at being so suddenly taken into favour by the Emperor, was raised to the level of bewilderment by the picture he beheld in the supper room of the Imperial Palace, when introduced there for the first time by his host. He was naturally abashed at being invited to sup with an Emperor; and his timidity was increased at the thought of meeting the Patriarch, and, perhaps, the Court officials, senators, and patricians at the Imperial banquet. But what was his astonishment when, instead of men of rank,

he beheld jesters and buffoons assembled around the board.

“You appear amazed,” said the Emperor to him, “at beholding my guests for the first time. You will be pleased with them on a closer acquaintance, and will find them very pleasant fellows. This,” said he, “is Theophilus, my Patriarch. There are three Patriarchs in Constantinople : Ignatius is the Patriarch of the Christians ; Photius is the Patriarch of Bardas Cæsar ; and Theophilus, the clown, is my Patriarch. Go on your knees and receive his blessing.”

Obedient to orders, though with much disgust, Basil prostrated himself before the mock Patriarch; and that hideous creature, rising from his seat, with much solemnity pronounced over Basil a stanza of a ribald ditty, and tracing an extraordinary figure in the air with his outstretched arm, blew upon him, and told him to rise up a new man. Even then the character of the Macedonian showed itself a little, and he retired to his couch with a serious and dissatisfied expression of face.

Michael played the host in his characteristic fashion. At one time he called for a song, when a buffoon stood up and gave a sacred chant of the Mass in a rapid and lively manner to words of gross profanity ; another time he would have a speech, when a mimic delivered some ridiculous sentiments, in the tone and manner of Ignatius' preaching. He addressed these clowns as prelates of the Church. One was a bishop, another an archbishop, a third was an abbot or an archimandrite. He discussed with them, in mocking

fashion, weighty questions touching faith and morals ; and wound up by making them all inebriated, or nearly so. They then departed with riotous cheers and boisterous laughter, in which the foolish ruler shared. As Basil departed from this house of folly, he said to himself, " If I ever attain to a position of authority in this city, I will do what I can to put an end to mummeries like this."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN EXPEDITION—A DREAM AND ITS FULFILMENT.

LIKE many men of his temperament, the Emperor had lucid intervals from time to time, during which he woke to a sense of responsibility. One of these came upon him a few days after the scene of riot and dissipation described in the last chapter, when he determined that he would make an effort to repair his damaged reputation by an exhibition of martial strategy and prowess on the battlefield.

The Saracens had been for some years in possession of the rich and valuable island of Crete, from which they often issued forth in their galleys to attack the seaboard cities of the Eastern Empire. Michael would attack the Saracens in this stronghold, and if he succeeded in dislodging them, or even defeated them in a pitched battle, he would restore to the Empire this pearl of the Eastern waters. How he would rise in public estimation if he succeeded in this enterprise! He held a council of war, to which he summoned his Generals and other military officers, as well as the Admiral of his fleet and the captains of the galleys composing it, and gave them orders to be ready within a month to start on an expedition for the recovery of the island. Pleased to get an opportunity of distinguishing themselves,

and [perhaps growing rich on the spoils of this rich depôt, the officers had the fleet and army well in hand before the day specified; and a fine spectacle was presented to the citizens of Constantinople in April, when the Imperial army, led by Michael in person, who was accompanied by Bardas Cæsar and a brilliant staff of General officers, went forth from the city by the lowest western gate, amidst the rattle of arms, the sound of cymbals, and the ringing of bells, to follow the nearest line that led to the port from which they could embark for the island. The bystanders gaped with wonder at the splendid appearance of the troops, and the well-ordered appliances for a campaign. The appearance of the horse regiments was particularly attractive, and especially that of the heavy cavalry, which was officered by members of the Byzantine nobility, and was justly regarded as the backbone of the Imperial forces.

Some regiments carried the long spear at rest in their hands; others were armed with the bow and arrow; others carried short swords and bucklers. Bundles of reserve lances and shields were carried in panniers by horses, simply caparisoned and led by slaves.

Boys and girls looked on the pageant with unmixed joy; but some old heads were shaken ominously, as their owners mentally contrasted this sudden burst of military ardour with the usual and well-known lethargic ways of the ruler of the State.

Andrimades broke into a circle of patricians

who were quietly discussing 'the spectacle on the fringe of the crowd, and without even saluting the distinguished body upon which 'he obtruded himself, he commenced in a bantering tone :

“ I do not believe in this display. This ruler of ours is only airing his vanity.”

“ You don't believe, then, that the Emperor means to fight.”

“ Not he ; he won't do now what he has never done.”

“ Is our Emperor a coward, then, think you ? ”

“ He has never shown spirit, except in the persecution of the weak and defenceless.”

“ Fie, Andrimades,” said a senator, “ to throw discredit on so magnificent a display, of which the whole city is proud. We should rather congratulate ourselves that Michael is opening his eyes to the responsibilities of his position.”

“ One eye open and one eye shut ; both eyes to be soon closed, I say.” And he disappeared in the crowd.

This display of military force was but half the spectacle presented to the admiring populace of Constantinople on that spring morning, celebrated in the annals of the Eastern Empire. The quays were crowded, and the streets along the shore of the strait were quite as animated and full of people as those within the city, for the fleet was drawn up in three divisions, and was to accompany on its watery way down the Bosphorus the march of the army on land. Oripas was in command of the first division, numbering thirty large vessels ; his lieutenants commanded the two other squadrons,

which were not so numerous, and were composed of lighter galleys.

The Labarum ensign floated over the Admiral's ship. Those who looked on that formidable flotilla, as it got under weigh, could understand the full meaning of the words "galley slaves," used as a term of reproach at the present day, but often without meaning attached to it; for they beheld in all the ships benches of men, principally Russians and Scythians, poorly clad and of unusually ferocious aspect, chained together and swinging to the oar like one man.

A lady, accompanied by a single slave, was watching the fleet from a high position, where she stood apart, and evidently seeking for some person whom she expected to see on board one of the ships. As the squadrons passed her on their way down the stream she scanned each vessel closely, and seemed puzzled and disappointed when she failed to discover the object of her search.

She was already turning away disconsolate, when a boat put out from the shore, bearing an officer to join his command. He had clearly been detained beyond his time by some mishap, for he seemed flushed and anxious. A glance was enough to tell her that he was the person she sought. She was satisfied. She bestowed one eager look on the occupant of the receding skiff, and departed, breathing a prayer that a life so valuable as his might be spared—a life so dear to those who had been made acquainted with his services in the cause of truth and order.

Alethea, returning listless and low-spirited to the city after the last ship had faded out of sight, was surprised to see Andrimades, to whom she had spoken but once, but whose quaint face and rotund figure were familiar enough, waiting for her approach, and evidently prepared to seek an interview.

“May I,” said he, addressing her as she was passing him by, “speak a word of consolation to the Lady Alethea, who is evidently concerned for one who has sailed with the fleet?”

“It is considerate of you, Sir,” said she, “even to suggest a possible gleam of hope in a prospect so dreary. I thank you. I shall be glad to hear anything you may be good enough to say.”

“Michael,” he began, “has no head.”

“Hence,” said she, “the danger of being under him in war.”

“He has no courage,” said Andrimades. “A man with neither head nor courage is a blank.”

“Have we not been told,” said she, “that blind men lead their followers to destruction!”

“Yes!” he answered; “to the pit, if their followers be blind, which they sometimes are not. May I ask,” he continued, “if your friend is dull and without sight.”

“By no means,” said she; “but clever and far seeing.”

“Then,” he said, “he is safe.”

She was about to depart, after thanking him for his attempted reassurance, when Andrimades resumed the conversation.

“Michael will fight,” said he.

“What else could this warlike departure mean?” said Alethea.

“But not with his enemies,” he rejoined.

“Surely not with his friends?” said she, languidly.

“With his friends,” said Andrimades.

“You puzzle me,” she said. “What is this riddle?”

“A very easy one,” said Andrimades. “The Emperor’s temper is irritable. He must fight with someone. He is too great a coward to fight with his enemies. He must, therefore, fight with his friends.”

“Might he not fight with himself?” said Alethea, abstractedly.

“He has not the wit to do so,” said Andrimades. “He is generally drunk.”

Alethea did not relish this kind of conversation, and she tried a second time to escape from what she regarded as the obtrusion and vulgarity of this strange man; but he was not to be dismissed.

“Theophylact,” he continued, “is my choice of all the warriors that have gone out.”

She was interested for the first time.

“But the Emperor does not love him,” he added.

“There is,” she said, “a long distance between love and hatred. Does he, think you, hate the Turmarch?”

“He loves him not,” said Andrimades, “and that is why he has sent him and his men by sea.”

“What might be the significance of his thus sending him by sea?”

“He loves him not,” repeated the oracle.

“Think you, is the danger greater for those who have gone by sea, or for those who have accompanied the Emperor?”

“For those who have gone by sea,” said Andri-mades decisively.

“Why?” said she.

“Because,” he said, “they must fight.”

“I am concerned for one who has gone by sea,” said Alethea.

“So,” he said, appearing to divine her meaning, “are half the maidens of the city.”

Alethea blushed deeply, and was silent.

“Forgive me,” said he, changing his tone and manner. “I am a rough brute, who has learned coarseness from association with our wretched Emperor and his buffoons. I intended to do a kindness, but I fear that, by my stupid banter, I have given pain.”

“I confess,” said Alethea with dignity, “that I have been hurt by the matter, the manner, and the tone of your remarks. I can, however, pardon all for the sake of the good intention.”

“I should have remembered the rank of the lady I addressed, and maintained the reserve of a stranger.”

“Enough,” said she, “adieu.”

We return to the army wending its way along the European shore of the Bosphorus towards the Archipelago, where it would cross the strait to the Asiatic side, and continue its march, within sight of the isles of Greece, to the port nearest to Crete, where it would meet the fleet which was to convey it to the shore of that island. Only half the journey

had been accomplished when the Emperor Michael, who had given many proofs of bad temper and moroseness on the way, ordered the troops to halt and set up their tents. The order was received with joy by the tired soldiers, to whom even a few hours of rest would be a great boon after a long march ; but, to their great surprise, day after day passed before the command to move again was given ; and when it came it sent a thrill of surprise through the entire camp, for the direction of the march was changed, and the men were bidden to return, at a quick pace, to the capital.

What had happened to change the Emperor's intention, and bring him back, with his fine army to the city, panic-stricken, it would seem, before he had even come face to face with the enemy, whom he went forth with such pomp to conquer ? The reader shall learn.

Bardas Cæsar and the Emperor Michael were bound to each other by more than ties of blood. They had been companions in many an intrigue, and they had stood side by side, as we have seen, in the fight against Church discipline. The Emperor, people thought, was neither suspicious nor jealous of his uncle, and the uncle was believed to be faithful to the man who had given him power and position.

As they rode out, side by side, through the gate of the city, talking and laughing, at the head of the Imperial troops, they seemed as brothers ; and no one could for a moment suspect that one of them was nursing in his soul a fell design against the life of the other, and that this other was a prey

to despondency arising out of a fear of death by violence.

Bardas Cæsar had had a dream a few days before, the memory of which shook his strong frame : he was so moved by it that he told it, weeping, to his daughter-in-law, Assandra, and asked for her advice ; for he told her that it made him doubt the prudence of accompanying his nephew on the expedition to Crete.

“ I thought,” said he, “ that it was night, and that I was going, at the head of a procession, with the Emperor towards the Church of St. Sophia. As we came near the building, I saw archangels looking out at us through all the windows and watching our movements. I dreamed that we entered the church, and moved up slowly and solemnly through the centre of it till we came to the place where the pulpit stands ; and then I was horrified on seeing two fierce eunuchs advance towards us, evidently bent on mischief. One of them seemed to seize upon the Emperor and to bind him with cords ; and then he dragged him with great violence out of the choir, and threw him on the ground on the right side of the building. The other drew me to the left, and bound me, and left me awe-stricken and trembling as to my fate.

“ Then, looking forward, I saw seated on the Bishop’s throne an old man like St. Peter, and two attendants standing near him, waiting on him, one on each side ; and before him, on his knees, I beheld Ignatius, shedding tears, in such way that the Apostle was deeply moved at his distress.

“ Then Ignatius seemed to cry in wailing tones :

‘Oh, you who hold the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, if you know the injustice they have done me, console me in my age and sufferings.’ And St. Peter seemed to say in reply, ‘Show to me the man who has ill-treated you, and God will turn the trial to your good.’ Then Ignatius, turning round, pointed with his finger towards me, and said, ‘Behold the man who has been my greatest persecutor.’ Whereupon St. Peter beckoned to the man on his right, and giving him a sharp sword, said in a loud voice, ‘Seize upon Bardas, the enemy of God, and carry him out of the church and hew him to pieces in front of the porch.’ As he was bearing me away to put me to death, I saw St. Peter raising his hand in a threatening manner, and heard him saying to the Emperor, in a contemptuous tone, ‘Look on, unnatural son, and see the fate that is in store for yourself.’”

Assandra listened with attention, as well as with horror, to this curious narrative; and when Bardas had ceased to speak, she said: “Do what is just, and be not afraid. Spare this old man, Ignatius; do him no more harm; involve yourself no longer with the profane designs of Photius; and then go on this expedition with a light heart, for no enemy shall harm the man who has made himself the friend of justice.”

Bardas turned on the woman fiercely, and said in derision: “You are a great moralist. If I followed your advice I should put myself in a ridiculous light before the Court, the Church, and the people. I will not be inconsistent: I will pursue the course upon which I have entered, and I will,

before to-morrow's sun rises, despatch my trusted Leo, accompanied by soldiers, to the island where Ignatius is confined, with orders to set guards upon him, in such way that he shall not be able even to celebrate the Liturgy, and that no one shall be able either to approach him or go forth from him. This shall be my answer to the warning I have received ; for it is but a dream, and though it has for a time unnerved me, I now rise above fear, and I am again myself—the Bardas who will suffer no scruple or qualm of conscience to turn him from his purpose."

"Then go," said Assandra, "upon your dark ways, and it may be that you will escape the avenging angel ; but I am not without my fears for you."

This was the last interview that Bardas had before starting on the expedition to Crete.

Happy had it been for him if he had followed the advice of his daughter-in-law ; but having dragged that woman down from the high level of Christian morality, he could not conceive her capable of holding in her heart the principles of truth or justice which she spoke with her lips. Yet, even in her degradation, she carefully nursed in her soul much that she had learned in brighter days.

Though not without some apprehension, Bardas Cæsar was far from realising the imminent peril to life in which he had moved for some time. The Emperor was jealous of his power and prestige ; and his flame of distrust had been carefully fanned by those courtiers whom Bardas had turned against

himself by his pride and tyranny. To such a degree had the hatred of his uncle taken possession of the young ruler that he resolved to kill him on the first favourable opportunity. And now that opportunity came, when they were far from the capital and away from such supporters as Bardas could calculate upon at home.

The uncle and nephew were seated in the Imperial tent, conversing on the war, the topic that filled the minds of all, when suddenly a number of men, with drawn swords in their hands, entered the tent, and advanced menacingly upon Bardas, who rose up at once, and throwing himself on his knees before the Emperor, pleaded for mercy.

"The time of mercy is passed," said Michael coldly. "As you have done to others, so be it done to you. Take him from my sight," he shouted to the assassins, "and execute to the letter the orders you have received."

They dragged him, whining and cringeing, out of the tent, threw him on the ground, and with their swords so hacked his body as to leave behind them nothing but a heap of human remnants.

Michael, the ruler over many provinces, had acted the part that Andrimades had assigned to him ; that is to say, he had fought even unto death, not with his enemies, but with the greatest friend he had on earth ; and in doing so he had quenched his military ardour. Ignoble being that he was, he thought no more of the insolence of the Saracens, or the groans of Christian men and women, trampled upon by them in an island where they could receive no sympathy or support

from friends lying near or around them. Like a coward, he returned to Constantinople stealthily, entering the city at night, and sending abroad through his minions the next day a rumour that Crete was absolutely impregnable, and that an assault on the place would result in the loss of a fine army and the probable destruction of the fleet.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A DISCONSOLATE WOMAN—A MIDNIGHT FLIGHT.

ASSANDRA, on hearing of the death of Bardas Cæsar, was filled with the most poignant grief. Though she knew the man was wicked, she had loved him ; though she felt that to love him was criminal, she had not curbed the passion of her heart. Now he was gone, had died as he had lived, had passed away suddenly and without repentance, and she was deprived of his presence without the consolation of being able to hope that he had found peace beyond the grave.

“Why,” she cried out passionately, “did I not force him to remain at home from that fatal expedition? Why did I not attach more importance to that dream which he told me, weeping? I asked him to spare Ignatius : I reproved him, and, after giving him some cold advice, I allowed him to go to his doom. Who killed Bardas Cæsar?” she said hysterically ; “not Michael, the degenerate Emperor. No, it was I who killed him ; I killed his body, when, in my weakness, I allowed him to go away without a murmur ; I killed his spirit. Why did I not fly from him when urged by many an inward reproach? So I might have saved him from himself by abandoning him. Poverty might have been my lot, for he deprived me of every home but his ; but what was poverty in comparison to disgrace and reprobation? Ah me ! I have lost

everything—self-respect, character, hope, peace of mind. Despair has settled down upon me; and it is but a just recompense for the wayward life I have led. I look around me, and I see no woman like myself. All are upright, or seem to be so. I, the associate of nobles and princes, who by marriage have been allied to the Imperial family; I, who but a week ago could turn the tide of anyone's fortune in this city, must now be pointed at with the finger of scorn by all the world, while all who are good and religious will rejoice in the humiliation of Assandra."

She rose in a state of wild distraction, and exclaimed: "I will go to the Emperor; I will charge him with murder. He shall account to me for the death of Bardas. I will bring him to justice; he must answer to the country and to its laws for this foul crime. He has not been raised to the purple that he might slay and kill. If he gives me no redress, I will go out into the streets and call upon the people to revolt against the assassin."

So saying, she hurried to the Imperial Palace, which was not far away, and presented herself, like an avenging fury, before the swinish Emperor.

"Now, Assandra, you disturb me; what is your business?" said Michael.

"I wish you," said Assandra, trying to restrain her wild emotions, "to account for the death of Bardas Cæsar."

"And what account should I give of the death of that vile man, who would have killed the Emperor if the Emperor had not first slain him?"

"It is not true," said Assandra, "that he would

have killed the Emperor ! The soul of Bardas was above the commission of such a crime."

"You forget his history, woman. Murder by slow degrees was one of his pastimes."

"You measure his morality, Lord Michael, by your own," said Assandra. "He did not cause ears, noses, or arms to be cut off, like the Emperor, nor did he ever decapitate a man on mere suspicion, as you have done so often."

"Because he had not the power of life and death, bold Judith, as has the ruler of the State ; but he had the will to do so. He adopted another plan to get rid of his enemies. There are two ways recognised in the chase for putting an end to a wolf or boar : one is by killing him outright, the other by pursuing him until he falls dead from weakness. Bardas adopted the latter."

"I have not come," she said, "to defend all the acts of your uncle ; he was human, and brought up in a wicked Court. But my mission here is to ask you, his nephew, why you killed him. You have said, to save your own life ; but you have uttered a falsehood in saying so : and you know that in saying so you have uttered a foul untruth. No, Michael," she said defiantly, "you have not killed Bardas Cæsar because you feared he would kill you ; but you have, in the inborn cruelty of your nature, assassinated him, perhaps through whim, or, more likely, through jealousy ; it may be in a drunken fit."

The Emperor sprang to his feet ; but the woman, who appeared to fascinate him for the moment, went on : "Who gave you the right to wade, like

the tyrants of Rome, knee deep through human blood? Domitian, Caligula, or Nero, in their worst days, were not more cruel or more irrational in their cruelty than you have been in the treatment of your subjects since you ascended the Imperial throne."

"Now, Assandra," said the Emperor, who appeared to be alternating between rage and admiration of the impassioned woman, "be calm. You are addressing a ruler who, fortunately for you, knows how to distinguish the frenzied words of an excited girl from a deliberate intention to outrage the majesty of the Emperor. Were I not favourably disposed towards you, I should not excuse your utterances, even on such grounds. You have cut me to the soul; but, as you have suffered so much, I forgive you. Nay, more," said he, "I will protect you in your present state of irresponsible excitement. I must provide for you a home, where you may freely give utterance to your thoughts until your present paroxysm ceases. The uncle is gone; take up your abode with the nephew."

"Not for worlds," said the woman. "I do not want your protection; and, after this night, I will never enter your contaminated palace again."

"But consider," said he, "the position I offer you. Mistress under the Empress of the Imperial household; with officials to fawn on you, courtiers to flatter you, and numberless slaves to obey your will."

"Yes," said she, "and with an unscrupulous and hard-hearted man to drive me to death, perhaps, as he drove one that was nearer, and who should

have been for a thousand reasons dearer to his heart."

"By no means," said the Emperor, "to death, but to life and joy and luxury. But come," said he, "the warm esteem of the Emperor is offered you, and the riches of the Empire shall be poured into your lap."

"Tempter!" said Assandra. "I want not your love; I despise your riches. I fly from your presence, never to see your hated countenance again."

"Mad woman!" he said. "You shall not leave me alive, to go and raise the city against me by your foolish tales. In this house you remain, dead or alive."

"Then kill me," said Assandra; "but no: I am not prepared to die. Spare me! O spare me, for the love of Heaven."

"No," said he. "I have spared you and borne with you too long. Say which you choose, instant death, or a life of ease in the Palace and the companionship of the Empress of the East."

"Give me a moment," she besought, "that I may think"—and she pressed her hands to her forehead. When she looked up again she perceived, for the first time, what had hitherto escaped both her notice and that of the Emperor, that one door of the apartment stood ajar. At the same moment her mind was determined, and she darted to the aperture. The Emperor, taken by surprise, made no effort to arrest her; and before he had recovered his presence of mind, she was already in the open street. Forth she sped, pursued by terror, past the

door of the mansion in which she had lived so long in luxury and shame, out through the deserted forum, whose tall pillars threw phantom obstacles in her path; out under the porticoes, where the echo of her footfall fell upon her ear like the tread of pursuers; out by the frowning basilica, by the sombre churches, and the white sepulchres of the dead.

Exhausted by the speed of her flight, she presently paused. A figure was moving slowly in front, a watchman, going his rounds, whose business it was to raise an alarm and give help in cases of fire breaking out in his district; but, though she was not ignorant of his calling, and knew that he was out at that late hour on business which had no reference to her, she turned rapidly away to avoid him, and mounted to the level of the fourth region, which she entered, and sat down to rest a little under the shadow of the portico of Pharaoh.

She rose up after a few minutes, and went on more slowly than before, passing by the baths of Honorius, the cistern of Theodosius, the granary of Valentinian, and the four-sided Theban obelisk. Again she came to the foot of a flight of marble steps which led into the region beyond. She had put her foot on the first of the flight, intending to mount them, when a heavy hand was laid on her arm, and a rough man, standing by her side, said:

“Before you leave this region, its custodian demands an account of your object in wandering here at this hour of the night.”

“I wander because I so wish: do you not see that I am of Cæsar’s household? I fly from the

face of the Emperor, who has threatened to take my life."

"Fly, then," said he, "rapidly ; for his night patrol has been turned out, and the soldiers are in pursuit of you. They were on your track to the foot of the steps, when they lost sight of you. On, on ! to the wooden bridge, which they are sure to hold if they arrive before you there, and then across the river, and conceal yourself in the hills on the other side. But if you should be captured, for God's sake do not breathe my name : I should be crucified for befriending a fugitive."

On she sped, from region to region of the city ; by dim palaces, looming statues and monuments, rippling fountains, creeping under the shadow of tall buildings, and rushing wildly across open spaces, through one of the city gates, where the guard was asleep, and so on to the wooden bridge, where she arrived before the soldiers, whom she could see approaching from the opposite direction. She fled across the bridge like a bird, and out into the country beyond.

She ascended the side of the hill which fronted her, covered with the dews of night, and passed along a solitary path whose stillness was scarcely broken by the faintest whisperings of stirring leaves and awakened insect life ; breaking through airy mists which hung like webs at intervals upon the hillside across the black cloud-shadows, which rolled over the mountain like huge boulders let loose from its craggy summit. Always ascending, splashing through rills running down to the plain, tearing through briars and brambles, falling over

loose stones or detached pieces of rock, at last, wet and bruised and weary, she arrived before the door of a hut, through the chinks of which a dim light was streaming.

Knocking gently at the door, she was surprised to hear a voice from within cry out, in terrified accents: "Ghost or goblin, why comest thou to disturb the rest of the weary poor? Go back to the foul grave from which thou hast come, if thou wouldst not drive the spirit out of us through fear."

"But I am neither ghost nor goblin; merely a wanderer from the city, who asks you to take me in for the love of Heaven."

The door was cautiously opened a few inches by an old woman, who, on seeing Assandra so wet and dishevelled, stretched out her arms hospitably towards her, and invited her into her poor house, where she said, "I and my old husband gain a poor living by herding goats and raising fruit in a little garden we have cut out on the mountain side."

CHAPTER XXX.

PRISONER AMONG THE SARACENS—A RESCUE.

THEOPHYLACT and the men under his command were the only part of the army led out of Constantinople by Michael III. that came into collision with the Mohammedans.

We can find little good to say of Mohammed and his system. His Eastern imagery, his systematised sensuality, and his ferocious butcheries have no attraction for us. Starting out of the sands of Arabia, sword in hand, and followed by troops of strong-bodied enthusiasts, this self-styled prophet went out slaying, conquering, and overturning everything, until he made a solid lodgment for himself and his barbaric hordes in the fairest far-off provinces of the Grecian Empire — a blazing comet out of its course.

And we have but little sympathy with those universalists in religion, who point to the rapid growth of Mohammedanism as an evidence of Divine approval. A religion of sensuality and plunder would naturally find followers in a corrupt world.

There are two ways in which vinegar can be substituted for wine in the same vessel. One way is by changing the wine into vinegar by a process of decomposition ; the other, to pour out the wine and pour in the vinegar. The Arabian fanatic did not, to any great extent, disintegrate the Chris-

tians of the countries he conquered ; but he exterminated them, and put his own corrupt followers in their place. Was there ever, since the foundation of the world, anything so audacious and wholly inexcusable as the attack made on the unoffending inhabitants of a peaceful Empire by these Eastern brigands? The Christian folk of Antioch, Jerusalem, and the other Eastern cities were praying in their own way, and practising the beautiful virtues of an elevated and chastening religion, when the tide of Arabic ruffianism broke over them, carrying away their worldly goods, and flooding the holy places with corruption. Who has not heard of the butchery of the Damascenes, who surrendered their beautiful city to a Saracen leader, named Abu Obeidah? They covenanted for a safe conduct, to be allowed to leave the city, and wander forth in search of a new home. But, in spite of pledged faith, they were pursued and overtaken, and cut to pieces by a savage named Kaled, who offered to spare them only if they would consent to enrol themselves among the followers of Mohammed.

It may be asserted that the Saracens were not more gross than the Goths, the Huns, and the other tribes who overturned civilisation in the West. Be it so : all were gross, all wild, enthusiastic in their fierce designs. All were ferocious and bloodthirsty. East and West, in the beginning of the seventh century, were equally at the mercy of savages ; but the leaders of the Eastern hordes were infinitely more proud, and immeasurably less merciful than the chieftains of the tribes who invaded and conquered Europe.

Attila, the Hun, was reputed the worst of the Western invaders ; yet Attila himself was struck with fear and remorse for his evil deeds before the face of Pope Leo the Great, who had journeyed from Rome to meet him, and to turn him, by persuasion, from the invasion of Italy. He fled with his army, and never renewed his attempt. The Saracen leaders of that age, on the other hand, always moved on in a career that brought desolation and death to every country which they entered, and were never turned away from their fell designs by pity, entreaty, or an awakened sense of evil-doing.

They had taken the island of Crete some forty years before the date of our narrative ; and were firmly established there when Michael III., in a real or assumed fit of military ardour, marched with a fine army out of Constantinople, with the object of attacking them and retaking the island.

We have heard how he halted on the way to the seat of war, committed an atrocious murder, and returned with the main body of his force to the capital ; and we are now to follow the fortunes of that smaller portion of the Imperial troops which was conveyed in the fleet to the island, and, after some slight opposition, was safely put ashore. This division of the army carried out its part of the programme faithfully. It took the enemy by surprise, and succeeded in driving him before them to the interior of the island ; but having advanced too far, and not receiving the support it calculated upon, was surrounded. Many of its men were killed ; many driven back to the coast, where they

re-embarked, and Theophylact, with some of his followers, who were fighting valiantly in front, was taken prisoner.

It was the custom of these fierce Arabians to give no quarter to Christians in the battlefield ; and it did not follow that Theophylact's life was to be spared because it had not been sacrificed at once. He probably was reserved for a long and perplexing interrogatory ; would be asked to embrace Islamism, and, if he refused, would be cut to pieces as a " Christian dog."

And so, a few days after his arrest, he was brought before Moussa, the commander of the infidel forces, when the following dialogue took place :

Moussa : Christian ! render testimony that there is only one God, without rival, and that Mohammed is His servant and His envoy.

Theophylact : Is it not enough for you to bear false witness without compelling another to do so ?

Moussa : I am no false witness.

Theophylact : Do not say then that God has sent Mohammed.

Moussa . I testify to the same that my father testified.

Theophylact : Therefore, the Samaritans, the Jews, the Scythians, the Christians, and the pagans are right, because they all follow the tradition of their fathers ?

Moussa : Do not you follow them also ?

Theophylact : I do ; but my fathers have taught me to recognise as an envoy from God Him whose coming has been foretold, and Who has proved His mission by miracles.

Moussa : Enough ; we will have no more argument. Do you acknowledge Mohammed as a prophet sent by God, or do you not ? Will you embrace the religion of Mohammed, or will you not ?

Theophylact : I do not acknowledge Mohammed as a prophet, and I will not embrace his doctrine, which is false.

Moussa : Then you shall die. Guards, keep this man in close confinement, until he shall be called out to suffer death for his impiety.

Theophylact was immediately surrounded by soldiers, who at once conveyed him to a filthy dungeon, without fresh air or light, and pushing him into this sepulchre, they closed the massive door, fastening it on the outside ; two of their number remaining, as sentinals, to keep guard over the prisoner.

Theophylact, shut up in this wretched cell, could not rest. It was in vain that he attempted to doze : his pallet was damp and hard, and the surroundings in every way too abominable. He could not even fall into a placid line of thought, for his breathing was impeded by the foulness of the air, and his head reeled. For ten long hours he tossed about in mental and physical agony, until day had passed into twilight, and twilight into dark night. He prayed, and he steeled his heart to bear up as a soldier and a Christian ; notwithstanding which a feeling of utter prostration came over him, and rolling heavily on the ground he lost all consciousness.

Meanwhile his rescue was being planned, and in

a quarter that could not by any possibility have been anticipated. There was in the town a maiden named Nyssa, who was a native of Corinth, and had been taken prisoner at Syracuse, where she was sojourning, and brought a captive to Crete, whence she was to be conveyed to the Palace of the Caliph, and immured in his harem. The horror of the fate that was before her made this Christian girl look about on every side for some means of escape from the hands of her captors, and having heard that an officer of the Imperial army lay in prison, awaiting the carrying out of the sentence of death that had been passed upon him, she formed the project of opening the door of his cell, and when he should be free flying under his protection to the shore of the island and across the sea, to her native Corinth, or to some other place within the Christian lines. She knew that the prison doors were easily opened from the outside, and that the lazy and unfaithful sentinels always deserted their post when darkness was set in.

So on this night, rising from her couch, where she had feigned to sleep, she glided noiselessly through the dark streets, and arriving at the prison where Theophylact was confined she cautiously drew back the bolt that fastened the door, and peering into the darkness of the chamber, she said in a low voice: "Christian soldier, arise and fly, otherwise you give up your soul in the morning."

Theophylact was on his feet in a moment, and extending his hand to his visitor allowed her to lead him out of the prison and for some distance through what appeared to him crooked

streets and winding ways, until they were well out of the town, when they both were only too glad to stop and take breath after their rapid and uneven walk.

"I am faint," said Theophylact, "with cold and hunger. I have not tasted food of any kind for two nights and a day."

"And I," said Nyssa, "knowing that you would receive no food in prison, have brought some bread and Malmsey wine. Partake of them," said she, "but on the way, lest we be pursued and overtaken before we arrive at the shore. But where is our guide?" she said, peering into the darkness of the black night. "He was to meet me here; and he will not disappoint me, for I have promised to give him a golden amulet which I wear on my arm when we arrive at the coast."

"To whom am I indebted for this providential rescue," said Theophylact; "or how shall I thank my deliverer?"

"Ask me not, soldier," said Nyssa. "You will hear all later on. For the present regard me as a fellow-prisoner, like yourself under sentence of death, but of a worse death than that to which you were condemned. But I hear our guide approach. "Proceed," said she, "not too fast, and keep within touch of us, and if any danger threatens, give the alarm."

They journeyed on in silence, along what appeared to be a sheep track; which led them through woods and then over smooth plains, crossed occasionally by streams of rapidly flowing water, which they forded; broken from time to time

by abrupt ledges of rock or patches of bog ; rising thence only to bury itself under thick undergrowths of prickly shrubs, through which they had literally to tear their way. The night bird croaked over their heads, to add to the gloom of the situation ; and the grunt or bark of some wild animal, whom they disturbed in his lair, struck disagreeably on their ears. More than once they thought they heard the sound of footsteps following them, and stepped aside to conceal themselves in a deeper gloom.

After such a night of weary and distressful travel it was with no slight sense of relief that they saw the first faint streaks of light breaking over the *Ægean* Sea, and knew that they were approaching the shore.

Another half-hour and they were at the water's edge, and searching for a boat in which to put out to sea, on the chance of being picked up if they should escape the perils of the deep waters.

Providence was kind to them. They found a boat in a nook hard by, and when she had thanked their guide and had given him the promised reward for his services, Theophylact took the oars and rowed rapidly from the shore. When they got some distance out, and saw that they were not observed or followed, Theophylact rested on his oars, and heard from Nyssa the history of her captivity. She concluded the recital as follows :

“When I found that my stolid captors could not be moved by a woman's tears, and that there was no human chance of escaping a fate worse than death, I threw myself on my knees and vowed

that I would devote my life to God's service, in one of the convents of the Greek islands, if He should save me from the hands and snares of my inhuman captors. You know the rest. I am saved. God has been good to me, and I am by anticipation a nun, devoted to His service for life."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A LONELY SOUL.

THE question how far Constantine modelled the palaces and mansions of his new city upon those of Rome, is one which may interest the antiquary. At the period of our story, however, the resemblance was considerably modified ; and of the four open spaces comprised in the ground plan of the typical Roman dwelling but one, the atrium, remained. Around this a Constantinopolitan house of this period commonly was built ; and the Patriarchal Palace, occupied by the usurper Photius, was no exception. It stood upon an admirable site, surrounded by wide pleasure grounds and gardens, and its internal decoration and furniture were in keeping with its noble outward features ; for the aspiring man who was then in possession of it had added to its beauties, and had filled it with objects of art and virtue. Its floors were glazed tiles of many hues, so arranged as to bring out mottoes, patterns, and figures ; its walls were painted in bright colours, overlaid with models of angels and saints in gold apparel, or with scroll-work of strange and marvellous device. Such vases as lay about—and they were many—in the form of urns or drinking vessels, were of the celebrated black and grey pottery of that period, and many of them were burnished or gilt all over. Elegant figures, in ivory and wood, generally of the Blessed, with

an occasional model of some philosopher of old, stood on bases of mosiac work at intervals through the public rooms, and rich curtains of silk hung before the doorways, or fell in loose drapery by the windows.

The furniture of this palace was massive and elegant ; rich with ivory and precious woods of various shades, with gems and jewelled ornaments, with musical instruments and rare objects from distant lands : on every side were evidences of the taste and wealth of the refined and ambitious man who then ruled the Church of the Imperial city.

But to dwell in a gorgeous palace, and to feast off gold and silver, does not ensure happiness.

Alethea at this time had mental struggles and trials closing in upon her from various quarters, which the brilliancy of her surroundings could do little to mitigate. She was deeply affected at the progress of the Schism. Priests of unsound views now ruled the churches of the city, and the clerical followers of Ignatius were threatened, driven away, or put in prison. Even the lay friends of the exiled Patriarch felt the pressure of the strong and hostile hand that was laid upon them, and many of them left the Eastern capital for Rome, or, like Melanus, whom Alethea admired and esteemed, went away to reside in their villas in the country. She feared that ere long none but she would be left to stem the tide of irreligion and rebellion against Church authority.

But would she even be allowed to remain in the city? It had come to her ears lately that the Emperor, who had been plotting her ruin since the

day of their altercation on the Bosphorus, had been for some time striving to induce Photius to consent to her banishment to the Convent of St. Prisca, there to end her life as a nun.

Photius could not but notice the change that had come over his ward, and found time occasionally, in the midst of his contentions and his ambitious schemes, to speak with her as to the causes of her trouble, which he rightly believed did not arise altogether from a fear of Michael, or a sorrow for the trials of Ignatius. He knew little of the attachment she entertained for Theophylact, but he noticed that her depression had increased upon the departure of the military expedition to Crete, and had not been removed by the return of the army. He therefore concluded that her thoughts, if not her heart, were with someone who remained at the seat of war, and this, he thought, must be the Turmarch, who landed with his men on the island, and had not been heard of since.

He would put some questions to her on the subject guardedly; he hated Theophylact for his orthodoxy, and if he should find her to be attached to this man, he would yield to the Emperor's proposal, and consent that she should be forced into religion, rather than that she should bring confusion on himself, by allying herself with an Ignatian and a Roman.

"Michael," said he one morning to his ward, "is in good humour at present. He is gratified beyond measure at the result of the expedition to Crete."

"Has he gained a victory?" inquired Alethea, who had not heard of the ignominious retreat of the

Emperor ; “ or, better still, has he recovered possession of the island ? ”

“ Neither one nor the other ; but he is pleased because a portion of his troops have been cut off, and are presumably slain, or prisoners ? ”

“ Even Michael cannot be so hard-hearted.”

“ But he is, I assure you : his callousness is marvellous. He sent, as you no doubt have heard, a division of his troops by sea, under the command of the Turmarch Theophylact.”

“ So I have heard.”

“ But you have not understood, nor could you even surmise his object in so sending them. Theophylact, it is no secret, is hateful to the Emperor, because of his attachment to Ignatius, and of his popularity in the city and the army, which makes him a serious impediment in the way of the Emperor’s projects. He has been for a long time anxious to put the Turmarch out of his sight. He has not seen his way to dismiss him from the army, or to have him removed by violence, but being a dabbler in Scripture lore, he has found in the action of King David on a certain occasion a mode of killing a man without responsibility. For certain reasons, which I will not enter into, David was anxious for the death of Urias the Hittite. Urias was, like Theophylact, an officer of the army. David ordered Urias to join the troops who were at war, and at the same time sent a private request to Joab, the general in command, to put Urias and his men in the front of the battle, and to give him no support : the consequence of which was, as David foresaw, that the Hittite was slain fighting. You see the parallel ? ”

“Perfectly,” said Alethea; “but is this not a cruel subject of conversation?”

“Not for those who are indifferent to the fate of a proud and obstinate man.”

“I confess I am not indifferent as to the fate of a brave man.”

“Which leads me,” said he abruptly, “to inquire as to the truth of a rumour which is abroad, that you feel a more than common interest in Theophylact.”

Alethea might have defended herself against this charge after the manner of maidens in similar circumstances at all periods of the world’s history, but was not allowed to open her mouth, for Photius went on impetuously :

“I should be grieved if you were attached to this vain soldier ; it would give me more pain than I can tell you, for he is a fickle, impulsive man, and a slave to popularity. Ignatius has flattered and spoiled him, which made him, up to the time of his departure for Crete, a plotter for the return of that dotard. It would be an act of the deepest ingratitude to me if you gave even the smallest portion of your affections to this man, who is my bitterest enemy. But no, why should I be uneasy on this head? You, I know, will be true to your indulgent guardian ; and if ever you gave an interested thought to this man, you will now, for my sake, dismiss him for ever from your mind. Look upon him, I beseech you, as numbered with the dead, as no doubt he is while I speak.”

“Whether alive or dead his memory shall be ever cherished by me. If he is still alive no one

in the city will give him when he returns a welcome so heartfelt as Alethea."

"Then," said Photius, "I may infer that you love the man."

"That is for myself; I am mistress of my own affections: but it does not follow that I love the person of the Turmarch because I admire his character. I could mourn the death of this champion of right and truth in a platonic spirit, and in the same spirit rejoice in his safe return from Crete."

Without uttering a word in reply Photius turned from her, and, leaving her presence abruptly, directed his steps to the Imperial Palace, where he remained for some time in conference with the Emperor. Upon leaving it might be observed that he was flushed and troubled, as if he had yielded to the Emperor something that his heart and conscience would have retained.

The love of the warrior and the maiden whose history we write, restrained and pure, was the natural outpouring of two ardent hearts attracted towards each other by a natural sympathy.

Alethea, the almost cloistered maid of a stirring period, like the hidden rose, had unfolded her charms in solitude. Was it not natural that she should be timid and retiring? What knew she of the art of love, or its artifices? No companion had told her of adventures, successes, or reverses in the field of romance. Alone she had been during her girlhood, except for the companionship of matrons and grave ecclesiastics; and at the first stirrings of the unknown passion she understood

nothing of the promptings of her heart, but was alarmed at them when they went out towards the object that attracted her. Her love was of a timid character, seeking the object of its choice and shrinking away from its approval. None the less was this affection which Alethea had conceived for Theophylact shaping and modifying her character, taking something from the strong self-confidence of youth, and bringing down a spirit naturally somewhat over-inclined to haughtiness ; thus rendering her more thoughtful than before, and inclining her, who had been so bright, to sadness and more than passing depression.

The conversation she had just had with Photius did not add to her peace of mind. She rose up after he went away, and full of anxious thoughts went forth into the garden where, after wandering about for some time, she took a seat near a sparkling stream of running water and gave herself over to thoughts of sympathy for one who was far away, till presently a tear glistened in her eye. "He, perhaps," thought she, "is gone, and with him the hopes of the orthodox. Yet it is possible too that he has escaped from the danger into which he was so treacherously thrust. Let him but return at the head of his troops and all might yet be well. But the Emperor's plan had been too carefully laid to fail. Alas, the gallant soldier has doubtless perished."

Finding that she was sinking into despondency she rose up with an intention of going to the Church of St. Irene, where, she thought, "I will pray for him and for all who are doing battle for the Faith and the Empire."

The route between the Patriarchal Palace and the church ran past the Basilica of Theodosius, where crowds were gathered at that time intent upon business. As she approached the Basilica she saw a group of persons conversing earnestly, and unconsciously she slackened her pace, that she might overhear their conversation.

"News of importance from the frontier," said one.

"Sad news for many in Constantinople," said another.

"Syracuse has been taken," said a third ; "and most of its inhabitants slaughtered."

"What matter about Syracuse," said the fourth. "It is far away ; it belongs more to the West than to us."

"The accounts from our own army quench all interest in Syracuse and such distant places," said an officer.

"And what may that be ?" said a bystander.

"That our troops have been defeated ; many prisoners taken, and many soldiers killed."

Alethea started at hearing these words, and timidly approaching the last speaker said : "Has there been any account of Theophylact the Turmarch, who left this city a month ago for the seat of war ?"

"Yes, Madam," said the soldier. "He was serving nobly in the front, but in so dangerous a position that he must have been slain or taken prisoner : and better to be slain in battle than to be reserved by those accursed Arabians to be cut to pieces in cold blood."

By a great effort she restrained every exhibition of feeling, and after thanking the officer for his well-meant explanation, leaned on the arm of her attendant slave and proceeded in the direction of the church.

She heard the death-bell tolling as she tottered into the sacred building. A film passed before her eyes as she heard, with deep emotion, the following prayers, poured out in the deep, sonorous voice of the officiant :

“Christ, Who art the life of the living and the resurrection of the dead, confirm this faithful departed in the hope of eternal life.”

“Render Thy faithful servant a citizen of Paradise, and a participator in Thy glory which shall be.”

“Grant him rest with Thy Saints.”

“Can it be Theophylact that is being prayed for?” thought she. “Faithful he was alike to heavenly and earthly powers.” She would have moved up through the nave to ask for an answer to her question ; but the church was crowded, and many eyes had been fixed upon her in consequence of her agitated entrance into the sacred edifice. She must wait to the end, must endure the suspense, and must submit patiently to the strain which the plaintive prayers and music of the Office for the Dead produced upon her.

As she began to see more clearly, she perceived in the dim light of the sparse funereal tapers that the church was draped in black, and that the priests wore sable vestments.

“My hidden sins and my grievous transgres-

sions, remember not, I beseech thee, O Lord," chanted a pale, emaciated cleric.

"Through us, Thy ministers, Thy servant crieth unto Thee, O merciful God," responded the choir.

The solemn strains of the chant rose and fell, repeated in the echoing dome. Now it struck a note of alarm, as if calling the sleepers from their graves ; now, in voice of thunder, it announced the coming of the Judge. In suppliant accents it pleaded for mercy ; then arose a wail of suffering, a cry of fear. Then there was breathed forth a plaintive appeal to the merits of the Redeemer :

"O Thou Who through Thy Divine nature alone art gifted with immortality, O Thou Who knowest the frailties of mortal man, grant to Thy servant departed participation in immortal joys."

The chant rolled on, calling to mind the examples of the Magdalen, of the thief on the Cross.

O remember, gracious Lord,
Ere Thou speak'st the fatal word,
How Thy Blood was poured to lave,
How Thou faintedst on the way.
Let not, then, the scoffer say,
He could not the sinner save !

The music ceased ; a hush fell upon the multitude. The celebrant stood up and chanted the following prayer to the Mother of God :

"O thou who alone wast privileged to bring forth the Source of incorruption, the Resurrection, and the Life, we invoke thine intercession, that to the faithful departed may be granted eternal rest."

This terminated the Office.

After the last prayer was concluded she rose

and walked slowly out of the church. She was followed by a young priest, who had seen her enter the building, and who seemed to be moved to compassion by her pensive bearing.

Addressing her he said : "The lady has, perhaps, lost a friend in the war. Might he be included among those who have been prayed for just now?"

"I know not, Reverend Sir," she answered, "whether my friend is living or dead; but I feared that this office might be for his repose."

"Not for the repose of one," he said, "but of all who have fallen in Crete."

"He was high in command of that unfortunate expedition," she said.

"The Turmarch Theophylact was the only superior officer who landed on the island; for the others, who remained with the Emperor, you need not fear, as they have come back safe to the city."

"For them it is well," she said, trying to appear relieved; "but can you tell me anything of the fate of Theophylact?"

"He has not fallen, Madam, but he has been taken prisoner."

"Pray how has this been made known?"

"Through a party of soldiers, who escaped from the battlefield, and were taken on board by a passing vessel."

"But imprisonment among the Arabians is certain death, I have been told," said she.

"Not unless their commander be a fanatic. An ordinary Arab general will kill his enemies in fight;

but if they fall into his hands as prisoners, he will confine them in a dungeon, it may be for years. If they outlive the hardships of imprisonment, he may, in the end, let them go their way. If, however, he be a fanatic, he will at once propose the alternative of death or apostasy. In either case, I admit that the prospect before Theophylact is gloomy."

"Still," she said, "his friends must rejoice that he is alive."

Their conversation was interrupted by Oriphas, the Admiral, who coming upon them abruptly, and drawing Alethea brusquely aside, said to her in a stern voice :

"Madam, you must consider yourself my prisoner. It is the Emperor's order."

"Imprisonment," said she, "can add but little to my sorrows : but pray, Sir, what have I done to deserve this indignity ?"

"That is not my business," said he, in a softer tone. "I am an official, and merely obey the orders of a superior."

"Mother of Heaven, have compassion on me !" said she earnestly, looking up. "Am I abandoned by Heaven as well as by this world ?"

Her gaze was so intense, her expression was so spiritual, and her desolation was so great, that the officer was moved.

"For to-day I will lodge you where you wish. To-morrow, or in a few days, I must convey you to the Convent of St. Prisca. Meanwhile you will be treated becomingly ; and believe me," he added, "I sincerely regret that this charge was not

committed to another. A galley, fitted up under my special directions, will be at your service ; and you will find that Oriphas, whatever his reputation, can be a careful and a respectful attendant."

She thanked him for his well-meant words, and with high-bred dignity suffered him to conduct her to the Patriarchal Palace.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CONVENT OF ST. PRISCA.

THE Emperor was scarcely prepared for the consent which Photius freely gave to the arrest of his ward, and her removal from the city to a convent on one of the islands of the Propontis in the interview referred to in the last chapter. Photius had not lost his love for Alethea. He would punish her for her disloyalty to himself, but he would not have her pained or humiliated beyond a limit he had fixed. Hence, in yielding to the Emperor's request, he laid down certain conditions ; such as that her banishment should be for a limited time, and that she should be sent to a convent where her rank should be recognised and she should be treated with special consideration. It is for us now to see how Michael, who had a special taste for the prosecution of religious women, evaded the observance of these conditions, though he had bound himself in a strict way to this observance.

The following letter was brought by one of the Admiral's rowers to the gate of the Convent of St. Prisca, in the island of Antros, and was left in the hand of the portress : " You will receive the Lady Alethea into your convent. Her hair is to be cut, and she is to receive the veil and ring. In all respects you will regard her as a religious, bound by lifelong vows."

This peremptory epistle was read aloud by the

Abbess, in the community-room, to the assembled Sisters.

“This,” said she, “is a communication from the Emperor: I should wish to have your opinions upon its contents.”

“The Emperor,” said the Sister Tryphena, “seldom honours us with request or command; nor would he do so now but that he wishes to make us his instruments to carry out some unworthy undertaking.”

“Is it not monstrous,” said Tryphosa, “that he should think us capable of perpetrating such a crime as he suggests!”

“What crime,” said Pulcheria, “could equal that of compelling a maiden to become a nun against her inclination?”

“He thinks,” said Olympias, “that we have no conscience, like himself.”

“There is no question about the immorality of the request,” said the Abbess. “I merely wish to consult you as to the reply I ought to make to it. The messenger awaits it.”

“Write him,” said Tryphosa, “that you will not receive her.”

“And have our community dispersed?” exclaimed Priscilla.

“Tell him,” said Tryphena, “that we have consciences, and that he has none.”

“And have our convent burned with Greek fire,” said Priscilla.

“May I say a word,” said the Sister Dorcas, a young novice.

“Certainly,” said Priscilla. “Then I would sug-

gest," said she, "that you receive this lady into the convent. She is of the highest rank ; and, better still, she is pious and orthodox. Every one in the Imperial city knows Alethea, the ward of Photius, and there is no one more universally esteemed."

"How is it, if this be so, that she is sent a prisoner to us?" demanded Mother Priscilla.

"Ah!" said Dorcas, "immured in your convent, you can form no idea of the intrigues and plots that are carried on in Constantinople by the Emperor, his uncle, and the mock Patriarch, Photius. Clowns and schismatics are esteemed, and good Christians, especially if they be in favour of Ignatius, are cruelly persecuted."

"And can it be," said Priscilla, "that this lady is of Ignatius' party, and opposed to the pretensions of Photius?"

"She has always been so," said Dorcas, "and, moreover, she has fearlessly expressed her views."

"Then she is a truly noble woman," said Priscilla, "and I will write to say that we will receive her (not, of course, to force her to take the habit, but to shelter her from persecution until better times come)."

Meanwhile, Alethea was being conveyed to her home in this convent : for the Emperor, not anticipating any opposition on the part of the nuns, had given orders to Orophas to hurry with her to a point on the coast from which she might easily pass in one of his galleys to the island of Antros. This officer was of evil repute, and had been known to carry out orders from the reigning powers in a heartless and tyrannical manner. But on this occa-

sion he was respectful and affable. He conversed with his prisoner in a courteous and friendly style, and communicated to her much information about recent events ; and, amongst other matters, he spoke to her of the death of Bardas Cæsar.

“Tell me,” she demanded, “how it happened.”

“He was cut to pieces,” he replied, “in the Emperor’s presence, and by his orders.”

“Awful retribution ! How terrible ! It was said to him, on the Day of the Epiphany : ‘Put up your sword in its scabbard, and remember that he who takes the sword by the sword shall perish.’ But, pray tell me,” said she, “the circumstances of this awful tragedy.”

He narrated to her all the particulars of the dreadful death, and the stealthy return of the expedition to the capital, together with such additional rumours as were abroad regarding the fate of Theophylact and the party he commanded ; and thus they beguiled the time until they arrived at their destination, where Alethea was received as became her rank by the entire community of the Convent of St. Prisca coming out to meet her in processional order.

Oriphas, having fulfilled his mission, bade her a respectful farewell, and started for the galley which was in attendance on him ; and Alethea was taken over affectionately by the nuns, to be cherished and honoured in every way within their power until a change of circumstances should call her home again to the Imperial city.

Some days after her arrival at the convent, as she was seated in the community-room, conversing

after the midday meal, the portress came in to say that a soldier, tall and majestic, but tired and travel-soiled, had just looked in at the porch ; that he had craved for bread for himself and a companion, who, he said, had borne him company over sea and land from within the infidel lines : he had been in the war, and had barely escaped with life.

Alethea, hearing this recital, and thinking that the distressed warrior might possibly be Theophylact, rose from her seat, and was already walking to the door of the apartment, when the portress added :

“ The companion of this soldier is a lady, young and fair, but, like himself, worn out with want and travelling.”

Alethea stopped short, and seeming dazed and embarrassed, returned to the bench on which she had been seated. The portress continued :

“ This girl is surely his wife, for he addressed her as ‘ spouse ’ several times in my hearing ; and it does seem a pity that they should be without bread, and so tired and worn out with fatigue and travelling. I thought of asking them into the convent and seating them to a meal in the refectory ; but there is the rule against the admission of men which I had no permission to set aside.”

“ And therefore, like a rigid portress as you are, you allowed them to go away hungry ; and now, when all is over, you come to give us a history of your dealing with the case. Fie ! ” continued the Abbess, “ you should have thought of the reward promised for even a cup of cold water given to the poor, and have detained them until you had told your story to the community.”

“But I do not believe, Abbess, that they have gone. I did not send them away, nor say an unfeeling word to them; and I am of opinion that they thought that I came in to consult my superior, and that they are still waiting in the porch.”

“Then I shall go myself,” said Priscilla, “and see them; and you,” said she, turning to Alethea, “who have come so recently from the city, and who may perhaps recognise this soldier as one you have seen on parade or march, will be a useful companion to accompany me to the convent gate.”

But Alethea remained seated, and excused herself, saying that she knew but few officers of the Imperial army; and if he who waited outside was one of those she happened to have met, she would prefer not to be recognised by him in her present position.

After the lapse of half-an-hour the Abbess returned to the room, and said that she had found at the gate a soldier of distinguished presence, tall and commanding, of refined and gentle manners, and with him a girl with the bashfulness and timidity of a nun. “But,” she added, “I do not think they are married, though they may be betrothed.”

All this time the strain on Alethea’s feelings was increasing. The last words were more than she could bear. Without betraying the agitation under which she laboured, she rose up with calmness and dignity, and quietly retired to the cell that had been given her, not to shed tears or to indulge in a paroxysm of indignation at the

duplicity and betrayal of Theophylact, but to gather strength, by calm and dispassionate reflection, to bear what was to her the greatest trial of her life.

“It was this heart of mine,” she thought, “that went out to him unasked ; it was this fancy of mine that induced in me an impression that my silent thoughts were made manifest. I blame no one but myself: not him assuredly, who had no grounds for believing that I loved him, and who, even if he did so believe, was not bound to return that love. At the same time it is a trial, from whatever side it comes, and I must steel my heart to bear it. Shall I remain,” thought she, “in this community and put on the habit? But this would not constitute a call to religion, and I should be a burden on the community if I joined it for the purpose of weeping at leisure. No ; I will bear and suffer unto death, if I am obliged ; but I will deceive no one, and blame no one for my trouble. It may be that time will bring me relief ; and, if time will not stand my friend, perhaps death may take compassion upon me, and come to release me from my sufferings.

Looking askance out through a small window which gave light to her little room she saw Theophylact going from the convent, and, as she thought, conversing gaily with his companion ; and for the first time, but for a moment only, a feeling of anger and jealousy swelled up to her throat. Recovering her self-possession, and remembering the resolve she had come to, she raised her eyes to Heaven, and in a low but audible voice she softly invoked the Mother of Sorrows.

A convent in the Eastern world in the ninth century was, in many respects, like such an institution in our days. The same sombreness and solemnity lay upon it ; the same peace and silence abode in its halls. Early the inmates rose from their hard couches, and long were the hours they spent in prayer and the meditation of the mysteries of religion. There were no excitements within those walls, and but little variety ; and even the visits of the friends and relatives of the nuns were so few that they scarcely affected the ever-abiding monotony of the daily life of these servants of God. It was well enough for those who were called to this state of life ; they could patiently, if not lightly, carry its burdens and chagrins : but for a girl like Alethea the solitude was trying ; and the current of anxious thoughts that ever flowed through her soul, unchecked by even the smallest interruption, acted prejudicially on her spirits and health. The Sisters thought that her fine constitution was being undermined ; and, in their anxiety for the preservation of her life, they even went so far as to suggest that she should fly from the convent under the cover of night, while they would, as best they could, brave the Emperor's wrath, which was sure to fall upon them when he heard of her escape. But Alethea would not enter into this plan, nor would she, by any act of hers, put in danger the humblest member of a community that had received her with such hospitality.

“ Nor, indeed, Mother Priscilla,” said she, “ is there much generosity in my refusal to follow your

advice, for I am as well placed here as elsewhere ; better and safer than I should be if I stole into the city and hid myself there. I never had many friends, and the few that I believed to be so have either forgotten me or turned from me."

"It is perfectly impossible, dear girl," said Calista affectionately, "that any friend could slight or forget one like you, gifted as you are in mind and body, and endowed with a most lovable disposition. No, Alethea, you deceive yourself: all whom you have ever known, or who have had the privilege of conversing with you, hold you in warm esteem; and I am quite sure that many whom you knew not would receive you into their hearts as well as their homes."

"It may be that some would compassionate me," said Alethea abstractedly; "but this would not heal the wound."

"Then there is a wound," said Priscilla. "I have thought so for some time; and now tell me who has been cruel enough to inflict it?"

"For that," she said, "I have inflicted it myself. I loved; I thought I was loved in return. I received a rude shock, and was pierced by a cruel arrow when I found the love which I thought was for me was given to another. Ask me not for further explanation."

"I am not blind, child," said Priscilla. "I have already unravelled the mystery. But a little shred of evidence was wanting to connect your pining with the visit of that officer to the convent gate. You have supplied it yourself. I now know that you loved him, and that you have been crushed at

finding him betrothed to another ; but is he betrothed? I confess that I believed that he was, but now I believe it not ; for I deem it impossible that, having lived in the sunshine of your friendship, he could ever turn from you."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PRINCIPLE AND EXPEDIENCY.

THEOPHYLACT, for it was he who called at the gate of the convent, accompanied by Nyssa, who had opened his prison door on the island of Crete, arrived shortly after in the Imperial city, and having consigned his companion to the care of a community of religious women in the capital, presented himself before Michael, and was told, without thanks for his services or recognition of any kind, to resume his duties in the army.

For some time after his return the Turmarch gave himself up to comparative repose; for after his confinement, want of food, and wearisome journey, he was weak and low-spirited, and unsuited for military duty. He walked every day by the Bosphorus, and on one of these strolls, meeting Oriphas, the Admiral, he saluted him. The latter, in a cheery voice, said :

“Ghost of Saul! Can this be Theophylact? Born under a lucky star! How did you escape a dog’s death?”

“The good spirits took compassion on me when I was left to die by the Emperor and the Admiral of the fleet.”

“No blame to the Admiral! I acted under orders when I sailed away.”

“An officer of your rank has some discretionary power. Surely you might have exercised it upon such an occasion, and not have left a small force

unsupported, that it might be cut to pieces by the infidel."

"You know what a Nero I serve."

"Certainly. But, what then?"

"That his servants must be content to pipe while Rome is being destroyed."

"Bah! You are essential to the fleet; the fleet is essential for the defence of our coasts against foes like the Saracens, and robbers like the Scythians. Your position makes you independent, Oriphas."

"I hold that no officer is independent. Do you consider yourself a free agent in the army?"

"No; but I am not in supreme command, like you."

"I should rather have said, have you not, as a Turmarch, done many things which your conscience told you were wrong?"

"Never."

"Did you not arrest Ignatius?"

"No! Nor would I."

"I was told you had."

"You were misinformed."

"My informant was Photius."

"He lied; and he knew he lied," said Theophylact calmly."

"Well," said Oriphas, "in my opinion, obedience is the first duty of an officer of the army or navy—blind obedience. In this spirit, when ordered, I have hunted Ignatius through the islands of the Propontis; and I believe I did right. I would do so a second time. I expect, in fact, to be soon put on his trail again."

“If I were in your position, and were commanded to do so manifestly unchristian and unjustifiable an act, I would resign my position in the navy.”

“Should I offend you, if I were to tell you a home truth.”

“By no means.”

“It is that you are looked upon, in high quarters, as a prejudiced and extreme man.”

“I should have expected it; but it is to me an honour to be condemned by men whom I know to be without principle or conscience.”

“My dear friend, I must protest against the use of such terms as applied to the Emperor and his colleague.”

“Oriphas,” said Theophylact firmly, “you are candid and outspoken. You condemn my principles in plain language. In equally plain language I condemn your conduct. You have not only, to use your own expression, ‘hunted’ the venerable Patriarch of Constantinople, but you have treated him with gross indignity. Have you not pushed and shaken the venerable prisoner, and beaten his domestics?”

“And if I have done so, it was in the interest of peace, to subdue a rebel once for all.”

“How can you say it—a rebel?”

“I consider a man who will not submit to the decree of the Senate a rebel.”

“Be accurate in your words. Has the Senate issued a decree against the Patriarch?”

“I take it for granted it has; for senators have gone on deputations several times to him, urging him to resign his See.”

“This does not imply any corporate action on their part. I do not believe that the senators have passed any decree against Ignatius. His persecution is the act of the Emperor, urged on by Photius.”

“Even if it be so, he must be beaten down and crushed.”

“To gratify a vindictive ruler and a sordid ecclesiastic?”

“No; to bring peace to disturbed consciences.”

“You are shifting your ground: now it is in the interest of discipline that you persecute the saintly man; now in obedience to a decree of the Senate; now to appease consciences. While your motive is uncertain, your action is decisive and cruel.”

“Spare me, Theophylact,” said the Admiral.

They walked along by the part of the harbour where the fleet lay at anchor. They were evidently uncongenial companions, having not a single taste in common. They felt that they could not continue to converse without coming into collision, and they were about to take leave of each other when Oriphas, unable to restrain his malevolence, and at the same time anxious to justify himself with his companion, continued:

“I have a supreme dislike of Ignatius. His uprightness is as hateful to me as his obstinacy. He is a merciless censor of public morals: I myself have undergone his bitter reproof. The Court is too lax for him, and the populace too dissipated; the fleet is too aggressive, and I, forsooth, am too tyrannical. If the man confined his rule to his churches and ecclesiastics no one would find fault

with him ; but his interference with the laity is intolerable, and has justly brought him to his present position. I am not hostile to the partisans of Ignatius : my contempt is for himself alone. You, I feel sure, will not give me credit for softness ; yet who could be more tender than I have been in my treatment of one of his most faithful partisans ? ”

“ I was not aware that you came in contact with any of the friends of Ignatius. ”

“ Did I not ? I was, on a recent occasion, jailer to one of his tenderest lambs. ”

“ His tenderest lamb ? A faithful monk or young priest, I presume. ”

“ No ! a beautiful and bashful lady. ”

“ You in charge of a lady, a friend of the Patriarch’s ! ”

“ Yes, and one I would have fallen in love with, if I were not a married man. ”

“ Strange things have occurred while I was away, ” said Theophylact.

“ Strange enough ; when an Admiral receives orders to convey Photius’ ward to a convent. ”

Theophylact started. “ Alethea ? ” he said.

“ The same, ” said Oriphas. “ I was ordered to put her under strict supervision : in fact, to convey her a prisoner to the Convent of St. Prisca, in Antros. I was commencing to execute my commission rather roughly, when I was unexpectedly and irresistibly unnerved. ”

“ How ? ”

“ By the beauty of the woman and her grace. When I saw the pained expression of her face, the

high-bred struggle to calm her agitation, and heard the music that fell in the form of inquiry and expostulation from her lips, I was as a child before her : I could have worshipped her. I believe I wished the Emperor to the Devil."

"Why did the barbarian arrest this friendless maid?"

"How should I know? I suppose in the spirit in which he arrested his own sister, to make her a nun against her will. But she will not be a religious, or I am much mistaken. She may be pious, but she is not unromantic."

"You appear to have observed her closely."

"I was some hours in her company, and conversing with her all the time; and when parting with her at the convent gate I ventured to remark: 'You have been brought here, I hope, with all the tenderness and consideration which a rough sailor could exhibit. Some other officer, of gentler ways, will, I hope, soon be despatched to bring you back to the city.' I thought she blushed slightly, and her eye sparkled with a hopeful brilliancy that I had not observed before."

"I honour you, Oriphas, for your treatment of this lady."

"You are of her party, Theophylact. Perhaps," he added, in a low voice, "you are the other whose image flashed upon her, and lit up the latent spark. Perhaps you are destined to bring her home from her exile."

Theophylact, when left alone, pondered for some time on the information he had received from Oriphas at the end of their interview; the result

of which was that he determined to intervene for the liberation of Alethea. He accordingly went to the Imperial Palace, sought for and was granted an interview with the Emperor Basil, to whom he narrated the history of Alethea's arrest, and removal from the city. But Basil, though strongly condemning the action of his colleague, and expressing sympathy with the victim of his capricious folly, declined to take action for the liberation of Alethea, at the same time assuring Theophylact that he would take an early opportunity of challenging Michael on the subject, and that he would as soon as possible bring back this girl with honour from her exile.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE END OF MICHAEL III.

LONG before the events recorded in the last few chapters, the Emperor Michael had taken Basil, the adventurer, whose acquaintance he had made in the hippodrome, to the Imperial Palace, and made him joint Emperor with himself. But he knew not the temper or tendencies of the new ruler at the time. Basil was not a jester, like the Emperor Michael. He was not a sot nor an idler; but a serious, temperate, and diligent man, duly impressed with the responsibilities of his new position, and fully determined to discharge his duties to the people over whom he was placed with zeal and dignity. Hence, from the beginning, the relations of these men to each other were strained, and as time went on disputes and disagreements of an acrimonious character often occurred between them.

Basil would charge his co-ruler with buffoonery, cruelty, intemperance, and indolence; and would be in return twitted with his low birth, and reproached for his ingratitude.

These encounters were sometimes of a jocular character, but were more frequently carried on in angry and vituperative language.

“So,” said Basil, in a warning tone, “you have been again in the mire. They name you Thrice August; but there is nothing august, or even decent, in your public acts.”

“What mean you by such words as these, Basil the Macedonian?”

“I mean what my words convey, Lord Michael.”

“They are frivolous,” said Michael, “and so are of no account.”

“Have you been before the Senate?” said Basil pointedly.

“Yes.”

“And did you introduce Basilicus, a rower of your galley?”

“Yes, yes.”

“And presented him to the Senate dressed in Imperial robes, with a diadem on his head?”

“Go on.”

“And said to the senators that you were sorry you had not made him Emperor, in place of Basil?”

“All this I have said, and more. What then?” demanded Michael defiantly.

“What then? This much: that a ruler who can say such things is unfit for the place he fills.”

“You adventurer from the wilds of Macedonia, when I brought Basilicus before the Senate it was to show that body how much superior he was to you. Was it not for your strength and knowledge of horses that I chose you for Emperor? Here was a man as strong, of much finer build, with better qualifications for the Imperial throne.”

“You speak like a madman! You know very well that your choice fell upon me, not for bodily qualities, but for gifts of the mind. Did you not fear that your wretched career would turn the army from its allegiance, would raise the people in re-

bellion against your rule? You wanted someone of strong mind to palliate your crimes, or hide from the people your cruelty, your drunkenness, and your profanity. You chose Basil because you knew that he could do so by his tact, and could shield your low character under the wing of his respectability."

"Respectability," sneered Michael — "respectability! Where was your respectability when you entered this city, after travelling on foot from your squalid home? Where was it when you slept through your first night here on the steps of a church? Where was it when you hung about the hippodrome, looking for employment from the grooms? Where, when I took you out of the mire and gave you a post in my stables?"

"Michael," said Basil, restraining his feelings, "of a truth you know not, or forget if ever you knew, what the word respectability means. It is not found in the high-born man, if his life be low and vicious; and it may exist in the man of humble birth, if his conduct be above reproach."

Not understanding Basil's reply, or feigning not to see the rebuke it contained, Michael continued:

"Do you not remember the steps by which I raised you from degradation? I made you—stranger, adventurer, plebeian that you were—into an equerry, gave you a position of importance in the Imperial household. Not thinking I had done enough for you, I raised you to the rank of chamberlain—made you, in succession, patrician and master of the offices, and, finally, madman that I was, I put you by my side on the throne. Now,

Macedonian, where is your gratitude? I hoped that you would have taken the weight of office from Michael on your strong shoulders, and allowed him to go his way; but you have crossed my path from the beginning. My amusements are too light! My pursuits are too cruel! My companions are too low! My bearing too unsteady! These are your words, echoed through the Palace, whispered among the officials, passing out to the army and fleet, and going the round of the city. I cannot bear this prying and spying any longer: it will drive me either to madness or to the commission of some great crime."

"Be calm and listen to me. Should I be a true friend, if I did not rebuke your vices? Could I, ought I, be silent, when I see you persecuting Christian women? But three nights since a girl was seen flying like a spirit through the city, to save her life from your cruelty. A few weeks ago a maiden of rank was carried away, no one knows whither, to be confined in a prison, by your command. Earlier, I have been told, you, a Christian, hunted a Christian slave into the Bosphorus, where she was drowned. It is not I that speak of these cruel freaks, but the city. If they are mentioned to me, I condemn them: that is all. But I frankly admit I have initiated conversations on your profanity, your orgies in the company of buffoons, your parody of the sacred rites of religion; and I have said that a man who does these things is unfit to sit upon a throne. I also, I admit, have joined with courtiers in speaking of the assassination of your uncle, Bardas, and condemning, in strongest language, that act of infamy."

“You approved that act, traitor!” said Michael fiercely.

“Never!”

“At least you said nothing against it.”

“Because I was not then in a position to speak.”

“You lie! You were then a patrician and a high official.”

“But an ennobled courtier stands not between a mad Emperor and his whims.”

“I could kill you, Basil of Macedonia, and will do so if you do not let me be.”

“It is not wise to threaten me.”

The breach between the two Emperors was growing wider every day. Basil continued to reprove his colleague, and Michael, instead of submitting to his guidance, was lashed into such abiding fury that it became quite clear that he would carry into effect the threat we have heard him utter, and make a sudden attempt on the life of the censor of his evil ways.

Opportunities for this were not wanting; for Basil went about unarmed, trusting in his great strength and agility, and making nothing of the threats of a sot whom intemperance had brought then to the verge of insanity.

One day, as Basil was returning alone from the chase, he met on the verge of a wood two men, disguised and masked, who he thought were waiting for him with hostile intent. The Emperor, dissembling his suspicion and putting on an air of carelessness, passed them by and continued his course in a straight line. Nevertheless, he was on the alert, and occasionally glanced behind to see

whether they were following him. Perceiving that they had left the place where he first saw them, he conjectured that they were advancing in line with him inside the wood ; and he believed that they would, when they saw an opportunity, make a sudden rush upon him from the side and endeavour to cut him down, without giving him time to defend himself.

He was unarmed, for it was not the custom in the East at that time for anyone, outside the army, to carry the sword, except in time of war ; but Basil's herculean strength and indomitable courage gave him perfect confidence as to the result of a combat with even two assailants.

He pursued his course fearlessly, his eagle glance sweeping the glade as he went on, and penetrating every opening in the foliage to the left, where he thought the assassins were in ambush, his acute hearing being sensible of even the faintest sounds that came from the interior of the wood. After travelling a long way he came to a dark passage, where the trees closed in on both sides of his path ; and hearing a rustling sound in the underwood he held himself ready, without stopping, to meet a sudden assault.

The attack came just at the moment he expected it. Like the tiger sweeping down on his prey, the assassins, with drawn swords, sprang from their lurking-place and rushed towards the Emperor. But Basil was prepared for them : he moved aside, allowing them to pass him, and then turning threw himself on the receding figures. One he seized by the shoulders in his powerful grasp, and dashed

him violently against a tree, from which he fell stunned to the ground ; and catching the other by the neck, he violently compressed his throat until he was nearly strangled. Flinging him aside with an expression of contempt, he continued his journey as calmly as if he had merely crushed a snake.

When Basil arrived, after this dangerous adventure, at the Imperial Palace, his first impulse, had he followed it, would have led him to take quick and summary vengeance on his associate in the Empire ; but wild and coarse as were the manners of that day, the adventurer Basil prided himself on moderation in his actions, and aimed at shaping his conduct by the principles of the religion he professed.

He determined, after this brutal attempt on his life, to pardon Michael, and he sought an interview with him, with the purpose of telling him so ; but, at the same time, he determined to warn him that he would for the future look upon him as a lion lying in wait for his prey, and that he would deal with him as with a wild beast if he ever again attacked him, either in person or by his servants."

"Emperor," said Basil, "have I deserved evil at your hands? Why do you seek my life? Am I a beast, that you should set your hunters upon me?"

"Who hunts you, or even sets so much value on you as to trouble about your life or death?"

"It seems that my life troubles you much ; but the hunted boar sometimes turns to bay. I have been a Samson to my would-be assassins, smiting them without sword or spear. Look for them in

the wooded road outside the north gate of the city, where they will be found shattered by my arm, but not perchance quite dead." So saying he went out ; and in Michael's eyes, as they followed him, there was an expression that boded him no good.

After this interview Basil seldom appeared in public without a body-guard, and he closed the avenues of his palace to Michael and his adherents. The latter at this time lived in the Palace of St. Mamas, where, in a more outrageous manner than ever he woke the echoes of the night by his boisterous revels. His conduct was so scandalous and unbearable, that the Macedonian deemed it an imperative duty to remonstrate with him, for the last time, before taking efficacious measures to remove him from the throne. He went to St. Mamas for this purpose, surrounded by an armed escort ; but scarcely had he crossed the threshold of the palace when a spear was hurled at him by one of Michael's men. A scuffle between the guards on both sides followed. Michael, more than half inebriated, was urging on his men when a sword was thrust through his body, and he fell to the ground dying. He raised his eyes for a moment to Heaven, and then sank back a corpse.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BASIL THE MACEDONIAN.

MICHAEL III. was dead ; the profane scoffer was no more. He had left behind him two men of his own making—one of them on the Imperial throne, the other in the Patriarchal chair.

The Emperor was dead, and with him died his Court of profane jesters, his orgies in the Palace, and his irreligious processions in the streets. Men who had held their breaths, lest they might incur his wrath, began to speak freely of his infamous career.

The bell was still tolling to carry the news of his death through the city, when Basil the Macedonian, partner in his power but not sharer in his vices, began to show himself in a new and unexpected light. His first independent act was to drive Photius from the city, not giving him time to pack up his goods, and he compelled him to take up his residence in a monastery far away from the home of his ambition. Such a sudden change of front as that now shown by the Macedonian was without precedent in the history of the rulers of the Eastern Empire : it was the talk of the entire city. Had not the Emperor Basil been of one mind with Michael III. all through the Schism? And had he, since he mounted the throne, said a word in public for Ignatius, or against the man whom he now so vigorously assailed? It might be that he

never gave a positive sanction to the acts of Michael, and that his approval of them was only apparent; but, whatever might be said for or against his attitude up to this time, there was a general chorus of approval in the city at the decided manner in which he cut himself adrift from the irreligious policy of the late Emperor.

A short time after the disappearance of Photius Basil sent for Theophylact, and asked him for the name of the convent in which the ward of the banished man was confined. "For," he said, "she, with others who have suffered for their loyalty to Ignatius, may return in triumph from exile, in the Imperial galley, with that noble defender of Church discipline; for I have given orders to the Admiral to bring back the Patriarch with much pomp, as, I think, a restitution of honour is due to him by me for the indignities he has received from my deceased colleague."

"The Lady Alethea is in residence at the Convent of St. Prisca, on the island of Antros; but there may be a difficulty against her returning at present, as she has now no home in the city."

"She shall not want a home," said Basil, "nor the comforts and luxuries to which she has been accustomed. A house shall be provided for her, and the treasurer will provide for her needs."

"Your Majesty is gracious beyond all expectation, and generous to a fault."

"Neither more gracious nor more generous than I feel myself bound to be by the promptings of my spirit. All has been going wrong in Church and State; barbarity and rudeness have reigned

supreme for years in this city ; it is time that order, peace, and justice should return. All who have mourned their absence will bid them a hearty welcome."

A few days after this interview between Theophylact and the Emperor Basil a procession of boats and barges, moving in the wake of the Imperial galley, appeared on the Bosphorus, coming from the Propontis ; and as the cavalcade drew near to the city it was greeted by the acclamations of thousands lining both banks of the stream. Ignatius, with others who like him had been sent into banishment, and among them the ward of the usurper, was seen standing in the first vessel of the flotilla ; and he received a cordial welcome from the assembled crowds, who accompanied him to his family mansion, where he took up his residence for the night.

Meanwhile, preparations were being made for his reception by the Emperor ; and the next day he was a guest at the Imperial Palace, where Basil received him in state, surrounded by a brilliant Court. Then followed, a day later, his solemn entry into St. Sophia, where an immense congregation was assembled and a high celebration of the Liturgy was given, in presence of the returned exile ; many bishops and abbots, the military and civil authorities, and all that was noble in the city, being present. On this occasion a proof of the loyalty of the people to their prelate was given in a wholly unexpected manner : when the deacon, in singing the preface, intoned the words, "Let us give thanks to God," the people, unable to restrain

their joy at the turn events had taken, rose to their feet like one man, and gave back the response, "It is meet and just," in a volume of jubilant sound that was heard on the distant shore of the Golden Horn.

Where was now the usurper of the patriarchal dignity, who had so long strutted triumphant through the highways of the city, and had sat in gorgeous attire at the public functions in its churches? Where was he who ventured to believe that the people of Constantinople were on his side? He had passed suddenly out of the minds of all, and if his name was mentioned accidentally it was received with positive disrespect, or with a sigh of relief at his absence, or with a request that it should not be introduced again.

One of Ignatius' first acts, after returning to his pastoral charge, was the eradication of the weeds which had grown up in his Church during his absence ; he took note of all the priests and bishops whom Photius had ordained, and of the clerics who had gone over to his side ; and without violence or cruelty, but with dignity and firmness, he suspended both classes from their ecclesiastical functions, and told them that their services would not be for the present needed in the Church of Constantinople ; and when he had performed this painful but necessary duty, he besought the Emperor Basil to put himself in communication with the Pope, and to ask his Holiness to send legates to Constantinople, that they might, in his name, confirm in a Council of Bishops what had been recently done, and remove the last traces of a

schism that still was producing disastrous effects in every diocese of the Oriental Church.

Basil readily complied with the Patriarch's request, and sent one of his chamberlains, named Euthymius, to Rome with a letter for the Pope, representing the views and wishes of Ignatius. Nicholas I., however, was dying at this time, and consequently the negotiation was suspended. It was, however, resumed later on, when both Emperor and Patriarch wrote letters to Adrian II., who succeeded Nicholas in the Papal chair, conceived in the same spirit as Basil's first communication. Basil wrote as follows :

“ Having, on my accession to sole Imperial power, found this Church deprived of its lawful pastor, and subject to the tyranny of an outsider, I banished Photius, and recalled our Father Ignatius, who, it is quite clear, has been treated with much violence. And I felt myself justified in so doing by the letters of your predecessor, which have been preserved here with much care. I ask you to signify your approval of what I have done, and to lay down a rule for the treatment of those who have been in the communion of Photius. There are some priests and bishops who, having been ordained by Ignatius, and having bound themselves in writing not to leave him, have failed to carry their promises into effect. There are others who have been ordained by Photius, and many of them are allied to him by compulsion and deceit. As almost all our bishops and priests have fallen, I pray you to have pity on them—to prevent a total disruption of our Church—and par-

ticularly upon those who are ready to do penance, and to put themselves under your direction as Supreme Pontiff. As for those who will not return to the strait path, they cannot escape condemnation."

Ignatius' letter was, in the main, of the same import as that of Basil. He touched on the sufferings of his friends, and stated that many of those whom he had ordained continued faithful to him; and he referred to Paul, Archbishop of Cesarea, in Cappadocia, who, having been ordained by Photius, "was an opponent of mine in the first Council, but in the last boldly refused to condemn me." In this letter he made a clear profession of the primacy of the Pope, and of his right to apply a remedy to all the evils of the Church.

These letters were carried to Rome by envoys representing the Patriarch and the Emperor—the former a certain metropolitan named John, and the latter bearing the same name as the Emperor himself—and duly presented by them to the Pope on their arrival in the Western city.

At the opening of the interview granted them by the Pope on occasion of this presentation, the envoys gave thanks to the Roman Church for having drawn the Church of Constantinople out of the Schism; and then they told the Pope that they were bearers of a sealed book, full of false charges against Rome, which Photius had left behind in his flight, which they were ordered to submit to the Pope, as head of the Church, for examination. The Pope demanded to see the book that he might condemn the author of

it for the third time ; whereupon the Metropolitan John went out to fetch it, and on his return he threw it upon the ground, saying to his Holiness :

“ It has been cursed at Constantinople, be it also cursed in Rome.”

His companion Basil, striking it as it lay there with his foot and his sword, said :

“ I believe that the Devil dwells in this book, to the end that he might say through the mouth of Photius that which he could not himself pronounce. It contains a counterfeit signature of the Emperor Basil to the Acts of a pretended Council, which Basil could not have convened, as is proved by his restoring Ignatius to his position and dignity ; and I am prepared to take oath that he did not. Photius is the man who wrote the Emperor’s name, as well as those of many absent bishops. No one in Constantinople has any knowledge of this Council ; for, in fact, it was never held. But Photius took advantage of the presence of many provincial bishops in that city on a certain occasion, and bribed a number of strangers to subscribe its Acts in their names. Hence the subscriptions are in different characters, with different pens : some of them light, others heavy, to represent the writing of old men. You can see here the difference in the writing ; but you should be in Constantinople to fully understand the fraud.”

The Pope, having heard the statement of Basil to the end, took the book from his hands and told him that he would have it examined and reported upon by experts well acquainted with the Greek language ; and when this had been done, after

the lapse of a few days, he summoned to St. Peter's a number of bishops to discuss the contents of the volume in the presence of the Eastern messengers.

The Pope initiated the proceedings of this assembly by the following address, which was read in his name :

“You can see, Venerable Brethren, what we have to do, both as regards this reputed Council, and the profanity of those who have subscribed its Acts. Freely say what you think regarding them. For me, I am ready for all sufferings and even death for the law of God, the Canons, the privileges of the Holy See, and the memory and acts of my predecessor, Pope Nicholas.”

The Bishop of Valetria then read, in the name of the Council, a reply to the Pope's words, asking him to condemn this false Council, “held in Constantinople by a faction of Photius' friends, in the reign of Michael III.”

“I think,” said Adrian, “that the Acts of this pretended Council should be cast into the fire and reduced to ashes, publicly, and in the presence of the Greek envoys.”

“This opinion,” said the Fathers, “is just. It has our approval, and we pray you to carry it into execution.”

The Pope then pronounced sentence as follows :

“We ordain that the false Council held some time ago in Constantinople by Photius and his patron, the Emperor Michael, contrary to the respect due to the Holy See, be set aside, its Acts

being burned ; and that it be anathematised as a lying assembly. We ordain that all the writings against the Holy See that Photius and Michael have put in circulation, and the two factious conventicles that they have gathered against our brother Ignatius, be rejected as unworthy of respect. We again condemn the rebel Photius, who has been already justly condemned by our predecessor and ourselves on account of the new extravagance which he has been guilty of, in rising in opposition to our predecessor and ourselves, and we anathematise him. Névertheless, if he submits himself by voice and writing to the decrees of our predecessor and to ours, and condemns the Acts of his pretended Council, we will receive him into communion as a layman. As for those who have been parties to this Council, or subscribed its Acts, if they obey the order of our predecessor and return to the communion of Ignatius, if they anathematise this assembly and commit its Acts to the fire, they may be admitted to the communion of the Church. For our son, the Emperor Basil, though his name has been introduced into those proceedings, we acquit him of all blame, and place him among the number of Catholic Emperors. Whosoever, after coming to the knowledge of this Apostolic pronouncement, shall retain copies of the Acts of the false Council referred to, shall be excommunicated, and, if a cleric, deposed. All this we ordain, not only for Constantinople, but for Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and for the whole Church."

The letter of the Emperor Basil to Pope Adrian

was supplemented by a request that his Holiness would send legates to the East, to preside over a General Council, to be held on their arrival, for the purpose of closing the Photian controversy and completing the union of the Eastern and Western Churches.

To this request Adrian II. assented, and having selected three distinguished ecclesiastics to represent him—Donatus, Bishop of Ostia, Stephen, Bishop of Nepi, and Marinus, Deacon of the Roman Church—he sent them to Constantinople, charging them with two letters in reply to those we have read. In one of these, addressed to the Emperor Basil, the Pope expressed his satisfaction with what had been done for Ignatius and against Photius.

“Regarding the schismatics,” he wrote, “as their crimes are different, so should be their treatment: but this we leave to the discretion of our legates and our brother Ignatius. Be assured we will be merciful to all except Photius, whose ordination must be absolutely repudiated. Assemble a Council of many bishops under the presidency of our legates, where crimes and persons may be subjected to examination. Let this Council have the copies of the Acts of the fictitious assembly held against the Holy See burned publicly, and let no portion thereof be retained by anyone under pain of deposition and anathema. Let the decrees of the Council of Rome against that of Photius be subscribed by all present, and kept in the archives of all the Churches.”

To Ignatius the Pope wrote a second letter, in

which he assured him that he would uphold the acts and decrees of his predecessor, Nicholas, as they affected Gregory of Syracuse and Photius.

“As to the bishops,” he continued, “who have been ordained by Methodius or you, I regard them as confessors of Jesus Christ, if they have opposed themselves to Photius and suffered with you ; and I think they are entitled to a place of honour in your Church, and should receive the compensation they deserve. But for those who have taken sides with Photius, if they come back to you and make satisfaction in a way that we have indicated to our legates, we have decided that they shall receive a pardon and be retained in the rank they occupy.”

Furnished with these letters, and with full instructions for their conduct in Constantinople, the legates left by sea for the East in the autumn of A.D. 867. Their movements were known to the Emperor Basil, for on their arrival in Thessalonica they were received with honour by an Imperial equerry, accompanied by a train of followers, who took them in charge and conveyed them as far as Selembria, a town about fifty miles from Constantinople.

Here they were met by a second deputation bearing them some very valuable marks of Imperial favour : such as a service of solid silver plate for the table, forty horses from the Imperial stables, and a number of servants to attend upon them. They pursued their journey, their pomp and equipage always increasing, until they arrived close to one of the gates of the Imperial city, where they were lodged for the night at the magnificent

Church of St. John the Evangelist, which had been recently erected by order of the Emperor Basil. Honours accumulated every hour upon the heads of these representatives of Pope Adrian. A special horse, richly caparisoned with gilded saddle and trappings, waited to carry each of them the next day in procession through the streets of Constantinople ; and a large number of officers from the Palace, and all the clergy of the city, robed in chasubles, came out to meet them to the city gates.

Sunday, the 25th of September, saw them entering the city, preceded by Paul, Basil, and Joseph, officials of the highest rank in the Patriarchal service, dressed in their clerical robes, and followed by a vast crowd of the people of the city, bearing lighted torches and blazing flambeaux. On they went, amidst the joyous acclamations of citizens, now thoroughly aroused from their schismatical sleep, until they touched their destination, which was the Palace of Irene, where they were received by the Secretary, who, on the part of the Emperor, welcomed them, and said that they would be received in audience on Tuesday.

On the morning of that day they went to the Imperial Palace, again in processional order, preceded by officials representing all the "companies" of the Imperial household. They were received by the Emperor in the "golden saloon," who, when they entered the chamber, rose from his throne, took from their hands the Pope's letter, and kissed it, and then entered upon a friendly conversation with them regarding the state of the Roman

Church, the health of the Pope, the condition of the clergy and senators; at the end of which he embraced the legates, and sent them away to visit Ignatius and to give him such letters as they had brought for him from Rome.

The day following they waited upon Basil a second time, and on this occasion the Emperor addressed to them some remarks which are of great historical importance. He said :

“The Church of Constantinople, rent in twain by the ambition of Photius, has already received a helping hand from your Church, through the anxious care of Pope Nicholas. We have been for two years awaiting the decision of our mother, the Roman Church, with all the patriarchs of the East, the metropolitans, and the bishops; for which reason we earnestly entreat you to apply yourselves to the re-establishment of union and peace.”

In reply the legates said : “This is the object of our coming here; but we cannot admit to our Council any of your Orientals who shall not have signed a certain formula which we have taken from the archives of the Holy See.”

At the request of the Emperor and of Ignatius, who was present, the text of the formula was read, after which the audience terminated and the legates returned to their quarters in the Palace of St. Irene.

“The Emperor has become a Roman,” said Elias, the treasurer, to Theophylact, as they went out side by side from the audience chamber in which the interview just described had taken place.

“And don't you think it better that it should be so? It is wiser to be a Roman orthodox than a Greek schismatic.”

“Roman or Greek, it is all the same to me,” said Elias; “but I think a man ought to be consistent.”

“Would you consider consistency always desirable?”

“Always. There is a weakness and fickleness in change of judgment.”

“Not always, surely. If a person had committed a crime, would you say that he should persevere in wrong-doing?”

“Theophylact, you are embarrassing. You reason too closely. You are always for principle, while other mortals are content with expediency.”

“I think it is absolutely necessary to uphold principle in our crisis—yes—and to act upon it. Was there ever such confusion in the religious affairs of a Christian city? Two patriarchs! Two followings among the bishops, and the populace divided in their allegiance. A perfect inability to relieve ourselves. What is to come of it if the people have no principle to guide them?”

Just then their conversation was interrupted by a third party who came up from behind, and without salutation or preface said, “You have been with the Emperor and Roman legates. What is the news?”

They recognised the voice of the new-comer, and turning full around beheld Photius, dignified as usual, and dressed in Pontifical array, but with a blustering air and an expression of much ma-

lignity on his countenance. "You have been hearing the plots of my enemies," he continued; "what is the news?"

"Photius," said Theophylact, "I am in the dark as to plots against you; and if you have enemies, I know them not. Your case will be the first before the Council, and you will be, I am sure, judged justly."

"I am above the judgment of Council or individual," said he haughtily. "I will not submit to condemnation."

"Your case is in the hands of the legates of the Bishop of Rome. They preside at the Council as a matter of course. Under them, truths will be elicited and doubts cleared up."

"I care not for the legates of Rome, nor for the man who sends them. You do not appear to be aware that I deposed the Pope."

"I am fully aware that you issued some such insane decree, and that you were laughed at by the world for your pains."

"You are insolent, Sir, and, I will add, ignorant of the points of ecclesiastical law and the issues involved in my contest with the Bishop of Rome."

"Photius," said Theophylact calmly, but with great meaning, "your pride and overbearing manner may carry the day with others, not with me. It is not the first time we have had a passage of arms. I spared you before; I will not spare you now. You remember our meeting near the Church of the Apostles, when Ignatius was being tortured to death in the tomb of Constantine Copronymus by your orders? I was on the point of calling

you 'murderer' that day, when by your blandness you disarmed me. I now throw all your crimes in your face, and charge you with inhuman cruelty and irreligion. Plain language is the best for such as you."

"If Bardas Cæsar were alive, or the Emperor Michael, I would have you degraded, exiled, perhaps slain, for this insolence. As things are, you have the victory, and I wish you joy." Turning to Elias he said: "You surely do not share the sentiments of this man. Perhaps you may give me information, not abuse."

"Oh! for me," said Elias, "I go with the rising tide. I am an official—nothing more. I hear nothing, know nothing, and say as little as I can. Do not ask me for information on Church affairs. I have a single eye for my duty."

"I suspect," said Photius, sneering and turning away, "that you have a second idea, and that is self."

Scarcely had Photius departed when an acclamation was heard, coming from the direction in which he had gone. Theophylact and Elias, curious to discover the cause of this noise, which was prolonged and boisterous, followed at a distance, and on coming near the hippodrome saw a crowd of servants and grooms gathered around Photius.

"He reminds us of old times," said a stable-boy.

"And of our friendly ruler, Michael," said another.

"And of the fine fun and merry times we had when there was no one to reprove or check us," said Septimus.

“Check you, man!” said a bystander. “Rather when the ruler of the State encouraged you by word and example.”

“Welcome, master!” said Peter. “We’re glad to see you back. You’ll never leave us again?”

“I hope not, my friend,” said Photius, “and if I do, it will be against my will.”

“How fond he is of us,” said Comas. “Times are changed, master.”

“In what way, my friend?” said Photius.

“In every way. Money is scarce, and rules are strict.”

“Strict are they, my friend? In what way?”

“Oh! this new Bishop is watching us all; and the Emperor is helping him.”

“We can’t get drunk in the hippodrome now, and if we fight we’re turned out.”

“My friend, you mistake me,” said Photius, with assumed gravity. “I never encouraged drunkenness or fighting.”

“There it is. You didn’t, of course; but you were never hard on us for those things.”

“Photius patriarch against the world!” shouted Peter.

The cry was taken up by many voices, and on every side were heard cries of “Away with Ignatius! Photius for ever!”

Just at this moment a large number of persons, orderly, disciplined, and marching in procession, turned in from a by-street and stopped in front of the hippodrome, where they indulged in loud cries of “Long live Ignatius!” “Welcome to the true Patriarch of Constantinople!”

A rush was made from the racecourse. Fierce yells of dissent came from the advancing grooms and stable-boys. Shouts of defiance were hurled back by the partisans of Ignatius. A collision between the crowds appeared imminent, when Theophylact advanced between the parties, and waving them back with outstretched arms, said in a commanding voice :

“I bespeak peace and order. What do you contend about? Are not you all in favour of justice and religion? You only mistake the means of obtaining the first and advancing the other. You are all well-disposed, though some of you are mistaken. Await the decision of the Council which will sit to-morrow. All the wisdom of the East and West will be there: bishops, metropolitans, delegates of the Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem, and legates of the Bishop of Rome. Ignatius and Photius will attend in person; and this case will be sifted to the bottom, and the grain separated from the chaff. And then the Patriarch who has a right to your allegiance will be given you.”

“He is right,” said a voice, “the Turmarch was always right. Long live Theophylact, slayer of the Saracens and saviour of the Empire! We will abide by what you say.” And the crowds separated, sobered somewhat, but still murmuring and consoling themselves on both sides with a murky idea that they alone had gained the day and demolished their adversaries.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE EIGHTH GENERAL COUNCIL.

THE Eighth General Council of the Church assembled in session on the 15th of October, 869, under the presidency of the three Papal legates, Donatus and Stephen, bishops, and the deacon Marinus. The place of session was a high gallery of St. Sophia, on the right side of the nave. A relic of the true cross was exhibited, and an open Book of the Gospels was near it. Next to the legates of the Pope sat Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and next to him was Thomas, Metropolitan of Tyre, representing the Patriarch of Antioch, and then the priest Elias, delegate of the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Eleven principal officers of State were present, by order of the Emperor Basil.

The first act of the assembled Fathers was to summon before them the bishops who had suffered for their adherence to Ignatius. They entered the Council chamber, twelve in number, of whom five were metropolitans, and they were told by the legates to be seated according to their rank, for they said, addressing them: "You are worthy of honour, and are to be congratulated on the course you have pursued."

Next followed a verification of the powers of all who were present as delegates, after which an in-

teresting letter of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Ignatius was read as follows :

“ You know what has prevented us from writing to you, or sending a messenger to you—the fear of those who hold us in their power. They are, however, just now showing much amiability to us, and allowing us to build churches and follow our ways without doing us injustice or violence. We have even received orders from our Emir to say why it is that we are obliged to send the priest Elias, with whom he has sent Thomas, Archbishop of Tyre, as you have requested by letter. You must know that the object of sending those is to obtain the freedom of some Saracens whom your Emperor holds in captivity. Wherefore we ask you to speak to the Emperor, our master, and ask him to send home as many of these Saracen prisoners as he can, to save us from the danger of being exterminated. I send you the coat, the pallium, and the mitre of St. James, and a vessel taken from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.”

This letter having been read and accepted by the assembled Fathers, the legates of the Holy See brought forward for signature the formula they had put before the Emperor some days earlier. It was read in Latin by an interpreter named Damien, and in Greek by Stephen, a deacon. It was in substance the same as one sent by Pope Hormisdas in the year 519, to the Patriarch John, for his subscription, and of the same import as another sent by the Emperor Justinian to Pope Agapetus in 535. It was as follows :

“ The beginning of salvation is found in keeping

the rule of faith ; after that one must fulfil to the letter the precepts laid down by the Fathers. Now, we cannot pass over in silence these words of Our Lord, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church' ; and the outcome has shown the truth of them, for the Holy See has always kept the Catholic religion without stain. Hence, in order not to be separated from that Church, and to observe the ordinances of the Fathers, especially of those who have occupied the Holy See, we pronounce anathema upon all heresies, and among them upon that of the Iconoclasts ; we anathematise Photius, usurper of the See of Constantinople, until he submits himself to the judgment of the Holy See, and annuls the Acts of his false Council. We receive the Council of Pope Nicholas, which has been subscribed by you, Adrian, Sovereign Pontiff, the Council you have held yourself, and all that has been decreed on this subject, approving those whom these Councils have approved of and condemning those whom they have condemned, principally Photius and Gregory of Syracuse, and those who adopt their schism or continue in their communion.

"As to the two false Councils held under the direction of the Emperor Michael against the Patriarch Ignatius, and a third against the Holy See, we pronounce an eternal anathema upon them, with those who are supporters of them or keep their Acts. We embrace with all our hearts every regulation made by the Holy See touching the Patriarch Ignatius, desiring, above all, to preserve in every way communion with the

Holy See, in which resides the full solidity of the Christian religion, promising not to receive in the Holy Mysteries those who are separated from it."

To this important formulary the following clause was added :

" I, N——, Bishop of ——, have with my hand signed this declaration, and have presented it to you, Adrian, Sovereign Pontiff and Pope of the Universal Church, through your legates, Donatus, Stephen, and Marinus."

The signature with the date was to follow, attested by a witness. This formula was without hesitation approved of and signed by all the assembled bishops.

The delegates of the Eastern patriarchates outside Constantinople had drawn up and signed a document of import similar to this, previously to the arrival of the Papal legates. This document was now presented to the Council and read. It was as follows :

"The Emperor Basil has summoned us from the East to appease the troubles of your Church, with the legates who come from Rome. But they come slowly, and we are afraid that our sojourn in this country may bring upon us, and upon all the Christians under their sway, a persecution from our Arab masters. Hence we think that we are not in duty bound to wait any longer for the said legates, in view of the fact that we hold in our hands proof of what has been done in the letters of the Popes Nicholas and Adrian. For these reasons we give our advice as follows: That every one should obey the decree of Pope Nicholas, as

we do. Hence that the Patriarch Ignatius shall continue in peaceable possession of his See; that the bishops, priests, and clerics who have been deposed for refusing to join in communion with Photius shall be restored; that they who, after being ordained by Ignatius or Methodius, have served under Photius, and have, after the banishment of that usurper, returned to the Catholic Church, or shall return before the closing of the Council, shall be received by the Church, as a good mother, into such penance as Ignatius may impose upon them. For Pope Nicholas has left him the power to receive them, having condemned no one by name, except Photius and Gregory of Syracuse. We condemn them both in the same fashion, and we pronounce those who have been ordained by Photius to be unworthy of any ecclesiastical ministration, and we anathematise every one who shall not submit to the judgment of Pope Nicholas, which is our judgment also."

When silence fell upon the Council, after the reading of this document, the legates of the Pope asked the delegates of the Eastern Patriarchs if the paper just read was their writing and contained their views. They answered in the affirmative, and the Council approved their words. At this stage of the proceedings the patrician Behanes interposed, on the part of the Senate, and addressing himself, in the first instance, to the legates of the Pope, said :

"I ask you to solve a difficulty that has been suggesting itself to us. How have you been in a position to condemn Photius without having ever seen him?"

The legates answered :

“Pope Nicholas condemned Photius, as presented to him in his letters and his envoys.”

“Who were these envoys?” said Behanes.

“If you require it,” said the legates, “we will give you the whole history of the transaction.” They continued as follows : “At the beginning of these troubles Arsabas was sent to Rome by the Emperor Michael with four bishops whose names we cannot bring to mind. They were bearers of a letter from the Emperor, which spoke of the revival of Iconoclasm, referred to the expulsion of Ignatius from his See, and requested the Pope to send legates to Constantinople to put down heresy and bring peace to its distracted Church. With this request his Holiness complied : he sent Rodoldus and Zachary here, who on their arrival held an irregular Council against Ignatius, and made pretence of deposing him from his office. They went back to Rome, accompanied by the Secretary, Leo, who was charged with letters from the Emperor and Photius, and with the Acts of the Council as well.

“But Pope Nicholas, having been put in possession of what had occurred in this city, assembled a Council of all the bishops of the West, calling to it the clergy and the senators of Rome, and condemned the assembly over which his legates had presided, set their acts and decisions aside, and deposed them from their rank and office among the clergy. This was the order in which Photius was condemned.”

Behanes then turned to the delegates of the Eastern Patriarchs : and addressed them thus :

“ You have been a long time here waiting for the Roman legates, and Photius has been very near you ; how comes it to pass that you never tried to see him before condemning him ? ”

Elias, legate of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, rose and said :

“ The Holy Spirit has established the Patriarchs that they might remove the scandals that spring up in the Church. Now, Photius not having been recognised by the first See, which is that of ancient Rome, nor by the three Patriarchal Sees of the East—that is to say, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem—there was no need to summon him to be examined and judged, his condemnation being a foregone conclusion. We have never known anyone as Patriarch of Constantinople but Ignatius. When we arrived here he was in exile ; but we knew no other. Thanks to God, we now see him restored, and we communicate with him, officiate in his church, and eat at his table, having throughout been in his communion, and having so declared publicly since our arrival here.

“ Now, though we have not spoken to Photius, we have not failed to make ourselves acquainted with his frivolous defence, for we have had many conversations with members of his party. They say that Ignatius, deposed and in exile, has resigned ; but neither Rome nor we have received his resignation, for it would be against the Canons.

“ Here are the reasons why we have not summoned Photius to pass a new judgment upon him. He sent an official to the Metropolitan of Tyre, to inquire if the Sec of Antioch had received him ;

and the Metropolitan told him distinctly that he had never been acknowledged by Antioch."

At the end of these remarks the Senate expressed itself as satisfied, and the first session of the Eighth General Council was brought to a close with plaudits for the Emperor, the Empress Eudoxia, Pope Nicholas, Pope Adrian, the Patriarch Ignatius, the Patriarchs of the far East, the Senate, and the assembled Fathers.

We pause in our recital to reflect on events and issues. Constantinople in A.D. 869 could not relieve itself without the intervention of the Pope; could not, without his helping hand, raise herself out of the mire. The Emperor wanted him, the Senate, the clergy, the people. The aid of the Patriarchs of the distant East was not enough, and they, when they came, in the person of their delegates, followed the leading of Rome.

A lesson coming from a distant age and clime at a moment when it is needed! Antioch might speak, Jerusalem might speak, Alexandria might speak, Constantinople might speak; but while Rome was silent, their voices lacked authority. The Christian world to-day is face to face with the same question: is it to be unity under authority, or endlessly multiplying divisions?

The second session of the Council was made two days after the first. A number of bishops, who had been ordained by Methodius and Ignatius, but who had gone over to Photius, presented themselves before the Fathers in this session, and begged to be received into communion as penitents. They were admitted by

the Papal legates, who said: "Because you have confessed your error, we receive you, in accordance with the rule laid down by Pope Adrian."

After these came eleven priests, similarly ordained and similarly fallen, and in succession a number of sub-deacons; they were all admitted again to the communion of the Church, and then the penances that all were to perform were announced by Ignatius in the following words:

"Those who eat flesh meat shall abstain from the use of it and from cheese and eggs. Those who do not eat flesh meat shall abstain from cheese, eggs, and fish on Wednesdays and Fridays, and shall partake of vegetables and herbs, oil and a little wine. They will bend the knee fifty times each day, and will say one hundred times, 'Lord be merciful to me!' and one hundred times, 'Lord, I have sinned; forgive me.' They will recite the sixteenth, thirty-seventh, and fiftieth Psalms. All this they will perform until Christmas, and meanwhile shall be interdicted from their sacred functions."

The subsequent sessions showed very clearly that if Photius had some weak followers he had still many staunch friends in the Episcopacy of the East. Theodulus of Ancyra and Nicephoras of Nicaea were on his side; Theophilus and Zachary, whom he had sent to Rome at the beginning of the dispute, were still faithful to him; and it was probably the number and weight of his supporters that made the senators in the fourth session ask the Eastern legates if he had ever been received into the communion of the Churches they represented.

No, they said, he had never been acknowledged by Jerusalem, Antioch, or Alexandria.

All this time Photius remained out of view. He was in Constantinople, brought back from his exile to be judged again. He was sent for by the Fathers, and returned an evasive reply. He was summoned to appear before the Council, and he would not come. In the end he was forced to present himself, which he did in a dogged and insolent humour, closing his mouth firmly and declining to answer any questions.

“Do you receive the ordinances of the Fathers?” demanded the senators of him.

He made no reply.

“Do you receive the decision of Pope Nicholas?” said the legates.

No reply.

“Do you receive what his successor, Pope Adrian, has ordained? Speak; speak.”

He was still silent; and the legates said:

“We have heard that he is eloquent, and we know that he is a deceiver. Let him speak.”

At length he said, in a sanctimonious tone: “God hears me, though I do not speak.”

“Your silence,” said the legates, “will not save you from being condemned.”

“Even Jesus, by His silence, did not escape condemnation,” he replied.

“Oh,” said the legates, “humble yourself; confess your errors by voice and writing; pronounce anathema upon these injurious and insolent proceedings of yours; promise to machinate no more against Ignatius, and to regard him as the Bishop

of this See ; embrace with reverence the decisions of the Holy See regarding yourself and him."

Photius made no reply to this exhortation, and the legates went on :

"What a man this is. He has closed his ears, like an adder, and will not hear the voice of this Council."

A long and interesting discussion between the Fathers and the Bishops who still adhered to Photius and other members of the Council, was carried through in the seventh session. The Emperor was present, and he besought the schismatics to make submission to the Council. Some of them did so ; but others, far from yielding, broke out into open and violent rebellion against all authority.

One of their number, Zachary, Bishop of Chalcedon, rose and initiated an acrimonious attack on the faith of the Holy See.

"Rome," said he, "has erred. Pope Julius received into his communion Marcellus of Ancyra, and the Council of Sardica, composed of three hundred bishops, justified him ; nevertheless, he is now under anathema as a heretic. Again, the unhappy Apiarius, supported by the Bishop of Rome, was rejected by a Council of African Bishops, which warned the Pope by letter to confine himself to his own sphere of authority and not to pass its limits. I might quote other cases in illustration of this point. The Canons are above Pope and Patriarchs ; and when they act contrary to the Canons we are justified in refusing to defer to their authority."

But Zachary was not to have the victory.

Up rose the Metropolitan of Smyrna, to dissect his case against Rome, and to prove by historical evidence the orthodoxy of Pope Julius and the others referred to by Zachary.

“You say,” began this able Bishop, “that many of those whom the Roman Church has pronounced just are regarded as criminals, and that many whom she has condemned are looked upon as sound and orthodox. This is inaccurate. Pope Julius and the Council of Sardica had good reason for receiving Marcellus; who anathematised all heresies, and particularly that of which he was himself accused. The great Athanasius and the confessor Paul, those pillars of the Church, received him into communion. But having ‘returned to his vomit,’ and fallen again into heresy, he was anathematised by Silvian and Liberius, successors of Julius:—so much for your first example of the fall of a Bishop of Rome. Now I come to the case of Apiarius. This man, in priest’s orders, was excommunicated by Urban, his bishop, and then deposed from his position by a Council. Pope Zosimus, to whom he appealed, declared him innocent, and sent him back to the Council to be reinstated. Zosimus died shortly after; but his successor, Boniface, received an assurance that Zosimus’ order had been obeyed, that Apiarius had been absolved and restored: the Fathers had merely interdicted him for the Church of Sicca, where he had ministered for some time, but given bad example, by the frivolity and levity of his conduct. And so the Council of Africa deferred to Pope Zosimus instead of resisting him, as you pretend.”

These well-dealt blows did not put down the adherents of Photius, and they would have carried on the war of words, defeated as they clearly were ; but the Emperor Basil interposed, and besought them "to sound the depths of their consciences, when they would discover the evil they had done in going into schism. The last hour has come," he said, "the Judge is at the gate : do not let Him take you by surprise outside the Church. Be not ashamed to bring your evil deeds to light, that you may apply a remedy to them. If you fear the embarrassment, I will give you an example of humiliation, ignorant sinner as I am. I will be the first to lay myself prostrate on the ground, making little of my purple and my crown. Mount upon my shoulders, trample upon me : I am ready to suffer all this, provided that I may witness the reunion of the Churches and save my soul. Look to yourselves for the future ; I am not answerable for your perdition. Renounce the spirit of contention and animosity, and resume the spirit of union and charity. Pass over to the right side, and unite yourself to your ruler. Be not in trouble regarding temporalities, for I can in many ways aid and comfort you. We will use all our influence with your Father and Patriarch, to give a dispensation in your regard, and to treat you with lenity. Only be not so obstinate as to court your ruin ; and neglect not this favourable opportunity. Do not allow yourselves to expect times and chances which may never come, and which, if they should come, will do you little good."

This earnest appeal of Basil was cordially ap-

proved by the Papal legates, and they acquiesced in a farther merciful proposition he made, which was that the schismatics should receive seven days' grace, during which they should have time to surrender to the Council; which if they did not, they would be brought up for judgment.

Ten days after this decision was come to, in the seventh session of this Council, Photius was brought to the door of the chamber in which it sat. Behanes announced his presence, and asked the legates if he might enter. They replied in the affirmative, and Photius entered the room leaning on a staff, and with him was his friend Gregory of Syracuse. As soon as he saw him, Marinus, one of the Pope's legates, said: "Take that staff from his hand; it is a mark of the pastoral dignity. He should not carry it, being a wolf and not a pastor. Ask him if he has entered into himself, and if he is ready to abjure his errors in writing."

Behanes put the question to him; and, evading it altogether, Photius said:

"We, that is Gregory and myself, pray God that He may give length of days to the Emperor. We will account to him for our doings, but not to the legates."

"Have you nothing more to say?" demanded the legates.

"If they had heard what we have said already," replied Photius to Behanes, "they would not put this question. If they repent of the sentence they have passed, let them prove it by their works."

"In what way?"

"By doing penance for the sin they have committed."

Seeing that it was useless to argue with Photius, his episcopal followers, who had up to this time remained outside the Council chamber, were now invited to enter. The Papal legates, on their appearance, put some questions to them through the senator.

“Has any of you prepared a brief?”

“No,” they answered. Then two of them said :

“What brief do you wish us to draw up? Is it our profession of faith?”

“No,” said the legates, “but the brief we have brought from Rome, which contains the repudiation of Photius and his acts, the condemnation of Gregory of Syracuse, a promise to submit to the authority of Ignatius, and to receive in their entirety the decrees of the Roman Church.”

To this direction, John, Bishop of Heraclea, replied : “Whosoever anathematises this Bishop”—pointing to Photius—“let him be anathematised.”

Zachary of Chalcedon said : “We will not do anything contrary to reason. We know how this affair has been carried through.”

The Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia said : “In what is contrary to reason and the Canons I will not acquiesce, let the command come from Rome, or from Jerusalem, or through an angel from Heaven.”

Behanes then, with the permission of the legates, thus addressed Photius and his adherents :

“Tell me, my friends, whence come you? From Heaven, from hell, or from the earth on which we dwell? When heresy or schism have arisen in

past times, has anyone been able to escape their noxious influence who turned from the advice of the Patriarchs? To-day the five Patriarchs condemn you. What do you mean? Is anyone in favour of you?"

Photius' Bishops replied: "We have on our side the Canons of the Apostles and the Councils of the Church."

Behanes said: "Where has God put the Canons for keeping? Is it not in certain churches? And where are these churches, but in the places whence come these legates? If there be others, name them."

But the Photian Bishops turned from him, and addressing the Emperor said: "God preserve your Majesty. We have asked for liberty to explain our views, and they give it not to us: how, then, can we speak?"

Behanes said: "There is no hindrance on the part of the Emperor, he allows you to speak; but the judges are unwilling to hear you, as you speak only words of abuse."

"We do not regard them as judges," said the Bishops.

"Do the Canons," said Behanes, "set aside the decisions of the Patriarchs? Are their judgments unreasonable?"

"Most unreasonable," said one.

"And they judge against the Canons and the views of the Patriarchs they represent?" said Behanes. "Go, then, to the Patriarchs, to learn their views."

"Go," interposed the Emperor, "and I will pay the expenses of your journey."

But these complaining prelates had no wish to undertake such a journey, and they said : " There is no necessity to go. Let the case be examined and decided by this Council."

And it was examined thoroughly in all its details and bearings. During this examination various and curious particulars came to light. For example, the confession of persons who had given false testimony against Ignatius ; the conviction of others who had, in Photius' Council, represented themselves as delegates of the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem ; the penitence of stable-boys who had worn the sacred vestments, and in their character of clerics offered incense to Photius.

The evidence was such as to allow no outlet of escape to the intruder and his adherent bishops. They were asked to repent ; they would not : to submit to the judgment of the Council ; they refused now, though they had previously consented to do so. Then a last monition was addressed to them by the Papal legates, warning them, under a pain of anathema, to submit, which refusing to do, they were condemned.

Photius was anathematised as a " forger, a usurper, and a schismatic " ; and with him Gregory of Syracuse and all his followers.

Thus ended for a while the public career of this unscrupulous and ambitious innovator ; and, after a few sessions of minor importance, as regards the matter of this record, the Council brought its discussions to an end, when its Acts were duly signed by the Papal legates first, then by Ignatius, and in

succession by the representatives of the other Patriarchs ; by the Emperor Basil, and finally by all the other Bishops who took part in its proceedings.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SLAVE GIRL'S LAST JOURNEY—ANDRIMADES.

THE Council having come to an end, and the bishops who composed it having left Constantinople to return to their Sees, the legates of Pope Adrian were preparing for their home journey, which was to be overland to a town on the sea coast, and from that seaport by ship to the coast of Italy.

The Emperor Basil, who had shown them such respect and deference during their stay in Constantinople, was gracious and generous to them on their departure. He invited them to a banquet in the Palace, which he gave in their honour; charged them with many valuable presents for the Pope, and promised to send the master of the horse, Theodosius, with an escort to accompany them to the port of departure and secure them against all casualties on the way.

Zeta having heard from Andrimades—who during his visits to Melanus' villa rambled over all subjects that were spoken of in the city—that the date of the departure of the legates was not far off, determined, if she could, to obtain permission to travel with their escort. To Melanus she applied, when he next came to the villa, and told him in earnest language that she was anxious to be of the party that was about to

accompany the legates to the Capital of the West.

“Think you,” said she, “that those messengers of the Bishop of Rome would allow an Eastern slave girl to travel with their attendants?”

“They will, I am quite sure, have a number of seculars as well as priests to accompany them on their journey,” said Melanus; “and I do not think that they would object to your enrolling yourself among the former.”

“And they will be escorted, I suppose, by Imperial soldiers or sailors, and so the journey will be a safe one?”

“They will be accompanied to the coast by an escort, under the command of Theodosius, master of the horse, but not beyond. At sea they must take care of themselves.”

“But no one would dare to molest a holy and unarmed party like these illustrious strangers!”

“Would they not?” said Melanus. “The Sclav pirates who infest the seas between here and Italy are no respecters of persons. Moreover, they are fierce and cruel, and have less regard for the lives than for the property of those whom ill-fortune may put into their hands.”

“But what is my life in comparison to the lives of those great and saintly men, who carry with them, I am sure, a special protection from Providence. I will gladly cast in my lot with them if you obtain for me permission to go among their followers.”

“I will try, rest assured of it. You have my sympathy in your troubles, and my approval of your intended enterprise, which, I hope, may at

last bring you to a home where no one will molest you."

And so, a few days after, Zeta was equipped for her third and last journey, Melanus having obtained for her permission to accompany the legates' party.

Before her departure she bade a sad farewell—first, to the slaves attached to the villa in which she had received hospitality, and to the farming families of the neighbourhood; secondly, to Alethea, who embraced her affectionately, and put into her hands a purse; and, finally, to Theophylact, who had, without consulting her, gone through the formalities necessary for making her a free woman, and who now accompanied the precious gift of liberty with a written testimonial to her worth and fidelity while in servitude.

Melanus had her conveyed from his country house to the place where the servants and followers of the Papal legates were assembled; and he gave directions that she should be given over in charge to the bronze-worker and his wife, under whose immediate protection she was to travel.

Thankful to all her benefactors alike, and with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow, Zeta departed on a journey which she confidently hoped would lead her out of trouble and into a peaceful haven.

There must have been danger on the way to the port when the Emperor deemed it necessary to protect the legates by a detachment of mounted men; and in some districts, as they went along, the bearing of the wild inhabitants who

hovered around them was not reassuring. The party travelled in two divisions, the first being composed of the legates and their immediate attendants, and the second of traders and travellers, among the last mentioned being the bronze-worker and his wife with whom Zeta was immediately associated.

There was no mishap on the way, and outside the great length of the journey and the overwhelming fatigue it caused, nothing to complain of, and the whole party arrived safe at the port on the afternoon of the fourth day after its departure from Constantinople.

There a vessel commissioned to convey the legates to Italy, the *Hagios*, lay with sails furled in the harbour, a frail craft by comparison with the modern ocean greyhound, and offering but scant accommodation for what in those days counted as a long voyage, but fitted and equipped after the best fashion known to shipwrights of the period. A complicated course lay before her: to coast along by the shore of the Propontis; to pass through the narrow neck of the Archipelago; to steer through the numberless islands of the Peloponnesus; and then, having rounded the southern coast of Greece, to head off in a north-westerly direction for her destination on the Adriatic side of the Italian peninsula.

A bright sky and a westerly breeze favoured the *Hagios*, and no more lovely evening ever shone upon those waters. The little ship careered before the wind as if she had been a modern schooner, until the western sky was flooded with golden light and

the sun dropped into the ocean, leaving the world to the care of the stars.

More slowly and cautiously she threaded her way through the Archipelago. She was gliding thence into the open sea, when the heavens became illuminated by the phosphoric light often seen in those latitudes, which, from its continuity, has the illuminating power of a half-moonlight, or of the early rays of the sun on a hazy morning in spring; and then the look-out gave warning of a vessel following stealthily in their wake. The captain gave orders to crowd all sail, and altered his course so as to bring the *Hagios* before the wind. He had recognised the pursuer as a Slav pirate, and well knew the merciless character of these barbarians.

The little vessel flew through the waters, and was every moment increasing the distance between herself and the pirate, when suddenly the tackle of the mainsail gave way; the great canvas flapped about the ship like the broken wings of a huge bird, and the *Hagios* was floating helpless on the waves.

There was no such thing as arranging terms of surrender with the semi-savages who now bore down upon them; it was unconditional surrender.

"Let us see whom you have on board," said a savage voice. "Ah! the very persons we have been looking for."

"I have only poor people on board, and two venerable prelates, returning to Rome with their escort," said the captain.

"Silence, my friend. I know very well who are

your passengers," said the pirate. "Your prelates are laden with rich presents from the Emperor Basil. Think you we have no spies to inform us who sails these waters? Up with every one on board, and produce their effects. Let none try to deceive me."

The words of the savage man struck terror into the passengers. They at once produced their valuables.

"These vestments, these vessels, and cups surpass all that I have heard. Pardon me, holy men. This is my profession."

Not even Zeta's few packages escaped the search of the pirates; and the Acts of the Council were thrown overboard, together with the tools of the poor bronze-worker.

The slave girl retained only one of her treasures, but it was the most highly valued of them all. There lay concealed in her bosom a parchment, on which was written: "Theophylact to Zeta, formerly slave, now freedwoman, a last farewell till they shall meet beyond a world of sorrows."

* * * * *

The departure of Zeta from Constantinople had been carefully concealed from Andrimades; and she was gone quite a week before he became aware, from a search in person at Melanus' villa, that she had succeeded this time in making good her escape from him and his unwelcome attentions.

It was in vain that he asked whither she had gone, for some of those to whom he put the question smiled, while others laughed outright, and all were ignorant of her destination—only knew

that she had been for some time preparing for a long journey to some distant country, from which she would never return.

Andrimades heaved a sigh, and quoted sadly : "I have joked enough ; I have drunk enough ; it is time that I should retire."

The Emperor regarded him as not much more than a Court jester ; and when he had put in prison the profane buffoons who, at the bidding of Michael III., had parodied the sacred rites of religion in the public streets, and had banished their aiders and abettors from his presence for ever, he called Andrimades to him and lectured him severely on his restlessness and want of common sense, giving him to understand very plainly that he need not present himself again at Court unless specially summoned. This second blow was too much for the old man : it suggested to him the thought, as he expressed it, of "depositing himself on the bed of the Bosphorus." "I have drunk enough," he repeated, "I have joked enough ; it is time that I should go home."

While he was in this desponding state of mind he one day encountered a party of monks of the Monastery of St. Paul, who were returning from an excursion on the Golden Horn, where they sometimes recreated themselves by paddling about in the cool atmosphere of the evening. And as the brothers were very gay and chatty, and, as he thought, rather boisterous, he accosted them and congratulated them on their buoyancy, remarking that he was glad to perceive that the monastic life was not a state of gloom.

"It alternates," said the principal brother. "It is sometimes gloomy enough. But we are sent out occasionally to amuse ourselves on the water, lest our bodily health should give way."

"I envy you," said Andrimades with a sigh; "I have no alternation in my life. It is invariably and monotonously sad."

"Has it been always so?" asked the monk. "Has the patrician been a prey to melancholy from his youth?"

"By no means," said Andrimades brightening. "I have been, through life, one of the gayest of men. No one, I think, has had a more unclouded career. I wish you had seen me a few years ago in my prime, well looking enough, well dressed, a favourite in society and at Court; with town house, a villa in the country, horses, dogs, and I will add a most desirable cellar of the best and oldest Chian wine. You would have thought such a man raised above care and trouble. But somehow all these things have come to pall on my palate, or nearly all; and my depression has sometimes been so great that I have contemplated the possibility of putting an end to my life."

"Heaven prevent you, noble patrician, from committing so rash an act."

"Not much probability that I shall do so, I have not gone beyond the contemplative stage. I have been mentally weighing the comforts and discomforts of a bed at the bottom of this estuary, down among the fishes, and so far I have determined against it. Still, when a man is in a state of prolonged depression there is always a possibility of his doing something desperate."

“ You want to be saved from yourself, Sir.”

“ Precisely. I want to be saved from the possibility of hastening my journey across the Styx, as the pagans have it.”

“ I know of but one remedy for despondency,” said the monk, “ and it is used with much success in our community when the monotony of daily life weighs heavily on the spirits ; it consists of patience, resignation, and evenness of mind founded on religion.”

“ All very well, my dear Sir,” said Andrimades ; “ but in my case the foundation is wanting. I have little or no religion in theory or practice. You will, perhaps, say to me, acquire religion. But I cannot, I am too old. I did not find her when I was a youth, and she flies me now. I do not mean to convey that I am an unbeliever ; but through life my house of worship has been the banqueting room. And, suppose I had religion, and could raise on it the structure you refer to, would it be worth the trouble ? For your patience, resignation, and evenness of mind appear to me but a dull programme ; only another name, in fact, for depression, or, perhaps, I should say, a refinement of despair. You must suggest some other medicine if you wish to cure my malady.”

“ From your standpoint you cannot understand our cure for lowness of spirits. If you were a monk you could easily realise it.”

“ Then make me a monk,” said Andrimades, laughing. “ I am not sure that I should not make a very good brother, if I had charge of the larder and the cellar. You have some good old wine in your monastery, brother ? ”

“Why, yes ; Malmsey is our drink on festival days.”

“A good wine, a rich and delicious wine ! The smack of it draws me towards your community. You smuggled it, I suppose, from some old cave where it was long stored—for those rascally Arabians neither make it nor drink it ; nor, if they had it, would they sell it to any Christian, and least of all to a community of monks.”

“No, Sir, that wine has lain in our cellars since before the occupation of the island by the infidels.”

“Better still. Put me down as a postulant for your habit.”

“Forgive me for saying that a taste for wine is not a proof of a call to our state of life.”

“No, I can understand ; but if a taste for it be combined with a distaste for worldly pleasures, what then ? ”

“Visit us at our monastery, and we will discuss the matter at length.”

“You will find me at your door within a week. Farewell.”

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE GHOST IN THE WOOD.

ANDRIMADES, returning home after his interview with the Fathers of the Monastery of St. Paul, met on the way Santabarin, the magician, who asked for permission to accompany him to his house.

“I have,” he said, “an important secret to communicate to you, and I wish to obtain your aid to carry into effect a plan that will be to the advantage of both of us.”

“My plotting days are at an end,” said Andrimades, heaving a sigh; “I am tired of the world. I wish I were with the Saints.”

“Meanwhile,” said Santabarin, “you would, if I mistake not, wish to be again with the Court, from which, as it is austere and religious, you could easily in due time pass to the company you refer to.”

“I do not hope to see the earthly Court again. I have been shut out from that heaven. Basil has set his face against me.”

“I know that he has,” said the magician, “but he can be made to regard you as a benefactor.”

“By magic, you would say?”

“No,” said the other softly, “I sometimes work with other implements.”

“Will your implement sear my conscience?—for I am becoming grave.”

“Not much. A little perhaps. But to regain

the favour of the Court a slight singeing is permissible."

"Perhaps so," said Andrimades. "Let me hear your plan."

"You know that Basil's son, Constantine, has been dead for six months; that Basil loved him much, and that Photius has enrolled him among the Saints."

"All this I have heard," said Andrimades.

"But have you heard," said Santabarin, "that Constantine has appeared on horseback in the wood outside the New Gate, shining like the sun, and enveloped in the garb of the Blessed?"

"Who has seen him?" inquired Andrimades.

"That is not to the point," said the other. "He can be seen by anyone who is in our confidence."

"*Our* confidence! Who is associated with you?"

"Whom do you suspect?"

"Perhaps the arch-plotter, Photius?"

"Yes; to be candid, Photius and I have been in correspondence. We are both in bad favour with the Emperor. We have devised the figure in the wood for the purpose of disarming him, if not attracting him to us."

"But how will this device work out that object?"

"It will exalt Photius as a seer. It will call me to the Palace for consultation, since I am learned in such matters."

"But what shall I gain?"

"You shall be the man to meet the spirit in the wood, and to report the occurrence to the Emperor."

“Well, perhaps I may as well take a part in the plot, for a good end, mind you, for a lawful end : to disarm the unreasonable hostility of Basil. I am not well up in morals. I suppose it is lawful to do evil that good may follow. What do you think?”

“Perfectly lawful,” said the other sardonically.

“Then give me my part,” said Andrimades, “and I will act it.”

A little before midnight, not quite twenty-four hours after this interview, Andrimades arrived, in a state of breathless agitation, at the Imperial Palace ; and, though the night was far advanced, urgently demanded an interview with the Emperor : nor would he be put off by the pleading of the chamberlain in attendance that Basil had retired for the night.

“I have seen a ghost,” he said, “who has commissioned me to convey intelligence of importance to the Emperor.”

The officer hinted a suspicion that over-indulgence in the pleasures of the table might be the origin of the alleged phantom.

“Would it were so,” said Andrimades, “I should be happier. I had been at the chase ; had lost my company ; was returning alone. In the darkness I found myself suddenly in the presence of the dead ! I had seen a ghost before, in the form of a lady ; but being comfortable after supper, I bore the shock resolutely. To-night the phantom was mounted on horseback ; his face as white as snow, his form covered with a shining robe. He accompanied me, riding now before me now

behind, presently to the right or left of my way. He addressed me in hollow tones, and commanded me to convey a message to the Emperor. So great was the fear with which he inspired me that I wonder I am alive to tell the story."

"Go home," said the chamberlain, "and sleep; and see the Emperor in the morning."

"And be haunted by this spirit through the night. The thought renews my terrors."

"A glass of your excellent Chian," said the other, "will ensure you against nocturnal visitants."

All his well-meant efforts having failed to reassure Andrimades, "Enter then," said the chamberlain, "and I hope you will find his Majesty in a good humour."

Ushered into the presence of Basil, who was still up and reading despatches, Andrimades was at first embarrassed, and seemed not to know how to introduce the subject of his visit, until the Emperor, in a cheery tone, bade him be seated, remarking: "You have, I presume, something of importance to communicate."

"Of great importance and special interest to your Majesty."

"And what may it be?" demanded Basil.

"A message from the world of spirits," said Andrimades.

"You jest," said the Emperor; "or you are under an hallucination, or you have unduly indulged in wine."

"August one, you can judge for yourself when you have heard my story," said Andrimades, "whether this is a matter in which I should permit myself to indulge in jesting."

“Then tell it as concisely as may be, and you will find me a patient listener,” said Basil.

“I was returning through the wood that is outside the New Gate from the chase an hour ago, when I heard a voice calling me from behind. I turned, and saw your son, Constantine, lately deceased, vested in the garments of Heaven. He said to me, ‘Andrimades, fear not.’ I said, ‘I have no fear, my Lord.’ He then entered into such a conversation as, if he had been living, would have been appropriate to our conditions. Presently I ventured to inquire after his present state; and at this he turned an angry eye upon me, but gave me no answer. Then he inquired of your Majesty, and whether you still grieved for him; and I assured him that your paternal heart was still heavy with the remembrance of its loss.”

“Pray, Andrimades,” said the Emperor, “do not trifle with me. If you believe that my son entrusted you with any communication for me, make haste to impart it. It may be indeed that he has been permitted to assure me of his well-being. You are aware that Photius has enrolled him among the Saints.”

“And for that reason,” said the other, “I felt rather consoled by his presence.”

A smile passed over the Emperor’s face as he said, “I was not aware that you were familiar with the Blessed. However, continue.”

“I knew that he was your deceased son by his appearance, and if I had had any doubt of his identity, it would have vanished after I heard him speak. He looked paler than in life,

but of the same stature and shape. He sat his horse with his accustomed grace——”

“But, Sir, this is irrelevant, and you speak of this apparition in such a tone as a man would use in describing an unexpected rencounter in a tavern. Did he whom you believe to be my dear deceased son say nothing of import, nor send any remembrance to me?”

“He did. In tones that I shall never forget—they were so musical and penetrating—he said: ‘Tell my father that I am in bliss. Tell him that if he comes into this solitary grove at the midnight hour I will appear to him, and he may fold me in his arms.’ His last words were: ‘Tell the Emperor to love and cherish Photius, who alone is conscious that I am among the Saints.’”

“Is there anything more?” asked the Emperor.

“No more,” said Andrimades.

“A strange story,” said Basil: “I don’t know whether it should make me laugh or weep. Send for Santabarin.”

Santabarin arrived at the Palace within half-an-hour, and was ushered into the apartment where the Emperor and Andrimades were conversing. The former recounted to him all the details of Andrimades’ story, remarking on the coincidence of the main fact with a dream he had had a few nights previously.

“The story,” he added, “has been profanely told; but I believe this is to be attributed to the manner of this aged courtier. Nevertheless, a certain amount of probability appears to underlie it. But as I am no adept in ghost lore, I have sent for

you that I may have your sage views on the possibility of phantoms of the dead appearing to the living ; and, supposing such apparitions to be possible, of the probability of my lost son's being allowed to revisit the earth."

"History, sacred and profane, tells us of apparitions of the dead," said Santabarin. "We may doubt of the truth of some of these narratives, but we cannot reject them all. I shall not weary you by citing particular cases ; but taking it as unquestionable that the spirits of the dead have from time to time in the past revisited this sub-lunary world, I will draw the natural inference that there is nothing repugnant to reason in admitting that a spirit in our day may reappear among his earthly friends. The difficulty of believing in the presence of a spirit is immensely diminished for the Christian if the ghost in question be one of the Saints.

"Your Sacred Record tells you in many passages that angels have visited the earth. Why not, therefore, the spirits of the Blessed, to give advice, to impart consolation, to remove despondency, or to hold out a friendly hand to the tottering Christian soul? Photius has placed your son, Constantine, among the Saints. He has even had churches built in his honour and dedicated to him ; why, then, may not we concede to him a privilege often granted to his companions in bliss? I, too, have heard of this apparition in the wood. It is bruited among the people. Others, besides Andrimades, have seen a youth in white garments, shining with the lustre of Heaven, mounted on a

noble steed, issuing from and disappearing in the dark recesses of the wood. Some have not testified to his identity with your son ; but nine out of ten who have enjoyed the privilege of casting their eyes on that vision of celestial beauty have recognised in the rider your loved and lost Constantine. Therefore, I say, Emperor, have courage and faith ; and, I will add, go forth to the wood in person, and embrace your son."

The Emperor, visibly affected, thanked Santabarin for the information he had given, and the consolation he had imparted to him ; and promising to go forth at midnight to meet his son, terminated the long interview.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

PHOTIUS IN EXILE : TAKEN, BUT NOT HUMBLLED.

WE lose sight of Photius for some time after the termination of the Eighth General Council; for he was banished at once from the Imperial city, and if not actually imprisoned, he was closely guarded in his exile by the civil and military officers of the Empire.

Fallen from his assumed position, and for the time regarded as an outcast, he abated nothing of his pretensions, but still clung to the hope of gaining a victory over his opponents. For this purpose he wrote many letters to clerics and bishops who were favourable to him, full of hope for the future. In one of these, addressed to a monk named Theodosius, he compares himself to the martyrs in presence of their persecutors, and even to Our Lord before the Roman Governor. In another letter to the same person he assumes a tone of withering denunciation, and characterises the Council lately held as "an assemblage of brigands and barbarians," and describes the Papal letters read in it as "barbarous productions filled with blasphemies." He changes his tone in a letter written to another friend, a deacon named Gregory, and affects piety, patience, and resignation to the decrees of Heaven. "Let them," he said, "if they will, anathematise us now, to the end that, despite our imperfections,

they may raise us from earth to the kingdom of Heaven." His wrath broke out again in a letter addressed to Ignatius, Metropolitan of Claudopolis, where he wrote of "the insane impudence of criminals casting their anathemas against the defenders of the Faith;" and described their "barbarous fury" as a farce, and as children's play. "Innocence," continued he, "laughs at their threats, and brings crowns and the glory of Heaven to those whom they had tried to punish."

Such letters as these were well calculated to produce an impression favourable to him in the minds of men of questionable character, raised by himself from obscurity, and placed in prominent positions in the Church; and the result was that a large number of his followers remained faithful to him in the days of his adversity, so that he was still a great power for evil. Looking back at him through a vista of ten centuries, we are amazed that even one responsible laic or cleric should have been found to adhere to him. This abiding popularity with a class witnesses to his rare ability, and to a certain mental audacity which could impart a certain attractiveness to its profane deductions.

The last letter of this strange man to which we shall refer was addressed to the Emperor Basil. It is a craven production, and the whine of the caged animal is heard through it. Its murmurings, fretfulness, and complaints come with a singularly bad grace from him who could inflict unheard of tortures upon an adversary without remorse or pity.

“Hear me,” he writes, “most clement ruler. I no longer refer to our old friendship, nor to the dreadful oaths and promises, nor to the holy unction and coronation, nor to the sacred mysteries you have received from my hands, nor to the spiritual adoption of your son. Of these I say nothing; I only address you on the ground of the common rights of humanity. All men, be they Greeks or barbarians, take the lives of those they condemn to death; and those whom they allow to live they do not destroy by hunger and a thousand other inflictions. For me, I lead a life worse than death. I am a prisoner, deprived of everything, relatives, friends, servants—in a word, of every human aid. . . . What is most strange, they have taken away my books. Are they afraid that I shall read the Word of God? If I have done wrong, I should have books to instruct me; and if I have done no harm, why are they taken away? Never has a Catholic been so treated, even by heretics. . . . They have left me life that I may feel my misfortunes the more; and so I suffer all the pains of death, without receiving the only relief it can bring, namely, the end of sufferings. . . . Remember that though an Emperor, you are a man, that you have the same body as others, the same Master, the same Creator, the same Judge. I do not ask for dignities, nor for glory, nor for prosperity; but for that which barbarians refuse not to their slaves—either the privilege of leading a life that is not worse than death, or of being at once delivered from the prison of this body.”

A few days after the receipt of this letter Basil sent a herald to the Palace of Pozus, to summon Alethea to his presence. Arriving at the Imperial residence she was received most graciously by the Emperor, who seated her by the side of the Empress Eudoxia, and addressed her as follows :

“I have had a touching appeal from your relative Photius. He is suffering, but unchanged. Can aught, think you, be done to bring him to a better mind? His iron will has been proof against my friendship, the entreaties of his friends, and the denunciations of the Church. I have been thinking that perhaps the attraction of family ties may produce an effect where all else has failed.”

“What would you have me to do, Most August?” said Alethea. “Is it your wish that I should address him by letter, and appeal, in the name of his living or departed kindred, to his feelings ——?”

“Precisely,” said the Emperor, interrupting, “*to his feelings*; not to his judgment, which has so often been appealed to in vain. But I confess to you, I have no confidence in an appeal made in writing to such as he.”

“If not in writing, Most August, by what means is it to be made?”

“In an interview. The man is lonely, without his accustomed personal comforts, miserable, and repining. Suppose I make you an angel of light, to break in on the darkness of his cell; bringing him food and wine, and what he longs for even more, books? Will he not receive you as a messenger from Heaven, endeared to him besides

on other grounds, and perhaps yield to kindness what he will not yield to force?"

"May it be so," said Alethea. "But I have not much confidence in ties of blood. His royal extraction makes him the more unyielding, and he thinks that all his relatives should be, like himself, haughty and defiant. I fear I shall but fall in his estimation if I ask him to renounce or even abate the least of his pretensions."

"But you present yourself in the light of a benefactor and healer of his ills, as well as in that of a dear and disinterested relative," said the Emperor.

"And," Eudoxia added, "the prayer of one like you, young, fair, and graceful, tender and loving, must move the man, unless he be, like some of our statues, made of cold marble."

"I will go," said Alethea, "cheerfully and willingly, whatever my misgivings. I long to see one whom I have loved much; and it will be a great pleasure to me to bring ease and comfort to him who has so long guided my footsteps and gratified even my whims."

"Then it only remains," said the Emperor, "to provide you with an escort, which I hereby do in the person of the Turmarch Theophylact, who shall be your guardian on this journey. No officer in the army holds a higher character with the public or with me."

Alethea almost started at the Emperor's words. A perceptible shadow passed over her face, and her voice quivered slightly, as she answered:

"For so distinguished an honour I am grateful, but I could not accept the companionship of the Turmarch."

"I thought to do you a special favour," said Basil, with a ring of disappointment in his tone. "There is no daughter of a senator in the city that would not gladly put herself into the hands of such a protector."

"I believe it," said she, "and regret that I cannot have that privilege."

The Emperor rose to depart, and Alethea was left alone with Eudoxia. The latter, with that instinct of curiosity which belongs to her sex, began at once to ply Alethea with a number of questions for the purpose of eliciting the cause of her refusal to accept Theophylact as a companion on her journey.

"You have heard of this Turmarch," said she. "His praises are in the mouths of many."

"What Catholic in the Empire," said Alethea, "has not heard of this champion of orthodoxy?"

"Perhaps," said the Empress, "you have even seen him. His splendid figure and martial bearing have drawn a crowd of curious eyes upon him."

"I have both seen and admired him," said Alethea.

"But not had an occasion to speak with him," said the Empress. "They say that his conversation is elevated and well-bred."

"I have spoken to the Turmarch on two or three occasions, and I fully endorse the public verdict."

"Then why not accept him as an escort?" said Eudoxia pointedly. "You resemble him in many ways. You are as orthodox as he is, as well-bred, as handsome. You appear to be made for each other."

Alethea, blushing slightly, said: "Pray do not press me for an answer, Empress. There are sometimes considerations which may not be explained, which hold far apart those whom nature would unite."

"You do not know your own heart, maiden," said the Empress, laying her hand familiarly and affectionately on the shoulder of Alethea. "For my part, I confess to a suspicion that it is the very warmth of your regard for him which impels you to avoid his company."

These last words of Eudoxia were, Alethea felt, so true that she would have made a confession then and there of her motive for rejecting the Emperor's offer but for the unexpected entrance of Oriphas, who came to announce that Basil had commissioned him to accompany the lady to her destination. Alethea, to the surprise of the Empress, graciously accepted his protection, and it was arranged that they should leave early on the following morning.

The journey to Photius' island prison was uneventful. Little was said on the way, for Eudoxia's words were still ringing in Alethea's ears and waking a responsive echo in her heart. It was only on her arrival at the island that she fully recognised the delicacy and difficulty of the task she had undertaken. She was even at a loss to know how she would introduce the object of her mission. She decided, however, to withhold it until, perhaps, some turn in her conversation with her relative might give her an opportunity to speak of it.

Photius received her as cordially as he could.

He was glad to see her ; he was thankful to her for coming ; and then he began in a querulous tone to relate his grievances :

“ I am,” he said, “ like one of the caged beasts at the amphitheatre ; no better fed, a bone thrown to me to gnaw, or a piece of raw flesh to tear asunder. I am sick, and I get no medicine ; solitary, without any to speak to me ; devoured by my own thoughts for want of mental occupation.”

“ The Emperor turns towards you,” said Alethea. “ He has been deeply moved by your letter.”

“ Turns towards me ! Happy news ! Does he then turn at length from his false Patriarch ? ”

“ I have come from the Imperial Palace to relieve your wants. See,” said she, beckoning to a slave to advance, with a large pannier between his arms, “ here are clothes, food, medicine, books, and comforts of all kinds, sent by the Emperor himself.”

“ I see. A well-chosen relief, and well timed. The Emperor, then, begins to incline towards me ; Ignatius’ star is waning ? ”

“ I do not believe that the Emperor abandons Ignatius,” said Alethea simply : she deemed it a duty to say as much.

“ Nay, it must be so. He begins to see through his coldness and pious selfishness ; and he will, no doubt, soon discover that I am his best friend ; if indeed he has not convinced himself of it already. I will tell you a secret : I know you will keep it to yourself. I have concocted a pedigree for Basil. Everyone believes him a plebeian and an adventurer. I myself have no doubt as to his low birth. But

to please him, to flatter him, to gain him over, I have put together a genealogical tree, on which I trace him to a famous King of Armenia."

"I should lose all respect for the Emperor," said Alethea, "if I thought he was in such a plot."

"And you do not lose respect for me, who have concocted it. How consistent! But I can assure you that your favourite has not started it. It is my work entirely. I have a fellow-worker, the clerk Theophanes. I wrote the book; he had it covered and put in its place."

"I am puzzled by all this," said Alethea, "and not edified. Perhaps I ought not to hear more about it."

"You shall hear it all," said Photius. "I wrote this false pedigree with my own hand, on old papyrus, in Alexandrian characters. I have contrived that it shall present an appearance of immense antiquity. I have caused it to be bound in an old worm-eaten cover, and hidden by Theophanes in the library of the Palace. In due time my coadjutor will discover it by chance. He will show it to the Emperor as a curiosity, and when it has done its work its true authorship may be disclosed. Perhaps all this has been done: I have not heard from Theophanes for months."

"I do not wish to add to your troubles," said Alethea, "by expressing myself as strongly as I feel on the unworthiness of this scheme. I shall merely say that I regret it: I am sorry that you should lend your great abilities to so questionable a transaction."

"I did not expect that you would take any but

the religious view of my project ; I did not calculate on your approval of it. But you will, I am sure, pardon me for introducing it, when I tell you that it consoles me to communicate it to one who, above all others, has my interest at heart."

"I regret that I have heard of it. It deprives me of a hope I fondly cherished."

"Yours, my dear Alethea, is the religious, mine the utilitarian standpoint. You will be surprised to hear that, in my anxiety to regain the Emperor's favour, I performed the canonisation of his deceased son, Constantine, before I was removed from the Patriarchate."

"The canonisation!" she exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes! made him a Saint, and had churches built in his honour."

"And why, pray," said she, rising in disgust, "do you communicate these shocking profanations to me? I have come here, against my better judgment, to console you, not to be scandalised by you. I hoped against hope that I might find you chastened by sufferings, and your proud spirit humbled into obedience to the decrees of the Church. I am but a girl, with a Christian girl's instincts, while you are a man of colossal mind ; but I cannot restrain myself from saying that you are now lower in the moral scale than I ever expected to see you."

"A matter of opinion. I confess the intellectual scale has more attractions for me. Everything almost is lawful for a man of my attainments with a view to recover his lost position. I elevate the Church by my writings ; I rescue from oblivion

and destruction the literary monuments of the past ; I gather and codicise the Canons of the Church : and my reward is a prison, my recompense starvation. I am unjust, you think, to the living and the dead. But I am unjust to those only who are unjust to me. I deceive the deceivers, I make fools of those who have almost driven me mad. Am I to have no rewards for the sleepless nights I have spent over my two great works—the “Book of Canons,” and my library—which would be an ornament to any epoch? For my search in the monasteries of the East for the forgotten works of historians and theologians? For bringing to light letters and treatises of the opponents of Catholicity as well as of its supporters, and collecting fragments of pagan prose and verse more precious than the rarest pearls that lie concealed under the waters of the Euxine Sea? Obey the Church, you say. My following is a Church in itself. I will put Church against Church ; and if the Bishop of Rome does not reinstate me in my lost position—for I admit he can do so, with the aid of the Emperor — I will again and for ever rend the Eastern Church from his communion. They think, because I am a prisoner, that I am gagged and powerless ; but I speak more eloquently from this cell than I could if seated on the Episcopal throne.”

Alethea rose to go, remarking in a firm voice : “I can hear no more. I regret having heard so much. I loved you as a benefactor and relative : that love is dried up at its source as your designs are unfolded. I must bid you good-bye ; and it

shall be a long, an eternal farewell, unless you abandon your present attitude of schism, hypocrisy, and irreligion, and recognise as such the true Patriarch of Constantinople, and submit yourself to his authority."

She left him still rebellious, but wondering at her firmness.

On her return journey she saw a strange group on the river bank ; and on drawing near recognised Andrimades, surrounded by a number of habited monks. They were engaged in an animated conversation. She turned smiling to Oriphas, who remarked in a dry tone :

" He is not often in such good company."

CHAPTER XL.

IN THE TOWER OF THE CITY GATE.

ON the day following her return from her visit to Photius, Alethea received a letter, which called her from home again on a mission of charity ; for she seemed at this time to be regarded with greater favour than ever by those in trouble and distress :

“Assandra, a desponding sister, one from contact with whom you might be expected to recoil, asks for an interview in the second tower of the city wall to the north-west ; for the sake of charity and to save her from destruction.” This letter was brought by an old peasant woman, and put into Alethea’s hand by a slave, who said that the messenger waited for a reply.

The answer was written in a moment :

“I will go to the place named as the light fades, and bring you such consolation as I may.”

Having written and despatched this short scroll, under the impulse of her kind heart, she began to doubt whether she had not been indiscreet ; for the locality had an evil reputation on many accounts, being after dark in the occupation of soldiers who guarded the city walls.

Might she safely go out, attended by the two female slaves, who usually accompanied her on her walks about the city ? Would they be a sufficient escort to such a place at so late an hour ?

Theophylact occurred to her mind ; but he had

fallen in her estimation, and she refused to allow her thoughts to dwell upon him.

She came to the conclusion, after mature reflection, that she would ask the patrician Melanus to bear her company; and, in accordance with this resolve, she addressed him as follows :

“ I go, as daylight fades, to meet and console a despairing sister, to the tower No. 2 of the city wall to the north-west. May I put myself under the care of the patrician Melanus ? ”

This note brought an immediate reply. The patrician would meet her, as she passed along the way, and would accompany her to her destination and home.

We need not follow them on their journey through the city, nor dwell upon their arrival at the tower, nor on their parting for a time at the door, where Melanus considerably left his companion alone to ascend a ladder to the upper room of the tower, where an old woman, who stood outside, informed her that Assandra had been waiting for some time.

On entering the small round upper chamber, she saw Assandra leaning against the wall, with her face shaded by her raised arm. Her figure and appearance wore an expression of sorrow and humiliation. She did not dare to advance, or even to raise her eyes to contemplate her visitor ; but, weeping silently, waited for her approach.

“ Assandra,” said Alethea, advancing towards her, “ how I rejoice to see you once more. I have followed you with my sorrowful thoughts since you became the victim of evil advice and surround-

ings ; for I felt always confident that you would return home again." And she twined her arm affectionately around the afflicted woman.

"Do not touch me, Alethea," said she ; "do not even come near me. I am unworthy of your caress, and it is almost contamination for you to converse with me."

"Hush ! hush !" said Alethea ; "I am but a weak woman, like yourself, if happily protected from evil by the mercy of Heaven. Sit down by me," said she ; "and with your hand clasped in mine, and your poor heart leaning on my bosom, pour all your griefs into my soul."

And there, in that solitary cell, the upright and the fallen wept in unison and talked in confidence ; nor was there more contamination in that loving interview than there was in that meeting in the Pharisees' banqueting-room, where the Magdalen bathed the feet of the Saviour in her tears, and wiped them with her flowing hair. Their conversation was long and sympathetic, and for a while seemed to bring much consolation to the distressed one. But her suppressed anguish broke forth again, and she said, in accents of despair :

"My heart well-nigh breaks at the thought of the part I have had in the miserable end of this unfortunate man. Whither has his spirit turned, and where has it found its abode ? Alas ! what hope is there for him ?"

"But perhaps his spirit turned to its Maker before it left the body, and cried for mercy and forgiveness ?"

"No," said Assandra, despondently ; "he cried

to the Emperor for mercy, but he did not cry to God. He had but little faith, and his conscience was seared. His soul was always in rebellion against the law of God, and he died as he lived; and I was consenting to his unhappy end."

She rose up in a state of anguish, and, letting down her long hair, she strode about the little room wringing her hands and saying, "I am the cause of his reprobation."

Alethea was deeply moved by the scene before her. She would have spoken words of comfort, but they came not to her lips. All she could bring herself to say was, "It is wrong to give way to despair." But this did not assuage the anguish of the afflicted woman, who despaired not for herself, but for the wicked man who was gone. Alethea's ethics, as became a Christian maiden, were of the rigid class. She looked straight at moral principles, and recognised their ever-binding force. She believed in vice and virtue; and that the latter deserved a reward, while the former would receive a punishment. How could she say, even to heal the wound of a broken heart, that a man who lived a bad life had made a good end? Better remain silent than utter, even for a good purpose, words in which she did not believe.

But others, she thought, are better judges of a case like this; and where I find nothing but a dark pall they may see a light through some chink or opening in its texture. And then she remembered that parables that spoke of mercy untold had been sometimes expounded in the church. And then she went farther than in her previous utterance, and said:

“It is wrong to despair, for the mercy of Heaven is unbounded, and sinners are not beyond its pale.”

“But,” said Assandra, “where is it said that a sinner will be received unless he repents? I have heard it preached that there is joy in Heaven for a sinner who does penance; from which I infer that there is grief and woe for the sinner who repents not.”

Alethea had not considered this point before. She was in truth more of a philosopher than a theologian. Her keen and clear intellect would have enabled her to solve Assandra’s difficulty but for its novelty, and a certain repugnance which the discussion of it engendered in her mind. She was silent again, and spoke not a word until the step of Melanus was heard on the stairs; when rising, she advanced to meet him, and in a few words explained to him the desolation and despair of Assandra, and her own futile efforts to console her.

“She must see a priest,” he said, “and discuss with him the troubles of her conscience. Her wound appears to require the hand of a skilled physician. Our meddling with it may only increase its malignancy. Let us go to the priest who serves the Church of St. Mocus, hard by. He will, in his charity, minister to this woman in her affliction.”

They directed their steps accordingly to the dwelling of the young priest, Alexis, who, like St. Paul, lived in a hired lodging, near the Church of St. Mocus, which he served. This priest was of noble birth, and of singularly elevated character.

He led a life of celibacy, though, like the Greek priests generally, he might have married before his ordination, and continued in that state afterwards. But apart from ascetic considerations, he considered that he would be freer to take upon himself the burdens of others if he was not oppressed by his own. And this, perhaps, not less than the manifest sanctity of his life, made him the recipient of the cares and troubles of the anxious and the afflicted. The fairest maidens of the city, as well as the unsightly and unkempt poor, brought their spiritual troubles, their ignorances, and failings to the young priest of St. Mocus, who had a heart capacious enough to carry with patience all the shortcomings of humanity. There was an ineffable charm in his cheerful and yet reserved manner, which inspired unbounded confidence in his visitors, while his well-bred and courteous bearing made him easy of approach to all. To the weak and the frail and the fallen he was particularly dear, for they found in him a father of rare feeling and compassion. There was no luxury in his dwelling, and yet it was always fragrant with the odour of sweet flowers; for he acknowledged with gratitude the bounteous hand of Nature, which lavishes such various charms over the path of human life. He admired the country landscape. He loved the balmy air. He loved the rippling waters and the shining sea; and while he freely and joyously cast himself into the bounteous lap of Nature, he did so that he might with greater vigour discharge the duties of his office, fulfil the functions of a universal

charity, and bear the vigil and the nocturnal prayer before his crucifix. The sort of life he led, though it imparted a somewhat delicate hue to his complexion, did but add to it a spiritual expression which sat with much grace on his handsome patrician face.

It was to this gifted and holy levite that our party bent their steps. They found him alone, wearied after the labours of the day, but, as usual, gracious and ready to grant them an interview.

“For though,” said he, “I have been particularly taken up since early morning with consultations and duties in the church, and have not been well for some days, it will be no trouble, but a great source of joy, if I can impart even a little peace to this afflicted child.”

“You tell me,” he said, directing his words to Assandra, “that this man was a great sinner, and that he died suddenly. And you infer that he did not repent. You are, no doubt, quite correct in your account of his life and death; but are you, think you, quite justified in your inference? A time—I presume, a considerable time—elapsed between the day on which you saw him last and the day on which he met his death. May he not have repented during that interval? Even if minutes instead of days had elapsed between your last interview with him and his death, might he not have repented during those minutes? Or even, as the grace of God sometimes operates instantaneously, might he not have repented if during that last conversation he had been struck down in your presence? I do not, as a matter of course, intend

to hold out undue encouragement to sinners, much less to contravene that solemn pronouncement of Holy Writ, 'As a man lives, so shall he die'; but merely to prove to you that you cannot shorten the merciful arm of the Most High, or sit in adverse judgment on your brother's soul.

"I would direct your attention to two consoling, and in this case apposite, passages of the revealed word, which narrate, one the justification of the publican, the other the saving of the penitent thief. In both cases a single cry from the soul was sufficient to move the Almighty to have mercy. Be consoled, my child, or, if not without great and anxious fear for this man's salvation, resign yourself to the decrees of Heaven. Repent always of your co-operation in his evil deeds, and have humble hope for yourself. Your hair let down and almost shading your face reminds me of another woman, young and fair as you, who strayed into devious paths; but when she turned on her weary way, and bent her steps towards home, was met by the love of the Father she had abandoned. Return to the mountain side, from which you say you have come, and to the hard lot which has fallen to you as your share in the work of atonement for the past. I shall hear of you, and watch over you at a distance; and in your doubts and troubles you will find me always ready to advise and console. A day may come when, with the co-operation of this good friend who accompanies you, I may provide in some distant city an abode where you can in peace of mind live out your days. Farewell for

the present. We shall meet again, when I will hope to find this strong paroxysm of grief soothed into resignation.”

When he had finished the priest accompanied his visitors to the door of the house, where they parted. But the young and sympathetic priest pondered long and anxiously before he went to rest on the sad recital that he had listened to; and the morning was breaking before he had ceased to think of the lone woman in her sadness and despair. Nor did he dismiss the subject from his mind until he had devised a plan by which he might divert the current of his thoughts into a new channel, and place before her an image that should speak to her, in no uncertain accents, of the joy that is above for the conversion of a sinner.

CHAPTER XLI.

A FAREWELL—PATERAL COUNSEL—THE EXPEDITION.

WITH the exception of the visits to Photius and Assandra, which she had made through a sense of duty, Alethea led a life of retirement in the Palace of Pozus, after her return to the city from the convent. She bore herself firmly under her new trial arising out of her estrangement from Theophylact; and her highly strung temperament, suffering still from the shock it had received, found some relief in a religious resignation to the inevitable, to which she compelled herself.

She would think no more of the Turmarch. He might be, for aught she knew, affianced to another; and even if he was not, his affections were not for her. He should not have led her to conclude, from words spoken to his slave, that he regarded her otherwise than with indifference. He was brave, he was orthodox, but he was rigid: there was no softness in him. She would regard her acquaintance with him as a dream that had vanished. She purposely avoided meeting him even casually. If he came into a church where she was at prayer, she remained immovable until he went away. If, during her occasional wanderings abroad, she saw him approaching from a distance, she turned off by some side street, that she might not meet him. And yet she wondered that his image was so per-

sistent in haunting her imagination. He was not far away as she landed from the Imperial barge that brought her back to the city. It even occurred to her that he had come down to the shore to welcome her; but she dismissed the thought as a mistake, and averted her eyes, lest they should meet his glance as she stepped into the chariot that was in waiting to convey her to her new home.

An event occurred about this time which stirred again into life an affection which she thought was dying, if not dead, but which in reality was only slumbering. Theophylact, she was told, had received orders to go to Italy, to take part in a new campaign against the Saracens.

How the great prize, for which they had been contending for a thousand years, eluded the Moslems is a mystery to many; but for some it is a Providential issue, traceable in the different ages to the action of the Bishops of Rome. From the eighth century to the middle of the sixteenth, a wave of Saracenic and afterwards of Turkish invasion, was rolling towards Central Europe. Having torn from the hands of the Emperors of the East the greater portion of their Asiatic provinces, it directed its force against their Western possessions: flooded Crete and Sicily, broke in upon Southern and Central Italy, and dashed furiously against the coast of Spain. A counter stream was directed towards the East in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when Europe rushed to the relief of the Christians of the Holy Land. But immediately after the Crusades had

terminated the Moslem tide returned again ; this time carrying away all that remained of the Greek Empire, and taking permanent possession of European soil. From the date of the fall of Constantinople the foaming crests of this infidel wave were seen upon the Christian barrier at every point along the banks of the Dniester, up the tributaries of the Danube, setting strongly against the fortified cities of Poland, and the towns of Lower Austria ; and for two centuries longer they dashed and were broken, and dashed again until they finally sank down and disappeared before the walls of Vienna. Many believe that the final check to the Turkish advance should be put down to the account of Pope Innocent XI. Certain it is that neither the Duke of Lorraine nor the Elector of Saxony could have saved Vienna ; and Count Staremberg, seated in the fretwork of the Tower of St. Stephen's, might still be looking for a streak of light in the distant horizon but for the arrival of the King of Poland on the scene. Was it Innocent that nerved the arm of Sobieski to smite the Moslem hordes ? We know, as an historical fact, that it was to the Pope that the victorious King turned in his hour of triumph ; for to him he despatched, immediately after the battle, the ensign of the Turkish army taken from the tent of its commander, Mustapha. More clearly traceable to a Pope's action was the great naval victory gained by the united fleets of Spain, Venice, and Rome, over the vast Turkish force of three hundred and thirty ships in the Gulf of Lepanto, in 1571. It was Pius V. who brought the Christian

squadron together, who blessed it, and sent it forth with an assurance of victory ; and the commander of his own galleys, Mark Anthony Colonna, stood by the side of Don John of Austria when he boarded the ship of the Turkish Admiral and hauled down his flag.

These, however, are events of comparatively modern history, with which we are not engaged in this narrative. It will be more within the scope of this work to search for the action of the Popes in defence of Christendom in the pages of the history of the ninth century.

We may assume, first, that Italy was in danger of being absorbed into the Saracenic Empire many times between the years 800 and 867, and that Italy possessed in herself no adequate power of overcoming the designs of the invaders. Hordes of Moors and Arabs swarmed into the peninsula during these years, landing at many points of the coast. Now it was at some Northern port that they disembarked, now at Porto or Naples. They spread over the country in marauding bands, plundering churches, devastating the cornfields, killing such unarmed persons as they met on their march. They crept up the Tiber, and succeeded in laying hands on the treasures of St. Peter's, which was then outside the walls that enclosed the city. They had a special greed for ecclesiastical treasure, and succeeded in capturing the votive offerings of gold and silver preserved in the Monasteries of St. Victor and St. Benedict, reputed to be the richest in Italy ; not without a stout resistance on the part of the monks.

Where would they stop, or who was to arrest their victorious march? We have said that Italy was unable to check their progress. Its secular rulers wanted alike the will and the power to resist the invasion, and were content to watch its progress with impotent apathy. Some of them took advantage of the anarchy introduced by the invaders to oppress and plunder on their own account. Others made treaties of peace and fellowship with the Saracens. The Neapolitans even assisted them in their predatory raids. One of the most powerful bishops of Southern Italy, who was also a temporal prince, deemed it prudent to establish a *modus vivendi* with them; and but for one man, and he neither great or powerful judged by the standard of the world, the occupation of the peninsula would have been complete.

The Emperors of the East saw the danger to which Italy was exposed, but did not seem inclined to move to its defence. The Emperors of the West were too much occupied with family and dynastic broils to busy themselves about the state of the peninsula. Yet if Italy had fallen under the yoke of the Saracens in 860, Rome would have been what Constantinople became some centuries later—the advanced post of the Mohammedan invasion of Europe. No one saw this so clearly as the Pope; and he was determined, come what might, that the infidel should never set foot within the Eternal City. Accordingly, in 848 Leo repaired and strengthened the exterior defences; he fortified the large suburb, called in after years the Leonine City, which surrounds St. Peter's; and

provided for the arming of the population and the careful guarding of all approaches. Rome became to all intents impregnable with its defences of stone and patriotic hearts. Twice did the infidels appear before the walls ; twice they retired discomfited. The surrounding country lay open to their ravages ; but within the sacred fire still burned.

But there was another danger for the Rome of 860, besides that of capture by assault—the danger of reduction by famine, following upon the destruction of the corn crops. The Pope made this the ground of an appeal to the European Powers for an armed intervention on behalf of Italy. “Last year,” he wrote, “we sowed and did not reap ; this year there will be no harvest, since we could not sow. Christian blood is poured out : those who escape fire or the sword are carried away into captivity ; the cities, the towns, and villages have perished, being abandoned by their inhabitants ; the bishops are driven from their Sees, and have no place of refuge but Rome.” In another appeal, to Charles, his Holiness makes this touching statement : “The remnant of the inhabitants of Rome is oppressed by extreme poverty ; and outside the walls all is rapine and desolation. The country is entirely devastated by the enemies of God. They have destroyed the churches and the altars ; they have killed the priests and religious, and massacred the people. Be mindful of our labours and our conflicts.”

It was in such language that the Pope demanded aid from the Christian Powers of the West against the invaders of Italy ; and though often disap-

pointed in obtaining it, he never relaxed his efforts to save Christianity in Europe from the dread fate that had fallen upon it in the continent of Asia. With like earnestness and better success he turned to the East, and appealed to the Emperor Basil. In response to the appeal of Pope John VIII., Basil determined to send a fleet of galleys to the South of Italy, manned with picked troops, with a view to drawing away the Saracen forces from Rome by an attack upon their stronghold. There was no officer of his army in whom he placed more confidence than Theophylact, who had previously served with distinction against the Arabian. To him he would gladly have entrusted the chief command of the forces, but for the claims of senior officers. He associated him, therefore, with two of these as third in command, privately assuring him, in complimentary terms, that he relied on him principally for the success of the expedition, and holding out the honourable prospect of promotion in the future.

Theophylact, always a soldier, and convinced that to smite the Arab was to render a service to the Church, entered with alacrity upon his preparations for the campaign, visiting many of his friends in the city to take leave. To the Patriarch Ignatius he paid a long visit, and in the course of conversation with this venerable ecclesiastic the name of Alethea was mentioned. The Bishop said that she had been depressed and ailing, and recommended the officer to call upon her before his departure. "She will receive you graciously," said he, replying to a remark of Theophylact, to

the effect that he believed that she was inclined to avoid him ; “and you will be the better for the good wishes of so true and elevated a character.”

Theophylact promised that he would wait upon her ; and, in fact, went straight from the Palace to her abode. On the announcement of his name, Alethea debated with herself whether she should see him or send him away. She decided finally to receive him, to speak to him in a tone of indifferent friendship, and so bid him farewell : it might be the last time of her seeing him, “and I never could forgive myself,” she said with emotion, “if I repulsed him now.”

“Let him enter,” she said ; and her heart throbbed as she heard his martial footstep crossing the court and approaching the chamber where she sat.

“I have come direct from the Patriarchal Palace,” said he. “Ignatius made a special request that I should call upon the Lady Alethea before my departure for Italy.”

“I am indebted to the Patriarch for this visit,” said she ; and she added, with a smile : “I fear he may have found it difficult to overcome your reluctance.”

“To speak truly, I feared you would not receive me ; and I was unwilling to intrude where my presence might embarrass.”

“Dismiss the apprehension. You are welcome, very welcome, even though you have come against your will. Let us speak of the prospects of the campaign you are entering upon.”

“But do not suppose that I have come against my will. The suggestion was very welcome.”

“Now,” said she archly, “pray do not go on. You are sinking deeper at every word.”

He coloured as he looked at the girl, never more beautiful in his eyes than now, with a simple and natural gaiety breaking out through her constraint. He saw that she was glad of his visit, and at the same time that she had had some misgiving with regard to some act of his ; and his suspicion that she had been for some time avoiding him was confirmed.

“You have been ailing,” said Theophylact. “Ignatius has spoken of your health with concern.”

“More in mind than in body,” she answered. “I have been sometimes very depressed.”

“Can I divine the cause of your distress ?” he asked.

“No,” said she, “unless you are a wizard.”

“May I make the attempt ?”

“Certainly,” said she, laughing.

“The banishment of your guardian ?”

“No. It is deserved: he is doing penance for his evil deeds.”

“The scandals of the late reign, and the demoralisation of the people ?”

“My interests are not so wide: you give me too much credit.”

“Your banishment and imprisonment ?”

“They have left but a pleasing recollection of the peace and happiness of the conventual life.”

“Some slight, or neglect, or annoyance received from another ?”

“A true prophet at last. But I begin to think

that I have been mistaken or deceived. Enough of my mental burthen, which appears to have fallen off. Your future should be the subject of our conversation. You are always selected for service against the Saracens. You should be in command and direct the operations. Your personal danger would be slighter, too."

"I am only a subordinate, and shall have the privilege of serving in the front."

"Those cruel, dreadful infidels! Will they ever cease to bring trouble upon us—to demand this tribute of noble lives!"

"This time," said Theophylact, "we shall give them a lesson. I am quite confident that we shall utterly crush any force with which the enemy can meet us. It will be rather a pursuit than a fight."

"So may it be: but I fear the chances of war."

"Before leaving," said Theophylact, "I should tell you of a peaceable expedition I have been engaged on lately."

"I am all attention."

"I have but recently returned from the island of Mitylene."

"One of the most distant islands of the Archipelago, is it not?"

"Yes, and my mission——"

"Was what?"

"To lead a young and beautiful maiden to the altar."

"To the altar?" she exclaimed in a stifled voice. "Then you are——she is——?"

"She is one of the brides of Christ," he replied,

answering gravely her unspoken question. "No bride of mine. There is but one lady in the world whom I would ask to be my wife, and she—— Alethea!——"

For a moment she lifted her eyes to meet his gaze bent upon her ; her lips moved as if to pronounce his name ; then she turned abruptly away, and went hastily from the room.

* * * * *

After the departure of Theophylact, at the termination of the interview she had given him, Alethea remained for some hours alone in meditative mood, swayed by doubts and anxieties, and not without some feelings of remorse for her abrupt and seemingly unkind departure from her lover. In her isolation she longed for a friend from whom she might receive spontaneous sympathy, and to whom she might communicate her precious secret.

She rose up at length with a fixed resolve, and motioning to a slave girl to follow her, she took the street that led directly to the Bosphorus, with feelings how different from those with which on previous occasions she had set aside her cares and forgotten her troubles, under the soothing influence of its shining wavelets. She wandered down the river bank, gazing listlessly on a scene whose beauty had no charm for her. Where was now her philosophy, where the restraint she had so long put upon herself? She would follow him, she thought, into Italy ; and if he should die on the battlefield, she would die with him. What would life be to her if he were taken away? She was im-

patient of the dictate of her spirit, which was telling her that she should be patient and resigned. She was even inclined to think that she had been too patient, and had received no reward; that no human heart could reconcile itself to such repeated rebuffs and disappointments. And even if she had shown him a little, ever so little, of the affection she felt for him! But her ever distant tone and manner must have made him believe that she was utterly cold and heartless. He had been outspoken and candid, and how had she responded to his fervent words? By merely pronouncing his name. O cruel reserve, which had taught her to be passionless and to conceal her love; to be stiff and artificial, instead of simple and sincere!

In matters of the heart our heroine was a very child for inexperience. Give her your compassion, fair reader, and be not surprised if, in the dearth of a bosom friend of her own sex, she sought for a counsellor and confidant in an unwonted direction. It was not, however, to one of the wedded presbyters of the parochial clergy that she turned, though at first sight this would have appeared more natural; but to Basil, an austere anchorite, whose monastery fronted the road which she had followed from the city. With his cowl and girdled habit, like a modern Cistercian; his white beard flowing almost to his waist; with mild, but penetrating eyes, and beaming countenance, full of the fire of Divine love; sandaled, austere, subdued, this Father of the ancient order of the Saint whose name he bore issued without delay from his cell,

where he had been engaged in work and prayer, to meet the visitor. He stopped short when he saw Alethea, so young, so lovely, so distressed, her attendant at her side, standing without.

"You have no experience, holy Father," said Alethea in a tremulous voice, after greeting the priest, "of my state; but you must have learned what it is to be swayed by an unbidden affection. My heart is agitated, and my mind is overwhelmed with grief. I am scarcely in possession of myself, and I have come to you for advice."

"Advice you shall have, my daughter, and sympathy and comfort, if words of mine can impart them; but"—he hesitated, as if he had spoken too self-confidently—"I am but a frail instrument: consolation in sorrow comes from on high."

"But I am," she said, "I fear, like Rachel in her grief: I cannot be comforted, because all my hopes have perished."

"Say not so," the monk remonstrated. "You have still hope in virtue, in Heaven, in God. Let this young slave girl retire to yon recess; and then tell me candidly, without fear and without concealment, the cause of your anxiety and the source of your distress."

"Father, can you feel for the young?"

"It is the prerogative of the old."

"And their frailty—you can make allowance for it?"

"Daughter," said he gravely, "I have been young myself, and in conflict; I fled from the battlefield while victory was doubtful."

"Then I will tell you all." But as she began

the recital the colour mounted to her cheeks, and her eyes beamed with so soft and brilliant a light, that the venerable monk bent his eyes upon the ground.

“I was, I fear, too much isolated,” she continued, “from others of my age. He who brought me up, my guardian, from whom I imbibed my tastes, was a man of books and philosophy. I learned to rely upon myself, and, for one of my condition, became reserved and self-confident: to such a degree, indeed, that I believed myself quite capable of controlling every emotion. My affection for my friend and guardian supplied for the absence of a deeper feeling, of which as yet I knew nothing, and for the time satisfied the yearnings of my heart. The name of my friend and patron, Father, is—Photius.”

The monk shuddered perceptibly at the mention of the name, and mildly remarked: “We have always been followers of the true Patriarch, Ignatius.”

“I know that you have,” replied Alethea, “and for this reason I have come to consult you.”

“God bless you, daughter. Then you, young and dependent as you were, have not been led into schism.”

“I have always venerated, loved, and followed my Bishop, and protested against the usurpation of his See by my ambitious relative. But, Father, you must not mistake my disposition, nor deem me firm, for experience tells me that I am fickle. But why this long preamble? Orthodox myself, I met casually the champion of orthodoxy in this

city, Theophylact, an officer of the heavy Horse, and——”

“I will spare your feelings,” said Basil, who had been a man of position in the world before he became a monk; “you were attracted by him; you gave him the affection of your young heart?”

“Yes, Father; but I hid my mind. I loved him, but did not let him think so; was sedate, and almost cold in my interviews with him; and, worst of all, allowed him to go into danger without bidding him good-bye. I carry a heavy burthen of grief, and my soul is torn with anxieties. I have lost my self-possession; I can no longer guide myself. Your direction, Father, and one word of comfort to a sadly desolate girl.”

“‘Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.’ You mourn, my child, not as a pagan, without rest or hope. You carry the cross of a Christian, which animates with confident hope of a reward. You have done nothing wrong, and your reserve was becoming to a Christian maiden. Go in peace. He whom you love is in the hands of God: and as both of you have been true in faith and morals, I trust—nay,” he added, rising, “I predict with confidence that he will come back from the war, cheered by acclaiming crowds, unhurt, and covered with the laurels of victory.”

* * * * *

The galleys of the Emperor, conveying a large and picked body of troops, arrived without accident or any event worth recording at the coast of Italy, and the soldiers were put ashore at Naples. The instructions given to the commanders of the

expedition were to search at once for the main body of the Saracen army, and, if possible, to take it unawares. On inquiry they learned that the Saracens had marched off towards St. Germanus, to attack and plunder the Monastery of Mount Casino.

This celebrated abbey, founded three centuries before, had been already sacked and plundered by the Lombard Kings ; and now it must fall a prey to the Saracens, unless the Greek army could save it from their hands. The attack on it was to be made from the heights, the unbelievers having established themselves above it on the same range of hills. It was no easy task to assail them in the position they held, for they could be approached only through ravines commanded by their position, or by an open and exposed advance up the mountain side.

The commander of the Greeks was not a strategist ; and he saw no way of assaulting the enemies' position but by a direct attack in front. In this spirit he advanced his troops, assenting to Theophylact's suggestion that he should be permitted to creep round the base of the mountain, with a small body of picked men, for the purpose of throwing himself on to the enemies' flank.

Meanwhile, the Saracens, seeing the Greeks in motion, came down the hill towards the monastery in large numbers. To meet them there issued from the gates of the building a body of monks, accompanied by their serfs, who, unaware of the presence of the Greeks, were determined to do battle on their own account, for the preservation of their

lives, and to save their convent from destruction and their altars from desecration. It was painful to look at them from below, engaged in such an unequal struggle, hurling extemporised missiles at their assailants, and brandishing against the sharp scimitars of the enemy forks and such like rude weapons, very few being provided with swords. And yet they held their position bravely, contesting the ground inch by inch with the Saracens. Numbers and discipline, however, and complete equipment began to tell against them, when the Greek commander, Gregory, realising the dangerous position of the monks, gave orders to his men to advance rapidly to their support. The Greek advance was checked by huge boulders of rock, which, loosened by the enemy above, came hurtling down on the advancing troops, driving them in every direction for shelter. It was impossible to make way against such a hail, and it might seem that the Orientals were beaten, and the brave monks and their followers doomed.

Then a change occurred in the aspect of things. The Saracens were seen to turn from the monks, and face round to meet a force advancing rapidly upon their rear. It was Theophylact with his men, who had crept up the other side of the mountain unperceived, and now fell upon the infidels with irresistible spirit. The Saracens reeled before this unexpected attack ; then rallied ; retired again ; returned once more with spirit to the encounter. A body of about a dozen men were seen to detach themselves from the main body and to rush forward in a compact mass upon the com-

mander of the Greeks, who in the *mêlée* was momentarily alone. For an instant it appeared that all was over with Theophylact. He disappeared in the midst of his assailants ; but in a moment he was on foot again, and, as it seemed, endowed with superhuman strength. Right and left he drove the infidels, clearing a wide circle with his gleaming blade, till a body of his own men, perceiving his danger, made a united rush by which they succeeded in rescuing him from his perilous position. Nevertheless, it was apparent that to advance was impossible, and that, at the best, he could hope no more than to hold his own until the arrival of reinforcements.

Meanwhile, the General below in the valley had been taking steps to relieve Theophylact and his party. A detachment of his troops was ordered to ascend the hill by the path Theophylact had followed. This movement was promptly effected, and not a moment too soon the fresh soldiers came to the aid of their weary comrades, and by their arrival caused the tide to turn. The Saracens broke and fled.

The victory was purchased at the cost of many lives, but the principal officers of the Greek army came safe out of the battle ; and Theophylact, though he had passed through great dangers, escaped with a few insignificant wounds.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE GREEK FIRE.

ALETHEA had returned from her interview with the monk Basil, and retired to rest earlier than usual after her wearying and anxious day. Night had come ; the moon was shining on the waters of the Bosphorus, and the stillness of night rested on the city hushed in sleep. The silence was scarcely broken by the occasional barking of a homeless dog, or the tread of the sentinel pacing the city wall.

From a high point of a hill to the east of the city a muffled figure looked down on the tranquil scene, and followed the line of glinting light, which, like a silver pathway, lay along the centre of the Golden Horn. In contrast with the universal repose of nature were the movements of this brooding figure, as it uttered from time to time a deep groan, raising its arms in silent supplication to Heaven, moving its head and wringing its hands, or stamping its foot impatiently on the rough ground.

A cloud shadow, which had obscured it, was rolled away, and there was revealed the form of a woman, in a flowing robe, with hair dishevelled and eyes turned up to Heaven.

Her glance was presently withdrawn from the starry sky, and turned downwards upon the Bosphorus, to the south-west. There she saw dimly,

from her high position, dark shadows stealing noiselessly out from the city, and dropping down the stream. These formed in line on the water, and from them suddenly spirited showers of liquid fire which fell upon other dark objects, which were riding at anchor farther down, and set them in a few moments ablaze ; when there were seen, perfectly defined against a dark background, the hulls of ships, with their canvas, spars, and masts enveloped in brilliant light.

Scarcely had the second act of the drama presented itself (and she was still debating anxiously what it might mean) when she heard, above and below and all around her, movements and suppressed voices, and became conscious that the mountain was occupied. In her surprise she crept behind a ledge of rock, which formed with the rising ground behind it a dark recess, just in time to escape a rush of men, who, vociferating in a strange tongue, hurried in a dense mass down the mountain side.

After some time the tramping footfalls died away, the lights were extinguished, and she was left again in solitude and darkness.

The curious events witnessed by this solitary watcher were the outcome of a conference held a fortnight before in the tent of the Count Dionysius, outside the city wall, across the Golden Horn, in a suburb then named Chalcedon. The Saracens had crept up towards the city in their ships during the absence of a large part of the Greek fleet and army, engaged in the expedition to Italy, to create a diversion for their comrades who were hard

pressed. Their ships lay at anchor half-a-mile down the estuary. How to drive them away became the question of the hour. The division of the Greek fleet that remained at home was both numerous and effective ; and yet, where the safety of the city was involved, the authorities desired, if possible, to avoid the risk of a naval combat. Hence meetings were held between superior officers of both arms, and discussions took place as to the most certain and effective way of disposing of the hostile squadron.

“Would that we had a knowledge of old methods,” said Theodosius. “The destruction of this fleet would have been an easy matter in the days of the Emperor Justinian.”

“And why not as easy now?” inquired an officer who had risen to position rather by Court favour than by merit.

“Your question surprises me,” said the former speaker. “Can it be that you are ignorant of the fact that Justinian’s cruisers burned the Saracen fleet to the water’s edge?”

“Granted. But why may not the cruisers of Basil do the same?”

“Will you be one of those to attempt it?” asked Theodosius.

“Certainly,” said the young officer ; “and risk my life on the venture.”

“I don’t question your bravery. But do you quite understand what is proposed?”

“Very clearly : the burning of the enemies’ ships with blazing wood or metal.”

“No, no,” said Theodosius impatiently ; “but burning them with liquid fire.”

“It is quite certain,” interposed Gregory, a military officer, “that in the days of Justinian, and even in the reign of Leo the Isaurian, we possessed the knowledge of a chemical preparation of a most destructive character. It was of such a nature that it burned even under the water, and was extinguished only when it had consumed itself and every object that it touched. It was, as Theodosius has said, a liquid, and could be spirted through tubes of copper. We are at present ignorant of its ingredients. Was it oil? Was it naphtha? Was it turpentine? Was it pitch? Or was it several of these combined in fixed proportions? We know not; and we have only the fact transmitted to us that with this substance, whatever it was, the fleet of the invader was twice burned, and the Empire saved.”

“I cannot bring myself to believe that the secret of this invention is entirely lost,” said an officer. “It was too valuable to be trusted to the memory of its manufacturers; it must have been put in writing, and will probably be found in the records.”

“But the Saracens will not wait while the records are being searched, and we shall be compelled to risk an engagement before we can discover the constituents of the Greek fire,” said an officer of the fleet. “I am of the same view as this young military officer, whose remarks have received but scant attention—that we should endeavour to burn the Saracen fleet with such materials as we have at hand.”

“Are your fire-ships to hand?” inquired Theodosius, addressing himself to the Admiral.

“Yes ; but they are old-fashioned and out of order.”

“But could they not, under cover of the night, steal with combustibles between the enemy’s ships ?”

“Perhaps. But when there, what could they do ?”

“Throw their torches, and scatter their inflammable oil.”

“And after doing little or no injury, remain to be boarded and sunk.”

“Then their original construction was a mistake, and they were worthless from the beginning ?”

“I cannot think so,” responded Oriphas. “I have too much respect for the intelligence and skill of our predecessors in the service of the Empire to admit that they would construct a useless engine of war. Our present fire-ships are after an old model. They contain, among other adaptations, forms of hideous monsters, through whose open jaws some sort of combustible must have been projected.”

“The Greek fire again,” said Theodosius. “Either that, or some other explosive of a destructive character.”

“It comes, then, to this,” said the President : “we must search the archives, and meanwhile be on the alert, prepared with our diminished fleet to risk a naval combat rather than allow these Mohammedans to approach nearer to our defences.”

A meeting composed of very different elements was taking place simultaneously in a bronze-caster’s workroom in a poor street in the north-east quarter of the city.

“A curse upon the Iconoclasts!” exclaimed the master of the warehouse. “They are reviving again. I tremble for my little friends.”

“And well you may,” said a loungee; “for if they get their way they will smash the nose of every puppet in the city.”

“Do not call them puppets. They are sacred images.”

“Yes; because they come from your holy hands.”

“My opinion of you, my friend, is that you are an image-breaker in disguise.”

“No; but I cannot understand venerating anything that comes from the hands of an old sinner like you.”

“I can make as good an image as any caster in Constantinople.”

“You can: but can you make a saint of it?”

“I do not want to.”

“Then why do you talk, man, about your bits of bronze?”

“I do not talk about them. 'Tis you that attack them.”

“But you do: you say you are afraid of the Iconoclasts.”

“I am afraid of losing my business; and that is reasonable cause for anxiety.”

“Then if it did not touch your pocket you would think as little of images as I.”

“Not so fast. I would venerate images, when blessed, for the sake of the Saints whom they represent.”

“Pshaw!” said the other, who was in a conten-

tious mood ; “ in venerating them what would you do but worship idols ? ”

“ None of your profanity here,” retorted the old man. “ Have I spent my life making images of saints and angels, to be told I am promoting the worship of idols ! I tell you, you are an Iconoclast, or, at the best, an ignorant fellow, who cannot understand what it is to respect a statue, not for what it is, but for what it represents. You know the statue of Constantine in the Forum ? ”

“ Of course.”

“ Would anyone show it disrespect ? ”

“ No one would dare.”

“ And why ? ”

“ Because it represents the great maker of this Empire and city.”

“ You are caught, you fool. But you do not see it.”

“ Your illustration is not so conclusive as you think. There is no danger of anyone’s adoring the model of Constantine, whereas there is a danger of someone’s adoring the image of Paul of Tarsus.”

“ What danger is there, unless a man is an idiot ? ”

“ O, the ignorant and credulous will do queer things.”

“ We cannot prevent them.”

“ But there is the point : you *can* prevent them, by withdrawing your models.”

“ Now, listen to common sense. Ignorant and learned have been taught that to adore images is idolatry. If after this teaching they adore the likenesses of saints and angels, which are

only set up to excite veneration for those whom they represent, and emulation to imitate their virtues, they are fools for their pains ; nothing more."

"But fools will be fools."

"Let them be so ; and I hope you will keep out of their company. Be off, and let me attend to my work."

The artificer turned to his assistant, and asked :

"Have you finished little Paul? A messenger from the Twelve Apostles is to call for him to-day."

"Yes," replied the other, a sulky fellow ; "and a job I had with him."

"What about that Plato for Gregory of Syracuse? Will it soon be out of hands?"

"He will have to wait for it."

"He says he cannot wait."

"How impatient he is for his pagan philosophers. It would be better for him to order some statue that would remind him that he is a Christian."

"We cannot make a saint of him."

"You cannot, indeed ; nor a Christian. He must be melted down first."

"Is the order for the young priest of St. Mocus ready?"

"What order?"

"The Magdalen."

"I have not touched it these three days. I do not like to put my hands upon it. It has no expression."

"Indeed, worthy polisher!"

“It is true.”

“It is not true, you rascal.”

“You may call me what names you will, but the statue has no sorrow and little beauty on its face.”

“Severe criticism from a mere manufacturer of polishing dust!”

“My ancestors manufactured in this city before yours were heard of.”

“What did they ever manufacture but this very dust for cutting bronze?”

“Would you like to know?”

“Yes, if you have anything to tell.”

“After all, I will keep it to myself.”

“Keep it to yourself, then; and go on with your work.”

“I will tell you, nevertheless; what do you think of—the Greek fire?”

“The Greek fire—what is that? Who knows anything of that in these days?”

“I: the secret has been in my family for generations.”

“Tell it to me, will you?—like a good fellow.”

“Not for the riches of the Emperor.”

At this moment the priest of St. Mocus entered the workshop, to see the statue he had ordered some weeks before. He had given particular directions about it, and had gone so far as to indicate the figure, the character of face, the hair, and the features; borrowing evidently from some living form that had impressed itself on his mind.

“I confess,” said he, when ordering the work, “I wish both to surprise and edify the person for

whom it is intended." It was probably this departure from the stereotyped Magdalen that excited the ire of the assistant, and made him so remiss in attending to this particular figure.

"Your Magdalen," said the moulder, "is not finished, through the neglect of my assistant. He is not pleased with face or figure, and has, in consequence, failed to do the polishing. It is still in a rough state. As you entered the room we were disputing about it."

"Let me see it," said the ecclesiastic; "I will be the judge. It is," said he, after examining it closely, "executed according to my order, and corresponds with the model in my mind."

"Now, what do you say!" said the moulder triumphantly, turning to his journeyman.

"I say nothing but what I said before: that it has not the piety or sorrow of the Magdalens we generally make."

"He is a critic, reverend Sir; my dust-polisher is a critic. He is too clever for his work. He ought to be at this moment making combustibles to burn the Saracen ships."

"Just what the superior officers of the fleet and army are endeavouring to discover at this moment."

"Well, here is their man. He understands the components of the Greek fire. It is, he says, an hereditary secret in his family."

"You are jesting at the expense of this poor fellow."

"Nay, ask him."

"You talk too fast," said the other sullenly.

“But did you not say that your ancestors were the first makers of the Greek fire?”

“I did; and so they were.”

“And that the secret of its manufacture had been handed down from father to son?”

“Yes.”

“And that it has come to you in due turn?”

“Yes; have you anything more to ask?”

“No; I leave you to the priest,” said he, walking away.

“My man,” said the latter, addressing the workman, “if what you have said be true there is a fortune within your reach. All the authorities are searching for information regarding this destructive fluid. At this moment the records are being searched, the recesses of Photius’ library are being explored, the book-shelves at the great School are being turned topsy-turvy—all to find some written account of the nature of the Greek fire. The knowledge of its components, you say, is preserved in your family, and you are acquainted with the method of its manufacture. Then come with me, and I will present you to a friend of mine, who holds a high command in the army. He will bring you before the committee of military and naval officers, who will test your accuracy and examine your claims to be the saviour of your country.”

“I speak the truth,” said Micathus; “I am prepared to go before any tribunal and to submit to the closest examination. I will make the Greek fire in the course of a few hours if they supply me with the materials.”

“Enough. Let us go together to the house of the Count Dionysius.”

It may appear incredible that the knowledge of this mediæval engine of destruction was confined to an artisan family in Constantinople in the ninth century. But the mystery that hedged in the processes of its manufacture had always been carefully guarded, lest, if it were removed, this weapon should come at last into the hands of the enemy. And so it happened that the method of its manufacture was never committed to writing. Hence, also, even to-day, the secret of its manufacture is buried out of sight; and beyond the fact that such a thing existed, and was used with effect, particularly in naval warfare, nothing is certainly known of it. It is, however, commonly said that naphtha, sulphur, gum, pitch, and bitumen were among its ingredients.

Full of information on this subject, and proud of his knowledge, Micathus, the worker in bronze, accompanied the clergyman to the quarters of the military staff, where he was presented before the assembled officers, who, as it opportunely happened, were again sitting in council, to receive the reports of some members of their body who had been sent to search the records.

The faces of the assembly showed depression, for no entry bearing on the matter had been found, when Micathus, led by the young priest of St. Mocus, entered the room.

“This man,” said his conductor, introducing him, “can aid you in your present difficulty. He appears to have been discovered by a Providential accident to save the Empire. He knows the ingredients of the burning fluid, and boasts that he

can compound them. The secret has been in his family for a hundred years. Give him such materials as he wants, and he stakes his liberty on the success of his process. If successful, you will know how to reward him for the benefit he will have conferred upon the Empire in the grave crisis that has come upon it by the unexpected arrival of the Saracen fleet in our waters, and its dangerous proximity to the city."

Eager words were addressed to Micathus from every side ; but he remained silent and seemingly dazed : so that at last he would have been dismissed as a fool if the young priest had not again interposed.

"What is it you want, Micathus," said he, "gum, or pitch, or sulphur, or naphtha?"

"All these," said the operative, "and thrice as many again ; and a furnace lighted, and vessels of thick copper—and to be left alone."

"But I have told these officers that you will produce the fire in their presence."

"And violate the trust that has come to me?—never. The secret remains in the family ; it is our inheritance, which we have sworn never to give away."

"Can money purchase it, my man?" demanded the President of the Commission.

"Not the wealth of the Empire," replied the workman.

"Perhaps," said an officer significantly, "there are other—and less pleasant—means?"

"Nor torture," said the other doggedly.

"You must take the man on his own terms,"

said the President of the Court ; “and let us be thankful that he has turned up at such a conjuncture. We give you,” said he addressing himself to Micathus, “all the materials you want for the production of the Greek fire ; only produce it quickly, before the sun sets ; for we must use it this night. To-morrow may be too late.”

Before an hour had passed the bronze-worker had filled his copper cauldrons with a liquid of bluish colour. He then summoned the officers, at whose instance he had compounded it, to come and see its effects.

“It is harmless,” he said, “as it now is. You may touch it ; you may even fill your hand with it. But apply to it a spark, and it becomes a hell-pool ; and once alight, neither air nor water will extinguish it, until it has burned itself out and has reduced to ashes every combustible object which it has touched. Fill that cup of silver lying yonder with it, and I will with a torch arouse the demon that is in it.” So saying he applied the light.

A rumbling noise for a moment ; then a sullen light spread over the surface of the liquid, which burned with a hissing and grinding sound.

“To touch the cup even would be fatal,” said the bronze-worker ; “but give me the pincers, and put before me a large vase of water, full to the top. I will immerse the lighted cup in it, and sink it to the bottom, and hold it there as long as you please ; and when I raise it again and bring it to the surface you will find it still ablaze.”

The experiment, in every way successful, brought

surprise and joy to the assembled officers. Here was obviously the long-sought "fire of the sea," the "blazing serpent," "the fire-devil," that had so often saved the Empire: its burning under water proved it.

Micathus was the hero of the hour. He was presented to the Emperor Basil; he received the thanks of the Senate and the blessing of the Patriarch Ignatius. Elias, the treasurer, was told to reward him without stint. The priest of St. Mocus was congratulated on all sides; and the fleet sped on its way to spirt this destructive fluid through the jaws of its model toads and serpents, and set ablaze the vessels of the Saracen flotilla that lay at rest down the Bosphorus.

And well supplied with this terrific projectile and the necessary engines, a squadron slipped their cables and sailed down the Bosphorus towards where, in fancied security, the enemy's ships lay at anchor.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ASSANDRA.

WE return to the woman whom we saw on the mountain contemplating the effects of the discovery described in the last chapter. There was not in the suburbs or surroundings of the Imperial city, on either side of the strait, a spot from which so good a view could be had of the destructive action of the Greek fire, as from that occupied by Assandra—for it was she who sat alone and desolate on the hillside meditating upon her sorrows.

There are men who would deny to one who suffers for a fault all sympathy. Fortunate it was for this woman that there was one whose charity was wide enough to embrace her as she was, with her sins, and to throw a veil over the past, while encouraging her to walk steadily on the way of amendment. She had been listening to the lessons of this friend, the young priest, who had kept her in view since the night she was brought to him by Melanus. She had been endeavouring to profit by his advice; but on this night the edifice of her good resolves was on the point of being shattered. Possessed by a vivid recollection of her luxurious past, she writhed, as one possessed, between the promptings of vice and virtue. Nor need it be a matter of surprise that a young woman, thinking of past years of indulgence, and contrasting with the past her present life of hardship and solitude, should

feel tempted to turn back, when a Jerome, old and emaciated, in the desert of Calchis, shook off with difficulty a vision of the ballroom of Rome.

Assandra was not aware of the death of Michael, though it had occurred long months before. It was his suggestion that now recurred to her mind—his invitation to the Palace, his proposal to reinstate her in her former position of wealth and luxury; this was the temptation besetting her that night, and driving her to the state of distraction and excitement in which we have seen her. She knew that it was an illusion; she could almost hear the accents of the tempter: breathed into her ear, they went vibrating through her frame, and filled her by turns with joy and terror. She saw the cloven foot of the angel of light that hovered around her, and for a time she struggled and cast him off. But he soon returned terrifying and soothing her, speaking to her softly in the gentle murmuring of the night air, and beckoning to her in the lights of the distant city. She stood wavering and unresolved: she would go forward; she would remain where she was. She stood upon the brink of a precipice; one step, and she would be lost. Surely it was unreasonable that she should live a wretched life with barbarians! Yet what of the terms under which she could enjoy the pleasures of life? Nay; no terms had been stipulated, and why must she suspect an evil design in a proffer of hospitality? She rose to go, when, by a flash of light shining into the recesses of her soul, she seemed to see clearly that she could not go to the Imperial Palace in safety

—that to return thither implied a return to degradation.

She drew herself up, and wrestled with the temptation that assailed her, and overcame it. As if she hoped to leave it there, fallen and crushed, she turned and fled up the mountain side, following the windings of the track, and waking the echoes of the night with her sobs and moans. But what change has come over her suddenly? She has dashed away her tears, her moaning has ceased, and she is speeding rapidly down the mountain side in the direction of the city lights. Her mind is resolved upon a safe and lawful course: she will go to the Palace for solace, and nothing more; she will place herself under the protection of a powerful prince, prepared to spurn that protection if it cannot be enjoyed without a violation of the moral law.

On she moved, this time firm in her purpose, unaware that her long struggle had carried her through the night, and that the dawn of day was approaching. Her eyes were attracted to a rent, small and narrow, in the dark pall that hung over her head, and she stopped and turned towards the east. There the first streak of daylight came creeping over the hills. For a while she stood motionless and spellbound under its influence; then she burst into tears.

When she was calmer she began to review the situation: "Fool that I am," said she, "hoping to pass through the fire without being singed! Fool, to think of trusting to the honour of that man! No palace for me; no gold or gems; no luxury;

no return to the pleasures of the world. Let me die rather, on this cold, dark hill ; friendless, abandoned, forgotten. The past is to me a hideous dream ; a vision that has fled, leaving only remorse ; a time long since dead and in the tomb, never to be recalled." So saying, she turned again, and walked firmly, not to the Emperor's Palace, but to the humble lodging of the priest that had stood her friend when the world cast her off.

Chilled and weak from fasting and exposure, dishevelled and saturated with the dews of night, her steps grew uneven as she moved along the most unfrequented ways of the suburbs ; and such was the reaction after the violent paroxysms to which she had been a victim, that she frequently paused to take breath, her feet almost failing her for utter weakness and prostration. A kind-hearted matron, hurrying to market, gave her a supporting arm for some distance ; and a night watchman walked by her side for some time, to show her through intricate passages the shortest way to the church.

She arrived at length at her destination, utterly worn out, and advanced timidly to the door of the priest's lodging to give the usual signal for admission. But this last excitement, added to her previous struggle, was too much for her ; and when the door after some delay was opened, she fell heavily down, insensible, upon the threshold.

When she recovered consciousness, she found herself stretched on a couch in an apartment of moderate dimensions, austerely furnished, but filled with religious statuary, and perfumed by the odour

of freshly gathered flowers. She was quite alone, and by her side, on a small bench, was a flagon of wine and some fruit and bread. She was about to refresh herself when her eyes fell upon a small statue, the exact model of herself in face and figure, but with an expression of penitential sorrow that penetrated her soul. She was still gazing at it when the door was gently opened and the priest entered noiselessly. She saw him look upon the figure and then turn his glance upon herself; and when she perceived that he was about to retire as he had entered, believing her to be still asleep, she broke silence.

“I have come,” she said, “to you—for advice and help in a great temptation; but the lesson has been already given: a new light has come into my soul, and I am nerved for a life of austerity.”

“So,” said he, “you have been studying the little book I have prepared for you. It is well. But meanwhile partake of my humble fare. I will return presently.” So saying, he left her wondering at his thoughtfulness and the interest he took in the welfare of one so unworthy.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE DEATH OF THE SLAVE GIRL.

NO one felt more elated at the success which had crowned the efforts of the Greek expedition into Italy than the Pope; and in his joy he sent a warm invitation to the Greek commanders to visit the Eternal City.

A council of officers was held, and the invitation of John VIII. was put before them for consideration. Theophylact was present, and declared himself in favour of accepting the invitation of the Pope; he added, at the same time, that he had himself a special reason for visiting the capital of Italy, apart from the curiosity which drew so many from all parts to see the world-famed shrine of St. Peter.

After a warm and long conversation on the subject, it was decided that the main body, with its officers, should return to Constantinople by sea, and that Theophylact might visit the Pope, accompanied by a smaller force; and that afterwards he should return overland.

The Turmarch was pleased with this decision. He loved adventure; and though quite alive to the dangers of the return journey, he made but little of them in comparison with the pleasure of learning the fate of the freedwoman who had been his slave.

The way from S. Germano to Rome lay through

a country that had been devastated for years by the enemy's forces. The fields were swept of their trees and crops ; the towns on the line of march were pictures of desolation ; convents and churches were in ruins, and the inhabitants were dead or gone, save a few half-famished creatures, who with hollow voices solicited a morsel of bread or a drop of wine from the strangers as they passed.

Arrived at the capital, the Greeks for the first time saw signs of life ; for even at that remote period a central spark of vitality kept that fair land from falling back into barbarism. And as they entered Rome they were surprised at witnessing the evidences of its ancient splendour which met their eyes on every side. For, though the palaces and public buildings of the old city were tottering or in ruins, there was still a number of edifices of grey antiquity that had survived the various sackings of the city, and a number of solid though unpretentious modern houses ; and the churches, so numerous and each of them telling its tale of early Christian suffering and triumph, appealed eloquently to the visitors.

The streets were full of strangers ; not only from the desolated provinces of the peninsula, but also from the most distant parts of the known world. There were the fair-skinned Briton and the darker Gaul ; the swarthy Spaniard and the bronzed denizen of North Africa ; while Asia and the East were represented, as a contemporary writer, Pope Nicholas tells us, by strangers from Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Mount Olympus.

To Theophylact it seemed strange that travellers

did not shrink from the capital of Italy in such dangerous times, when only its walls intervened between them and the howling wolves outside : but then, as now, there was a religious repose in that city which could not be found elsewhere ; and wanderers, tired of the world, went thither at every risk to finish their days in peace under the protection of St. Peter.

The Rome of that day was devoid of statuary, and was in that respect in striking contrast with Constantinople. It had, however, libraries of ecclesiastical documents, Acts of Councils, Papal letters, briefs, grants, and bulls, which were no less curious, and, in a religious sense, more valuable than any writings preserved in the Eastern city.

All these peculiarities Theophylact noted, as he daily went about examining the place in detail ; and his mind was thrilled by various emotions, at one time of religious enthusiasm, at another of fervent admiration of the glories of the more ancient civilisation, as revealed in the ruins of temples, palaces, and monuments that met his view on every hand.

He had seen John VIII., who sat on the Fisherman's throne, and had received his thanks and blessing ; but up to this time he had not been able to find a clue to the retreat of Zeta, though he had visited many churches in his search for her. He would have left the capital in ignorance of her fate, if his wanderings had not brought him one morning to the door of the little Church of St. Bibiana, where a religious function was being performed.

He entered the building noiselessly ; but seeing that it was filled with devout worshippers, retired to the porch until the end of the service. When all was over he had the satisfaction of gazing once more on the well-remembered features of his former slave, and bidding her a touching and solemn farewell. But Zeta's presence requires a word of explanation, for nothing has yet been told of her movements after she departed abruptly from the travellers with whom she came to Rome.

There is a small church in Rome dependent on St. Mary Major, and dedicated to St. Bibiana, virgin and martyr. Thither, on December 2nd, the anniversary of the martyrdom of this Saint, worshippers repair in large numbers to hear the record of her life ; to read it on the frescoes that adorn the nave of the edifice ; and to join in the Mass and the devotions that are performed in her honour. "She was young," it is recorded in the acts of her martyrdom, "and fair ; and was tempted by a wicked ruler. She remained faithful to duty and to God ; but the struggle for the preservation of her innocence and faith was of a prolonged and violent character, and cost her her life."

Like many of the churches of Rome, the present Church of St. Bibiana is built on the foundations of an older one ; and that building was erected by Pope Simplicius, in 465, and named after a pious lady who defrayed the expense of its erection. It was standing at the period embraced in this record, and frequented by pious pilgrims, who assembled there to praise God and honour His martyred servant.

Perhaps it was some resemblance between her sufferings and those of St. Bibiana that attracted Zeta to this church, and held her there by a silken cord of love.

This young wanderer from the East appeared very poor and friendless, and, with much silent bashfulness, was forced to solicit an alms from those entering or leaving the edifice; and, though her petition was made in her native Greek, it was in purport the same as that of the modern beggars at the same church, who ask for some little assistance for the "love of the dear St. Bibiana." This young Greek girl, so timid, so modest, was a great favourite with the frequenters of the church. Many would gladly have taken her to their homes, but she gratefully declined their offers of hospitality; and though often asked for her history, she said no more than that she had been a slave in the East, had received her freedom, and had come to Rome to die.

The priests who ministered in the church manifested special respect and regard for this girl, whose piety was tender and deep, without ostentation, and they volunteered to obtain for her a position as teacher of the Greek language; but she pleaded ignorance and incapacity. She lodged with a poor but pious matron who frequented the church; who loved her as a child, and would freely have shared her humble fare with her. But the girl insisted on dividing with her such alms as she received from the generosity of the faithful.

She went but little through the city, and never but to attend a religious function at some church

in which the anniversary of its patron was being commemorated.

As she was leaving the Church of St. Bibiana on a genial evening in October, she found herself side by side with an old gentleman, whom, from his dress and complexion, she judged to be a countryman of her own. Turning half-round sharply, and fixing his eyes upon her, he said :

“You are from the East? I think I have seen you before.”

“I was seldom to be seen when in Constantinople, and my position was so humble that very few regarded me.”

“But I have seen you. I have a rare recollection of faces. If I look well once at the human visage I never forget it. You have not, perhaps, heard any news from the City of Constantine since you have been here?”

“Who was to tell me news? I have no friends here, and no acquaintances outside the house in which I lodge.”

“I will tell you the news of the city,” said the garrulous old gentleman, who appeared quite pleased to have caught a listener. “Ignatius is dead. The old courtier, Andrimades, was drowned accidentally in a bag of Chian wine: Melanus, the patrician, is about to be married to Photius’ ward. Assandra, the daughter-in-law of Bardas Cæsar, has run away with Gryllus, the fool. Theophylact married a girl that he saved from drowning—and I am the Emperor Basil.”

He had scarcely concluded this incoherent speech, which he delivered with great rapidity

of utterance, when a gentleman, also an Oriental, came up, and seizing him by the arm carried him off, at the same time signalling to the girl to attach no importance to what he had said.

He was one of those who had fled from the brutality of Michael III.; and had lost the greater portion of his goods, his country, and in the end his reason.

Foolish as the jargon was, it produced a deep impression on the girl; and all that evening and the next day she complained of feeling unwell. Her frame was agitated, and her heart beat violently. Feeling a presentiment that her course was run, she went to the church on the second morning and received the Holy Communion. After a slight refection of bread and fruit, she returned again to the church, where she remained all day in prayer. Darkness came upon her still before the altar of Demetria, the sister of Bibiana, who died of syncope when the lash of the persecutor was raised over her; and so absorbed was she that she did not hear the voice of the porter warning her to leave the church, nor the noise of the doors as they were closed.

But the next morning, as the priest came out to arrange an altar for an early Mass, he saw before the shrine of St. Demetria the outline of a saintly face and graceful figure, still in the attitude of prayer, holding in its hand a paper, on which was written :

“Zeta, with love, blessings, and thanks to all who have been kind to her in Rome and on the Bosphorus.”

When he approached, to raise her from what he believed to be a slumber, he found that she was dead.

The body of Zeta was not disturbed that day, and crowds came to the church to see the dead face of one whose spirit had fled to a better land. The sight touched all hearts, for the lips seemed parted in prayer, and the eyes were raised to Heaven ; and so fragrant was the body, that pious and sensitive visitors declared that she was a Saint who had passed away, and that the odours of Paradise perfumed the air.

On the second day pious women, by direction of the priests of the Church of St. Bibiana, came to prepare the body for burial ; but so fresh was it, and so far from decay, that it was left unshrouded upon a bier in the centre of the nave until the Office for the Dead should be recited. Next morning the solemn tones of the Dirge filled the Church of St. Bibiana. "Have pity on me : have pity on me, you, my friends at least, for the hand of the Lord has touched me." "Why art thou sorrowful, O my soul, and why disturbest thou me? Hope thou in God, for to Him will I still make confession." "The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear?" "I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living." How many millions have been consoled with these aspirations of faith and hope!

The touching office was ended, and the last *Requiescat in pace*, sung in a sonorous voice, was dying away, when Theophylact, leaving his

position in the porch passed up to the nave, and standing near the bier, looked with emotion on the sweet, sleeping figure of his slave and friend. His great chest heaved ; a tear started to his eye. Reverently he knelt down by the body, and prayed long and fervently, while all eyes were turned upon him. He was unconscious of them, and rising to his feet, after some time he took one of the still pliant hands in his and raised it to his lips. He kissed it reverently, and then, bestowing one long gaze upon the well-remembered features, breathed "Farewell," and so left the church.

CHAPTER XLV.

LAUREL-CROWNED.

A JOURNEY overland from Rome to Constantinople would be, in any age, a considerable undertaking. What must it have been in the ninth century, when the intervening regions were occupied by barbarous tribes, who neither knew nor cared to adopt the simplest usages of civilisation! Swamps, almost impassable, had to be waded through, and rivers crossed in fragile and dangerous skiffs. The rudest inns for travellers were not to be found in the wretched villages on the way; and food must be begged, when birds or animals could not be killed, or fish procured from the rivers; for the paucity of their numbers made it necessary to choose the least frequented routes.

It was only after they had got well into the perils and trials of the route that Theophylact and his companions realised the difficulty of their undertaking; but advance they must at every sacrifice, since a retreat, not to speak of its depressing effect, would bring disgrace upon men who had so often stood in the presence of danger.

The country was occupied by Slavs, at this time as fierce and cruel as they had been three centuries before, when, under Attila, the Hun, they had issued forth from their desert plains to devastate France and Italy. At every step the Greeks were beset by these savages; and often

found themselves surrounded by them, and were forced to cut a passage out with their swords. Had it not been for the prestige of the Greek name, and the dread of the Emperor of the East, they would not have brought their lives out of these solitudes ; and, as it was, they arrived in a state of sheer prostration at Philippopolis, within Greek territory, many weeks after they had started from Rome. Here they were met by a detachment of Greek horse, sent from Constantinople to their relief. Having rested and regaled themselves for some days, they pursued their journey by easy stages to Adrianopolis, where they were ordered to remain until arrangements should be made for their reception and public entry into the Imperial city.

The cavalcade, of which Theophylact was the central figure, through the streets of Constantinople was such as we should expect it to be in that age and in that region. It comprised many regiments of horse and foot under the command of their respective officers, while the ecclesiastical element was represented by groups of monks, bearing flaming torches and chanting psalms of victory. A mob of many thousands surrounded the *cortège*, and everywhere the streets re-echoed the acclamations of the civilians, and the lattices were bright with the smiles of beauty.

On through the streets the long line wound its way, making for the Church of St. Irene, where a public function of thanksgiving was to be held ; and near the doors of the sacred edifice it was met by the Emperor and his officers of state, who entered the church at its head.

The prayers for peace, consisting of a great and little collect and litany, were seldom at that time omitted from any office of the Eastern Church. They are almost identical with a part of the Litany of the Saints as recited in the West on Holy Saturday. Their propriety on this occasion was obvious, inasmuch as they contain petitions for peace, for the army, and for the temporal powers. Hence, when the presiding priest, assisted by his deacon, had recited some prayers of thanksgiving in a standing posture, he humbly bent the knee, and prayed in words of which the following are a sufficiently accurate rendering :

“ In peace let us beseech the Lord.

“ Lord, have mercy.

“ For peace from above,

“ Let us beseech the Lord.

“ For the peace of the whole world,

“ Let us beseech the Lord.

“ For this holy house, and for those who enter it with faith, piety, and the fear of God,

“ Let us beseech the Lord.

“ For our Archbishop, for the honourable Priesthood, for the Diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and laity,

“ Let us beseech the Lord.

“ For our most religious and God-fearing Emperor ; for all the Palace and the army,

“ Let us beseech the Lord.

“ That He may aid them in battle, and put down every foe and enemy under their feet,

“ Let us beseech the Lord.

“ For this city and country, and for those who dwell therein,

“Let us beseech the Lord.

“Help, save, have mercy, and guard us,

“O God, by Thy grace.

“Making mention of our all-holy, pure, pre-eminently blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us offer ourselves and all our lives to Christ, our God.”

The religious ceremony over, the soldiers turned to leave the church, and as he went down the nave the eye of Theophylact quietly scanned the congregation, looking for a face that he expected to see upraised to greet him. But his glance, though falling upon a sympathetic and enthusiastic crowd, did not discover the object he sought. He raised his eyes to the women's gallery; but among its occupants was no one that he recognised.

Disappointed in his search, he crossed the threshold, and was going slowly towards his home when he stopped on seeing, under a monk's cowl, a face that was well known among the *viveurs* of the city, and which he had often himself seen beaming with dissipation and merriment.

“My eyes deceive me,” he murmured to himself: “it cannot be Andrimades; or, if it be, he has put on the habit through jest.” The other, who seemed to divine his thoughts, advanced towards him, and said in a cheery voice:

“The same. There is no deception: what I seem to be, I am.”

“Surely not a hermit?” said Theophylact, amazed.

“A cenobite,” replied Andrimades; “not every monk is a solitary.”

"Cenobite or hermit, you amaze me," said Theophylact.

"I am not surprised: I amaze myself, I assure you."

"Your house and villa?" inquired Theophylact.

"Sold," replied the other.

"Your horses and chariots?"

"Gone to the hammer."

"Your money, the statues, and furniture?"

"Given to the poor. You do not ask about my cellar; it is empty, and toads and vermin hold high revel in it."

"Where do you live?" asked the officer.

"In the Monastery of St. Paul. Come and see me, and bring Melanus with you, and I will give you the whole history of my change of life. Meanwhile, I have something of importance to say to you. I have come out expressly to meet you. You will bear with me. The subject is a delicate one, and I have reflected upon it with a charitable motive and a desire to do good."

"I cannot question the motives of a monk."

"Of a monk such as I am? Born out of due time? Well, be that as it may. There is a noble lady in this city——"

"There are many such."

"Many; but one above and beyond the rest."

"For what is she remarkable? Did she strike a slave, and ask pardon afterwards?"

"She never injured a living thing."

"I understand: a gentle dame. What of her?"

"Gentle in manner," said Andrimades, "strong in character."

“Is she intellectual as well?” said Theophylact, beginning to suspect that Alethea was the person referred to.

“Intellectual, clever, and well informed.”

“What might be her outward appearance?”

“O, for that, I am a monk! I have an eye for the soul, not for the body.”

“I understand. But regarding her as a statue, a piece of bronze or marble——”

“I could not,” said Andrimades, looking rather foolish. “She is not angular, like our picture saints.”

“But her face might be like theirs.”

“It might, and is in some respects: it is, however, of the earth; while theirs are of Heaven.”

“Of the earth, earthy: it is a sensuous face, I suppose?”

“By no means: it is a spiritual face, but of a pagan cast.”

“Precisely: showing rather sensuousness than the reserve of a Christian maid?”

“No,” said Andrimades decisively; “nothing of the kind; but combining the beauty of the pagan face, as represented by old statues, with the subdued expression of our best Christian models.”

“Nothing could be better than your description of this maiden. Let us put its various parts together. Her high birth is set off by great beauty; she combines in her character gentleness, firmness, extraordinary intelligence, and a knowledge of many subjects. You have been candid with me in imparting this information; I will be

equally candid with you : I believe I know the person whom you have described, and that she is no other than Alethea, the relative and sometime ward of the usurper of the Patriarchal dignity in this city."

"You are correct in your surmise, Sir. The maiden I have been trying to portray is Alethea. And now you will add much to the value of your discovery, and spare me some embarrassment, if you will suggest a motive for my bringing the good qualities of this gifted lady to your notice."

"A strange request surely! How can I judge of your motives? Before I would even hazard a reply, I must ask to be informed whether this maiden is espoused?"

"She is not espoused, but I believe she loves with a subdued but intense affection."

"Whom does she love?"

"Yourself."

"Am I indeed so favoured?"

"You are ; and have been since the expedition to Crete, if not before."

"Pray how do you know?"

"I have watched her, in your absence, with curiosity when a layman, with charitable interest since I became a monk. I came across her, half by accident, half by design, on the day you departed on the expedition to Crete ; and seeing that she was in grief for some one in the fleet, I rudely plied her with questions, until I satisfied myself that the lamented one was the Turmarch Theophylact. During the dreary and anxious months of the war in Italy, now happily ended, I

took every opportunity of observing this maiden, no longer through idle curiosity, but through an intense interest which I felt in her well-being. The result was to confirm my earlier impression : I saw that she was a prey to uneasiness, and laboured under intense excitement, which she vainly tried to suppress. I came, finally, to the conclusion that her heart was entirely yours. But I was not yet satisfied. I saw that during your absence she occasionally called upon the Patriarch Ignatius, and that she went to the School of Magnaura, presumably for consultation and advice. She put herself under the direction of the monk Basil. I made it a special business to present myself as often as I could, without arousing suspicion as to my object, to Basil, Ignatius, and Leo, the philosopher, and to converse with them as long as I could with propriety. There was no difficulty during these interviews in introducing the name of Alethea, for whom I well knew respect and admiration were entertained by them, in common with all the orthodox of the city. And so it came about that I elicited the purport of her visits to them. These bore relation to the expedition to Italy, and the cause of her anxiety was the safety of one of the officers. Now my chain of evidence was complete; and, whether prudently or otherwise you can judge, I came to the conclusion that I would take the first opportunity after your return home of putting you in possession of the fact that you are loved, with a faithful and undying affection, by a maiden whose regard would do honour to an emperor."

“It is so strange, so unexpected, that you should be my unappointed agent in this delicate matter. I know not what to say, or how to thank you.”

“Do not thank me: I have been occupying and amusing myself. I was, in former days, fond of the chase. I fear that the monk Andrimades has much of the spirit of the old courtier of that name. Still, I meant to do a kindness to both. Answer me a few questions, and I go back to my convent and promise to avoid eavesdropping in future.”

“At your service.”

“You have seen the maiden I have been speaking about?”

“Often.”

“You admire her?”

“Who does not?”

“You esteem her?”

“Indeed I do, most highly.”

“May I ask it? Do you love her?”

“With all the deep affection of a soldier’s heart.”

“Then my business is done. You, no doubt, have heard of the great banquet that is to be given by the Emperor to and in honour of the victorious commanders of the Italian expedition?”

“As a matter of course. I am among the invited guests.”

“Alethea will be there: she is a great favourite of the Empress Eudoxia. Seek an opportunity of speaking to her in private. Tell her what you have told me, and—but I am going too far. Tell her, however, that if Andrimades were not a

monk, and were not so old and ugly as he is, you would have a rival. As it is—he resigns her to you. Farewell.” And the strange man walked away.

Meanwhile Alethea, whose happiness was such a matter of concern to the strange man who had learned by his watching and spying to esteem her, was on her way to Magnaura, there to seek an interview with its Principal, who had ere this shown a marked and abiding interest in her welfare, and, in his reserved way, had become to her a true and valued friend. She found him seated in a half-reclining position, musing, with a red rose in his hand, whose delicate perfume he from time to time inhaled, and prying between its thin leaves for a fuller knowledge of its wondrous mechanism.

“I know,” said he, almost audibly, “that there are mysteries hidden in this flower which another generation will unravel. We see the outside only: others will penetrate its secret. But will their better knowledge of nature withdraw them from its Author? It will tend to do so, because they will in their pride think that they have discovered the First Cause outside the Deity. For me, this little flower leads me away from unbelief. The atmosphere of sweets that surround it, of which I know nothing, except that it is pleasant to me, its modest blush, the life that pervades it—all is mystery. How is it —?”

He was interrupted in his reverie by the entry of a slave, who announced that Alethea waited in the hall. She was admitted to his presence without delay.

"I have been," he said, "meditating on this beautiful flower. You love the rose, no doubt, as all maidens do?"

"No banquet was without the rose," said she, "in the last days of the first Roman Empire. I should esteem myself a degenerate child of the second, if I did not put it first among flowers."

"Have you ever imagined that there is an argument hidden in the leaves of the rose?"

"I have not thought of it," she replied.

"But there is. Thus: Who made the rose? Man? He could not: he can build a house, can write a book, can turn a wheel, can paint a picture; but he cannot make a rose. For a rose is a living thing, and he cannot originate life. Who, then, made the rose? Some principle or giver of life? And who is He? Near or distant, He is a Being different from and above all beings that we know or have experience of. Do you follow me?"

"At a distance," replied his guest; "but it seems to me that what you say of the rose may be, with equal truth, said of every thing or being that lives and dies."

"Your visits to me," said Leo, "are as those of an angel, for you appear to live in light, and shed some rays upon even the dark questions of science."

"More, I fear," said she, "by accident than by design. I confess to loving Christian philosophy, but I scarcely understand its first principles."

"The instinct of the Christian mind, fresh and untutored, often accumulates truth in larger measure than the thoroughly awakened intelli-

gence. We philosophers too often, by our criticism, obscure what we examine ; our aberrations are sometimes as foolish as those of a wayward child. Truth, as it seems to me, is found in other ways besides that of direct investigation ; and other faculties or powers, apart from the intellect, have their place in its discovery. Turning to this little flower again," said he, holding up the rose ; " no one asks where it came from, or whither it goes ; but the fancy is busy about it, the senses are charmed with it : they follow it in its growth from a hard bud, and putting on an outward garb of crimson, swelling and opening its petals to the sun, and after a time growing weary of existence, fading and shrinking, and falling, little by little, to fragments. The senses, which follow the rise and fall of the rose, are impressed with it as a thing from Heaven. Is it quite different with a work like this," he continued, holding up a small, highly decorated statue of the Blessed Virgin. " Here the senses are appealed to, but in an entirely different way. This thing of earth, bright as a flower in its rich colouring, is seen and felt to be a mere imitation of nature, the work of feeble hands, and does not lead us beyond its maker, man. But I weary you with my philosophising. Let me only say, in conclusion, that my object is to satisfy myself and you, who have had the patience to listen to me, that the exercises of the senses will lead an unperverted mind direct to a Creator."

" Think you," said Alethea, " that faith will always increase with an increase of knowledge of the mysteries hidden in nature ? "

“It should so increase, because the deeper we search into the secrets of nature, the more clearly we recognise the Omnipotence of the hand working through it. But whether it will so increase is quite another question. When the human mind was perfectly free, before Christianity, by imposing faith upon it, set a bound to its roivings, it misled men from God. If it should, by throwing off faith, make itself free again, it will be more profane and blasphemous than ever.”

“I thought,” said she, “that the ancient philosophers gradually ascended towards the recognition of a Supreme Being, and laid down rules for the practice of virtue as a consequence.”

“Not as a body. A few of them, perhaps—Socrates, Plato, for example—mounted the hill to a considerable height; and they were helped, as it seems to me, by an invisible hand, in their ascent, because they had not thrown away their opportunities. If future philosophers voluntarily descend from the mountain which their predecessors scaled, there will be no rising for them; they will sink into the abyss.”

“I can see the difference clearly,” said Alethea, “between endeavouring to scramble out of a noxious pool, and plunging voluntarily into its foetid depths; in the latter case there is no resurrection. But surely it is not coming to this, that faith will be set aside for philosophy! Our learned men must know that philosophy has run its course, and having failed to construct a convincing system has been condemned by the voice of mankind.”

“They know it well, and are at present influenced

by that knowledge. But the possibilities of the future! I look before me into ages to come, and I see in them a revolt against authority in matters of faith. I feel that the human mind is like an unripe flower, but half-opened; and that, as it expands, it will fancy itself capable of scaling the heights of Heaven. It will then take nothing for granted, but will lay profane hands on the Christian revelation, on the sacred writings. It will grow bolder because it will be praised and honoured, till, in the end, it will look upon the mystery that saved the world and gave for the first time hope and joy to hopeless man, as a fable beneath the notice of the learned."

"But surely no contradiction will be found between revelation and man's discoveries that would justify the learned in throwing over the former."

"Apparent contradictions will be observed; there can be no real contradiction between truth and truth. But these apparent contradictions, being the offspring of much mental labour and patient research on the part of the learned, will be hugged to their breasts to the exclusion of all else. In vain will the orthodox appeal to the great fundamental proofs of Christianity, its divine teaching, its miraculous propagation, its fulfilment of prophecy, its explanation of the origin of the world and of man; the ants of science will rummage in the dust and heap up their little worthless treasures in place of the glorious hopes that Christianity holds out to them."

"May I," said Alethea modestly, "mention a

point which occurred to me while you were speaking?"

"Pray do, I shall be most happy to discuss it."

"What you said appears to me like the dream of a visionary."

"Perhaps it is to some extent. I but study the workings of my own mind, and closely watch its tendencies. I find that when left to itself it tends in the direction of rebellion against authority. The learned decline to be cramped or confined within the limits prescribed by faith. But enough of this interminable subject. If I mistake not, you have not come to-day to ask for a lesson in philosophy, but to receive advice on a subject nearer to your heart than your intellect. I have a suspicion that your visit has some connexion with the return of our troops from Italy. Pray why are you not at St. Irene, to join in the thanksgiving service?"

"Why, indeed? I should be there if I followed my natural impulse; but you will be the last to deny my sex's privilege of occasional inconsistency."

"But you are the least capricious, the most reasonable of women!"

"To a fault, I often think," said Alethea. "But alone as I am, with few friends and no home influence to guide me, I have fallen into the habit of directing myself after a fashion of my own."

"Then," said Leo, "you would have gone to the church if you had followed your inclination, but were withheld by the stern voice of reason?"

“Precisely,” said she.

“Then, allow me to say that, in my opinion, it is time you emancipate yourself.”

“You would, then, set me free?”

“Free as the bird that cleaves the air.”

“Free to go and to come!”

“Free to go where nature leads you.”

“Free to show some of that love that is in my heart?”

“Free to show it all.”

CHAPTER XLVI.

FAREWELL TO ANDRIMADES.

ANDRIMADES a monk! The jester of the city become a serious and grave man! The "good liver," as the French would name him, put on simple fare and learning to dispense with flavours! Having met this eccentric man in many grotesque positions, and followed him in his wanderings and adventures, in which he showed slight signs of stability of character, the reader cannot but be surprised to see his face beaming out from under the monk's cowl. How this change was wrought he himself shall explain, and the motives which withdrew him from the world into the cloister.

A patrician arrived at the Monastery of St. Paul; he must see Brother Procopius, who is an old acquaintance of his; so he says to the door-keeper.

"Procopius is busy at this moment," answered the porter. "He is purveyor of the monastery, and is in charge of the larder and cellar; at this moment he is measuring out the wine, this being a feast-day."

"I will wait in the reception-room until he is free. Tell him, brother, that the patrician Melanus waits for him."

After some minutes Procopius, somewhat oily and flushed, appeared; without any preliminary, he folded Melanus in a close embrace.

“So you have come,” he cried, “to see Procopius! I thought that since he had assumed this queer name he had been forgotten outside.”

“Never to be forgotten!” responded Melanus cordially. “The memory of his humour and his madcap pranks is immortal. Your reputation will endure for ever.” It is scarcely necessary to explain that the monk Procopius and Andrimades were one and the same person.

After his interview with the monks, narrated elsewhere, Andrimades was observed by his friends to change his mode of life, to become more sensible and more temperate than he had been for years. His aberrations and eccentricities were less noticeable. He renounced the idea of depositing himself upon the bed of the Bosphorus, and became less moody in his demeanour. Religion, which hitherto he had not practised, became henceforth of much interest to him. He was often seen in the church, and he went so far as once to take a prominent part in a religious procession through the streets. His change of life was a subject of frequent conversations in the porticoes, among the better classes. How it came about we shall learn from his conversation with Melanus on the occasion of the present visit.

“A monk, I declare, a veritable monk! Who could have imagined it a year ago!”

“No one less than myself,” said Andrimades.

“And when, may I ask, and why did you take the resolution to become a religious?” inquired his friend.

“I will answer both questions in one sentence :

when I had proved to my own satisfaction that the world is a cheat and a knave. There was a contract between me and the world: I gave all; I got nothing in return. I gave my health: I had a fine constitution, and I undermined it in the pursuit of pleasure. I gave my talents: I confess I had not much ability; but I had some conversational powers, and a certain amount of wit; I gave myself to be a society buffoon. I followed the chase with spirit and courage. No one loved the pleasures of the table more than I. So having unlimited credit, so to speak, I never troubled my banker, the world, for a balance sheet until I became religious. And then I called this same world to account, and asked, 'How do we stand? I have given you everything.' World retorts: 'Why do you ask now? You never inquired before.' 'It is enough that I do ask,' I said; 'I must have an answer.' 'Well, then,' said the world, 'I gave you health and wealth.' 'You did nothing of the kind: I got these from my progenitors,' said I. 'I gave you pleasure,' said the world. 'You did not,' said I; 'I made that out of health and wealth.' 'You are an ungrateful son,' said the world; 'and I am disposed to cast you off.' 'And I am inclined to give you up as a fraud,' said I, 'because I have gained nothing by you.' So we parted, I going to a monastery, and the world going to the devil."

"O," said Melanus, highly amused, "you will be Andrimades to the end. You are as quaint as ever. I wonder that they received you into this austere community."

"They were honoured by my coming," said

Andrimades. "I made my own terms with them. I would tell you all, but I fear it might not tend to edification."

"You ought to know well that I cannot be scandalised by anything St. Procopius may say."

"So I ought: I will tell you all, then. When I presented myself at the gate of this monastery, now eight months ago, I received a polite, and even a cordial reception, as a man of my position would naturally expect. But when, after a few preliminary remarks, I somewhat nervously broke to the Superior the object of my visit—well, I only wish you had seen his face. I never saw such an expression of jocularitv and amazement combined. With difficulty he could refrain from laughing outright. He said to me: 'There is not much of the monk in your appearance, Sir. Pardon me if I appear somewhat at a loss, in view of the unexpected nature of your application.' 'But I do really desire to become a monk,' I said. 'I have made up my mind to it.'

"'What are your qualifications for the holy state?' he demanded.

"'I am not aware,' said I, 'that I have any particular qualifications, except a desire to enter it, and the remains of a good constitution.'

"'There is much in the desire,' said he. 'May I ask what is your religious practice.'

"'I have been doing some amateur religion,' said I, 'for the last five months. Till then you may put me down as a pagan.'

"'Amateur religion? Do you mean that you were practising religion for amusement, or to pass away the time?' he asked.

“‘Not exactly,’ said I, ‘but without science.’

“‘Might I ask, Sir,’ said he, ‘what your habits are?’

“‘Very simple,’ I answered. ‘A lounge at the baths; a chat under the porticoes; a visit or two; a good supper; a dive into the cellar. I have given up the more dissipated amusements. I seldom gamble; I avoid the hippodrome; I am no longer received at Court.’

“‘Pray, Sir,’ said he, ‘what do you mean to convey by the words, “a dive into the cellar.” You do not, I hope, drink to excess. That would entirely disqualify you for our order.’

“‘No, no,’ said I, ‘I have drunk as much in my day as most men; but now I pay more attention to quality than quantity.’

“‘Ah!’ he murmured thoughtfully, ‘I am afraid you mistake your vocation. Can you fast?’ said he.

“‘I never tried it,’ said I.

“‘Can you abstain from the use of wine?’

“‘I suppose I could if I hadn’t it,’ I replied.

“‘But if you had it—Malmsey, Chian, and all the others—if you had them, old and choice, in brimming measures before you; could you so mortify yourself as not to taste them?’

“‘I could, I dare say, if I were not thirsty; but I generally am thirsty. So, perhaps, I may as well say No.’

“‘Under these circumstances, Sir, I recommend you to go home, lead a Christian life, and think no more of the monastic state,’ said he.

“‘That is exactly what I cannot do,’ I replied.

‘I have broken up my home to become a monk. I shall have no resource but the sea.’

“‘The sea!’ he cried. ‘You will go to sea!’

“‘In plain words, shall drown myself.’

“‘God forbid!’ he exclaimed. ‘Perhaps we ought to give you a trial. Go away for the present, and abstain from wine until I see you again. Spend an hour in St. Sophia this evening in prayer, and return to-morrow at midday.’

“The sequel need not be told: *‘Veni, vidi, vici.’* I returned the next day, and carried everything before me. The Superior was all obsequiousness; the brothers showed me every attention. But a feature of the case, as surprising as my reception here, is this: that after three months spent in the house, the Superior came to me and said: ‘Brother Procopius, your conduct has given me the greatest satisfaction. I propose to appoint you to an important office in the monastery. Henceforth you will be cellarer to the community. You will have charge of the cellar; and as you are growing old, and have been accustomed to good things, you have my permission to drink an extra measure of wine each day.’ I sometimes, but, you will be surprised to hear, rarely, avail myself of this privilege. Now you have heard, in my old style, an account of my transformation. But I have something to add, in all seriousness. I am, on the whole, happy in my present position; happier than I have been for years. I need not tell you that the happiness of the monastic life is not the same as that of a worldly career. It is not so fitful and riotous; it is more even and subdued. Still, it is

far from being a condition of drowsiness or stupidity. Its charm consists, I think, in the peace of mind, the freedom from the world's cares, and the confidence in a Divine Providence, which distinguish it. I had no idea that there could be under this habit such rest for a troubled spirit as I have found. Some persons are under the impression that this mode of life stifles the natural affections and makes one forget old friends. With me it is quite the contrary. I sometimes sit in my cell reflecting upon times long past, and visions of dear ones who have gone to rest rise up before my mind; and old Procopius, after communion with them awhile, with a tear in his eye, dismisses them with a 'God be with you, old friends,' or if they have left this world, I say, 'The Lord grant rest unto their souls!'

"The austerities of this life are not excessive, though I found rising at a very early hour trying at first. The silence imposed by rule was irksome for some time to a man who never restrained his tongue, and was always talking nonsense. But these inconveniences I can bear now, not only without murmur, but even with joy, as an atonement for my former shortcomings. I am happy, I repeat, happier, on the whole, than I have ever been before. Every one is kind and considerate to me, for there is much brotherly love in our community. So I think, Melanus, you will admit that I have chosen the better part—better than that of remaining in the outer world, neglecting the things which are eternal."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE REVERIE OF LEO THE PHILOSOPHER.

AS soon as the curtain had fallen on Alethea's retiring figure, Leo followed a train of reflections which led him from his surroundings into a tangled maze of philosophical speculation.

"Is it all life," thought he, "or does life underlie it all? It would seem to be all life: life in the air, life in the water, life in the earth, living things on a constantly decreasing scale, until the eye is unable to perceive them. A conviction remains that all material things are composed of living atoms. And is not this impression confirmed by other discoveries? For if life were met with only in the spheres in which it serves an end, or at least in some sense is beautiful, we might be disposed to believe it not to be universal; but when we meet it hiding under a leaf where it is never seen, or crouching in the lowest depths of a lonely ravine, on the inaccessible mountain-top, or crawling beneath the mud that covers the bottom of the deepest rivers, when we find living things in all the unfrequented byways of the world, are we not led to think that the earth, the air, and the sea are, even in their minutest particles, alive? Not teeming with life, which is obvious, but *living*?"

"But, supposing the world in all its component parts to be nothing more or less than a mass of living things, would the problem of life be solved?"

Far from it: for the life of the world would be then more wonderfully harmonious than we, with our limited vision, can perceive it to be. The puzzle is not so much in life, as in the harmony with which living things work together. All have a path to tread, and in that way they walk. All have a sphere to inhabit, and within that sphere they dwell. Some owe service towards others, and this service they render; each has a task put upon it, to co-operate in some way for the preservation and perpetuation of order in creation: and this task is never neglected.

“Why do the living particles of the sun and moon never rebel and refuse to give their light? Why do not the all-living waters of the world grow tired of coming and going, and stand still? They cannot. Something checks them, and compels them into harmony. But it is not the life that is in them, for that, if it could, would be free. Am I so certain that life has a tendency to freedom? Yes, for I find this tendency in myself, who am rational, and I see it in animals, which are irrational.

“Order, co-operation, and harmony cannot come from overlying life; there must be another life underlying created things, pushing against them, keeping them in line, holding them all in its grasp, forcing them on, whether they will or not. Clearly there must be such a life: it is a physical necessity: philosophy demands its existence. But what is it? Vain man, thou canst not grasp it fully without some light added to that which thou naturally hast. It is the Spirit of God, as the Sacred Record says,

‘filling the world’ which He has made. No, the world is not a mass of living things ; for if it were, it would die before its time. What is life but the high road to death? If a thing did not begin to live, it might last as long as the world ; but as soon as it tastes the sweet cup of life, it is put on the road to destruction. A statue of a man will live longer than its prototype, because it has not life. Animate it, and it will after a short time crumble to dust. A tree will live longer than an animal, because of its comparatively imperfect life. The irrational animals, some of them have a longer term than man, because their spirit, though more robust, is on the whole much less lively. But all, man and animal, bird and fish, worm and insect, flower and tree, die, because they have lived ; and if the whole world was made of living atoms, it would lose that permanency which is the attribute of death.

“If the world were a mass of living things, would not life be essential, and from eternity? No more than if it was only partially animated, or contained only a few living things within its circumference. For, in this supposition, temporal life should come from temporal life ; and it is a contradiction to say that any number of temporal lives could amount to life eternal.

“Measure them, put them together, draw them out into line, one end of which is now : you must, as you extend the line, put them one behind the other ; but whatever number you include in this extending process, since each of them is limited, you will have a limited sum, unless you suppose

that a number of limited lines make a line without limits, or that the last in the series is not like the rest, but is infinite and eternal, like God.

“Problem of life, how wonderful! Never to be understood by the unbeliever, and but faintly illumined by the light of revelation! Without the spoken word of God it is all speculation and ineffectual inquiry. The fundamental fact must be recognised even by the unbeliever: that we live in a world of mysterious life, which to him is an insoluble mystery, because reason alone cannot fathom its depths. And yet, what efforts were made, outside the zone of revelation, to mount to a knowledge of the Principle and Giver of Life! Efforts in part successful, but on the whole disappointing; for life was not long enough to bring them to a successful issue. Not that pure reason has anything disrespectful to say of a First Principle, or should lend itself to the undue exaltation of passing existences; but reason has had its chance, and a long spell of independent and uncontrolled endeavour, and what has it done? Not, surely, led the mass of mankind to a recognition of the Creator; but, while flashing this truth on the minds of a few learned men, it has left the community to worship stocks and stones, and to wallow in hideous corruption.

“It was necessary to mount higher, to rise to a platform nearer Heaven, to a region where there is clearer vision, in order to realise the mystery of existence: and standing at last on the mountain, how does reason perceive the flowing of all things from the Fountain of Life?

“ The flowing river sings the power
Of Him Who is its Lord,
Springs forth, and flows past field and bower,
Obedient to His word.

“ ‘ I cannot stop, I cannot stay,
His law still reigns supreme ;
His hand it is that points my way
And guides my hast’ning stream.

“ ‘ ’Twixt fount and sea my course I run
Over my deep’ning bed.
To hearken to His word is life :
Then never deem me dead.’

“ Cease, babbling stream ; this is not life.
Yet would each living thing
Might own the One Creator’s sway,
And due submission bring.”

As Leo was thus throwing his final thought into a metrical form, Alethea was announced for the second time. She had left the Magnaura determined to avail herself, at least to some extent, of the liberty the philosopher had given her, and now returned laughingly to tell him that she had come to grief in the attempt.

“ Such an unexpected mishap,” she began, “ when the vessel seemed to be safely entering the port ! After I left you I directed my steps—more, you will understand, by accident than design—in the direction of the Church of St. Irene, and passed down the street which leads from that church towards the residence of Theophylact. As I went along, I saw, as I expected, the Turmarch approaching from the opposite direction, but in strange company. Andrimades was with him, and they were talking with much animation. I was

glad that a third party was there to relieve, even by banter or quaint remarks, the embarrassment of our meeting. To my sorrow, however, Andrimades departed abruptly when I was still far away, and so I was left alone to make my approach. I did so, perhaps blushing a little, but with a very fair amount of courage; your parting words appeared to give me strength. We met; I welcomed him home with cordiality, expressing the great pleasure it gave me to see him return safe from the war."

"Did you tell him how sad you were while he was away?"

"O, no."

"Or that you thought of following him to Italy?"

"That was but a passing dream."

"But you surely said that you were ever praying for his return?"

"No; that would have been to say too much."

"Go on," said Leo, "you have the feminine instinct which dictates what to say and how to say it in such circumstances."

"But, unfortunately, it was not allowed to dictate. We were gliding deeper every moment into a most interesting conversation, and becoming, as we advanced, more confidential at every sentence spoken; I felt that a crisis was coming; when who, think you, came suddenly on the scene?"

"Andrimades again—to spoil your romance."

"Not Andrimades; he might have even promoted it."

"Perhaps the grave Melanus, to shed a gloom about you both."

“ Pardon me ; there is no darkness for me about that good patrician. But it was not he.”

“ Oriphas ?”

“ No.”

“ His good spouse ?”

“ No.”

“ Then what evil genius came between you and your happiness ?”

“ Basil, the Emperor,” said Alethea. “ He was promenading, after the service in St. Irene, attended by his guards. Seeing Theophylact, he approached him, and merely saying to me, ‘ You are bidden to the banquet in the Palace, on Thursday, in honour of this soldier and his brothers-in-arms,’ carried off the Turmarch and left me solitary.”

“ But you will meet Theophylact again in the golden banqueting-room of the Imperial Palace. Perhaps you will even have a stroll with him in the garden before the banquet begins.”

“ May it be so. I shall most certainly attend the banquet ; and I shall continue the interrupted dialogue—perhaps,” she added archly, “ bring it to a happy conclusion.”

“ I am proud of my training. Had you been preparing to be a nun, I would not have counselled even a measure of freedom ; but being, as I am sure, destined to occupy a high position in the society of the city, I have put you, not on the path of dissipation, but on the way of a more worldly experience than that you were yourself disposed to enter upon. It is well : all things are well when done in order and with judgment.

And now, as I in turn have much confidence in your wisdom, I will consult you on a project that has been put before me by the Caliph Almanon. It is a curious proposal, and requires the wisdom of two heads to examine it, with a view to discovering what it is worth. By way of introduction I must tell you a long story.

“ A young man, who learned geometry from me, became secretary to a military officer, and accompanied him to the war. This, you will bear in mind, happened a few years ago. The expedition was an unfortunate one for the army, and for this captain and his secretary. The former was killed in battle, and the latter was made a slave to one of the most illustrious of the Mussulman chiefs.

“ The Caliph Almanon, who reigned at that time, and still presides over the destinies of these people, was much given to the ancient sciences, particularly that of mathematics; and this young captive, hearing of his taste in this direction, told his master that he had a considerable knowledge of mathematics, and would wish to be presented to the Caliph. In due time this pupil of mine was brought before the ruler, and tested as to his knowledge in presence of the mathematicians of the State; but it was found that it was confined to axioms and definitions, and did not extend to demonstrations. Still they gave him praise, and asked him if there were many men as learned as himself in Constantinople. He answered that he was merely a learner; and then he told them of my life and labours, and gave them, no doubt, an

exaggerated account of my scientific and philosophical knowledge. The result of all this is that Almanon has restored my pupil to liberty, and sent him home with a letter for 'Leo, the philosopher,' in which he invites me to go to him, and promises me riches and honours without measure if I comply with his request.

"Now, the question I put to you is, Should I go? Would it be prudent to abandon my present position in a Christian land, for a higher position among unbelievers?"

"Does the Emperor," inquired Alethea, "know of this invitation?"

"He does not," answered Leo.

"If he did know of it, would he, think you, sanction your complying with it?"

"Most assuredly no."

"Then why hesitate to reject it?"

"Ah," said Leo, "if I were as disinterested as you, I should not hesitate. But this is the honour of being, like Joseph of old, next to Pharaoh. I should be like that patriarch, the second man in the realm, and 'at the commandment of my mouth all the people should obey,' and 'only in the kingly throne' would Almanon 'be above me.'"

"I did not think you were so aspiring," said Alethea, smiling.

"You think that at my age the pageantry of life should have no attraction for me. Nor should it, I admit; but the fire of ambition sets the old ablaze oftener than the young. I have, as you know, renounced riches, and am content with meagre fare and austere surroundings. I believed,

too, that I was done with desires of advancement ; but this message from the far East—ah ! what shall I do ? I who have been your Mentor, have become your pupil.”

“ The Saracens are fierce, are they not ? ” said Alethea.

“ They are cruel and treacherous,” said Leo.

“ And enemies of Christianity ? ” added Alethea.

“ Exterminators in desire.”

“ Thank Heaven that you are far from them.”

“ I shall,” said Leo, “ always. And I shall, when I think of your advice in this vital matter, say in my heart the words of Scripture : ‘ From the mouth of infants and those at the breast hast Thou perfected praise.’ ”

CHAPTER XLVIII.

A GOLDEN BANQUET.

SOME days after the return of Theophylact took place the banquet in honour of the successful commanders of the Italian expedition, to which all the members and connexions of the Imperial family, the senators, and many titled dignitaries of the city and provinces were invited.

That gorgeous Palace by the Bosphorus rarely saw a more distinguished company than that which was gathered within its gilded chambers on this occasion, to sup off dishes of gold, and to drink from golden goblets the choicest wines of the age. The ladies of the Court, the wives of the titled guests, many fair maidens of official and non-official families, in rich robes of many-coloured silk elaborately embroidered, added light and grace to the general aspect of a gathering, the most distinguished that had filled the Palace for years.

The spirit of the age, literary and intellectual revivalism, was reflected in the conversation of the various groups into which the guests collected. Financiers and officers of the Treasury department were discussing the views of an economist in his book on the "Revenues of the State." A treatise on the calendar supplied a theme of conversation to a knot of scientists, most of whom were of the higher clergy. A few elderly patricians were contrasting the present and past of the Imperial city,

and drawing much of their information from an anonymous treatise on the "Antiquities of Constantinople, its Buildings and Monuments."

A listener could not but be deeply interested in the conversation of these men. It was sensible, critical, and discriminating. They did not claim for their city, at present, all the qualities that Constantine had originally given it; but they said that, though taste had changed, and statuary, painting, and architecture had assumed new forms, the decadence had not been excessive. Old buildings, such as churches and palaces, had fallen into ruins with the lapse of time, but others as fine had been substituted for them. The tradition of Roman refinement had been preserved in the streets of the city, its walls, gates, and reservoirs; and, if there had been a shrinkage in the general magnificence of the place, it was to be traced to curtailed resources, arising from the encroachments and appropriations of the followers of "the Prophet."

Let us approach a coterie of young nobles, who are listening attentively to the narrative of one of their own class, who has just returned from a tour in the provinces, and has dipped into regions formerly within the limits of the Empire, now under the rule of the Moslem.

"I left home three months ago," said this youth, whose name was Alexis, "on a rambling tour, intending to visit our outlying dependencies. I took with me a 'Traveller's Guide-book,' compiled by Hierocles, which professes to give a description of the cities of the Empire and its sixty-four provinces."

“An obsolete work,” said Comenas, one of the group, “seeing that our cities have been rased and our provinces alienated.”

“Obsolete, certainly,” said Alexis, “and not up to date ; but still deeply interesting and suggestive. With this itinerary in my hand, I made excursions through what remains of the Greek Empire : dull journeys for the most part, with the exception of my travels through Greece Proper, where the vestiges of an ancient and superior civilisation are everywhere traceable.”

“Can it be possible,” interposed a listener, “that you did not go on to Italy, where you would have found—in Naples, and Rome, and elsewhere—not only traces, but numberless and accurate models of past greatness and architectural skill?”

“I looked upon Italy as outside my projected route, since it is lost to us for ever ; and I should even have returned from Greece a desponding and disappointed man but that a longing desire took possession of me to cross the land-locked sea, and visit Alexandria and Carthage.”

“And you visited those cities?”

“Yes.”

“Please tell us what you saw.”

“I saw what disappointed and pained me. The Greek dress of those towns is gone, and they wear now, it seemed to me, a mourning garb. I was filled with sad and bitter thoughts, as I stood at the porch of the great Church of Alexandria, pondering on the past glory of the city as a centre of Christian philosophy, and the burning of its great library by the Saracens. I saw about me

ruined castles, rased fortifications, and blue-domed mosques, while a timid Christian population appeared to be trodden down by insolent Mohammedans."

"This state of decadence," said Comenas, "is not in accordance with what we have been hearing of Saracenic progress. Are there not evidences in Africa of an advance in learning and taste among these people?"

"I should have said," answered Alexis, "to give fulness to my narrative, that this people is being educated. Every mosque that I saw had a school attached to it, for the instruction of the young. These Arabians have been stealing our ideas of building, and manufacture, and many other things, and developing them into a style of their own. There is a movement within their lines which, while it is destructive as regards our civilisation, is progressive in another sense, and shows both ability and originality in the nation of warriors which has produced it."

"From Egypt I passed into Syria, visiting in succession Jerusalem, Damascus, and Aleppo; everywhere noticing a transformation similar to that which I observed in Alexandria: Greek churches disappearing, Saracenic mosques taking their places; the monuments of our civilisation giving way before an advancing and, in many cases, a magnificent reconstruction."

"Then you admire the architectural skill of these barbarians," said Comenas.

"They are no longer barbarians," replied Alexis. "Their wit has been sharpened, and their taste has

been chastened by intercourse with us, and they have raised a perfectly original civilisation on the ruins of ours. It is in their capital city, Bagdad, that you can see their genius in full swing. I went there from Aleppo, and was startled when I entered the place. It is a wondrous depôt of everything that is outwardly magnificent, while it is a seat of learning of the first order. It is full of palaces, numbers of the Saracen nobility residing there; while its famous college, erected by the Caliph Al-Mostanser Billah, is——”

His narrative was interrupted by the entrance of the Emperor Basil, who came from the interior of the Palace. Contrary to his usual habit, he appeared light and frivolous, and was conversing in a half-jocular tone with the Count Dionysius and Theophylact, who accompanied him, and some other superior officers of the Italian expedition.

“I am prepared to give this man,” said he, nodding to indicate Theophylact, “a novel reward for his good service, in addition to his promotion in the army. I have a wife for him, majestic as himself,” pointing to a girl covered with jewels, who, though fair of face and of form, was a perfect Amazon in stature.

“This is my newly-created general, Carema,” said he, presenting Theophylact and passing on briskly. He encountered the Empress, who had entered before him. She was in conversation with Alethea, and seeing the latter he stopped and said: “I have been expecting a visit from you, for I hoped to hear, ere this, of the outcome of your visit to Photius.”

“ I waited your pleasure, Emperor,” said Alethea; “ and besides, I had nothing pleasing to communicate.”

“ I would hear all,” said the Emperor—“ even though he spurned my well-meant attentions.”

Alethea related to him as many of the details of her painful interview with Photius as she deemed prudent; and when she finished, Basil, without a word of comment on the story, said abruptly :

“ Look yonder, and see your enemy, Theophylact. How well he is matched !”

Meanwhile, Theophylact found himself in a very perplexing dilemma. The girl, Carema, who was daughter of the Prefect of Illyria, and a new-comer to the city, having been informed of the Emperor’s intention, received him with much freedom. She chatted and laughed, as if he had been an old friend, and amazed him by saying pointedly : “ You are not now for the first time aware of the Emperor’s project ? ”

“ The Emperor,” said Theophylact, embarrassed, “ may not have been aware—— ”

“ O yes,” said she, interrupting ; “ he was fully aware of the delicacy of such a proposition, and of my views. He has been most considerate.”

“ Could he have anticipated—— ” stammered Theophylact.

“ A refusal on my part,” said she, essaying to finish his sentence, “ he would have stopped short ; but he was certain of my acquiescence.”

“ We do not fully understand each other,” said Theophylact, in despair.

“Not, perhaps, at present,” said she; “but we shall, no doubt, later on.”

“I am embarrassed——” he began, intending to explain all.

“Do not refer to it, pray,” said she. “It is natural in such circumstances.”

Just at this moment the father of Carema came up, and motioning to Theophylact to stand aside for a moment, gave him an opportunity of escaping from what was to him a most painful dilemma.

We return to the Emperor and Alethea.

“He is not my enemy, Emperor,” she said, “nor do I believe that he dislikes or is disliked by man or woman.”

“Then you have changed,” said the Emperor, “in your appreciation of him.”

“Alas!” said she, heaving a deep sigh, “I could not if I would.”

“Eudoxia,” said the Emperor, calling to the Empress, who had gone a little away, and was speaking to an ecclesiastic of high rank, “here is a mystery, and, I fear, a mistake. This girl, whom I believed an enemy of Theophylact, is, I surmise, attached to him. What shall I do? I have thrown Carema upon him. He has taken an opportunity of escaping from her. I find I have taken a step painful to all parties concerned, but to none more than myself.”

“Allow me to extricate you,” said the Empress, who, as the reader may remember, had suspected with womanly instinct the existence of this attachment, and had rallied Alethea upon it. “I will undertake to undeceive, and, if necessary, to con-

sole Carema, and will take the blame of not having informed you of the previous engagement of your officer."

"O Empress," said Alethea, quite embarrassed, "pray do not say that. There is no engagement, I assure you, nothing more than a girlish fancy, which may not be reciprocated."

"How timid, the child!" said Eudoxia. "How diffident of her charms! You love, and you are loved in return. Your feelings are betrayed by your sparkling eyes and mantling cheeks, your liquid tones and graceful movements; and you think that they have escaped the notice of a soldier, handsome and susceptible as yourself? No; you are irresistible, fair Alethea. See, your admirer approaches. Fly to him; walk with him amidst the flowers before supper, and turn your romance into an espousal."

So saying, the Empress kissed Alethea affectionately, and literally drove her into the garden at the side of the noble soldier.

"So long alone," said he, "and not even consoled by the consciousness of being loved."

"But I was nurtured in philosophy, Theophract, which teaches us to suffer without murmuring."

"Then you locked up your sorrows in your stoical heart?"

"Yes, till it well-nigh broke."

"Your philosophy, then, like a false friend, deserted you in the time of trouble?"

"Indeed yes. But another friend came on the scene and consoled me."

"In what form?"

“ In what form do you suspect ? ”

“ Combative ; but not military.”

“ Ah me ! My Angel-guardian, the Admiral of the fleet.”

“ Yes : Oriphas ? ”

“ Shame ! He is not of a consoling nature.”

“ But he is gallant.”

“ He reserves his gallantry, like a good spouse, for his Elpidia ; though I will say he has been to me as kind as his rough nature would allow.”

“ But your consoler, Alethea ? I am curious to know who he is.”

“ And your consoler in Crete, and through the islands ? ” said she archly. “ I am longing to make her acquaintance.”

“ I do not admit to have been consoled,” said he. “ You do. I have the advantage in this. It is yours to explain.”

“ Do you not admit your guilt ? All the same you are convicted on evidence.”

“ Of what ? ” asked he, laughing.

“ Of having sailed through the islands of the Archipelago in the company of a young and fair maiden, whom you addressed as ‘ spouse.’ ”

“ O that convent gate,” said he ; “ I have rightly traced my misfortune to it.”

“ You have been unfortunate then ? ”

“ Why not ? I lost your love for a time.”

“ Never,” said she innocently.

“ Then why so distant, so cold ? You appeared to shun me, and take to flight every time I approached you.”

“ I can say with truth that it was not through

jealousy. I did not fall to the low level of that ignoble condition. I received quite a circumstantial account of your engagement to another, and I would not interfere with your choice. Why should I, having no claim on your affection, outside the yearnings of my own untutored heart? I would keep out of view and teach you to forget, if at any time you even thought of me; and thus not mar your happiness by a pang, even though I might die of grief."

"I always believed you to be unselfish, and raised above the whims and passions that dominate so many of us."

"Not so," said she; "but acting naturally, and following the dictates of a disposition unformed save by my sense of right and wrong."

"A disposition unspoiled by art! It often occurs to me," said he, "that we are better without training, such as it generally is."

"Not, surely, without religious training?" said she. "It is all I can boast of."

"Assuredly not; but without the training of society. Deception, insincerity, pretence, are the lessons too often inculcated by the Court, while pedantic ignorance is sometimes the outcome of a school course."

"You are a Solon," she said quietly. "But have we time during this too short interview for philosophy?"

"You recall me to myself, Alethea. Minutes fly unheeded, while the momentous question has not yet been asked."

"Asked and answered in effect," said she.

“Pray do not put it to me formally. Asked,” she continued, “when you said you would never lead another to the altar. Answered by my delight on hearing these words—answered by my prayers and anxiety for you when on the battlefield, by my yearning for your return safe home, by my dreams of you, and my daily reveries ; O Theophylact, answered by the tears that I have shed in silence, when I thought that your love was diverted to another.”

He took her hand in his, and said slowly and with much feeling :

“The sun has shone upon me often, but never so brightly as to-day. I have tried and pained you, unwittingly, when I escorted from Crete to Mitylene, where she now is a nun in a convent, a maiden who, herself a prisoner, had rescued me from death.”

* * * * *

“And now we part,” he said ; “the guests are entering the banqueting hall.”

He laid his hand affectionately on her arm, and said :

“Tell me, dearest, who was it that consoled you in my absence ? ”

She raised her rosy lips to his ear to reply, and the fragrance of her warm breath caused his cheek to flush as she whispered : “A monk, my beloved ; only the holy recluse, Basil.”

CHAPTER XLIX.

ANOTHER SCENE IN ST. SOPHIA.

YEARS have passed since the occurrence of the event recorded in the first chapter of this book. Some of the actors in that solemn scene still survive, and some have passed away. Some have been raised up, and some have been cast down : for uprightness has received a reward and vice a punishment.

It is again a gala day in Constantinople ; there will be a great religious ceremony in St. Sophia ; and Ignatius, now re-installed in the Patriarchal chair, will officiate in person, while the Emperor Basil and his Court will attend in state. The bells of the Cathedral are heard through the city ; and crowds, composed of various nationalities, are seen hastening in converging streams, towards the great church. From the country outside the city walls, from under the porticoes, from the modest houses of the poor, and the gorgeous dwellings of the rich, they issue forth a great multitude, bright and joyous, with the anticipation of witnessing a function which, to judge from their mood and manners, will be for them a source not only of pleasure, but of triumph.

And it is pleasant to join one of these living streams, and to hear the Syrian conversing with the Armenian, and the bronzed Roumelian matron with the fair Circassian maid ; the soldier with the

civilian, the boy from the hippodrome with the attendant at the baths, the garrulous old woman with the laughing child. Still there is a unity in this Babel ; for though various the dialects, and divers the tones and accents, there is but one subject running through the conversation of them all, and that is the spectacle they are about to witness, namely the marriage of the noblest soldier of the day, Theophylact, with the best and most beautiful woman in the Imperial city, Alethea, ward and relative of the deposed Patriarch, Photius.

The Imperial procession, too, is seen moving along, in great state, towards the church. The Emperor wears the crown, and his courtiers are glittering with gold and precious stones, and the guards are in their gala uniforms, and a vast number of soldiers, marshalled under their officers, follow in the wake of the Imperial party.

All these converging streams meet at the great door of the church, and, uniting in one great river of life, flow into the sacred edifice and spread over its vast area. A perceptible buzz is audible while they are settling down into their various positions, and then follows the silence of anticipation and prayer.

They have not long to wait ; for soon a side door turns on its hinges, and an imposing procession enters the church. But, if a traveller from the distant West happened to be present, he would detect some features for which he would be unable to account. For what can be the destination of a glass filled with sparkling wine, which one of the clerics reverently bears in his hands? Why are

two crowns borne by another, and what part can they possibly have in the ceremony that is to take place?

Following the bearers of these emblems, the significance of which will be seen later on, come some priests, each of them carrying in one hand a cup of incense, and in the other a thurible filled with lighted wood; and then follows a choir of priests chanting psalms in a solemn Gregorian mode.

But the gaze of all is riveted on those who, with lighted tapers in their hands, close that long array—Theophylact, looking as martial as ever, and happier than we have seen him before, and Alethea, whose beauty gains from the slight embarrassment arising out of the suppressed congratulations and expressions of admiration that meet her on every side.

The doors of the Bema open above, and another procession comes forth. But who is this that closes it, so old, so tottering, so fragile? Can this be Ignatius, the Patriarch, who, with such strength and dignity smote the irreligious Cæsar in that same spot not many years before? Yes, it is even that martyred prelate, who, in his struggle for right and justice and the retention of his See, has been crushed and mangled, and brought many times into the presence of death; it is he, coming for the last time into St. Sophia, to impart a nuptial benediction to the noble soldier and gracious maiden who have been in all his trials and abandonment faithful to him and his Church.

Meanwhile the chant of the priests rises in swelling tones through the great building:

“Blessed are all they that fear the Lord, that walk in His ways.”

The congregation, evidently trained to give the responses, is ready with the refrain :

“Glory be to Thee, our God : Glory be to Thee !”

“For thou shalt eat the labours of thy hands : blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee.”

“Glory be to Thee, our God : Glory be to Thee !”

“Thy wife as a fruitful vine on the sides of thy house : thy children as olive-plants round about thy table.”

“Glory be to Thee, our God : Glory be to Thee !”

“Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.”

“Glory be to Thee, our God : Glory be to Thee !”

“May the Lord bless thee out of Sion : and mayst thou see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.”

“Glory be to Thee, our God : Glory be to Thee !”

“And mayst thou see thy children’s children : and peace upon Israel.”

“Glory be to Thee, our God : Glory be to Thee !”

At the conclusion of the last response to this appropriate psalm, a deacon proclaims in a loud voice prayers for peace, for the rest of the Church, for the welfare of the affianced—to the end that God may give a blessing to their union, as He did

to the marriage of Cana, and grant them the gifts of temperance, contentment, and holiness of life. A priest follows the deacon, and asks of God a blessing on this marriage, reminding Him of the blessings He gave to the marriages of Abraham and Sarah, and of Isaac and Rebecca, and prays Him to add to temporal prosperity an abundance of spiritual gifts.

Finally, Ignatius advances, and in broken but loving tones says: "Unite them by a perfect harmony, and crown them, to the end that they may be one flesh. Give them the fruits of marriage, and grant that they may be blessed in their offspring." Then taking the two crowns from the hands of the attendant cleric, he places one of them on the head of Theophylact, saying: "Be this servant of God crowned for this handmaid of God." Putting the other on the head of Alethea, he adds: "Be this handmaid of God crowned for this servant of God."

Some apposite passages from Holy Scripture are then read. The cup of wine, which we have seen, is presented to the Patriarch, who blesses it and presents it to Alethea to sip. The ceremony is concluded by a benediction, which is given by Ignatius in the following words:

"The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Most Holy, Consubstantial, and Life-giving Trinity, whose Divinity and Kingdom are one, bless you, and grant you length of days, fecundity, an increase of faith, and an abundance of temporal goods, and render you worthy of the enjoyment of them; at the intercession of the Holy Mother of God and all the Saints. Amen."

The ceremony over, congratulations are poured out upon the newly-married by all the congregation, from the Emperor to the beggar who stands at the door of the church ; and the great gathering of young and old, of men and maids, of slaves and freemen, passes out through the open porches. Many of them, as they pass along the streets, contrast the two scenes which, within a few years, have been witnessed in St. Sophia, and agree that the horror and disgrace of the earlier have been wiped out by the happiness and honour of this later day.

CHAPTER L.

CONCLUSION.

SO the characters of this drama pass off the stage, and we bid them farewell—"a word that hath been and must be, a sound that makes us linger: yet, farewell." The hero and heroine of this romance, the slave, Andrimades, Melanus, and others flit into that dreamland from which they have been made to emerge; while the real characters, with whom we have been conversing, still hold their places on the page of history.

The Greek Empire is no more. The Saracen, with whom it contended, is an almost forgotten name. The Christian city of Constantinople has long disappeared from the earth. The Emperors, who held their state or rioted in its gorgeous palaces, are an extinct line; and the Patriarch, who ruled so widely over the souls of the Eastern millions, is a cramped and enslaved ecclesiastic, with little influence and very limited jurisdiction.

There is one with whom we have been made familiar in these pages surviving still, little affected, apparently, by the lapse of time, and retaining at the present day a marvellous resemblance to what he was ten centuries ago. This is the Bishop of Rome. His aspirations are the same to-day as they were then; his words of admonition are similarly tender, his words of censure equally severe. Even the mode and style of his address to

the Christian world are so unchanged that the letters of Nicholas I. might be read for those of Leo XIII. or the ninth Pius. In conflict with Bismarck in 1885, as he was with Bardas Cæsar in 860 ; a temporary prisoner to the King of Italy in the nineteenth century, as he was to the Lombard King in the ninth ; venerated by the Kaisers of our day, as he was by Basil, Charlemagne, and Lothair in the middle ages, he shows history repeating itself, century after century, in such a way as it is not repeated elsewhere. His dominion is wider to-day than it was a thousand years ago ; and, if he has lost the East, he regards that loss as redeemable, and is as anxious at present for the reunion of the Greeks as he was for their retention in his Communion in the epoch of Photius.

That Photius, apart from his rebellion against Pope and Council, was of easy and accommodating conscience, goes without saying. We have, it must be admitted, painted him in dark colours in this record ; but our brush has not been dipped in gall. We would fain have vested him in a brighter hue, for his research and industry in a difficult epoch, and could pardon many shortcomings for his contributions to literature, sacred and profane. But his inhuman cruelty to Ignatius could not be ignored in a narrative such as this, and a reference to his writings would be incomplete which did not point to the hypocrisy, insincerity, and deceit which underlie a large number of his letters.

His assumption of the Patriarchal power was not on any grounds justifiable. It may have pleased the rulers of the Empire ; and this is the

most that can be said in its defence. His conduct, reckless and without conscience, in deposing bishops and creating others to strengthen his party, cannot find a defender among moderate Christian men. His profane devices to attract the Emperor Basil, his bluster, his coarse invective, his unique repudiation of a superior in the Church, his tragic change of front, fawning at one time upon the Pope, at another time threatening and smiting him—all these features in his career point to a mind full to overflowing of pride, passion, and selfishness.

We found it impossible, in sincerity, to praise him for any quality outside his scholarship; and we laid our hands heavily on his coarse individuality, coarse and refined, perhaps, we should say by turns: refined with the pen, coarse with the tongue; refined to his superiors, coarse to his dependents. Outwardly an ornament to the centre of the Greek Empire, he put himself often on a level with the savage rulers who governed its distant provinces.

Such being our estimate of Photius, we had no scruple in putting into his mouth words which, perhaps, he never actually spoke, but which, at the same time, were in accord with his acts as attested by the historian. Pity it is that we should have to put into his mouth deception, lies, perjury; but in doing so we only presumed that his sentiments were consistent with his deeds, and gave him credit for having the boldness to say what he thought.

We have had to introduce the name of Pope

Nicholas I. to our readers in this record, and to refer to his letters and action in favour of the deposed Patriarch Ignatius. We could not, in justice to our narrative, pass him over. He was a fearless man, and perfectly consistent in his views and pronouncements from the beginning to the end of the Schism. It was no human advantage to him to throw all the weight of his high position and distinguished personal character on the side of the oppressed, nor did he even seem at the time to advance the cause of religion in the Eastern Church by his advocacy of the claims of Ignatius. Might he not have sacrificed that prelate to the exigencies of an acute crisis, and accumulated the force and influence of Michael III. and his powerful uncle for the security of Rome and its dependencies, and the protection of Italy from the Saracens? But no. He lost sight of self, and put aside every consideration but that of principle. The spectacle of this man on his tottering earthly throne, not knowing the hour at which a hostile army from the East might arrive at the gates of Rome, his provinces outside burnt and desolated by roving bands of marauding Saracens, every day bringing him sorrowful accounts of churches destroyed and convents and monasteries pillaged, yet never wavering in his high resolve to do strict justice between the rival claimants to the Patriarchal chair of Constantinople, was one not often met in history.

He would not acquiesce in the accomplished condemnation of Ignatius until his defence was before him; he would not recognise as Patriarch the usurper of his See until he had proved his

right to supersede him : he held himself free of both sides until independent testimony should give him a full knowledge of the origin and progress of the dispute ; and then he gave his verdict, a sentence so just and spirited that it should keep his memory green in the Greek Church to the end of time, as it unquestionably has in all other Churches in communion with Rome.

There is no imagination in the delineation of the characters of Bardas Cæsar and the Emperor Michael III. : they are drawn to life, and as they appear in the history of the epoch. If they are made to speak in guileful, deceptive, and violent language, it is on the assumption that their words were like their acts ; for in their relations to Photius and the schism originated by him they laid themselves open to blame on every side, and showed themselves to be unworthy of the high position that they occupied as rulers of the Eastern Empire.

We make ourselves responsible in these pages for a description of Constantinople in the middle of the ninth century which may not be in all respects accurate ; but it is correct to this extent at least, that all the monuments described existed in the Imperial city simultaneously or successively between the reign of Arcadius and that of Michael III. The interval, no doubt, is a long one, and gives time for the disappearance of pillars, basilicas, porticoes, palaces, and public buildings of other kinds ; still we must bear in mind that the buildings of Constantinople, like those of Rome, were constructed to defy time, as is fully borne out by

many relics of very remote times seen in the Constantinople of the present day, such as the Pyramid of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the Serpentine Column, the Porphyry Pillar, the Column of Arcadius and Eudoxia, the "Kis-Tash," the aqueduct of Valens, the Palace of Theodosius II., the "Bindir-dirick," and others. We must also bear in mind the fact that in a great city like Constantinople, the capital of a vast civilised empire, re-construction of decaying public works was not neglected, and that as one building went down another rose on its foundation. There is no surmise or exaggeration in the descriptions we have given of the palaces and churches: they were in A.D. 855 exactly as we have presented them.

There is in the British Museum a curious document, written in Latin, author's name not given, which lays down a tabulated list of all that was curious or remarkable in each of the fourteen regions of the city in the beginning of the fifth century. We give in an Appendix certain extracts from this record.

It may be objected that in this book Greeks of the ninth century are made to think and speak as we do ten centuries later, and to resemble more the inhabitants of modern Europe than those of ancient Rome. For this we seem to be justified on two grounds. The first is, that the Greeks were Christians, like ourselves, with Christian instincts, ideas, and proclivities; and the second, that they, while retaining the mental activity of the Romans, disregarded their tastes, manners, modes of living and of expression, and aimed at originality in many ways.

There appears to be no solid reason why the Greeks should not have put before them in the fifth century the model writings of the Augustinian age, and endeavoured to reproduce their style in their own language; or have made the beautiful statues of Rome the models for their own work. There is no doubt, it has been said, that the Christian Greeks objected to everything pagan; but this does not seem a sufficient reason for undervaluing or despising the deft fingers and brilliant pens of the old pagan Empire. The Greeks were quite critical enough to be able to abstract the chaff from the wheat, or, in other words, to eliminate the pagan element from the literature, sculpture, and architecture of the earlier period; but they did not do so, nor attempted it even, but introduced new styles of writing, carving, and building, and were, as we have said elsewhere, original even as to the form of their houses, their amusements, their dress, and their manners at table.

We do not, perhaps, fully realise how much we owe to these mediæval Greeks, and how far our ways and manners may be shaped upon theirs. It would be wrong to suppose that after the fall of Constantinople they brought only books and a knowledge of architecture into Western Europe. They brought their ways and manners as well, their form of thought, their mode of expression, their refined taste; and these were all flashed over Europe from country to country, as nations awoke from barbarism or advanced on the path of culture. We are probably much more like the Greeks of the

ninth century than the Romans of the first ; and while writing, acting, and speaking on a higher level, represent to a very great extent their peculiar form of civilisation.

Some characters to which the reader has been introduced may, perhaps, be regarded as too modern—for example, Andrimades, who is represented as half-way between a wit and an imbecile. But has there not been an Andrimades in all the civilisations of the world? The Court jester of three centuries ago was an exaggerated Andrimades. Rome, as Horace tells us, had many of the class in the reign of Augustus. Modern society is full of the species. One of the greatest of our novelists has at least one in every book he wrote. Andrimades is a type of the species of men who are generally saying and doing the wrong thing, and justifying it by the expression of some native silliness which they cannot or do not endeavour to correct.

THE END.

A P P E N D I X .

THE unknown topographer to whom allusion is made in the text (Ch. L., p. 266), enumerates, among the notable objects in the regions of fifth-century Constantinople, the following :

Regio prima.—Domum Placidæ Augustæ, Thermas Arcadianas ; Vicos seu angipartas, 29 ; Domos, 118 ; Porticos perpetuos, 2 ; Balneas privatas, 15 ; Pistrina publica, 4 ; Pistrina privata, 15 ; Gradus, 4.

Regio secunda.—Ecclesiam magnam, Ecclesiam antiquam, Senatum, Tribunal, Thermas Zeuxippi, Theatrum, Amphitheatrum ; Vicos, 34 ; Domos, 98 ; Porticos magnos, 4 ; Balneas privatas, 13 ; Gradus, 4.

Regio tertia.—Circum maximum, Domum Pulcheriæ Augustæ, Portum novum, Porticum semirotundum, Tribunal Fori Constantini ; Vicos, 7 ; Domos, 94 ; Porticos magnos, 5 ; Balneas privatas, 11 ; Pistrinas privatas, 9.

Regio quarta.—Militarium aureum, Augusteum, Basilicam, Porticum Pharaonis, Navalis victoriæ monumentum, Ecclesiæ S. Menusæ, Stadium, Scalam Tomasii ; Vicos, 32 ; Domos, 373 ; Porticos magnos, 4 ; Balneas privatas, 7 ; Pistrinas privatas, 5 ; Gradus, 7.

Regio quinta.—Thermas Honorianas, Cisternum Theodosianum, Prytaneum, Thermas Eudoxianas, Forum Theodosianum, Obeliscus Thebæus quadratus, Horrea hollearea, Nymphæum, Horrea Troadensia, Horrea Valentiniana, Horrea Constantiaca ; Vicos, 23 ; Domos, 184 ; Porticos magnos, 7 ; Balneas privatas, 11 ; Pistrina publica, 7 ; Pistrina privata, 2 ; Gradus, 9 ; Macellas, 2.

Regio sexta.—Columnnum purpureum Constantii, Senatum ejusdem loci, Neokiam portam, Scalam Sycænam ; Vicos, 32 ; Domos, 444 ; Porticum magnam ; Balneas privatas, 9 ; Pistrinum publicum, 1 ; Pistrina privata, 17 ; Gradus, 10.

Regio septima.—Ecclesias (S. Irenes, S. Anastasii, S. Pauli), Columnam Theodosii; Equites magnos, 2; Partem Fori Theodosiani; Thermas Carolianas; Domos, 81; Pistrina privata, 12; Balneas privatas, 11; Porticos magnos, 1; Gradus, 17.

Regio octava.—Partem Fori Constantini, Basilicam Theodosianam, Capitol; Porticos magnos, 5; Balneas privatas, 10; Macellos duos; Pistrina privata, 5.

Regio nona.—Ecclesias, 2; Cænopolim, Omonæam, Homa Alexandrina, Domus Nobilissimæ Arcadiæ, Horream Theodosianam; Vicos, 16; Domos, 116; Porticos magnos, 2; Balneas privatas, 15; Pistrina privata, 15; Pistrina publica, 4.

Regio decima.—Ecclesiæ S. Acacii, Thermas Constantianas, Domus Augustæ Placidæ, Domus nobilissimæ Arcadiæ, Numpheum magnum, Porticos majores, 6; Balneas privatas, 2; Piscina publica, 2; Piscina privata, 16; Gradus, 12.

Regio undecima.—Ecclesia Apostolorum, Palatium Flacellæanum, Domum Augustæ Pulcheriæ, Bovem aureum, Cisternam Archadeacam, Cisternam Modestiacam; Porticos majores, 4; Balneas privatas, 14; Pistrina publica, 1; Pistrina privata, 3.

Regio duodecima.—Portam auream, Porticus Troadensis, Forum Theodosianum, Columnam cum gradibus, Monetam, Portam Theodosianum, Porticos majores, 3; Balneas privatas, 5; Pistrina privata, 5; Gradus, 9.

Regio tertia-decima.—Ecclesiam, Thermas Honorianas, Forum Honorianum, Theatrum, Navaliam, Porticum majorem, Balneas privatas, 5; Gradus, 8; Domos, 431.

Regio quarta-decima.—Ecclesia, 1; Palatium, 1; Nymphæum, Thermas, Theatrum, Lusorium; Domos, 167; Porticos majores, 2; Balneas privatas, 5; Pistrina publica, 2; Pistrina privata, 5.

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