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GIBBON'S

ROMAN EMPIRE.

WITH VARIORUM NOTES.

VOL. II.



THE HISTORY OF
THE DECLINE AND FALL
OF
THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

BY
EDWARD GIBBON.

WITH VARIORUM NOTES, INCLUDING THOSE OF
GUIZOT, WENCK, SCHREITER, AND HUGO.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. AND THE SENTIMENTS,
MANNERS, NUMBERS, AND CONDITION OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.

A CANDID but rational inquiry into the progress and establishment of Christianity, may be considered as a very essential part of the history of the Roman empire. While that great body was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the Capitol. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the period or to the limits of the Roman empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of human kind in arts and learning, as well as in arms. By the industry and zeal of the Europeans, it has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and, by the means of their colonies, has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients.

But this inquiry, however useful or entertaining, is

attended with two peculiar difficulties.* The scanty and suspicious materials of ecclesiastical history seldom enable us to dispel the dark cloud that hangs over the first age of the church. The great law of impartiality too often obliges us to reveal the imperfections of the uninspired teachers and believers of the gospel; and, to a careless observer, *their* faults may seem to cast a shade on the faith which they professed. But the scandal of the pious Christian, and the fallacious triumph of the infidel, should cease as soon as they recollect not only *by whom*, but likewise *to whom*, the divine revelation was given. The theologian may indulge the pleasing task of describing religion as she descended from heaven, arrayed in her native purity. A more melancholy duty is imposed on the historian. He must discover the inevitable mixture of error and corruption, which she contracted in a long residence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings.

Our curiosity is naturally prompted to inquire by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth. To this inquiry, an obvious but satisfactory answer may be returned; that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author. But as truth and reason seldom find so favourable a reception in the world, and as the wisdom of Providence frequently condescends to use the passions of the human heart, and the general circumstances of mankind, as instruments to execute its purpose, we may still be permitted, though with becoming submission, to ask, not indeed what were the first, but what were the secondary, causes of the rapid growth of the Christian church? It will perhaps appear, that it was most effectually favoured and assisted by the five following causes: I. The inflexible, and, if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit which, instead of inviting, had deterred, the Gentiles

* After he had published this part of his work, Gibbon became aware of a third difficulty attending such an inquiry. (See his *Memoirs*, p. 230.) The prejudice which at first existed against these chapters is now abated. The milder tone, in which the errors of Gibbon are noticed by such translators as M. Guizot and such editors as Dean Milman, attests the improved feeling of the age; while successive edi-

from embracing the law of Moses. II. The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth. III. The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church. IV. The pure and austere morals of the Christians. V. The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman empire.*

I. We have already described the religious harmony of the ancient world, and the facility with which the most different and even hostile nations embraced, or at least respected, each other's superstitions.† A single people refused to join in the common intercourse of mankind. The Jews, who, under the Assyrian and Persian monarchies, had languished for many ages the most despised portion of their slaves,‡ emerged from obscurity under the successors of

tions continue to prove the popularity and standard value of the work.—ED. * There was a sixth cause, to which the others owed their efficacy. This was the want of a better religion, then beginning to be widely felt in the Greek and Roman world. They were outgrowing their polytheism; beginning to be ashamed of what Gibbon too flatteringly calls their "elegant mythology." From the days of Thales to those of Cicero, philosophers had been vaguely striving to devise a more rational theology. Though unsuccessful in this, they had diffused around them a general dissatisfaction with the popular worship. To this feeling the first Macedonian rulers of Egypt, unwittingly perhaps, gave an energetic vivacity, by their active patronage of learning, and ingrafted on this a knowledge of the Mosaic religion, by means of the numerous Jews whom they planted and patronized in Alexandria and Cyrene, and by the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. Throughout the east, but more especially in Egypt and Syria, great numbers were thus prepared to abandon heathenism and embrace a spiritual faith.—ED.

† M. Guizot maintains here, that "intolerance seems to be inherent in the religious spirit, when armed with power;" and at some length adduces authorities, to show that persecution was practised by the Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. Some of these are very questionable, as proofs of his assertion; and the "fearful cruelties," attributed to the "successors of Alexander, to make the Jews forsake their religion," are an entire perversion of the facts related by Josephus. The general position might have been better attested; but it will be found, that religious opinions never have been visited by pains and penalties, except to protect the wealth or emolument of the persecutors.—ED. ‡ Dum Assyrios penes, Medosque, et Persas Orientis tunc, despectissima pars servientium. Tacit. Hist. 5, 8. Herodotus, who visited Asia whilst it obeyed the last of those empires, slightly

Alexander; and, as they multiplied to a surprising degree in the east, and afterward in the west, they soon excited the curiosity and wonder of other nations.* The sullen obstinacy with which they maintained their peculiar rites and unsocial manners, seemed to mark them out a distinct species of men, who boldly professed, or who faintly disguised, their implacable hatred to the rest of human-kind.† Neither the violence of Antiochus, nor the arts of Herod, nor the example of the circumjacent nations, could ever persuade the Jews to associate with the institutions of Moses the elegant mythology of the Greeks.‡ According

mentions the Syrians of Palestine, who, according to their own confession, had received from Egypt the rite of circumcision. See lib. 2, c. 104. * Diodorus Siculus, lib. 40. Dion Cassius, lib. 37, p. 121. Tacit. Hist. 5, 1—9. Justin. 36, 2, 3.

† Tradidit areano quæcunque volumine Moses,
Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,
Quæsitos ad fontes solos deducere verpas.

The letter of this law is not to be found in the present volume of Moses. But the wise, the humane Maimonides openly teaches, that if an idolater fall into the water, a Jew ought not to save him from instant death. See Basnage, Histoire des Juifs, lib. 6, c. 28. [Maimonides (Tractat. de Idololat. v. 34, vi. 28, x. 69) undoubtedly states the severe construction against idolators, which interpreters of the Hebrew Scriptures put on such passages, as: "thou shalt utterly destroy them," &c.; and, among other instances, cites that which Gibbon has quoted from Basnage. But he neither "teaches," nor inculcates the observance of them as a duty. To have done so, would have been altogether inconsistent with the general character of his writings and his whole course of action. His "More Nevochim" (Ductor Dubitantium) is considered to be the most rational book that ever came from the pen of a Rabbi, and excited among the bigots of his nation, such fierce animosity against him, that they inscribed their sentence of excommunication even on his tomb. In his post as chief physician to Saladin, it was his employment to save the lives of the men of many faiths whom that liberal prince had collected in his court at Cairo, and whom the Jews regarded as idolators and heathens. By all these his death was lamented. In the page preceding that which he quoted, Gibbon might have seen the real value, not only of such denunciations and antipathies, but also of more positive injunctions; for Basnage there says, that, according to the opinion of Eleazar, Jews might even so far break the second commandment, as to make graven images and ornaments for heathen temples, "*pourvu qu'on soit bien payé.*" Hist. des Juifs, tom. vi, partie 2, p. 617.—ED.] ‡ A Jewish sect, which indulged themselves in a sort of occasional conformity, derived from Herod, by whose example and authority they had been seduced, the name of Herodians. But their numbers were so inconsiderable, and

to the maxims of universal toleration, the Romans protected a superstition which they despised.* The polite Augustus condescended to give orders, that sacrifices should be offered for his prosperity in the temple of Jerusalem;† while the meanest of the posterity of Abraham, who should have paid the same homage to the Jupiter of the Capitol, would have been an object of abhorrence to himself and to his brethren. But the moderation of the conquerors was insufficient to appease the jealous prejudices of their subjects, who were alarmed and scandalized at the ensigns of Paganism, which necessarily introduced themselves into a Roman province.‡ The mad attempt of Caligula to place his own statue in the temple of Jerusalem, was defeated by the unanimous resolution of a people who dreaded death much less than such an idolatrous profanation.§ Their attachment to the law of Moses was equal to their detestation of foreign religions. The current of zeal and devotion, as it was contracted into a narrow channel, ran with the strength, and sometimes with the fury, of a torrent.

This inflexible perseverance, which appeared so odious or so ridiculous to the ancient world, assumes a more awful character, since Providence has deigned to reveal to us the mysterious history of the chosen people. But the devout and even scrupulous attachment to the Mosaic religion, so conspicuous among the Jews who lived under the second temple, becomes still more surprising, if it is compared with the stubborn incredulity of their forefathers. When the law was given in thunder from mount Sinai; when the tides of the ocean, and the course of the planets, were suspended for the convenience of the Israelites; and when

their duration so short, that Josephus has not thought them worthy of his notice. See Prideaux's *Connexion*, vol. ii, p. 285. * Cicero pro Flacco, c. 28. † Philo de Legatione. Augustus left a foundation for a perpetual sacrifice. Yet he approved of the neglect which his grandson Caius expressed towards the temple of Jerusalem. See Sueton. in August. c. 93, and Casaubon's notes on that passage.

‡ See, in particular, Josephi *Antiquitat.* 17, 6; 18, 3, and de *Bel. Judaic.* 1, 33, and 2, 9, edit. Havercamp. § *Jussi a Caio Cesare, effigiem ejus in templo locare, arma potius sumpsere*, Tacit. *Hist.* 5, 9. Philo and Josephus gave a very circumstantial, but a very rhetorical, account of this transaction, which exceedingly perplexed the governor of Syria. At the first mention of this idolatrous proposal, King Agrippa fainted away, and did not recover his senses till the third day.

temporal rewards and punishments were the immediate consequences of their piety or disobedience, they perpetually relapsed into rebellion against the visible majesty of their divine king, placed the idols of the nations in the sanctuary of Jehovah, and imitated every fantastic ceremony that was practised in the tents of the Arabs, or in the cities of Phœnicia.* As the protection of Heaven was deservedly withdrawn from the ungrateful race, their faith acquired a proportionable degree of vigour and purity. The contemporaries of Moses and Joshua had beheld with careless indifference the most amazing miracles. Under the pressure of every calamity, the belief of those miracles has preserved the Jews of a later period from the universal contagion of idolatry; and, in contradiction to every known principle of the human mind, that singular people seems to have yielded a stronger and more ready assent to the traditions of their remote ancestors, than to the evidence of their own senses.†

The Jewish religion was admirably fitted for defence, but it was never designed for conquest; and it seems probable that the number of proselytes was never much superior to that of apostates. The divine promises were originally made, and the distinguishing rite of circumcision was enjoined, to a single family. When the posterity of Abraham had multiplied like the sands of the sea, the Deity, from whose mouth they received a system of laws and ceremonies, declared himself the proper, and as it were the national, God of Israel; and, with the most jealous care, separated his favourite people from the rest of mankind. The conquest of the land of Canaan was accompanied with so many wonderful and with so many bloody circumstances, that the victorious Jews were left in a state of irreconcilable hostility with all their neighbours. They had been commanded to extirpate some of the most idolatrous tribes, and the execution of the divine will had seldom been retarded by the weakness of humanity. With the other nations they were forbidden to contract any marriages or alliances; and the

* For the enumeration of the Syrian and Arabian deities, it may be observed, that Milton has comprised in one hundred and thirty very beautiful lines the two large and learned syntagmas which Selden had composed on that abstruse subject. † "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewn them?" (Numbers xiv, 11.) It would be

prohibition of receiving them into the congregation, which in some cases was perpetual, almost always extended to the third, to the seventh, or even to the tenth, generation. The obligation of preaching to the Gentiles the faith of Moses, had never been inculcated as a precept of the law, nor were the Jews inclined to impose it on themselves as a voluntary duty.

In the admission of new citizens, that unsocial people was actuated by the selfish vanity of the Greeks, rather than by the generous policy of Rome. The descendants of Abraham were flattered by the opinion, that they alone were the heirs of the covenant; and they were apprehensive of diminishing the value of their inheritance, by sharing it too easily with the strangers of the earth. A larger acquaintance with mankind extended their knowledge, without correcting their prejudices; and whenever the God of Israel acquired any new votaries, he was much more indebted to the inconstant humour of polytheism, than to the active zeal of his own missionaries.* The religion of Moses seems to be instituted for a particular country, as well as for a single nation; and if a strict obedience had been paid to the order, that every male, three times in the year, should present himself before the Lord Jehovah, it would have been impossible that the Jews could ever have spread themselves beyond the narrow limits of the promised land.† That obstacle was indeed removed by the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem; but the most considerable part of the Jewish religion was involved in its destruction; and the Pagans, who had long wondered at the strange report of an empty sanctuary,‡ were at a loss to discover what could be the object, or what could be the instruments, of a worship which was destitute of temples, and of altars, of priests and of sacrifices. Yet even in their fallen state, the

easy, but it would be unbecoming, to justify the complaint of the Deity from the whole tenor of the Mosaic history. * All that relates to the Jewish proselytes has been very ably treated by Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, lib. 6, c. 6, 7. † See Exod. xxiv, 23; Deut. xvi, 16, the commentators, and a very sensible note in the *Universal History*, vol. i, p. 603, edit. fol. ‡ When Pompey, using or abusing the right of conquest, entered into the Holy of holies, it was observed with amazement, "Nulla intus Deum effigie, vacuum sedem et inania arcana." *Tacit. Hist.* 5, 9. It was a popular saying with regard to the Jews:

Nil præter nubes et cœli numen adorant.

Jews, still asserting their lofty and exclusive privileges, shunned, instead of courting, the society of strangers. They still insisted, with inflexible rigour, on those parts of the law which it was in their power to practise. Their peculiar distinctions of days, of meats, and a variety of trivial though burdensome observances, were so many objects of disgust and aversion for the other nations, to whose habits and prejudices they were diametrically opposite. The painful and even dangerous rite of circumcision was alone capable of repelling a willing proselyte from the door of the synagogue.*

Under these circumstances, Christianity offered itself to the world, armed with the strength of the Mosaic law, and delivered from the weight of its fetters. An exclusive zeal for the truth of religion, and the unity of God, was as carefully inculcated in the new as in the ancient system: and whatever was now revealed to mankind, concerning the nature and designs of the Supreme Being, was fitted to increase their reverence for that mysterious doctrine. The divine authority of Moses and the prophets was admitted, and even established, as the firmest basis of Christianity. From the beginning of the world, an uninterrupted series of predictions had announced and prepared the long expected coming of the Messiah, who, in compliance with the gross apprehensions of the Jews, had been more frequently represented under the character of a king and conqueror, than under that of a prophet, a martyr, and the Son of God. By his expiatory sacrifice, the imperfect sacrifices of the temple were at once consummated and abolished. The ceremonial law, which consisted only of types and figures, was succeeded by a pure and spiritual worship, equally adapted to all climates, as well as to every condition of mankind; and to the initiation of blood, was substituted a more harmless initiation of water. The promise of divine favour, instead of being partially confined to the posterity of Abraham, was universally proposed to the freeman and the slave, to the Greek and to the barbarian, to the Jew and to the Gentile. Every privilege that could raise the proselyte from earth to heaven, that could exalt his devotion, secure his happiness, or even gratify that secret pride,

* A second kind of circumcision was inflicted on a Samaritan or Egyptian proselyte. The sullen indifference of the Talmudists, with

which, under the semblance of devotion, insinuates itself into the human heart, was still reserved for the members of the Christian church; but at the same time all mankind was permitted, and even solicited, to accept the glorious distinction, which was not only proffered as a favour, but imposed as an obligation. It became the most sacred duty of a new convert to diffuse among his friends and relations the inestimable blessings which he had received, and to warn them against a refusal that would be severely punished as a criminal disobedience to the will of a benevolent but all-powerful Deity.

The enfranchisement of the church from the bonds of the synagogue was a work, however, of some time and of some difficulty. The Jewish converts who acknowledged Jesus in the character of the Messiah, foretold by their ancient oracles, respected him as a prophetic teacher of virtue and religion; but they obstinately adhered to the ceremonies of their ancestors, and were desirous of imposing them on the Gentiles, who continually augmented the number of believers. These Judaizing Christians seem to have argued with some degree of plausibility, from the divine origin of the Mosaic law, and from the immutable perfections of its great Author. They affirmed, *that* if the Being, who is the same through all eternity, had designed to abolish those sacred rites, which had served to distinguish his chosen people, the repeal of them would have been no less clear and solemn than their first promulgation; *that*, instead of those frequent declarations, which either suppose or assert the perpetuity of the Mosaic religion, it would have been represented as a provisional scheme, intended to last only till the coming of the Messiah, who should instruct mankind in a more perfect mode of faith and of worship;* *that* the Messiah himself, and his disciples who conversed with him on earth, instead of authorizing by their example the most minute observances of the Mosaic law,† would have published to the world the abolition of

respect to the conversion of strangers, may be seen in Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, l. 6, c. 6. * These arguments were urged with great ingenuity by the Jew Orobio, and refuted with equal ingenuity and candour by the Christian Limborch. See the *Amica Collatio* (it well deserves that name), or account of the dispute between them.

† *Jesus . . . circumcisis erat; cibus utebatur Judaicis; vestitu simili;*

those useless and obsolete ceremonies, without suffering Christianity to remain, during so many years, obscurely confounded among the sects of the Jewish church. Arguments like these appear to have been used in the defence of the expiring cause of the Mosaic law; but the industry of our learned divines has abundantly explained the ambiguous language of the Old Testament, and the ambiguous conduct of the apostolic teachers. It was proper gradually to unfold the system of the gospel, and to pronounce, with the utmost caution and tenderness, a sentence of condemnation so repugnant to the inclination and prejudices of the believing Jews.

The history of the church of Jerusalem affords a lively proof of the necessity of those precautions, and of the deep impression which the Jewish religion had made on the minds of its sectaries. The first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews; and the congregation over which they presided united the law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ.* It was natural that the primitive tradition of a church which was founded only forty days after the death of Christ, and was governed almost as many years under the immediate inspection of his apostle, should be received as the standard of orthodoxy.† The distant churches very frequently appealed to the authority of their venerable parent, and relieved her distresses by a liberal contribution of alms. But when numerous and opulent societies were established in the great cities of the empire, in Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome, the reverence which Jerusalem had inspired to all the Christian colonies insensibly diminished. The Jewish converts, or, as they were afterwards called, the Nazarenes, who had laid

*purgatos scabie mittebat ad sacerdotes; Paschata et alios dies festos religiosè observabat: Si quos sanavit sabbatho, ostendit non tantum ex lege, sed et exceptis sententiis talia opera sabbatho non interdicta. Grotius de Verit. Religionis Christianæ, l. 5, c. 7. A little afterwards (c. 12), he expatiates on the condescension of the apostles. * Pæne omnes Christum Deum sub legis observatione credebant. Sulpitius Severus, 2, 31. See Eusebius, Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 4, c. 5. † Mosheim, de Rebus Christianis ante Constantinum Magnum, p. 153. In this masterly performance, which I shall often have occasion to quote, he enters much more fully into the state of the primitive church, than he has an opportunity of doing in his General History. [The church at Antioch was the first Christian. Acts. xi, 20; xiii, 1.—ED.*

the foundations of the church, soon found themselves overwhelmed by the increasing multitudes, that from all the various religions of polytheism enlisted under the banner of Christ; and the Gentiles who, with the approbation of their peculiar apostle, had rejected the intolerable weight of Mosaic ceremonies, at length refused to their more scrupulous brethren the same toleration which at first they had humbly solicited for their own practice. The ruin of the temple, of the city, and of the public religion of the Jews, was severely felt by the Nazarenes; as in their manners, though not in their faith, they maintained so intimate a connexion with their impious countrymen, whose misfortunes were attributed by the Pagans to the contempt, and more justly ascribed by the Christians, to the wrath of the Supreme Deity. The Nazarenes retired from the ruins of Jerusalem to the little town of Pella beyond the Jordan, where that ancient church languished above sixty years in solitude and obscurity.* They still enjoyed the comfort of making frequent and devout visits to the *holy city*, and the hope of being one day restored to those seats which both nature and religion taught them to love as well as to revere. But at length, under the reign of Hadrian, the desperate fanaticism of the Jews filled up the measure of their calamities; and the Romans, exasperated by their repeated rebellions, exercised the rights of victory with unusual rigour. The emperor founded, under the name of *Ælia Capitolina*, a new city on mount Sion,† to which he gave the privileges of a colony; and denouncing the severest penalties against any of the Jewish people who should dare to approach its precincts, he fixed a vigilant garrison of a Roman cohort to enforce the execution of his orders. The Nazarenes had only one way left to escape the common proscription, and the force of truth was on this occasion assisted by the influence of temporal advantages. They

* Eusebius, l. 3, c. 5. Le Clerc, Hist. Ecclesiast. p. 605. During this occasional absence, the bishop and church of Pella still retained the title of Jerusalem. In the same manner, the Roman pontiffs resided seventy years at Avignon; and the patriarchs of Alexandria have long since transferred their episcopal seat to Cairo. † Dion Cassius, l. 69. The exile of the Jewish nation from Jerusalem is attested by Aristo of Pella (apud Euseb. l. 4, c. 6), and is mentioned by several ecclesiastical writers, though some of them too hastily extend this interdiction to the whole country of Palestine.

elected Marcus for their bishop, a prelate of the race of the Gentiles, and most probably a native either of Italy or some of the Latin provinces.* At his persuasion, the most considerable part of the congregation renounced the Mosaic law, in the practice of which they had persevered above a century. By this sacrifice of their habits and privileges, they purchased a free admission into the colony of Hadrian, and more firmly cemented their union with the catholic church.†

When the name and honours of the church of Jerusalem had been restored to mount Sion, the crimes of heresy and schism were imputed to the obscure remnant of the Nazarenes which refused to accompany their Latin bishop. They still preserved their former habitation of Pella, spread themselves into the villages adjacent to Damascus, and formed an inconsiderable church in the city of Beræa, or, as it is now called, of Aleppo, in Syria.‡ The name of Nazarenes was deemed too honourable for those Christian Jews, and they soon received, from the supposed poverty of their understanding, as well as of their condition, the contemptuous epithet of Ebionites.§

* Marcus was a Greek prelate. See Döderlein, *Comment. de Ebionæis*, p. 10.—GUIZOT. † Eusebius, l. 4, c. 6. Sulpitius Severus, 2. 31. By comparing their unsatisfactory accounts, Mosheim (p. 327, &c.) has drawn out a very distinct representation of the circumstances and motives of this revolution. ‡ Le Clerc (*Hist. Ecclesiast.* p. 477. 535) seems to have collected from Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, and other writers, all the principal circumstances that relate to the Nazarites or Ebionites. The nature of their opinions soon divided them into a stricter and a milder sect; and there is some reason to conjecture, that the family of Jesus Christ remained members, at least, of the latter and more moderate party. § Some writers have been pleased to create an Ebion, the imaginary author of their sect and name. But we can more safely rely on the learned Eusebius, than on the vehement Tertullian, or the credulous Epiphanius. According to Le Clerc, the Hebrew word *ebjonim* may be translated into Latin by that of *pauperes*. See *Hist. Ecclesiast.* p. 477. [The name of Ebionites had an earlier origin. The first Christians in Jerusalem were so called, on account of the poverty to which their charities had reduced them. (Acts, c. 4, 34; c. 11, 30. Galat. c. 2, 10. Rom. c. 25, 26). It was attached to the Jew-Christians, who remained at Pella, persisting in their Jewish opinions. They were afterwards accused of denying the divinity of Jesus Christ, and for that they were disowned by the church. The Socinians, who have more recently denied this point of faith, have relied on the example of the Ebionites, as a proof that the opinions of

In a few years after the return of the church of Jerusalem, it became a matter of doubt and controversy, whether a man who sincerely acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, but who still continued to observe the law of Moses, could possibly hope for salvation. The humane temper of Justin Martyr inclined him to answer this question in the affirmative; and though he expressed himself with the most guarded diffidence, he ventured to determine in favour of such an imperfect Christian, if he were content to practise the Mosaic ceremonies, without pretending to assert their general use or necessity. But when Justin was pressed to declare the sentiment of the church, he confessed that there were very many among the orthodox Christians, who not only excluded their Judaizing brethren from the hope of salvation, but who declined any intercourse with them in the common offices of friendship, hospitality, and social life.* The more rigorous opinion prevailed, as it was natural to expect, over the milder; and an eternal bar of separation was fixed between the disciples of Moses and those

the first Christians were the same as theirs. Artemon, among others, gave great weight to this argument. Döderlein, and many modern theologians, have taken pains to show that this was a charge falsely alleged against the Ebionites. Comment. de Ebion., 1770, § 3—8.—Guzot.] [The passages in scripture quoted above contain no proofs of the early Christians in Jerusalem having been called Ebionites, nor do they indicate such poverty as would have warranted the appellation.—Ed.] * See the very curious dialogue of Justin Martyr with the Jew Tryphon. The conference between them was held at Ephesus, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, and about twenty years after the return of the church at Pella to Jerusalem. For this date consult the accurate note of Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclesiastiques, tom. ii, p. 511. [Justin Martyr made an important distinction, which Gibbon has left unnoticed. The first Jew-Christians were called Ebionites, and had retired to Pella. Those who were persuaded by their bishop, Marcus, to abandon, at least partially, the Mosaic law and return to Jerusalem, took the name of Nazarenes; those who persisted in their Judaism retained that of Ebionites. These last alone are rejected by the church, and severely reprehended by Justin Martyr. He is more lenient towards the Nazarenes, who, though still observing themselves some parts of the Mosaic law, did not compel pagan converts to conform to it; while the Ebionites, properly so called, desired to enforce their compliance. This appears to have been the principal distinction between the two sects. Döderlein, p. 25.—Guzot.] [In all this we see that there was a considerable difference between early Jew and Greek Christianity. The "Greek prelate" Marcus prevailed on some to adopt the latter, while the

of Christ. The unfortunate Ebionites, rejected from one religion as apostates, and from the other as heretics, found themselves compelled to assume a more decided character; and although some traces of that obsolete sect may be discovered as late as the fourth century, they insensibly melted away either into the church or the synagogue.*

While the orthodox church preserved a just medium between excessive veneration and improper contempt for the law of Moses, the various heretics deviated into equal but opposite extremes of error and extravagance.

From the acknowledged truth of the Jewish religion, the Ebionites had concluded that it could never be abolished. From its supposed imperfections the Gnostics as hastily inferred that it was never instituted by the wisdom of the Deity. There are some objections against the authority of Moses and the prophets, which too readily present themselves to the sceptical mind: though they can only be derived from our ignorance of remote antiquity, and from our incapacity to form an adequate judgment of the divine economy. These objections were eagerly embraced, and as petulantly urged, by the vain science of the Gnostics.† As those heretics were, for the most part, averse to the pleasures of sense, they morosely arraigned the polygamy of the patriarchs, the gallantries of David, and the seraglio of Solomon. The conquest of the land of Canaan, and the extirpation of the unsuspecting natives, they were at a loss how to reconcile with the common notions of humanity and justice. But when they recollected the sanguinary list of

others, who continued recusant, were disowned by the two religions between which they stood, and gradually disappeared. This explains Justin Martyr's severity.—Ed.] * Of all the systems of Christianity, that of Abyssinia is the only one which still adheres to the Mosaic rites (Geddes's Church History of Ethiopia, and Dissertations de La Grand, sur la Relation du P. Lobo). The eunuch of queen Candace might suggest some suspicions; but, as we are assured (Socrates, l. 19. Sozomen, 2. 24. Ludolphus, p. 281) that the Æthiopians were not converted till the fourth century, it is more reasonable to believe that they respected the Sabbath, and distinguished the forbidden meats, in imitation of the Jews who, in a very early period, were seated on both sides of the Red Sea. Circumcision had been practised by the most ancient Æthiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness, which seem to be explained in the Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains, tom. ii, p. 117. † Beausobre, Histoire du Manichéisme, l. 1, c. 3, has stated their objections, particularly those of Faustus, the adversary of Augustin, with the most learned impartiality.

murders, of executions, and of massacres, which stain almost every page of the Jewish annals, they acknowledged that the barbarians of Palestine had exercised as much compassion towards their idolatrous enemies, as they had ever shewn to their friends or countrymen.* Passing from the sectaries of the law to the law itself, they asserted that it was impossible that a religion which consisted only of bloody sacrifices and trifling ceremonies, and whose rewards as well as punishments were all of a carnal and temporal nature, could inspire the love of virtue, or restrain the impetuosity of passion. The Mosaic account of the creation and fall of man was treated with profane derision by the Gnostics, who would not listen with patience to the repose of the Deity after six days' labour, to the rib of Adam, the garden of Eden, the trees of life and of knowledge, the speaking serpent, the forbidden fruit, and the condemnation pronounced against human kind for the venial offence of their first progenitors.† The God of Israel was impiously represented by the Gnostics, as a being liable to passion and to error, capricious in his favour, implacable in his resentment, meanly jealous of his superstitious worship, and confining his partial providence to a single people, and to this transitory life. In such a character they could discover none of the features of the wise and omnipotent Father of the universe.‡ They allowed that the religion of the Jews was somewhat less criminal than the idolatry of the Gentiles: but it was their fundamental doctrine, that the Christ whom they adored as the first and brightest emanation of the Deity, appeared upon earth to rescue mankind from their various errors, and to reveal a *new* system of truth and perfection. The most learned of the fathers, by a very singular condescension, have imprudently admitted the sophistry of the Gnostics. Acknowledging that the literal sense is repugnant to every principle of faith as well as reason, they deem themselves secure and invulnerable behind the ample

* *Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu: adversus omnes alios hostile odium.* Tacit. Hist. 5. 4. Surely Tacitus had seen the Jews with too favourable an eye. The perusal of Josephus must have destroyed the antithesis. † Dr. Burnet (*Archæologia*, l. 2, c. 7) has discussed the first chapters of Genesis with too much wit and freedom. ‡ The milder Gnostics considered Jehovah, the Creator, as a being of a mixed nature between God and the demon. Others confounded him with the evil principle. Consult the second century

veil of allegory, which they carefully spread over every tender part of the Mosaic dispensation.*

It has been remarked with more ingenuity than truth, that the virgin purity of the church was never violated by schism or heresy before the reign of Trajan or Hadrian, about one hundred years after the death of Christ.† We may observe with much more propriety, that, during that period, the disciples of the Messiah were indulged in a freer latitude, both of faith and practice, than has ever been allowed in succeeding ages. As the terms of communion were insensibly narrowed, and the spiritual authority of the prevailing party was exercised with increasing severity, many of its most respectable adherents, who were called upon to renounce, were provoked to assert, their private opinions, to pursue the consequences of their mistaken principles, and openly to erect the standard of rebellion against the unity of the church. The Gnostics were distinguished as the most polite, the most learned, and the most wealthy, of the Christian name: and that general appellation, which expressed a superiority of knowledge, was either assumed by their own pride, or ironically bestowed by the envy of their adversaries. They were almost without exception of the race of the Gentiles; and their principal founders seem to have been natives of Syria or Egypt, where the warmth of the climate disposes both the mind and the body to indolent and contemplative devotion. The Gnostics blended with the faith of Christ many sublime but obscure tenets, which they derived from oriental philosophy, and even from the religion of Zoroaster, concerning the eternity of matter, the existence of two principles, and the mysterious hierarchy of the invisible world.‡ As soon as

of the general history of Mosheim, which gives a very distinct, though concise, account of their strange opinions on this subject. * See

Beausobre. *Hist. du Manichéisme*, l. 1, c. 4. Origen and St. Augustin were among the Allegorists. † Hegeſippus, ap. Euseb. l. 3. 32, 4. 22. Clemens Alexandrin. *Stromat.* 7. 17. [This is not so positively asserted by Hegeſippus. As the passage stands in Eusebius (l. 3, c. 32, p. 84) the first part is modified by the last. It is there stated, that up to that period, the church had remained pure and inviolate.

“Those who had attempted to corrupt the doctrines of the gospel, had till then obscurely toiled.”—GUIZOT.] ‡ In the account of the Gnostics of the second and third centuries, Mosheim is ingenious and candid, Le Clerc dull, but exact; Beausobre almost always an

they launched out into that vast abyss, they delivered themselves to the guidance of a disordered imagination; and as the paths of error are various and infinite, the Gnostics were imperceptibly divided into more than fifty particular sects,* of whom the most celebrated appear to have been the Basilidians, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, and, in a still later period, the Manichæans. Each of these sects could boast of its bishops and congregations, of its doctors and martyrs;† and, instead of the four Gospels adopted by the church, the heretics produced a multitude of histories, in which the actions and discourses of Christ and of his apostles were adapted to their respective tenets.‡ The suc-

apologist; and it is much to be feared that the primitive fathers are very frequently calumniators. [The Gnostics were the offspring of philosophy, in the early stages of the progress of Christianity. The time when they arose is uncertain; nor had they any eminent founder or fixed rule of faith. They appear to have originated as soon as the new religion became generally known; they were the most educated among the heathens, and abounded principally in those eastern countries, that were most pervaded by the philosophical notions of the age. Till the beginning of the second century, the Christian churches did not possess their scriptures, and had no common standard of orthodoxy. They had only traditions of what their great teacher had proclaimed, and these every individual adapted for himself to his own peculiar philosophy, be it what it might, and fashioned them to his own liking and degree of knowledge. This freedom of thought brought within the pale of the church all who had in any way learned to discredit the fables of polytheism, and the example of the higher drew the lower after them. Churches were thus organized, into which, when they received the Scriptures, stricter canons were introduced.—Ed.] * See the catalogue of Irenæus and Epiphanius. It must indeed be allowed, that those writers were inclined to multiply the number of sects which opposed the *unity* of the church. † Eusebius, l. 4, c. 15. Sozomen, l. 2, c. 32. See in Bayle, in the article of *Marcion*, a curious detail of a dispute on that subject. It should seem that some of the Gnostics (the Basilidians) declined, and even refused the honour of martyrdom. Their reasons were singular and abstruse. See Mosheim, p. 359. ‡ See a very remarkable passage of Origen (Proem. ad Lucam). That indefatigable writer, who had consumed his life in the study of the Scriptures, relies for their authenticity on the inspired authority of the church. It was impossible that the Gnostics could receive our present Gospels, many parts of which (particularly in the resurrection of Christ) are directly, and, as it might seem, designedly, pointed against their favourite tenets. It is, therefore, somewhat singular that Ignatius (Epist. ad Smyrn. Patr. Apost. tom. ii. p. 34) should choose to employ a vague and doubtful tradition, instead of quoting the certain tes-

cess of the Gnostics was rapid and extensive.* They covered Asia and Egypt, established themselves in Rome, and sometimes penetrated into the provinces of the west. For the most part they arose in the second century, flourished during the third, and were suppressed in the fourth or fifth, by the prevalence of more fashionable controversies, and by the superior ascendant of the reigning power. Though they constantly disturbed the peace, and frequently disgraced the name, of religion, they contributed to assist rather than to retard the progress of Christianity. The Gentile converts, whose strongest objections and prejudices were directed against the law of Moses, could find admission into many Christian societies, which required not from their untutored mind any belief of an antecedent revelation. Their faith was insensibly fortified and enlarged, and the church was ultimately benefited by the conquests of its most inveterate enemies.†

But whatever difference of opinion might subsist between the Orthodox, the Ebionites, and the Gnostics, concerning the divinity or the obligations of the Mosaic law, they were all equally animated by the same exclusive zeal, and by the

timony of the evangelists. [Bishop Pearson has made a very happy effort to account for this "somewhat singular" omission. Many sayings of Jesus Christ were known to the early Christians, which are not recorded in the Gospels, nor have ever been reduced to writing. Why might not Ignatius, who had lived with the apostles or their disciples, repeat, in other words, what Luke relates, especially at a time, when being in prison, he had not the Gospels at hand? See Pearson, *Vind. Ign.* part 2, c. 9, p. 396, in tom. ii. *Patr. Apost. ed. Coteler. Clericus, 1724.* See also Davis's Reply, p. 31.—GUIZOT.] [Eusebius (*Hist. Ecc.* 3. 37) says that, in the time of Hadrian, Quadratus and others travelled among the churches "to deliver the Scriptures of the holy Gospels," which do not appear to have been in their possession before. The journey of Ignatius to Rome was in the preceding reign of Trajan. In exhorting the Christian communities among whom he passed, he could therefore appeal to no other rule of faith than the "traditions of the Apostles." Mr. Davis contested this, in the passage cited by M. Guizot, and for that purpose, made the Greek term for "*the Gospel*" (or the Christian religion), mean "*the gospels*;" (or the narratives of the four Evangelists).—ED.] * *Faciunt favos et vespæ; faciunt ecclesias et Marcionitæ*, is the strong expression from Tertullian, which I am obliged to quote from memory. In the time of Epiphanius (*advers. Hæreses*, p. 302) the Marcionites were very numerous in Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and Persia.

† Augustin is a memorable instance of this gradual progress 1202

same abhorrence for idolatry which had distinguished the Jews from the other nations of the ancient world. The philosopher, who considered the system of polytheism as a composition of human fraud and error, could disguise a smile of contempt under the mask of devotion, without apprehending that either the mockery or the compliance would expose him to the resentment of any invisible, or, as he conceived them, imaginary powers. But the established religions of Paganism were seen by the primitive Christians in a much more odious and formidable light. It was the universal sentiment both of the church and of heretics, that the demons were the authors, the patrons, and the objects of idolatry.* Those rebellious spirits who had been degraded from the rank of angels, and cast down into the infernal pit, were still permitted to roam upon earth, to torment the bodies, and to seduce the minds of sinful men. The demons soon discovered and abused the natural propensity of the human heart toward devotion; and, artfully withdrawing the adoration of mankind from their Creator, they usurped the place and honours of the Supreme Deity. By the success of their malicious contrivances, they at once gratified their own vanity and revenge, and obtained the only comfort of which they were yet susceptible, the hope of involving the human species in the participation of their guilt and misery. It was confessed, or at least it was imagined, that they had distributed among themselves the most important characters of Polytheism; one demon assuming the name and attributes of Jupiter, another of Æsculapius, a third of Venus, and a fourth perhaps of Apollo;† and that, by the advantage of their long experience and aerial nature, they were enabled to execute, with sufficient skill and dignity, the parts which they had undertaken. They lurked in the temples, instituted festivals and sacrifices, invented fables, pronounced oracles, and were frequently allowed to perform miracles. The Christians, who, by the interposition of evil spirits, could so readily explain every preternatural appearance,

reason to faith. He was, during several years, engaged in the Manichean sect.

* The unanimous sentiment of the primitive church is very clearly explained by Justin Martyr, (*Apolog. Major*), by Athenagoras (*Legat. c. 22*), &c. and by Lactantius, (*Institut. Divin. 2, 14—19*).

† Tertullian (*Apolog. c. 23*) alleges the confession of the demons themselves as often as they were tormented by the Christian exorcists.

were disposed and even desirous to admit the most extravagant fictions of the Pagan mythology. But the belief of the Christian was accompanied with horror. The most trifling mark of respect to the national worship he considered as a direct homage yielded to the demon, and as an act of rebellion against the majesty of God.

In consequence of this opinion, it was the first but arduous duty of a Christian to preserve himself pure and undefiled from the practice of idolatry. The religion of the nations was not merely a speculative doctrine, professed in the schools or preached in the temples. The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or private life: and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them, without, at the same time, renouncing the commerce of mankind, and all the offices and amusements of society.* The important transactions of peace and war were prepared or concluded by solemn sacrifices, in which the magistrate, the senator, and the soldier, were obliged to preside or to participate.† The public spectacles were an essential part of the cheerful devotion of the Pagans; and the gods were supposed to accept, as the most grateful offering, the games that the prince and people celebrated in honour of their peculiar festivals.‡ The Christian, who with pious horror avoided the abomination of the circus or the theatre, found himself encompassed with infernal snares in every convivial entertainment, as often as his friends, invoking the hospitable deities, poured out libations to each other's happiness.§ When the bride, struggling with well-affected reluctance, was forced in hymeneal pomp over the threshold of her new

* Tertullian has written a most severe treatise against idolatry, to caution his brethren against the hourly danger of incurring that guilt. *Recogita sylvam, et quantæ latitant spinæ.* De Coronâ Militis, c. 10.

† The Roman senate was always held in a temple or consecrated place. (Aulus Gellius, 14. 7). Before they entered on business, every senator dropped some wine and frankincense on the altar. Sueton. in August. c. 35.

‡ See Tertullian de Spectaculis. This severe reformer shows no more indulgence to a tragedy of Euripides, than to a combat of gladiators. The dress of the actors particularly offends him. By the use of the lofty buskin, they impiously strive to add a cubit to their stature. c. 13.

§ The ancient practice of concluding the entertainment with libations may be found in every classic. Socrates and Seneca, in their last moments, made a noble application

habitation;* or when the sad procession of the dead slowly moved towards the funeral pile;† the Christian, on these interesting occasions, was compelled to desert the persons who were the dearest to him, rather than contract the guilt inherent to these impious ceremonies. Every art and every trade that was in the least concerned in the framing or adorning of idols, was polluted by the stain of idolatry;‡ a severe sentence, since it devoted to eternal misery the far greater part of the community, which is employed in the exercise of liberal or mechanic professions. If we cast our eyes over the numerous remains of antiquity, we shall perceive, that besides the immediate representations of the gods, and the holy instruments of their worship, the elegant forms and agreeable fictions consecrated by the imagination of the Greeks were introduced as the richest ornaments of the houses, the dress, and the furniture, of the Pagans.§ Even the arts of music and painting, of eloquence and poetry, flowed from the same impure origin. In the style of the fathers, Apollo and the muses were the organs of the infernal spirit; Homer and Virgil were the most eminent of his servants; and the beautiful mythology which pervades and animates the compositions of their genius, is destined to celebrate the glory of the demons. Even the common language of Greece and Rome abounded with familiar but

of this custom. *Postquam stagnum calidæ aquæ introiit, respergens proximos servorum, additâ voce, libare se liquorem illum Jovi Liberatori.* Tacit. *Annal.* 15. 64. * See the elegant but idolatrous hymn of Catullus, on the nuptials of Manlius and Julia. O Hymen,

Hymenæe Iô! Quis huic Deo comparari ausit? † The ancient funerals (in those of Misenus and Pallas) are no less accurately described by Virgil, than they are illustrated by his commentator Servius. The pile itself was an altar, the flames were fed with the blood of victims, and all the assistants were sprinkled with laustral water. ‡ Tertullian *de Idololatria*, c. 11. [The exaggerated opinions and declamations of Tertullian are not to be considered as expressing the general opinions of the first Christians. Gibbon too often makes the individual notions of some father of the church characteristics of Christianity. This is unfair.—GUIZOT.] [This no doubt is unfair; but it is the universal practice. Every sect and party is so judged. Tertullian may not have expressed the “general opinions of the first Christians;” but a man of his talents, animated by his energy, and occupying his position, must have had many followers who felt and thought like him. His influence will be seen afterwards.—ED.]

§ See every part of Montfaucon's *Antiquities*. Even the reverses of the Greek and Roman coins were frequently of an idolatrous nature.

impious expressions, which the prudent Christian might too carelessly utter, or too patiently hear.*

The dangerous temptations which on every side lurked in ambush to surprise the unguarded believer, assailed him with redoubled violence on the days of solemn festivals. So artfully were they framed and disposed throughout the year, that superstition always wore the appearance of pleasure, and often of virtue.† Some of the most sacred festivals in the Roman ritual were destined to salute the new calends of January with vows of public and private felicity; to indulge the pious remembrance of the dead and living; to ascertain the inviolable bounds of property; to hail, on the return of spring, the genial powers of fecundity; to perpetuate the two most memorable eras of Rome, the foundation of the city, and that of the republic; and to restore, during the humane license of the Saturnalia, the primitive equality of mankind. Some idea may be conceived of the abhorrence of the Christians for such impious ceremonies, by the scrupulous delicacy which they displayed on a much less alarming occasion. On days of general festivity, it was the custom of the ancients to adorn their doors with lamps and with branches of laurel, and to crown their heads with a garland of flowers. This innocent and elegant practice might perhaps have been tolerated as a mere civil institution. But it most unluckily happened that the doors were under the protection of the household gods, that the laurel was sacred to the lover of Daphne, and that garlands of flowers, though frequently worn as a symbol either of joy or mourning, had been dedicated in their first origin to the service of superstition. The trembling Christians, who were persuaded in this instance to comply with the fashion of their country, and the commands of the magistrate, laboured under the most gloomy apprehensions, from the reproaches

Here indeed the scruples of the Christian were suspended by a stronger passion.

* Tertullian de Idololatria, c. 20—22. If a Pagan friend (on the occasion perhaps of sneezing) used the familiar expression of "Jupiter bless you," the Christian was obliged to protest against the divinity of Jupiter.

† Consult the most laboured work of Ovid, his imperfect *Fasti*. He finished no more than the first six months of the year. The compilation of Macrobius is called the *Saturnalia*, but it is only a small part of the first book that bears any relation to the title.

of their own conscience, the censures of the church, and the denunciations of divine vengeance.*

Such was the anxious diligence required to guard the chastity of the gospel from the infectious breath of idolatry. The superstitious observances of public or private rites were carelessly practised, from education and habit, by the followers of the established religion. But as often as they occurred, they afforded the Christians an opportunity of declaring and confirming their zealous opposition. By these frequent protestations, their attachment to the faith was continually fortified; and, in proportion to the increase of zeal, they combated with the more ardour and success in the holy war, which they had undertaken against the empire of the demons.

II. The writings of Cicero† represent in the most lively colours the ignorance, the errors, and the uncertainty, of the ancient philosophers with regard to the immortality of the soul. When they are desirous of arming their disciples against the fear of death, they inculcate, as an obvious though melancholy position, that the fatal stroke of our dissolution releases us from the calamities of life; and that those can no longer suffer who no longer exist. Yet there were a few sages of Greece and Rome who had conceived a more exalted, and in some respects a juster, idea of human

* Tertullian has composed a defence, or rather panegyric, of the rash action of a Christian soldier, who, by throwing away his crown of laurel, had exposed himself and his brethren to the most imminent danger. By the mention of the *emperors* (Severus and Caracalla), it is evident, notwithstanding the wishes of M. de Tillemont, that Tertullian composed his treatise *De Coronâ*, long before he was engaged in the errors of the Montanists. See *Mémoires Ecclesiastiques*, tom. iii. p. 384. [The soldier did not tear the crown from his head to throw it away scornfully. He did not throw it away at all; he carried it in his hand, while his comrades encircled their brows with theirs. "Lauream castrensem, quam cæteri in capite, hic in manu gestabat." *Argum. de Coronâ Militis*. Tertull. p. 100. Tertullian does not expressly name the two emperors, Severus and Caracalla; he only speaks of two emperors, and of a long term of repose enjoyed by the church. It is generally agreed that he joined the Montanists about the year 200. The *De Coronâ Militis* appears to have been written, at soonest, about the year 202, before the persecution of Severus. It must, therefore, have been subsequent to the author's Montanism. Mosheim, *Dissert. de Apolog. Tertull.* p. 53. *Biblioth. Rais.* Amst. tom. ii, part 2, p. 291. Cave, *Hist. Lit.* p. 92, 93.—GUIZOT.] † In particular, the first book of the *Tusculan Questions*, and the treatise *de Senectute*, and the *Somnium Scipionis*, contain, in the most beautiful language, everything that Grecian

nature; though it must be confessed, that, in the sublime inquiry, their reason had been often guided by their imagination, and that their imagination had been prompted by their vanity. When they viewed with complacency the extent of their own mental powers; when they exercised the various faculties of memory, of fancy, and of judgment, in the most profound speculations or the most important labours; and when they reflected on the desire of fame, which transported them into future ages, far beyond the bounds of death and of the grave; they were unwilling to confound themselves with the beasts of the field, or to suppose, that a being, for whose dignity they entertained the most sincere admiration, could be limited to a spot of earth, and to a few years of duration. With this favourable prepossession they summoned to their aid the science, or rather the language, of metaphysics. They soon discovered, that as none of the properties of matter will apply to the operations of the mind, the human soul must consequently be a substance distinct from the body, pure, simple, and spiritual, incapable of dissolution, and susceptible of a much higher degree of virtue and happiness after the release from its corporeal prison. From these specious and noble principles, the philosophers who trod in the footsteps of Plato deduced a very unjustifiable conclusion, since they asserted, not only the future immortality, but the past eternity, of the human soul, which they were too apt to consider as a portion of the infinite and self-existing spirit, which pervades and sustains the universe.* A doctrine thus removed beyond the senses and the experience of mankind, might serve to amuse the leisure of a philosophic mind; or, in the silence of solitude, it might sometimes impart a ray of comfort to desponding virtue; but the faint impression which had been received in the schools, was soon obliterated by the commerce and business of active life. We are sufficiently acquainted with the eminent persons who flourished in the age of Cicero and of the first Cæsars, with their actions, their characters, and their motives, to be assured that their conduct in this life was never regulated by any serious conviction of the rewards or punishments of a future state. At the bar and in the philosophy, or Roman good sense, could possibly suggest on this dark but important object. * The pre-existence of human souls, so far at least as that doctrine is compatible with religion, was adopted by

senate of Rome, the ablest orators were not apprehensive of giving offence to their hearers, by exposing that doctrine as an idle and extravagant opinion, which was rejected with contempt by every man of a liberal education and understanding.*

Since, therefore, the most sublime efforts of philosophy can extend no farther than feebly to point out the desire, the hope, or at most, the probability, of a future state, there is nothing except a divine revelation, that can ascertain the existence, and describe the condition, of the invisible country which is destined to receive the souls of men after their separation from the body. But we may perceive several defects inherent to the popular religions of Greece and Rome, which rendered them very unequal to so arduous a task. 1. The general system of their mythology was unsupported by any solid proofs; and the wisest among the Pagans had already disclaimed its usurped authority. 2. The description of the infernal regions had been abandoned to the fancy of painters and of poets, who peopled them with so many phantoms and monsters, who dispensed their rewards and punishments with so little equity, that a solemn truth, the most congenial to the human heart, was oppressed and disgraced by the absurd mixture of the wildest fictions.† 3. The doctrine of a future state was scarcely considered among the devout Polytheists of Greece and Rome as a fundamental article of faith. The providence of the gods, as it related to public communities rather than to private individuals, was principally displayed on the visible theatre of the present world. The petitions which were offered on the altars of Jupiter or Apollo, expressed the anxiety of their worshippers for temporal happiness, and their ignorance or indifference concerning a future life.‡ The important

many of the Greek and Latin fathers. See Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichisme*, l. 6, c. 4. * See Cicero pro Cluent. c. 61. Cæsar, ap. Sallust. de Bell. Catilin. c. 50. Juvenal, Satir. 2. 149.

Esse aliquos manes, et subterranea regna,

Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum ære lavantur.

* The eleventh book of the *Odyssey* gives a very dreary and incoherent account of the infernal shades. Pindar and Virgil have embellished the picture; but even those poets, though more correct than their great model, are guilty of very strange inconsistencies. See Bayle, *Réponses aux Questions d'un Provincial*, part 3, c. 32. † See the sixteenth epistle of the first book of Horace, the thirteenth satire on

truth of the immortality of the soul was inculcated with more diligence as well as success in India, in Assyria, in Egypt, and in Gaul; and since we cannot attribute such a difference to the superior knowledge of the barbarians, we must ascribe it to the influence of an established priesthood, which employed the motives of virtue as the instrument of ambition.*

We might naturally expect that a principle so essential to religion would have been revealed in the clearest terms to the chosen people of Palestine, and that it might safely have been intrusted to the hereditary priesthood of Aaron. It is incumbent on us to adore the mysterious dispensations of Providence,† when we discover, that the doctrine of the

Juvenal, and the second satire of Persius: these popular discourses express the sentiment and language of the multitude. * If we confine ourselves to the Gauls, we may observe, that they intrusted, not only their lives, but even their money, to the security of another world. *Vetus ille mos Gallorum occurrit* (says Valerius Maximus, l. 2, c. 6, p. 10) *quos memoria proditum est, pecunias mutuas, quæ his apud inferos redderentur, dare solitos.* The same custom is more darkly insinuated by Mela, l. 3, c. 2. It is almost needless to add, that the profits of trade hold a just proportion to the credit of the merchant, and that the druids derived from their holy profession a character of responsibility, which could scarcely be claimed by any other order of men. † The right reverend author of the *Divine Legation of Moses* assigns a very curious reason for the omission, and most ingeniously retorts it on the unbelievers. [It is by no means clearly demonstrated that this doctrine is omitted in the law of Moses. Michaelis thinks, that even if the silence of the Jewish lawgiver were incontrovertibly proved, still we should not be authorized to infer from it, that he was unacquainted with, or did not admit, the immortality of the soul. According to him, Moses did not write as a theologian: he did not instruct his people in the verities of the faith; we see in his works only the historian and the civil legislator; he regulated ecclesiastical discipline more than religious belief. As a mere human legislator, the immortality of the soul must often have been made known to him. The Egyptians, among whom he lived forty years believed it, in their way. The ascent of Enoch, who "walked with God and he was not, for God took him" (Genesis v. 24), seems to indicate some idea of an existence that follows man's earthly being. The book of Job, which some learned men attribute to Moses himself, has this clearer reference to the doctrine: (c. xix, v. 26, 27)—"and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another." M. Pareau, professor of theology at Harderwyk, published, in 1807, an octavo volume, with the title, "*Commentatio de immortalitatis ac vitæ futuræ notitiis, ab antiquissimo Jobo scriptore,*"

immortality of the soul is omitted in the law of Moses: it is darkly insinuated by the prophets; and during the long period which elapsed between the Egyptian and the Babylonian servitudes, the hopes as well as fears of the Jews appear to have been confined within the narrow compass of the present life.* After Cyrus had permitted the exiled

in which he deduces intimations of the doctrine of a future state, from the twenty-seventh chapter of Job. (Michaelis, Syntagma, Comment. p. 80. Survey of the state of Literature and ancient History in Germany, by Ch. Villers, p. 63; 1809.) These notions of immortality are not so distinct and positive as to obviate all objections. What may be said is, that they seem to be gradually developed by the succession of sacred writers. This may be seen in Isaiah, David, and Solomon, who says (Eccles. xii, 9), "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it." I will add here the ingenious conjecture of a philosophical theologian, on the causes which induced Moses to withhold from his people any special announcement of the immortality of the soul. He thinks, that this legislator beheld around him a state of civilization, in which any popular knowledge of this doctrine would have misled the Jews into many idolatrous superstitions, against which it was his object to guard them. He contemplated mainly the establishment of a firm theocracy, and to preserve among his nation the idea of the unity of God, as the future basis of Christianity. He carefully kept at a distance all that might weaken or obscure this idea. In other countries the people had strangely abused the notions which they entertained, respecting the immortality of the soul. This he wished to prevent, and therefore made it a part of his code (Deut. xviii, 11), that the Jews should not, like the Egyptians, have communion with "a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer." Those who will take into consideration the condition of the Gentiles and the Jews, and the facility with which idolatry at that period everywhere insinuated itself, will not be surprised that Moses suppressed a tenet, the influence of which would have been more fatal than useful to the Israelites. Orat. Fest. de Vitæ Immort. Spe, &c., auct. Ph. Alb. Stapfer. pp. 12, 13, 20. Berne, 1787.—[GUIZOT.] [The omission which M. Guizot says "is not clearly demonstrated," Dean Milnan candidly admits to be "unquestionable." The well-known use of it by Warburton, is also confessed to have "made few disciples; and it is difficult to suppose that it would be intended by the author himself, for more than a *display of intellectual strength*." The world had no distinct idea of a future state. Greek philosophy had speculated on it, and excited hopes which became more lively as education expanded. The two leading popular wants of the age were then, the worship of a supreme spiritual Godhead, and a settled conviction of the immortality of the soul. These Christianity supplied so authoritatively, that it could not fail to make a rapid progress.—Ed.]

* See Le Clerc (Prolegomena ad Hist. Ecclesiast. sect. 1, c. 8.) His authority seems to carry the greater weight, as he has written a learned and judicious commentary on the books of the Old Testament.

nations to return into the promised land, and after Ezra had restored the ancient records of their religion, two celebrated sects, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, insensibly arose at Jerusalem.* The former, selected from the more opulent and distinguished ranks of society, were strictly attached to the literal sense of the Mosaic law, and they piously rejected the immortality of the soul, as an opinion that received no countenance from the divine book, which they revered as the only rule of their faith. To the authority of Scripture the Pharisees added that of tradition; and they accepted, under the name of traditions, several speculative tenets from the philosophy or religion of the eastern nations. The doctrines of fate or predestination, of angels and spirits, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, were in the number of these new articles of belief; and as the Pharisees, by the austerity of their manners, had drawn into their party the body of the Jewish people, the immortality of the soul became the prevailing sentiment of the synagogue, under the reign of the Asmonæan princes and pontiffs. The temper of the Jews was incapable of contenting itself with such a cold and languid assent as might satisfy the mind of a Polytheist; and, as soon as they admitted the idea of a future state, they embraced it with the zeal which has always formed the characteristic of the nation. Their zeal, however, added nothing to its evidence, or even probability; and it was still necessary, that the doctrine of life and immortality, which had been dictated by nature, approved by reason, and received by superstition, should obtain the sanction of divine truth, from the authority and example of Christ.

When the promise of eternal happiness was proposed to mankind, on condition of adopting the faith, and of observing the precepts, of the gospel, it is no wonder that so advantageous an offer should have been accepted by great numbers of every religion, of every rank, and of every province in the Roman empire. The ancient Christians were animated by a contempt for their present existence, and by

* Josephi Antiquit. l. 13, c. 10. De Bell. Jud. 2, 8. According to the most natural interpretation of his words, the Sadducees admitted only the Pentateuch; but it has pleased some modern critics to add the prophets to their creed, and to suppose, that they contented themselves with rejecting the traditions of the Pharisees. Dr. Jortin has

a just confidence of immortality, of which the doubtful and imperfect faith of modern ages cannot give us any adequate notion. In the primitive church the influence of truth was very powerfully strengthened by an opinion, which, however it may deserve respect for its usefulness and antiquity, has not been found agreeable to experience. It was universally believed, that the end of the world, and the kingdom of heaven, were at hand. The near approach of this wonderful event had been predicted by the apostles; the tradition of it was preserved by their earliest disciples; and those who understood in their literal sense the discourses of Christ himself, were obliged to expect the second and glorious coming of the Son of Man in the clouds, before that generation was totally extinguished, which had beheld his humble condition upon earth, and which might still be witness to the calamities of the Jews under Vespasian or Hadrian. The revolution of seventeen centuries has instructed us not to press too closely the mysterious language of prophecy and revelation; but as long as, for wise purposes, this error was permitted to subsist in the church, it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians, who lived in the awful expectation of that moment when the globe itself, and all the various race of mankind, should tremble at the appearance of their divine Judge.*

argued that point in his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii, p. 103. * This expectation was countenanced by the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, and by the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians. Erasmus removes the difficulty by the help of allegory and metaphor; and the learned Grotius ventures to insinuate, that for wise purposes the pious deception was permitted to take place. [It has been explained by some modern theologians, who find in it neither allegory nor deception. They say, that Jesus Christ, after having announced the ruin of Jerusalem and of the temple, speaks of his second coming and of the signs by which it was to be preceded; but that those, who believed it to be near at hand, were misled by the wrong meaning which they gave to two words, an error still maintained in our modern versions of Matthew's Gospel (xxiv, 29, 34). In the first of these verses are the words: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened," &c. The Greek word *εὐθέως*, which is there translated 'immediately,' signifies properly, *on a sudden, all at once*, so that it only designates the instantaneous manifestation of the signs which Jesus announces, and not the shortness of the time that was to intervene between them and "the days of tribulation," of which he had just spoken. Then verse 34 is thus rendered: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these

The ancient and popular doctrine of the millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ. As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to six thousand years.* By the same analogy it was inferred, that this long period of labour and contention, which was now almost elapsed,† would be succeeded by a joyful sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection. So pleasing was this hope to the mind of believers, that the *New Jerusalem*, the seat of this blissful kingdom, was quickly adorned with all the gayest colours of the imagination. A felicity consisting only of pure and spiritual pleasure would have appeared too refined for its inhabitants, who were still supposed to possess their human nature and senses. A garden of Eden, with the amusements of the pastoral life, was not suited to the advanced state of society

things shall be fulfilled." The words which Jesus addressed to his disciples, are *αὐτῆ γενεᾶ*, which mean, *the race, the succession of my disciples*; they apply to a class of men, not to a generation. The real import of the passage then is, that the race of men then commencing with his hearers, should not pass away, till all this happened; that is to say, that the succession of Christians would not cease before his coming. See Prof. Paulus's Comment. on the New Test. edit. 1802, tom. iii, p. 445, 455.—GUIZOT.] [When such nicely-varied interpretations support opposite opinions, on passages in Matthew's Gospel, we feel the loss of his Hebrew original. Scripture critics appeal to Greek expressions, as if they were the *very words* used by the speaker, when, as is well known, they were uttered to Jews, recorded in their language, and put into Greek by some unknown translator. (Hieron. de Vir. Illust. 3.) The difficulty of accurately representing the true sense of Hebrew in another language is admitted and notorious.—ED.]

* See Burnet's Sacred Theory, part 3, c. 5. This tradition may be traced as high as the author of the Epistle of Barnabas, who wrote in the first century, and who seems to have been half a Jew. † The primitive church of Antioch computed almost six thousand years from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ. Africanus, Lactantius, and the Greek church, have reduced that number to five thousand five hundred, and Eusebius has contented himself with five thousand two hundred years. Those calculations were formed on the Septuagint, which was universally received during the six first centuries. The authority of the Vulgate and of the Hebrew text has determined the moderns, Protestants as well as Catholics, to prefer a period of about

which prevailed under the Roman empire. A city was therefore erected of gold and precious stones, and a supernatural plenty of corn and wine was bestowed on the adjacent territory; in the free enjoyment of whose spontaneous productions, the happy and benevolent people was never to be restrained by any jealous laws of exclusive property.* The assurance of such a millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers, from Justin Martyr† and Irenæus who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine.‡ Though it might not be universally received, it appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers; and it seems so well adapted to the desires and apprehensions of mankind, that it must have contributed in a very considerable degree to the progress of the Christian faith. But when the edifice of the church was almost completed, the temporary support was laid aside. The doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion, and was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism.§ A mysterious prophecy, which still forms a part of the sacred canon, but which was thought to favour the exploded sentiment, has very narrowly escaped the proscription of the church.¶

four thousand years; though, in the study of profane antiquity, they often find themselves straitened by those narrow limits. * Most of these pictures were borrowed from a misinterpretation of Isaiah, Daniel, and the Apocalypse. One of the grossest images may be found in Irenæus (lib. 5, p. 455), the disciple of Papias, who had seen the apostle St. John. † See the second dialogue of Justin with Tryphon, and the seventh book of Lactantius. It is unnecessary to allege all the intermediate fathers, as the fact is not disputed. Yet the curious reader may consult Daillé *De usu Patrum*, lib. 2, c. 4. ‡ The testimony of Justin, of his own faith and that of his orthodox brethren, in the doctrine of a millennium, is delivered in the clearest and most solemn manner. (*Dialog. cum Tryphonte Jud.* p. 177, 178, edit. Benedictin.) If in the beginning of this important passage there is anything like an inconsistency, we may impute it, as we think proper, either to the author or to his transcribers. § Dupin, *Bibliothèque Ecclésiastique*, tom. i, p. 223, tom. ii, p. 366; and Mosheim, p. 720; though the latter of these learned divines is not altogether candid on this occasion. ¶ In the council of Laodicea (about the year 360), the Apocalypse was tacitly excluded from the sacred canon by the same churches of Asia to which it is addressed; and we may learn from the complaint of Sulpitius Severus, that their sentence had been ratified

Whilst the happiness and glory of a temporal reign were promised to the disciples of Christ, the most dreadful calamities were denounced against an unbelieving world. The edification of the new Jerusalem was to advance by equal steps with the destruction of the mystic Babylon; and as long as the emperors who reigned before Constantine persisted in the profession of idolatry, the epithet of Babylon was applied to the city and to the empire of Rome. A regular series was prepared of all the moral and physical evils which can afflict a flourishing nation; intestine discord, and the invasion of the fiercest barbarians from the unknown regions of the north; pestilence and famine, comets and eclipses, earthquakes and inundations.* All these were only so many preparatory and alarming signs of the great catastrophe of Rome, when the country of the Scipios and Cæsars should be consumed by a flame from heaven, and the city of the seven hills, with her palaces, her temples, and her triumphal arches, should be buried in a vast lake of fire and brimstone. It might, however, afford some consolation to Roman vanity, that the period of their empire would be that of the world itself; which, as it had once perished by the element of water, was destined to experience a second and speedy destruction from the element of fire. In the opinion of a general conflagration, the faith of the Christian very happily coincided with the tradition of the east, the philosophy of the stoics, and the analogy of nature; and even the country, which from religious motives, had been chosen for the origin and principal scene of the conflagration, was the best adapted for that purpose by natural and

by the greater number of Christians of his time. From what causes, then, is the Apocalypse at present so generally received by the Greek, the Roman, and the Protestant churches? The following ones may be assigned: 1. The Greeks were subdued by the authority of an impostor, who, in the sixth century, assumed the character of Dionysius the Areopagite. 2. A just apprehension, that the grammarians might become more important than the theologians, engaged the Council of Trent to fix the seal of their infallibility on all the books of Scripture contained in the Latin Vulgate, in the number of which the Apocalypse was fortunately included. (Fr. Paolo, *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino*, l. 2). 3. The advantage of turning those mysterious prophecies against the see of Rome inspired the Protestants with uncommon veneration for so useful an ally. See the ingenious and elegant discourses of the bishop of Litchfield on that unpromising subject. * Lactantius (*Institut. Divin.* 7. 15, &c.) relates the dismal

physical causes; by its deep caverns, beds of sulphur, and numerous volcanoes, of which those of *Ætna*, of *Vesuvius*, and of *Lipari*, exhibit a very imperfect representation. The calmest and most intrepid sceptic could not refuse to acknowledge, that the destruction of the present system of the world by fire was in itself extremely probable. The Christian who founded his belief much less on the fallacious arguments of reason than on the authority of tradition and the interpretation of Scripture, expected it with terror and confidence as a certain and approaching event; and as his mind was perpetually filled with the solemn idea, he considered every disaster that happened to the empire as an infallible symptom of an expiring world.*

The condemnation of the wisest and most virtuous of the Pagans on account of their ignorance or disbelief of the divine truth, seems to offend the reason and the humanity of the present age.† But the primitive church, whose faith was of a much firmer consistence, delivered over, without hesitation, to eternal torture, the far greater part of the human species. A charitable hope might perhaps be indulged in favour of Socrates, or some other sages of antiquity, who had consulted the light of reason before that of the gospel had arisen.‡ But it was unanimously affirmed,

tale of futurity with great spirit and eloquence. * On this subject every reader of taste will be entertained with the third part of Burnet's Sacred Theory. He blends philosophy, Scripture, and tradition, into one magnificent system; in the description of which he displays a strength of fancy not inferior to that of Milton himself. † And yet, whatever may be the language of individuals, it is still the public doctrine of all the Christian churches: nor can even our own refuse to admit the conclusions which must be drawn from the eighth and the eighteenth of her articles. The Jansenists, who have so diligently studied the works of the fathers, maintain this sentiment with distinguished zeal; and the learned M. de Tillemont never dismisses a virtuous emperor without pronouncing his damnation. Zuinglius is perhaps the only leader of a party who has ever adopted the milder sentiment; and he gave no less offence to the Lutherans than to the Catholics. See Bossuet, *Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes*, l. 2, c. 19—22.

‡ Justin and Clemens of Alexandria allow that some of the philosophers were instructed by the Logos; confounding its double signification, of the human reason, and of the divine word. [Both these fathers were prepared for the Christian faith by Platonism, and could not be so ungrateful to their eminent heathen teachers, as to exclude them from the mansions of the blest. Clemens, who was half a century later than Justin, has been censured for the use which

that those, who, since the birth or death of Christ, had obstinately persisted in the worship of the demons, neither deserved nor could expect a pardon from the irritated justice of the Deity. These rigid sentiments, which had been unknown to the ancient world, appear to have infused a spirit of bitterness into a system of love and harmony. The ties of blood and friendship were frequently torn asunder by the difference of religious faith; and the Christians, who in this world found themselves oppressed by the power of the Pagans, were sometimes seduced by resentment and spiritual pride to delight in the prospect of their future triumph. "You are fond of spectacles," exclaims the stern Tertullian, "expect the greatest of all spectacles, the last and eternal judgment of the universe. How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs and fancied gods groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars; so many celebrated poets trembling before the tribunal, not of Minos, but of Christ; so many tragedians, more tuneful in the expression of their own sufferings; so many dancers—!" But the humanity of the reader will permit me to draw a veil over the rest of this infernal description, which the zealous African pursues in a long variety of affected and unfeeling witticisms.*

he made of his philosophy in his religious writings, some part of which Cassiodorus suppressed in his translation on that account. R. Simon, Hist. Crit. p. 19, 20.—Ed.]

* Tertullian, de Spectaculis, c. 30. In order to ascertain the degree of authority which the zealous African had acquired, it may be sufficient to allege the testimony of Cyprian, the doctor and guide of all the western churches. (See Prudent. Hym. 13. 100). As often as he applied himself to his daily study of the writings of Tertullian, he was accustomed to say, "*Da mihi magistrum* ;—Give me my master." (Hieronym. de Viris Illustribus, tom. i, p. 284). [The translation of this passage in Tertullian is not faithful (*exacte*). The first sentence is mutilated, for it stands thus in the original: "*Ille dies, nationibus insperatus, ille derisus, cum tanti seculi vetustas et tot ejus nativitates, uno igne haurientur.*" Nor do we find there the exaggerated exclamations: "So many magistrates, so many sage philosophers, so many celebrated poets," &c: but simply "magistrates, philosophers, poets," &c.: "*præsides, philosophos, poetas,*" &c. Tertullian's vehemence, in

Doubtless there were many among the primitive Christians of a temper more suitable to the meekness and charity of their profession. There were many who felt a sincere compassion for the danger of their friends and countrymen, and who exerted the most benevolent zeal to save them from the impending destruction. The careless Polytheist, assailed by new and unexpected terrors, against which neither his priests nor his philosophers could afford him any certain protection, was very frequently terrified and subdued by the menace of eternal tortures. His fears might assist the progress of his faith and reason; and if he could once persuade himself to suspect that the Christian religion might possibly be true, it became an easy task to convince him that it was the safest and most prudent party that he could possibly embrace.

III. The supernatural gifts, which even in this life were ascribed to the Christians above the rest of mankind, must have conduced to their own comfort, and very frequently to the conviction of infidels. Besides the occasional prodigies, which might sometimes be effected by the immediate interposition of the deity, when he suspended the laws of nature for the service of religion, the Christian church, from the time of the apostles and their first disciples,* has claimed an uninterrupted succession of miraculous powers, the gift

this treatise, was employed for the purpose of deterring the Christians from attending the secular games, given to the Roman people by the emperor Severus. Sentiments of good-will and charity towards infidels may be found in other passages, where the spirit of the Gospel repressed the violence of human passion. In his Apology (c. 31) he says, "Qui ergo putaveris nihil nos de salute Caesarum curare, inspicie Dei voces, literas nostras. Scitote ex illis præceptum esse nobis ad redundationem benignitatis etiam pro inimicis Deum orare et persecutoribus bona precari. Sed etiam nominatim et manifeste orate, inquit (Christus) pro regibus et pro principibus et potestatibus, ut omnia sint tranquilla nobis."—GUIZOT.] [Tertullian, in a former note, was denounced by M. Guizot as an untrue exponent of early Christian sentiments. The first sentence, as given by him at full length, is far more violent and revolting than it is in Gibbon's abridged version. To make good his second charge of "exaggerated exclamations," he has himself had recourse to a most unpardonable mutilation. The "*so many*," which he censures as an amplifying interpolation, is actually in the original, and if used only once, it is applied to *all* by conjunctive particles.—ED.] * Notwithstanding the evasions of Dr. Middleton,

of tongues, of vision, and of prophecy; the power of expelling demons, of healing the sick, and of raising the dead. The knowledge of foreign languages was frequently communicated to the contemporaries of Irenæus, though Irenæus himself was left to struggle with the difficulties of a barbarous dialect whilst he preached the gospel to the natives of Gaul.* The divine inspiration, whether it was conveyed in the form of a waking or of a sleeping vision, is described as a favour very liberally bestowed on all ranks of the faithful, on women as on elders, on boys as well as upon bishops. When their devout minds were sufficiently prepared by a course of prayer, of fasting, and of vigils, to receive the extraordinary impulse, they were transported out of their senses, and delivered in ecstacy what was inspired, being mere organs of the holy spirit, just as a pipe or flute is of him who blows into it.† We may add, that the design of these visions was, for the most part, either to disclose the future history, or to guide the present administration of the church. The expulsion of the demons from the body of those unhappy persons whom they had been permitted to torment, was considered as a signal though ordinary triumph of religion, and is repeatedly alleged by the ancient apologists as the most convincing evidence of the truth of Christianity. The awful ceremony was usually performed in a public manner, and in the presence of a great number of spectators; the patient was relieved by the power or skill of the exorcist; and the vanquished demon was heard to confess, that he was one of the fabled gods of antiquity,

it is impossible to overlook the clear traces of visions and inspiration, which may be found in the apostolic fathers.

* Irenæus adv. Hæres. Proem. p. 3. Dr. Middleton (Free Inquiry, p. 96, &c.) observes, that as this pretension of all others was the most difficult to support by art, it was the soonest given up. The observation suits his hypothesis. [The attack first made by Mr. Davis on this passage is repeated by Dean Milman in milder terms. They both misconceived Gibbon's meaning. He does not say that Irenæus made "any allusion to the gift of tongues;" but on the contrary, that he was silent on the subject; that while this miraculous faculty was asserted to be in the church, the bishop of Lyons had acquired, by the natural course of study, the means of conversing with the Gauls of his diocese. His words: "non didicimus," "non affectavimus," clearly denote this.—ED.]

† Athenagoras in Legatione, Justin Martyr, Cohort. ad Gentes. Tertullian advers. Marcionit. l. 4. These descriptions are not very

who had impiously usurped the adoration of mankind.* But the miraculous cure of diseases of the most inveterate or even preternatural kind can no longer occasion any surprise, when we recollect that in the days of Irenæus, about the end of the second century, the resurrection of the dead was very far from being esteemed an uncommon event; that the miracle was frequently performed on necessary occasions, by great fasting and the joint supplication of the church of the place; and that the persons thus restored to their prayers had lived afterwards among them many years.† At such a period, when faith could boast of so many wonderful victories over death, it seems difficult to account for the scepticism of those philosophers who still rejected and derided the doctrine of the resurrection. A noble Grecian had rested on this important ground the whole controversy, and promised Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, that if he could be gratified with the sight of a single person who had been actually raised from the dead, he would immediately embrace the Christian religion. It is somewhat remarkable, that the prelate of the first eastern church, however anxious for the conversion of his friend, thought proper to decline this fair and reasonable challenge.‡

The miracles of the primitive church, after obtaining the sanction of ages, have been lately attacked in a very free and ingenious inquiry;§ which, though it has met with the most favourable reception from the public, appears to have excited a general scandal among the divines of our own as well as of the other Protestant churches of Europe.¶ Our different sentiments on this subject will be much less influenced by any particular arguments, than by our habits of study and reflection; and, above all, by the degree of the unlike the prophetic fury, for which Cicero (*de Divinat.* 2. 54) expresses so little reverence. * Tertullian (*Apolog.* c. 23) throws out a bold defiance to the Pagan magistrates. Of the primitive miracles, the power of exorcising is the only one which has been assumed by the Protestants. † Irenæus *adv. Hæreses*, l. 2, 56, 57; l. 5, c. 6. Mr. Dodwell (*Dissertat. ad Irenæum*, 2. 42) concludes, that the second century was still more fertile in miracles than the first.

‡ Theophilus *ad Autolyceum*, l. 1, p. 345, edit. Benedictin. Paris, 1742.

§ Dr. Middleton sent out his *Introduction* in the year 1747, published his *Free Inquiry* in 1749, and before his death, which happened in 1750, he had prepared a vindication of it against his numerous adversaries. ¶ The University of Oxford conferred degrees on his opponents. From the indignation of Mosheim, (p. 221) we may dis-

evidence which we have accustomed ourselves to require for the proof of a miraculous event. The duty of an historian does not call upon him to interpose his private judgment in this nice and important controversy; but he ought not to dissemble the difficulty of adopting such a theory as may reconcile the interest of religion with that of reason, of making a proper application of that theory, and of defining with precision the limits of that happy period exempt from error and from deceit, to which we might be disposed to extend the gift of supernatural powers. From the first of the fathers to the last of the popes, a succession of bishops, of saints, of martyrs, and of miracles, is continued without interruption; and the progress of superstition was so gradual and almost imperceptible, that we know not in what particular link we should break the chain of tradition. Every age bears testimony to the wonderful events by which it was distinguished; and its testimony appears no less weighty and respectable than that of the preceding generation, till we are insensibly led on to accuse our own inconsistency, if in the eighth or in the twelfth century we deny to the venerable Bede, or to the holy Bernard, the same degree of confidence which, in the second century, we had so liberally granted to Justin or to Irenæus.* If the truth of any of those miracles is appreciated by their apparent use and propriety, every age had unbelievers to convince, heretics to confute, and idolatrous nations to convert; and sufficient motives might always be produced to justify the interposition of Heaven. And yet, since every friend to revelation is persuaded of the reality, and every reasonable man is convinced of the cessation, of miraculous powers, it is evident that there must have been *some period* in which they were either suddenly or gradually withdrawn from the Christian church. Whatever era is chosen for that purpose, the death of the apostles, the conversion of the Roman empire, or the extinction of the Arian heresy,† the insensibility

cover the sentiments of the Lutheran divines.

* It may seem somewhat remarkable, that Bernard of Clairvaux, who records so many miracles of his friend St. Malachi, never takes any notice of his own, which, in their turn, however, are carefully related by his companions and disciples. In the long series of ecclesiastical history, does there exist a single instance of a saint asserting that he himself possessed the gift of miracles?

† The conversion of Constantine is the era which is most usually fixed by Protestants. The more rational divines are unwilling to admit the miracles of the fourth, whilst the more

of the Christians who lived at that time will equally afford a just matter of surprise. They still supported their pretensions after they had lost their power. Credulity performed the office of faith; fanaticism was permitted to assume the language of inspiration; and the effects of accident or contrivance were ascribed to supernatural causes. The recent experience of genuine miracles should have instructed the Christian world in the ways of Providence, and habituated their eye (if we may use a very inadequate expression) to the style of the divine Artist. Should the most skilful painter of modern Italy presume to decorate his feeble imitations with the name of Raphael or of Correggio, the insolent fraud would be soon discovered and indignantly rejected.

Whatever opinion may be entertained of the miracles of the primitive church since the time of the apostles, this unresisting softness of temper, so conspicuous among the believers of the second and third centuries, proved of some accidental benefit to the cause of truth and religion. In modern times, a latent and even involuntary scepticism adheres to the most pious dispositions. Their admission of supernatural truths is much less an active consent, than a cold and passive acquiescence. Accustomed long since to observe and to respect the invariable order of nature, our reason, or at least our imagination, is not sufficiently prepared to sustain the visible action of the Deity. But, in the first ages of Christianity, the situation of mankind was extremely different. The most curious, or the most credulous, among the Pagans were often persuaded to enter into a society, which asserted an actual claim to miraculous powers. The primitive Christians perpetually trod on mystic ground, and their minds were exercised by the habits of believing the most extraordinary events. They felt, or they fancied, that on every side they were incessantly

credulous are unwilling to reject those of the fifth century. [M. Guizot has abstained from all remarks on this "third cause." Dean Milman has made several, which are those of an enlightened and liberal mind. "Many Protestant divines," he says, "will now, without reluctance, confine miracles to the time of the apostles, or at least to the first century." He admits that the *post-apostolic* miracles are doubtful, and that the most credible among them may be ascribed to some "marvellous concurrence of secondary causes," between which and actual suspensions of the laws of nature, "an unphilosophic age" can draw no line of distinction.—ED.]

assaulted by demons, comforted by visions, instructed by prophecy, and surprisingly delivered from danger, sickness, and from death itself, by the supplications of the church. The real or imaginary prodigies, of which they so frequently conceived themselves to be the objects, the instruments, or the spectators, very happily disposed them to adopt with the same ease, but with far greater justice, the authentic wonders of the evangelic history; and thus miracles that exceeded not the measure of their own experience, inspired them with the most lively assurance of mysteries which were acknowledged to surpass the limits of their understanding. It is this deep impression of supernatural truths which has been so much celebrated under the name of faith; a state of mind described as the surest pledge of the divine favour and of future felicity, and recommended as the first or perhaps the only merit of a Christian. According to the more rigid doctors, the moral virtues, which may be equally practised by infidels, are destitute of any value or efficacy in the work of our justification.

IV. But the primitive Christian demonstrated his faith by his virtues; and it was very justly supposed that the divine persuasion which enlightened or subdued the understanding, must at the same time purify the heart, and direct the actions of the believer. The first apologists of Christianity who justify the innocence of their brethren, and the writers of a later period who celebrate the sanctity of their ancestors, display in the most lively colours, the reformation of manners which was introduced into the world by the preaching of the gospel. As it is my intention to remark only such human causes as were permitted to second the influence of revelation, I shall slightly mention two motives which might naturally render the lives of the primitive Christians much purer and more austere than those of their pagan contemporaries, or their degenerate successors—repentance for their past sins, and the laudable desire of supporting the reputation of the society in which they were engaged.

It is a very ancient reproach, suggested by the ignorance or the malice of infidelity, that the Christians allured into their party the most atrocious criminals, who, as soon as they were touched by a sense of remorse, were easily persuaded to wash away, in the water of baptism, the guilt of their past conduct, for which the temples of the gods

refused to grant them any expiation. But this reproach, when it is cleared from misrepresentation, contributes as much to the honour as it did to the increase of the church.* The friends of Christianity may acknowledge without a blush, that many of the most eminent saints had been before their baptism the most abandoned sinners. Those persons, who in the world had followed, though in an imperfect manner, the dictates of benevolence and propriety, derived such a calm satisfaction from the opinion of their own rectitude, as rendered them much less susceptible of the sudden emotions of shame, of grief, and of terror, which have given birth to so many wonderful conversions. After the example of their divine Master, the missionaries of the gospel disdained not the society of men, and especially the society of women, oppressed by the consciousness, and very often by the effects, of their vices. As they emerged from sin and superstition to the glorious hope of immortality, they resolved to devote themselves to a life, not only of virtue, but of penitence. The desire of perfection became the ruling passion of their soul; and it is well known, that while reason embraces a cold mediocrity, our passions hurry us, with rapid violence, over the space which lies between the most opposite extremes.

When the new converts had been enrolled in the number of the faithful, and were admitted to the sacraments of the church, they found themselves restrained from relapsing into their past disorders by another consideration, of a less spiritual, but of a very innocent and respectable nature. Any particular society that has departed from the great body of the nation, or the religion to which it belonged, immediately becomes the object of universal as well as invidious observation. In proportion to the smallness of its numbers, the character of the society may be affected by the virtue and vices of the persons who compose it; and every member is engaged to watch with the most vigilant attention over his own behaviour and over that of his brethren; since, as he must expect to incur a part of the common disgrace, he may hope to enjoy a share of the common reputation. When the Christians of Bithynia were brought before the tribunal of the younger Pliny, they assured the proconsul that, far from being engaged in any unlawful conspiracy, they were

* The imputations of Celsus and Julian, with the defence of the fathers, are very fairly stated by Spanheim, *Commentaire sur les*

bound by a solemn obligation to abstain from the commission of those crimes which disturb the private or public peace of society; from theft, robbery, adultery, perjury, and fraud.* Near a century afterwards, Tertullian, with an honest pride, could boast, that very few Christians had suffered by the hand of the executioner, except on account of their religion.† Their serious and sequestered life, averse to the gay luxury of the age, inured them to chastity, temperance, economy, and all the sober and domestic virtues. As the greater number were of some trade or profession, it was incumbent on them, by the strictest integrity and the fairest dealing, to remove the suspicions which the profane are too apt to conceive against the appearances of sanctity. The contempt of the world exercised them in the habits of humility, meekness, and patience. The more they were persecuted, the more closely they adhered to each other. Their mutual charity and unsuspecting confidence has been remarked by infidels, and was too often abused by perfidious friends.‡

It is a very honourable circumstance for the morals of the primitive Christians, that even their faults, or rather errors, were derived from an excess of virtue. The bishops and doctors of the church, whose evidence attests, and whose authority might influence, the professions, the principles, and even the practice, of their contemporaries, had studied the Scriptures with less skill than devotion; and they often received, in the most literal sense, those rigid precepts of Christ and the apostles, to which the prudence of succeeding commentators has applied a loose and more figurative mode of interpretation. Ambitious to exalt the perfection of the gospel above the wisdom of philosophy, the zealous fathers have carried the duties of self-mortification, of purity, and of

Cæsars de Julian, p. 463.

* Plin. Epist. 10. 97.

† Tertullian, Apolog. c. 44. He adds, however, with some degree of hesitation, "Aut si aliud, jam non Christianus." [Tertullian says positively, "*no Christian*;" "nemo illic Christianus;" still he has so qualified the expression by the words which Gibbon has quoted in this note, as seemingly to mean that he knew none.—GUIZOT.] [Dean Milman has undoubtedly given the true meaning of the passage, viz. that any one guilty of such crimes, "ceased to be a Christian." As an offending Quaker is now disowned by the society, so at that time an offending Christian was no longer a member of the church.—ED.] ‡ The philosopher Peregrinus (of whose life and death Lucian has left us so entertaining

patience, to a height which it is scarcely possible to attain, and much less to preserve, in our present state of weakness and corruption. A doctrine so extraordinary and so sublime must inevitably command the veneration of the people; but it was ill calculated to obtain the suffrage of those worldly philosophers, who, in the conduct of this transitory life, consult only the feelings of nature and the interest of society.*

There are two very natural propensities which we may distinguish in the most virtuous and liberal dispositions—the love of pleasure, and the love of action. If the former be refined by art and learning, improved by the charms of social intercourse, and corrected by a just regard to economy, to health, and to reputation, it is productive of the greatest part of the happiness of private life. The love of action is a principle of a much stronger and more doubtful nature. It often leads to anger, to ambition, and to revenge; but when it is guided by the sense of propriety and benevolence, it becomes the parent of every virtue; and if those virtues are accompanied with equal abilities, a family, a state, or an empire, may be indebted for their safety and prosperity to the undaunted courage of a single man. To the love of pleasure we may therefore ascribe most of the agreeable, to the love of action we may attribute most of the useful and respectable, qualifications. The character in which both the one and the other should be united and harmonized would seem to constitute the most perfect idea of human nature. The insensible and inactive disposition which should be supposed alike destitute of both, would be rejected, by the common consent of mankind, as utterly incapable of procuring any happiness to the individual, or any public benefit to the world. But it was not in *this* world that the primitive Christians were desirous of making themselves either agreeable or useful.

The acquisition of knowledge, the exercise of our reason or fancy, and the cheerful flow of unguarded conversation, may employ the leisure of a liberal mind. Such amusements, however, were rejected with abhorrence, or admitted with the utmost caution, by the severity of the fathers, who

an account) imposed, for a long time, on the credulous simplicity of the Christians of Asia. * See a very judicious treatise of Barbeyrac *sur la Morale des Pères*.

despised all knowledge that was not useful to salvation, and who considered all levity of discourse as a criminal abuse of the gift of speech. In our present state of existence the body is so inseparably connected with the soul, that it seems to be our interest to taste, with innocence and moderation, the enjoyments of which that faithful companion is susceptible. Very different was the reasoning of our devout predecessors; vainly aspiring to imitate the perfection of angels, they disdained, or they affected to disdain, every earthly and corporeal delight.* Some of our senses indeed are necessary for our preservation, others for our subsistence, and others again for our information, and thus far it was impossible to reject the use of them. The first sensation of pleasure was marked as the first moment of their abuse. The unfeeling candidate for heaven was instructed, not only to resist the grosser allurements of the taste or smell, but even to shut his ears against the profane harmony of sounds, and to view with indifference the most finished productions of human art. Gay apparel, magnificent houses, and elegant furniture, were supposed to unite the double guilt of pride and of sensuality; a simple and mortified appearance was more suitable to the Christian who was certain of his sins, and doubtful of his salvation. In their censures of luxury, the fathers are extremely minute and circumstantial; † and among the various articles which excite their pious indignation, we may enumerate false hair, garments of any colour except white, instruments of music, vases of gold or silver, downy pillows (as Jacob reposed his head on a stone), white bread, foreign wines, public salutations, the use of warm baths, and the practice of shaving the beard, which, according to the expression of Tertullian, is a lie against our own faces, and an impious attempt to improve the works of the Creator. ‡ When Christianity was introduced among the rich and the polite, the observation of these singular laws was left, as it would be at present, to the few who were ambitious of superior sanctity. But it is always easy, as well as agreeable, for the inferior ranks of mankind to claim a merit from the contempt of that pomp and pleasure

* Lactant. Institut. Divin. l. 6, c. 20—22. † Consult a work of Clemens of Alexandria, entitled the *Pedagogue*, which contains the rudiments of ethics as they were taught in the most celebrated of the Christian schools. ‡ Tertullian, de Spectaculis, c. 23. Clemens

which fortune has placed beyond their reach. The virtue of the primitive Christians, like that of the first Romans, was very frequently guarded by poverty and ignorance.

The chaste severity of the fathers, in whatever related to the commerce of the two sexes, flowed from the same principle; their abhorrence of every enjoyment which might gratify the sensual, and degrade the spiritual, nature of man. It was their favourite opinion, that if Adam had preserved his obedience to the Creator, he would have lived for ever in a state of virgin purity, and that some harmless mode of vegetation might have peopled paradise with a race of innocent and immortal beings.* The use of marriage was permitted only to his fallen posterity, as a necessary expedient to continue the human species, and as a restraint, however imperfect, on the natural licentiousness of desire. The hesitation of the orthodox casuists on this interesting subject betrays the perplexity of men, unwilling to approve an institution which they were compelled to tolerate.† The enumeration of the very whimsical laws which they most circumstantially imposed on the marriage bed, would force a smile from the young and a blush from the fair. It was their unanimous sentiment, that a first marriage was adequate to all the purposes of nature and of society. The sensual connexion was refined into a resemblance of the mystic union of Christ with his church, and was pronounced to be indissoluble either by divorce or by death. The practice of second nuptials was branded with the name of a legal adultery; and the persons who were guilty of so scandalous an offence against Christian purity, were soon excluded from the honours, and even from the aims, of the church.‡ Since desire was imputed as a crime, and marriage was tolerated as a defect, it was consistent with the same principles to consider a state of celibacy as the nearest approach to the divine perfection. It was with the utmost difficulty that ancient Rome could support the institution of six vestals,§ but the primitive church was filled with a

Alexandrin. *Pædagog.* l. 3, c. 8.

* Beausobre, *Hist. Critique du Manichéisme*, l. 7, c. 3. Justin, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustin, &c. strongly inclined to this opinion.

† Some of the Gnostic heretics were more consistent; they rejected the use of marriage.

‡ See a chain of tradition, from Justin Martyr to Jerome, in the *Morale des Pères*, c. 4, 6—26.

§ See a very curious Dissertation on the Vestals, in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. iv, p. 161—227.

great number of persons of either sex, who had devoted themselves to the profession of perpetual chastity.* A few of these, among whom we may reckon the learned Origen, judged it the most prudent to disarm the tempter.† Some were insensible and some were invincible against the assaults of the flesh. Disdaining an ignominious flight, the virgins of the warm climate of Africa encountered the enemy in the closest engagement; they permitted priests and deacons to share their bed, and gloried amidst the flames in their unsullied purity. But insulted nature sometimes vindicated her rights, and this new species of martyrdom served only to introduce a new scandal into the church.‡ Among the Christian Ascetics, however (a name which they soon acquired from their painful exercise), many, as they were less presumptuous, were probably more successful. The loss of sensual pleasure was supplied and compensated by spiritual pride. Even the multitude of Pagans were inclined to estimate the merit of the sacrifice by its apparent difficulty; and it was in the praise of these chaste spouses of Christ that the fathers have poured forth the troubled stream of their eloquence.§ Such are the early traces of monastic principles and institutions, which, in a subsequent age, have counterbalanced all the temporal advantages of Christianity.¶

The Christians were not less averse to the business than to the pleasures of this world. The defence of our persons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the Notwithstanding the honours and rewards which were bestowed on those virgins, it was difficult to procure a sufficient number; nor could the dread of the most horrible death always restrain their incontinence.

* Cupiditatem procreandi aut unam scimus aut nullam. Minucius Felix, c. 31. Justin Apolog. Major. Athenagoras in Legat. c. 28. Tertullian de Cultu Fœmin. l. 2. † Eusebius, l. 6, 8. Before the fame of Origen had excited envy and persecution, this extraordinary action was rather admired than censured. As it was his general practice to allegorize Scripture, it seems unfortunate that, in this instance only, he should have adopted the literal sense. ‡ Cyprian, Epist. 4, and Dodwell, Dissertat. Cypriane. 3. Something like this rash attempt was long afterwards imputed to the founder of the order of Fontevault. Bayle has amused himself and his readers on that very delicate subject.

§ Dupin (Bibliothèque Ecclesiastique, tom. i, p. 195) gives a particular account of the dialogue of the ten virgins, as it was composed by Methodius, bishop of Tyre. The praises of virginity are excessive.

¶ The Ascetics (as early as the second century) made a public profession of mortifying their bodies, and of abstaining from the use of

patient doctrine which enjoined an unlimited forgiveness of past injuries, and commanded them to invite the repetition of fresh insults. Their simplicity was offended by the use of oaths, by the pomp of magistracy, and by the active contention of public life; nor could their humane ignorance be convinced, that it was lawful on any occasion to shed the blood of our fellow-creatures, either by the sword of justice, or by that of war; even though their criminal or hostile attempts should threaten the peace and safety of the whole community.* It was acknowledged, that under a less perfect law, the powers of the Jewish constitution had been exercised, with the approbation of Heaven, by inspired prophets and by anointed kings. The Christians felt and confessed that such institutions might be necessary for the present system of the world, and they cheerfully submitted to the authority of their pagan governors. But while they inculcated the maxims of passive obedience, they refused to take any active part in the civil administration or the military defence of the empire. Some indulgence might perhaps be allowed to those persons who before their conversion were already engaged in such violent and sanguinary occupations; † but it was impossible that the Christians, without renouncing a more sacred duty, could assume the character of soldiers, of magistrates, or of princes. ‡ This indolent, or

flesh and wine. Mosheim, p. 310. * See the *Morale des Pères*. The same patient principles have been revived since the Reformation by the Socinians, the modern Anabaptists, and the Quakers. Barclay, the apologist of the Quakers, has protected his brethren, by the authority of the primitive Christians, p. 542—549. † Tertullian, *Apolog.* c. 21. *De Idololatriâ*, c. 17, 18. Origen *contra Celsum*, l. 5, p. 253; l. 7, p. 348; l. 8, p. 423—428. ‡ Tertullian (*de Coronâ Militis*, c. 11) suggests to them the expedient of deserting; a counsel which, if it had been generally known, was not very proper to conciliate the favour of the emperors towards the Christian sect. [Tertullian does not suggest to the soldiers “the expedient of deserting;” he says, that they ought to be unceasingly on their guard, so that while engaged in the service they might do nothing contrary to the law of God, and that they should suffer martyrdom or *openly* quit the service, rather than yield a cowardly conformity. He does not pronounce decidedly that Christians ought not to serve in the army; he even concludes by saying, “*Putâ denique licere militiam usque ad causam coronæ.*” (*Apolog.* c. 2, p. 127, 128). In many other passages, he shows that the army was full of Christians. “*Hesterni sumus, et omnia vestra implevimus; urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa.*” (*Apolog.* c. 37, p. 20). “*Navigamus et nos vobiscum et militamus.*”

even criminal, disregard to the public welfare, exposed them to the contempt and reproaches of the Pagans, who very frequently asked, what must be the fate of the empire, attacked on every side by the barbarians, if all mankind should adopt the pusillanimous sentiments of the new sect?*

To this insulting question the Christian apologists returned obscure and ambiguous answers, as they were unwilling to reveal the secret cause of their security; the expectation that, before the conversion of mankind was accomplished, war, government, the Roman empire, and the world itself, would be no more. It may be observed, that, in this instance likewise, the situation of the first Christians coincided very happily with their religious scruples, and that their aversion to an active life contributed rather to excuse them from the service, than to exclude them from the honours, of the state and army.

(Ib. c. 42, p. 34). Origen indeed (contra Cel. l. 8) seems to have been more strict. But he often also moderated this extreme rigour, which was then perhaps wanted to produce great effects; and he speaks too of the military profession as being honourable (l. 4, c. 218).—GUIZOT.] [This passage was not included, even by Mr. Davis, in the “misrepresentations of Tertullian,” which he laid to Gibbon’s charge, and Dean Milman admits, that M. Guizot is “unfortunate in the defence” which he attempts. The distinction between telling soldiers “*openly to quit the service,*” and suggesting “*the expedient of deserting,*” is difficult to discern.—ED.] * As well as we can judge from the mutilated representation of Origen, (l. 8, p. 423) his adversary, Celsus, had urged this objection with great force and candour. [We ought not to be surprised that the early Christians refused to take any part in public business. It was the natural consequence of the antagonism of their principles to the customs, laws, and practices of the Pagan world. As Christians, they could not enter the senate, which, as Gibbon himself states, always met in a temple or other sacred edifice; and each member, before he took his place, poured some drops of wine or burned incense on the altar; as Christians, they could not join in festivals and banquets, where libations were always offered. In fact, as “the innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of public and private life,” Christians could not share in them, without being, according to their principles, guilty of impiety. It was not so much then by any effect of their doctrines, as by a result of their situation, that they were kept apart from public business. They were as active as the Pagans, whenever they had not to encounter this obstacle. “*Proinde nos solum Deum adoramus, et vobis in rebus aliis læti inservimus.*” (Just. Mart. Apol. p. 64).—GUIZOT.] [This quotation Dean Milman reminds M. Guizot is irrelevant, for it merely relates to the payment of taxes.—ED.]

V. But the human character, however it may be exalted or depressed by a temporary enthusiasm, will return by degrees to its proper and natural level, and will resume those passions that seem the most adapted to its present condition. The primitive Christians were dead to the business and pleasures of the world; but their love of action, which could never be entirely extinguished, soon revived, and found a new occupation in the government of the church. A separate society, which attacked the established religion of the empire, was obliged to adopt some form of internal policy, and to appoint a sufficient number of ministers, intrusted not only with the spiritual functions, but even with the temporal direction, of the Christian commonwealth. The safety of that society, its honour, its aggrandizement, were productive, even in the most pious minds, of a spirit of patriotism, such as the Romans had felt for the republic; and sometimes, of a similar indifference in the use of whatever means might probably conduce to so desirable an end. The ambition of raising themselves or their friends to the honours and offices of the church was disguised by the laudable intention of devoting to the public benefit the power and consideration, which, for that purpose only, it became their duty to solicit. In the exercise of their functions they were frequently called upon to detect the errors of heresy or the arts of faction, to oppose the designs of perfidious brethren, to stigmatize their characters with deserved infamy, and to expel them from the bosom of a society, whose peace and happiness they had attempted to disturb. The ecclesiastical governors of the Christians were taught to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove; but as the former was refined, so the latter was insensibly corrupted, by the habits of government. In the church as well as in the world, the persons who were placed in any public station rendered themselves considerable by their eloquence and firmness, by their knowledge of mankind, and by their dexterity in business; and while they concealed from others, and perhaps from themselves, the secret motives of their conduct, they too frequently relapsed into all the turbulent passions of active life, which were tinged with an additional degree of bitterness and obstinacy from the infusion of spiritual zeal.

The government of the church has often been the subject, as well as the prize, of religious contention. The hostile disputants of Rome, of Paris, of Oxford, and of Geneva, have alike struggled to reduce the primitive and apostolic model* to the respective standards of their own policy. The few who have pursued this inquiry with more candour and impartiality are of opinion,† that the apostles declined the office of legislation, and rather chose to endure some partial scandals and divisions, than to exclude the Christians of a future age from the liberty of varying their forms of ecclesiastical government according to the changes of times and circumstances. The scheme of policy, which, under their approbation, was adopted for the use of the first century, may be discovered from the practice of Jerusalem, of Ephesus, or of Corinth. The societies which were instituted in the cities of the Roman empire were united only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution. The want of discipline and human learning was supplied by the occasional assistance of the *prophets*,‡ who were called to that function without distinction of age, of sex, or of natural abilities, and who, as often as they felt the divine impulse, poured forth the effusions of the Spirit in the assembly of the faithful. But these extraordinary gifts were frequently abused or misapplied by the prophetic teachers. They displayed them at an improper season, presumptuously disturbed the service of the assembly, and by their pride or mistaken zeal they introduced, particularly into the apostolic church of Corinth, a long and melancholy train of disorders.§ As the institution of prophets became useless, and even pernicious, their powers were withdrawn, and their office abolished. The public functions of religion were solely intrusted to the established ministers of the church, the *bishops* and the *presbyters*; two appellations, which, in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the same office and the same

* The aristocratical party in France, as well as in England, has strenuously maintained the divine origin of bishops. But the Calvinistical presbyters were impatient of a superior; and the Roman pontiff refused to acknowledge an equal. See Fra Paolo. † In the history of the Christian hierarchy, I have, for the most part, followed the learned and candid Mosheim. ‡ For the prophets of the primitive church, see Mosheim, *Dissertationes ad Hist. Eccles. pertinentes*, tom. ii, p. 132—208. § See the epistles of St. Paul, and of Clemens, to

order of persons.* The name of presbyter was expressive of their age, or rather of their gravity and wisdom. The title of bishop denoted their inspection over the faith and manners of the Christians who were committed to their pastoral care. In proportion to the respective numbers of the faithful, a larger or smaller number of these *episcopal presbyters*, guided each infant congregation with equal authority and with united counsels.†

But the most perfect equality of freedom requires the directing hand of a superior magistrate; and the order of public deliberations soon introduces the office of a president, invested at least with the authority of collecting the sentiments, and of executing the resolutions, of the assembly. A regard for the public tranquillity, which would so frequently have been interrupted by annual or occasional elections, induced the primitive Christians to constitute an honourable and perpetual magistracy; and to choose one of the wisest and most holy among their presbyters to execute, during his life, the duties of their ecclesiastical governor. It was under these circumstances that the lofty title of bishop began to raise itself above the humble appellation of presbyter; and while the latter remained the most natural distinction for the members of every Christian senate, the former was appropriated to the dignity of its new president.‡ The advantages of this episcopal form of

the Corinthians. * The first ministers appointed in the church were *deacons*, and were seven in number. (Acts, c. 6, v. 1—7). The distribution of alms was their office, in which females also assisted. After the deacons, elders or priests, *πρεσβύτεροι*, were chosen, to maintain order in the community, regulate its proceedings, and act in its name. Bishops were next charged with the duty of watching over the faith and instruction of the believers. The apostles themselves instituted many bishops. Tertullian, (adv. Marc. c. 5), Clemens Alexandrinus, and several fathers in the second and third century, leave no room for doubt on this point. The equality of rank, which prevailed among these various officials, did not prevent each having his distinct functions, even at the outset. They became much more so afterwards. See Planck, *Geschichte der Christlich-Kirchen Verfassung*, 1 Band, p. 24. — GUIZOT. [The instructions which Paul gave to Titus for choosing bishops, or, more correctly, “overlookers,” were soon disregarded.—ED.] † Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity*, l. 7. ‡ See Jerome ad Titum, c. 1, and Epist. 85 (in the *Benedictine* edition, 101), and the elaborate apology of Blondel, *pro sententia Hieronymi*. The ancient state, as it is described by Jerome, of the bishop and presbyters of Alexandria, receives a remarkable confirmation from the patriarch Eutychius,

government, which appears to have been introduced before the end of the first century,* were so obvious and so important for the future greatness, as well as the present peace, of Christianity, that it was adopted without delay by all the societies which were already scattered over the empire, had acquired in a very early period the sanction of antiquity.† and is still revered by the most powerful churches, both of the east and of the west, as a primitive and even as a divine establishment.‡ It is needless to observe, that the pious and humble presbyters, who were first dignified with the episcopal title, could not possess, and would probably have rejected, the power and pomp which now encircle the tiara of the Roman pontiff, or the mitre of a German prelate. But we may define in a few words, the narrow limits of their original jurisdiction, which was chiefly of a spiritual, though in some instances of a temporal, nature.§ It consisted in the administration of the sacraments and discipline of the church; the superintendency of religious ceremonies, which imperceptibly increased in number and variety; the consecration of ecclesiastical ministers, to whom the bishop assigned their respective functions; the management of the public fund; and the determination of all such differences as the faithful were unwilling to expose before the tribunal of an idolatrous judge. These powers, during a short period, were exercised according to the advice of the presbyterial college, and with the consent and approbation of the assembly of Christians. The primitive bishops were considered only as the first

(Annal. tom. i, p. 330, vers. Pocock.) whose testimony I know not how to reject, in spite of all the objections of the learned Pearson in his *Vindicie Ignatiane*, part 1, c. 11. * See the introduction to the *Apocalypse*. Bishops, under the name of angels, were already instituted in the seven cities of Asia. And yet the epistle of Clemens (which is probably of as ancient a date) does not lead us to discover any traces of episcopacy either at Corinth or Rome. † *Nulla ecclesia sine episcopo*, has been a fact as well as a maxim since the time of Tertullian and Irenæus. ‡ After we have passed the difficulties of the first century, we find the episcopal government universally established, till it was interrupted by the republican genius of the Swiss and German reformers. § See Mosheim in the first and second centuries. Ignatius (ad Smymæos, c. 3, &c.) is fond of exalting the episcopal dignity. Le Clerc (*Hist. Eccles.* p. 569) very bluntly censures his conduct. Mosheim, with a more critical judgment (p. 161), suspects the purity even of the smaller epistles.

of their equals, and the honourable servants of a free people. Whenever the episcopal chair became vacant by death, a new president was chosen among the presbyters by the suffrage of the whole congregation, every member of which supposed himself invested with a sacerdotal character.*

Such was the mild and equal constitution by which the Christians were governed more than a hundred years after the death of the apostles. Every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic; and although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual as well as friendly intercourse of letters and deputations, the Christian world was not yet connected by any supreme authority or legislative assembly. As the numbers of the faithful were gradually multiplied, they discovered the advantages that might result from a closer union of their interests and designs. Towards the end of the second century, the churches of Greece and Asia adopted the useful institutions of provincial synods,† and they may justly be supposed to have borrowed the model of a representative council from the celebrated examples of their own country, the Amphictyons, the Achæan league, or the assemblies of the Ionian cities. It was soon established

* *Nonne et Laici sacerdotes sumus?* Tertullian, *Exhort. ad Castitat.* c. 7. As the human heart is still the same, several of the observations which Mr. Hume has made on enthusiasm (*Essays*, vol. i, p. 76, quarto edit.), may be applied even to real inspiration. † Synods were not the first collective bodies, into which separate churches drew themselves together. Dioceses were first formed by the union of many small country churches with that of a neighbouring city. Several of the latter then combined with one of higher celebrity, to which the designation of metropolitan was given. Dioceses do not appear till towards the beginning of the second century. Before that time there were not so many country churches as to require incorporation; and it is about the middle of the same century, that we discover the first traces of metropolitan government. Provincial synods did not begin to be held till about the middle of the third century; but other synods preceded them. History gives us positive ideas of some that met towards the end of the second century—at Ephesus, Jerusalem, Rome, and in Pontus, to settle the dispute between the Latin and Asiatic churches, respecting the time at which Easter should be celebrated. But these synods were without regular form, nor were they held periodically. This systematic arrangement began with the provincial synods, which were composed of the bishops of a district, assembled under their metropolitan chief. Planck's *Geschichte*, *Stor-Band*, p. 90.—Guzot. [This gradual organization of the church was

as a custom and as a law, that the bishops of the independent churches should meet in the capital of the province at the stated periods of spring and autumn. Their deliberations were assisted by the advice of a few distinguished presbyters, and moderated by the presence of a listening multitude.* Their decrees, which were styled canons, regulated every important controversy of faith and discipline; and it was natural to believe that a liberal effusion of the Holy Spirit would be poured on the united assembly of the delegates of the Christian people. The institution of synods was so well suited to private ambition and to public interest, that in the space of a few years it was received throughout the whole empire. A regular correspondence was established between the provincial councils, which mutually communicated and approved their respective proceedings; and the Catholic church soon assumed the form, and acquired the strength, of a great federative republic.† As the legislative authority of the particular churches was insensibly superseded by the use of councils, the bishops obtained by their alliance a much larger share of executive and arbitrary power; and as soon as they were connected by a sense of their common interest, they were enabled to attack, with united vigour, the original rights of their clergy and people. The prelates of the third century imperceptibly changed the language of exhortation into that of command, scattered the seeds of future usurpations, and supplied, by scripture allegories and declamatory rhetoric, their deficiency of force and of reason. They exalted the unity and power of the church, as it was represented in the *episcopal office*, of which every bishop enjoyed an equal and undivided portion.‡ Princes and magistrates, it was often repeated, might boast an earthly claim to a transitory dominion: it was the episcopal authority alone which was

more probably suggested by Plato's Republic than by the Greek Leagues and assemblies, to which it is attributed by Gibbon.—ED.]

* Acta Concil. Carthag. apud Cyprian. edit. Fell. p. 158. The council was composed of eighty-seven bishops from the provinces of Mauritania, Numidia, and Africa; some presbyters and deacons assisted at the assembly; *presente plebis maxima parte.* † *Aguntur præterea per Græcias illas, certis in locis concilia, &c.* Tertullian de Jejuniiis, c. 13. The African mentions it as a recent and foreign institution. The coalition of the Christian churches is very ably explained by Mosneim, p. 164—170. ‡ Cyprian, in his admired treatise De

derived from the Deity, and extended itself over another world. The bishops were the vicegerents of Christ, the successors of the apostles, and the mystic substitutes of the high priest of the Mosaic law. Their exclusive privilege of conferring the sacerdotal character invaded the freedom both of clerical and of popular elections; and if, in the administration of the church, they still consulted the judgment of the presbyters, or the inclination of the people, they most carefully inculcated the merit of such a voluntary condescension. The bishops acknowledged the supreme authority which resided in the assembly of their brethren; but in the government of his peculiar diocese, each of them exacted from his *flock* the same implicit obedience as if that favourite metaphor had been literally just, and as if the shepherd had been of a more exalted nature than that of his sheep.* This obedience, however, was not imposed without some efforts on one side, and some resistance on the other. The democratical part of the constitution was, in many places, very warmly supported by the zealous or interested opposition of the inferior clergy. But their patriotism received the ignominious epithets of faction and schism; and the episcopal cause was indebted for its rapid progress to the labours of many active prelates, who, like Cyprian of Carthage, could reconcile the arts of the most ambitious statesman with the Christian virtues which seem adapted to the character of a saint and martyr.†

The same causes which at first had destroyed the equality of the presbyters, introduced among the bishops a pre-eminence of rank, and from thence a superiority of jurisdiction. As often as in the spring and autumn they met in provincial synod, the difference of personal merit and reputation was very sensibly felt among the members of the assembly, and the multitude was governed by the wisdom and eloquence of the few. But the order of public proceedings required a more regular and less invidious distinction: the office of perpetual presidents in the councils

Unitate Ecclesiae, p. 75—86.

* We may appeal to the whole tenor of Cyprian's conduct, of his doctrine, and of his epistles. Le Clerc, in a short life of Cyprian (Bibliothèque Universelle, tom. xii, p. 207—378), has laid him open with great freedom and accuracy.

† If Novatus, Felicissimus, &c., whom the bishop of Carthage expelled from his church and from Africa, were not the most detest-

of each province was conferred on the bishops of the principal city; and these aspiring prelates, who soon acquired the lofty titles of metropolitans and primates, secretly prepared themselves to usurp over their episcopal brethren the same authority which the bishops had so lately assumed above the college of presbyters.* Nor was it long before an emulation of pre-eminence and power prevailed among the metropolitans themselves, each of them affecting to display, in the most pompous terms, the temporal honours and advantages of the city over which he presided; the numbers and opulence of the Christians who were subject to their pastoral care; the saints and martyrs who had risen among them; and the purity with which they preserved the tradition of the faith, as it had been transmitted, through a series of orthodox bishops, from the apostle or the apostolic disciple to whom the foundation of their church was ascribed.† From every cause, either of a civil or of an ecclesiastical nature, it was easy to foresee that Rome must enjoy the respect, and would soon claim the obedience, of the provinces. The society of the faithful bore a just proportion to the capital of the empire; and the Roman church was the greatest, the most numerous, and, in regard to the west, the most ancient, of all the Christian establishments, many of which had received their religion from the pious labours of her missionaries. Instead of *one* apostolic founder, the utmost boast of Antioch, of Ephesus, or of Corinth, the banks of the Tiber were supposed to have been honoured with the preaching and martyrdom of the *two* most eminent among the apostles;‡ and the bishops of Rome very prudently claimed the inheritance of whatsoever prerogatives were attributed either to the

able monsters of wickedness, the zeal of Cyprian must occasionally have prevailed over his veracity. For a very just account of these obscure quarrels, see Mosheim, p. 497—512. * Mosheim, p. 269. 574. Dupin, *Antiquæ Eccles. Disciplin.* p. 19, 20. † Tertullian, in a distinct treatise, has pleaded against the heretics, the right of prescription, as it was held by the apostolic churches. ‡ The journey of St. Peter to Rome is mentioned by most of the ancients (see Eusebius, 2. 25), maintained by all the Catholics, allowed by some Protestants (see Pearson and Dodwell de Success. *Episcop. Roman.*), but has been vigorously attacked by Spanheim (*Miscellanea Sacra*, 3. 3). According to father Hardouin, the monks of the thirteenth century, who composed the *Æneid*, represented St Peter under the

person or to the office of St. Peter.* The bishops of Italy and of the provinces were disposed to allow them a primacy of order and association (such was their very accurate expression) in the Christian aristocracy.† But the power of a monarch was rejected with abhorrence; and the aspiring genius of Rome experienced, from the nations of Asia and Africa, a more vigorous resistance to her spiritual, than she had formerly done to her temporal, dominion. The patriotic Cyprian, who ruled with the most absolute sway the church of Carthage and the provincial synods, opposed with resolution and success the ambition of the Roman pontiff, artfully connected his own cause with that of the eastern bishops, and, like Hannibal, sought out new allies in the heart of Asia.‡ If this Punic war was carried on without any effusion of blood, it was owing much less to the moderation than to the weakness of the contending prelates. Invectives and excommunications were *their* only weapons; and these, during the progress of the whole controversy, they hurled against each other with equal fury and devotion. The hard necessity of censuring either a pope, or a saint and martyr, distresses the modern Catholics, whenever they are obliged to relate the particulars of a dispute, in which the champions of religion indulged such passions as seem much more adapted to the senate or to the camp.§

The progress of the ecclesiastical authority gave birth to the memorable distinction of the laity and of the clergy, which had been unknown to the Greeks and Romans.¶

allegorical character of the Trojan hero. * It is in French only, that the famous allusion to St. Peter's name is exact. *Tu es Pierre, et sur cette pierre.*—The same is imperfect in Greek, Latin, Italian, &c., and totally unintelligible in our Teutonic languages. [In the language spoken by Jesus, the allusion is exact. (Matthew, c. 16, v. 17) *Κεφα*, in Syro-Chaldaic, signifies a *basis, foundation, rock*, and Peter had likewise the name of *Κεφας*.—GUIZOT.] † Irenæus adv. Hæreses, 3. 3. Tertullian de Præscription. c. 36, and Cyprian, Epistol. 27. 55. 71. 75. Le Clerc (Hist. Eccles. p. 764) and Mosheim (p. 258. 278) labour in the interpretation of these passages. But the loose and rhetorical style of the fathers often appears favourable to the pretensions of Rome.

‡ See the sharp epistle from Firmilianus, bishop of Cesarea, to Stephen, bishop of Rome, ap. Cyprian, Epistol. 75. § Concerning this dispute of the re-baptism of heretics, see the epistles of Cyprian, and the seventh book of Eusebius. ¶ For the origin of these words, see Mosheim, p. 141, Spanheim, Hist. Ecclesiast. p. 633. The distinction of *clerus* and *laicus* was established before the time of Tertullian.

The former of these appellations comprehended the body of the Christian people; the latter, according to the signification of the word, was appropriated to the chosen portion that had been set apart for the service of religion; a celebrated order of men, which has furnished the most important, though not always the most edifying, subjects for modern history. Their mutual hostilities sometimes disturbed the peace of the infant church, but their zeal and activity were united in the common cause; and the love of power, which (under the most artful disguises) could insinuate itself into the breasts of bishops and martyrs, animated them to increase the number of their subjects, and to enlarge the limits of the Christian empire. They were destitute of any temporal force, and they were for a long time discouraged and oppressed, rather than assisted, by the civil magistrate; but they had acquired, and they employed within their own society, the two most efficacious instruments of government, rewards and punishments; the former derived from the pious liberality, the latter from the devout apprehensions, of the faithful.

I. The community of goods, which had so agreeably amused the imagination of Plato,* and which subsisted in some degree among the austere sect of the Essenians,† was adopted for a short time in the primitive church. The fervour of the first proselytes prompted them to sell those worldly possessions which they despised, to lay the price of them at the feet of the apostles, and to content themselves with receiving an equal share out of the general distribution.‡ The progress of the Christian religion relaxed, and gradually abolished this generous institution, which, in hands less pure than those of the apostles, would too soon have been corrupted and abused by the returning selfishness of human nature; and the converts who embraced the new religion were permitted to retain the possession of their patrimony, to receive legacies and inheritances, and to increase their separate property by all the lawful means of

* The community instituted by Plato is more perfect than that which Sir Thomas More has imagined for his Utopia. The community of women, and that of temporal goods, may be considered as inseparable parts of the same system. † Josephi Antiquitat. 18. 2. Philo, de Vit. Contemplativ. ‡ See the Acts of the Apostles, c. 2. 4, 5. with Grotius's Commentary. Mosheim, in a particular dissertation, attacks the common opinion with very inconclusive arguments.

trade and industry. Instead of an absolute sacrifice, a moderate proportion was accepted by the ministers of the gospel; and in their weekly or monthly assemblies, every believer, according to the exigency of the occasion, and the measure of his wealth and piety, presented his voluntary offering for the use of the common fund.* Nothing, however inconsiderable, was refused; but it was diligently inculcated, that, in the article of tithes, the Mosaic law was still of divine obligation; and that since the Jews, under a less perfect discipline, had been commanded to pay a tenth part of all that they possessed, it would become the disciples of Christ to distinguish themselves by a superior degree of liberality,† and to acquire some merit by resigning a superfluous treasure, which must so soon be annihilated with the world itself.‡ It is almost unnecessary to observe, that the revenue of each particular church, which was of so uncertain and fluctuating a nature, must have varied with the poverty or the opulence of the faithful, as they were dispersed in obscure villages, or collected in the great cities of the empire. In the time of the emperor Decius, it was the opinion of the magistrates, that the Christians of Rome were possessed of very considerable wealth; that vessels of gold and silver were used in their religious worship; and that many among their proselytes had sold their lands and houses to increase the public riches of the sect; at the expense, indeed, of their unfortunate children, who found themselves beggars, because their parents had been saints.§ We should listen

* Justin Martyr, Apolog. Major, c. 89. Tertullian, Apolog. c. 39.

† Irenæus adv. Hæres. lib. 4, c. 27. 34. Origen in Num. Hom. 2. Cyprian de Unitat. Eccles. Constitut. Apostol. lib. 2, c. 34, 35. with the notes of Cotelerius. The Constitutions introduce this divine precept, by declaring that priests are as much above kings as the soul is above the body. Among the tithable articles, they enumerate corn, wine, oil, and wood. On this interesting subject, consult Prideaux's History of Tithes, and Fra Paolo delle Materie Beneficarie; two writers of a very different character. ‡ The same opinion, which prevailed about the year 1000, was productive of the same effects. Most of the donations express their motive, "appropinquante mundi fine." See Mosheim's General History of the Church, vol. 1, p. 457.

§ Tum summa cura est fratribus
(Ut sermo testatur loquax),
Offerre, fundis venditis,
Sestertiorum millia.
Addicta avorum prædia

with distrust to the suspicions of strangers and enemies; on this occasion, however, they receive a very specious and probable colour from the two following circumstances, the only ones that have reached our knowledge, which define any precise sums, or convey any distinct idea. Almost at the same period, the bishop of Carthage, from a society less opulent than that of Rome, collected a hundred thousand sesterces (above \$50*l.* sterling), on a sudden call of charity to redeem the brethren of Numidia, who had been carried away captives by the barbarians of the desert.* About a hundred years before the reign of Decius, the Roman church had received, in a single donation, the sum of two hundred thousand sesterces from a stranger of Pontus, who proposed to fix his residence in the capital.† These oblations, for the most part, were made in money; nor was the society of Christians either desirous or capable of acquiring, to any considerable degree, the incumbrance of landed property. It had been provided by several laws, which were enacted with the same design as our statutes of mortmain, that no real estate should be given or bequeathed to any corporate body, without either a special privilege or a particular dispensation from the emperor or from the senate;‡ who were seldom disposed to grant them in favour of a sect, at first the object of their contempt, and at last of their fears and jealousy. A transaction, however, is related under the reign of Alexander Severus, which discovers that the restraint was sometimes eluded or suspended, and that the Christians were permitted to claim and to possess lands

Fœdis sub auctionibus,
 Successor exheres gemit
 Sanctis egens parentibus.
 Hæc occultantur abditis
 Ecclesiarum in angulis;
 Et summa pietas creditur
 Nudare dulces liberos.

—Prudent. *περὶ στεφάνων*. Hymn 2.

The subsequent conduct of the deacon Laurence only proves how proper a use was made of the wealth of the Roman church; it was undoubtedly very considerable; but Fra Paolo (c. 3.) appears to exaggerate, when he supposes that the successors of Commodus were urged to persecute the Christians by their own avarice, or that of their praetorian prefects. * Cyprian. Epistol. 62. † Tertullian de Prescriptione, c. 30. ‡ Diocletian gave a rescript, which is only a declaration of the old law; "Collegium, si nullo speciali privilegio

within the limits of Rome itself.* The progress of Christianity, and the civil confusion of the empire, contributed to relax the severity of the laws; and, before the close of the third century, many considerable estates were bestowed on the opulent churches of Rome, Milan, Carthage, Antioch, Alexandria, and the other great cities of Italy and the provinces.

The bishop was the natural steward of the church; the public stock was intrusted to his care without account or control; the presbyters were confined to their spiritual functions; and the more dependent order of deacons was solely employed in the management and distribution of the ecclesiastical revenue.† If we may give credit to the vehement declamations of Cyprian, there were too many among his African brethren, who, in the execution of their charge, violated every precept, not only of evangelic perfection, but even of moral virtue. By some of these unfaithful stewards the riches of the church were lavished in sensual pleasures; by others they were perverted to the purposes of private gain, of fraudulent purchases, and of rapacious usury.‡ But as long as the contributions of the Christian people were free and unconstrained, the abuse of their confidence could not be very frequent; and the general uses to which their liberality was applied, reflected honour on the religious society. A decent portion was reserved for the maintenance of the bishop and his clergy; a sufficient sum was allotted for the expense of the public worship, of which the feasts of love, the *agapæ*, as they were called, constituted a very pleasing part. The whole remainder was the sacred patrimony of the poor. According to the discretion of the bishop, it was distributed to support widows and orphans, the lame, the sick, and the aged, of the community; to comfort strangers and pilgrims, and to alleviate the misfortunes of prisoners and captives, more especially when their sufferings had been occasioned by their firm attachment to the cause

subnixum sit, hæreditatem capere non posse, dubium non est." Fra Paolo (c. 4.) thinks that these regulations had been much neglected since the reign of Valerian. * Hist. August. p. 131. The ground had been public; and was now disputed between the society of Christians and that of butchers. † Constitut. Apostol. 2. 35.

‡ Cyprian de Lapsis, p. 89 Epistol. 65. The charge is confirmed by the nineteenth and twentieth canon of the council of Illiberis.

of religion.* A generous intercourse of charity united the most distant provinces, and the smaller congregations were cheerfully assisted by the alms of their more opulent brethren.† Such an institution, which paid less regard to the merit than to the distress of the object, very materially conduced to the progress of Christianity. The Pagans, who were actuated by a sense of humanity, while they derided the doctrines, acknowledged the benevolence of the new sect.‡ The prospect of immediate relief and of future protection allured into its hospitable bosom many of those unhappy persons whom the neglect of the world would have abandoned to the miseries of want, of sickness, and of old age. There is some reason likewise to believe, that great numbers of infants, who, according to the inhuman practice of the times, had been exposed by their parents, were frequently rescued from death, baptized, educated, and maintained, by the piety of the Christians, and at the expense of the public treasure.§

II. It is the undoubted right of every society to exclude from its communion and benefits such among its members as reject or violate those regulations which have been established by general consent. In the exercise of this power the censures of the Christian church were chiefly directed against scandalous sinners, and particularly those who were guilty of murder, of fraud, or of incontinence; against the authors, or the followers of any heretical opinions which had been condemned by the judgment of the episcopal order; and against those unhappy persons, who, whether from choice or from compulsion, had polluted themselves, after their baptism, by an act of idolatrous worship. The consequences

* See the apologies of Justin, Tertullian, &c. † The wealth and liberality of the Romans to their most distant brethren is gratefully celebrated by Dionysius of Corinth. ap. Euseb. lib. 4, c. 23. [There can be no doubt, that the progress of Christianity was much assisted by these ample funds. But they parented also many of the mischiefs, by which it was corrupted. See how sharply, in the fifth century, Salvianus of Marseilles reprov'd them in his treatise de Avaritia, præsertim Clericorum et Sacerdotum.—ED.] ‡ See Lucian in Peregrin. Julian (Ep. 49.) seems mortified, that the Christian charity maintains not only their own, but likewise the heathen poor.

§ Such, at least, has been the laudable conduct of more modern missionaries, under the same circumstances. Above three thousand new-born infants are annually exposed in the streets of Pekin. See

of excommunication were of a temporal, as well as a spiritual, nature. The Christian against whom it was pronounced was deprived of any part in the oblations of the faithful; the ties both of religious and of private friendship were dissolved; he found himself a profane object of abhorrence to the persons whom he most esteemed, or by whom he had been the most tenderly beloved; and as far as an expulsion from a respectable society could imprint on his character a mark of disgrace, he was shunned or suspected by the generality of mankind. The situation of these unfortunate exiles was in itself very painful and melancholy; but, as it usually happens, their apprehensions far exceeded their sufferings. The benefits of the Christian communion were those of eternal life, nor could they erase from their minds the awful opinion, that to those ecclesiastical governors by whom they were condemned, the Deity had committed the keys of hell and of paradise. The heretics, indeed, who might be supported by the consciousness of their intentions, and by the flattering hope that they alone had discovered the true path of salvation, endeavoured to regain, in their separate assemblies, those comforts, temporal as well as spiritual, which they no longer derived from the great society of Christians. But almost all those who had reluctantly yielded to the power of vice or idolatry were sensible of their fallen condition, and anxiously desirous of being restored to the benefits of the Christian communion.

With regard to the treatment of these penitents, two opposite opinions, the one of justice, the other of mercy, divided the primitive church. The more rigid and inflexible casuists refused them for ever, and without exception, the meanest place in the holy community which they had disgraced or deserted; and leaving them to the remorse of a guilty conscience, indulged them only with a faint ray of hope that the contrition of their life and death might possibly be accepted by the Supreme Being.* A milder sentiment was embraced in practice as well as in theory, by the purest and most respectable of the Christian churches.†

Le Comte, *Mémoires sur la Chine*, and the *Recherches sur les Chinois et les Egyptiens*, tom. i, p. 61. * The Montanists and the Novatians, who adhered to this opinion with the greatest rigour and obstinacy, found *themselves* at last in the number of excommunicated heretics. See the learned and copious Mosheim, *Sæcul.* 2, 3. † Dionysius, ap.

The gates of reconciliation and of heaven were seldom shut against the returning penitent; but a severe and solemn form of discipline was instituted, which, while it served to expiate his crime, might powerfully deter the spectators from the imitation of his example. Humbled by a public confession, emaciated by fasting, and clothed in sackcloth, the penitent lay prostrate at the door of the assembly, imploring with tears the pardon of his offences, and soliciting the prayers of the faithful.* If the fault was of a very heinous nature, whole years of penance were esteemed an inadequate satisfaction to the divine justice; and it was always by slow and painful gradations that the sinner, the heretic, or the apostate, was readmitted into the bosom of the church. A sentence of perpetual excommunication was, however, reserved for some crimes of an extraordinary magnitude, and particularly for the inexcusable relapses of those penitents who had already experienced and abused the clemency of their ecclesiastical superiors. According to the circumstances or the number of the guilty, the exercise of the Christian discipline was varied by the discretion of the bishops. The councils of Ancyra and Illiberis were held about the same time, the one in Galatia, the other in Spain; but their respective canons, which are still extant, seem to breathe a very different spirit. The Galatian, who after his baptism had repeatedly sacrificed to idols, might obtain his pardon by a penance of seven years; and if he had seduced others to imitate his example, only three years more were added to the term of his exile. But the unhappy Spaniard, who had committed the same offence, was deprived of the hope of reconciliation, even in the article of death; and his idolatry was placed at the head of a list of seventeen other crimes, against which a sentence no less terrible was pronounced. Among these we may distinguish the inextinguishable guilt of calumniating a bishop, a presbyter, or even a deacon.†

Euseb. 4. 23. Cyprian, de Lapsis. * Cave's Primitive Christianity, part 3. c. 5. The admirers of antiquity regret the loss of this public penance.

† See in Dupin, Bibliothèque Ecclesiastique, tom. ii, p. 304—313, a short but rational exposition of the canons of those councils, which were assembled in the first moments of tranquillity, after the persecution of Diocletian. This persecution had been much less severely felt in Spain than in Galatia; a difference which may, in some measure, account for the contrast of their regulations.

The well-tempered mixture of liberality and rigour, the judicious dispensations of rewards and punishments, according to the maxims of policy as well as justice, constituted the *human* strength of the church. The bishops, whose paternal care extended itself to the government of both worlds, were sensible of the importance of these prerogatives; and, covering their ambition with the fair pretence of the love of order, they were jealous of any rival in the exercise of a discipline so necessary to prevent the desertion of those troops which had enlisted themselves under the banner of the cross, and whose numbers every day became more considerable. From the imperious declamations of Cyprian, we should naturally conclude, that the doctrines of excommunication and penance formed the most essential part of religion; and that it was much less dangerous for the disciples of Christ to neglect the observance of the moral duties, than to despise the censures and authority of their bishops. Sometimes we might imagine that we were listening to the voice of Moses, when he commanded the earth to open, and to swallow up, in consuming flames, the rebellious race which refused obedience to the priesthood of Aaron; and we should sometimes suppose that we heard a Roman consul asserting the majesty of the republic, and declaring his inflexible resolution to enforce the rigour of the laws. "If such irregularities are suffered with impunity," it is thus that the bishop of Carthage chides the lenity of his colleague, "if such irregularities are suffered, there is an end of *episcopal vigour*;* an end of the sublime and divine power of governing the church; an end of Christianity itself." Cyprian had renounced those temporal honours which it is probable he would never have obtained;† but the acquisition of such

* Cyprian. Epist. 69. † The birth and talents of Cyprian may justify a very different opinion. Cave (Hist. Lit. tom. i, p. 87) speaks of him thus—"Thascius Cæcilius Cyprianus, a native of Carthage, and a distinguished orator, acquired much glory, wealth, and honour. He indulged in plentiful repasts and supper-banquets; was clothed in rich vestments, resplendent with gold and purple; was surrounded by crowds of clients, and respectfully followed by a large retinue, bearing the insignia and ornaments of office. Such is his description of himself in his letter to Donatus."—GUIZOT. [Cyprian's language respecting himself was, as Dean Milman admits, "rather embellished," by Dr. Cave. Gibbon has been accused of misrepresenting the character of Cyprian. It will come more fully forward in the next chapter. In the mean time it is sufficient to remark, that

absolute command over the consciences and understanding of a congregation, however obscure or despised by the world, is more truly grateful to the pride of the human heart, than the possession of the most despotic power, imposed by arms and conquest on a reluctant people.

In the course of this important, though perhaps tedious, inquiry, I have attempted to display the secondary causes which so efficaciously assisted the truth of the Christian religion. If among these causes we have discovered any artificial ornaments, any accidental circumstances, or any mixture of error and passion, it cannot appear surprising that mankind should be the most sensibly affected by such motives as were suited to their imperfect nature. It was by the aid of these causes, exclusive zeal, the immediate expectation of another world, the claim of miracles, the practice of rigid virtue, and the constitution of the primitive church, that Christianity spread itself with so much success in the Roman empire. To the first of these the Christians were indebted for their invincible valour, which disdained to capitulate with the enemy whom they were resolved to vanquish. The three succeeding causes supplied their valour with the most formidable arms. The last of these causes united their courage, directed their arms, and gave their efforts that irresistible weight which even a small band of well-trained and intrepid volunteers has so often possessed over an undisciplined multitude, ignorant of the subject, and careless of the event of the war. In the various religions of Polytheism, some wandering fanatics of Egypt and Syria who addressed themselves to the credulous superstition of the populace, were perhaps the only order of priests* that derived their whole support and credit from their sacerdotal profession, and were very deeply affected by a personal concern for the safety or prosperity of their tutelar deities. The ministers of Polytheism, both in Rome and in the provinces, were, for the most part, men of a noble birth and of an affluent fortune, who received, as an honourable distinction, the care of a celebrated temple, or of a public sacrifice; exhibited, very frequently at their own

this prelate had formed himself by the writings of Tertullian, whose vehemence all moderate Christians lament and disavow.—Ed.]

* The acts, the manners, and the vices, of the priests of the Syrian gods, are very humorously described by Apuleius, in the eighth book

expense, the sacred games;* and with cold indifference performed the ancient rites, according to the laws and fashion of their country. As they were engaged in the ordinary occupations of life, their zeal and devotion were seldom animated by a sense of interest, or by the habits of an ecclesiastical character. Confined to their respective temples and cities, they remained without any connexion of discipline or government; and whilst they acknowledged the supreme jurisdiction of the senate of the college of pontiffs, and of the emperor, those civil magistrates contented themselves with the easy task of maintaining, in peace and dignity, the general worship of mankind. We have already seen how various, how loose, and how uncertain were the religious sentiments of Polytheists. They were abandoned, almost without control, to the natural workings of a superstitious fancy. The accidental circumstances of their life and situation determined the object as well as the degree of their devotion; and as long as their adoration was successively prostituted to a thousand deities, it was scarcely possible that their hearts could be susceptible of a very sincere or lively passion for any of them.

When Christianity appeared in the world, even these faint and imperfect impressions had lost much of their original power. Human reason, which by its unassisted strength is incapable of perceiving the mysteries of faith, had already obtained an easy triumph over the folly of Paganism; and when Tertullian or Lactantius employ their labours in exposing its falsehood and extravagance, they are obliged to transcribe the eloquence of Cicero or the wit of Lucian. The contagion of these sceptical writings had been diffused far beyond the number of their readers. The fashion of incredulity was communicated from the philosopher to the man of pleasure or business; from the noble to the plebeian, and from the master to the menial slave who waited at his table, and who eagerly listened to the freedom of his conver-

of his *Metamorphosis*. * The office of Asiarch was of this nature, and it is frequently mentioned in Aristides, the Inscriptions, &c. It was annual and elective. None but the vainest citizens could desire the honour; none but the most wealthy could support the expense. See in the *Patres Apostol.* (tom. ii, p. 200,) with how much indifference Philip the Asiarch conducted himself in the martyrdom of Polycarp. There were likewise Bithyniarchs, Lyciarchs, &c.

sation. On public occasions the philosophic part of mankind affected to treat with respect and decency the religious institutions of their country; but their secret contempt penetrated through the thin and awkward disguise; and even the people, when they discovered that their deities were rejected and derided by those whose rank or understanding they were accustomed to reverence, were filled with doubts and apprehensions concerning the truth of those doctrines, to which they had yielded the most implicit belief. The decline of ancient prejudice exposed a very numerous portion of human kind to the danger of a painful and comfortless situation. A state of scepticism and suspense may amuse a few inquisitive minds; but the practice of superstition is so congenial to the multitude, that if they are forcibly awakened, they still regret the loss of their pleasing vision. Their love of the marvellous and supernatural, their curiosity with regard to future events, and their strong propensity to extend their hopes and fears beyond the limits of the visible world, were the principal causes which favoured the establishment of Polytheism. So urgent on the vulgar is the necessity of believing, that the fall of any system of mythology will most probably be succeeded by the introduction of some other mode of superstition. Some deities of a more recent and fashionable cast might soon have occupied the deserted temples of Jupiter and Apollo, if, in the decisive moment, the wisdom of Providence had not interposed a genuine revelation, fitted to inspire the most rational esteem and conviction, whilst at the same time, it was adorned with all that could attract the curiosity, the wonder, and the veneration of the people. In their actual disposition, as many were almost disengaged from their artificial prejudices, but equally susceptible and desirous of a devout attachment, an object much less deserving would have been sufficient to fill the vacant place in their hearts, and to gratify the uncertain eagerness of their passions. Those who are inclined to pursue this reflection, instead of viewing with astonishment the rapid progress of Christianity, will perhaps be surprised that its success was not still more rapid and still more universal.*

It has been observed, with truth as well as propriety,

* Gibbon has here glanced at what he ought to have made the first and chief natural cause of the success of Christianity.—ED

that the conquests of Rome prepared and facilitated those of Christianity. In the second chapter of this work, we have attempted to explain in what manner the most civilized provinces of Europe, Asia, and Africa, were united under the dominion of one sovereign, and gradually connected by the most intimate ties of laws, of manners, and of language. The Jews of Palestine, who had fondly expected a temporal deliverer, gave so cold a reception to the miracles of the divine Prophet,* that it was found unnecessary to publish, or at least to preserve, any Hebrew gospel.† The authentic

* The reception was not so cold as Gibbon seems to think. In the space of two days, eight thousand Jewish converts were baptized. (Acts ii, 27—40; iv, 4.) They formed the first Christian church.—GUIZOT. [This was before the reception of the new religion among the Greeks. Subsequently to that change, Christianity, as is well known, made little progress in Judea, but, on the contrary, was everywhere resisted by the Jews, while the Gentiles welcomed it gladly. The Apostles soon quitted their own country, and foreign lands were the theatres of their exertions and the scenes of their triumph.—ED.]

† The modern critics are not disposed to believe what the fathers almost unanimously assert, that St. Matthew composed a Hebrew gospel of which only the Greek translation is extant. It seems, however, dangerous to reject their testimony. [This testimony is strongly supported. Papias, who was a contemporary of the apostle John, says positively, that “*Matthew wrote the discourses of Jesus Christ in Hebrew, and that each one interpreted them for himself as he could.*” This Hebrew was the Syro-Chaldaic dialect, then used at Jerusalem. This is corroborated by Origen, Irenæus, Eusebius, Jerome, and Epiphanius. It was in this language that Jesus Christ himself preached, as may be seen in many words employed by him and translated by the evangelists; and it was also used by Paul when addressing the Jews. (Acts xx, 2; xvii, 4; xxvi, 14.) The opinions of some critics prove nothing against evidence so incontestible. The principal objection raised by them is, that Matthew quotes from the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament. This is not correct; for out of ten such quotations, which are found in his gospel, seven are evidently taken from the Hebrew text; and in the three others, there are no material variations; but these last are not quoted literally. Jerome says positively, that in a copy which he had seen at Cesarea, the quotations are in Hebrew. (In Catal.) More modern writers, among whom is Michaelis, have no doubt on this subject. The Greek version appears to have been made in the time of the apostles, as Jerome and Augustin affirm, perhaps by one of them.—GUIZOT.] [The concurrent testimony of so many early writers leaves no reasonable ground to doubt the fact, that there was a Hebrew original of Matthew’s gospel. Eusebius repeats it no less than six times; and all assert it so positively, that to question it is, as Gibbon hints, to shake the very foundation of all primitive ecclesiastical history. Papias, who is the chief authority for it, has

histories of the actions of Christ were composed in the Greek language, at a considerable distance from Jerusalem, and after the Gentile converts were grown extremely numerous.* As soon as those histories were translated into the Latin tongue, they were perfectly intelligible to all the subjects of Rome, excepting only to the peasants of Syria and Egypt, for whose benefit particular versions were afterwards made. The public highways, which had been constructed for the use of the legions, opened an easy passage for the Christian missionaries from Damascus to Corinth, and from Italy to the extremity of Spain or Britain; nor did those spiritual conquerors encounter any of the obstacles which usually retard or prevent the introduction of a foreign religion into a distant country. There is the strongest reason to believe, that before the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, the faith of Christ had been preached in every province, and in all the great cities of the empire; but the foundation of the several congregations, the numbers of the faithful who composed them, and their proportion to the unbelieving multitude, are now buried in obscurity, or disguised by fiction and declamation. Such imperfect circumstances, however, as have reached our knowledge concerning the increase of the Christian name in Asia and Greece, in Egypt, in Italy, and in the west, we shall now proceed to relate, without neglecting the real or imaginary acquisitions which lay beyond the frontiers of the Roman empire.

The rich provinces that extended from the Euphrates to the Ionian sea were the principal theatre on which the apostle of the Gentiles displayed his zeal and piety. The seeds of the gospel, which he had scattered in a fertile soil, were diligently cultivated by his disciples; and it should seem that, during the two first centuries, the most considerable body of Christians was contained within those limits. Among the societies which were instituted in Syria, none were more ancient or more illustrious than those of Damas-

ken called a weak man and of small capacity. Yet he was considered in his days competent to be a bishop; he is confidently quoted by those nearest to his time; and Eusebius not only praises his abilities, and particularly his knowledge of the Scriptures (lib. 3, c. 36), but devotes also a long chapter (39) to the information derived from him.—ED.] * Under the reigns of Nero and Domitian, and in the cities of Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, and Ephesus. See Mill, *Prolegomena ad Nov. Testament.* and Dr. Lardner's fair and extensive

cus, of Bæræ or Aleppo, and of Antioch. The prophetic introduction of the Apocalypse has described and immortalized the seven churches of Asia, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira,* Sardes, Laodicea, and Philadelphia: and their colonies were soon diffused over that populous country. In a very early period, the islands of Cyprus and Crete, the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia, gave a favourable reception to the new religion: and Christian republics were soon founded in the cities of Corinth, of Sparta, and of Athens.† The antiquity of the Greek and Asiatic churches allowed a sufficient space of time for their increase and multiplication; and even the swarms of Gnostics and other heretics serve to display the flourishing condition of the orthodox church, since the appellation of heretics has always been applied to the less numerous party. To these domestic testimonies we may add the confession, the complaints, and the apprehensions of the Gentiles themselves. From the writings of Lucian, a philosopher who had studied mankind, and who describes their manners in the most lively colours, we may learn, that, under the reign of Commodus, his native country of Pontus was filled with Epicureans and *Christians*.‡ Within fourscore years after the death of Christ,§ the humane Pliny laments the magnitude of the evil which he vainly attempted to eradicate. In his very curious epistle to the emperor Trajan, he affirms, that the temples were almost deserted, that the sacred victims scarcely found any purchasers, and that the superstition had not only infected

collection, vol. xv. * The Alogians (Epiphanius de Hæres. 51) disputed the genuineness of the Apocalypse, because the church of Thyatira was not yet founded. Epiphanius, who allows the fact, extricates himself from the difficulty, by ingeniously supposing, that St. John wrote in the spirit of prophecy. See Abauzit, Discours sur l'Apocalypse. † The epistles of Ignatius and Dionysius (ap. Euseb. 4, 23) point out many churches in Asia and Greece. That of Athens seems to have been one of the least flourishing. ‡ Lucian in Alexander. c. 25. Christianity, however, must have been very unequally diffused over Pontus; since in the middle of the third century, there were no more than seventeen believers in the extensive diocese of Neo-Cæsarea. See M. de Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclesiast. tom. iv, p. 675, from Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, who were themselves natives of Cappadocia.

§ According to the ancients, Jesus Christ suffered under the consulship of the two Gemini, in the year 29 of our present era. Pliny was sent into Bithynia (according to Pagi) in the year 110. [Clinton (F. R. i. 89) has corrected this date to 105.—ED.]

the cities, but had even spread itself into the villages and the open country of Pontus and Bithynia.*

Without descending into a minute scrutiny of the expressions, or the motives, of those writers, who either celebrate or lament the progress of Christianity in the east, it may in general be observed, that none of them have left us any grounds from whence a just estimate might be formed of the real numbers of the faithful in those provinces. One circumstance, however, has been fortunately preserved, which seems to cast a more distinct light on this obscure but interesting subject. Under the reign of Theodosius, after Christianity had enjoyed during more than sixty years the sunshine of imperial favour, the ancient and illustrious church of Antioch consisted of one hundred thousand persons, three thousand of whom were supported out of the public oblations.† The splendour and dignity of the queen of the east, the acknowledged populousness of Cæsarea, Seleucia, and Alexandria, and the destruction of two hundred and fifty thousand souls in the earthquake which afflicted Antioch under the elder Justin.‡ are so many convincing proofs that the whole number of its inhabitants was not less than half a million, and that the Christians, however multiplied by zeal and power, did not exceed a fifth part of that great city. How different a proportion must we adopt when we compare the persecuted with the triumphant church, the west with the east, remote villages with populous towns, and countries recently converted to the faith, with the place where the believers first received the appellation of Christians! It must not, however, be dissembled, that, in another passage, Chrysostom, to whom we are indebted for this useful information, computes the multitude of the faithful as even superior to that of the Jews and Pagans.§ But the solution of this apparent difficulty is easy and obvious. The eloquent preacher draws a parallel between the civil and the ecclesiastical constitution of Antioch; between the list of Christians who had acquired heaven by baptism, and the list of citizens who had a right to share the public liberality. Slaves, strangers, and infants,

* Plin. Epist. 10, 97. † Chrysostomi Opera, tom. vii, p. 658, 810.

‡ John Malala, tom. ii, p. 144. He draws the same conclusion with regard to the populousness of Antioch.

§ Chrysostom, tom. i, p. 592. I am indebted for these passages, though not for my inference,

were comprised in the former; they were excluded from the latter.

The extensive commerce of Alexandria, and its proximity to Palestine, gave an easy entrance to the new religion. It was at first embraced by great numbers of the Therapeutæ, or Essenians of the lake Mareotis, a Jewish sect which had abated much of its reverence for the Mosaic ceremonies. The austere life of the Essenians, their fasts and excommunications, the community of goods, the love of celibacy, their zeal for martyrdom, and the warmth though not the purity of their faith, already offered a very lively image of the primitive discipline.* It was in the school of Alexandria that the Christian theology appears to have assumed a regular and scientific form; and when Hadrian visited Egypt, he found a church composed of Jews and of Greeks, sufficiently important to attract the notice of that inquisitive prince.† But the progress of Christianity was for a long time confined within the limits of a single city, which was itself a foreign colony; and till the close of the second century the predecessors of Demetrius were the only prelates of the Egyptian church. Three bishops were consecrated by the hands of Demetrius, and the number was increased to twenty by his successor Heraclas.‡ The body of the natives, a people distinguished by sullen inflexibility of temper,§ entertained the new doctrine with coldness and reluctance; and even in the time of Origen, it was rare to meet with an Egyptian who had surmounted his early pre-

to the learned Dr. Lardner. *Credibility of the Gospel History*, vol. xii, p. 370. * Basnage (*Histoire des Juifs*, lib. 2, c. 20—28) has examined, with the most critical accuracy, the curious treatise of Philo, which describes the Therapeutæ. By proving that it was composed as early as the time of Augustus, Basnage has demonstrated, in spite of Eusebius (lib. 2, c. 17), and a crowd of modern Catholics, that the Therapeutæ were neither Christians nor monks. It still remains probable that they changed their name, preserved their manners, adopted some new articles of faith, and gradually became the fathers of the Egyptian Ascetics. † See a letter of Hadrian, in the *Augustan History*, p. 245.

‡ For the succession of Alexandrian bishops, consult Renaudot's *History*, p. 24, &c. This curious fact is preserved by the patriarch Eutychius, (*Annal.* tom. i, p. 334, vers. Pocock.) and its internal evidence would alone be a sufficient answer to all the objections which Bishop Pearson has urged in the *Vindicæ Ignatiane*. [See *Clinton's Catalogue*; (F. R. ii, 535.) Demetrius became bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 190, and Heraclas succeeded him in 233.—ED.] § Amalian

judices in favour of the sacred animals of his country.* As soon, indeed, as Christianity ascended the throne, the zeal of those barbarians obeyed the prevailing impulsion; the cities of Egypt were filled with bishops, and the deserts of Thebais swarmed with hermits.

A perpetual stream of strangers and provincials flowed into the capacious bosom of Rome. Whatever was strange or odious, whoever was guilty or suspected, might hope, in the obscurity of that immense capital, to elude the vigilance of the law. In such a various conflux of nations, every teacher, either of truth or of falsehood, every founder, whether of a virtuous or a criminal association, might easily multiply his disciples or accomplices. The Christians of Rome, at the time of the accidental persecution of Nero, are represented by Tacitus as already amounting to a very great multitude,† and the language of that great historian is almost similar to the style employed by Livy, when he relates the introduction and the suppression of the rites of Bacchus. After the Bacchanals had awakened the severity of the senate, it was likewise apprehended that a very great multitude, as it were *another people*, had been initiated into those abhorred mysteries. A more careful inquiry soon demonstrated, that the offenders did not exceed seven thousand; a number indeed sufficiently alarming, when considered as the object of public justice.‡ It is with the same candid allowance that we should interpret the vague expressions of Tacitus, and in a former instance, of Pliny, when they exaggerate the crowds of deluded fanatics who had forsaken the established worship of their gods. The church of Rome was undoubtedly the first and most populous of the empire; and we are possessed of an authentic record which attests the state of religion in that city about the middle of the third century, and after a peace of thirty-eight years. The clergy, at that time, consisted of a bishop, forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, as many sub-deacons, forty-two acolythes, and fifty readers, exorcists, and porters. The number of widows, of the infirm, and of the poor, who were maintained by the oblations of the faithful, amounted

Marcellin. 22, 16. * Origen contra Celsum, lib. 1, p. 40.

† *Ingens multitudo*, is the expression of Tacitus, 15, 44.

‡ T. Liv. 39, 13, 15--17. Nothing could exceed the horror and consternation of the senate on the discovery of the Bacchanalians, whose depravity is described, and perhaps exaggerated, by Livy.

to fifteen hundred.* From reason, as well as from the analogy of Antioch, we may venture to estimate the Christians of Rome at about fifty thousand. The populousness of that great capital cannot perhaps be exactly ascertained; but the most modest calculation will not surely reduce it lower than a million of inhabitants, of whom the Christians might constitute at the most a twentieth part.†

The western provincials appeared to have derived the knowledge of Christianity from the same source which had diffused among them the language, the sentiments, and the manners of Rome. In this more important circumstance, Africa, as well as Gaul, was gradually fashioned to the imitation of the capital. Yet notwithstanding the many favourable occasions which might invite the Roman missionaries to visit the Latin provinces, it was late before they passed either the sea or the Alps,‡ nor can we discover in those great countries any assured traces either of faith or of persecution that ascend higher than the reign of the Antonines.§ The slow progress of the gospel in the cold climate of Gaul was extremely different from the eagerness with which it seems to have been received on the burning sands of Africa. The African Christians soon formed one of the principal members of the primitive church. The practice introduced into that province, of appointing bishops to the most inconsiderable towns, and very frequently to the most obscure villages, contributed to multiply the

* Eusebius, lib. 6, c. 43. The Latin translator (M. de Valois) has thought proper to reduce the number of presbyters to forty-four.

† This proportion of the presbyters and of the poor, to the rest of the people, was originally fixed by Burnet, (*Travels into Italy*, p. 168), and is approved by Moyle, (vol. ii, p. 151). They were both unacquainted with the passage of Chrysostom, which converts their conjecture almost into a fact. ‡ Serius trans Alpes, religione Dei susceptâ. Sulpicius Severus, l. 2. These were the celebrated martyrs of Lyons. See Eusebius, 5. 1. Tillemont, *Mém. Ecclesiast.* tom. ii, p. 316. According to the Donatists, whose assertion is confirmed by the tacit acknowledgment of Augustin, Africa was the last of the provinces which received the Gospel. Tillemont, *Mém. Ecclesiast.* tom. i, p. 754. [It was natural that Christianity should advance slowly in the west, where the way had not been opened for it by philosophy. The doctrines of the Greek schools, which had been for four centuries working onward round their birth-places, had only been recently introduced into Rome, and were still but "a more refined species of luxury, and a kind of table furniture, set apart for the entertainment of the great." (*Div. Leg.* book 3, sec. 3).—ED.] § Tum primum intra Gallias martyria visa. Sulp. Severus, l. 2. With regard to Africa, see

splendour and importance of their religious societies, which, during the course of the third century, were animated by the zeal of Tertullian, directed by the abilities of Cyprian, and adorned by the eloquence of Lactantius. But if, on the contrary, we turn our eyes towards Gaul, we must content ourselves with discovering, in the time of Marcus Antoninus, the feeble and united congregations of Lyons and Vienna: and even as late as the reign of Decius, we are assured, that in a few cities only, Arles, Narbonne, Thoulouse, Limoges, Clermont, Tours, and Paris, some scattered churches were supported by the devotion of a small number of Christians.* Silence is indeed very consistent with devotion; but as it is seldom compatible with zeal, we may perceive and lament the languid state of Christianity in those provinces which had exchanged the Celtic for the Latin tongue; since they did not, during the three first centuries, give birth to a single ecclesiastical writer. From Gaul, which claimed a just pre-eminence of learning and authority over all the countries on this side of the Alps, the light of the gospel was more faintly reflected on the remote provinces of Spain and Britain; and if we may credit the vehement assertions of Tertullian, they had already received the first rays of the faith, when he addressed his apology to the magistrates of the emperor Severus.† But the obscure and imperfect origin of the western churches of Europe has been so negligently recorded, that if we would relate the time and manner of their foundation, we must supply the silence of antiquity by those legends which avarice or superstition long afterwards dictated to the monks in the lazy gloom of their convents.‡ Of these holy romances that of the apostle St. James can alone, by its singular extravagance, deserve

Tertullian ad Scapulam, c. 3. It is imagined, that the Scyllitan martyrs were the first. (*Acta Sincera*, Ruinart, p. 34). One of the adversaries of Apuleius seems to have been a Christian. *Apolog.* p. 496, 497, edit. Delphin. * *Rare in aliquibus civitatibus ecclesie, paucorum Christianorum devotione, resurgerent.* *Acta Sincera*, p. 130. Gregory of Tours, l. 1, c. 28. Mosheim, p. 207. 449. There is some reason to believe that, in the beginning of the fourth century, the extensive dioceses of Liege, of Treves, and of Cologne, composed a single bishopric, which had been very recently founded. See *Memoires de Tilliement*, tom. vi, part 1, p. 43. 411. † The date of Tertullian's Apology is fixed, in a dissertation of Mosheim, to the year 198.

‡ In the fifteenth century, there were few who had either inclination or courage to question, whether Joseph of Arimathea founded the

to be mentioned. From a peaceful fisherman of the lake of Gennesareth, he was transformed into a valorous knight, who charged at the head of the Spanish chivalry, in their battles against the Moors. The gravest historians have celebrated his exploits; the miraculous shrine of Compostella displayed his power; and the sword of a military order, assisted by the terrors of the inquisition, was sufficient to remove every objection of profane criticism.*

The progress of Christianity was not confined to the Roman empire; and according to the primitive fathers, who interpret facts by prophecy, the new religion, within a century after the death of its divine author, had already visited every part of the globe. "There exists not," says Justin Martyr, "a people, whether Greek or barbarian, or any other race of men, by whatsoever appellation or manners they may be distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture, whether they dwell under tents, or wander about in covered waggons, among whom prayers are not offered up in the name of a crucified Jesus to the Father and Creator of all things."† But this splendid exaggeration, which even at present it would be extremely difficult to reconcile with the real state of mankind, can be considered only as the rash sally of a devout but careless writer, the measure of whose belief was regulated by that of his wishes. But neither the belief nor the wishes of the fathers can alter the truth of history. It will still remain an undoubted fact, that the barbarians of Scythia and Germany, who afterwards subverted the Roman monarchy, were involved in the darkness of Paganism; and that even the conversion of Iberia, of Armenia, or of Ethiopia was not attempted with any degree of success till the sceptre was in the hands of an orthodox emperor.‡ Before that time, the various accidents of war and commerce might indeed diffuse

monastery of Glastonbury, and whether Dionysius the Areopagite preferred the residence of Paris to that of Athens. * The stupendous metamorphosis was performed in the ninth century. See

Mariana, (*Hist. Hispan.* l. 7, c. 13, tom. i, p. 285, edit. Hag. Com. 1733), who, in every sense, imitates Livy, and the honest detection of the legend of St. James by Dr. Geddes, (*Miscellanies*, vol. ii, p. 221).

† Justin Martyr, *Dialog. cum Tryphon.* p. 341. Irenæus *adv. Hæres.* l. 1, c. 10. Tertullian *adv. Jud.* c. 7. See Mosheim, p. 203.

‡ See the fourth century of Mosheim's *History of the Church.* Many, though very confused circumstances, that relate to the conver-

an imperfect knowledge of the gospel among the tribes of Caledonia,* and among the borderers of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates.† Beyond the last-mentioned river, Edessa was distinguished by a firm and early adherence to the faith.‡ From Edessa the principles of Christianity were easily introduced into the Greek and Syrian cities which obeyed the successors of Artaxerxes; but they do not appear to have made any deep impression on the minds of the Persians, whose religious system, by the labours of a well-disciplined order of priests, had been constructed with much more art and solidity than the uncertain mythology of Greece and Rome.§

From this impartial though imperfect survey of the progress of Christianity, it may perhaps seem probable, that the number of its proselytes has been excessively magnified by fear on the one side, and by devotion on the other. According to the irreproachable testimony of Origen,¶ the proportion of the faithful was very inconsiderable, when compared with the multitude of an unbelieving world; but, as we are left without any distinct information, it is impossible to determine, and it is difficult even to conjecture, the real numbers of the primitive Christians. The most favourable calculation, however, that can be deduced from the examples of Antioch and of Rome, will not permit

sion of Iberia and Armenia, may be found in Moses of Chorene, lib. 2, c. 78--89.

* According to Tertullian, the Christian faith had penetrated into parts of Britain inaccessible to the Roman arms. About a century afterward, Ossian, the son of Fingal, is said to have disputed, in his extreme old age, with one of the foreign missionaries; and the dispute is still extant, in verse, and in the Erse language. See Mr. Macpherson's Dissertation on the Antiquity of Ossian's Poems, p. 10.

† The Goths, who ravaged Asia in the reign of Gallienus, carried away great numbers of captives, some of whom were Christians, and became missionaries. See Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclesiast. tom. iv, p. 44.

‡ The legend of Abgarus, fabulous as it is, affords a decisive proof that many years before Eusebius wrote his history, the greatest part of the inhabitants of Edessa had embraced Christianity. Their rivals, the citizens of Carrhæ, adhered, on the contrary, to the cause of Paganism, as late as the sixth century.

§ According to Bardesanes, (ap. Euseb. Præpar. Evangel.) there were some Christians in Persia before the end of the second century. In the time of Constantine, (see his Epistle to Sapor; Vit. lib. 4, c. 13), they composed a flourishing church. Consult Beausobre, Hist. Critique du Manichéisme, tom. i, p. 180, and the Bibliotheca Orientalis of Assemani.

¶ Origen contra Celsum, lib. 8, p. 424.

us to imagine that more than a twentieth part of the subjects of the empire had enlisted themselves under the banner of the cross before the important conversion of Constantine. But their habits of faith, of zeal, and of union, seemed to multiply their numbers; and the same causes which contributed to their future increase served to render their actual strength more apparent and more formidable.

Such is the constitution of civil society, that whilst a few persons are distinguished by riches, by honours, and by knowledge, the body of the people is condemned to obscurity, ignorance, and poverty. The Christian religion, which addressed itself to the whole human race, must consequently collect a far greater number of proselytes from the lower than from the superior ranks of life.

This innocent and natural circumstance has been improved into a very odious imputation, which seems to be less strenuously denied by the apologists, than it is urged by the adversaries of the faith; that the new sect of Christians was almost entirely composed of the dregs of the populace; of peasants and mechanics, of boys and women, of beggars and slaves, the last of whom might sometimes introduce the missionaries into the rich and noble families to which they belonged. "These obscure teachers (such was the charge of malice and infidelity) are as mute in public as they are loquacious and dogmatical in private. Whilst they cautiously avoid the dangerous encounter of philosophers, they mingle with the rude and illiterate crowd, and insinuate themselves into those minds, whom their age, their sex, or their education, has the best disposed to receive the impression of superstitious terrors."*

This unfavourable picture, though not devoid of a faint resemblance, betrays, by its dark colouring and distorted features, the pencil of an enemy. As the humble faith of Christ diffused itself through the world, it was embraced by several persons who derived some consequence from the advantages of nature or fortune. Aristides, who presented an eloquent apology to the emperor Hadrian, was an Athenian philosopher.† Justin Martyr had sought divine knowledge in the schools of Zeno, of Aristotle, of Pythagoras,

* Minucius Felix, c. 8, with Wouwerus's notes. Celsus ap. Origen l. 3, p. 138—142. Julian ap. Cyril. l. 6, p. 206; edit. Spanheim.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccles. 4. 3. Hieronymus. Epist. 83.

and of Plato, before he fortunately was accosted by the old man, or rather the angel, who turned his attention to the study of the Jewish prophets.* Clemens of Alexandria had acquired much various reading in the Greek, and Tertullian in the Latin, language. Julius Africanus and Origen possessed a very considerable share of the learning of their times; and although the style of Cyprian is very different from that of Lactantius, we might almost discover that both those writers had been public teachers of rhetoric. Even the study of philosophy was at length introduced among the Christians, but it was not always productive of the most salutary effects; knowledge was as often the parent of heresy as of devotion; and the description which was designed for the followers of Artemon may, with equal propriety, be applied to the various sects that resisted the successors of the apostles. "They presume to alter the Holy Scriptures, to abandon the ancient rule of faith, and to form their opinions according to the subtle precepts of logic. The science of the church is neglected for the study of geometry, and they lose sight of heaven while they are employed in measuring the earth. Euclid is perpetually in their hands. Aristotle and Theophrastus are the objects of their admiration; and they express an uncommon reverence for the works of Galen. Their errors are derived from the abuse of the arts and sciences of the infidels; and they corrupt the simplicity of the gospel by the refinements of human reason."†

Nor can it be affirmed with truth, that the advantages of birth and fortune were always separated from the profession of Christianity. Several Roman citizens were brought before the tribunal of Pliny, and he soon discovered that a great number of persons of *every order* of men in Bithynia had deserted the religion of their ancestors.‡ His unsuspected testimony may, in this instance, obtain more credit than the bold challenge of Tertullian, when he addresses

* The story is prettily told in Justin's Dialogues. Tillemont, (Mém. Ecclesiast. tom. ii, p. 324), who relates it after him, is sure that the old man was a disguised angel. † Eusebius, 5. 28. It may be hoped that none, except the heretics, gave occasion to the complaint of Celsus, (ap. Origen. l. 2, p. 77), that the Christians were perpetually correcting and altering their gospels. ‡ Plin Epist. 10. 97. Fuerunt alii similis amentie, cives Romam . . . Multi enim omnis ætatis *omnis ordinis*, utriusque sexus, etiam vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur.

himself to the fears as well as to the humanity of the proconsul of Africa, by assuring him, that if he persists in his cruel intentions, he must decimate Carthage, and that he will find among the guilty many persons of his own rank, senators and matrons of noblest extraction, and the friends or relations of his most intimate friends.* It appears, however, that about forty years afterwards the emperor Valerian was persuaded of the truth of this assertion, since, in one of his rescripts, he evidently supposes, that senators, Roman knights, and ladies of quality, were engaged in the Christian sect.† The church still continued to increase its outward splendour as it lost its internal purity; and in the reign of Diocletian, the palace, the courts of justice, and even the army, concealed a multitude of Christians, who endeavoured to reconcile the interests of the present with those of a future life.

And yet these exceptions are either too few in number, or too recent in time, entirely to remove the imputation of ignorance and obscurity which has been so arrogantly cast on the first proselytes of Christianity.‡ Instead of employ-

* Tertullian ad Scapulam. Yet even his rhetoric rises no higher than to claim a tenth part of Carthage. † Cyprian, Epist. 79.

‡ To this imperfect list ought to be added the names of many Pagans, whose conversion, in the very dawn of Christianity, lessens the force of the historian's imputation. Among these are the proconsul Sergius Paulus, converted at Paphos. (Acts, c. 13, v. 7 and 12). Dionysius the Areopagite, who, with many others, was converted by Paul, at Athens (Acts, c. 17, v. 34). Several persons in the court of Nero (Philipp. c. 4, v. 22). Erastus, the revenue officer at Corinth, (Romans, c. 16, v. 23). Some Asiarchs, (Acts, c. 19, v. 31). To the philosophers may also be added Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Hegesippus, Melito, Miltiades, Pautenus, Ammonius Saccas, and others, all distinguished by their talents and acquirements.—GUIZOT. [M. Guizot's own list is far from complete. He has omitted such names as Polycarp, Hippolytus Africanus, and Irenæus. He might also have inserted in it the two brothers, Theodorus and Athenodorus, whose conversion by Origen, through the influence of his Platonic philosophy, is fully related by Jerome, (De Vir. Ill. c. 65), and the former of whom became Gregory Thaumaturgus, the zealous bishop of Neo-Cæsarea. It is a very erroneous notion, that Christianity was the "most favourably received by the poor and simple." Facts prove that its earliest friends were rich and educated. The church of Antioch, while yet only a year old, had funds to spare for the poor at Jerusalem; and the rapid growth of ecclesiastical wealth, already noticed, could not have taken place if the first proselytes had

ing in our defence the fictions of later ages, it will be more prudent to convert the occasion of scandal into a subject of edification. Our serious thoughts will suggest to us, that the apostles themselves were chosen by Providence among the fishermen of Galilee, and that the lower we depress the temporal condition of the first Christians, the more reason we shall find to admire their merit and success. It is incumbent on us diligently to remember, that the kingdom of heaven was promised to the poor in spirit; and that minds afflicted by calamity and the contempt of mankind cheerfully listen to the divine promise of future happiness; while, on the contrary, the fortunate are satisfied with the possession of this world; and the wise abuse in doubt and dispute their vain superiority of reason and knowledge.

We stand in need of such reflections to comfort us for the loss of some illustrious characters, which in our eyes might have seemed the most worthy of the heavenly present. The names of Seneca, of the elder and the younger Pliny, of Tacitus, of Plutarch, of Galen, of the slave Epictetus, and of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, adorn the age in which they flourished, and exalt the dignity of human nature. They filled with glory their respective stations, either in active or contemplative life; their excellent understandings were improved by study; philosophy had purified their minds from the prejudices of the popular superstition; and their days were spent in the pursuit of truth, and the practice of virtue. Yet all these sages (it is no less an object of surprise than of concern) overlooked or rejected the perfection of the Christian system. Their language or their silence equally discover their contempt for the growing sect, which in their time had diffused itself over the Roman empire. Those among them who condescend to mention the Christians, consider them only as obstinate and perverse enthusiasts, who exacted an implicit submission to their mysterious doctrines, without being able to produce a

been mostly ignorant and obscure. The Gnostics, who, though heretics, were Christians, are admitted to have been generally of the higher orders. The eminent men, to whom Gibbon points as still adhering to heathenism, prove nothing in any way, but the common force of accidental contingencies or habitual adherence to opinions adopted in early life.—Ed.]

single argument that could engage the attention of men of sense and learning.*

It is at least doubtful whether any of these philosophers perused the apologies which the primitive Christians repeatedly published in behalf of themselves and of their religion; † but it is much to be lamented that such a cause was not defended by abler advocates. They expose with superfluous wit and eloquence the extravagance of Polytheism; they interest our compassion by displaying the innocence and suffering of their injured brethren; but when they would demonstrate the divine origin of Christianity, they insist much more strongly on the predictions which announced, than on the miracles which accompanied, the appearance of the Messiah. Their favourite argument might serve to edify a Christian, or to convert a Jew, since both the one and the other acknowledge the authority of those prophecies, and both are obliged, with devout reverence, to search for their sense and their accomplishment. But this mode of persuasion loses much of its weight and influence, when it is addressed to those who neither understand nor respect the

* Dr. Lardner, in his first and second volumes of Jewish and Christian testimonies, collects and illustrates those of Pliny the younger, of Tacitus, of Galen, of Marcus Antoninus, and perhaps of Epictetus (for it is doubtful whether that philosopher means to speak of the Christians). The new sect is totally unnoticed by Seneca, the elder Pliny, and Plutarch. † The emperors Hadrian, Antoninus, &c., read with wonder the Apologies for their faith, which Justin Martyr, Aristides, Melito, and others addressed to them. (See Hieron. ad Mag. and Orosius, lib. 8, c. 13. p. 488). Eusebius says expressly, that the cause of Christianity was defended in the presence of the senate, by Apollonius the martyr, in a very elegant oration. “Cum iudex multis cum precibus obsecrasset petiissetque ab illo, uti coram senatu rationem fidei suæ redderet, elegantissima oratione pro defensione fidei pronuntiata, &c. (Euseb. Latine, lib. 5, c. 21. p. 154). — GUIZOT]. It is not very clear, either from this Latin version, or the original Greek, or the context, when carefully considered, whether this oration was held before the senate or the judge. The latter seems the most probable, and would get rid of some doubts and difficulties. It ought not to excite any surprise, that the Apologies insisted so little on the miraculous evidence of the writers' faith, in an age when hostile disputants ascribed all such works to magic, and when the belief in this agency was so prevalent, that Apuleius was obliged to defend himself judicially against the charge of having employed it, to win the affections of a wealthy widow. All the early defenders of Christianity insist on its realization both of prophecy and philosophy. That which the emperor Hadrian received from Aristides is described by Jerome, as “contextum

Mosaic dispensation and the prophetic style.* In the unskilful hands of Justin and of the succeeding apologists, the sublime meaning of the Hebrew oracles evaporates in distant types, affected conceits, and cold allegories; and even their authenticity was rendered suspicious to an unenlightened Gentile by the mixture of pious forgeries, which under the names of Orpheus, Hermes, and the Sibyls,† were obtruded on him as of equal value with the genuine inspiration of heaven. The adoption of fraud and sophistry in the defence of revelation too often reminds us of the injudicious conduct of those poets, who load their *invulnerable* heroes with a useless weight of cumbersome and brittle armour.

But how shall we excuse the supine inattention of the Pagan and philosophic world, to those evidences which were presented by the hand of Omnipotence, not to their reason, but to their senses? During the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their first disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and, pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alterations in the moral or physical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth,‡ or at least a celebrated

philosophorum sententiis." Gibbon estimated Christianity too low, and ancient philosophy too high, to take correct views of their mutual bearings and concurrent action.—Ed.] * If the famous prophecy of the seventy weeks had been alleged to a Roman philosopher, would he not have replied in the words of Cicero: "Quæ tandem ista auguratio est, annorum potius quam aut mensium aut dierum?" (De Divinatione, 2. 30.) Observe with what irreverence Lucian (in Alexandro, c. 13.) and his friend Celsus (ap. Origen lib. 7, p. 327,) express themselves concerning the Hebrew prophets. † The philosophers, who derided the more ancient predictions of the Sibyls, would easily have detected the Jewish and Christian forgeries which had been so triumphantly quoted by the fathers from Justin Martyr to Lactantius. When the Sibylline verses had performed their appointed task, they, like the system of the millennium, were quietly laid aside. The Christian Sibyl had unluckily fixed the ruin of Rome for the year 195, (A.U.C. 948). ‡ The fathers, as they are drawn out in battle array by Dom Calmet, (Dissertation sur la Bible, tom. iii. p. 295—308,) seem

province of the Roman empire,* was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curiosity, and the devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history.† It happened during the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects, or received the earliest intelligence, of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipses, which his indefatigable curiosity could collect.‡ Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe.§ A distinct chapter of Pliny is designed for eclipses of an extraordinary nature and unusual

to cover the whole earth with darkness, in which they are followed by most of the moderns.

* Origen (ad Matt. c. 27) and a few modern critics, Beza, Le Clerc, Lardner, &c. are desirous of confining it to the land of Judea. † The celebrated passage of Philegon is now wisely abandoned. When Tertullian assures the Pagans that the mention of the prodigy is found in *arcanis* (not *archicis*) vestris, (see his Apology, c. 21.) he probably appeals to the Sibylline verses, which relate it exactly in the words of the gospel. ‡ Seneca, Quest. Natur. lib. 1, 15; 6, 1; 7, 17. Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. 2. § Some learned theologians maintain, that this part of Scripture has been misinterpreted, and that the error has involved industrious commentators in labours, which Origen had done his best to spare them. They say that the phrase *σκότος ἐγένετο* (Matt. c. 27. v. 45) does not mean an eclipse, or any extraordinary darkness, but an obscuration of any kind, caused in the atmosphere by clouds or other objects. Such a darkening of the sun, being a rare occurrence in Palestine, where in the middle of April the sky is generally serene, would be regarded both by Jews and Christians as an important event, and they were accustomed to fear it as a presage of evil (Amos, c. 8, v. 9—10). The word *σκότος* is often used in this sense by contemporary writers. In Revelations, (c. 9, v. 2.) where darkness is caused by smoke and dust, the words are, *ἠσκορίσθη ὁ ἥλιος*, “the sun was concealed.” In the Septuagint, *σκότος* is employed, to express the Hebrew *ophal*, which designates any kind of darkness: the evangelists, who modelled their language on that of the Septuagint, gave without doubt the same latitude to the expression. Such an obscuration of the heavens usually precedes an earthquake. (Matt. c. 27, v. 51). Many examples of this occur in Pagan authors, who at the time considered the event to be miraculous. (Ovid, lib. 2, v. 33, lib. 15, v. 785; Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. 2, c. 39). Wetstein has collected these in his edition of the New Testament (tom. i. p. 537). We must not then be surprised, that heathen writers make no mention of a phenomenon which took place only at Jerusalem, and probably was no departure

duration ; but he contents himself with describing the singular defect of light which followed the murder of Cæsar, when, during the greatest part of the year, the orb of the sun appeared pale and without splendour.* This season of obscurity, which cannot surely be compared with the preternatural darkness of the Passion, had been already celebrated by most of the poets† and historians of that memorable age.‡

CHAPTER XVI.—THE CONDUCT OF THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE CHRISTIANS, FROM THE REIGN OF NERO TO THAT OF CONSTANTINE.

IF we seriously consider the purity of the Christian religion, the sanctity of its moral precepts, and the innocent, as well as austere, lives of the greater number of those who during the first ages, embraced the faith of the gospel, we should naturally suppose, that so benevolent a doctrine would have been received with due reverence, even by the unbelieving world ; that the learned and the polite, however they might deride the miracles, would have esteemed the virtues, of the new sect ; and that the magistrates, instead of persecuting, would have protected an order of men who yielded the most passive obedience to the laws, though they declined the active cares of war and government. If, on the other hand, we recollect the universal toleration of Polytheism, as it was invariably maintained by the faith of the people, the incredulity of philosophers, and the policy of the Roman senate and emperors, we are at a loss to discover what new offence the Christians had committed, what new provocation could exasperate the mild indifference of antiquity, and what new motives could urge the Roman princes, who beheld without concern a thousand forms of religion

from the laws of nature, although regarded by Christians and Jews as a presage of evil. See Michaelis's Notes on the New Testament, vol. i, p. 290. Paulus, Comment. vol. iii, p. 762.—GUIZOT. [We are involved in darkness, too, while criticising the words of a translation, without the original. At every step we are sensible how much we want Matthew's Hebrew record.—ED.] * Plin. Hist. Natur. 2. 30. † Virgil. Georgic. 1. 466. Tibullus, lib. 1. Eleg. 5. ver. 75. Ovid. Metamorph. 15. 782. Lucan. Pharsal. 1. 540. The last of these poets places this prodigy before the civil war. ‡ See a public epistle of M. Antony in Josephi Antiq. 14. 12. Plutarch in Cæsar, p. 471. Appian. Bell. Civil. lib. 4.

subsisting in peace under their gentle sway, to inflict a severe punishment on any part of their subjects, who had chosen for themselves a singular, but an inoffensive, mode of faith and worship.

The religious policy of the ancient world seems to have assumed a more stern and intolerant character, to oppose the progress of Christianity. About fourscore years after the death of Christ, his innocent disciples were punished with death by the sentence of a proconsul of the most amiable and philosophic character, and according to the laws of an emperor distinguished by the wisdom and justice of his general administration. The apologies which were repeatedly addressed to the successors of Trajan are filled with the most pathetic complaints, that the Christians who obeyed the dictates, and solicited the liberty of conscience, were alone, among all the subjects of the Roman empire, excluded from the common benefits of their auspicious government. The deaths of a few eminent martyrs have been recorded with care; and from the time that Christianity was invested with the supreme power, the governors of the church have been no less diligently employed in displaying the cruelty, than in imitating the conduct, of their Pagan adversaries. To separate (if it be possible) a few authentic, as well as interesting, facts from an undigested mass of fiction and error, and to relate in a clear and rational manner, the causes, the extent, the duration, and the most important circumstances of the persecutions to which the first Christians were exposed, is the design of the present chapter.*

Dion Cassius, lib. 45, p. 431. Julius Obsequens, c. 128. His little treatise is an abstract of Livy's prodigies. * The history of Christianity, in its earliest stage, is only to be found in the Acts of the Apostles; from no other source can we learn the first persecutions inflicted on the Christians. Limited to a few individuals and a narrow space, these persecutions interested none but those who were exposed to them, and have had no other chroniclers. Gibbon, by going no farther back than to the time of Nero, has entirely omitted all the preceding persecutions, recorded by Luke. This omission could only be justified by questioning the authenticity of the Acts of the Apostles, for if they are authentic they must be consulted and quoted. Among the works transmitted to us from past times, few are so well attested, as Lardner has shewn in the second part of his Credibility of the Gospel History. Gibbon had no just plea then for passing over in silence Luke's recital, and this chasm in his history is full of meaning.—GIZOT. [Gibbon did not question the authenticity of the

The sectaries of a persecuted religion, depressed by fear, animated with resentment, and perhaps heated by enthusiasm, are seldom in a proper temper of mind calmly to investigate, or candidly to appreciate, the motives of their enemies, which often escape the impartial and discerning view even of those who are placed at a secure distance from the flames of persecution. A reason has been assigned for the conduct of the emperors towards the primitive Christians, which may appear the more specious and probable, as it is drawn from the acknowledged genius of Polytheism. It has already been observed, that the religious concord of the world was principally supported by the implicit assent and reverence which the nations of antiquity expressed for their respective traditions and ceremonies. It might, therefore, be expected that they would unite with indignation, against any sect of people which should separate itself from the communion of mankind, and claiming the exclusive possession of divine knowledge, should disdain every form of worship except its own, as impious and idolatrous. The rights of toleration were held by mutual indulgence; they were justly forfeited by a refusal of the accustomed tribute. As the payment of this tribute was inflexibly refused by the Jews, and by them alone, the consideration of the treatment which they experienced from the Roman magistrates will serve to explain how far these speculations are justified by facts; and will lead us to discover the true causes of the persecution of Christianity.

Without repeating what has been already mentioned, of the reverence of the Roman princes and governors for the temple of Jerusalem, we shall only observe that the destruction of the temple and city was accompanied and followed by every circumstance that could exasperate the minds of the conquerors, and authorize religious persecution by the most specious arguments of political justice, and the public safety. From the reign of Nero to that of Antoninus Pius, the Jews discovered a fierce impatience of the dominion of

Acts of the Apostles, for he has quoted facts from them. He did not consider the transactions there related to be any evidence of a public and general persecution, nor have they been so considered by ecclesiastical historians. M. Guizot alone thinks that proofs are to be found there of the repression of Christianity by imperial mandate and official cruelty, from which it again came forth unsubdued. This note was intended by him, as introductory to some which follow, and in

Rome, which repeatedly broke out in the most furious massacres and insurrections. Humanity is shocked at the recital of the horrid cruelties which they committed in the cities of Egypt, of Cyprus, and of Cyrene, where they dwelt in treacherous friendship with the unsuspecting natives;* and we are tempted to applaud the severe retaliation which was exercised by the arms of the legions against a race of fanatics, whose dire and credulous superstition seemed to render them the implacable enemies, not only of the Roman government, but of human kind.† The enthusiasm of the Jews was supported by the opinion that it was unlawful for them to pay taxes to an idolatrous master; and by the flattering promise which they derived from their ancient oracles, that a conquering Messiah would soon arise, destined to break their fetters, and to invest the favourites of heaven with the empire of the earth. It was by announcing himself as their long-expected deliverer, and by calling on all the descendants of Abraham to assert the hope of Israel, that the famous Baruchchebas collected a formidable army, with which he resisted during two years the power of the emperor Hadrian.‡

Notwithstanding these repeated provocations, the resentment of the Roman princes expired after the victory; nor were their apprehensions continued beyond the period of war and danger. By the general indulgence of Polytheism,

which it will be seen that he maintains such an opinion.—ED.]

* In Cyrene they massacred two hundred and twenty thousand Greeks; in Cyprus, two hundred and forty thousand; in Egypt, a very great multitude. Many of these unhappy victims were sawed asunder, according to a precedent to which David had given the sanction of his example. The victorious Jews devoured the flesh, licked up the blood, and twisted the entrails, like a girdle, round their bodies. See Dion Cassius, lib. 68, p. 1145. [The comments of Reimarus and others on this passage in Dion Cassius shew it to be their opinion, that the hatred, in which the Romans held the Jews, caused them to exaggerate the atrocities which the latter had perpetrated.—GUIZOT.] [To this must be added, the proneness of the ancients to magnify calamities. Their means of information were too scanty and vague to be accurate. Rumour alone supplied them with intelligence, and we know how that grows larger at every step, especially when dealing with numbers.—ED.] † Without repeating the well-known narratives of Josephus, we may learn from Dion (lib. 69, p. 1162), that in Hadrian's war five hundred and eighty thousand Jews were cut off by the sword, besides an infinite number which perished by famine, by disease, and by fire. ‡ For the sect of the Zealots, see Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, lib. 1, c. 17; for the character of the Messiah, according to the Rabbins,

and by the mild temper of Antoninus Pius, the Jews were restored to their ancient privileges, and once more obtained the permission of circumcising their children, with the easy restraint, that they should never confer on any foreign proselyte that distinguishing mark of the Hebrew race.* The numerous remains of that people, though they were still excluded from the precincts of Jerusalem, were permitted to form and to maintain considerable establishments, both in Italy and in the provinces, to acquire the freedom of Rome, to enjoy municipal honours, and to obtain at the same time an exemption from the burdensome and expensive offices of society. The moderation or the contempt of the Romans gave a legal sanction to the form of ecclesiastical police which was instituted by the vanquished sect. The patriarch, who had fixed his residence at Tiberias, was empowered to appoint his subordinate ministers and apostles, to exercise a domestic jurisdiction, and to receive from his dispersed brethren an annual contribution.† New synagogues were frequently erected in the principal cities of the empire; and the sabbaths, the fasts, and the festivals, which were either commanded by the Mosaic law, or enjoined by the traditions of the rabbins, were celebrated in the most solemn and public manner.‡ Such gentle treatment insensibly assuaged the stern temper of the Jews. Awakened from their dream of prophecy and conquest, they assumed the behaviour of peaceable and industrious subjects. Their irreconcilable hatred of mankind, instead of flaming out in acts of blood and violence, evaporated in less dangerous gratifications. They embraced every opportunity of overreaching the idolators in trade; and they pronounced secret and ambiguous imprecations against the haughty kingdom of Edom.§

Since the Jews, who rejected with abhorrence the deities adored by their sovereign and by their fellow-subjects, en-

lib. 5, c. 11—13; for the actions of Barchochebas, lib. 7, c. 12. [This war lasted three years and a half, from the spring of 132 to August, 135. See Dio and Jerome, as quoted by Clinton, F. R. 1. 122.—Ed.]

* It is to Modestinus, a Roman lawyer (lib. 6, regular.), that we are indebted for a distinct knowledge of the edict of Antoninus. See Casaubon. ad Hist. August. p. 27. † See Basnage, Histoire des Juifs, l. 3, c. 2, 3. The office of patriarch was suppressed by Theodosius the younger.

‡ We need only remember the Purim, or deliverance of the Jews from the rage of Haman, which, till the reign of Theodosius, was celebrated with insolent triumph and riotous intemperance. Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, lib. 8. c. 17, lib. 8. c. 6. § According to the false Josephus,

joyed, however, the free exercise of their unsocial religion, there must have existed some other cause which exposed the disciples of Christ to those severities from which the posterity of Abraham was exempt. The difference between them is simple and obvious; but, according to the sentiments of antiquity, it was of the highest importance. The Jews were a *nation*; the Christians were a *sect*: and, if it was natural for every community to respect the sacred institutions of their neighbours; it was incumbent on them to persevere in those of their ancestors. The voice of oracles, the precepts of philosophers, and the authority of the laws, unanimously enforced this national obligation. By their lofty claim of superior sanctity, the Jews might provoke the Polytheists to consider them as an odious and impure race. By disdaining the intercourse of other nations, they might deserve their contempt. The laws of Moses might be for the most part frivolous or absurd; yet, since they had been received during many ages by a large society, his followers were justified by the example of mankind; and it was universally acknowledged that they had a right to practise what it would have been criminal in them to neglect. But this principle, which protected the Jewish synagogue, afforded not any favour or security to the primitive church. By embracing the faith of the gospel, the Christians incurred the supposed guilt of an unnatural and unpardonable offence. They dissolved the sacred ties of custom and education, violated the religious institutions of their country, and presumptuously despised whatever their fathers had believed as true, or had revered as sacred. Nor was this apostasy (if we may use the expression) merely of a partial or local kind; since the pious deserter, who withdrew himself from the temples of Egypt or Syria, would equally disdain to seek an asylum in those of Athens or Carthage. Every Christian rejected with contempt the superstitions of his family, his city, and his province. The whole body of Christians unanimously refused to hold any communion with the gods of Rome, of the empire, and of mankind. It was in vain that the oppressed believer asserted the inalien-

Tsepho, the grandson of Esau, conducted into Italy the army of Æneas, king of Carthage. Another colony of Idumæans, flying from the sword of David, took refuge in the dominions of Romulus. For these, or for other reasons of equal weight, the name of Edom was applied by the

able rights of conscience and private judgment. Though his situation might excite the pity, his arguments could never reach the understanding, either of the philosophic or of the believing part of the Pagan world. To their apprehensions, it was no less a matter of surprise that any individuals should entertain scruples against complying with the established mode of worship, than if they had conceived a sudden abhorrence to the manners, the dress, or the language, of their native country.*

The surprise of the Pagans was soon succeeded by resentment; and the most pious of men were exposed to the unjust but dangerous imputation of impiety. Malice and prejudice concurred in representing the Christians as a society of atheists, who, by the most daring attack on the religious constitution of the empire, had merited the severest animadversion of the civil magistrate. They had separated themselves (they gloried in the confession) from every mode of superstition which was received in any part of the globe by the various temper of Polytheism: but it was not altogether so evident what deity, or what form of worship, they had substituted to the gods and temples of antiquity. The pure and sublime idea which they entertained of the Supreme Being escaped the gross conception of the Pagan multitude, who were at a loss to discover a spiritual and solitary God, that was neither represented under any corporeal figure or visible symbol, nor was adored with the accustomed pomp of libations and festivals, of altars and sacrifices.† The sages of Greece and Rome, who had elevated their minds to the contemplation of the existence and attributes of the First Cause, were induced by reason or by vanity to reserve for themselves and their chosen disciples the privilege of this philosophical devotion.‡ They were

Jews to the Roman empire.

* From the arguments of Celsus, as they are represented and refuted by Origen (lib. 5, p. 247—259), we may clearly discover the distinction that was made between the Jewish *people* and the Christian *sect*. See in the *Dialogues* of Minucius Felix (c. 5, 6) a fair and not inelegant description of the popular sentiments, with regard to the desertion of the established worship.

† *Cur nullas aras habent? templa nulla? nulla nota simulacra? Unde autem, vel quis ille, aut ubi, Deus unicuique, solitarius, destitutus?* (Minucius Felix, c. 10.) The Pagan interlocutor goes on to make a distinction in favour of the Jews, who had once a temple, altars, victims, &c

‡ It is difficult (says Plato) to attain, and dangerous to publish, the

far from admitting the prejudices of mankind as the standard of truth; but they considered them as flowing from the original disposition of human nature: and they supposed that any popular mode of faith and worship, which presumed to disclaim the assistance of the senses, would, in proportion as it receded from superstition, find itself incapable of restraining the wanderings of the fancy, and the visions of fanaticism. The glance which men of wit and learning condescended to cast on the Christian revelation, served only to confirm their hasty opinion, and to persuade them that the principle, which they might have revered, of the divine unity, was defaced by the wild enthusiasm, and annihilated by the airy speculations, of the new sectaries. The author of a celebrated dialogue, which has been attributed to Lucian, whilst he affects to treat the mysterious subject of the Trinity in a style of ridicule and contempt, betrays his own ignorance of the weakness of human reason, and of the inscrutable nature of the divine perfections.*

It might appear less surprising that the founder of Christianity should not only be revered by his disciples as a sage and a prophet, but that he should be adored as a god. The Polytheists were disposed to adopt every article of faith which seemed to offer any resemblance, however distant or imperfect, with the popular mythology; and the legends of Bacchus, of Hercules, and of Æsculapius, had, in some measure, prepared their imagination for the appear-

knowledge of the true God. See the *Théologie des Philosophes*, in the abbé d'Olivet's French translation of Tully de *Natura Deorum*, tom. i, p. 275. [Nevertheless both he and others did publish their notions, orally to their scholars and in books for their readers. We are not to suppose, as many do when it suits their argument, that publication in early times was the same as it is now. Yet the opinions thus propagated did spread far and wide. In Plato's time, those of Socrates had been carried by Aristippus to the very border of the African desert, and the two contemporaries rivalled each other in teaching them at Syracuse, in the immediate proximity of Latium. Within the next hundred years the permanent colleges and public libraries of Alexandria made them more generally known. Gibbon's observations may apply to Rome, perhaps to Athens, but not to the prevailing sentiment of the educated classes in the east.—ED.]

* The author of the *Philopatris* perpetually treats the Christians as a company of dreaming enthusiasts: *καπνῶναι αἰθέριοι, αἰθεροβαστοῦντες*, &c., and in one place manifestly alludes to the vision in which St. Paul was transported to the third heaven. In another place Try-

ance of the Son of God under a human form.* But they were astonished that the Christians should abandon the temples of those ancient heroes, who, in the infancy of the world, had invented arts, instituted laws, and vanquished the tyrants or monsters who infested the earth, in order to choose for the exclusive object of their religious worship an obscure teacher, who, in a recent age, and among a barbarous people, had fallen a sacrifice either to the malice of his own countrymen, or to the jealousy of the Roman government. The Pagan multitude, reserving their gratitude for temporal benefits alone, rejected the inestimable present of life and immortality which was offered to mankind by Jesus of Nazareth. His mild constancy in the midst of cruel and voluntary sufferings, his universal benevolence, and the sublime simplicity of his actions and character, were insufficient, in the opinion of those carnal men, to compensate for the want of fame, of empire, and of success; and, whilst they refused to acknowledge his stupendous triumph over the powers of darkness and of the grave, they misrepresented, or they insulted, the equivocal birth, wandering life, and ignominious death, of the divine Author of Christianity.†

The personal guilt which every Christian had contracted in thus preferring his private sentiment to the national religion, was aggravated in a very high degree by the number and union of the criminals. It is well known, and has been already observed, that Roman policy viewed, with the utmost jealousy and distrust, any association among its subjects; and that the privileges of private corporations,

phon, who personates a Christian, after deriding the gods of Paganism, proposes a mysterious oath,

Ἵψιμέδοντα θεῖον, μέγαν, ἄμφοτον, οὐρανόωρα,
 Υἱὸν πατρὸς, πνεῦμα ἐκ πατρὸς εκπορευόμενον
 "Ἐν ἐκ τριῶν, καὶ ἐξ ἐνὸς τρία,

Ἄριθμέειν μὲ διδάσκεις (is the profane answer of Critias), καὶ ὄρκος ἡ ἀριθμητικὴ· οὐκ οἶδα γὰρ τί λέγεις· ἔν τρια, τρια ἔν! * According to Justin Martyr (Apolog. Major, c. 70—85), the demon, who had gained some imperfect knowledge of the prophecies, purposely contrived this resemblance, which might deter, though by different means, both the people and the philosophers from embracing the faith of Christ.

† In the first and second books of Origen, Celsus treats the birth and character of our Saviour with the most impious contempt. The orator

though formed for the most harmless or beneficial purposes, were bestowed with a very sparing hand.* The religious assemblies of the Christians who had separated themselves from the public worship, appeared of a much less innocent nature: they were illegal in their principle, and in their consequences might become dangerous; nor were the emperors conscious that they violated the laws of justice, when, for the peace of society, they prohibited those secret and sometimes nocturnal meetings.† The pious disobedience of the Christians made their conduct, or perhaps their designs, appear in a much more serious and criminal light; and the Roman princes, who might perhaps have suffered themselves to be disarmed by a ready submission, deeming their honour concerned in the execution of their commands, sometimes attempted, by rigorous punishments, to subdue this independent spirit, which boldly acknowledged an authority superior to that of the magistrate. The extent and duration of this spiritual conspiracy seemed to render it every day more deserving of his animadversion. We have already seen that the active and successful zeal of the Christians had insensibly diffused them through every province, and almost every city, of the empire. The new converts seemed to renounce their family and country, that they might connect themselves in an indissoluble band of union with a peculiar society, which everywhere assumed a different character from the rest of mankind. Their gloomy and austere aspect, their abhorrence of the common business and pleasures of life, and their frequent predictions of impending calamities,‡ inspired the Pagans with the apprehension of some danger, which would arise from the new sect, the more alarming as it was the more obscure. What-

Libanius praises Porphyry and Julian for confuting the folly of a sect, which styles a dead man of Palestine, God, and the Son of God. Socrates, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* 3, 23. * The emperor Trajan refused to incorporate a company of one hundred and fifty firemen for the use of the city of Nicomedia. He disliked all associations. See *Plin. Epist.* 10, 42, 43.

† The procursul Pliny had published a general edict against unlawful meetings. The prudence of the Christians suspended their agapæ; but it was impossible for them to omit the exercise of public worship.

‡ As the prophecies of the antichrist, approaching conflagration, &c. provoked those Pagans whom they did not convert, they were mentioned with caution and reserve, and the Montanists were censured for disclosing too freely the dangerous secret. See Mosheim, p. 413.

ever (says Pliny) may be the principle of their conduct, their inflexible obstinacy appeared deserving of punishment.*

The precautions with which the disciples of Christ performed the offices of religion were at first dictated by fear and necessity; but they were continued from choice. By imitating the awful secrecy which reigned in the Eleusinian mysteries, the Christians had flattered themselves that they should render their sacred institutions more respectable in the eyes of the Pagan world.† But the event, as it often happens to the operations of subtle policy, deceived their wishes and their expectations. It was concluded that they only concealed what they would have blushed to disclose. Their mistaken prudence afforded an opportunity for malice to invent, and for suspicious credulity to believe, the horrid tales which described the Christians as the most wicked of human kind, who practised in their dark recesses every abomination that a depraved fancy could suggest, and who solicited the favour of their unknown god by the sacrifice of every moral virtue. There were many who pretended to confess or to relate the ceremonies of this abhorred society. It was asserted, that a new-born infant, entirely covered over with flour, was presented, like some mystic symbol of initiation, to the knife of the proselyte, who unknowingly inflicted many a secret and mortal wound on the innocent victim of his error; that as soon as the cruel deed was perpetrated, the sectaries drank up the blood, greedily tore asunder the quivering members, and pledged themselves to eternal secrecy, by a mutual consciousness of guilt. It was as confidently affirmed, that this inhuman sacrifice was succeeded by a suitable entertainment, in which intemperance served as a provocative to brutal lust; till, at the appointed moment, the lights were suddenly extinguished, shame was banished, nature was forgotten; and, as accident might direct, the darkness of the night was polluted by the incestuous commerce of sisters and brothers, of sons and of mothers.‡

* *Neque enim dubitabam, quodcunque esset quod faterentur* (such are the words of Pliny), *pervicaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri.* † See Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i, p. 101. and Spanheim, *Remarques sur les Césars de Julien*, p. 468, &c.

‡ See Justin Martyr, *Apolog.* 1, 35; 2, 14. Athenagoras in *Legation*

But the perusal of the ancient apologies was sufficient to remove even the slightest suspicion from the mind of a candid adversary. The Christians, with the intrepid security of innocence, appeal from the voice of rumour to the equity of the magistrates. They acknowledge, that if any proof can be produced of the crimes which calumny has imputed to them, they are worthy of the most severe punishment. They provoke the punishment, and they challenge the proof. At the same time they urge, with equal truth and propriety, that the charge is not less devoid of probability, than it is destitute of evidence: they ask, whether any one can seriously believe that the pure and holy precepts of the gospel, which so frequently restrained the use of the most lawful enjoyments, should inculcate the practice of the most abominable crimes: that a large society should resolve to dishonour itself in the eyes of its own members; and that a great number of persons of either sex, and every age and character, insensible to the fear of death or infamy, should consent to violate those principles which nature and education had imprinted most deeply in their minds.* Nothing, it should seem, could weaken the force or destroy the effect of so unanswerable a justification, unless it were the injudicious conduct of the apologists themselves, who betrayed the common cause of religion, to gratify their devout hatred to the domestic enemies of the church. It was sometimes faintly insinuated, and sometimes boldly asserted, that the same bloody sacrifices, and the same incestuous festivals, which were so falsely ascribed to the orthodox believers, were in reality celebrated by the Marcionites, by the Carpocratians, and by several other sects of the Gnostics, who, notwithstanding they might deviate into the paths of heresy, were still actuated by the sentiments of men, and still governed by the precepts of Christianity.† Accusations of a similar kind were retorted

c. 27. Tertullian, Apolog. c. 7—9. Minucius Felix, c. 9, 10, 30, 31. The last of these writers relates the accusation in the most elegant and circumstantial manner. The answer of Tertullian is the boldest and most vigorous.

* In the persecution of Lyons, some Gentile slaves were compelled by the fear of tortures, to accuse their Christian master. The church of Lyons, writing to their brethren of Asia, treat the horrid charge with proper indignation and contempt. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. 5, 1.

† See Justin Martyr, Apolog. 1, 35. Irenæus, adv. Hæres. 1, 24. Clemens Alexandrin. Stromat. lib. 3, p. 438. Euseb. 4, 8. It would

upon the church by the schismatics who had departed from its communion;* and it was confessed on all sides that the most scandalous licentiousness of manners prevailed among great numbers of those who affected the name of Christians. A Pagan magistrate, who possessed neither leisure nor abilities to discern the almost imperceptible line which divides the orthodox faith from heretical depravity, might easily have imagined that their mutual animosity had extorted the discovery of their common guilt. It was fortunate for the repose, or at least for the reputation, of the first Christians, that the magistrates sometimes proceeded with more temper and moderation than is usually consistent with religious zeal; and that they reported, as the impartial result of their judicial inquiry, that the sectaries, who had deserted the established worship, appeared to them sincere in their professions, and blameless in their manners; however they might incur, by their absurd and excessive superstition, the censure of the laws.†

History, which undertakes to record the transactions of the past for the instruction of future ages, would ill deserve the honourable office, if she condescended to plead the cause of tyrants, or to justify the maxims of persecution. It must, however, be acknowledged, that the conduct of the emperors who appeared the least favourable to the primitive church, is by no means so criminal as that of modern sovereigns, who have employed the arm of violence and terror against the religious opinions of any part of their subjects. From their reflections, or even from their own feelings, a Charles V. or a Louis XIV. might have acquired a just knowledge of the rights of conscience, of the obligation of faith, and of the innocence of error. But

be tedious and disgusting to relate all that the succeeding writers have imagined, all that Epiphanius has received, and all that Tillemont has copied. M. de Beausobre (*Hist. du Manichéisme*, lib. 9, c. 8, 9) has exposed, with great spirit, the disingenuous arts of Augustin and Pope Leo I. * When Tertullian became a Montanist, he aspersed the morals of the church which he had so resolutely defended. "Sed majoris est agape, quia per hanc adolescententes tui cum sororibus dormiunt, appendices scilicet gulæ lascivia et luxuria." *De Jejuniis*, c. 17. The thirty-fifth canon of the council of Illiberis provides against the scandals which too often polluted the vigils of the church, and disgraced the Christian name in the eyes of the unbelievers.

† Tertullian (*Apolog.* c. 2) expatiates on the fair and honourable testimony of Pliny, with much reason, and some declamation.

the princes and magistrates of ancient Rome were strangers to those principles which inspired and authorized the inflexible obstinacy of the Christians in the cause of truth; nor could they themselves discover, in their own breasts, any motive which would have prompted them to refuse a legal, and as it were a natural, submission to the sacred institutions of their country. The same reason which contributes to alleviate the guilt, must have tended to abate the rigour, of their persecutions. As they were actuated, not by the furious zeal of bigots, but by the temperate policy of legislators, contempt must often have relaxed, and humanity must frequently have suspended, the execution of those laws which they enacted against the humble and obscure followers of Christ. From the general view of their character and motives, we might naturally conclude: I. That a considerable time elapsed before they considered the new sectaries as an object deserving of the attention of government. II. That in the conviction of any of their subjects who were accused of so very singular a crime, they proceeded with caution and reluctance. III. That they were moderate in the use of punishments; and IV. That the afflicted church enjoyed many intervals of peace and tranquillity. Notwithstanding the careless indifference which the most copious and the most minute of Pagan writers have shown to the affairs of the Christians,* it may still be in our power to confirm each of these probable suppositions by the evidence of authentic facts.

I. By the wise dispensation of Providence, a mysterious veil was cast over the infancy of the church, which, till the faith of the Christians was matured, and their numbers were multiplied, served to protect them not only from the malice, but even from the knowledge, of the Pagan world. The slow and gradual abolition of the Mosaic ceremonies afforded a safe and innocent disguise to the more early proselytes of the gospel. As they were by far the greater part of the race of Abraham, they were distinguished by the peculiar mark of circumcision, offered up their devotions in the temple of Jerusalem till its final destruction, and received

* In the various compilation of the Augustan History (a part of which was composed under the reign of Constantine), there are not six lines which relate to the Christians; nor has the diligence of Xiphilin discovered their name in the large history of Dion Cassius.

both the law and the prophets as the genuine inspirations of the Deity. The Gentile converts, who by a spiritual adoption had been associated to the hope of Israel, were likewise confounded under the garb and appearance of the Jews,* and as the Polytheists paid less regard to articles of faith than to the external worship, the new sect, which carefully concealed, or faintly announced, its future greatness and ambition, was permitted to shelter itself under the general toleration which was granted to an ancient and celebrated people in the Roman empire. It was not long, perhaps, before the Jews themselves, animated with a fiercer zeal and a more jealous faith, perceived the gradual separation of their Nazarene brethren from the doctrine of the synagogue; and they would gladly have extinguished the dangerous heresy in the blood of its adherents. But the decrees of heaven had already disarmed their malice; and though they might sometimes exert the licentious privilege of sedition, they no longer possessed the administration of criminal justice; nor did they find it easy to infuse into the calm breast of a Roman magistrate the rancour of their own zeal and prejudice. The provincial governors declared themselves ready to listen to any accusation that might affect the public safety; but as soon as they were informed that it was a question not of facts but of words, a dispute relating only to the interpretation of the Jewish laws and prophecies, they deemed it unworthy of the majesty of Rome seriously to discuss the obscure differences which might arise among a barbarous and superstitious people. The innocence of the first Christians was protected by ignorance and contempt; and the tribunal of the Pagan magistrate often proved their most assured refuge against the fury of the synagogue.† If, indeed, we were disposed to adopt the traditions of a too credulous antiquity, we might relate the distant peregrination, the wonderful achievements, and the various deaths, of the twelve apostles; but a more accurate inquiry will induce us to doubt, whether any of those persons who had been witnesses to the miracles of Christ were permitted, beyond the limits of Palestine, to seal with their blood the truth of their testi-

* An obscure passage of Suetonius (in Claud. c. 25) may seem to offer a proof how strangely the Jews and Christians of Rome were confounded with each other. † See in the eighteenth and twenty-fifth

mony.* From the ordinary term of human life, it may very naturally be presumed that most of them were deceased before the discontent of the Jews broke out into that furious war, which was terminated only by the ruin of Jerusalem. During a long period, from the death of Christ to that memorable rebellion, we cannot discover any traces of Roman intolerance, unless they are to be found in the sudden, the transient, but the cruel, persecution which was exercised by Nero against the Christians of the capital, thirty-five years after the former, and only two years before the latter, of those great events. The character of the philosophic historian, to whom we are principally indebted for the knowledge of this singular transaction, would alone be sufficient to recommend it to our most attentive consideration.†

In the tenth year of the reign of Nero, the capital of the empire was afflicted by a fire which raged beyond the memory

chapters of the Acts of the Apostles the behaviour of Gallio, præconsul of Achaia, and of Festus, procurator of Judea. * In the time of Tertullian and Clemens of Alexandria, the glory of martyrdom was confined to St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. James. It was gradually bestowed on the rest of the Apostles by the more recent Greeks, who prudently selected for the theatre of their preaching and sufferings some remote country beyond the limits of the Roman empire. See Mosheim, p. 81, and Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclesiastiques, tom. i, part. 3. † Gibbon has not considered here how the incomes of the priests, and of all who depended upon, or were in any way employed by them, which had never before been affected, were sensibly diminished by the increasing influence of the new faith. Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, says, that "the temples were almost deserted, and the sacred victims scarcely found any purchasers." This is the only offence, of which he, their magistrate and judge, could find the Christians guilty; and Trajan, in his answer, requires only that they should prove their innocence by offering sacrifice, "supplicando diis nostris." The stream of sacred revenue had thus been cut off; and in such a case, no religion, having the power, has ever yet failed to have recourse to persecution. Members of all the leading families in Rome had employments in the temples, and all were interested in maintaining the perquisites of office. Artists, tradesmen, cultivators of the soil, all derived pecuniary advantage from what they furnished for the celebration of religious rites. These could easily insinuate into the mind of such a sovereign as Nero, that a sect which treated with contempt his title of *Pontifex Maximus*, could have no more respect for that of *Imperator*, and thus make them objects of resentment and suspicion. Calumny is always one of the weapons of persecution, a plea for using slooper, when they can be wielded, and a substitute for them when they are taken away. Tacitus and Suetonius, who had evi

or example of former ages.* The monuments of Grecian art and of Roman virtue, the trophies of the Punic and Gallic wars, the most holy temples, and the most splendid palaces, were involved in one common destruction. Of the fourteen regions or quarters into which Rome was divided, four only subsisted entire, three were levelled with the ground, and the remaining seven, which had experienced the fury of the flames, displayed a melancholy prospect of ruin and desolation. The vigilance of government appears not to have neglected any of the precautions which might alleviate the sense of so dreadful a calamity. The imperial gardens were thrown open to the distressed multitude, temporary buildings were erected for their accommodation, and a plentiful supply of corn and provisions was distributed at a very moderate price.† The most generous policy seemed to have dictated the edicts which regulated the disposition of the streets and the construction of private houses; and as it usually happens, in an age of prosperity, the conflagration of Rome, in the course of a few years, produced a new city, more regular and more beautiful than the former. But all the prudence and humanity affected by Nero on this occasion were insufficient to preserve him from the popular suspicion. Every crime might be imputed to the assassin of his wife and mother; nor could the prince, who prostituted his person and dignity on the theatre, be deemed incapable of the most extravagant folly. The voice of rumour accused the emperor as the incendiary of his own capital; and as the most incredible stories are the best adapted to the genius of an enraged people, it was gravely reported, and firmly believed, that Nero, enjoying the calamity which he had occasioned, amused himself with singing to his lyre the destruction of ancient Troy.‡ To divert a suspicion which the power of despotism was unable

dently neither inquired nor ascertained the truth, and only wrote from public report, say no more against the Christians of their time, than even now quarrelling sects will say of each other, or apprehensive hierarchies fulminate against envious rivals.—ED. * Tacit. Annal. 15, 38—44. Sueton. in Neron. c. 38. Dion Cassius, lib. 62, p. 1014. Orosius, 7, 7. † The price of wheat (probably of the *modius*) was reduced as low as *terti nummi*, which would be equivalent to about fifteen shillings the English quarter. ‡ We may observe, that the rumour is mentioned by Tacitus with a very becoming distrust and hesitation, whilst it is greedily transcribed by Suetonius, and solemnly

to suppress, the emperor resolved to substitute in his own place some fictitious criminals.

"With this view," continues Tacitus, "he inflicted the most exquisite tortures on those men, who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death, by the sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate.* For awhile this dire superstition was checked; but it again burst forth,† and not only spread itself over Judea, the first seat of this mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome, the common asylum which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confessions of those who were seized discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city, as for their hatred of human kind.‡ They died in torments, and their torments

confirmed by D— [According to Tacitus, Nero was at Antium when the fire began.—ED.] * This testimony is alone sufficient to expose the anachronism of the Jews, who place the birth of Christ near a century sooner. (Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, lib. 5. c. 14, 15.) We may learn from Josephus (*Antiquitat.* 18, 3) that the procuratorship of Pilate corresponded with the last ten years of Tiberius, A.D. 27—37. As to the particular time of the death of Christ, a very early tradition fixed it to the 25th of March, A.D. 29, under the consulship of the two Gemini. (Tertullian *adv. Judæos*, c. 8.) This date, which is adopted by Pagi, Cardinal Norris, and Le Clerc, seems at least as probable as the vulgar era, which is placed (I know not from what conjectures) four years later. [The chronicle of Eusebius (anno 2048) is the authority for the date of A.D. 33. See the discussions of this question by Clinton (*F. R.* i, p. 12—18), who agrees with Tertullian; and by Turnbull, in the *Transactions of the Chronological Institute* (part i, p. 15—21), who adopts the later or vulgar era.—ED.]

† This single sentence: "Repressa in præsens, exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat," proves that the Christians had already attracted the notice of the ruling powers, and that Nero was not the first to persecute them. I am surprised that no one has ever shewn how the Acts of the Apostles are confirmed by these words of Tacitus.—GUIZOT. [M. Guizot should have pointed out the portions of the Scripture narrative which he considers to be thus corroborated. Instances of judicial proceedings, not very harsh, against individuals, are there recorded; and of the fury of multitudes, stirred up by opposing Jews; but nowhere do we find Christianity "repressed" by any general course of magisterial rigor, and coming forth again from beneath the pressure. Opposition always appears there to be ineffectual, and progress constant. The "repressa" of Tacitus is much more correctly explained by Dean Milman, who refers it to "the expected extirpation of the religion by the death of its founder."—ED.] ‡ *odio*

were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and exposed to the fury of dogs; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse race, and honoured with the presence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace in the dress and attitude of a charioteer. The guilt of the Christians deserved indeed the most exemplary punishment; but the public abhorrence was changed into commiseration, from the opinion that those unhappy wretches were sacrificed not so much to the public welfare, as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant.* Those who survey with a curious eye the revolutions of mankind may observe, that the gardens and circus of Nero on the Vatican, which were polluted with the blood of the first Christians, have been rendered still more famous by the triumph and by the abuse of the persecuted religion. On the same spot,† a temple, which far surpasses the ancient glories of the Capitol, has been since erected by the Christian pontiffs; who, deriving their claim of universal dominion from a humble fisherman of Galilee, have succeeded to the throne of the Cæsars, given laws to the barbarian conquerors of Rome, and extended their spiritual jurisdiction from the coast of the Baltic to the shores of the Pacific ocean.

But it would be improper to dismiss this account of Nero's persecution, till we have made some observations, that may serve to remove the difficulties with which it is perplexed, and to throw some light on the subsequent history of the church.

1. The most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the

humani generis convicti. These words may either signify the hatred of mankind towards the Christians, or the hatred of the Christians towards mankind. I have preferred the latter sense, as the most agreeable to the style of Tacitus, and to the popular error, of which a precept of the gospel (see Luke xiv, 26) had been, perhaps, the innocent occasion. My interpretation is justified by the authority of Lipsius; of the Italian, the French, and the English translators of Tacitus; of Mosheim (p. 102); of Le Clerc (*Historia Ecclesiast.* p. 427); of Dr. Lardner (*Testimonies*, vol. i, p. 345), and of the Bishop of Gloucester (*Divine Legation*, vol. iii, p. 38). But as the word *convicti* does not unite very happily with the rest of the sentence, James Gronovius has preferred the reading of *conjuncti*, which is authorized by the valuable MS. of Florence. * Tacit. *Annal.* 15, 44. † Nardini, *Roma Antica*.

truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated passage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment which Nero inflicted on the Christians, a sect of men who had embraced a new and criminal superstition.* The latter may be proved by the consent of the most ancient manuscripts; by the inimitable character of the style of Tacitus; by his reputation, which guarded his text from the interpolations of pious fraud; and by the purport of his narration, which accused the first Christians of the most atrocious crimes, without insinuating that they possessed any miraeulous or even magical powers above the rest of mankind.† 2. Notwithstanding it is probable that Tacitus was born some years before the fire of Rome,‡ he could derive only from reading and conversation the knowledge of an event which happened during his infancy. Before he gave himself to the public, he calmly waited till his genius had attained its full maturity; and he was more than forty years of age, when a grateful regard for the memory of the virtuous Agricola extorted from him the most early of those historical compositions which will delight and instruct the most distant posterity. After making a trial of his strength in the life of Agricola and the description of Germany, he conceived, and at length

p. 487. Donatus de Româ Antiquâ, l. 3, p. 449.

* Sueton. in Nerone, c. 16. The epithet of *malefica*, which some sagacious commentators have translated *magical*, is considered by the more rational Mosheim as only synonymous to the *criticabilis* of Tacitus. † The passage concerning Jesus Christ, which was inserted into the text of Josephus, between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius, may furnish an example of no vulgar forgery. The accomplishment of the prophecies, the virtues, miracles, and resurrection, of Jesus, are distinctly related. Josephus acknowledges that he was the Messiah, and hesitates whether he should call him a man. If any doubt can still remain concerning this celebrated passage, the reader may examine the pointed objections of Le Fevre (Havercamp. Joseph. tom. ii, p. 267—273), the laboured answers of Daubuz (p. 187—232) and the masterly reply (Bibliothèque Ancienne et Moderne, tom. vii, p. 237—288), of an anonymous critic, whom I believe to have been the learned Abbé de Longuerue. [Much labour has been lost over this passage of Josephus. Supposing it to be genuine, it would only prove what none deny, that near the close of the first century, there were Christians who held certain opinions, and believed in certain events. Had the writer even avowed his own belief, which is by no means clear, it would have added nothing to the evidence of long antecedent facts.—ED.] ‡ See the lives of Tacitus by Lipsius and the Abbé de la Bletterie: Dictionnaire de Bayle

executed, a most arduous work—the history of Rome, in thirty books, from the fall of Nero to the accession of Nerva. The administration of Nerva introduced an age of justice and prosperity, which Tacitus had destined for the occupation of his old age;* but when he took a nearer view of his subject, judging, perhaps, that it was a more honourable or a less invidious office, to record the vices of past tyrants, than to celebrate the virtues of a reigning monarch, he chose rather to relate, under the form of annals, the actions of the four immediate successors of Augustus. To collect, to dispose, and to adorn, a series of fourscore years, in an immortal work, every sentence of which is pregnant with the deepest observations and the most lively images, was an undertaking sufficient to exercise the genius of Tacitus himself during the greatest part of his life. In the last years of the reign of Trajan, whilst the victorious monarch extended the power of Rome beyond its ancient limits, the historian was describing, in the second and fourth books of his annals, the tyranny of Tiberius;† and the emperor Hadrian must have succeeded to the throne, before Tacitus, in the regular prosecution of his work, could relate the fire of the capital, and the cruelty of Nero towards the unfortunate Christians. At the distance of sixty years, it was the duty of the annalist to adopt the narratives of contemporaries; but it was natural for the philosopher to indulge himself in the description of the origin, the progress, and the character of the new sect, not so much according to the knowledge or prejudices of the age of Nero, as according to those of the time of Hadrian.

3. Tacitus very frequently trusts to the curiosity or reflection of his readers to supply those intermediate circumstances and ideas, which, in his extreme conciseness, he has thought proper to suppress. We may, therefore, presume to imagine some probable cause which could direct the cruelty of Nero against the Christians of Rome, whose obscurity, as well as innocence, should have shielded them from his indignation, and even from his notice.‡ The Jews, who were numerous in the capital, and oppressed in their own country, were a much fitter object for the suspicions

à l'article *Tacite*; and Fabricius, *Biblioth. Latin.* tom. ii, p. 386, edit Ernest. * *Principatum Divi Nervæ, et imperium Trajani, uberiorum securioremque materiam senectuti seposui.* Tacit. Hist. l. † See Tacit. *Annal.* 2. 61; 4, 4. ‡ In the passage already referred to, Tacitus

of the emperor and of the people: nor did it seem unlikely that a vanquished nation, who already discovered their abhorrence of the Roman yoke, might have recourse to the most atrocious means of gratifying their implacable revenge. But the Jews possessed very powerful advocates in the palace, and even in the heart, of the tyrant; his wife and mistress, the beautiful Poppæa, and a favourite player of the race of Abraham, who had already employed their intercession in behalf of the obnoxious people.* In their room it was necessary to offer some other victims; and it might easily be suggested that, although the genuine followers of Moses were innocent of the fire of Rome, there had arisen among them a new and pernicious sect of *Galilæans*, which was capable of the most horrid crimes. Under the appellation of *Galilæans*, two distinctions of men were confounded, the most opposite to each other in their manners and principles; the disciples who had embraced the faith of Jesus of Nazareth,† and the zealots who had followed the standard of Judas the Gaulonite.‡ The former were the friends, the latter were the enemies, of human kind; and the only resemblance between them consisted in the same inflexible constancy, which, in the defence of their cause, rendered them insensible of death and tortures. The followers of Judas, who impelled their countrymen into rebellion, were soon buried under the ruins of Jerusalem; whilst those of Jesus, known by the more celebrated name of Christians, diffused themselves over the Roman empire. How natural was it for Tacitus, in the time of Hadrian, to appropriate to the Christians the guilt and the sufferings, which he might, with far greater truth and justice, have attributed to a sect whose odious memory was almost ex-

says enough to prove that the Christians were not an *obscure* sect, since they had been "repressed," and were not esteemed *innocent* by the Romans.—GUIZOT.] * The player's name was Aliturus. Through the same channel, Josephus (de Vitâ suâ, c. 3), about two years before, had obtained the pardon and release of some Jewish priests who were prisoners at Rome. † The learned Dr. Lardner (*Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, vol. ii, p. 102, 103) has proved that the name of Galilæans was a very ancient and perhaps the primitive appellation of the Christians. ‡ *Josephi Antiquitat.* 18. 1, 2. Tillemont, *Ruine des Juifs*, p. 742. The sons of Judas were crucified in the time of Claudius. His grandson Eleazar, after Jerusalem was taken, defended a strong fortress with nine hundred and sixty of his most desperate followers. When the battering ram had made a breach, they turned their own swords against their wives, their children, and at length against their

tinguished!* 4. Whatever opinion may be entertained of this conjecture (for it is no more than a conjecture), it is evident that the effect, as well as the cause, of Nero's persecution, were confined to the walls of Rome;† that the religious tenets of the Galilæans, or Christians, were never made a subject of punishment, or even of inquiry; and that, as the idea of their sufferings was, for a long time, connected with the idea of cruelty and injustice, the moderation of succeeding princes inclined them to spare a sect oppressed by a tyrant, whose rage had been usually directed against virtue and innocence.

It is somewhat remarkable, that the flames of war consumed almost at the same time the temple of Jerusalem

own breasts. They died to the last man. * This conjecture supposes what is altogether improbable, nay even impossible. Tacitus could not "appropriate to the Christians" of Rome, "the guilt and the sufferings which he might, with far greater truth and justice, have attributed" to the partisans of Judas the Gaulonite; for the latter had never been in Rome. Their revolts, their attempts, their opinions, wars, and punishments were all confined to Judea. (Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, tom. i, p. 491.) The disciples of Jesus had also been long known at Rome by the name of Christians, which Tacitus affirms so positively, and at the same time refers so distinctly to its etymology, that he cannot be suspected of having made any mistake.—GUIZOT. [It should be remembered, that Gibbon owns this to be "*no more than a conjecture.*" It was without doubt too hastily adopted, and on very weak grounds. The Christians were never known by any other name out of Judea, or its immediate neighbourhood. When M. Guizot says, that it had *long* been given to them at Rome, he forgets that it had been itself invented only about twenty years, and was not brought to the imperial city till some time after its first introduction at Antioch. It was therefore still new at the period here treated of. Gibbon was evidently misled less by Dr. Lardner than by the passage, in which Epictetus, who lived in Rome during Nero's reign, applies the term Galilæans to some race, that from madness or habit, had become indifferent to life and its concerns. This would apply to the Jews; but up to that period there had been no opportunity for Christians to exhibit any such general trait of character.—ED.] † See Dodwell. *Paucitat. Mart.* l. 13. The Spanish Inscription in Gruter, p. 238, No. 9, is a manifest and acknowledged forgery, contrived by that noted impostor, Cyriacus of Ancona, to flatter the pride and prejudices of the Spaniards. See Ferreras, *Histoire d'Espagne*, tom. i, p. 192. [The assertion, that "these persecutions were confined to the walls of Rome," is unsupported by any evidence. Sulpicius Severus speaks of edicts against Christianity, issued by Nero after the fire of Rome. "Post etiam datis legibus religio vetabatur, palamque edictis propositis Christianum esse non licebat" (lib. 2, c. 37). We have no authority which weakens that of Orosius, who says expressly, that the Christians of the provinces

and the Capitol of Rome;* and it appears no less singular, that the tribute which devotion had destined to the former, should have been converted by the power of an assaulting victor to restore and adorn the splendour of the latter.† The emperors levied a general capitation-tax on the Jewish people; and although the sum assessed on the head of each individual was inconsiderable, the use for which it was designed, and the severity with which it was exacted, were considered as an intolerable grievance.‡ 5. Since the officers of the revenue extended their unjust claims to many persons who were strangers to the blood or religion of the Jews, it was impossible that the Christians, who had so often sheltered themselves under the shade of the synagogue, should now escape this rapacious persecution. Anxious as they were to avoid the slightest infection of idolatry, their conscience forbade them to contribute to the honour of that demon who had assumed the character of the Capitoline Jupiter. As a very numerous though declining party among the Christians still adhered to the law of Moses, their efforts to dissemble their Jewish origin were detected by the decisive test of circumcision;§ nor

were persecuted by Nero. “Nero Christianos supplicis ac mortibus affecit, ac per omnes provincias pari persecutione ex cruciari imperavit” (lib. 8, c. 5).—GUIZOT.] [If there had been such persecutions in the provinces, they must have extended to those where the Apostles were then preaching, and where their “Acts” were written. The silence of that record is strong evidence; while on the other hand, the ready granting of Paul’s appeal to Rome, proves that the provincial governors had received no such power to act as is implied by the “ex cruciari imperavit” of Orosius, who did not write till nearly four hundred years after the time of Nero.—ED.] * The capitol was burnt during the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian, the 19th of December, A.D. 69. On the 10th of August, A.D. 70, the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed by the hands of the Jews themselves, rather than by those of the Romans.

† The new capitol was dedicated by Domitian. Sueton. in Domitian, c. 5. Plutarch, in Poplicola, tom. i, p. 230, edit. Bryan. The gilding alone cost twelve thousand talents (above two millions and a half). It was the opinion of Martial (l. 9, epigram. 3), that if the emperor had called in his debts, Jupiter himself, even though he had made a general auction of Olympus, would have been unable to pay two shillings in the pound.

‡ With regard to the tribute, see Dion Cassius, lib. 66, p. 1082, with Reimar’s notes. Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum, tom. ii. p. 571, and Basnage, Histoire de Juifs, lib. 7, c. 2. § Suetonius (in Domitian. c. 12,) had seen an old man of uncty publicly examined before

were the Roman magistrates at leisure to inquire into the difference of their religious tenets. Among the Christians who were brought before the tribunal of the emperor, or, as it seems more probable, before that of the procurator of Judea, two persons are said to have appeared, distinguished by their extraction, which was more truly noble than that of the greatest monarchs. These were the grandsons of St. Jude the apostle, who himself was the brother of Jesus Christ.* Their natural pretensions to the throne of David might perhaps attract the respect of the people, and excite the jealousy of the governor; but the meanness of their garb, and the simplicity of their answers, soon convinced him that they were neither desirous nor capable of disturbing the peace of the Roman empire. They frankly confessed their royal origin, and their near relation to the Messiah; but they disclaimed any temporal views, and professed that his kingdom, which they devoutly expected, was purely of a spiritual and angelic nature. When they were examined concerning their fortune and occupation, they shewed their hands hardened with daily labour, and declared that they derived their whole subsistence from the cultivation of a farm near the village of Cocaba, of the extent of about twenty-four English acres,† and of the value of nine thousand drachms, or 300*l.* sterling. The grandsons of St. Jude were dismissed with compassion and contempt.‡

But although the obscurity of the house of David might protect them from the suspicions of a tyrant, the present

the procurator's tribunal. This is what Martial calls, *Mentula tributis damnata*.

* This appellation was at first understood in the most obvious sense, and it was supposed that the brothers of Jesus were the lawful issue of Joseph and Mary. A devout respect for the virginity of the mother of God suggested to the Gnostics, and afterwards to the orthodox Greeks, the expedient of bestowing a second wife on Joseph. The Latins (from the time of Jerome) improved on that hint, asserted the perpetual celibacy of Joseph, and justified by many similar examples the new interpretation that Jude, as well as Simon and James, who are styled the brothers of Jesus Christ, were only his first-cousins. See Tillemont, *Mém. Ecclesiast.* tom. i. part 3, and Beausobre *Hist. Critique du Manichéisme*, lib. 2, c. 2.

† Thirty-nine *πλῆθρα*, squares of a hundred feet each, which, if strictly computed, would scarcely amount to nine acres. But the probability of circumstances, the practice of other Greek writers, and the authority of M. de Valois, incline me to believe that the *πλῆθρον* is used to express the Roman *jugerum*.

‡ Eusebius, 3. 20. The story is

greatness of his own family alarmed the pusillanimous temper of Domitian, which could only be appeased by the blood of those Romans whom he either feared, or hated, or esteemed. Of the two sons of his uncle Flavius Sabinus,* the elder was soon convicted of treasonable intentions, and the younger, who bore the name of Flavius Clemens, was indebted for his safety to his want of courage and ability.† The emperor, for a long time, distinguished so harmless a kinsman by his favour and protection, bestowed on him his own niece Domitilla, adopted the children of that marriage to the hope of the succession, and invested their father with the honours of the consulship. But he had scarcely finished the term of his annual magistracy, when on a slight pretence he was condemned and executed; Domitilla was banished to a desolate island on the coast of Campania;‡ and sentence either of death or of confiscation was pronounced against a great number of persons who were involved in the same accusation. The guilt imputed to their charge was that of *Atheism* and *Jewish manners*;§ a singular association of ideas, which cannot with any propriety be applied except to the Christians, as they were obscurely and imperfectly viewed by the magistrates and by the writers of that period. On the strength of so probable an interpretation, and too eagerly admitting the suspicions of a tyrant as an evidence of their honourable crime, the church has placed both Clemens and Domitilla among its first martyrs, and has branded the cruelty of Domitian with the name of the second persecution. But this persecution (if it deserves that epithet) was of no long duration. A few months after the death of Clemens, and the banishment of Domitilla, Stephen, a freed man belonging to the latter, who had enjoyed the favour,

taken from Hegesippus. * See the death and character of Sabinus in Tacitus. (Hist. 3. 74, 75.) Sabinus was the elder brother, and till the accession of Vespasian, had been considered as the principal support of the Flavian family. † Flavius Clementem patruem suum *contemptissime inertie . . . ex tenuissima suspicione interemit*. Sueton. in Domitian. c. 15. ‡ The isle of Pandataria, according to Dion. Bruttius Præsens (apud Euseb. 3. 18,) banishes her to that of Pontia, which was not far distant from the other. That difference, and a mistake, either of Eusebius, or of his transcribers, have given occasion to suppose two Domitillas, the wife and the niece of Clemens. See Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclesiastiques, tom. ii, p. 244. § Dion. lib. 67, p. 1112. If the Bruttius Præsens, from whom it is probable that he collected this account, was the correspondent of Pliny, (Epistol. 7. 3.)

but who had not surely embraced the faith of his mistress, assassinated the emperor in his palace.* The memory of Domitian was condemned by the senate; his acts were rescinded; his exiles recalled; and, under the gentle administration of Nerva, while the innocent were restored to their rank and fortunes, even the most guilty either obtained pardon or escaped punishment.†

II. About ten years afterwards, under the reign of Trajan, the younger Pliny was intrusted by his friend and master with the government of Bithynia and Pontus. He soon found himself at a loss to determine by what rule of justice or of law he should direct his conduct in the execution of an office the most repugnant to his humanity. Pliny had never assisted at any judicial proceedings against the Christians, with whose name alone he seems to be acquainted; and he was totally uninformed with regard to the nature of their guilt, the method of their conviction, and the degree of their punishment. In this perplexity he had recourse to his usual expedient, of submitting to the wisdom of Trajan an impartial and, in some respects, a favourable account of the new superstition, requesting the emperor that he would condescend to resolve his doubts, and to instruct his ignorance.‡ The life of Pliny had been employed in the acquisition of learning, and in the business of the world. Since the age of nineteen he had pleaded with distinction in the tribunals of Rome,§ filled a place in the senate, had been invested with the honours of the consulship, and had formed very numerous connexions with every order of men, both in Italy and in the provinces. From his ignorance, therefore, we may derive some useful information. We may assure ourselves, that when he accepted the government of Bithynia, there were no general laws or decrees of the senate in force against the Christians; that neither Trajan nor any of his virtuous predecessors, whose edicts were received into

we may consider him as a contemporary writer. * Suet. in Domit. c. 17. Philostratus in Vit. Apollon. lib. 8. † Dion. lib. 67, p. 1118. Plin. Epistol. 4. 22. ‡ Plin. Epistol. 10. 97. The learned Mosheim expresses himself (p. 147. 232.) with the highest approbation of Pliny's moderate and candid temper. Notwithstanding Dr. Lardner's suspicions (see Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, vol. ii. p. 46), I am unable to discover any bigotry in his language or proceedings.

§ Plin. Epist. 5. 8. He pleaded his first cause A.D. 51, the year after the famous eruption of Vesuvius, in which his uncle lost his life.

the civil and criminal jurisprudence, had publicly declared their intentions concerning the new sect; and that whatever proceedings had been carried on against the Christians, there were none of sufficient weight and authority to establish a precedent for the conduct of a Roman magistrate.

The answer of Trajan, to which the Christians of the succeeding age have frequently appealed, discovers as much regard for justice and humanity as could be reconciled with his mistaken notions of religious policy.* Instead of displaying the implacable zeal of an inquisitor, anxious to discover the most minute particles of heresy, and exulting in the number of his victims, the emperor expresses much more solicitude to protect the security of the innocent, than to prevent the escape of the guilty. He acknowledges the difficulty of fixing any general plan; but he lays down two salutary rules, which often afforded relief and support to the distressed Christians. Though he directs the magistrates to punish such persons as are legally convicted, he prohibits them, with a very humane inconsistency, from making any inquiries concerning the supposed criminals; nor was the magistrate allowed to proceed on every kind of information. Anonymous charges the emperor rejects, as too repugnant to the equity of his government; and he strictly requires, for the conviction of those to whom the guilt of Christianity is imputed, the positive evidence of a fair and open accuser. It is likewise probable, that the persons who assumed so invidious an office were obliged to declare the grounds of their suspicions, to specify (both in respect to time and place) the secret assemblies which their Christian adversary had frequented, and to disclose a great number of circumstances, which were concealed with the most vigilant jealousy from the eye of the profane. If they succeeded in their prosecution, they were exposed to the resentment of a considerable and active party, to the censure of the more liberal portion of mankind, and to the ignominy which, in every age and country, has attended the character of an informer. If, on the contrary, they failed in their proofs, they incurred the severe and perhaps capital penalty, which, according to a law published by the emperor

* Plin. Epist. 10. 98. Tertullian (Apolog. c. 5.) considers this rescript as a relaxation of the ancient penal law, "*Quas Trajanus ex parte frustratus est!*" and yet Tertullian, in another part of his Apo-

Hadrian, was inflicted on those who falsely attributed to their fellow citizens the crime of Christianity. The violence of personal or superstitious animosity might sometimes prevail over the most natural apprehension of disgrace and danger; but it cannot surely be imagined, that accusations of so unpromising an appearance were either lightly or frequently undertaken by the Pagan subjects of the Roman empire.*

The expedient which was employed to elude the prudence of the laws, affords a sufficient proof how effectually they disappointed the mischievous designs of private malice or superstitious zeal. In a large and tumultuous assembly, the restraints of fear and shame, so forcible on the minds of individuals, are deprived of the greatest part of their influence. The pious Christian, as he was desirous to obtain or to escape the glory of martyrdom, expected, either with impatience or with terror, the stated returns of the public games and festivals. On those occasions, the inhabitants of the great cities of the empire were collected in the circus of the theatre, where every circumstance of the place, as well as of the ceremony, contributed to kindle their devotion, and to extinguish their humanity. Whilst the numerous spectators, crowned with garlands, perfumed with incense, purified with the blood of victims, and surrounded with the altars and statues of their tutelary deities, resigned themselves to the enjoyment of pleasures which they considered as an essential part of their religious worship, they recollected that the Christians alone abhorred the gods of mankind, and by their absence and melancholy on these solemn festivals, seemed to insult or to lament the public felicity. If the empire had been afflicted by any recent calamity, by a plague, a famine, or an unsuccessful war; if the Tiber had, or if the Nile had not, risen beyond its banks; if the earth had shaken, or if the temperate order of the seasons had been interrupted, the superstitious Pagans were convinced that the crimes and the impiety of the Christians, who were logists, exposes the inconsistency of prohibiting inquiries and enjoining punishments. * Eusebius (Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 4, c. 9) has preserved the edict of Hadrian. He has likewise (c. 13) given us one still more favourable, under the name of Antoninus, the authenticity of which is not so universally allowed. The second Apology of Justin contains some curious particulars relative to the accusation of Christians. [Professor Hegelmayer has proved the authenticity of the edict

spared by the excessive lenity of the government, had at length provoked the divine justice. It was not among a licentious and exasperated populace, that the forms of legal proceedings could be observed; it was not in an amphitheatre, stained with the blood of wild beasts and gladiators, that the voice of compassion could be heard. The impatient clamours of the multitude denounced the Christians as the enemies of gods and men, doomed them to the severest tortures, and, venturing to accuse by name some of the most distinguished of the new sectaries, required with irresistible vehemence that they should be instantly apprehended and cast to the lions.* The provincial governors and magistrates who presided in the public spectacles were usually inclined to gratify the public inclinations, and to appease the rage, of the people, by the sacrifice of a few obnoxious victims. But the wisdom of the emperors protected the church from the danger of these tumultuous clamours and irregular accusations, which they justly censured as repugnant both to the firmness and to the equity of their administration. The edicts of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius expressly declared, that the voice of the multitude should never be admitted as legal evidence to convict or to punish those unfortunate persons who had embraced the enthusiasm of the Christians.†

of Antoninus in his Comment. Hist. Theol. in edict. Ant. Pi. Tubing. 1777.—GUIZOT.] * See Tertullian. (Apolog. c.40.) The acts of the martyrdom of Polycarp exhibit a lively picture of these tumults, which were usually fomented by the malice of the Jews. [Jews would not have attended festivities in which so much idolatry was mixed up. It is far more likely, that these tumults were excited by the parties referred to in a former note, whose profits or earnings were diminished by the decline of the ancient religion. When the effects of this great social change were beginning to be experienced, and long-protected interests, whose ramifications extended into every part of the empire, foresaw their ruin, we cannot be surprised that intelligent and well-meaning princes, like Trajan, the Antonines and Decius, should have yielded to the importunities of priests and people, demanding stringent and vindictive measures against the authors of the injury. We naturally feel compassion for the suffering martyr, and indignation against his oppressor. But we must not forget, that there was suffering also on the other side. Yet Gibbon was too lenient to the ruling powers, too forbearing towards the atrocities which they permitted, in an age when no ignorance of the rights of conscience can be allowed to palliate such outrages on the feelings of humanity.—ED.]

† These regulations are inserted in the above-mentioned edicts of

III. Punishment was not the inevitable consequence of conviction; and the Christians whose guilt was the most clearly proved by the testimony of witnesses, or even by their voluntary confession, still retained in their own power the alternative of life or death. It was not so much the past offence, as the actual resistance, which excited the indignation of the magistrate. He was persuaded that he offered them an easy pardon, since, if they consented to cast a few grains of incense upon the altar, they were dismissed from the tribunal in safety and with applause. It was esteemed the duty of a humane judge to endeavour to reclaim rather than to punish, those deluded enthusiasts. Varying his tone according to the age, the sex, or the situation, of the prisoners, he frequently condescended to set before their eyes every circumstance which could render life more pleasing, or death more terrible; and to solicit, nay, to entreat them, that they would show some compassion to themselves, to their families, and to their friends.* If threats and persuasions proved ineffectual, he had often recourse to violence; the scourge and the rack were called to supply the deficiency of argument; and every art of cruelty was employed to subdue such inflexible, and, as it appeared to the Pagans, such criminal obstinacy. The ancient apologists of Christianity have censured, with equal truth and severity, the irregular conduct of their persecutors, who contrary to every principle of judicial proceeding, admitted the use of torture, in order to obtain, not a confession, but a denial, of the crime which was the object of their inquiry.† The monks of the succeeding ages, who, in their peaceful solitudes, entertained themselves with diversifying the deaths and sufferings of the primitive martyrs, have frequently invented torments of a much more refined and ingenious nature. In particular, it has pleased them to suppose, that the zeal of the Roman magistrates, disdainng every consideration of moral virtue or public decency, endeavoured to seduce those whom they were unable to vanquish; and that, by their orders, the most brutal violence was offered to those whom they

Hadrian and Pius. See the apology of Melito (apud Euseb. lib. 4, c. 26). * See the rescript of Trajan, and the conduct of Pliny.

The most authentic acts of the martyrs abound in these exhortations.

† In particular, see Tertullian (Apolog. c. 2. 3), and Lactantius, Institut. Divin. 5. 9). Their reasonings are almost the same: but we

found it impossible to seduce. It is related, that pious females, who were prepared to despise death, were sometimes condemned to a more severe trial, and called upon to determine whether they set a higher value on their religion or on their chastity. The youths to whose licentious embraces they were abandoned, received a solemn exhortation from the judge, to exert their most strenuous efforts to maintain the honour of Venus against the impious virgin who refused to burn incense on her altars. Their violence, however, was commonly disappointed, and the seasonable interposition of some miraculous power preserved the chaste spouses of Christ from the dishonour even of an involuntary defeat. We should not, indeed, neglect to remark, that the more ancient as well as authentic memorials of the church are seldom polluted with these extravagant and indecent fictions.*

The total disregard of truth and probability in the representations of these primitive martyrdoms was occasioned by a very natural mistake. The ecclesiastical writers of the fourth or fifth centuries ascribed to the magistrates of Rome the same degree of implacable and unrelenting zeal which filled their own breasts against the heretics or the idolators of their own times. It is not improbable that some of those persons who were raised to the dignities of the empire might have imbibed the prejudices of the populace, and that the cruel disposition of others might occasionally be stimulated by motives of avarice or of personal resentment.† But it is certain, and we may appeal to the grateful confessions of the first Christians, that the greatest part of those magis-

may discover, that one of these apologists had been a lawyer, and the other a rhetorician.

* See two instances of this kind of torture in the *Acta Sincera Martyrum*, published by Ruinart, p. 160. 399. Jerome, in his legend of Paul the Hermit, tells a strange story of a young man, who was chained naked on a bed of flowers, and assaulted by a beautiful and wanton courtesan. He quelled the rising temptation by biting off his tongue. [The more ancient as well as authentic memorials of the church do relate many such examples, nor is their testimony elsewhere contradicted. Among others, Tertullian says: "By condemning the Christian female to the lewd (*lenonem*) rather than to the lion (*leonem*), you have confessed that the violation of chastity is held by us to be more atrocious than any punishment, even than death itself." (*Apol. cap. ult. p. 40*). Eusebius also says: "Other virgins, dragged to places of ill-fame, have sacrificed life rather than pollute virtue. (*Hist. Eccl. lib. 8, c. 14.*)—(GUIZOT.)

† The conversion of his wife provoked Claudius Herminianus,

trates who exercised in the provinces the authority of the emperor or of the senate; and to whose hands alone the jurisdiction of life and death was intrusted, behaved like men of polished manners and liberal education, who respected the rules of justice, and who were conversant with the precepts of philosophy. They frequently declined the odious task of persecution, dismissed the charge with contempt, or suggested to the accused Christian some legal evasion, by which he might elude the severity of the laws.* Whenever they were invested with a discretionary power,† they used it much less for the oppression than for the relief and benefit of the afflicted church. They were far from condemning all the Christians who were convicted of an obstinate adherence to the new superstition. Contenting themselves, for the most part, with the milder chastisements of imprisonment, exile, or slavery in the mines,‡ they left the unhappy victims of their justice some reason to hope that a prosperous event, the accession, the marriage, or the triumph, of an emperor, might speedily restore them, by a general pardon, to their former state. The martyrs devoted to immediate execution by the Roman magistrates appear to have been selected from the most opposite extremes. They were either bishops and presbyters, the persons the most distinguished among the Christians by their rank and influence, and whose example might strike terror into the whole sect,§ or else they were the meanest and most abject among

governor of Cappadocia, to treat the Christians with uncommon severity. Tertullian ad Scapalam, c. 3. * Tertullian, in his epistle to the governor of Africa, mentions several remarkable instances of lenity and forbearance, which had happened within his knowledge.

† Neque enim in universum aliquid quod quasi certam formam habeat constitui potest: an expression of Trajan, which gave a very great latitude to the governors of provinces. ‡ In metalla damnatur, in insulas relegatur. (Tertullian, Apolog. c. 12.) The mines in Numidia contained nine bishops, with a proportionable number of their clergy and people, to whom Cyprian addressed a pious epistle of praise and comfort. (See Cyprian. Epistol. 76, 77.) § Though we cannot receive with entire confidence, either the epistles or the acts of Ignatius (they may be found in the second volume of the Apostolic Fathers), yet we may quote that bishop of Antioch as one of these *exemplary* martyrs. He was sent in chains to Rome as a public spectacle; and when he arrived at Troas, he received the pleasing intelligence, that the persecution of Antioch was already at an end. [The acts of Ignatius are generally received as authentic. Seven of his letters are the same. They are mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome

them, particularly those of the servile condition, whose lives were esteemed of little value, and whose sufferings were viewed by the ancients with too careless an indifference.* The learned Origen, who, from his experience, as well as reading, was intimately acquainted with the history of the Christians declares in the most express terms, that the number of martyrs was very inconsiderable.† His authority would alone be sufficient to annihilate that formidable army of martyrs, whose relics, drawn for the most part from the catacombs of Rome, have replenished so many churches.‡ and whose marvellous achievements have been the subject

Two editions of them exist. In one they are lengthened by many passages, that are apparently interpolated. The other contains what he actually wrote, at least according to the opinions of the most enlightened and best informed critics. (See Lardner's Cred. of Gosp. Hist. part 2, vol. i. p. 152. Less, Ueber die Religion, tom. i. p. 529. Usser. Diss. de Ignat. Epist. Pearson. Vind. Ignat.) It was during the reign of Trajan, that bishop Ignatius was taken from Antioch to Rome, to be torn by lions in the amphitheatre, in the year 107, or according to others, 116.—GUIZOT.] [In the preceding chapter Gibbon did not hesitate to refer to the epistles of Ignatius as genuine.—ED.] * Among the martyrs of Lyons (Euseb. lib. 5, c. 1,) the slave Blandina was distinguished by more exquisite tortures. Of the five martyrs so much celebrated in the acts of Felicitas and Perpetua, two were of a servile, and two others of a very mean, condition. † Origen. advers. Celsum, lib. 3, p. 116. His words deserve to be transcribed: "Ὀλιγοὶ κατὰ καιροῦς, καὶ σφόδρα ἐδαριθμητοὶ περὶ τῶν Χριστιανῶν θεοσεβείας τέθνηκασι." [To this passage should have been added the consecutive words, "God not permitting the whole race to be destroyed," which seems to indicate, that Origen only considered the slaughtered to be few, when compared with the multitude of survivors. He spoke too of the state of religion under Caracalla, Elagabalus, Alexander Severus, and Philip; it was in the reign of the last of these, that Origen wrote his books against Celsus.—GUIZOT.] ‡ If we recollect that all the plebeians of Rome were not Christians, and that all the Christians were not saints and martyrs, we may judge with how much safety religious honours can be ascribed to bones or urns, indiscriminately taken from the public burial-place. After ten centuries of a very free and open trade, some suspicions have arisen among the more learned Catholics. They now require as a proof of sanctity and martyrdom, the letters B.M. a phial full of red liquor, supposed to be blood, or the figure of a palm-tree. But the two former signs are of little weight, and with regard to the last, it is observed by the critics: 1. That the figure, as it is called, of a palm, is perhaps a cypress, and perhaps only a stop, the flourish of a comma, used in the monumental inscriptions. 2. That the palm was the symbol of victory among the Pagans. 3. That among the Christians it served as the emblem, not only of martyrdom, but in general of a joyful resurrection. See the epistle of P. Mabillon on the worship of unknown saints, and Muratori sopra la

of so many volumes of holy romance.* But the general assertion of Origen may be explained and confirmed by the particular testimony of his friend Dionysius, who, in the immense city of Alexandria, and under the rigorous persecution of Decius, reckons only ten men and seven women who suffered for the profession of the Christian name.†

During the same period of persecution, the zealous, the eloquent, the ambitious, Cyprian governed the church, not only of Carthage, but even of Africa. He possessed every quality which could engage the reverence of the faithful, or provoke the suspicions and resentment of the Pagan magistrates. His character, as well as his station, seemed to mark out that holy prelate as the most distinguished object of envy and of danger.‡ The experience, however, of the life of Cyprian is sufficient to prove, that our fancy has exaggerated the perilous situation of a Christian bishop, and that the dangers to which he was exposed were less imminent than those which temporal ambition is always prepared to encounter in the pursuit of honours.§ Four

Antichità Italiane, Dissertat. 58. * As a specimen of these legends, we may be satisfied with ten thousand Christian soldiers crucified in one day, either by Trajan or Hadrian, on mount Ararat. See Baronius ad Martyrologium Romanum. Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclesiastiques, tom. ii. part 2, p. 438, and Geddes's Miscellanies, vol. ii. p. 203. The abbreviation of MIL. which may signify either soldiers or thousands, is said to have occasioned some extraordinary mistakes. † Dionysius ap. Euseb. lib. 6, c. 41. One of the seventeen was likewise accused of robbery. [Gibbon ought to have said "falsely accused of robbery," for so it is in the original, from which he quotes. This Christian, by name Nemesion, was falsely accused, before the centurion, of a crime to which he was a stranger (ἀλλοτριωτάτην.) and was acquitted. Then, taken before the governor, as guilty of being a Christian, he was subjected to a double torture. (Euseb. lib. 6, c. 41. 45.) Dionysius makes particular mention only of the principal martyrs, and describes Alexandria, as so desolated by the fury of the Pagans, that it wore "the aspect of a town taken by storm." Origen wrote too before the persecution under the emperor Decius.—GUIZOT.] [This is copied from Mr. Davis's Examination, p. 62. Gibbon, in his Vindication, (1st edit. p. 42) says, that Nemesion, though deemed innocent by his bishop, Dionysius, was treated by the civil magistrate as guilty, which Mr. Davis (Reply, p. 80) unsuccessfully endeavours to disprove.—ED.]

‡ The letters of Cyprian exhibit a very curious and original picture, both of the man and the times. See likewise the two lives of Cyprian, composed with equal accuracy, though with very different views; the one by Le Clerc, (Bibliothèque Universelle, tom. xii. p. 208—378), the other by Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclesiastiques, tom. iv. part 1. p. 76—459. § Our fancy has not

Roman emperors, with their families, their favourites, and their adherents, perished by the sword in the space of ten years, during which the bishop of Carthage guided by his authority and eloquence the counsels of the African church. It was only in the third year of his administration, that he had reason, during a few months, to apprehend the severe edicts of Decius, the vigilance of the magistrate, and the clamours of the multitude, who loudly demanded, that Cyprian, the leader of the Christians, should be thrown to the lions. Prudence suggested the necessity of a temporary retreat, and the voice of prudence was obeyed. He withdrew himself into an obscure solitude, from whence he could maintain a constant correspondence with the clergy and people of Carthage; and concealing himself till the tempest was past, he preserved his life, without relinquishing either his power or his reputation. His extreme caution did not, however, escape the censure of the more rigid Christians who lamented, or the reproaches of his personal enemies who insulted, a conduct which they considered as a pusillanimous and criminal desertion of the most sacred duty.* The propriety of reserving himself for the future exigencies of the church, the example of several holy bishops,† and the divine admonitions which, as he declares himself, he frequently received in visions and ecstasies, were the reasons alleged in his justification.‡ But his best apology may be found in the cheerful resolution, with which, about eight years afterwards, he suffered death in the cause of religion. The authentic history of his martyrdom has been recorded with unusual candour and impartiality. A short abstract,

“exaggerated the perilous situation of a Christian bishop,” for in a former note, Gibbon himself has said, that the mines of Numidia contained nine bishops, with a proportionable number of their clergy and people,” for which he refers to the authority of Cyprian. *Epist.* 76, 77.—GUIZOT]. [This is by no means a contradiction of Gibbon’s observation, that in those days of persecution, the Christian who attained the highest spiritual honours, did not expose himself to as much danger as the Pagan who sought or held the highest temporal dignity.—ED.]

* See the polite, but severe, epistles of the clergy of Rome to the bishop of Carthage. (Cyprian, *Epist.* 8. 9.) Pontius labours, with the greatest care and diligence, to justify his master against the general censure. † In particular those of Dionysius of Alexandria, and Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Cæsarea. See Euseb. *Hist. Ecclesiast.* lib. 6. c. 40, and *Mémoires de Tillemont*, tom. iv. part 2, p. 685.

‡ See Cyprian, *Epist.* 16, and his life by Pontius.

therefore, of its most important circumstances, will convey the clearest information of the spirit, and of the forms, of the Roman persecutions.*

When Valerian was consul for the third, and Gallienus for the fourth, time, Paternas, proconsul of Africa, summoned Cyprian to appear in his private council-chamber. He there acquainted him with the imperial mandate which he had just received,† that those who abandoned the Roman religion should immediately return to the practice of the ceremonies of their ancestors. Cyprian replied, without hesitation, that he was a Christian and a bishop, devoted to the worship of the true and only Deity, to whom he offered up his daily supplications for the safety and prosperity of the two emperors, his lawful sovereigns. With modest confidence he pleaded the privilege of a citizen, in refusing to give any answer to some invidious, and indeed illegal, questions which the proconsul had proposed. A sentence of banishment was pronounced as the penalty of Cyprian's disobedience; and he was conducted without delay to Curubis, a free and maritime city of Zengitania, in a pleasant situation, a fertile territory, and at the distance of about forty miles from Carthage.‡ The exiled bishop enjoyed the conveniences of life and the consciousness of virtue. His reputation was diffused over Africa and Italy; an account of his behaviour was published for the edification of the

* We have an original life of Cyprian by the deacon Pontius, the companion of his exile, and the spectator of his death; and we likewise possess the ancient proconsular acts of his martyrdom. These two relations are consistent with each other and with probability; and what is somewhat remarkable, they are both unsullied by any miraculous circumstances. † It should seem that these were circular orders, sent at the same time to all the governors. Dionysius (ap. Euseb. lib. 7, c. 11,) relates the history of his own banishment from Alexandria, almost in the same manner. But as he escaped and survived the persecution, we must account him either more or less fortunate than Cyprian. ‡ See Plin. Hist. Natur. 5. 3. Cellarius, Geograph. Antiq. part 3, p. 96. Shaw's Travels, p. 90, and, for the adjacent country (which is terminated by Cape Bona, or the promontory of Mercury), l'Afrique de Mémol. tom. ii. p. 494. There are the remains of an aqueduct near Curubis, or Curbis, at present altered into Gurbes; and Dr. Shaw read an inscription which styles that city *Colonia Fulvia*. The deacon Pontius (in Vit. Cyprian. c. 12,) calls it "Apricum et competentem locum, hospitium pro voluntate secretum, et quicquid apponi eis ante promissum est, qui regnum et justitiam Dei quærunt." [Cape Bon was the "Fair Promontory" of Polybius.—ED.]

Christian world;* and his solitude was frequently interrupted by the letters, the visits, and the congratulations, of the faithful. On the arrival of a new proconsul in the province, the fortune of Cyprian appeared for some time to wear a still more favourable aspect. He was recalled from banishment; and though not yet permitted to return to Carthage, his own gardens in the neighbourhood of the capital were assigned for the place of his residence.†

At length, exactly one year‡ after Cyprian was first apprehended, Galerius Maximus, proconsul of Africa, received the imperial warrant for the execution of the Christian teachers. The bishop of Carthage was sensible that he should be singled out for one of the first victims; and the frailty of nature tempted him to withdraw himself, by a secret flight, from the danger and the honour of martyrdom;§ but soon recovering that fortitude which his character required, he returned to his gardens, and patiently expected the ministers of death. Two officers of rank, who were intrusted with that commission, placed Cyprian between them in a chariot; and as the proconsul was not then at leisure, they conducted him, not to a prison, but to a private house in Carthage, which belonged to one of them. An elegant supper was provided for the entertainment of the bishop; and his Christian friends were permitted, for the last time, to enjoy his society, whilst the streets were filled with a multitude of the faithful, anxious and alarmed at the approaching fate of

* See Cyprian. Epistol. 77. edit. Fell. † Upon his conversion, he had sold those gardens for the benefit of the poor. The indulgence of God (most probably the liberality of some Christian friend) restored them to Cyprian. See Pontius, c. 15. ‡ When Cyprian, a twelvemonth before, was sent into exile, he dreamt that he should be put to death the next day. The event made it necessary to explain that word, as signifying a year. Pontius, c. 12. § This does not appear to have induced Cyprian's short concealment. He wished not to be taken to Utica, as was threatened, but to suffer at Carthage, where those who had been guided by him during his life, might be edified by his death. This at least is the explanation of his conduct, which he gives in his letters. "When I heard that the officers were coming to convey me to Utica, I yielded to the advice of those very dear friends who persuaded me to withdraw from my gardens. I considered too, that it would best become a bishop to confess his Lord in the city over which he had spiritually presided, and where his example might edify all his flock." Epist. 81. p. 238.—Guzot.

their spiritual father.* In the morning he appeared before the tribunal of the proconsul, who, after informing himself of the name and situation of Cyprian, commanded him to offer sacrifice, and pressed him to reflect on the consequences of his disobedience. The refusal of Cyprian was firm and decisive; and the magistrate, when he had taken the opinion of his council, pronounced with some reluctance the sentence of death. It was conceived in the following terms: "That Thascius Cyprianus should be immediately beheaded, as the enemy of the gods of Rome, and as the chief and ringleader of a criminal association, which he had seduced into an impious resistance against the laws of the most holy emperors, Valerian and Gallienus.† The manner of his execution was the mildest and least painful that could be inflicted on a person convicted of any capital offence; nor was the use of torture admitted to obtain from the bishop of Carthage either the recantation of his principles, or the discovery of his accomplices.

As soon as the sentence was proclaimed, a general cry of "We will die with him," arose at once among the listening multitude of Christians who waited before the palace gates. The generous effusions of their zeal and affection were neither serviceable to Cyprian nor dangerous to themselves. He was led away under a guard of tribunes and centurions, without resistance and without insult, to the place of his execution, a spacious and level plain near the city, which was already filled with great numbers of spectators. His faithful presbyters and deacons were permitted to accompany their holy bishop.‡ They assisted him in laying aside his upper garment, spread linen on the ground to catch the

* Pontius (c. 15) acknowledges that Cyprian, with whom he supped, passed the night "custodia delicata." The bishop exercised a last and very proper act of jurisdiction, by directing that the younger females, who watched in the streets, should be removed from the dangers and temptations of a nocturnal crowd. Act. Proconsularia, c. 2.

† See the original sentence in the Acts, c. 4, and in Pontius, c. 17. The latter expresses it in a more rhetorical manner. ‡ Neither Pontius, in his Life of Cyprian, nor any ancient manuscripts, afford the least ground for believing that the "presbyters and deacons were permitted to accompany their holy bishop" in their official character, or that they were known in that capacity. Apart from all connection with religion, the course here taken by the historian must appear strange to us, in so complacently giving the persecutors credit for some extenuating circumstances in their treatment of a man, whom

precious relics of his blood, and received his orders to bestow five-and-twenty pieces of gold on the executioner. The martyr then covered his face with his hands, and at one blow his head was separated from his body. His corpse remained during some hours exposed to the curiosity of the Gentiles; but in the night it was removed, and transported in a triumphal procession, and with a splendid illumination, to the burial-place of the Christians. The funeral of Cyprian was publicly celebrated, without receiving any interruption from the Roman magistrates; and those among the faithful who had performed the last offices to his person and his memory, were secure from the danger of inquiry or of punishment. It is remarkable, that of so great a multitude of bishops in the province of Africa, Cyprian was the first who was esteemed worthy to obtain the crown of martyrdom.*

It was in the choice of Cyprian, either to die a martyr, or to live an apostate; but on that choice depended the alternative of honour or infamy. Could we suppose that the bishop of Carthage had employed the profession of the Christian faith only as the instrument of his avarice or ambition, it was still incumbent on him to support the character which he had assumed; † and if he possessed the smallest degree of manly fortitude, rather to expose himself to the most cruel tortures, than by a single act to exchange the reputation of a whole life, for the abhorrence of his Christian brethren, and the contempt of the Gentile world. But if the zeal of Cyprian was supported by the sincere conviction of the truth of those doctrines which he preached, the crown of martyrdom must have appeared to him as an object of desire rather than of terror. It is not easy to extract any

they were putting to death, for the sole crime of a frank and courageous adherence to his opinions.—GUIZOT. * Pontius, c. 19.

M. de Tillemont (*Mémoires*, tom. iv, part 1, p. 450, note 50), is not pleased with so positive an exclusion of any former martyrs of the episcopal rank. [M. de Tillemont honestly states his difficulties, and concludes by saying, that there must be some mistake in the text of Pontius, who, as he conceives, intended only to speak of Africa Minor or Carthage; for in his fifty-sixth letter, addressed to Papianus, Cyprian speaks expressly of many bishops his colleagues, "qui proscripti sunt, vel apprehensi in carcere et catenis fuerunt; aut qui in exilium relegati, illustri itinere ad Dominum profecti sunt, aut qui in quibusdam locis animadversi, ecclesies coronas de Domini clarificatione sumpserunt." —GUIZOT.] † Whatever opinion we may entertain of the character or principles of Thomas à Becket, we must acknowledge that he suffered

distinct ideas from the vague though eloquent declamations of the fathers, or to ascertain the degree of immortal glory and happiness which they confidently promised to those who were so fortunate as to shed their blood in the cause of religion.* They inculcated with becoming diligence, that the fire of martyrdom supplied every defect and expiated every sin; that while the souls of ordinary Christians were obliged to pass through a slow and painful purification, the triumphant sufferers entered into the immediate fruition of eternal bliss, where, in the society of the patriarchs, the apostles, and the prophets, they reigned with Christ, and acted as his assessors in the universal judgment of mankind. The assurance of a lasting reputation upon earth, a motive so congenial to the vanity of human nature, often served to animate the courage of the martyrs. The honours which Rome or Athens bestowed on those citizens who had fallen in the cause of their country, were cold and unmeaning demonstrations of respect, when compared with the ardent gratitude and devotion which the primitive church expressed towards the victorious champions of the faith. The annual commemoration of their virtues and sufferings was observed as a sacred ceremony, and at length terminated in religious worship. Among the Christians who had publicly confessed their religious principles, those who (as it very frequently happened) had been dismissed from the tribunal or the prisons of the Pagan magistrates, obtained such honours as were justly due to their imperfect martyrdom, and their generous resolution. The most pious females courted the permission of imprinting kisses on the fetters which they had worn, and on the wounds which they had received. Their persons were esteemed holy, their decisions were admitted with deference, and they too often abused, by their spiritual pride and licentious manners, the pre-eminence which their zeal and intrepidity had acquired.† Distinctions like these, whilst they displayed the exalted

death with a constancy not unworthy of the primitive martyrs. See Lord Lyttelton's History of Henry II., vol. ii, p. 592, &c. * See in particular the treatise of Cyprian, de Lapsis, p. 87—98, edit. Fell. The learning of Dodwell, (Dissertat. Cyprianic. 12, 13) and the ingenuity of Middleton, (Free Inquiry, p. 162, &c.) have left scarcely anything to add concerning the merit, the honours, and the motives, of the martyrs.

† Cyprian. Epistol. 5—7, 22—24, and de Unitat. Ecclesiæ. The number of pretended martyrs has been very much multiplied, by the custom which was introduced of bestowing that

merit, betrayed the inconsiderable number of those who suffered, and of those who died for the profession of Christianity.

The sober discretion of the present age will more readily censure than admire, but can more easily admire than imitate, the fervour of the first Christians, who, according to the lively expression of Sulpicius Severus, desired martyrdom with more eagerness than his own contempo-

honourable name on confessors. [The letters of Cyprian, to which Gibbon refers, do not prove what he says of "the spiritual pride and licentious manners" of the confessors. In his fifth letter, written during his retirement, he exhorts the deacons and priests to fill his vacant place, not to allow the confessors or poor to want for anything, and to visit the former in their prisons. In the sixth, addressed to Sergius, Rogatianus, and other confessors, he exhorts them to suffer martyrdom, and complains of not being with them, to kiss their pure hands, and the lips which had glorified God. He bids them despise all the sufferings of this life, in the hope of eternal glory. The seventh is addressed to his deacons and presbyters, desiring them in a few words to relieve the poor. The twenty-second is from Lucian to Celerinus, most modestly written, disclaiming the praises of his friend, and condoling with him on the death of his sisters, the victims of persecution. The twenty-fourth is from Caldonius to Cyprian and the presbyters of Carthage, consulting them on the re-admission of penitent apostates into the church. It is only in the treatise *De Unitate Ecclesie*, that any confessors are reprov'd.—GUIZOT.] [In these notes, the attacks on Gibbon are unfair. He does not say that the presbyters and deacons attended the execution of Cyprian "in their official character." With regard to Cyprian's letters, see also his *Vindication*, p. 156. His edition of Cyprian's works was that of Amsterdam, 1700; while M. Guizot used that of Oxford, 1682, or one in which the epistles stand in the same order, and in which Nos. 11, 13, and 14 correspond with Nos. 5, 6, and 7 in the former. M. Guizot should have looked into this before he committed himself by the publication of such a note as the above. There is no character which is so differently judged as is that of Cyprian, by the holders of opposite opinions. To Gibbon, early accustomed to think for himself, all control over thought was repugnant; and his short acquaintance with it, as it is exercised in the Roman Catholic church, probably conduced to his early abjuration of his adopted faith, as well as to the view afterwards taken by him, of the ground on which the prerogative is asserted. By this rule he estimated the character of the prelate, who first invested the Christian teacher with those stern attributes of command, which have since been more fully developed in such strict systems of ecclesiastical discipline. Where religion first assumed this form, it trained a supine race, that fell an easy prey to each successive invader; and in the land of Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, and Cyril, industry, learning, talent, civilization, and even Christianity itself, were for the most part soon extinguished, and remain so to the present day — ED.]

aries solicited a bishopric.* The epistles which Ignatius composed, as he was carried in chains through the cities of Asia, breathe sentiments the most repugnant to the ordinary feelings of human nature. He earnestly beseeches the Romans, that when he should be exposed in the amphitheatre, they would not, by their kind but unseasonable intercession, deprive him of the crown of glory; and he declares his resolution to provoke and irritate the wild beasts which might be employed as the instruments of his death.† Some stories are related of the courage of martyrs, who actually performed what Ignatius had intended; who exasperated the fury of the lions, pressed the executioner to hasten his office, cheerfully leaped into the fires which were kindled to consume them, and discovered a sensation of joy and pleasure in the midst of the most exquisite tortures. Several examples have been preserved of a zeal impatient of those restraints which the emperors had provided for the security of the church. The Christians sometimes supplied by their voluntary declaration the want of an accuser, rudely disturbed the public service of Paganism,‡ and, rushing in crowds round the tribunal of the magistrates, called upon them to pronounce and to inflict the sentence of the law. The behaviour of the Christians was too remarkable to escape the notice of the ancient philosophers; but they seem to have considered it with much less admiration than astonishment. Incapable of conceiving the motives which sometimes transported the fortitude of believers beyond the bounds of prudence or reason, they treated such an eagerness to die as the strange result of obstinate despair, of stupid insensibility, or of superstitious frenzy.§ “Unhappy men!” ex-

* *Certatim gloriosa in certamina ruebatur; multoque avidius tum martyria gloriosis mortibus querebantur, quam nunc episcopatus pravis ambitionibus appetuntur.* Sulpicius Severus, l. 2. He might have omitted the word *nunc*. † See *Epist. ad Roman.* c. 4, 5, ap. *Patres Apostol.* tom. ii, p. 27. It suited the purpose of bishop Pearson (*See Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, part 2, c. 9*) to justify, by a profusion of examples and authorities, the sentiments of Ignatius. ‡ The story of Polyuctes, on which Corneille has founded a very beautiful tragedy, is one of the most celebrated, though not perhaps the most authentic, instances of this excessive zeal. We should observe, that the sixteenth canon of the council of Illiberis refuses the title of martyrs to those who exposed themselves to death, by publicly destroying the idols. § See *Epictetus, l. 4, c. 7* (though there is

claimed the proconsul Antoninus to the Christians of Asia; "unhappy men! if you are thus weary of your lives, is it so difficult for you to find ropes and precipices?"* He was extremely cautious (as it is observed by a learned and pious historian) of punishing men who had found no accusers but themselves, the imperial laws not having made any provision for so unexpected a case; condemning therefore a few, as a warning to their brethren, he dismissed the multitude with indignation and contempt.† Notwithstanding this real or affected disdain, the intrepid constancy of the faithful was productive of more salutary effects on those minds which nature or grace had disposed for the easy reception of religious truth. On these melancholy occasions, there were many among the Gentiles who pitied, who admired, and who were converted. The generous enthusiasm was communicated from the sufferer to the spectators; and the blood of martyrs, according to a well-known observation, became the seed of the church.

But although devotion had raised, and eloquence continued to inflame, this fever of the mind, it insensibly gave way to the more natural hopes and fears of the human heart; to the love of life, the apprehension of pain, and the horror of dissolution. The more prudent rulers of the church found themselves obliged to restrain the indiscreet ardour of their followers, and to distrust a constancy which too often abandoned them in the hour of trial.‡ As the lives of the faithful became less mortified and austere, they were every day less ambitious of the honours of martyrdom,

some doubt whether he alludes to the Christians). Marcus Antoninus de Rebus suis, l. 11, c. 3. Lucian in Peregrin. [This is the passage referred to at p. 108 (Note), where it is suggested, that Epictetus, by the term Galileans, more probably meant the whole Jewish nation, than Christians.—Ed.] * Tertullian ad Scapul. c. 5. The learned

are divided between three persons of the same name, who were all pro-consuls of Asia. I am inclined to ascribe this story to Antoninus Pius, who was afterwards emperor, and who may have governed Asia under the reign of Trajan. [Antoninus was proconsul of Asia in the time of the younger Pliny, Ep. 4, 3.—Ed.] † Mosheim, de Rebus Christ. ante Constantin. p. 235. ‡ See the epistle of the church of Smyrna, ad. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. 4, c. 15. [The martyrdom of Polycarp is the principal subject of this chapter in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius. Some other martyrs are mentioned, and only in one instance is a want of constancy related; it is that of a physician, named Quintus, who, terrified at the sight of the wild beasts and the instruments of torture, renounced his faith. This example proves little with regard

and the soldiers of Christ, instead of distinguishing themselves by voluntary deeds of heroism, frequently deserted their post, and fled in confusion before the enemy whom it was their duty to resist. There were three methods, however, of escaping the flames of persecution, which were not attended with an equal degree of guilt; the first, indeed, was generally allowed to be innocent; the second was of a doubtful, or at least of a venial, nature; but the third implied a direct and criminal apostacy from the Christian faith.

I. A modern inquisitor would hear with surprise, that whenever an information was given to a Roman magistrate, of any person within his jurisdiction who had embraced the sect of the Christians, the charge was communicated to the party accused, and that a convenient time was allowed him to settle his domestic concerns, and to prepare an answer to the crime which was imputed to him.* If he entertained any doubt of his own constancy, such a delay afforded him an opportunity of preserving his life and honour by flight, of withdrawing himself into some obscure retirement or some distant province, and of patiently expecting the return of peace and security. A measure so consonant to reason was soon authorized by the advice and example

to Christians in general, of whose courage this chapter of Eusebius furnishes stronger proofs than it does of cowardice.—GUIZOT.]

* In the second apology of Justin, there is a particular and very curious instance of this legal delay. The same indulgence was granted to accused Christians, in the persecution of Decius; and Cyprian (de Lapsis) expressly mentions the "dies negantibus prestitus." [The cases here cited from Justin Martyr and Cyprian, are those of a few individuals, which are no proofs of the general course taken with the accused. It is on the contrary evident from this very apology of Justin, that seldom was any respite granted to them. A man, named Lucius, himself a Christian, was present when a Christian was unjustly condemned by Urbicus. He asked the judge why he punished a man guilty neither of adultery, nor theft, nor of any crime but that of avowing himself to be a Christian. Urbicus only replied, 'And thou, too, seemest to be one.' 'Undoubtedly I am,' answered Lucius, on which he was immediately ordered to be led away and put to death. A third, who came up at the same time, was sentenced to be scourged." See Just. Mar. Apolog. 2, p. 90, edit. Ben. 1742. Here, then, are three cases in which no delay was granted; there are many others, such as those of Ptolemæus, Marcellus, &c. Justin makes it even a matter of reproach to some judges, that they sent the accused to death before they had investigated the charge against them. The words of Cyprian refer also to a particular case, and state merely that a day was fixed on which all the Christians, who had not then renegated, were to be

of the most holy prelates; and seems to have been censured by few, except by the Montanists, who deviated into heresy by their strict and obstinate adherence to the rigour of ancient discipline.* II. The provincial governors, whose zeal was less prevalent than their avarice, had countenanced the practice of selling certificates (or libels as they were called), which attested that the persons therein mentioned had complied with the laws, and sacrificed to the Roman deities. By producing these false declarations, the opulent and timid Christians were enabled to silence the malice of an informer, and to reconcile in some measure their safety with their religion. A slight penance atoned for this profane dissimulation.† III. In every persecution there were great numbers of unworthy Christians, who publicly disowned or renounced the faith which they had professed; and who confirmed the sincerity of their abjuration, by the legal acts of burning incense or of offering sacrifices. Some of these apostates had yielded on the first menace or exhortation of the magistrate; whilst the patience of others had been subdued by the length and repetition of tortures. The affrighted countenances of some betrayed their inward remorse, whilst others advanced with confidence and alacrity to the altars of the gods.‡ But the disguise, which fear

condemned.—GUIZOT.] [A charge made by Mr. Davis (p. 71) is here repeated, without any notice of the answer to it. See Gibbon's *Vind.* p. 48—54, 1st ed., where he showed that his accuser had suppressed the passage in Cyprian; that the impugned statement was confirmed by Mosheim (*De Rebus*, p. 480), and that Justin Martyr had admitted the delay, in the case of the woman who had been converted by Ptolemæus. Mr. Davis, in his reply, did not deny his error, and still maintained that the charge was in substance just.—ED.]

* Tertullian considers flight from persecution as an imperfect, but very criminal apostacy; as an impious attempt to elude the will of God, &c. &c. He has written a treatise on this subject, (see p. 536—544, edit. Rigalt.) which is filled with the wildest fanaticism, and the most incoherent declamation. It is, however, somewhat remarkable, that Tertullian did not suffer martyrdom himself.

† The *Libellatici*, who are chiefly known by the writings of Cyprian, are described with the utmost precision in the copious commentary of Mosheim, p. 483—489. [The penance was not slight, for it was the same as that enjoined on apostates who had sacrificed to idols; it lasted many years. Fleury, *Hist. Ecc.* tom. ii, p. 271.—GUIZOT.]

‡ Plin. *Epistol.* 10. 97. Dionysius Alexandrin. ap. Euseb. l. 6, c. 41. *Ad prima statim verba minantur inimici maximus fratrum numerus fidem suam prodidit: nec prostratus est persecutionis impetu, sed voluntario lapsu seipsum prostravit.* Cyprian. *Opuscula*, p. 82. Among these deserters were many priests and even

had imposed, subsisted no longer than the present danger. As soon as the severity of the persecution was abated, the doors of the churches were assailed by the returning multitude of penitents, who detested their idolatrous submission, and who solicited with equal ardour, but with various success, their re-admission into the society of Christians.*

IV. Notwithstanding the general rules established for the conviction and punishment of the Christians, the fate of those sectaries, in an extensive and arbitrary government, must still, in a great measure, have depended on their own behaviour, the circumstances of the times, and the temper of their supreme as well as subordinate rulers. Zeal might sometimes provoke, and prudence might sometimes avert or assuage, the superstitious fury of the Pagans. A variety of motives might dispose the provincial governors either to enforce or to relax the execution of the laws; and of these motives, the most forcible was their regard not only for the public edicts, but for the secret intentions of the emperor, a glance from whose eye was sufficient to kindle or to extinguish the flames of persecution. As often as any occasional severities were exercised in the different parts of the empire, the primitive Christians lamented and perhaps magnified their own sufferings; but the celebrated number of *ten*

bishops. [Pliny says that the greater number of those brought before him, avowed themselves to be Christians, and that this "*periclitantium numerus*" was the difficulty which caused him to consult Trajan. Eusebius (l. 6, c. 41), leaves no room to doubt that those who gave up their faith, were far less numerous than those who boldly confessed. "The prefect," he says, "and the assessors who attended the court, were filled with alarm at seeing the multitude of Christians; the very judges trembled." Cyprian, too, states that most of those who had betrayed weakness at the time of the persecution under Decius, distinguished themselves by their courage during that of Gallus. "*Steterunt fortes et ipso dolore pœnitentiæ facti ad prælium fortiores.* Epist. 60, p. 142.—GUIZOT.] [This alleged "misrepresentation of Pliny" was first adduced by Mr. Davis (p. 87). Gibbon, in his Vindication, urged that historians must blend together dispersed materials to form a consistent narrative; and concluded by stating, that "neither Pliny, Dionysius, nor Cyprian, mentions *all* the circumstances and *distinctions* of the conduct of the Christian apostates; but if one of them was withdrawn, the account which I have given would, in some instance, be defective." Mr. Davis (Reply, p. 49) met this defence by ridicule, without argument.—ED.]

* It was on this occasion that Cyprian wrote his treatise *De Lapsis*, and many of his epistles. The controversy concerning the treatment of penitent apostates, does not occur among the Christians of the pre

persecutions has been determined by the ecclesiastical writers of the fifth century, who possessed a more distinct view of the prosperous or adverse fortunes of the church, from the age of Nero to that of Diocletian. The ingenious parallels of the *ten* plagues of Egypt and of the *ten* horns of the Apocalypse, first suggested this calculation to their minds; and in their application of the faith of prophecy to the truth of history, they were careful to select those reigns which were indeed the most hostile to the Christian cause.* But these transient persecutions served only to revive the zeal, and to restore the discipline, of the faithful; and the moments of extraordinary rigour were compensated by much longer intervals of peace and security. The indifference of some princes, and the indulgence of others, permitted the Christians to enjoy, though not perhaps a legal, yet an actual and public, toleration of their religion.

The apology of Tertullian contains two very ancient, very singular, but, at the same time, very suspicious, instances of imperial clemency; the edicts published by Tiberius and by Marcus Antoninus, and designed not only to protect the innocence of the Christians, but even to proclaim those stupendous miracles which had attested the truth of their doctrine. The first of these examples is attended with some difficulties which might perplex the sceptical mind.† We are required to believe, *that* Pontius Pilate informed the emperor of the unjust sentence of death which he had pronounced against an innocent, and, as it appeared, a divine, person; and that, without acquiring the merit, he exposed himself to the danger of martyrdom; *that* Tiberius, who avowed his contempt for all religion, immediately conceived the design of placing the Jewish Messiah among the gods of Rome; *that* his servile senate ventured to disobey

ceding century. Shall we ascribe this to the superiority of their faith and courage, or to our less intimate knowledge of their history?

* See Mosheim, p. 97. Sulpicius Severus was the first author of this computation; though he seemed desirous of reserving the tenth and greatest persecution for the coming of the antichrist.

† The testimony given by Pontius Pilate is first mentioned by Justin. The successive improvements which the story has acquired (as it passed through the hands of Tertullian, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Orosius, Gregory of Tours, and the authors of the several editions of the acts of Pilate), are very fairly stated by Dom Calmet, *Dissertat. sur l'Écriture*, tom. iii, p. 651, &c. [It is most probable that Pliny's letter to Trajan inspired, in some over-zealous believer, the idea of fabricating one from Pontius Pilate to Tiberius.—ED.]

the commands of their master; *that* Tiberius, instead of resenting their refusal, contented himself with protecting the Christians from the severity of the laws, many years before such laws were enacted, or before the church had assumed any distinct name or existence; and, lastly, *that* the memory of this extraordinary transaction was preserved in the most public and authentic records, which escaped the knowledge of the historians of Greece and Rome, and were only visible to the eyes of an African Christian, who composed his apology one hundred and sixty years after the death of Tiberius. The edict of Marcus Antoninus is supposed to have been the effect of his devotion and gratitude, for the miraculous deliverance which he had obtained in the Marcomannic war. The distress of the legions, the seasonable tempest of rain and hail, of thunder and of lightning, and the dismay and defeat of the barbarians, have been celebrated by the eloquence of several Pagan writers. If there were any Christians in that army, it was natural that they should ascribe some merit to the fervent prayers, which, in the moment of danger, they had offered up for their own and the public safety. But we are still assured by monuments of brass and marble, by the imperial medals, and by the Antonine column, that neither the prince nor the people entertained any sense of this signal obligation, since they unanimously attribute their deliverance to the providence of Jupiter, and to the interposition of Mercury. During the whole course of his reign, Marcus despised the Christians as a philosopher, and punished them as a sovereign.*

* On this miracle, as it is commonly called, of the thundering legion, see the admirable criticism of Mr. Moyle, in his works, vol. ii, p. 81—300. ["The rescript in favour of the Christians is given to Pius by some." (Clint. F. R. ii, 25.) It appears to have followed Justin Martyr's Apology. The philosophy of Marcus Aurelius was that of the Stoics, which had always been the least favourable to Christianity. It was by them and the Epicureans, that Paul was cited before the Areopagus at Athens. It is not, however, to be supposed that an emperor with a mind so temperate and generally equitable, should be influenced by the jealousies of the Greek schools, and prejudiced against a rival "philosophy," as the new religion was then termed, for which so many Platonists wrote apologies and defences. His treatment of the Christians can in no way be accounted for, but by the motive to which it has been attributed in a preceding note, p. 101. This alone places in its true light, conduct which Gibbon has somewhat equivocally characterized, and affords a satisfactory solution of the doubts which pervade Dean Milman's commentary on the passage. If the Marcomannic war had any connection with the rigorous proceedings which commenced at the

By a singular fatality, the hardships which they had endured under the government of a virtuous prince, immediately ceased on the accession of a tyrant; and as none except themselves had experienced the injustice of Marcus, so they alone were protected by the lenity of Commodus. The celebrated Marcia, the most favoured of his concubines, and who at length contrived the murder of her imperial lover, entertained a singular affection for the oppressed church; and though it was impossible that she could reconcile the practice of vice with the precepts of the gospel, she might hope to atone for the frailties of her sex and profession by declaring herself the patroness of the Christians.* Under the gracious protection of Marcia, they passed in safety the thirteen years of a cruel tyranny; and when the empire was established in the house of Severus, they formed a domestic but more honourable connexion with the new court. The emperor was persuaded, that in a dangerous sickness, he had derived some benefit, either spiritual or physical, from the holy oil with which one of his slaves had anointed him. He always treated with peculiar distinction several persons of both sexes who had embraced the new religion. The nurse as well as the preceptor of Caracalla were Christians; and if that young prince ever betrayed a sentiment of humanity, it was occasioned by an incident, which, however trifling, bore some relation to the cause of Christianity.† Under the reign of Severus, the fury of the populace was checked; the rigour of ancient laws was for some time suspended; and the provincial governors were satisfied with receiving an annual present from the churches within their jurisdiction, as the price, or as the reward, of their moderation.‡ The controversy concerning the precise same time, it is to be found in the necessity, which it created, for appeasing the discontented pagans.—ED.]

* Dion Cassius, or rather his abbreviator Xiphilin, lib. 72, p. 1206. Mr. Moyle (p. 266), has explained the condition of the church under the reign of Commodus.

† Compare the life of Caracalla in the Augustan History with the epistle of Tertullian to Scapula. Dr. Jortin (Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii, p. 5, &c.) considers the cure of Severus, by the means of holy oil, with a strong desire to convert it into a miracle.

‡ Tertullian de Fugâ, c. 13. The present was made during the feast of the Saturnalia; and it is a matter of serious concern to Tertullian, that the faithful should be confounded with the most infamous professions which purchased the connivance of the government.

time of the celebration of Easter, armed the bishops of Asia and Italy against each other, and was considered as the most important business of this period of leisure and tranquillity.* Nor was the peace of the church interrupted, till the increasing numbers of proselytes seem at length to have attracted the attention, and to have alienated the mind, of Severus. With the design of restraining the progress of Christianity, he published an edict, which, though it was designed to affect only the new converts, could not be carried into strict execution, without exposing to danger and punishment the most zealous of their teachers and missionaries. In this mitigated persecution, we may still discover the indulgent spirit of Rome and of Polytheism, which so readily admitted every excuse in favour of those who practised the religious ceremonies of their fathers.†

But the laws which Severus had enacted soon expired with the authority of that emperor; and the Christians, after this accidental tempest, enjoyed a calm of thirty-eight years.‡ Till this period they had usually held their assemblies in private houses and sequestered places. They were now permitted to erect and consecrate convenient edifices for the purpose of religious worship;§ to purchase lands, even at Rome itself, for the use of the community; and to conduct the elections of their ecclesiastical ministers in so public, but at the same time, in so exemplary a manner as to deserve the respectful attention of the Gentiles.¶ This long repose of the church was accompanied with dignity. The reigns of those princes who derived their extraction from the Asiatic provinces, proved the most favourable to the Christians; the eminent persons of the sect, instead of being reduced to implore the protection of

* Euseb. l. 5, c. 23, 24. Mosheim, p. 435—447.

† *Judæos fieri sub gravi pœnâ vetuit. Idem etiam de Christianis sanxit.* Hist. August. p. 70. ‡ Sulpicius Severus, l. 2, p. 384. This computation (allowing for a single exception) is confirmed by the history of Eusebius, and by the writings of Cyprian. § The antiquity of Christian churches is discussed by Tillemont, (*Mémoires Ecclesiastiques*, tom. iii, part 2, p. 68—72), and by Mr. Moyle, (vol. i, p. 378—398). The former refers the first construction of them to the peace of Alexander Severus; the latter, to the peace of Gallienus. ¶ See the Augustan History, p. 130. The emperor Alexander adopted their method of publicly proposing the names of those persons who were candidates for ordination. It is true, that the honour of this practice is likewise

a slave or concubine, were admitted into the palace in the honourable characters of priests and philosophers; and their mysterious doctrines, which were already diffused among the people, insensibly attracted the curiosity of their sovereign. When the empress Mammæa passed through Antioch, she expressed a desire of conversing with the celebrated Origen, the fame of whose piety and learning was spread over the east. Origen obeyed so flattering an invitation; and though he could not expect to succeed in the conversion of an artful and ambitious woman, she listened with pleasure to his eloquent exhortations, and honourably dismissed him to his retirement in Palestine.* The sentiments of Mammæa were adopted by her son Alexander; and the philosophic devotion of the emperor was marked by a singular, but injudicious, regard for the Christian religion. In his domestic chapel he placed the statues of Abraham, of Orpheus, of Apollonius, and of Christ, as an honour justly due to those respectable sages, who had instructed mankind in the various modes of addressing their homage to the supreme and universal Deity.† A purer faith, as well as worship, was openly professed and practised among his household. Bishops, perhaps for the first time, were seen at court; and after the death of Alexander, when the inhuman Maximin discharged his fury on the favourites and servants of his unfortunate benefactor, a great number of Christians, of every rank and of both sexes, were involved in the promiscuous massacre, which, on their account, has improperly received the name of persecution.‡

attributed to the Jews.

* Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 6, c. 21.

Hieronym. de Script. Eccles. c. 54. Mammæa was styled a holy and pious woman, both by the Christians and the Pagans. From the former, therefore, it was impossible that she should deserve that honourable epithet. † See the Augustan History, p. 123. Mosheim (p. 465), seems to refine too much on the domestic religion of Alexander. His design of building a public temple to Christ, (Hist. August. p. 129) and the object which was suggested either to him, or in similar circumstances to Hadrian, appear to have no other foundation than an improbable report, invented by the Christians, and credulously adopted by an historian of the age of Constantine.

‡ Euseb. l. 6, c. 28. It may be presumed, that the success of the Christians had exasperated the increasing bigotry of the Pagans. Dion Cassius, who composed his history under the former reign, had most probably intended for the use of his master those counsels of persecution, which he ascribes to a better age, and to the favourite of Augustus. Concerning this oration of Maccenas, or rather of Dion, I

Notwithstanding the cruel disposition of Maximin, the effects of his resentment against the Christians were of a very local and temporary nature; and the pious Origen, who had been proscribed as a devoted victim, was still reserved to convey the truths of the Gospel to the ear of monarchs.* He addressed several edifying letters to the emperor Philip, to his wife, and to his mother; and as soon as that prince, who was born in the neighbourhood of Palestine, had usurped the imperial sceptre, the Christians acquired a friend and a protector. The public, and even partial, favour of Philip towards the sectaries of the new religion, and his constant reverence for the ministers of the church, gave some colour to the suspicion, which prevailed

may refer to my own unbiassed opinion, (vol. i, p. 43, note) and to the abbé de la Bléterie. *Mémoires de l'Académie*, tom. xxiv, p. 303; tom. xxv, p. 432. [This massacre has been very properly termed a persecution, for it continued through the whole of Maximin's reign. Eusebius, as quoted above, states this; and Rufinus confirms it in these words: "Tribus annis a Maximino persecutione commota, in quibus finem et persecutionis fecit et vitæ." (Hist. l. 6, c. 19). If it be true that Dion Cassius "intended for the use of his master the counsels of persecution," which are found in his pages, the Christians must have been known to that historian, and objects of his particular attention. How can Gibbon reconcile this necessary inference, with the ignorance of the very name of Christians, which he imputes to him in an earlier part of this chapter? The supposition in that note is unsupported by any proof, and it is probable that Dion Cassius has often referred to the Christians under the name of Jews, (l. 67, c. 14; l. 68, c. 1).—GUIZOT.] [It is scarcely possible that, in the third century, the Christians should have been unknown to such a writer as Dion Cassius, whose character, as an historian, is illustrated with so much ability and learning by M. Niebuhr, in the introduction to his *Lectures on Roman History* (p. 61). Nor did Gibbon impute such "ignorance" to him; he only said, that through "careless indifference," he had neglected them, and that Xiphilin could not find their name in his work. M. Guizot has here adopted Mr. Davis's impeachment (p. 82), and overlooked Gibbon's *Vindication*, (p. 59--63) so triumphant as to make his accuser confess, in his *Reply*, (p. 26), that he "could not be peremptory in this charge." It matters little whether an emperor persecuted more or less, and whether the Christians were known or not to a particular historian. We have before us the broad, undeniable fact, that they multiplied in number and increased in power, till they suppressed polytheism, and converted the whole Roman empire. The two questions, which this suggests, are, What were the causes of the change, and what its effects? From these our attention should not be drawn off to trifling points.—ED.]

* Orosius, l. 7, c. 19, mentions Origen as the object of Maximin's resentment; and Firmilianus, a Cappadocian bishop of that age, gives a just and confined idea of this persecution (apud Cyprian. *Epist.* 57).

in his own times, that the emperor himself was become a convert to the faith,* and afforded some grounds for a fable which was afterwards invented, that he had been purified by confession and penance from the guilt contracted by the murder of his innocent predecessor.†

The fall of Philip introduced, with the change of masters, a new system of government, so oppressive to the Christians, that their former condition, ever since the time of Domitian, was represented as a state of perfect freedom and security, if compared with the rigorous treatment which they experienced under the short reign of Decius.‡ The virtues of that prince will scarcely allow us to suspect that he was actuated by a mean resentment against the favourites of his predecessor; and it is more reasonable to believe, that in the prosecution of his general design to restore the purity of Roman manners, he was desirous of delivering the empire from what he condemned as a recent and criminal superstition. The bishops of the most considerable cities were removed by exile or death: the vigilance of the magistrates prevented the clergy of Rome, during sixteen months, from proceeding to a new election; and it was the opinion of the Christians, that the emperor would more patiently endure a competitor for the purple than a bishop in the capital.§ Were it possible to suppose that the penetration of Decius had discovered pride under the disguise of humility, or that he could foresee the temporal dominion which might insensibly arise from the claims

* The mention of those princes who were publicly supposed to be Christians, as we find it in an epistle to Dionysius of Alexandria, (ap. Euseb. l. 7, c. 10), evidently alludes to Philip and his family; and forms a contemporary evidence that such a report had prevailed; but the Egyptian bishop, who lived at an humble distance from the court of Rome, expresses himself with a becoming diffidence concerning the truth of the fact. The epistles of Origen (which were extant in the time of Eusebius, see l. 6, c. 36), would most probably decide this curious, rather than important, question.

† Euseb. l. 6, c. 34. The story, as is usual, has been embellished by succeeding writers, and is confuted, with much superfluous learning, by Frederick Spanheim. (Opera Varia, tom. ii, p. 400, &c.)

‡ Lactantius, de Mortibus Persecutorum, c. 3, 4. After celebrating the felicity and increase of the church, under a long succession of good princes, he adds: "Extitit post annos plurimos, execrabile animal, Decius, qui vexavit ecclesiam." § Euseb. l. 6, c. 39. Cyprian. Epist. 55. The see of Rome remained vacant from the martyrdom of Fabianus, the 20th of January, A.D. 250, till the election of Cornelius, the 4th of June.

of spiritual authority, we might be less surprised, that he should consider the successors of St. Peter as the most formidable rivals to those of Augustus.

The administration of Valerian was distinguished by a levity and inconstancy, ill suited to the gravity of the *Roman censor*. In the first part of his reign, he surpassed in clemency those princes who had been suspected of an attachment to the Christian faith. In the last three years and a half, listening to the insinuations of a minister addicted to the superstitions of Egypt, he adopted the maxims, and imitated the severity, of his predecessor Decius.* The accession of Gallienus, which increased the calamities of the empire, restored peace to the church; and the Christians obtained the free exercise of their religion, by an edict addressed to the bishops, and conceived in such terms as seemed to acknowledge their office and public character.† The ancient laws, without being formally repealed, were suffered to sink into oblivion; and (excepting only some hostile intentions which are attributed to the emperor Aurelian)‡ the disciples of Christ passed above forty years in a state of prosperity, far more dangerous to their virtue than the severest trials of persecution.

The story of Paul of Samosata, who filled the metropolitan

A.D. 251. Decius had probably left Rome, since he was killed before the end of that year. * Euseb. lib. 7, c. 10. Mosheim (p. 548) has very clearly shewn, that the prefect Macrianus, and the Egyptian *Magus*, are one and the same persons. † Eusebius (l. 7, c. 13) gives us a Greek version of this Latin edict, which seems to have been very concise. By another edict, he directed that the *cæmeteria* should be restored to the Christians. ‡ Euseb. l. 7, c. 30. Lactantius de M. P. c. 6. Hieronym. in Chron. p. 177. Orosius, l. 7, c. 23. Their language is in general so ambiguous and incorrect, that we are at a loss to determine how far Aurelian had carried his intentions before he was assassinated. Most of the moderns (except Dodwell, Dissertat. Cyprian. 11, 64), have seized the occasion of gaining a few extraordinary martyrs. [All that has been transmitted to us, relative to Aurelian's persecution, has been investigated by Dr. Lardner with his usual impartiality, and he concludes thus: "Upon more carefully examining the words of Eusebius, and observing the accounts of other authors, learned men have generally, and I think very judiciously, determined that Aurelian not only intended, but did actually persecute; but his persecution was short, he having died soon after the publication of his edicts. (Heathen Testimonies, vol. iii, p. 117.) Basnage avows distinctly the same opinion. "Non intentatum modo, sed executum quoque brevi-ssimo tempore mandatum, nobis infixum est in animo." Ann. 275, No. 2; and compare Pagi, ann. 272, Nos. 4, 12, 273.—GUILLOT.]

see of Antioch, while the east was in the hands of Odenathus and Zenobia, may serve to illustrate the condition and character of the times. The wealth of that prelate was a sufficient evidence of his guilt, since it was neither derived from the inheritance of his fathers, nor acquired by the arts of honest industry. But Paul considered the service of the church as a very lucrative profession.* His ecclesiastical jurisdiction was venal and rapacious; he extorted frequent contributions from the most opulent of the faithful, and converted to his own use a considerable part of the public revenue. By his pride and luxury, the Christian religion was rendered odious in the eyes of the Gentiles. His council-chamber and his throne, the splendour with which he appeared in public, the suppliant crowd who solicited his attention, the multitude of letters and petitions to which he dictated his answers, and the perpetual hurry of business in which he was involved, were circumstances much better suited to the state of a civil magistrate,† than to the humility of a primitive bishop. When he harangued his people from the pulpit, Paul affected the figurative style and the theatrical gestures of an Asiatic sophist, while the cathedral resounded with the loudest and most extravagant acclamations in praise of his divine eloquence. Against those who resisted his power, or refused to flatter his vanity, the prelate of Antioch was arrogant, rigid, and inexorable: but he relaxed the discipline, and lavished the treasures of the church on his dependent clergy, who were permitted to imitate their master in the gratification of every sensual appetite; for Paul indulged himself very freely in the pleasures of the table, and he had received into the episcopal palace two young and beautiful women, as the constant companions of his leisure moments.‡

* Paul was better pleased with the title of *ducenarius*, than with that of bishop. The *ducenarius* was an imperial procurator, so called from his salary of two hundred *sestertia*, or 1,600*l.* a year. (See Salmasius ad Hist. August. p. 124.) Some critics suppose that the bishop of Antioch had actually obtained such an office from Zenobia, while others consider it only as a figurative expression of his pomp and insolence.

† Simony was not unknown in those times; and the clergy sometimes bought what they intended to sell. It appears that the bishopric of Carthage was purchased by a wealthy matron, named Lucilla, for her servant Majorinus. The price was four hundred *folles*. (Monument. Antiq. ad calcem Optati, p. 263.) Every *folle* contained one hundred and twenty-five pieces of silver, and the whole sum may be computed at about 2,400*l.* ‡ If we are desirous of extenuating the

Notwithstanding these scandalous vices, if Paul of Samosata had preserved the purity of the orthodox faith, his reign over the capital of Syria would have ended only with his life; and had a seasonable persecution intervened, an effort of courage might perhaps have placed him in the rank of saints and martyrs. Some nice and subtle errors, which he imprudently adopted and obstinately maintained, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, excited the zeal and indignation of the eastern churches.* From Egypt to the Euxine Sea, the bishops were in arms and in motion. Several councils were held, confutations were published, excommunications were pronounced, ambiguous explanations were by turns accepted and refused, treaties were concluded and violated, and at length Paul of Samosata was degraded from his episcopal character, by the sentence of seventy or eighty bishops, who assembled for that purpose at Antioch, and who, without consulting the rights of the clergy or people, appointed a successor by their own authority. The manifest irregularity of this proceeding increased the numbers of the discontented faction; and as Paul, who was no stranger to the arts of courts, had insinuated himself into the favour of Zenobia, he maintained above four years the possession of the episcopal house and office. The victory of Aurelian changed the face of the east, and the two contending parties, who applied to each other the epithets of schism and heresy, were either commanded or permitted to plead their cause before the tribunal of the conqueror. This public and very singular trial affords a convincing proof, that the existence, the property, the privileges, and the internal policy, of the Christians, were acknowledged, if not by the laws, at least by the magistrates of the empire. As a Pagan and as a soldier, it could scarcely be expected that Aurelian should enter into the discussion, whether the sentiments of Paul or those of his adversaries were most agreeable to the true

vices of Paul, we must suspect the assembled bishops of the east of publishing the most malicious calumnies, in circular epistles, addressed to all the churches of the empire (ap. Euseb. l. 7, c. 30). [In their condemnation of Paul of Samosata, the bishops laid much stress on his vices and immoral conduct. The letter addressed by the synod to the bishops of Rome and Alexandria, was designed, according to Eusebius, to inform them of the change in Paul's faith, of the discussions and answers to which it had given rise, and of his general conduct and morals. Euseb. Hist. Ecc. l. 7, c. 30.—GUIZOT.] * His heresy (like those of Noetus and Sabellius, in the same century) tended to con-

standard of the orthodox faith. His determination, however, was founded on the general principles of equity and reason. He considered the bishops of Italy as the most impartial and respectable judges among the Christians; and as soon as he was informed that they had unanimously approved the sentence of the council, he acquiesced in their opinion, and immediately gave orders that Paul should be compelled to relinquish the temporal possessions belonging to an office, of which, in the judgment of his brethren, he had been regularly deprived. But while we applaud the justice, we should not overlook the policy, of Aurelian; who was desirous of restoring and cementing the dependance of the provinces on the capital, by every means which could bind the interest or prejudices of any part of his subjects.*

Amidst the frequent revolutions of the empire, the Christians still flourished in peace and prosperity; and notwithstanding a celebrated era of martyrs has been deduced from the accession of Diocletian,† the new system of policy, introduced and maintained by the wisdom of that prince, continued, during more than eighteen years, to breathe the mildest and most liberal spirit of religious toleration. The mind of Diocletian himself was less adapted indeed to speculative inquiries, than to the active labours of war and government. His prudence rendered him averse to any great innovation; and though his temper was not very susceptible of zeal or enthusiasm, he always maintained an habitual regard for the ancient deities of the empire. But the leisure of the two empresses, of his wife Prisca, and of Valeria his daughter, permitted them to listen with more attention and respect to the truths of Christianity, which, in every age, has acknowledged its important obligations to female devotion.‡ The principal eunuchs, Lucian§ and

found the mysterious distinction of the Divine persons. See Mosheim, p. 702, &c. * Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 7, c. 30. We are entirely

indebted to him for the curious story of Paul of Samosata. † The era of martyrs, which is still in use among the Copts and the Abyssinians, must be reckoned from the 29th of August, A.D. 284, as the beginning of the Egyptian year was nineteen days earlier than the real accession of Diocletian. See Dissertation Préliminaire à l'Art de Vérifier les Dates. ‡ The expression of Lactantius (de M. P. c. 15). "sacrificio pollui coegit," implies their antecedent conversion to the faith, but does not seem to justify the assertion of Mosheim (p. 912), that they had been privately baptized. § M. de Tillemont (Mémoires

Dorotheus, Gorgonius and Andrew, who attended the person, possessed the favour, and governed the household of Diocletian, protected by their powerful influence the faith which they had embraced. Their example was imitated by many of the most considerable officers of the palace, who, in their respective stations, had the care of the imperial ornaments, of the robes, of the furniture, of the jewels, and even of the private treasury; and though it might sometimes be incumbent on them to accompany the emperor when he sacrificed in the temple,* they enjoyed, with their wives, their children, and their slaves, the free exercise of the Christian religion. Diocletian and his colleagues frequently conferred the most important offices on those persons who avowed their abhorrence for the worship of the gods, but who had displayed abilities proper for the service of the state. The bishops held an honourable rank in their respective provinces, and were treated with distinction and respect, not only by the people, but by the magistrates themselves. Almost in every city, the ancient churches were found insufficient to contain the increasing multitude of proselytes; and, in their place, more stately and capacious edifices were erected for the public worship of the faithful. The corruption of manners and principles, so forcibly lamented by Eusebius,† may be considered, not only as a consequence, but as a proof, of the liberty which the Christians enjoyed and abused under the reign of Diocletian. Prosperity had relaxed the nerves of discipline. Fraud, envy, and malice, prevailed in every congregation. The presbyters aspired to the episcopal office, which every day became an object more worthy of their ambition. The bishops, who contended with each other for ecclesiastical pre-eminence, appeared by their conduct to claim a secular and tyrannical power in the church; and the lively faith which still distinguished the Christians from the Gentiles, was shewn much less in their lives than in their controversial writings.

Ecclesiastiques, tom. v, part. 1, p. 11, 12) has quoted from the Spicilegium of Dom Luc d'Acheri, a very curious instruction, which Bishop Theonas composed for the use of Lucian. * Lactantius de

M. P. c. 10. † Eusebius, Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 8, c. 1. The reader who consults the original, will not accuse me of heightening the picture. Eusebius was about sixteen years of age at the accession of the em-

Notwithstanding this seeming security, an attentive observer might discern some symptoms that threatened the church with a more violent persecution than any which she had yet endured. The zeal and rapid progress of the Christians awakened the Polytheists from their supine indifference in the cause of those deities, whom custom and education had taught them to revere. The mutual provocations of a religious war, which had already continued above two hundred years, exasperated the animosity of the contending parties. The Pagans were incensed at the rashness of a recent and obscure sect, which presumed to accuse their countrymen of error, and to devote their ancestors to eternal misery. The habits of justifying the popular mythology against the invectives of an implacable enemy, produced in their minds some sentiments of faith and reverence for a system which they had been accustomed to consider with the most careless levity. The supernatural powers assumed by the church inspired at the same time terror and emulation. The followers of the established religion intrenched themselves behind a similar fortification of prodigies; invented new modes of sacrifice, of expiation, and of initiation;* attempted to revive the credit of their expiring oracles;† and listened with eager credulity to every impostor, who flattered their prejudices by a tale of wonders.‡ Both parties seemed to acknowledge the truth of those miracles which were claimed by their adversaries; and while they were contented with ascribing them to the arts of

peror Diocletian. * We might quote, among a great number of instances, the mysterious worship of Mythras, and the Taurobolia; the latter of which became fashionable in the time of the Antonines. (See a Dissertation of M. de Boze, in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. ii. p. 443). The romance of Apuleius is as full of devotion as of satire.

† The impostor Alexander very strongly recommended the oracle of Trophonius at Mallos, and those of Apollo at Claros and Miletus. Lucian, tom. ii. p. 236, edit. Reitz. The last of these, whose singular history would furnish a very curious episode, was consulted by Diocletian before he published his edicts of persecution. Lactantius de M. P. c. 11. ‡ Besides the ancient stories of Pythagoras and Aristeas, the cures performed at the shrine of Æsculapius, and the fables related of Apollonius of Tyana, were frequently opposed to the miracles of Christ; though I agree with Dr. Lardner, (see *Testimonies*, vol. iii. p. 253, 352), that when Philostratus composed the life of Apollonius, he had no such intention.

magic, and to the power of demons, they mutually concurred in restoring and establishing the reign of superstition.* Philosophy, her most dangerous enemy, was now converted into her most useful ally. The groves of the Academy, the gardens of Epicurus, and even the Portico of the Stoics, were almost deserted, as so many different schools of scepticism or impiety,† and many among the Romans were desirous that the writings of Cicero should be condemned and suppressed by the authority of the senate.‡ The prevailing sect of the New Platonicians judged it prudent to connect themselves with the priests, whom perhaps they despised, against the Christians, whom they had reason to fear. These fashionable philosophers prosecuted the design of extracting allegorical wisdom from the fictions of the Greek poets; instituted mysterious rites of devotion for the use of their chosen disciples; recommended the worship of the ancient gods as the emblems or ministers of the Supreme Deity; and composed against the faith of the gospel many elaborate treatises,§ which have since been

* It is seriously to be lamented, that the Christian fathers, by acknowledging the supernatural, or, as they deem it, the infernal, part of Paganism, destroy with their own hands the great advantage which we might otherwise derive from the liberal concessions of our adversaries. † Julian (p. 301, edit. Spanheim) expresses a pious joy, that the providence of the gods had extinguished the impious sects, and for the most part destroyed the books of the Pyrrhonians and Epicureans, which had been very numerous, since Epicurus himself composed no less than three hundred volumes. See Diogenes Laertius, lib. 10, c. 26. ‡ Cumque alios audiam mussitare indignanter, et dicere oportere statui per senatum, aboleantur ut hæc scripta, quibus Christiana religio comprobetur, et vetustatis opprimatur auctoritas Arnobius adversus Gentes, lib. 3, p. 103, 104. He adds very properly, Erroris convinceite Ciceronem . . . nam intercipere scripta, et publicatam velle submergere lectionem, non est Deum defendere sed veritatis testificationem timere. § Lactantius (Divin. Institut. lib. 5, c. 2, 3), gives a very clear and spirited account of two of these philosophic adversaries of the faith. The large treatise of Porphyry against the Christians consisted of thirty books, and was composed in Sicily about the year 270. [Philosophy cannot have been, as Gibbon admits, "the most dangerous enemy" of polytheism, without having been at the same time and in an equal degree the friend of Christianity. By its aid, the latter was nurtured into such vigour, that about the middle of the third century, its adversaries conceived the idea of reviving heathenism by similar means. To this end Celsus, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus directed their useless efforts, and for this the extra-

committed to the flames by the prudence of orthodox emperors.*

Although the policy of Diocletian and the humanity of Constantius inclined them to preserve inviolate the maxims of toleration, it was soon discovered that their two associates, Maximian and Galerius, entertained the most implacable aversion for the name and religion of the Christians. The minds of those princes had never been enlightened by science; education had never softened their temper. They owed their greatness to their swords; and in their most elevated fortune they still retained their superstitious prejudices of soldiers and peasants. In the general administration of the provinces they obeyed the laws which their benefactor had established; but they frequently found occasions of exercising within their camp and palaces a secret persecution,† for which the imprudent zeal of the Christians sometimes offered the most specious pretences. A sentence of death was executed upon Maximilianus, an African youth, who had been produced by his own father before the magistrate as a sufficient and legal recruit, but who obstinately persisted in declaring that his conscience would not permit him to embrace the profession of a soldier.‡ It could

vagant portion of the New Platonists were encouraged in the fantastic doctrines which they invented.—ED]. * See Socrates, Hist. Eccles., lib. 1, c. 9, and Codex Justinian. lib. 1, tit. 1. lib. 3. † Eusebius, lib. 8, c. 4. c. 17. He limits the number of military martyrs, by a remarkable expression (*σπανίως τούτων εἰς πῶν καὶ ἑυτερόν*), of which neither his Latin nor French translator had rendered the energy. Notwithstanding the authority of Eusebius, and the silence of Lactantius, Ambrose, Sulpicius, Orosius, &c. it has been long believed, that the Thebæan legion, consisting of six thousand Christians, suffered martyrdom, by the order of Maximian, in the valley of the Pennine Alps. The story was first published about the middle of the fifth century, by Eucherius, bishop of Lyons, who received it from certain persons, who received it from Isaac, bishop of Geneva, who is said to have received it from Theodore, bishop of Octodurum. The abbey of St. Maurice still subsists, a rich monument of the credulity of Sigismund, king of Burgundy. See an excellent dissertation in the thirty-sixth volume of the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée*, p. 427—454.

‡ See the *Acta Sincera*, 299. The accounts of his martyrdom, and of that of Marcellus, bear every mark of truth and authenticity. [This anecdote, when fully related, places the young man before us in a different point of view. Maximilian was the son of Victor, a Numidian soldier and a Christian. He was not “produced by his own father before the magistrate, as a sufficient and legal recruit.” The sons of

scarcely be expected that any government should suffer the action of Marcellus the centurion to pass with impunity. On the day of a public festival, that officer threw away his belt, his arms, and the ensigns of his office, and exclaimed with a loud voice, that he would obey none but Jesus Christ, the eternal King, and that he renounced for ever the use of carnal weapons, and the service of an idolatrous master. The soldiers, as soon as they recovered from their astonishment, secured the person of Marcellus. He was examined in the city of Tingi by the president of that part of Mauritania; and as he was convicted by his own confession, he was condemned and beheaded for the crime of desertion.* Examples of such a nature savour much less of religious

soldiers were obliged to enter the army, when twenty-one years of age, and as such Maximilian was inrolled. He refused obstinately, on account of the Pagan ceremonies, in which he could not join, and not because "his conscience would not permit him to embrace the profession of a soldier." The father, when called upon by the magistrate to reprimand his son, replied: "He has his reasons and knows what he is doing." (*Habet concilium suum, quid illi expediat.*) Maximilian, having been condemned to death, Victor went his way, returning thanks to Heaven, that had given him such a son.—GUIZOT.] [M. Guizot's version does not differ materially from Gibbon's, except in one point, and in that Dean Milman questions his accuracy, and asks: "Was not the law which compelled the sons of soldiers to serve at twenty-one years old, a law of Constantine?" A more correct opinion of this transaction may be formed, by looking to what is stated by Gibbon in the next chapter, under the head of "Difficulty of levies," and by Niebuhr in the third volume of his Lectures, p. 152. We may there see, that the lands bestowed on veterans had from some unknown period been subject to the condition, that their sons should devote themselves to the profession of arms, as soon as they attained the age of manhood.—ED.] * *Acta Sincera*, p. 302. [The case of Marcellus was like that of Maximilian. On public festivals, those who were present sacrificed to the gods. He refused to join in this, saying: "If it be the fate of a soldier to sacrifice to the gods and the emperors, I renounce my oath (*vitem*): I take off my belt: I abandon my ensigns, and refuse to serve." So it is related by Ruinart in the *Acta Sincera*, as referred to. It is evident that Marcellus withdrew from the service for no other reason, than that he was compelled to sacrifice to false gods.—GUIZOT.] [In this note M. Guizot has followed Dr. Chelsum (p. 114—117) and disregarded Gibbon's reply (p. 120—126). The facts are substantially the same in the two statements; but Gibbon adds to his, that military law treated such conduct as "the crime of desertion." This cannot surely be denied. Even in these days, would not the articles of war punish a soldier so acting, as a mutineer or deserter? So long as there are armies, insubordination must be a crime.—ED.]

persecution than of martial or even civil law: but they served to alienate the mind of the emperors; to justify the severity of Galerius, who dismissed a great number of Christian officers from their employments; and to authorize the opinion, that a sect of enthusiasts which avowed principles so repugnant to the public safety, must either remain useless, or would soon become dangerous, subjects to the empire.

After the success of the Persian war had raised the hopes and the reputation of Galerius, he passed a winter with Diocletian in the palace of Nicomedia; and the fate of Christianity became the object of their secret consultations.* The experienced emperor was still inclined to pursue measures of lenity; and though he readily consented to exclude the Christians from holding any employments in the household or the army, he urged in the strongest terms the danger as well as cruelty of shedding the blood of those deluded fanatics. Galerius at length extorted from him the permission of summoning a council, composed of a few persons the most distinguished in the civil and military departments of the state. The important question was agitated in their presence; and those ambitious courtiers easily discerned, that it was incumbent on them to second, by their eloquence, the importunate violence of the Cæsar. It may be

* De M. P. c. 11. Lactantius (or whoever was the author of this little treatise) was, at that time, an inhabitant of Nicomedia; but it seems difficult to conceive how he could acquire so accurate a knowledge of what passed in the imperial cabinet. [This permission was not "extorted" from Diocletian. It was his own act. Lactantius says indeed: "Diocletian could not dissuade his violent colleague from the mad design; so he gave way to the opinions of his friends." (De Mort. Per. c. 11.) But such conduct was in accordance with the artful character of Diocletian, who wished to have the credit of doing the good in accordance with his own inclinations, and of being instigated by others to do the evil. "Nam erat hujus malitiæ, cum bonum quid facere decrevisset, sine consilio faciebat, ut ipse laudaretur. Cum autem malum, quoniam id reprehendendum sciebat, in consilium multos convocabat, ut aliorum culpæ adscriberetur quicquid ipse deliqueret."—*Ibid.* At this period Constantine was old enough to take interest in affairs of state, and was so placed as to know what was going on. It was probably from him, that Lactantius received all his information, when afterwards intrusted with the education of his son, Crispus. Eutropius moreover says of Diocletian: "He cunningly and sagaciously delayed, so that his severity might be imputed to the cruel disposition of others." (*ib.* 9, c. 26.)—GUIZOT.]

presumed, that they insisted on every topic which might interest the pride, the piety, or the fears, of their sovereign in the destruction of Christianity. Perhaps they represented, that the glorious work of the deliverance of the empire was left imperfect, so long as an independent people was permitted to subsist and multiply in the heart of the provinces. The Christians (it might speciously be alleged), renouncing the gods and the institutions of Rome, had constituted a distinct republic, which might yet be suppressed before it had acquired any military force; but which was already governed by its own laws and magistrates, was possessed of a public treasure, and was intimately connected, in all its parts, by the frequent assemblies of the bishops, to whose decrees their numerous and opulent congregations yielded an implicit obedience. Arguments like these may seem to have determined the reluctant mind of Diocletian to embrace a new system of persecution; but though we may suspect, it is not in our power to relate, the secret intrigues of the palace, the private views and resentments, the jealousy of the women or eunuchs, and all those trifling but decisive causes which so often influence the fate of empires, and the councils of the wisest monarchs.*

The pleasure of the emperors was at length signified to the Christians, who, during the course of this melancholy winter, had expected, with anxiety, the result of so many secret consultations. The 23rd of February, which coincided with the Roman festival of the Terminalia,† was appointed (whether from accident or design) to set bounds to the progress of Christianity. At the earliest dawn of

* The only circumstance which we can discover is the devotion and jealousy of the mother of Galerius. She is described by Lactantius, as *Deorum montium cultrix; mulier admodum superstitiosa*. She had a great influence over her son, and was offended by the disregard of some of her Christian servants. [This "disregard" was shown by fasting and praying, instead of joining in the banquets and sacrifices, which she celebrated with the Pagans. "Sacrifices were performed at almost all her daily meals and festivities. While she was banquetting with Pagans, her Christian attendants fasted and prayed. Hence arose her hatred of them." Lact. de M. P. c. 11.—GUIZOT.] [If the mistress of a household now always found her servants "fasting and praying" when they ought to be performing the work for which they were engaged, she would dismiss them; and even conceive a dislike for the principles, however pious and commendable, by which they were so unfitted for the business of life.—ED.] † The worship and festival

day, the prætorian prefect,* accompanied by several generals, tribunes, and officers of the revenue, repaired to the principal church of Nicomedia, which was situated on an eminence in the most populous and beautiful part of the city. The doors were instantly broken open; they rushed into the sanctuary; and as they searched in vain for some visible object of worship, they were obliged to content themselves with committing to the flames the volumes of Holy Scripture. The ministers of Diocletian were followed by a numerous body of guards and pioneers, who marched in order of battle, and were provided with all the instruments used in the destruction of fortified cities. By their incessant labour, a sacred edifice, which towered above the imperial palace, and had long excited the indignation and envy of the Gentiles, was in a few hours levelled with the ground.†

The next day the general edict of persecution was published;‡ and though Diocletian, still averse to the effusion of blood, had moderated the fury of Galerius, who proposed that every one refusing to offer sacrifice should immediately be burnt alive, the penalties inflicted on the obstinacy of the Christians might be deemed sufficiently rigorous and effectual. It was enacted, that their churches in all provinces of the empire should be demolished to their foundations; and the punishment of death was denounced against all who should presume to hold any secret assemblies for the purpose of religious worship. The philosophers, who now assumed the unworthy office of directing the blind zeal of persecution, had diligently studied the nature and genius of the Christian religion; and as they were not ignorant that the speculative doctrines of the faith were supposed to be contained in the writings of the prophets, of the evangelists, and of the apostles, they most probably suggested

of the god Terminus are elegantly illustrated by M. de Boze, *Mém. de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. i, p. 50.

* In our only MS. of Lactantius, we read *profectus*; but reason, and the authority of all the critics, allow us, instead of that word, which destroys the sense of the passage, to substitute *profectus*.

† Lactantius de M. P. c. 12, gives a very lively picture of the destruction of the church.

‡ Mosheim (p. 922—926), from many scattered passages of Lactantius and Eusebius, has collected a very just and accurate notion of this edict; though he sometimes deviates into conjecture and refinement.

the order, that the bishops and presbyters should deliver all their sacred books into the hands of the magistrates, who were commanded under the severest penalties, to burn them in a public and solemn manner. By the same edict, the property of the church was at once confiscated; and the several parts of which it might consist were either sold to the highest bidder, united to the imperial domain, bestowed on the cities and corporations, or granted to the solicitations of rapacious courtiers. After taking such effectual measures to abolish the worship, and to dissolve the government, of the Christians, it was thought necessary to subject to the most intolerable hardships the condition of those perverse individuals who would still reject the religion of nature, of Rome, and of their ancestors. Persons of a liberal birth were declared incapable of holding any honours or employment: slaves were for ever deprived of the hopes of freedom: and the whole body of the people were put out of the protection of the law. The judges were authorized to hear and to determine every action that was brought against a Christian; but the Christians were not permitted to complain of any injury which they themselves had suffered; and thus those unfortunate sectaries were exposed to the severity, while they were excluded from the benefits, of public justice. This new species of martyrdom, so painful and lingering, so obscure and ignominious, was, perhaps, the most proper to weary the constancy of the faithful; nor can it be doubted, that the passions and interest of mankind were disposed on this occasion to second the designs of the emperors. But the policy of a well-ordered government must sometimes have interposed on behalf of the oppressed Christians; nor was it possible for the Roman princes entirely to remove the apprehension of punishment, or to connive at every act of fraud and violence, without exposing their own authority and the rest of their subjects to the most alarming dangers.*

This edict was scarcely exhibited to the public view, in

* Many ages afterwards, Edward I. practised, with great success, the same mode of persecution against the clergy of England. See Hume's History of England, vol. ii, p. 300, 4to. edition. [There is no proof of any policy having interposed in behalf of the oppressed Christians. The edict of Diocletian was enforced with unabated vigour to the close of his reign. Euseb. Hist. Ecc. l. 8, c. 13.—GUILZOT.]

the most conspicuous place of Nicomedia, before it was torn down by the hands of a Christian, who expressed at the same time, by the bitterest invectives, his contempt as well as abhorrence for such impious and tyrannical governors. His offences, according to the mildest laws, amounted to treason, and deserved death: and if it be true that he was a person of rank and education, those circumstances could serve only to aggravate his guilt. He was burnt, or rather roasted, before a slow fire; and his executioners, zealous to revenge the personal insult which had been offered to the emperors, exhausted every refinement of cruelty, without being able to subdue his patience, or to alter the steady and insulting smile which, in his dying agonies, he still preserved in his countenance. The Christians, though they confessed that his conduct had not been strictly conformable to the laws of prudence, admired the divine fervour of his zeal; and the excessive commendations which they lavished on the memory of their hero and martyr, contributed to fix a deep impression of terror and hatred in the mind of Diocletian.*

His fears were soon alarmed by the view of a danger from which he very narrowly escaped. Within fifteen days the palace of Nicomedia, and even the bed-chamber of Diocletian, were twice in flames; and though both times they were extinguished without any material damage, the singular repetition of the fire was justly considered as an evident proof that it had not been the effect of chance or negligence. The suspicion naturally fell on the Christians; and it was suggested with some degree of probability, that those desperate fanatics, provoked by their present sufferings, and apprehensive of impending calamities, had entered into a conspiracy with their faithful brethren, the eunuchs of the palace, against the lives of two emperors, whom they detested as the irreconcilable enemies of the church of God. Jealousy and resentment prevailed in every breast, but especially in that of Diocletian. A great number of persons, distinguished either by the offices which they had filled, or by the favour which they had enjoyed, were thrown into prison. Every mode of torture was put into practice, and the court

* Lactantius only calls him: quidam, etsi non recte, magno tamen animo, &c. (c. 12.) Eusebius (l. 8, c. 5), adorns him with secular honours. Neither has condescended to mention his name; but the Greeks celebrate his memory under that of John. See Tillemont,

as well as city, was polluted with many bloody executions;* but as it was found impossible to extort any discovery of this mysterious transaction, it seems incumbent on us either to presume the innocence, or to admire the resolution of the sufferers. A few days afterwards Galerius hastily withdrew himself from Nicomedia, declaring, that if he delayed his departure from that devoted palace, he should fall a sacrifice to the rage of the Christians. The ecclesiastical historians, from whom alone we derive a partial and imperfect knowledge of this persecution, are at a loss how to account for the fears and dangers of the emperors. Two of these writers, a prince and a rhetorician, were eye-witnesses of the fire of Nicomedia. The one ascribes it to lightning, and the divine wrath; and the other affirms that it was kindled by the malice of Galerius himself.†

As the edict against the Christians was designed for a general law of the whole empire, and as Diocletian and Galerius, though they might not wait for the consent, were assured of the concurrence, of the western princes, it would appear more consonant to our ideas of policy, that the governors of all the provinces should have received secret instructions to publish, on one and the same day, this declaration of war within their respective departments. It was at least to be expected, that the convenience of the public highways and established posts would have enabled the emperors to transmit their orders with the utmost despatch from the palace of Nicomedia to the extremities of the Roman world; and that they would not have suffered fifty days to elapse before the edict was published in Syria, and near

Mémoires Ecclesiastiques, tom. v, part 2, p. 320.

* Laetantius de M. P. c. 13, 14. Potentissimi quondam eunuchi necati, per quos palatium, et ipse constabat. Eusebius (l. 8, c. 6), mentions the cruel executions of the eunuchs, Gorgonius and Dorotheus, and of Anthemius, bishop of Nicomedia; and both those writers describe, in a vague but tragical manner, the horrid scenes which were acted even in the imperial presence.

† See Lactantius, Eusebius, and Constantine ad Cœtum Sanctorum, c. 25. Eusebius confesses his ignorance of the cause of the fire. [The history of that period does not afford a single example of any attempt made by Christians to injure their persecutors. There is, therefore, no reason that can be deemed even probable for believing that they set fire to the palace. The act must be explained on the authority of Constantine and Lactantius, whose accounts M. de Tillemont has instructed us how to reconcile. Hist.

four months before it was signified to the cities of Africa.* This delay may perhaps be imputed to the cautious temper of Diocletian, who had yielded a reluctant consent to the measures of persecution, and who was desirous of trying the experiment under his more immediate eye, before he gave way to the disorders and discontent which it must inevitably occasion in the distant provinces. At first, indeed, the magistrates were restrained from the effusion of blood; but the use of every other severity was permitted, and even recommended, to their zeal; nor could the Christians, though they cheerfully resigned the ornaments of their churches, resolve to interrupt their religious assemblies, or to deliver their sacred books to the flames. The pious obstinacy of Felix, an African bishop, appears to have embarrassed the subordinate ministers of the government. The curator of his city sent him in chains to the proconsul. The proconsul transmitted him to the prætorian prefect of Italy; and Felix, who disdained even to give an evasive answer, was at length beheaded at Venusia, in Lucania, a place on which the birth of Horace has conferred fame.† This precedent, and perhaps some imperial rescript, which was issued in consequence of it, appeared to authorize the governors of provinces in punishing with death the refusal of the Christians to deliver up their sacred books. There were undoubtedly many persons who embraced this opportunity of obtaining the crown of martyrdom; but there were likewise too many who purchased an ignominious life by discovering and betraying the Holy Scripture into the hands of infidels. A great number even of bishops and presbyters acquired, by this criminal compliance, the opprobrious epithet of *traditors*; and their offence was productive of much present scandal, and of much future discord, in the African church.‡

The copies, as well as the versions, of Scripture were already so multiplied in the empire, that the most severe inquisition could no longer be attended with any fatal consequences; and even the sacrifice of those volumes, which in every congregation were preserved for public use, re-

des Emp., Diocle. 19.—GUIZOT.]

* Tillemont, *Mémoires Ecclesiast.*

tom. v, part 1, p. 43. † See the *Acta Sincera* of Ruinart, p. 353; those of Felix of Thibara, or Tibiur, appear much less corrupted than in the other editions, which afford a lively specimen of legendary licence.

‡ See the first book of Optatus of Milevis against the Donatists, at Paris, 1700, edit. Dupin. He lived under the reign of

quired the consent of some treacherous and unworthy Christians. But the ruin of the churches was easily effected by the authority of the government, and by the labour of the Pagans. In some provinces, however, the magistrates contented themselves with shutting up the places of religious worship. In others they more literally complied with the terms of the edict; and after taking away the doors, the benches, and the pulpit, which they burnt, as it were in a funeral pile, they completely demolished the remainder of the edifice.* It is perhaps to this melancholy occasion, that we should apply a very remarkable story, which is related with so many circumstances of variety and improbability, that it serves rather to excite than to satisfy our curiosity. In a small town in Phrygia, of whose name as well as situation we are left ignorant, it should seem that the magistrates and the body of the people had embraced the Christian faith; and as some resistance might be apprehended to the execution of the edict, the governor of the province was supported by a numerous detachment of legionaries. On their approach the citizens threw themselves into the church, with the resolution either of defending by arms that sacred edifice, or of perishing in its ruins. They indignantly rejected the notice and permission which was given to them, to retire, till the soldiers, provoked by their obstinate refusal set fire to the building on all sides, and consumed, by this extraordinary kind of martyrdom, a great number of Phrygians, with their wives and children.†

Valens. * The ancient monuments, published at the end of Optatus, p. 261, &c. describe, in a very circumstantial manner, the proceedings of the governors in the destruction of churches. They made a minute inventory of the plate, &c. which they found in them. That of the church at Cirta, in Numidia, is still extant. It consisted of two chalices of gold, and six of silver; six urns, one kettle, seven lamps, all likewise of silver, besides a large quantity of brass utensils and wearing apparel. † Lactantius (Institut. Divin. 5. 11) confines the calamity to the *conventiculum*, with its congregation. Eusebius (8. 11) extends it to a whole city, and introduces something very like a regular siege. His ancient Latin translator, Rufinus, adds the important circumstance of the permission given to the inhabitants of retiring from thence. As Phrygia reached to the confines of Isauria, it is possible that the restless temper of those independent barbarians may have contributed to this misfortune. [All the inhabitants were burned, according to Eusebius, not merely "a great number." Lactantius confirms this, for he says "universum populum."—GUIZOT.] [Gibbon's "great number of Phrygians," applies to the people of a province, not to the inhabitants of a town.—ED.]

Some slight disturbances, though they were suppressed almost as soon as excited, in Syria and the frontiers of Armenia, afforded the enemies of the church a very plausible occasion to insinuate that those troubles had been secretly fomented by the intrigues of the bishops, who had already forgotten their ostentatious professions of passive and unlimited obedience.* The resentment, or the fears of Diocletian, at length transported him beyond the bounds of moderation, which he had hitherto preserved,† and he declared, in a series of cruel edicts, his intention of abolishing the Christian name. By the first of these edicts, the governors of provinces were directed to apprehend all persons of the ecclesiastical order; and the prisons destined for the vilest criminals were soon filled with a multitude of bishops, presbyters, deacons, readers, and exorcists. By a second edict, the magistrates were commanded to employ every method of severity which might reclaim them from their odious superstition, and oblige them to return to the established worship of the gods. This rigorous order was extended, by a subsequent edict, to the whole body of Christians, who were exposed to a violent and general persecution.‡ Instead of those salutary restraints which had required the direct and solemn testimony of an accuser, it

* Eusebius, l. 8, c. 6. M. de Valois (with some probability) thinks that he has discovered the Syrian rebellion in an oration of Libanius; and that it was a rash attempt of the tribune Eugenius, who, with only five hundred men, seized Antioch, and might perhaps allure the Christians by the promise of religious toleration. From Eusebius (l. 9, c. 8), as well as from Moses of Chorene, (Hist. Armen. l. 2, c. 77, &c.) it may be inferred that Christianity was already introduced into Armenia.

† By his first edict he had been already transported "beyond the bounds of moderation." There is no evidence that his new persecutions were caused either by his resentment or his fears. Perhaps they may be traced to his superstition, or some apparent respect for his ministers. The oracle of Apollo, when consulted by Diocletian, answered only, that just men forbade it to speak. Constantine, who was present at this ceremony, affirms with an oath, that in reply to an inquiry who these just men were, the high-priest named the Christians. On this the emperor eagerly turned against the innocent a sword, intended only for the punishment of the guilty. He issued immediately bloody edicts, written, if we may so say, with a dagger, and commanded the judges to use all their ingenuity in devising new punishments. Euseb. Vit. Const. l. 2, c. 51—GUIZOT. ‡ See Mosheim, p. 938. The text of Eusebius very plainly shows that the governors, whose powers were enlarged, not restrained, by the new

became the duty, as well as the interest of the imperial officers to discover, to pursue, and to torment, the most obnoxious among the faithful. Heavy penalties were denounced against all who should presume to save a proscribed sectary from the just indignation of the gods, and of the emperors. Yet, notwithstanding the severity of this law, the virtuous courage of many of the Pagans, in concealing their friends or relations, affords an honourable proof that the rage of superstition had not extinguished in their minds the sentiments of nature and humanity.*

Diocletian had no sooner published his edicts against the Christians, than, as if he had been desirous of committing to other hands the work of persecution, he divested himself of the imperial purple. The character and situation of his colleagues and successors sometimes urged them to enforce, and sometimes inclined them to suspend, the execution of these rigorous laws; nor can we acquire a just and distinct idea of this important period of ecclesiastical history, unless we separately consider the state of Christianity in the different parts of the empire, during the space of ten years, which elapsed between the first edicts of Diocletian and the final peace of the church.

The mild and humane temper of Constantius was averse to the oppression of any part of his subjects. The principal offices of his palace were exercised by Christians. He loved their persons, esteemed their fidelity, and entertained not any dislike to their religious principles. But as long as Constantius remained in the subordinate station of Cæsar, it was not in his power openly to reject the edicts of Diocletian, or to disobey the commands of Maximian. His authority contributed, however, to alleviate the sufferings which he pitied and abhorred. He consented, with reluctance, to the ruin of the churches; but he ventured to protect the Christians themselves from the fury of the populace, and from the rigour of the laws. The provinces of Gaul (under which we may probably include those of Britain) were indebted for the singular tranquillity which they enjoyed to the gentle interposition of their sovereign.†

laws, could punish with death the most obstinate Christians as an example to their brethren.

* Athanasius, p. 833, ap. Tillemont, *Mém. Ecclesiast.* tom. v, part 1, p. 90.

† Eusebius, l. 8, c. 13.

Lactantius de M. P. c. 15. Dodwell (*Dissertat. Cyprian.* 11. 75), repræ

But Datianus, the president or governor of Spain, actuated either by zeal or policy, chose rather to execute the public edicts of the emperors, than to understand the secret intentions of Constantius; and it can scarcely be doubted, that his provincial administration was stained with the blood of a few martyrs.* The elevation of Constantius to the supreme and independent dignity of Augustus, gave a free scope to the exercise of his virtues; and the shortness of his reign did not prevent him from establishing a system of toleration, of which he left the precept and the example to his son Constantine. His fortunate son, from the first moment of his accession, declaring himself the protector of the church, at length deserved the appellation of the first emperor who publicly professed and established the Christian religion. The motives of his conversion, as they may variously be deduced from benevolence, from policy, from conviction, or from remorse; and the progress of the revolution, which under his powerful influence, and that of his sons, rendered Christianity the reigning religion of the Roman empire, will form a very interesting and important chapter in a succeeding part of this history. At present it may be sufficient to observe, that every victory of Constantine was productive of some relief or benefit to the church.

The provinces of Italy and Africa experienced a short but violent persecution. The rigorous edicts of Diocletian were strictly and cheerfully executed by his associate Maximian, who had long hated the Christians, and who delighted in acts of blood and violence. In the autumn of the first year of the persecution, the two emperors met at Rome to celebrate their triumph; several oppressive laws appear to have issued from their secret consultations, and the dilisents them as inconsistent with each other. But the former evidently speaks of Constantius in the station of Cæsar, and the latter of the same prince in the rank of Augustus. * Datianus is mentioned in Gruter's Inscriptions, as having determined the limits between the territories of Pax Julia, and those of Ebora, both cities in the southern part of Lusitania. If we recollect the neighbourhood of those places to Cape St. Vincent, we may suspect that the celebrated deacon and martyr of that name has been inaccurately assigned by Prudentius, &c. to Saragossa, or Valentia. See the pompous history of his sufferings, in the *Mémoires de Tillemont*, tom. v, part 2, p. 58—85. Some critics are of opinion, that the department of Constantius, as Cæsar, did not include Spain, which still continued under the immediate jurisdiction of Maximian.

gence of the magistrates was animated by the presence of their sovereigns. After Diocletian had divested himself of the purple, Italy and Africa were administered under the name of Severus, and were exposed, without defence, to the implacable resentment of his master Galerius. Among the martyrs of Rome, Adauctus deserves the notice of posterity. He was of a noble family in Italy, and had raised himself, through the successive honours of the palace, to the important office of treasurer of the private demesnes. Adauctus is the more remarkable for being the only person of rank and distinction who appears to have suffered death, during the whole course of this general persecution.*

The revolt of Maxentius immediately restored peace to the churches of Italy and Africa; and the same tyrant who oppressed every other class of his subjects, shewed himself just, humane, and even partial, towards the afflicted Christians.† He depended on their gratitude and affliction, and

* Eusebius, l. 8, c. 11. Gruter, Inscript. p. 1171, No. 18. Ruffinus has mistaken the office of Adauctus, as well as the place of his martyrdom. [To the sufferers should be added the principal eunuchs of the palace, Dorotheus, Gorgonius, and Andrew, who, attending on the person of Diocletian, enjoyed his favour and governed the imperial household. In a preceding page Gibbon himself speaks of them. Lactantius relates their death: "Potentissimi eunuchi necati per quos palatium et ipse ante constabat." (De Mort. Pers. c. 15). Eusebius also removes all doubt on the subject by naming Dorotheus and the other keepers of the imperial apartments, who, although invested by the emperor with the most honourable privileges, and cherished as his sons, endured insults, misfortunes, and even the most cruel death, rather than preserve for themselves the glory and pleasures of the world, by forsaking their religion. (Hist. Eccl. l. 8, c. 6).—Guzot.] [It was not necessary for Gibbon to repeat here, what he had just before said respecting these martyrs, referring to the very passages in Eusebius and Lactantius, which M. Guizot has cited, and even quoting the same words from the last. When speaking too of the persecution in Italy under Severus, there would have been a double irrelevancy in repeating what had been done some time before by Diocletian at Nicomedia.—ED.] † Nothing can be less true than this, as may be proved by the very passage in Eusebius, to which the reader is referred. It is there said: "Maxentius, who had seized on the government in Italy, as first pretended (*καθυπεκρίνατο*) to be a Christian, in order to ingratiate himself with the Roman people. By his orders his ministers put a stop to the persecution of the Christians, and he affected an hypocritical piety that he might appear to be milder than his predecessors. But his actions, in the sequel, proved him to be very different to what was at first hoped." (Hist. Eccl. l. 8, c. 14). The same writer then adds, that Maxentius was the ally of Maximin, who persecuted the

very naturally presumed, that the injuries which they had suffered, and the dangers which they still apprehended from his most inveterate enemy, would secure the fidelity of a party already considerable by their numbers and opulence.* Even the conduct of Maxentius towards the bishops of Rome and Carthage may be considered as the proof of his toleration, since it is probable that the most orthodox princes would adopt the same measures with regard to their established clergy. Marcellus, the former of these prelates, had thrown the capital into confusion, by the severe penance which he imposed on a great number of Christians, who, during the late persecution, had renounced or dissembled their religion. The rage of faction broke out in frequent and violent seditions; the blood of the faithful was shed by each other's hands; and the exile of Marcellus, whose prudence seems to have been less eminent than his zeal, was found to be the only measure capable of restoring peace to the distracted church of Rome.† The behaviour

Christians; and he calls them "brothers in wickedness," (*ἀδελφοὶ τὴν κακίαν*). He attributes the evils that afflicted the people during the reign of these two emperors, to the persecution which they excited against the Christians; and the very title of his chapter, "Concerning the conduct of the enemies of religion," (*περὶ τοῦ τρόπου τῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐχθρῶν*), indicates clearly what Maxentius was.—GUIZOT. [This note is taken from Mr. Davis, who in his Reply to Gibbon's Vindication, confesses (p. 44) that his original charge was made through his having "unfortunately mistaken Eusebius and attributed to Maxentius what is spoken of Maximin." A charge, so abandoned by its author, ought not to have been dragged forth again out of the oblivion into which it had sunk.—ED.] * Eusebius, l. 8, c. 14. But as Maxentius was vanquished by Constantine, it suited the purpose of Lactantius to place his death among those of the persecutors.

† The epitaph of Marcellus is to be found in Gruter, Inscript. p. 1712, No. 3, and it contains all that we know of his history. Marcellinus and Marcellus, whose names follow in the list of popes, are supposed by many critics to be different persons; but the learned abbé de Longuerue was convinced that they were one and the same.

Veridicus rector lapsis quia crimina flere
 Prædixit miseris, fuit omnibus hostis amarus.
 Hinc furor, hinc odium; sequitur discordia, lites,
 Seditio, cædes: solvuntur fœdera pacis.
 Crimen ob alterius, Christum qui in pace negavit
 Finibus expulsus patriæ est feritate tyranni.
 Hæc breviter Damasus voluit comperta referre:
 Marcelli populus meritum cognoscere posset.

We may observe that Damasus was made bishop of Rome, A.D. 266.

of Melsurius, bishop of Carthage, appears to have been still more reprehensible. A deacon of that city had published a libel against the emperor. The offender took refuge in the episcopal palace; and though it was somewhat early to advance any claims of ecclesiastical immunities, the bishop refused to deliver him up to the officers of justice. For this treasonable resistance, Mensurius was summoned to court, and instead of receiving a legal sentence of death or banishment, he was permitted, after a short examination, to return to his diocese.* Such was the happy condition of the Christian subjects of Maxentius, that whenever they were desirous of procuring for their own use any bodies of martyrs, they were obliged to purchase them from the most distant provinces of the east. A story is related of Aglae, a Roman lady, descended from a consular family, and possessed of so ample an estate, that it required the management of seventy-three stewards. Among these, Boniface was the favourite of his mistress; and as Aglae mixed love with devotion, it is reported that he was admitted to share her bed. Her fortune enabled her to gratify the pious desire of obtaining some sacred relics from the east. She intrusted Boniface with a considerable sum of gold, and a large quantity of aromatics; and her lover, attended by twelve horsemen and three covered chariots, undertook a remote pilgrimage, as far as Tarsus in Cilicia.†

The sanguinary temper of Gaerius, the first and principal author of the persecution, was formidable to those Christians whom their misfortunes had placed within the limits of his dominions; and it may fairly be presumed, that many persons of a middle rank, who were not confined by the chains either of wealth or of poverty, very frequently deserted their native country, and sought a refuge in the milder climate of the west. As long as he commanded only

* Optatus contr. Donatist. l. 1, c. 17, 18. [The words of Optatus are: "Profectus [Roman] causam dixit; jussus est reverti Carthaginem." Perhaps he justified himself by his pleadings, since he was ordered to return to Carthage.—GUIZOT.] † The Acts of the

Passion of St. Boniface, which abound in miracles and declamation, are published by Ruinart, (p. 283—291), both in Greek and Latin, from the authority of very ancient manuscripts. [It is not known whether Aglae and Boniface were Christians at the time of their unlawful intercourse. Tillemont also proves that the story is doubtful.]

the armies and provinces of Illyricum, he could with difficulty either find or make a considerable number of martyrs, in a warlike country, which had entertained the missionaries of the gospel with more coldness and reluctance than any other part of the empire.* But when Galerius had obtained the supreme power and the government of the east, he indulged in their fullest extent his zeal and cruelty, not only in the provinces of Thrace and Asia, which acknowledged his immediate jurisdiction, but in those of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, where Maximin gratified his own inclination, by yielding a rigorous obedience to the stern commands of his benefactor.† The frequent disappointments of his ambitious views, the experience of six years of persecution, and the salutary reflections which a lingering and painful distemper suggested to the mind of Galerius, at length convinced him that the most violent efforts of despotism are insufficient to extirpate a whole people, or to subdue their religious prejudices. Desirous of repairing the mischief that he had occasioned, he published in his own name, and in those of Licinius and Constantine, a

(*Mém. Ecc.*; note on the Persec. of Dioclet. tom. v, note 32, p. 283).—*GUIZOT.*]

* During the four first centuries, there exist few traces of either bishops or bishoprics in the western Illyricum. It has been thought probable that the primate of Milan extended his jurisdiction over Sirmium, the capital of that great province. See the *Geographia Sacra* of Charles de St. Paul, p. 68—76, with the observations of Lucas Holstenius. [Christianity was soon afterwards propagated among the German tribes to the north of the Roman empire. Many Christians, driven by the persecutions of the emperors, found a hospitable refuge among the barbarians. (Euseb. de Vit. Const. l. 2, c. 53. Sessler, *Selecta*. cap. H. i. j. 115). The first knowledge of the Christian religion was imparted to the Goths by a prisoner of war, a young girl. She continued her devotional exercises among them, fasting, praying, and singing praises to God day and night. When she was asked why she gave herself so much trouble, she replied: "It is thus that we honour Christ, the Son of God!" (Sozomen. lib. 2, c. 6).—*GUIZOT.*] [The Franks, who, as we have seen, were borderers on the frontiers of the Roman empire, did not become Christians till the conversion of Clovis, two centuries after the time of Diocletian; they do not appear to have been more advanced in their knowledge of the faith than the remoter Saxons, to whom, after their establishment in Kent, the mission of Augustin took place at nearly the same period. There are no traces of a Gothic church before the time of Ulphilas, towards the end of the fourth century.—*ED.*] † The eighth book of Eusebius, as well as the supplement concerning the martyrs of Palestine, principally relate to the persecution of Galerius and Maximin. The general laments

general edict, which, after a pompous recital of the imperial titles, proceeded in the following manner :

“Among the important cares which have occupied our minds for the utility and preservation of the empire, it was our intention to correct and re-establish all things according to the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans. We were particularly desirous of reclaiming into the way of reason and nature the deluded Christians who had renounced the religion and ceremonies instituted by their fathers; and, presumptuously despising the practice of antiquity, had invented extravagant laws and opinions according to the dictates of their fancy, and had collected a various society from the different provinces of our empire. The edicts which we have published to enforce the worship of the gods having exposed many of the Christians to danger and distress, many having suffered death, and many more, who still persist in their impious folly, being left destitute of any public exercise of religion, we are disposed to extend to those unhappy men the effects of our wonted clemency. We permit them therefore freely to profess their private opinions, and to assemble in their conventicles without fear or molestation, provided always that they preserve a due respect to the established laws and government. By another rescript we shall signify our intentions to the judges and magistrates; and we hope that our indulgence will engage the Christians to offer up their prayers to the Deity whom they adore, for our safety and prosperity, for their own, and for that of the republic.”* It is not usually in the language of edicts and manifestoes that we should search for the real character or the secret motives of princes; but as these were the words of a dying emperor, his situation, perhaps, may be admitted as a pledge of his sincerity.

When Galerius subscribed this edict of toleration, he was well assured that Licinius would readily comply with the inclinations of his friend and benefactor, and that any measures in favour of the Christians would obtain the tions with which Lactantius opens the fifth book of his *Divine Institutes* allude to their cruelty.

* Eusebius (l. 8, c. 17), has given us a Greek version, and Lactantius (de M. P. c. 34), the Latin original of this memorable edict. Neither of these writers seems to recollect how directly it contradicts whatever they have just affirmed of the remorse and repentance of Galerius.

approbation of Constantine: but the emperor would not venture to insert in the preamble the name of Maximin, whose consent was of the greatest importance, and who succeeded a few days afterwards to the provinces of Asia. In the first six months, however, of his new reign, Maximin affected to adopt the prudent councils of his predecessor; and though he never condescended to secure the tranquillity of the church by a public edict, Sabinus, his praetorian prefect, addressed a circular letter to all the governors and magistrates of the provinces, expatiating on the imperial clemency, acknowledging the invincible obstinacy of the Christians, and directing the officers of justice to cease their ineffectual prosecutions, and to connive at the secret assemblies of those enthusiasts. In consequence of these orders, great numbers of Christians were released from prison, or delivered from the mines. The confessors, singing hymns of triumph, returned into their own countries; and those who had yielded to the violence of the tempest solicited with tears of repentance their re-admission into the bosom of the church.*

But this treacherous calm was of short duration; nor could the Christians of the east place any confidence in the character of their sovereign. Cruelty and superstition were the ruling passions of the soul of Maximin. The former suggested the means, the latter pointed out the objects, of persecution. The emperor was devoted to the worship of the gods, to the study of magic, and to the belief of oracles. The prophets or philosophers whom he revered, as the favourites of heaven, were frequently raised to the government of provinces, and admitted into his most secret councils. They easily convinced him, that the Christians had been indebted for their victories to their regular discipline, and that the weakness of Polytheism had principally flowed from a want of union and subordination among the ministers of religion. A system of government was therefore instituted, which was evidently copied from the policy of the church. In all the great cities of the empire, the temples were repaired and beautified by the order of Maximin; and the officiating priests of the various deities were subjected to the authority of a superior pontiff, destined to oppose the bishop, and to promote the cause of Paganism. These

* Eusebius, l. 9, c. 1. He inserts the epistle of the prefect.

pontiffs acknowledged, in their turn, the supreme jurisdiction of the metropolitans or high-priests of the province, who acted as the immediate vicegerents of the emperor himself. A white robe was the ensign of their dignity; and these new prelates were carefully selected from the most noble and opulent families. By the influence of the magistrates, and of the sacerdotal order, a great number of dutiful addresses were obtained, particularly from the cities of Nicomedia, Antioch, and Tyre, which artfully represented the well-known intentions of the court as the general sense of the people; solicited the emperor to consult the laws of justice rather than the dictates of his clemency; expressed their abhorrence of the Christians, and humbly prayed that those impious sectaries might at least be excluded from the limits of their respective territories. The answer of Maximin to the address which he obtained from the citizens of Tyre is still extant. He praises their zeal and devotion in terms of the highest satisfaction, descants on the obstinate impiety of the Christians, and betrays, by the readiness with which he consents to their banishment, that he considered himself as receiving, rather than as conferring, an obligation. The priests as well as the magistrates were empowered to enforce the execution of his edicts, which were engraved on tables of brass; and though it was recommended to them to avoid the effusion of blood, the most cruel and ignominious punishments were inflicted on the refractory Christians.*

* See Eusebius, lib. 8, c. 14; lib. 9, c. 2—8. Lactantius de M. P. c. 36. These writers agree in representing the arts of Maximin; but the former relates the execution of several martyrs, while the latter expressly affirms, *occuldi servos Dei vetuit*. [These apparent contradictions are reconciled, when the entire passage is taken, as thus written by Lactantius. "While, with pretended clemency, he forbade the servants of God to be slain, he ordered them to be mutilated, their eyes to be put out, their hands amputated, or their feet, noses, and ears cut off. But, preparing these torments, he was deterred from inflicting them by the letters of Constantine. He therefore dissembled, and if any one perished, his body was thrown secretly into the sea." This detail of the tortures, which were inflicted on the Christians, perfectly reconciles the expressions of Eusebius and Lactantius. Those, who died in consequence of these tortures, and were thrown into the sea, may justly be considered as martyrs. The apparent contradiction is caused only by the garbled quotation from Lactantius.—GUIZOT]. Here again M. Guizot has followed Mr. Davis and with somewhat better success. By quoting only four words from Lactantius, Gibbon

The Asiatic Christians had everything to dread from the severity of a bigoted monarch, who prepared his measures of violence with such deliberate policy. But a few months had scarcely elapsed, before the edicts published by the two western emperors, obliged Maximin to suspend the prosecution of his designs: the civil war which he so rashly undertook against Licinius employed all his attention; and the defeat and death of Maximin soon delivered the church from the last and most implacable of her enemies.*

In this general view of the persecution, which was first authorized by the edicts of Diocletian, I have purposely refrained from describing the particular sufferings and deaths of the Christian martyrs. It would have been an easy task, from the history of Eusebius, from the declamations of Lactantius, and from the most ancient acts, to collect a long series of horrid and disgusting pictures, and to fill many pages with racks and scourges, with iron hooks and red-hot beds, and with all the variety of tortures which fire and steel, savage beasts, and more savage executioners, could inflict on the human body. These melancholy scenes might be enlivened by a crowd of visions and miracles, destined either to delay the death, to celebrate the triumph, or to discover the relics, of those canonized saints who suffered for the name of Christ. But I cannot determine what I ought to transcribe, till I am satisfied how much I ought to believe.†

certainly appears to keep out of view the next sentence, in which barbarities are related, worse even than death itself. But this was not done, to distort any historical fact or palliate the acts of Maximin. Very doubtful, however, is it, whether any of these horrid mutilations were actually perpetrated, for in the succeeding sentence, which Mr. Davis suppressed, Lactantius says, that the monster, when preparing them (*moliens*) was deterred (*deterretur*), by the letters of Constantine, from carrying them into effect. This justifies Gibbon's assertion, that the edicts of his colleagues "obliged Maximin to suspend the prosecution of his designs." * A few days before his death, he published a very ample edict of toleration, in which he imputes all the severities which the Christians suffered to the judges and governors, who had misunderstood his intentions. See the edict in Eusebius, lib. 9, c. 10. † The justly discriminating historian does not reject facts by wholesale, when they do not suit a particular system. This Gibbon has done in the present chapter, in which he allows no martyrdoms but such as cannot by any possible ingenuity be denied. Authorities must be weighed, not thrown out of the balance. Heathen historians, in many passages, confirm what those of the church have said, respecting the persecution of Christians. Celsus made it a cause

The gravest of the ecclesiastical historians, Eusebius himself, indirectly confesses, that he has related whatever might redound to the glory, and that he has suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace of religion * Such an acknowledgment will naturally excite a suspicion, that a writer who has so openly violated one of the fundamental laws of history, has not paid a very strict regard to the observance of the other; and the suspicion will derive additional credit from the character of Eusebius, which was less tinctured with credulity, and more practised in the arts of courts, than that of almost any of his contemporaries. On some particular occasions, when the magistrates were exasperated by some personal motives of interest or resentment, when the zeal of the martyrs urged them to forget the rules of prudence, and perhaps of decency, to overturn the altars, to pour out imprecations against the emperors, or to strike the judge as he sat on his tribunal, it may be presumed that every mode of torture which cruelty could invent, or constancy could endure, was exhausted on those devoted vie-

for reproach to them, that they held secret meetings, because they feared punishment; "for when you are arrested," said he, "you are dragged to execution, and suffer all kinds of torture, before you are put to death." (Origen. cont. Cels. lib. 1, 2, 6, 8, passim). Libanius also, the panegyrist of Julian, speaks thus of them: "Those who followed a corrupt religion, were constantly apprehensive of danger; they feared that Julian would invent for them torments even more exquisite than those which they had before endured, such as being maimed, burned alive, &c.: for preceding emperors had practised such cruelties on them. Libanii Orat. parent. in Julian. ap. Fab. Bibl. Græc. v. 9, No. 58, p. 283.—GUIZOT.] [Gibbon's defence of the course taken by him in this chapter (Vind. p. 122—145, 1st Edit.) would be weakened by abridgment. He considered it to be his duty as "an impartial judge," to be counsel for the accused who had no witnesses, and to "examine with distrust and suspicion, the interested evidence of the accuser." Niebuhr also (Lect. on Rom. Hist. iii, p. 297) states, that the persecution by Diocletian "was not so frightful as we are wont to believe." The sudden hostility to the Christians, then manifested, was the work of Galerius, jealous of the new hierarchy, who were establishing a dominion more undisputed and feared, than that of the emperor himself. By inconsiderately yielding to the intemperate advice of his junior, Diocletian brought himself into a dilemma, which was the real cause of his so soon resigning the purple and retiring into private life.—ED.] * Such is the fair deduction from two remarkable passages in Eusebius, lib. 8, c. 2. and de Martyr. Palestin. c. 12. The prudence of the historian has exposed his own character to censure and suspicion. It is well known that he himself had been

tims.* Two circumstances, however, have been unwarily mentioned, which insinuate that the general treatment of the Christians, who had been apprehended by the officers of justice, was less intolerable than it is usually imagined to have been. 1. The confessors, who were condemned to work in the mines, were permitted, by the humanity or the negligence of their keepers, to build chapels, and freely to profess their religion, in the midst of those dreary habitations.† The bishops were obliged to check and to censure

thrown into prison: and it was suggested that he had purchased his deliverance by some dishonourable compliance. The reproach was urged in his lifetime, and even in his presence, at the council of Tyre. See Tillemont, *Mémoires Ecclesiastiques*, tom. viii. p. 67. * The ancient, and perhaps authentic, account of the sufferings of Tarachus and his companions, (*Acta Sincera*, Ruinart, p. 419—448,) is filled with strong expressions of resentment and contempt, which could not fail of irritating the magistrate. The behaviour of Ædesus to Hierocles, prefect of Egypt, was still more extraordinary, *λογαῖς τε καὶ ἰσχυαῖς τῶν δίκαστην . . . περιβάλλον.* Euseb. de Martyr. Palestin. c. 5. [There is nothing in the acts of Tarachus and his companions, which can be considered as "filled with expressions of resentment and contempt." It is the fault of the persecutors, if they put such a construction on the firmness of the persecuted. "What is your name?" said the presiding officer, Maximus, to Tarachus. "I am a Christian." "Break his jaw-bone," was the order instantly given. (Ruinart. p. 469.) His companion, when led forward, replied to the same question, "I am a Christian and my name is Probus." He was told to offer sacrifice, whereby he might gain the favour of his prince and the friendship of Maximus. "At such a price," he answered, "I desire neither the favour of a prince nor your friendship." After suffering the most cruel torments, he was loaded with chains, and the judge forbade any care to be bestowed on his wounds; "sanguine tuo impleta est terra." (Ruinart. p. 462.) The third was Andronicus, who with equal fortitude, resisted the command to offer sacrifice. To deceive him, the judge said, that his brothers had complied. "Unhappy man!" he exclaimed; "why would you beguile me by such falsehoods?" At last they were exposed to the wild beasts. Comparing the conduct of the judge with that of the martyrs, are the answers of the latter unbecoming or violent? The very people, who were present, manifested less gentleness and were less respectful. The injustice of Maximus was so revolting to them, that when the unfortunate victims appeared in the amphitheatre, the spectators were filled with terror, and murmured, saying: "Unjust is the judge who has done this!" Many left the scene; and as they retired, spoke of Maximus with contempt. (Ruinart. p. 488).—GUIZOT.] † Euseb. de Martyr. Palestin. c. 13. [No sooner were the higher authorities informed of this, than the president of the province, a severe and cruel man, as Eusebius says in the same chapter, banished the confessors: some to the islands

the forward zeal of the Christians, who voluntarily threw themselves into the hands of the magistrates. Some of these were persons oppressed by poverty and debts, who blindly sought to terminate a miserable existence by a glorious death. Others were allured by the hope, that a short confinement would expiate the sins of a whole life; and others again were actuated by the less honourable motives of deriving a plentiful subsistence, and perhaps a considerable profit, from the alms which the charity of the faithful bestowed on the prisoners.* After the church had triumphed over all her enemies, the interest as well as vanity of the captives prompted them to magnify the merit of their respective sufferings. A convenient distance of time or place gave an ample scope to the progress of fiction; and the frequent instances which might be alleged of holy martyrs, whose wounds had been instantly healed, whose strength had been renewed, and whose lost members had miraculously been restored, were extremely convenient for the purpose of removing every difficulty, and of silencing every objection. The most extravagant legends, as they conduced to the honour of the church, were applauded by the credulous multitude, countenanced by the power of the clergy, and attested by the suspicious evidence of ecclesiastical history.

The vague descriptions of exile and imprisonment, of pain and torture, are so easily exaggerated or softened by the pencil of an artful orator, that we are naturally induced to inquire into a fact of a more distinct and stubborn kind; the number of persons who suffered death in consequence of the edicts published by Diocletian, his associates, and his successors. The recent legendaries record whole armies and cities, which were at once swept away by the undistinguishing rage of persecution. The more ancient writers content themselves with pouring out a liberal effusion of loose and tragical invectives, without condescending to ascertain the precise number of those persons who were

Cyprus, others to various parts of Palestine, and ordered that they should be put to the most laborious toils. Four among them, who could not be prevailed on to abjure their faith, were burned alive.—GUIZOT].

* Augustin. Collat. Carthagin. Dei, 3. c. 13, ap. Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclesiastiques, tom. v. part 1. p. 46. The controversy with the Donatists has reflected some, though perhaps a partial, light on the history

permitted to seal with their blood their belief of the gospel. From the history of Eusebius, it may however be collected, that only nine bishops were punished with death; and we are assured, by his particular enumeration of the martyrs of Palestine, that no more than ninety-two Christians were entitled to that honourable appellation.* As we are unacquainted with the degree of episcopal zeal and courage which prevailed at that time, it is not in our power to draw any useful inferences from the former of these facts; but the latter may serve to justify a very important and probable conclusion. According to the distribution of Roman provinces, Palestine may be considered as the sixteenth part of the eastern empire;† and since there were some governors, who from a real or affected clemency had preserved their hands unstained with the blood of the faithful,‡

of the African church. * Eusebius de Martyr. Palestin. c. 13. He closes his narration, by assuring us, that these were the martyrdoms inflicted in Palestine, during the *whole* course of the persecution. The fifth chapter of his eighth book, which relates to the province of Thebais in Egypt, may seem to contradict our moderate computation; but it will only lead us to admire the artful management of the historian. Choosing for the scene of the most exquisite cruelty the most remote and sequestered country of the Roman empire, he relates, that in Thebais from ten to one hundred persons had frequently suffered martyrdom in the same day. But when he proceeds to mention his own journey into Egypt, his language insensibly becomes more cautious and moderate. Instead of a large, but definite number, he speaks of many Christians (*πλειονος*); and most artfully selects two ambiguous words (*ιστορησαμεν* and *υπομεινοντας*), which may signify either what he had seen or what he had heard; either the expectation, or the execution, of the punishment.¹ Having thus provided a secure evasion, he commits the equivocal passage to his readers and translators; justly conceiving that their piety would induce them to prefer the most favourable sense. There was perhaps some malice in the remark of Theodorus Metochita, that all who, like Eusebius, had been conversant with the Egyptians, delighted in an obscure and intricate style. (See Valesius ad loc.) † When Palestine was divided into three, the prefecture of the east contained forty-eight provinces. As the ancient distinctions of nations were long since abolished, the Romans distributed the provinces according to a general proportion of their extent and opulence. ‡ *Ut gloriari possint nullum se innocentem*

¹ Those who will take the trouble of examining the passage, may judge whether *υπομεινοντας* can signify the expectation of punishment; if so taken, the sentence would be unmeaning and absurd.—GUIZOT. [Does not the word properly denote *awaiting the execution of sentences passed on them?*—ED.]

it is reasonable to believe that the country which had given birth to Christianity, produced at least the sixteenth part of the martyrs who suffered death within the dominions of Galerius and Maximin; the whole might consequently amount to about fifteen hundred, a number, which, if it is equally divided between the ten years of the persecution, will allow an annual consumption of one hundred and fifty martyrs. Allotting the same proportion to the provinces of Italy, Africa, and perhaps Spain, where, at the end of two or three years, the rigour of the penal laws was either suspended or abolished, the multitude of Christians in the Roman empire, on whom a capital punishment was inflicted by a judicial sentence, will be reduced to somewhat less than two thousand persons. Since it cannot be doubted that the Christians were more numerous, and their enemies more exasperated, in the time of Diocletian, than they had ever been in any former persecution, this probable and moderate computation may teach us to estimate the number of primitive saints and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the important purpose of introducing Christianity into the world.*

premissis, nam et ipse audivi aliquos glorientes, quia administratio sua, in hac parte, fuerit incruenta. Lactant. Institut. Divin. 5. 11. * The calculation which Gibbon has made is founded on the number of martyrs, actually mentioned by name, in the history of Eusebius; but many more are there referred to. His ninth and tenth chapters are headed: "Of Antoninus, Zebinus, Germanus, and other martyrs;" "Of Peter the Monk, Asclepius the Marcionite, and other martyrs." Speaking of those who suffered under Diocletian, he says: "I will relate the particulars of the death of only one, from which my readers may judge what the rest endured." (Hist. Ecc. lib. 8, c. 6.) Dodwell made a similar calculation before Gibbon, and objections, to which Ruinaræ gave this peremptory answer, in his Act. Mart. Pref. p. 24, &c. "Eusebius has admitted an infinite number of martyrs, although he has actually named but few. He is his own best interpreter, when he says (l. 3, c. 25), that many martyrs suffered under Trajan (l. 5, init.); that they were innumerable under Antoninus and Verus (l. 6, c. 1); that in the time of Severus the churches were everywhere made illustrious by champions of the faith. In like manner he speaks of the persecutions of Decius and Valerian. The judicious reader may decide how far Dodwell is supported by such evidence." In the very persecutions which Gibbon has represented as lighter than that of Diocletian, the number of martyrs appears to have been greater than he even allows for the last, and that number is certified by incontestable monuments. I will only adduce one of these. Among

We shall conclude this chapter by a melancholy truth, which obtrudes itself on the reluctant mind; that even admitting, without hesitation or inquiry, all that history has recorded, or devotion has feigned, on the subject of martyrdoms, it must still be acknowledged that the Christians, in the course of their intestine dissensions, have inflicted far greater severities on each other, than they had experienced from the zeal of infidels. During the ages of ignorance which followed the subversion of the Roman empire in the west, the bishops of the imperial city extended their dominion over the laity as well as clergy of the Latin church. The fabric of superstition which they had erected, and which might long have defied the feeble efforts of reason, was at length assaulted by a crowd of daring fanatics, who, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, assumed the popular character of reformers. The church of Rome defended by violence the empire which she had acquired by fraud; a system of peace and benevolence was soon disgraced by proscriptions, wars, massacres, and the institution of the holy office; and as the reformers were animated by the love of civil, as well as of religious freedom, the Catholic princes connected their own interest with that of the clergy, and enforced by fire and the sword the terrors of spiritual censures. In the Netherlands alone more than one hundred thousand of the subjects of Charles the Fifth are said to have suffered by the hand of the executioner;

Cyprian's letters, there is inserted one from Lucianus to Celerinus, written from his prison cell, and naming seventeen of his brethren, who had died, either in the quarries, in the midst of tortures, or of hunger in their dungeons. "By the emperor's order," are his words, "we are doomed to die of hunger and thirst; we are shut up in two cells, so that smoke, hunger, and thirst, may do their work upon us." Cypr. Epist. 22.—GUIZOT.] [It may be seen in Cyprian's letters, No. V and others, that the unimprisoned Christians were allowed to visit and relieve those in confinement. If then any confessors died in prison of hunger and thirst, and the word "*necari*" be not a mere figurative or hyperbolical term, it must have been through the neglect of those, who certainly had the means and the opportunity of preventing it, and were moreover urgently required by their spiritual superior to employ them. These disputes as to the greater or lesser number of martyrs, are however comparatively unimportant. The early Christians were often persecuted; this cannot be denied. Numbers ought not to affect the question. The single murder of Servetus has stamped a dark a blot on the name of Calvin, as the slaughter of hosts has on

and this extraordinary number is attested by Grotius,* a man of genius and learning, who preserved his moderation amidst the fury of contending sects, and who composed the annals of his own age and country, at a time when the invention of printing had facilitated the means of intelligence, and increased the danger of detection. If we are obliged to submit our belief to the authority of Grotius, it must be allowed, that the number of Protestants, who were executed in a single province and a single reign, far exceeded that of the primitive martyrs in the space of three centuries, and of the Roman empire. But if the improbability of the fact itself should prevail over the weight of evidence; if Grotius should be convicted of exaggerating the merit and sufferings of the reformers;† we shall be naturally led to inquire what confidence can be placed in the doubtful and imperfect monuments of ancient credulity; what degree of credit can be assigned to a courtly bishop, and a passionate declaimer, who, under the protection of Constantine, enjoyed the exclusive privilege of recording the persecutions inflicted on the Christians by the vanquished rivals, or disregarded predecessors, of their gracious sovereign.‡

those of Gardiner and Bonner, of Philip and Katharine. Christians have certainly been more ferociously cruel to each other, than the heathens were to their forefathers.—Ed.] * Grot. *Annal. de Rebus Belgicis*, lib. 1, p. 12. edit. fol. † Fra Paolo (*Istoria del Consilio Tridentino*, lib. 3) reduces the number of Belgic martyrs to fifty thousand. In learning and moderation, Fra Paolo was not inferior to Grotius. The priority of time gives some advantage to the evidence of the former, which he loses on the other hand by the distance of Venice from the Netherlands. ‡ Professor Schreiter, in a note principally addressed to his German readers, assigns among his reasons for not having made any observations on the two last chapters, the hope at that time entertained, that Professor Wenck was preparing a separate treatise on them. It has been seen in M. Guizot's Preface (p. 12), that this expectation was disappointed. The note also refers to Dr. Lüderwald's then recently published work, *On the propagation of the Christian religion by its own evidence*. Helmstädt, 1788. There is some ground for the Professor's complaint, that Christianity, Church, and Hierarchy are too often confounded by Gibbon, and the errors of the latter improperly attributed to the former; yet it must be borne in mind that it has not long been safe *anywhere*, and is not even now *everywhere*, to make a distinction between the *Hierarchy and Christianity*.—Ed.

CHAPTER XVII — FOUNDATION OF CONSTANTINOPLE. — POLITICAL SYSTEM OF CONSTANTINE AND HIS SUCCESSORS. — MILITARY DISCIPLINE. — THE PALACE. — THE FINANCES.

THE unfortunate Licinius was the last rival who opposed the greatness, and the last captive who adorned the triumph, of Constantine. After a tranquil and prosperous reign, the conqueror bequeathed to his family the inheritance of the Roman empire; a new capital, a new policy, and a new religion; and the innovations which he established have been embraced and consecrated by succeeding generations. The age of the great Constantine and his sons is filled with important events; but the historian must be oppressed by their number and variety, unless he diligently separates from each other the scenes which are connected only by the order of time. He will describe the political institutions that gave strength and stability to the empire, before he proceeds to relate the wars and revolutions which hastened its decline. He will adopt the division unknown to the ancients, of civil and ecclesiastical affairs: the victory of the Christians, and their intestine discord, will supply copious and distinct materials both for edification and for scandal.

After the defeat and abdication of Licinius, his victorious rival proceeded to lay the foundations of a city, destined to reign, in future times, the mistress of the east, and to survive the empire and religion of Constantine. The motives, whether of pride or of policy, which first induced Diocletian to withdraw himself from the ancient seat of government, had acquired additional weight by the example of his successors, and the habits of forty years. Rome was insensibly confounded with the dependent kingdoms which had once acknowledged her supremacy; and the country of the Cæsars was viewed with cold indifference by a martial prince, born in the neighbourhood of the Danube, educated in the courts and armies of Asia, and invested with the purple by the legions of Britain. The Italians, who had received Constantine as their deliverer, submissively obeyed the edicts

which he sometimes condescended to address to the senate and people of Rome; but they were seldom honoured with the presence of their new sovereign. During the vigour of his age, Constantine, according to the various exigencies of peace and war, moved with slow dignity, or with active diligence, along the frontiers of his extensive dominions; and was always prepared to take the field either against a foreign or a domestic enemy. But as he gradually reached the summit of prosperity and the decline of life, he began to meditate the design of fixing in a more permanent station the strength as well as majesty of the throne. In the choice of an advantageous situation, he preferred the confines of Europe and Asia; to curb, with a powerful arm, the barbarians who dwelt between the Danube and the Tanais; to watch with an eye of jealousy the conduct of the Persian monarch, who indignantly supported the yoke of an ignominious treaty. With these views, Diocletian had selected and embellished the residence of Nicomedia: but the memory of Diocletian was justly abhorred by the protector of the church; and Constantine was not insensible to the ambition of founding a city which might perpetuate the glory of his own name. During the late operations of the war against Licinius, he had sufficient opportunity to contemplate, both as a soldier and a statesman, the incomparable position of Byzantium; and to observe how strongly it was guarded by nature against a hostile attack, whilst it was accessible on every side to the benefits of commercial intercourse. Many ages before Constantine, one of the most judicious historians of antiquity* had described the advantages of a situation, from whence a feeble colony of Greeks derived the command of the sea, and the honours of a flourishing and independent republic.†

If we survey Byzantium in the extent which it acquired with the august name of Constantinople, the figure of the imperial city may be represented under that of an unequal triangle. The obtuse point, which advances towards the

* Polybius, lib. 4, p. 423, edit. Casaubon. He observes that the peace of the Byzantines was frequently disturbed, and the extent of their territory contracted, by the inroads of the wild Thracians.

† The navigator Byzas, who was styled the son of Neptune, founded the city 656 years before the Christian era. His followers were drawn

east and the shores of Asia, meets and repels the waves of the Thracian Bosphorus. The northern side of the city is bounded by the harbour; and the southern is washed by the Propontis, or sea of Marmara. The basis of the triangle is opposed to the west, and terminates the continent of Europe. But the admirable form and division of the circumjacent land and water cannot, without a more ample explanation, be clearly or sufficiently understood.

The winding channel through which the waters of the Euxine flow with a rapid and incessant course towards the Mediterranean, received the appellation of Bosphorus, a name not less celebrated in the history, than in the fables, of antiquity.* A crowd of temples and of votive altars, profusely scattered along its steep and woody banks, attested the unskilfulness, the terrors, and the devotion, of the Grecian navigators, who, after the example of the Argonauts, explored the dangers of the inhospitable Euxine. On these banks tradition long preserved the memory of the palace of Phineus, infested by the obscene harpies,† and of the sylvan reign of Amycus, who defied the son of Leda to the combat of the cestus.‡ The straits of the Bosphorus are terminated

from Argos and Megara. Byzantium was afterwards rebuilt and fortified by the Spartan general Pausanias. See Scaliger, *Animadvers. ad Euseb.* p. 81. Ducange, *Constantinopolis*, lib. 1, part 1, cap. 15, 16. With regard to the wars of the Byzantines against Philip, the Gauls, and the kings of Bithynia, we should trust none but the ancient writers who lived before the greatness of the imperial city had excited a spirit of flattery and fiction. [A second Megarian colony, under Zeuxippus, strengthened Byzantium, B.C. 628 (*Lydus de Mag. Rom.* iii. 70, p. 280). It was taken by Darius, B.C. 505, and recovered from the Persians by Pausanias, about 470.—Ed.]

* The Bosphorus has been very minutely described by Dionysius of Byzantium, who lived in the time of Domitian (*Hudson, Geograph. Minor.* tom. iii.), and by Gilles or Gyllius, a French traveller of the sixteenth century. Tournefort (*Lettre 15*) seems to have used his own eyes and the learning of Gyllius.

† There are very few conjectures so happy as that of Le Clerc, (*Bibliothèque Universelle*, tom. 1, p. 148.) who supposes that the harpies were only locusts. The Syriac or Phœnician name of those insects, their noisy flight, the stench and devastation which they occasion, and the north wind which drives them into the sea, all contribute to form this striking resemblance. ‡ The residence of Amycus was in Asia, between the old and the new castles, at a place called Laurinsana. That of Phineus was in Europe, near the village of Mauro mole and the Black sea. See *Gyllius de Bosph.* lib. 2, c. 23. Tour-

by the Cyanean rocks, which, according to the description of the poets, had once floated on the face of the waters; and were destined by the gods to protect the entrance of the Euxine against the eye of profane curiosity.* From the Cyanean rocks to the point and harbour of Byzantium, the winding length of the Bosphorus extends about sixteen miles,† and its most ordinary breadth may be computed at about one mile and a half. The new castles of Europe and Asia are constructed, on either continent, upon the foundations of two celebrated temples, of Serapis and of Jupiter Urius. The old castles, a work of the Greek emperors, command the narrowest part of the channel, in a place

nefort, lettre 15. [The territory over which Amycus reigned was called, in his time, Bebrycia, afterwards Bithynia. He invented the cestus used by pugilists. (Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. 1, p. 363). When the Argonauts appeared on his coast, he offered to fight with any one of them. Pollux accepted the challenge, and killed him by a blow on the neck. (Cluvier. Biblioth. Apollod. lib. 1, § 20). According to Epicharmus and Periander, Amycus was not killed, but only bound by Pollux, as he is represented on a funeral vase in Winkelman's History of Art, plate 18. Theocritus, who describes the combat at some length (Id. 22) makes Pollux not kill his antagonist, but exact from him an oath, no more to maltreat strangers that might come into his dominions. Nicephorus Callistus (Hist. Ecc. lib. 7, c. 50) relates an ancient tradition, which is worthy of notice. The Argonauts, on landing in Bebrycia, began to plunder. Amycus, at the head of his people, attacked them and put them to flight. They concealed themselves in a thick forest, and dared not leave it, till some heavenly power, appearing to them in the form of a man with the wings of an eagle, promised them victory. They then attacked Amycus, defeated and killed him. As a memorial of this event, they erected on the spot a temple, which they called Sosthenium, because they had there recovered their courage; and they placed in it a statue, resembling the divinity who had visited them. Constantine afterwards converted this temple into a church, dedicated to the archangel Michael. (See Cluvier's Notes on Apollod. note 88, p. 175).—GUIZOT.]

* The deception was occasioned by several pointed rocks, alternately covered and abandoned by the waves. At present there are two small islands, one towards either shore: that of Europe is distinguished by the column of Pompey. [These islands were also called by the early Greek fabulists, Symplegadæ and Planetæ. Their common name is supposed to have been derived from their dark appearance. Yet their situation, at the very point, where the straits and Euxine join (Strabo, lib. 7) seems to indicate that their name had an early connection with the Celtic *meeting of waters*, which sometimes took the form of *cyuan* and *cyran*; and this the first Greeks who ventured to pass them may easily have corrupted into *Cyanea*. Many similar instances favour this opinion.—ED.]

† The ancients computed one hun-

where the opposite banks advance within five hundred paces of each other. These fortresses were restored and strengthened by Mahomet the Second, when he meditated the siege of Constantinople;* but the Turkish conqueror was most probably ignorant, that near two thousand years before his reign, Darius had chosen the same situation to connect the two continents by a bridge of boats.† At a small distance from the old castles we discover the little town of Chrysopolis, or Scutari, which may almost be considered as the Asiatic suburb of Constantinople. The Bosphorus, as it begins to open into the Propontis, passes between Byzantium and Chalcedon. The latter of those cities was built by the Greeks, a few years before the former; and the blindness of its founders, who overlooked the superior advantages of the opposite coast, has been stigmatized by a proverbial expression of contempt.‡

The harbour of Constantinople, which may be considered as an arm of the Bosphorus, obtained in a very remote period, the denomination of the *Golden Horn*. The curve which it describes might be compared to the horn of a stag, or, as it should seem, with more propriety, to that of an ox.§ The epithet of *golden* was expressive of the riches which every wind wafted from the most distant countries into the secure and capacious port of Constantinople. The river Lycus, formed by the conflux of two little streams, pours into the harbour a perpetual supply of fresh water, which serves to cleanse the bottom, and to invite the periodical

dred and twenty stadia, or fifteen Roman miles. They measured only from the new castles, but they carried the straits as far as the town of Chalcedon. * Ducas, Hist. c. 34. Leunclavius, Hist. Turcica Musulmanica, lib. 15, p. 577. Under the Greek empire these castles were used as state prisons, under the tremendous name of Lethe, or towers of oblivion. † Darius engraved in Greek and Assyrian letters, on two marble columns, the names of his subject nations, and the amazing numbers of his land and sea forces. The Byzantines afterwards transported these columns into the city, and used them for the altars of their tutelar deities. Herodotus, lib. 4, c. 87.

‡ Namque arctissimo inter Europam Asianque divortio Byzantium in extremâ Europâ posuere Græci, quibus, Pythium Apollinem consulentibus ubi conderent urbem, redditum oraculum est, quærerent sedem *cæcorum* terris adversam. Eâ ambage Chalcedonii monstrabantur, quod priores illuc advecti, prævisâ locorum utilitate peccata legissent. Tacit. Annal. 12. 62. § Strabo, lib. 10, p. 492. Most of the entlers are now broken off; or, to speak less figuratively, most of

shoals of fish to seek their retreat in that convenient recess. As the vicissitudes of tides are scarcely felt in those seas, the constant depth of the harbour allows goods to be landed on the quays without the assistance of boats; and it has been observed, that in many places the largest vessels may rest their prows against the houses, while their sterns are floating in the water.* From the mouth of the Lycus to that of the harbour, this arm of the Bosphorus is more than seven miles in length. The entrance is about five hundred yards broad, and a strong chain could be occasionally drawn across it, to guard the port and city from the attack of a hostile navy.†

Between the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, the shores of Europe and Asia, receding on either side, enclose the sea of Marmora, which was known to the ancients by the denomination of Propontis. The navigation from the issue of the Bosphorus to the entrance of the Hellespont, is about one hundred and twenty miles. Those who steer their westward course through the middle of the Propontis, may at once descry the high lands of Thrace and Bithynia, and never lose sight of the lofty summit of mount Olympus, covered with eternal snows.‡ They leave on the left a deep gulf, at the bottom of which Nicomedia was seated, the imperial residence of Diocletian; and they pass the small islands of Cyzicus and Proconnesus before they cast anchor at Gallipoli, where the sea which separates Asia from Europe is again contracted into a narrow channel.

The geographers who, with the most skilful accuracy, have surveyed the form and extent of the Hellespont, assign about sixty miles for the winding course, and about three

* The recesses of the harbour are filled up. See Gyll. de Bosphoro Thracio, lib. 1, c. 5. * Procopius de Edificiis, lib. 1, c. 15. His description is confirmed by modern travellers. See Thevenot, part 1, lib. 1. c. 15. Tournefort, lettre 12. Niebuhr, Voyage d'Arabie, p. 22.

† See Ducange, C. P. lib. 1, part 1, c. 16, and his Observations sur Villehardouin, p. 289. The chain was drawn from the Acropolis, near the modern Kiosk, to the tower of Galata; and was supported at convenient distances by large wooden piles. ‡ Thevenot (Voyages au Levant, part 1, lib. 1, c. 14) contracts the measure to one hundred and twenty-five small Greek miles. Belon (Observations, lib. 2, c. 1) gives a good description of the Propontis, but contents himself with the vague expression of one day and one night's sail. When Sandys (Travels, p. 21) talks of one hundred and fifty furlongs in length as well

miles for the ordinary breadth, of these celebrated straits.* But the narrowest part of the channel is found to the northward of the old Turkish castles, between the cities of Sestus and Abydus. It was here that the adventurous Leander braved the passage of the flood for the possession of his mistress.† It was here likewise, in a place where the distance between the opposite banks cannot exceed five hundred paces,‡ that Xerxes imposed a stupendous bridge of boats, for the purpose of transporting into Europe a hundred and seventy myriads of barbarians.§ A sea contracted within such narrow limits, may seem but ill to deserve the singular epithet of broad, which Homer, as well as Orpheus, has frequently bestowed on the Hellespont. But our ideas of greatness are of a relative nature; the traveller, and especially the poet, who sailed along the Hellespont, who pursued the windings of the stream, and contemplated the rural scenery, which appeared on every side to terminate the prospect, insensibly lost the remembrance of the sea; and his fancy painted those celebrated

as breadth, we can only suppose some mistake of the press in the text of that judicious traveller. * See an admirable dissertation of M. d'Anville upon the Hellespont or Dardanelles, in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. xxviii. p. 318—346. Yet even that ingenious geographer is too fond of supposing new, and perhaps imaginary measures, for the purpose of rendering ancient writers as accurate as himself. The stadia employed by Herodotus in the description of the Euxine, the Bosphorus, &c. (lib. 4, c. 85.) must undoubtedly be all of the same species; but it seems impossible to reconcile them either with truth or with each other. † The oblique distance between Sestus and Abydus was thirty stadia. The improbable tale of Hero and Leander is exposed by M. Mahudel, but is defended, on the authority of poets and medals, by M. de la Nauze. See the *Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. vii. Hist. p. 73. *Mém.* p. 240. ‡ Gibbon makes the narrowest parts of the Hellespont and the Bosphorus, to be both exactly of the same breadth. Yet all the ancients speak of the former as being the widest. Seven stadia is the distance according to Herodotus (*Melpom.* c. 85. *Polyhym.* c. 31), Strabo, (p. 591) and Pliny, (lib. 4, c. 12) which is 875 paces. It is singular that Gibbon, having just before blamed D'Anville for "supposing new and perhaps imaginary measures," should have adopted the very measurement of the stadium, given to it by that geographer, who thought that the ancients had one of the length of 51 toises. This he applies to the circuit of Babylon. Seven such stadia are about equal to 500 paces. 7 stadia=2142 feet, 500 paces=2135 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet. See Rennell's *Geography of Herodotus*, p. 121.—Guzot.

§ See the seventh book of Herodotus, who has erected an elegant trophy to his own fame and to that of his country. The review

straits with all the attributes of a mighty river flowing with a swift current, in the midst of a woody and inland country, and at length, through a wide mouth, discharging itself into the Ægean or Archipelago.* Ancient Troy,† seated on an eminence at the foot of mount Ida, overlooked the mouth of the Hellespont, which scarcely received an accession of waters from the tribute of those immortal rivulets the Simois and Scamander. The Grecian camp had stretched twelve miles along the shore from the Sigæan to the Rhætean promontory; and the flanks of the army were guarded by the bravest chiefs who fought under the banners of Agamemnon. The first of those promontories was occupied by Achilles with his invincible Myrmidons, and the dauntless Ajax pitched his tents on the other. After Ajax had fallen a sacrifice to his disappointed pride, and to the ingratitude of the Greeks, his sepulchre was erected on the ground where he had defended the navy against the rage of Jove and of Hector; and the citizens of the rising town of Rhæteum celebrated his memory with divine honours.‡ Before Constantine gave a just preference to the situation of Byzantium, he had conceived the design of erecting the seat of empire on this celebrated spot, from whence the Romans derived their fabulous origin. The extensive plain which lies below ancient Troy, towards the Rhætean promontory and the tomb of Ajax, was first chosen for his new capital; and though the undertaking was soon relinquished, the stately remains of unfinished walls and towers attracted

appears to have been made with tolerable accuracy; but the vanity, first of the Persians, and afterwards of the Greeks, was interested to magnify the armament and the victory. I should much doubt whether the *invaders* have ever outnumbered the *men* of any country which they attacked. * See Wood's Observations on Homer, p. 320. I have, with pleasure, selected this remark from an author who in general seems to have disappointed the expectation of the public as a critic, and still more as a traveller. He had visited the banks of the Hellespont; he had read Strabo; he ought to have consulted the Roman itineraries; how was it possible for him to confound Ilium and Alexandria Troas (Observations, p. 340, 341), two cities which were sixteen miles distant from each other? † Demetrius of Scepsis wrote sixty books on thirty lines of Homer's catalogue. The thirteenth book of Strabo is sufficient for *our* curiosity.

‡ Strabo, lib. 13, p. 595. The disposition of the ships, which were drawn upon dry land, and the posts of Ajax and Achilles, are very clearly described by Homer. See Iliad, 9. 220.

the notice of all who sailed through the straits of the Hellespont.*

We are at present qualified to view the advantageous position of Constantinople, which appears to have been formed by nature for the centre and capital of a great monarchy. Situated in the forty-first degree of latitude, the imperial city commanded, from her seven hills,† the opposite shores of Europe and Asia; the climate was healthy and temperate, the soil fertile, the harbour secure and capacious, and the approach on the side of the continent was of small extent and easy defence. The Bosphorus and the Hellespont may be considered as the two gates of Constantinople; and the prince who possessed those important passages, could always shut them against a naval enemy, and open them to the fleets of commerce. The preservation of the eastern provinces may, in some degree, be ascribed to the policy of Constantine; as the barbarians of the Euxine, who in the preceding age had poured their armaments into the heart of the Mediterranean, soon desisted from the exercise of piracy, and despaired of forcing this insurmountable barrier. When the gates of the Hellespont and Bosphorus were shut, the capital still enjoyed, within their spacious inclosure, every production which could supply the wants or gratify the luxury, of its numerous inhabitants. The sea coasts of Thrace and Bithynia, which languish under the weight of Turkish oppression, still exhibit a rich prospect of vineyards, of gardens, and of plentiful harvests; and the Propontis has ever been renowned for an inexhaustible store of the most exquisite fish, that are taken in their stated seasons, without skill and almost without labour.‡ But when the passages of the straits were thrown open for

* Zosim. l. 2, p. 105. Sozomen, l. 2, c. 3. Theophanes, p. 18. Nicephorus Callistus, l. 7, p. 48. Zonaras, tom. ii, l. 13, p. 6. Zosimus places the new city between Ilium and Alexandria, but this apparent difference may be reconciled by the large extent of its circumference. Before the foundation of Constantinople, Thessalonica is mentioned by Cedrenus (p. 283), and Sardica by Zonaras, as the intended capital. They both suppose, with very little probability, that the emperor, if he had not been prevented by a prodigy, would have repeated the mistake of the *blind* Chalcedonians. † Pocock's Description of the East, vol. ii, part 2, p. 127. His plan of the seven hills is clear and accurate. That traveller is seldom so satisfactory. ‡ See Belon, Observations, c. 72--76. Among a variety of different species, the *pelamides*, a sort of thunnies, were the most celebrated. We may

trade, they alternately admitted the natural and artificial riches of the north and south, of the Euxine and of the Mediterranean. Whatever rude commodities were collected in the forests of Germany and Scythia, as far as the sources of the Tanais and the Borysthenes; whatsoever was manufactured by the skill of Europe or Asia; the corn of Egypt, and the gems and spices of the farthest India, were brought by the varying winds into the port of Constantinople, which, for many ages, attracted the commerce of the ancient world.*

The prospect of beauty, of safety, and of wealth, united in a single spot, was sufficient to justify the choice of Constantine. But as some decent mixture of prodigy and fable has, in every age, been supposed to reflect a becoming majesty on the origin of great cities,† the emperor was desirous of ascribing his resolution, not so much to the uncertain counsels of human policy, as to the infallible and eternal decrees of divine wisdom. In one of his laws he has been careful to instruct posterity, that, in obedience to the commands of God, he laid the everlasting foundations of Constantinople;‡ and though he has not condescended to relate in what manner the celestial inspiration was communicated to his mind, the defect of his modest silence has been liberally supplied by the ingenuity of succeeding writers, who describe the nocturnal vision which appeared to the fancy of Constantine, as he slept within the walls of Byzantium. The tutelary genius of the city, a venerable matron sinking under the weight of years and infirmities, was suddenly transformed into a blooming maid, whom his own hands adorned with all the symbols of imperial greatness.§ The monarch awoke, interpreted the auspicious

learn from Polybius, Strabo, and Tacitus, that the profits of the fishery constituted the principal revenue of Byzantium. * See the

eloquent description of Busbequius, *epistol.* 1, p. 64. *Est in Europa; habet in conspectu Asiam, Ægyptum, Africamque à dextrâ: quæ tametsi contiguæ non sunt, maris tamen navigandique commoditate veluti junguntur. A sinistra vero Pontus est, Euxinus, &c.*

† *Datur hæc venia antiquitati, ut miscendo humana divinis, primordia urbium augustiora faciat.* T. Liv. in *proem.* ‡ He says in

one of his laws: *Pro commoditate urbis quam æterno nomine, jubente Deo, donavimus.* Cod. Theodos. l. 13, tit. 5, leg. 7. § The Greeks,

Theophanes, Cedrenus, and the author of the Alexandrian Chronicle, confine themselves to vague and general expressions. For a more particular account of the vision, we are obliged to have recourse to such

omen, and obeyed, without hesitation, the will of Heaven. The day which gave birth to a city or colony, was celebrated by the Romans with such ceremonies as had been ordained by a generous superstition;* and though Constantine might omit some rites which savoured too strongly of their Pagan origin, yet he was anxious to leave a deep impression of hope and respect on the minds of the spectators. On foot, with a lance in his hand, the emperor himself led the solemn procession, and directed the line, which was traced as the boundary of the destined capital; till the growing circumference was observed with astonishment by the assistants, who at length ventured to observe, that he had already exceeded the most ample measure of a great city. "I shall still advance," replied Constantine, "till HE, the invisible guide, who marches before me, thinks proper to stop."† Without presuming to investigate the nature or motives of this extraordinary conductor, we shall content ourselves with the more humble task of describing the extent and limits of Constantinople ‡

In the actual state of the city, the palace and gardens of the seraglio occupy the eastern promontory, the first of the seven hills, and cover about one hundred and fifty acres of our own measure. The seat of Turkish jealousy and despotism is erected on the foundations of a Grecian republic; but it may be supposed that the Byzantines were tempted by the conveniency of the harbour to extend their habitations on that side beyond the modern limits of the seraglio. The new walls of Constantine stretched from the port to the Propontis across the enlarged breadth of the triangle, at the distance of fifteen stadia from the ancient fortification; and with the city of Byzantium they enclosed five of the seven hills, which, to the eyes of those who approach Constan-

Latin writers as William of Malmsbury. See Ducange, C. P. lib. 1, p. 24, 25.

* See Plutarch in Romul, tom. i, p. 49, edit. Bryan. Among other ceremonies, a large hole, which had been dug for that purpose, was filled up with handfuls of earth, which each of the settlers brought from the place of his birth, and thus adopted his new country.

† Philostorgius, l. 2, c. 9. This incident, though borrowed from a suspected writer, is characteristic and probable.

‡ See in the Mémoires de l'Académie, tom. xxxv, p. 747—758, a dissertation of M. d'Anville on the extent of Constantinople. He takes the plan inserted in the Imperium Orientale of Banduri as the most complete; but by a series of very nice observations, he reduces the

tinople, appear to rise above each other in beautiful order.* About a century after the death of the founder, the new buildings, extending on one side up the harbour, and on the other along the Propontis, already covered the narrow ridge of the sixth, and the broad summit of the seventh hill. The necessity of protecting those suburbs from the incessant inroads of the barbarians, engaged the younger Theodosius to surround his capital with an adequate and permanent inclosure of walls.† From the eastern promontory to the golden gate, the extreme length of Constantinople was about three Roman miles;‡ the circumference measured between ten and eleven; and the surface might be computed as equal to about two thousand English acres. It is impossible to justify the vain and credulous exaggerations of modern travellers, who have sometimes stretched the limits of Constantinople over the adjacent villages of the European, and even of the Asiatic coast.§ But the suburbs of Pera and

extravagant proportion of the scale, and instead of nine thousand five hundred, determines the circumference of the city as consisting on about seven thousand eight hundred French *toises*.

* Codinus, *Antiquitat. Const.* p. 12. He assigns the church of St. Anthony as the boundary on the side of the harbour. It is mentioned in Ducange, l. 4, c. 6; but I have tried, without success, to discover the exact place where it was situated.

† The new wall of Theodosius was constructed in the year 413. In 447 it was thrown down by an earthquake, and rebuilt in three months by the diligence of the prefect Cyrus. The suburb of the Blachernæ was first taken into the city in the reign of Heraclius. Ducange, *Const.* l. 1, c. 10, 11.

‡ The measurement is expressed in the *Notitia* by fourteen thousand and seventy-five feet. It is reasonable to suppose that these were Greek feet; the proportion of which has been ingeniously determined by M. d'Anville. He compares the hundred and eighty feet with the seventy-eight Hashemite cubits, which in different writers are assigned for the height of St. Sophia. Each of these cubits was equal to twenty-seven French inches. [The *Notitia Dignitatum Imperii* is a calendar of all the offices of the court, the state, the army, &c. It is like our court calendars, but with this difference, that the *Notitia* contained only a list of the offices, while in ours we have the names of the persons by whom they are held. It was framed in the time of the emperor Theodosius I., that is, in the fourth century, when the empire was already divided into Eastern and Western. It is probable that this was not the first of the kind, but had been preceded by others, which are lost.—GUIZOT.]

§ The accurate Thevenot (l. 1, c. 15), walked in one hour and three quarters round two of the sides of the triangle, from the Kiosk of the seraglio to the Seven Towers. D'Anville examines with care, and receives with confidence, this decisive testimony, which gives a circumference of ten or twelve miles. The extra-

Galata, though situate beyond the harbour, may deserve to be considered as a part of the city,* and this addition may perhaps authorize the measure of a Byzantine historian, who assigns sixteen Greek (about fourteen Roman) miles for the circumference of his native city.† Such an extent may seem not unworthy of an imperial residence. Yet Constantinople must yield to Babylon and Thebes,‡ to ancient Rome, to London, and even to Paris.§

The master of the Roman world, who aspired to erect an eternal monument of the glories of his reign, could employ in the prosecution of that great work the wealth, the labour, and all that yet remained of the genius, of obedient millions. Some estimate may be formed of the expense bestowed with imperial liberality on the foundation of Constantinople, by the allowance of about 2,500,000*l.* for the construction of the walls, the porticoes, and the aqueducts.¶ The forests that overshadowed the shores of the Euxine, and the celebrated quarries of white marble in the little island of Proconnesus, supplied an inexhaustible stock of materials, ready to be conveyed, by the convenience of a short water-carriage, to the harbour of Byzantium.** A multitude of labourers and

vagant computation of Tournefort (lettre 11) of thirty-four or thirty miles, without including Scutari, is a strange departure from his usual character.

* The Sycae, or fig-trees, formed the thirteenth region, and were very much embellished by Justinian. It has since borne the names of Pera and Galata. The etymology of the former is obvious; that of the latter is unknown. See Ducange, *Const.* l. 1, c. 22, and Gyllius de Byzant. l. 4, c. 10.

† One hundred and eleven stadia, which may be translated into modern Greek miles each of seven stadia, or six hundred and sixty, sometimes only six hundred, French toises. See D'Anville, *Mesures Itinéraires*, p. 53.

‡ When the ancient texts, which describe the size of Babylon and Thebes, are settled, the exaggerations reduced, and the measures ascertained, we find that those famous cities filled the great but not incredible circumference of about twenty-five or thirty miles. Compare D'Anville, *Mém. de l'Académie*, tom. xxviii, p. 235, with his *Description de l'Égypte*, p. 201, 202.

§ If we divide Constantinople and Paris into equal squares of fifty French *toises*, the former contains eight hundred and fifty, and the latter one thousand one hundred and sixty of those divisions.

¶ Six hundred centenaries, or sixty thousand pounds weight of gold. This sum is taken from Codinus, *Antiquit. Const.* p. 11; but unless that contemptible author had derived his information from some purer sources, he would probably have been unacquainted with so obsolete a mode of reckoning.

** For the forests of the Black Sea, consult Tournefort, lettre 16; for the marble quarries

artificers urged the conclusion of the work with incessant toil; but the impatience of Constantine soon discovered, that, in the decline of the arts, the skill as well as numbers of his architects bore a very unequal proportion to the greatness of his designs. The magistrates of the most distant provinces were therefore directed to institute schools, to appoint professors, and by the hopes of rewards and privileges, to engage in the study and practice of architecture a sufficient number of ingenious youths, who had received a liberal education.* The buildings of the new city were executed by such artificers as the reign of Constantine could afford; but they were decorated by the hands of the most celebrated masters of the age of Pericles and Alexander. To revive the genius of Phidias and Lysippus, surpassed indeed the power of a Roman emperor; but the immortal productions which they had bequeathed to posterity, were exposed without defence to the rapacious vanity of a despot. By his commands the cities of Greece and Asia were despoiled of their most valuable ornaments.† The trophies of memorable wars, the objects of religious veneration, the most finished statues of the gods and heroes, of the sages and poets, of ancient times, contributed to the splendid triumph of Constantinople; and gave occasion to the remark of the historian Cedrenus,‡ who observes with much enthusiasm, that nothing seemed wanting except the souls of the illustrious men whom those admirable monuments were intended to represent. But it is not in the city of Constantine, nor in the declining period of an empire, when the human mind was depressed by civil and religious slavery, that we should seek for the souls of Homer and of Demosthenes.

of Proconnesus, see Strabo, l. 13, p. 588. The latter had already furnished the materials of the stately buildings of Cyzicus.

* See the Codex Theodos. l. 13, tit. 4, leg. 1. This law is dated in the year 334, and was addressed to the prefect of Italy, whose jurisdiction extended over Africa. The commentary of Godefroy on the whole title well deserves to be consulted.

† Constantinopolis dedicatur pene omnium urbium nuditate. Hieronym. Chron. p. 181. See Colinus, p. 8, 9. The author of the Antiquitat. Const. l. 3, (apud Banduri, Imp. Orient. tom. i, p. 41), enumerates Rome, Sicily, Antioch, Athens, and a long list of other cities. The provinces of Greece and Asia Minor may be supposed to have yielded the richest booty.

‡ Hist. Compend. p. 369. He describes the statue, or rather bust,

During the siege of Byzantium, the conqueror had pitched his tent on the commanding eminence of the second hill. To perpetuate the memory of his success, he chose the same advantageous position for the principal forum,* which appears to have been of a circular, or rather elliptical form. The two opposite entrances formed triumphal arches; the porticoes, which inclosed it on every side, were filled with statues; and the centre of the forum was occupied by a lofty column, of which a mutilated fragment is now degraded by the appellation of *the burnt pillar*. This column was erected on a pedestal of white marble twenty feet high; and was composed of ten pieces of porphyry, each of which measured about ten feet in height, and about thirty-three in circumference.† On the summit of the pillar, above one hundred and twenty feet from the ground, stood the colossal statue of Apollo. It was of bronze, had been transported either from Athens or from a town of Phrygia, and was supposed to be the work of Phidias. The artist had represented the god of day, or, as it was afterwards interpreted, the emperor Constantine himself, with a sceptre in his right hand, the globe of the world in his left, and a crown of rays glittering on his head.‡ The Circus, or Hippodrome, was a stately building, about four hundred paces in length, and one hundred in breadth.§ The space between the two *metæ* or goals was filled with statues and obelisks; and we may still remark a very singular fragment of antiquity; the bodies of three serpents, twisted into one pillar of brass. Their triple heads had once supported the golden tripod which, after the defeat of Xerxes, was consecrated in the

of Homer with a degree of taste which plainly indicates that Cedrenus copied the style of a more fortunate age. * Zosim. l. 2, p. 106.

Chron. Alexandrin. vel Paschal. p. 284. Ducange, Const. l. 1, c. 24. Even the last of those writers seems to confound the Forum of Constantine with the Augusteum, or court of the palace. I am not satisfied whether I have properly distinguished what belongs to the one and the other. † The most tolerable account of this column is given

by Pocock (Description of the East, vol. ii, part 2, p. 131), but it is still in many instances perplexed and unsatisfactory. ‡ Ducange, Const. l. 1, c. 24, p. 76, and his notes ad Alexiad. p. 382. The statue of Constantine or Apollo was thrown down under the reign of Alexius Comnenus.

§ Tournefort (lettre 12), computes the Atmeidan at four hundred paces. If he means geometrical paces of five feet each, it was three hundred *toises* in length, about forty more than the great circus of Rome. See D'Anville, Mesures Itinéraires, p. 73.

temple of Delphi by the victorious Greeks.* The beauty of the Hippodrome has been long since defaced by the rude hands of the Turkish conquerors; but, under the similar appellation of Atmeidan, it still serves as a place of exercise for their horses. From the throne, whence the emperor viewed the Circensian games, a winding staircase † descended to the palace; a magnificent edifice, which scarcely yielded to the residence of Rome itself; and which, together with the dependant courts, gardens, and porticoes, covered a considerable extent of ground upon the banks of the Propontis, between the Hippodrome and the church of St. Sophia. ‡ We might likewise celebrate the baths, which still retained the name of Zeuxippus, after they had been enriched, by the munificence of Constantine, with lofty columns, various marbles, and above threescore statues of bronze. § But we should deviate from the design of this

* The guardians of the most holy relics would rejoice if they were able to produce such a chain of evidence as may be alleged on this occasion. See Banduri ad Antiquitat. Const. p. 668. Gyllius de Byzant. l. 2, c. 13. 1. The original consecration of the tripod and pillar in the temple of Delphi may be proved from Herodotus and Pausanias. 2. The Pagan Zosimus agrees with the three ecclesiastical historians, Eusebius, Socrates, and Sozomen, that the sacred ornaments of the temple of Delphi were removed to Constantinople by the order of Constantine; and among these the serpentine pillar of the Hippodrome is particularly mentioned. 3. All the European travellers who have visited Constantinople, from Buondelmonte to Pocock, describe it in the same place, and almost in the same manner; the differences between them are occasioned only by the injuries which it has sustained from the Turks. Mahomet II. broke the under jaw of one of the serpents with a stroke of his battle-axe. Thevenot, l. 1, c. 17. [In the year 1808, during their revolt against the Vizir Mustapha Baraictar, who wished to introduce a new system of military discipline, the janissaries besieged the quarter of the Hippodrome in which the Vizir's palace stood, and in the conflagration which they caused, the ancient structure was destroyed.—GUIZOT.] [For farther particulars respecting the brazen serpents, and injury done to the pillar, see Chap. LXVIII, note.—ED.] † The Latin name *cochlea* was adopted by the Greeks, and very frequently occurs in the Byzantine history. Ducange, Const. l. 2, c. 1, p. 104. ‡ There are three topographical points which indicate the situation of the palace. 1. The staircase, which connected it with the Hippodrome or Atmeidan. 2. A small artificial port on the Propontis, from whence there was an easy ascent, by a flight of marble steps, to the gardens of the palace. 3. The Augusteum was a spacious court, one side of which was occupied by the front of the palace, and another by the church of St. Sophia. § Zeuxippus was an epithet of Jupiter, and the baths

history, if we attempted minutely to describe the different buildings or quarters of the city. It may be sufficient to observe, that whatever could adorn the dignity of a great capital, or contribute to the benefit or pleasure of its numerous inhabitants, was contained within the walls of Constantinople. A particular description, composed about a century after its foundation, enumerates a capitol or school of learning, a circus, two theatres, eight public, and one hundred and fifty-three private baths, fifty-two porticoes, five granaries, eight aqueducts or reservoirs of water, four spacious halls for the meetings of the senate or courts of justice, fourteen churches, fourteen palaces, and four thousand three hundred and eighty-eight houses, which, for their size or beauty, deserved to be distinguished from the multitude of plebeian habitations.*

The populousness of this favoured city was the next and most serious object of the attention of its founder. In the dark ages which succeeded the translation of the empire, the remote and the immediate consequences of that memorable event were strangely confounded by the vanity of the Greeks, and the credulity of the Latins.† It was asserted

were a part of old Byzantium. The difficulty of assigning their true situation has not been felt by Ducange. History seems to connect them with St. Scphia and the palace; but the original plan, inserted in Banduri, places them on the other side of the city, near the harbour. For their beauties, see Chron. Paschal. p. 285, and Gyllius de Byzant. l. 2, c. 7. Christodorus (see Antiquitat. Const. l. 7.) composed inscriptions in verse for each of the statues. He was a Theban poet in genius as well as in birth,—

Bœotum in crasso jurares aere natum.

* See the Notitia. Rome only reckoned one thousand seven hundred and eighty large houses, *domus*; but the word must have had a more dignified signification. No *insule* are mentioned at Constantinople. The old capital consisted of four hundred and twenty-four streets, the new of three hundred and twenty-two.

† Liutprand, Legatio ad Imp. Nicephorum, p. 153. The modern Greeks have strangely disfigured the antiquities of Constantinople. We might excuse the errors of the Turkish or Arabian writers; but it is somewhat astonishing, that the Greeks, who had access to the authentic materials preserved in their own language, should prefer fiction to truth, and loose tradition to genuine history. In a single page of Codinus we may detect twelve unpardonable mistakes; the reconciliation of Severus and Niger, the marriage of their son and daughter, the siege of Byzantium by the Macedonians, the invasion of the Gauls which recalled Severus to Rome, the *sixty* years which elapsed from his death to the foundation of Constantinople, &c.

and believed, that all the noble families of Rome, the senate, and the equestrian order, with their innumerable attendants, had followed their emperor to the banks of the Propontis; that a spurious race of strangers and plebeians was left to possess the solitude of the ancient capital, and that the lands of Italy, long since converted into gardens, were at once deprived of cultivation and inhabitants.* In the course of this history, such exaggerations will be reduced to their just value. Yet, since the growth of Constantinople cannot be ascribed to the general increase of mankind and of industry, it must be admitted, that this artificial colony was raised at the expense of the ancient cities of the empire. Many opulent senators of Rome, and of the eastern provinces, were probably invited by Constantine to adopt for their country the fortunate spot which he had chosen for his own residence. The invitations of a master are scarcely to be distinguished from commands; and the liberality of the emperor obtained a ready and cheerful obedience. He bestowed on his favourites the palaces which he had built in the several quarters of the city, assigned them lands and pensions for the support of their dignity,† and alienated the demesnes of Pontus and Asia, to grant the hereditary estates by the easy tenure of maintaining a house in the capital.‡ But these encouragements and obligations soon became superfluous, and were gradually abolished. Wherever the seat of government is fixed, a considerable part of the public revenue will be expended by the prince himself, by his ministers, by the officers of justice, and by the domestics of the palace. The most wealthy of the provincials will be attracted by the powerful motives of interest and duty, of amusement and curiosity. A third and more numerous class of inhabitants will insensibly be formed, of

* Montesquieu, *Grandeur et Décadence des Romains*, c. 17.

† Themist. *Orat.* 3, p. 48, edit. Hardouin. Sozomen, l. 2, c. 3, Zosim. l. 2, p. 107. Anonym. *Valesian.* p. 715. If we could credit Codinus (p. 10), Constantine built houses for the senators on the exact model of their Roman palaces, and gratified them, as well as himself, with the pleasure of an agreeable surprise; but the whole story is full of fictions and inconsistencies.

‡ The law by which the younger Theodosius, in the year 438, abolished this tenure, may be found among the *Novelle* of that emperor, at the head of the *Theodosian Code*, tom. vi, nov. 12. M. de Tillemont (*Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 371,) has evidently mistaken the nature of these estates. With a grant from the imperial demesnes, the same condition was accepted as

servants, of artificers, and of merchants, who derive their subsistence from their own labour, and from the wants or luxury of the superior ranks. In less than a century, Constantinople disputed with Rome itself the pre-eminence of riches and numbers. New piles of buildings, crowded together with too little regard to health or convenience, scarcely allowed the intervals of narrow streets for the perpetual throng of men, of horses, and of carriages. The allotted space of ground was insufficient to contain the increasing people; and the additional foundations, which, on either side, were advanced into the sea, might alone have composed a very considerable city.*

The frequent and regular distributions of wine and oil, of corn or bread, of money or provisions, had almost exempted the poorest citizens of Rome from the necessity of labour. The magnificence of the first Cæsars was in some measure imitated by the founder of Constantinople;† but his libe-

a favour which would justly have been deemed a hardship, if it had been imposed upon private property.

* The passages of Zosimus, of Eunapius, of Sozomen, and of Agathias, which relate to the increase of buildings and inhabitants at Constantinople, are collected and connected by Gyllius (de Byzant. lib. 1, c. 3). Sidonius Apollinaris (in Panegy. Anthem. 56, p. 290, edit. Sirmond) describes the moles that were pushed forwards into the sea; they consisted of the famous Puzzolan sand, which hardens in the water.

† Sozomen, l. 2, c. 3. Philostorg. l. 2, c. 9. Codin. Antiquitat. Const. p. 8. It appears by Socrates, (l. 2, c. 13,) that the daily allowances of the city consisted of eight myriads of *σῖτον*, which we may either translate with Valesius by the words modii of corn, or consider as expressive of the number of loaves of bread. [Registers were kept of all the common people at Rome who received these distributions; their right to them was strictly personal. Constantine attached it to the houses of his new capital, in order to induce the lower classes to provide themselves dwellings as quickly as possible. Code Theod. l. 14.—GUIZOT.] [Corn was distributed to the poor of Rome from very early times, in the temple of Ceres, under the superintendence of the *Ædiles Cereales*, whose office appears to have been almost similar to that of our Poor Law Commissioners or guardians. At a later period, A. U. C. 629–30, when the spoils of victory had enriched the treasury, and conquered countries paid large annual tributes of grain, Caius Gracchus, then tribune of the people, was the author of a law by which these abundant stores were sold to the commonalty of Rome at the low rate of three-fourths of an *as* (or about one halfpenny) for the *modius* or peck, which was only one-fourth of the current price. This law is mentioned by Cicero (pro Sextio, c. 48); by Plutarch (in Vit. C. Gracchi, tom. iv, p. 658, 659), and by other writers. The “magnificence of the first Cæsars,” though

rality, however it might excite the applause of the people, has incurred the censure of posterity. A nation of legislators and conquerors might assert their claim to the harvest of Africa, which had been purchased with their blood; and it was artfully contrived by Augustus, that in the enjoyment of plenty, the Romans should lose the memory of freedom. But the prodigality of Constantine could not be excused by any consideration either of public or private interest; and the annual tribute of corn imposed upon Egypt for the benefit of his new capital, was applied to feed a lazy and indolent populace, at the expense of the husbandmen of an industrious province.* Some other regulations of this emperor are less liable to blame, but they are less deserving of notice. He divided Constantinople into fourteen regions or quarters,† dignified the public council with

it may have enhanced, did not originate the example which Gibbon has here represented Constantine as imitating.—ED.] * See Cod. Theodos. l. 13 and 14, and Cod. Justinian. edict. 12, tom. ii, p. 648, edit. Genev. See the beautiful complaint of Rome in the poem of Claudian de Bell. Gildonico, ver. 46—64.

Cum subiit par Roma mihi, divisaque sumsit
Æquales aurora togas; Ægyptia rura
In partem cessere novam.

[The tribute drawn from Egypt was no less at the expense of Rome. By the emperor's command, the Alexandrian fleets bore to Constantinople the harvests, which during four months of the year had fed the inhabitants of the ancient capital. Claudian has forcibly depicted the scarcity which was thus produced.

“Hæc nobis, hæc ante dabas; nunc pabula tantum
Roma precor; miserere tuæ, pater optime, gentis;
Extremam defende famem.”

De Bell. Gild. v. 34.—GUIZOT.] [Gibbon's quotation is appropriate, because it applies to and illustrates his text. That of M. Guizot has reference only to Claudian's times, and to circumstances about a hundred years after the building of Constantinople. In that space of time, the Romans had learned to draw their cereal supplies from other quarters; the more western provinces of Africa furnished them, and they were cut off by the insurrection which is the subject of Claudian's poem:

“—hunc quoque nunc Gildo rapuit.”—v. 63.

This was the cause of the scarcity, which Rome is represented as so earnestly imploring Jupiter to relieve; it had no connection whatever with the tribute drawn by Constantine from Egypt to his new city.—ED.]

† The regions of Constantinople are mentioned in the code of Justinian, and particularly described in the Notitia of the younger Theo-

the appellation of Senate,* communicated to the citizens the privileges of Italy,† and bestowed on the rising city the title of Colony, the first and most favoured daughter of ancient Rome. The venerable parent still maintained the legal and acknowledged supremacy, which was due to her age, to her dignity, and to the remembrance of her former greatness.‡

As Constantine urged the process of the work with the impatience of a lover, the walls, the porticoes, and the principal edifices, were completed in a few years, or, according to another account, in a few months;§ but this extraordinary diligence should excite less admiration, since many of the buildings were finished in so hasty and imperfect a manner, that under the succeeding reign, they were preserved with

dosius; but as the four last of them are not included within the wall of Constantine, it may be doubted whether this division of the city should be referred to the founder.

* *Senatum constituit secundi ordinis; Claros vocavit.* Anonym. Valesian. p. 715. The senators of old Rome were styled *Clarissimi*. See a curious note of Valesius, and Ammian. Marcellin. 22. 9. From the eleventh epistle of Julian, it should seem that the place of senator was considered as a burden, rather than as an honour; but the abbé de la Bletterie (*Vie de Jovien*, tom. ii, p. 371.) has shown that this epistle could not relate to Constantinople. Might we not read, instead of the celebrated name of *Βυζαντιος*, the obscure but more probable word *Βισανθηνοισ;* Bisanthe or Rhædestus, now Rhodosto, was a small maritime city of Thrace. See Stephan. Byz. de Urbibus, p. 225, and Cellar. Geograph. tom. i, p. 849.

† *Cod. Theodos. l. 14. 13.* The commentary of Godefroy (tom. v, p. 220) is long, but perplexed; nor indeed is it easy to ascertain in what the *Jus Italicum* could consist, after the freedom of the city had been communicated to the whole empire.

‡ Julian (*Orat. l. p. 8.*), celebrates Constantinople as not less superior to all other cities, than she was inferior to Rome itself. His learned commentator (Spanheim, p. 75, 76,) justifies this language by several parallel and contemporary instances. Zosimus, as well as Socrates and Sozomen, flourished after the division of the empire between the two sons of Theodosius, which established a perfect equality between the old and the new capital.

§ Codinus (*Antiquitat. p. 3.*) affirms that the foundations of Constantinople were laid in the year of the world 5837, (A.D. 329,) on the twenty-sixth of September, and that the city was dedicated on the eleventh of May, 5838, (A.D. 330). He connects these dates with several characteristic epochs, but they contradict each other; the authority of Codinus is of little weight, and the space which he assigns must appear insufficient. The term of ten years is given us by Julian, (*Orat. l. p. 8.*) and Spanheim labours to establish the truth of it; (p. 69—75,) by the help of two passages from Themistius (*Orat. 4. p. 58.*) and Philostorgius, (*lib. 2, c. 9.*) which form

difficulty from impending ruin.* But while they displayed the vigour and freshness of youth, the founder prepared to celebrate the dedication of his city.† The games and largesses which crowned the pomp of this memorable festival may easily be supposed; but there is one circumstance of a more singular and permanent nature, which ought not entirely to be overlooked. As often as the birthday of the city returned, the statue of Constantine, framed by his order, of gilt wood, and bearing in his right hand a small image of the genius of the place, was erected on a triumphal car. The guards, carrying white tapers, and clothed in their richest apparel, accompanied the solemn procession as it moved through the Hippodrome. When it was opposite to the throne of the reigning emperor, he rose from his seat, and with a grateful reverence adored the memory of his predecessor.‡ At the festival of dedication, an edict, engraved on a column of marble, bestowed the title of **SECOND** or **NEW ROME** on the city of Constantine.§ But the name of Constantinople¶ has prevailed over that honourable epithet; and after the revolution of fourteen centuries, still perpetuates the fame of the author.**

a period from the year 324 to the year 334. Modern critics are divided concerning this point of chronology, and their different sentiments are very accurately discussed by Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 619—625. * Themistius, *Orat.* 3. p. 47. Zosim. lib. 2. p. 108. Constantine himself, in one of his laws, (*Cod. Theod.* lib. 15, tit. 1,) betrays his impatience. † Cedrenus and Zonaras, faithful to the mode of superstition which prevailed in their own times, assure us that Constantinople was consecrated to the Virgin Mother of God.

‡ The earliest and most complete account of this extraordinary ceremony may be found in the *Alexandrian Chronicle*, p. 285. Tillemont and the other friends of Constantine, who are offended with the air of Paganism, which seems unworthy of a Christian prince, had a right to consider it as doubtful; but they were not authorized to omit the mention of it. § Sozomen, lib. 2, c. 2. Ducange, *C. P.* lib. 1, c. 6. *Velut ipsius Romæ filiam*, is the expression of Augustin. *De Civitat. Dei*, lib. 5, c. 25. ¶ Eutropius, lib. 10, c. 8. Julian *Orat.* 1. p. 8. Ducange *C. P.* lib. 1, c. 5. The name of Constantinople is extant on the medals of Constantine. ** The lively Fontenelle (*Dialogues des Morts*, 12,) affects to deride the vanity of human ambition, and seems to triumph in the disappointment of Constantine, whose immortal name is now lost in the vulgar appellation of *Istambol*, a Turkish corruption of *εις την πάλιν*. Yet the original name is still reserved: 1. By the nations of Europe. 2. By the modern Greeks. 3. By the Arabs, whose writings are diffused over the wide extent of their conquests in Asia and Africa. See D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque*

The foundation of a new capital is naturally connected with the establishment of a new form of civil and military administration. The distinct view of the complicated system of policy, introduced by Diocletian, improved by Constantine, and completed by his immediate successors, may not only amuse the fancy by the singular picture of a great empire, but will tend to illustrate the secret and internal causes of its rapid decay. In the pursuit of any remarkable institution, we may be frequently led into the more early or more recent times of the Roman history; but the proper limits of this inquiry will be included within a period of about one hundred and thirty years, from the accession of Constantine to the publication of the Theodosian Code;* from which, as well as from the *Notitia* of the east and west,† we derive the most copious and authentic information of the state of the empire. This variety of objects will suspend, for some time, the course of the narrative; but the interruption will be censured only by those readers who are insensible to the importance of laws and manners, while they peruse, with eager curiosity, the transient intrigues of a court, or the accidental event of a battle.

The manly pride of the Romans, content with substantial power, had left to the vanity of the east the forms and ceremonies of ostentatious greatness.‡ But when they lost even the semblance of those virtues which were derived from their ancient freedom, the simplicity of Roman manners was insensibly corrupted by the stately affectation of the courts of Asia. The distinctions of personal merit and influence, so conspicuous in a republic, so feeble and obscure under a monarchy, were abolished by the despotism of the emperors, who substituted in their room a severe subordination of

Oriente, p. 275. 4. By the more learned Turks, and by the emperor himself in his public mandates. Cautemir's History of the Othman Empire, p. 51. * The Theodosian code was promulgated A.D. 438.

See the Prolegomena of Godefroy, c. 1, p. 185. † Pancirolus, in his elaborate commentary, assigns to the *Notitia* a date almost similar to that of the Theodosian code; but his proofs, or rather conjectures, are extremely feeble. I should be rather inclined to place this useful work between the final division of the empire. (A.D. 395,) and the successful invasion of Gaul by the barbarians, (A.D. 407.) See *Histoire des Anciens Peuples de l'Europe*, tom. vii, p. 40.

‡ Scilicet externæ superbiæ sueto, non inerat notitia nostri (perhaps *visiæ*); apud quos vis imperii valet, inania transmittuntur. Tacit

rank and office, from the titled slaves who were seated on the steps of the throne, to the meanest instruments of arbitrary power. The multitude of abject dependants was interested in the support of the actual government, from the dread of a revolution, which might at once confound their hopes, and intercept the reward of their services. In this divine hierarchy (for such it is frequently styled), every rank was marked with the most scrupulous exactness, and its dignity was displayed in a variety of trifling and solemn ceremonies, which it was a study to learn, and a sacrilege to neglect.* The purity of the Latin language was debased, by adopting, in the intercourse of pride and flattery, a profusion of epithets, which Tully would have scarcely understood, and which Augustus would have rejected with indignation. The principal officers of the empire were saluted, even by the sovereign himself, by the deceitful titles of your *Sincerity*, your *Gravity*, your *Excellency*, your *Eminency*, your *sublime and wonderful Magnitude*, your *illustrious and magnificent Highness*.† The codicils or patents of their office were curiously emblazoned with such emblems as were best adapted to explain its nature and high dignity; the image or portrait of the reigning emperors; a triumphal car; the book of mandates placed on a table covered with a rich carpet, and illuminated by four tapers; the allegorical figures of the provinces which they governed; or the appellations and standards of the troops whom they commanded. Some of these official ensigns were really exhibited in their hall of audience; others preceded their pompous march whenever they appeared in public; and every circumstance of their demeanour, their dress, their ornaments, and their train, was calculated to inspire a deep reverence for the representatives of supreme majesty. By a philosophic observer, the system of the Roman government might have been mistaken for a splendid theatre, filled with players of

Annal. 15. 31. The gradation from the style of freedom and simplicity, to that of form and servitude, may be traced in the epistles of Cicero, of Pliny, and of Symmachus. * The emperor Gratian,

after confirming a law of precedency published by Valentinian, the father of his *divinity*, thus continues: Siquis igitur indebitum sibi locum usurpaverit, nulla se ignoratione defendat; sitque plane *sacrilegii reus*, qui *divina* præcepta neglexerit. Cod. Theodos. lib. 6, tit. 5. leg. 2. † Consult Notitia Dignitatum, at the end of the Theodosian

every character and degree, who repeated the language, and imitated the passions, of their original model.*

All the magistrates of sufficient importance to find a place in the general state of the empire, were accurately divided into three classes: 1. the *Illustrious*; 2. the *Spectabiles*, or *Respectable*; and, 3. the *Clarissimi*, whom we may translate by the word *Honourable*. In the times of Roman simplicity, the last mentioned epithet was used only as a vague expression of deference, till it became at length the peculiar and appropriated title of all who were members of the senate,† and consequently of all who, from that venerable body, were selected to govern the provinces. The vanity of those who, from their rank and office, might claim a superior distinction above the rest of the senatorial order, was long afterward indulged with the new appellation of *Respectable*; but the title of *Illustrious* was always reserved to some eminent personages, who were obeyed or revered by the two subordinate classes. It was communicated only, I. To the consuls and patricians; II. To the prætorian prefects, with the prefects of Rome and Constantinople; III. To the masters-general of the cavalry and the infantry; and, IV. To the seven ministers of the palace, who exercised their *sacred* functions about the person of the emperor.‡ Among those illustrious magistrates who were esteemed co-ordinate with each other, the seniority of appointment gave place to the union of dignities.§ By the expedient of honorary codicils, the emperors, who were fond of multiplying their favours, might sometimes gratify the vanity, though not the ambition, of impatient courtiers.¶

I. As long as the Roman consuls were the first magistrates of a free state, they derived their right to power from the choice of the people. As long as the emperors condescended

code, tom. vi, p. 316. * Pancirolus, ad Notitiam utriusque Imperii, p. 39. But his explanations are obscure, and he does not sufficiently distinguish the painted emblems from the effective ensigns of office.

† In the Pandects, which may be referred to the reigns of the Antonines, *Clarissimus* is the ordinary and legal title of a senator.

‡ Pancirol. p. 12—17. I have not taken any notice of the two inferior ranks, *Perfectissimus* and *Egregius*, which were given to many persons who were not raised to the senatorial dignity. § Cod.

Theodos. 6, tit. 6. The rules of precedency are ascertained with the most minute accuracy by the emperors, and illustrated with equal prolixity by their learned interpreter. ¶ Cod. Theodos. lib. 6, tit. 22.

to disguise the servitude which they imposed, the consuls were still elected by the real or apparent suffrage of the senate. From the reign of Diocletian even these vestiges of liberty were abolished, and the successful candidates who were invested with the annual honours of the consulship, affected to deplore the humiliating condition of their predecessors. The Scipios and the Catos had been reduced to solicit the votes of plebeians, to pass through the tedious and expensive forms of a popular election, and to expose their dignity to the shame of a public refusal; while their own happier fate had reserved them for an age and government in which the rewards of virtue were assigned by the unerring wisdom of a gracious sovereign.* In the epistles which the emperor addressed to the two consuls elect, it was declared that they were created by his sole authority.† Their names and portraits, engraved on gilt tablets of ivory, were dispersed over the empire as presents to the provinces, the cities, the magistrates, the senate, and the people.‡ Their solemn inauguration was performed at the place of the imperial residence; and during a period of one hundred and twenty years, Rome was constantly deprived of the presence of her ancient magistrates.§ On the morning of the 1st of January, the consuls assumed the ensigns of their

* Ausonius (in *Gratiarum Actione*) basely expatiates on this unworthy topic, which is managed by Mamertinus (*Panegy. Vet.* 11, 16—19,) with somewhat more freedom and ingenuity. † *Cum de consulibus in annum creandis, solus mecum volutarem . . . te consulem et designavi, et declaravi, et priorem nuncupavi*; are some of the expressions employed by the emperor Gratian to his preceptor the poet Ausonius.

‡ *Immanesque . . . dentes
Qui secti ferro in tabulas auroque micantes,
Inscripti rutilum cœlato consule nomen
Per proceres et vulgus eant.*

Claud. in 2 Cons. Stilichon. 456.

Montfaucon has represented some of these tablets or dyptics; see *Supplément à l'Antiquité expliquée*, tom. iii, p. 220.

§ *Consule lætatur post plurima sæcula viso
Pallanteus apex: agnoscunt rostra curules
Auditas quondam proavis: desuetaque cingit
Regius auratis Fora fascibus Ulpia licitor.*

Claudian in 6 Cons. Honori, 643.

From the reign of Carus to the sixth consulship of Honorius, there was an interval of one hundred and twenty years, during which the

dignity. Their dress was a robe of purple embroidered in silk and gold, and sometimes ornamented with costly gems.* On this solemn occasion they were attended by the most eminent officers of the state and army, in the habit of senators; and the useless fasces, armed with the once formidable axes, were borne before them by the lictors.† The procession moved from the palæce‡ to the forum, or principal square of the city; where the consuls ascended their tribunal, and seated themselves in the eurple chairs, which were framed after the fashion of ancient times. They immediately exercised an act of jurisdiction, by the manumission of a slave, who was brought before them for that purpose; and the ceremony was intended to represent the celebrated action of the elder Brutus, the author of liberty and of the consulship, when he admitted among his fellow-citizens the faithful Vindex, who had revealed the conspiracy of the Tarquins.§ The public festival was continued during several days in all the principal cities; in Rome, from custom; in Constantinople, in Carthage, Antioch, and Alexandria, from the love of pleasure and the superfluity of wealth.¶ In the

emperors were always absent from Rome on the first day of January. See the *Chronologie de Tillemont*, tom. iii, iv, and v. * See Claudian in *Cons. Prob. et Olybrii*, 178, &c.; and in 4 *Cons. Honorii*, 585, &c.; though in the latter it is not easy to separate the ornaments of the emperor from those of the consul. Ausonius received, from the liberality of Gratian, a *vestis palmata*, or robe of state, in which the figure of the emperor Constantius was embroidered.

† *Cernis et armorum proceres legumque potentes:*

Patricios sumunt habitus; et more Gabino

Discolor incedit legio, positisque parumper

Bellorum signis, sequitur vexilla Quirini.

Lictori cedunt aquilæ, ridetque togatus

Miles, et in mediis effulget curia castris.

————— *strictasque procul radiare secures.*

Claud. in 4 *Cons. Honorii*, 5. In *Cons. Prob.* 229.

‡ See Valesius ad *Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 22, c. 7.*

§ *Auspice mox læto sonuit clamore tribunal;*

Te fastos ineunte quater: solemnia ludit

Omnia libertas: deductum Vindice morem

Lex servat, famulusque jugo laxatus herili

Ducitur, et grato remeat securior ictu.

Claudian in 4 *Cons. Honorii*, 611.

¶ *Celebrant quidem solennes istos dies, omnes ubique urbes quæ sub legibus agunt; et Roma de more, et Constantinopolis de imitatione, et Antiochia pro luxu, et discincta Carthage, et domus flu-*

two capitals of the empire the annual games of the theatre, the circus, and the amphitheatre,* cost four thousand pounds of gold, (about) one hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling; and if so heavy an expense surpassed the faculties or the inclination of the magistrates themselves, the sum was supplied from the imperial treasury.† As soon as the consuls had discharged these customary duties, they were at liberty to retire into the shade of private life, and to enjoy, during the remainder of the year, the undisturbed contemplation of their own greatness. They no longer presided in the national councils; they no longer executed the resolutions of peace or war. Their abilities (unless they were employed in more effective offices) were of little moment; and their names served only as the legal date of the year in which they had filled the chair of Marius and of Cicero. Yet it was still felt and acknowledged, in the last period of Roman servitude, that this empty name might be compared, and even preferred, to the possession of substantial power. The title of consul was still the most splendid object of ambition, the noblest reward of virtue and loyalty. The emperors themselves, who disdained the faint shadow of the republic, were conscious that they acquired an additional splendour and majesty as often as they assumed the annual honours of the consular dignity.‡

The proudest and most perfect separation which can be found in any age or country, between the nobles and the people, is perhaps that of the patricians and the plebeians, as it was established in the first age of the Roman republic. Wealth and honours, the offices of the state, and the ceremonies of religion, were almost exclusively possessed by the former; who, preserving the purity of their blood with the most insulting jealousy,§ held their clients in a condition of

minis Alexandria, sed Treviri Principis beneficio. Ausonius in Grat. Actione. * Claudian (in *Cons. Mall. Theodori*, 279—331,) describes in a lively and fanciful manner, the various games of the circus, the theatre, and the amphitheatre, exhibited by the new consul. The sanguinary combats of gladiators had already been prohibited.

† Procopius in *Hist. Arcana*, c. 26. ‡ In *consulatu honos sine labore suscipitur.* (Mamertin. in *Panegy. Vet.* 11. 2.) This exalted idea of the consulship is borrowed from an oration (3. p. 107,) pronounced by Julian in the servile court of Constantius. See the abbé de la Bletterie, (*Mémoires de l'Académie*, tom. xxiv, p. 259,) who delights to pursue the vestiges of the old constitution, and who sometimes finds them in his copious fancy. § Intermarriages between

specious vassalage. But these distinctions, so incompatible with the spirit of a free people, were removed, after a long struggle, by the persevering efforts of the tribunes. The most active and successful of the plebeians accumulated wealth, aspired to honours, deserved triumphs, contracted alliances, and after some generations, assumed the pride of ancient nobility.* The patrician families, on the other hand, whose original number was never recruited till the end of the commonwealth, either failed in the ordinary course of nature, or were extinguished in so many foreign and domestic wars, or, through a want of merit or fortune, insensibly mingled with the mass of the people.† Very

the patricians and plebeians were prohibited by the laws of the Twelve Tables; and the uniform operations of human nature may attest that the custom survived the law. See in Livy (4. 1—6), the pride of family urged by the consul, and the rights of mankind asserted by the tribune Canuleius. [Niebuhr, who has asserted for the Plebes a much higher standing than they were before supposed to have occupied in the Roman system, has placed the subject of this note in a different point of view. He says: "The prohibition of intermarriage between patricians and plebeians had been sanctioned by usage since the very earliest times; it was first made an enactment in the Twelve Tables. Such a custom generally becomes galling by being made a written law, and thus the storm was raised from which, the *plebiscitum Canuleium* sprang. This is usually considered as a great victory of the plebeians. Such a prohibition did harm to none more than to the patricians themselves. Mixed marriages from both orders must surely have been common at all times, and they were binding in conscience; yet the son of a patrician-plebeian marriage never had any gentilian rights, and was counted among the plebeians. The consequence of this was, that the patricians were fast dwindling away. Wherever the nobles are restricted to marry within their own class, their order becomes quite powerless in the course of time. If the plebeians had meant to humble the patricians, they ought to have been strenuous in continuing the prohibition of intermarriage. But for the Canuleian law, the patricians would have lost their position in the state a hundred years sooner." Lectures, vol. i, p. 326.—Ed.] * See the animated pictures drawn by Sallust, in the Jugurthine war, of the pride of the nobles, and even of the virtuous Metellus, who was unable to brook the idea that the honour of the consulship should be bestowed on the obscure merit of his lieutenant Marius, (c. 64). Two hundred years before, the race of the Metelli themselves were confounded among the plebeians of Rome; and from the etymology of their name of *Cacilius*, there is reason to believe that those haughty nobles derived their origin from a sutler. † In the year of Rome 800, very few remained, not only of the old patrician families, but even of those which had been created by Caesar and Augustus. (Tacit Annal

few remained who could derive their pure and genuine origin from the infancy of the city, or even from that of the republic, when Cæsar and Augustus, Claudius and Vespasian, created from the body of the senate a competent number of new patrician families, in the hope of perpetuating an order which was still considered as honourable and sacred.* But these artificial supplies (in which the reigning house was always included) were rapidly swept away by the rage of tyrants, by frequent revolutions, by the change of manners, and by the intermixture of nations.† Little more was left, when Constantine ascended the throne, than a vague and imperfect tradition, that the patricians had once been the first of the Romans. To form a body of nobles, whose influence may restrain, while it secures, the authority of the monarch, would have been very inconsistent with the character and policy of Constantine; but had he seriously entertained such a design, it might have exceeded the measure of his power to ratify, by an arbitrary edict, an institution which must expect the sanction of time and of opinion. He revived, indeed, the title of *patricians*, but he revived it as a personal, not as an hereditary, distinction. They yielded only to the transient superiority of the annual consuls; but they enjoyed the pre-eminence over all the great officers of state, with the most familiar access to the person of the prince. This honourable rank was bestowed on them for life; and as they were usually favourites and ministers who had grown old in the imperial court, the true etymology of the word was perverted by ignorance and flattery; and the patricians of

11. 25.) The family of Scaurus (a branch of the patrician *Æmili*) was degraded so low, that his father, who exercised the trade of a charcoal merchant, left him only ten slaves, and somewhat less than 300*l.* sterling. (Valerius Maximus, lib. 4, c. 4. n. 11. Aurel. Victor in Scuro.) The family was saved from oblivion by the merit of the son.

* Tacit. *Annal.* 11. 25. Dion Cassius, lib. 3, p. 693. The virtues of *Agricola*, who was created a patrician by the emperor Vespasian, reflected honour on that ancient order; but his ancestors had not any claim beyond an equestrian nobility. † This failure would have been almost impossible, if it were true, as *Casaubon* compels *Aurelius Victor* to affirm (*ad Sueton. in Cæsar. c. 42.* See *Hist. August. p. 203,* and *Casaubon, Comment. p. 220.*) that Vespasian created at once a thousand patrician families. But this extravagant number is too much even for the whole senatorial order, unless we should include all

Constantine were revered as the adopted *fathers* of the emperor and the republic.*

II. The fortunes of the prætorian prefects were essentially different from those of the consuls and patricians. The latter saw their ancient greatness evaporate in a vain title. The former, rising by degrees from the most humble condition, were invested with the civil and military administration of the Roman world. From the reign of Severus to that of Diocletian, the guards and the palace, the laws and the finances, the armies and the provinces, were intrusted to their superintending care; and, like the viziers of the east, they held with one hand the seal, and with the other the standard, of the empire. The ambition of the prefects, always formidable, and sometimes fatal, to the masters whom they served, was supported by the strength of the prætorian bands; but after those haughty troops had been weakened by Diocletian, and finally suppressed by Constantine, the prefects, who survived their fall, were reduced without difficulty to the station of useful and obedient ministers. When they were no longer responsible for the safety of the emperor's person, they resigned the jurisdiction which they had hitherto claimed and exercised over all the departments of the palace. They were deprived by Constantine of all military command, as soon as they had ceased to lead into the field, under their immediate orders, the flower of the Roman troops; and at length, by a singular revolution, the captains of the guard were transformed into the civil magistrates of the provinces. According to the plan of government instituted by Diocletian, the four princes had each their prætorian prefect; and, after the monarchy was once more united in the person of Constantine, he still continued to create the same number of *four prefects*, and intrusted to their care the same provinces which they already administered. 1. The prefect of the east stretched his ample jurisdiction into the three parts of the globe which were subject to the Romans, from the cataracts of the Nile to the banks of the Phasis, and from the mountains of Thrace to the frontiers of Persia: 2. The important provinces of Pannonia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Greece, once acknowledged the authority of the prefect of the Roman knights who were distinguished by the permission of wearing the *laticlave*. * Zosimus, lib. 2, p. 118; and Godefroy ad Cod.

Illyricum: 3. The power of the prefect of Italy was not confined to the country from whence he derived his title; it extended over the additional territory of Rhætia as far as the banks of the Danube, over the dependant islands of the Mediterranean, and over that part of the continent of Africa which lies between the confines of Cyrene and those of Tingitania: 4. The prefect of the Gauls comprehended under that plural denomination the kindred provinces of Britain and Spain, and his authority was obeyed from the wall of Antoninus to the foot of mount Atlas.*

After the prætorian prefects had been dismissed from all military command, the civil functions which they were ordained to exercise over so many subject nations were adequate to the ambition and abilities of the most consummate ministers. To their wisdom was committed the supreme administration of justice and of the finances, the two objects which, in a state of peace, comprehend almost all the respective duties of the sovereign and of the people; of the former, to protect the citizens who are obedient to the laws; of the latter, to contribute the share of their property which is required for the expenses of the state. The coin, the highways, the posts, the granaries, the manufactures, whatever could interest the public prosperity, was moderated by the authority of the prætorian prefects. As the immediate representatives of the imperial majesty, they were empowered to explain, to enforce, and on some occasions to modify, the general edicts, by their discretionary proclamations. They watched over the conduct of the provincial governors, removed the negligent, and inflicted punishments on the guilty. From all the inferior jurisdictions, an appeal in every matter of importance, either civil or criminal, might be brought before the tribunal of the prefect; but *his* sentence was final and absolute; and the emperors themselves refused to admit any complaints against the judgment or the integrity of a magistrate whom they honoured with such unbounded confidence.† His appoint-

Theodos. lib. 6, tit. 6.

* Zosimus, lib. 2, p. 109, 110. If we had not fortunately possessed this satisfactory account of the division of the power and provinces of the prætorian prefects, we should frequently have been perplexed amid the copious details of the Code, and the circumstantial minuteness of the Notitia. † See a law of Constantine himself. *A præfectis autem prætorio provocare, non sinimus*

ments were suitable to his dignity;* and if avarice was his ruling passion, he enjoyed frequent opportunities of collecting a rich harvest of fees, of presents, and of perquisites. Though the emperors no longer dreaded the ambition of their prefects, they were attentive to counterbalance the power of this great office by the uncertainty and shortness of its duration.†

From their superior importance and dignity, Rome and Constantinople were alone excepted from the jurisdiction of the prætorian prefects. The immense size of the city, and the experience of the tardy, ineffectual operation of the laws, had furnished the policy of Augustus with a specious pretence for introducing a new magistrate, who alone could restrain a servile and turbulent populace by the strong arm of arbitrary power.‡ Valerius Messalla was appointed the first prefect of Rome, that his reputation might countenance so invidious a measure; but at the end of a few days, that accomplished citizen§ resigned his office, declaring, with a

Cod. Justinian. lib. 7, tit. 62. leg. 19. Charisius, a lawyer of the time of Constantine, (Heinec. Hist. Juris Romani, p. 349,) who admits this law as a fundamental principle of jurisprudence, compares the prætorian prefects to the masters of the horse of the ancient dictators. Pandect. lib. 1, tit. 11.

* When Justinian, in the exhausted condition of the empire, instituted a prætorian prefect for Africa, he allowed him a salary of one hundred pounds of gold. Cod. Justinian, lib. 1, tit. 27. leg. 1.

† For this, and the other dignities of the empire, it may be sufficient to refer to the ample commentaries of Pancirolus and Godefroy, who have diligently collected and accurately digested in their proper order all their legal and historical materials. From those authors, Dr. Howell (History of the World, vol. ii, p. 24—77,) has deduced a very distinct abridgment of the state of the Roman empire.

‡ Tacit. Annal. 6. 11. Euseb. in Chron. p. 155. Dion Cassius, in the oration of Mæcenus, (lib. 7, p. 675.) describes the prerogatives of the prefect of the city as they were established in his own time.

§ The fame of Messalla has been scarcely equal to his merit. In his earliest youth, he was recommended by Cicero to the friendship of Brutus. He followed the standard of the republic till it was broken in the fields of Philippi. He then accepted and deserved the favour of the most moderate of the conquerors; and uniformly asserted his freedom and dignity in the court of Augustus. The triumph of Messalla was justified by the conquest of Aquitain. As an orator, he disputed the palm of eloquence with Cicero himself. Messalla cultivated every muse, and was the patron of every man of genius. He spent his evenings in philosophic conversation with Horace; assumed his place at table between Delia and Tibullus; and amused his leisure by encouraging the poetical talents of young Ovid.

spirit worthy of the friend of Brutus, that he found himself incapable of exercising a power incompatible with public freedom.* As the sense of liberty became less exquisite, the advantages of order were more clearly understood; and the prefect, who seemed to have been designed as a terror only to slaves and vagrants, was permitted to extend his civil and criminal jurisdiction over the equestrian and noble families of Rome. The prætors, annually created as the judges of law and equity, could not long dispute the possession of the forum with a vigorous and permanent magistrate, who was usually admitted into the confidence of the prince. Their courts were deserted; their number, which had once fluctuated between twelve and eighteen,† was gradually reduced to two or three; and their important functions were confined to the expensive obligation‡ of exhibiting games for the amusement of the people. After the office of the Roman consuls had been changed into a vain pageant, which was rarely displayed in the capital, the prefects assumed their vacant place in the senate, and were soon acknowledged as the ordinary presidents of that venerable assembly. They received appeals from the distance of one hundred miles; and it was allowed as a principle of jurisprudence, that all municipal authority was derived from them alone.§

In the discharge of his laborious employment, the governor of Rome was assisted by fifteen officers, some of whom had been originally his equals, or even his superiors. The principal departments were relative to the command of a numerous watch established as a safeguard against fires, robberies, and nocturnal disorders; the custody and distribution of the

* *In civilem esse potestatem contestans*, says the translator of Eusebius. Tacitus expresses the same idea in other words: *quasi nescius exercendi*. † See Lipsius, *Excursus D. ad 1 lib. Tacit. Annal.*

‡ Heineccii *Element. Juris Civilis secund. ordinem Pandect.* tom. i, p. 70. See likewise Spanheim *de Usu Numismatum*, tom. ii, dissertat. 10, p. 119. In the year 450, Marcian published a law, that *three* should be annually created prætors of Constantinople, by the choice of the senate, but with their own consent. *Cod. Justinian. lib. 1, tit. 39. leg. 2.*

§ *Quidquid igitur intra urbem admittitur, ad P. U. videtur pertinere; sed et siquid intra centesimum milliarium.* Ulpian in *Pandect. lib. 1, tit. 13. n. 1.* He proceeds to enumerate the various offices of the prefect, who, in the Code of Justinian, (*lib. 1, tit. 39. leg. 3.*) is declared to precede and command all city magistrates, *sine injuria ac detrimento honoris alieni.*

public allowance of corn and provisions; the care of the port, of the aqueducts, of the common sewers, and of the navigation and bed of the Tiber; the inspection of the markets, the theatres, and of the private as well as public works. Their vigilance ensured the three principal objects of a regular police, safety, plenty, and cleanliness; and as a proof of the attention of government to preserve the splendour and ornaments of the capital, a particular inspector was appointed for the statues; the guardian, as it were, of that inanimate people, which, according to the extravagant computation of an old writer, was scarcely inferior in number to the living inhabitants of Rome. About thirty years after the foundation of Constantinople, a similar magistrate was created in that rising metropolis, for the same uses, and with the same powers. A perfect equality was established between the dignity of the two municipal, and that of the four prætorian prefects.*

Those who, in the imperial hierarchy, were distinguished by the title of *Respectable* formed an intermediate class between the *illustrious* prefects and the *honourable* magistrates of the provinces. In this class the proconsuls of Asia, Achaia, and Africa, claimed a pre-eminence, which was yielded to the remembrance of their ancient dignity; and the appeal from their tribunal to that of the prefects was almost the only mark of their dependance.† But the civil government of the empire was distributed into thirteen great *dioceses*, each of which equalled the just measure of a powerful kingdom. The first of these dioceses was subject to the jurisdiction of the *Count* of the east; and we may convey some idea of the importance and variety of his functions, by observing, that six hundred apparitors, who would be styled at present either secretaries, or clerks, or ushers, or messengers, were employed in his immediate office.‡ The place of Augustal *Prefect* of Egypt was no

* Besides our usual guides, we may observe, that Felix Cantelorius has written a separate treatise, *De Prefecto Urbis*; and that many curious details concerning the police of Rome and Constantinople are contained in the fourteenth book of the Theodosian Code.

† Eunapius affirms, that the proconsul of Asia was independent of the prefect; which must, however, be understood with some allowance; the jurisdiction of the vice-prefect he most assuredly disclaimed. Pancirolus, p. 161. ‡ The proconsul of Africa had four hundred apparitors; and they all received large salaries, either from the trea-

longer filled by a Roman knight; but the name was retained; and the extraordinary powers which the situation of the country, and the temper of the inhabitants, had once made indispensable, were still continued to the governor. The eleven remaining dioceses, of Asiana, Pontica, and Thrace; of Macedonia, Dacia, and Pannonia or Western Illyricum; of Italy and Africa; of Gaul, Spain, and Britain; were governed by twelve vicars or vice-prefects,* whose name sufficiently explains the nature and dependance of their office. It may be added, that the lieutenant-generals of the Roman armies, the military counts and dukes, who will be hereafter mentioned, were allowed the rank and title of *Respectable*.

As the spirit of jealousy and ostentation prevailed in the councils of the emperors, they proceeded with anxious diligence to divide the substance, and to multiply the titles of power. The vast countries which the Roman conquerors had united under the same simple form of administration, were imperceptibly crumbled into minute fragments; till at length the whole empire was distributed into one hundred and sixteen provinces, each of which supported an expensive and splendid establishment. Of these, three were governed by proconsuls, thirty-seven by consulars, five by correctors, and seventy-one by presidents. The appellations of these magistrates were different; they ranked in successive order, the ensigns of their dignity were curiously varied, and their situation, from accidental circumstances, might be more or less agreeable or advantageous. But they were all (excepting only the proconsuls) alike included in the class of *honourable* persons; and they were alike intrusted, during the pleasure of the prince, and under the authority of the prefects or their deputies, with the administration of justice and the finances in their respective districts. The ponderous volumes of the codes and pandects† would furnish ample materials for a minute inquiry into the system of provincial government, as in the space of six centuries it was improved

sury or the province. See Pancirol. p. 26, and Cod. Justinian. l. 12, tit. 56, 57. * In Italy there was likewise the *Vicar of Rome*. It

has been much disputed, whether his jurisdiction measured one hundred miles from the city, or whether it stretched over the ten southern provinces of Italy. † Among the works of the celebrated Ulpian, there was one in ten books, concerning the office of a pro-

by the wisdom of the Roman statesmen and lawyers. It may be sufficient for the historian to select two singular and salutary provisions intended to restrain the abuse of authority. 1. For the preservation of peace and order, the governors of the provinces were armed with the sword of justice. They inflicted corporal punishments, and they exercised, in capital offences, the power of life and death. But they were not authorized to indulge the condemned criminal with the choice of his own execution, or to pronounce a sentence of the mildest and most honourable kind of exile. These prerogatives were reserved to the prefects, who alone could impose the heavy fine of fifty pounds of gold: their vicegerents were confined to the trifling weight of a few ounces.* This distinction, which seems to grant the larger while it denies the smaller degree of authority, was founded on a very rational motive. The smaller degree was infinitely more liable to abuse. The passions of a provincial magistrate might frequently provoke him into acts of oppression, which affected only the freedom or the fortunes of the subject; though, from a principle of prudence, perhaps of humanity, he might still be terrified by the guilt of innocent blood. It may likewise be considered, that exile, considerable fines, or the choice of an easy death, relate more particularly to the rich and the noble; and the persons most exposed to the avarice or resentment of a provincial magistrate, were thus removed from his obscure persecution to the more august and impartial tribunal of the prætorian prefect. 2. As it was reasonably apprehended that the integrity of the judge might be biassed, if his interest was concerned, or his affections were engaged, the strictest regulations were established to exclude any person, without the special dispensation of the emperor, from the government of the province where he was born;† and to prohibit the governor or his son from contracting marriage with a native

consul, whose duties in the most essential articles were the same as those of an ordinary governor of a province.

* The presidents, or consuls, could impose only two ounces; the vice-prefects, three; the proconsuls, count of the east, and prefect of Egypt, six. See Heineccii Jur. Civil. tom. i, p. 75. Pandect. l. 48, tit. 19, n. 8. Cod. Justinian. l. 1, tit. 54, leg. 4—6.

† Ut nulli patriæ suæ administratio sine speciali principis permissu permittatur. Cod. Justinian, l. 1, tit. 41. This law was first enacted by the emperor Marcus, after the rebellion of Cassius. (Dion. l. 71). The same regulation is observed in China,

or an inhabitant;* or from purchasing slaves, lands, or houses, within the extent of his jurisdiction.† Notwithstanding these rigorous precautions, the emperor Constantine, after a reign of twenty-five years, still deploras the venal and oppressive administration of justice, and expresses the warmest indignation that the audience of the judge, his dispatch of business, his seasonable delays, and his final sentence, were publicly sold, either by himself, or by the officers of his court. The continuance, and perhaps the impunity, of these crimes, is attested by the repetition of impotent laws, and ineffectual menaces.‡

All the civil magistrates were drawn from the profession of the law. The celebrated institutes of Justinian are addressed to the youth of his dominions who had devoted themselves to the study of Roman jurisprudence; and the sovereign condescends to animate their diligence, by the assurance that their skill and ability would in time be rewarded by an adequate share in the government of the republic.§ The rudiments of this lucrative science were taught in all the considerable cities of the east and west: but the most famous school was that of Berytus,¶ on the

with equal strictness and with equal effect. * Pandect. l. 23, tit. 2, n. 38. 57. 63. † In jure continetur, ne quis in administratione, constitutus aliquid compararet. Cod. Theod. l. 8, tit. 15, leg. 1. This maxim of common law was enforced by a series of edicts (see the remainder of the title) from Constantine to Justin. From this prohibition, which is extended to the meanest officers of the governor, they except only clothes and provisions. The purchase within five years may be recovered; after which, on information, it devolves to the treasury. ‡ Cessent rapaces jam nunc officialium manus; cessent, inquam; nam si moniti non cessaverint, gladiis præcedentur, &c. Cod. Theod. l. 1, tit. 7, leg. 1. Zeno enacted that all governors should remain in the province to answer any accusations, fifty days after the expiration of their power. Cod. Justinian. l. 2, tit. 49, leg. 1.

§ Summâ igitur ope, et alacri studio, has leges nostras accipite; et vosmetipsos sic eruditos ostendite, ut spes vos pulcherrima foveat; toto legitimo opere perfecto, posse etiam nostram rempublicam in partibus ejus vobis credendis gubernari. Justinian. in proem. Institutionum.

¶ The splendour of the school of Berytus, which preserved in the east the language and jurisprudence of the Romans, may be computed to have lasted from the third to the middle of the sixth century.—Heinec. Jur. Rom. Hist. p. 351—356. [It was on their way to finish their professional education at the law-school of Berytus, that the two brothers, Theodorus and Athenodorus, meeting Origen at Cæsarea, were prevailed on by him to study philosophy, through which he converted them to Christianity. (Hieron. de Vir. Ill. c. 65)]

coast of Phœnicia, which flourished above three centuries from the time of Alexander Severus, the author, perhaps, of an institution so advantageous to his native country. After a regular course of education, which lasted five years, the students dispersed themselves through the provinces, in search of fortune and honours; nor could they want an inexhaustible supply of business in a great empire, already corrupted by the multiplicity of laws, of arts, and of vices. The court of the prætorian præfect of the east could alone furnish employment for one hundred and fifty advocates, sixty-four of whom were distinguished by peculiar privileges, and two were annually chosen, with a salary of sixty pounds of gold, to defend the causes of the treasury. The first experiment was made of their judicial talents, by appointing them to act occasionally as assessors to the magistrates; from thence, they were often raised to preside in the tribunals before which they had pleaded. They obtained the government of a province; and, by the aid of merit, of reputation, or of favour, they ascended, by successive steps, to the *illustrious* dignities of the state.* In the practice of the bar, these men had considered reason as the instrument of dispute; they interpreted the laws according to the dictates

Alexander Severus commenced his reign A.D. 221, when Origen was thirty-six years of age, so that Gibbon's conjecture is well-founded.—Ed.]

* As in a former period I have traced the civil and military promotion of Pertinax, I shall here insert the civil honours of Mallius Theodorus. 1. He was distinguished by his eloquence, while he pleaded as an advocate in the court of the prætorian præfect. 2. He governed one of the provinces of Africa, either as president or consular, and deserved, by his administration, the honour of a brass statue. 3. He was appointed vicar, or vice-præfect, of Macedonia. 4. Quæstor. 5. Count of the sacred largesses. 6. Prætorian præfect of the Gauls; whilst he might yet be represented as a young man. 7. After a retreat, perhaps a disgrace, of many years, which Mallius (confounded by some critics with the poet Manlius (see Fabricius Bibliothec. Latin. edit. Ernest. tom. i, c. 18, p. 501), employed in the study of the Grecian philosophy, he was named prætorian præfect of Italy in the year 397. 8. While he still exercised that great office, he was created, in the year 399, consul for the west; and his name, on account of the infamy of his colleague, the eunuch Eutropius, often stands alone in the Fasti. 9. In the year 408, Mallius was appointed a second time prætorian præfect of Italy. Even in the venal panegyric of Claudian, we may discover the merit of Mallius Theodorus, who, by a rare felicity, was the intimate friend both of Symmachus and of St. Augustin. See Tillemont, Hist. des Emp. tom. v, p. 1110—1114.

of private interest; and the same pernicious habits might still adhere to their characters in the public administration of the state. The honour of a liberal profession has indeed been vindicated by ancient and modern advocates, who have filled the most important stations, with pure integrity and consummate wisdom; but in the decline of Roman jurisprudence, the ordinary promotion of lawyers was pregnant with mischief and disgrace. The noble art which had once been preserved as the sacred inheritance of the patricians was fallen into the hands of freedmen and plebeians,* who, with cunning rather than with skill, exercised a sordid and pernicious trade. Some of them procured admittance into families for the purpose of fomenting differences, of encouraging suits, and of preparing a harvest of gain for themselves or their brethren. Others, recluse in their chambers, maintained the dignity of legal professors, by furnishing a rich client with subtleties to confound the plainest truth, and with arguments to colour the most unjustifiable pretensions. The splendid and popular class was composed of the advocates, who filled the forum with the sound of their turgid and loquacious rhetoric. Careless of fame and of justice, they are described, for the most part, as ignorant and rapacious guides, who conducted their clients through a maze of expense, of delay, and of disappointment; from whence, after a tedious series of years, they were at length dismissed, when their patience and fortune were almost exhausted.†

III. In the system of policy introduced by Augustus, the governors, those at least of the imperial provinces, were invested with the full powers of the sovereign himself. Ministers of peace and war, the distribution of rewards and punishments depended on them alone, and they successively appeared on the tribunal in the robes of civil magistracy, and in complete armour at the head of the Roman legions.‡

* Mamertinus in Panegyri. Vet. 11. 20. Asterius apud Photium, p. 1500. † The curious passage of Ammianus (l. 30, c. 4), in which he paints the manners of contemporary lawyers, affords a strange mixture of sound sense, false rhetoric, and extravagant satire. Godefroy (Prolegom. ad Cod. Theod. c. 1, p. 185), supports the historian by similar complaints and authentic facts. In the fourth century, many camels might have been laden with law books. Eunapius in Vit. Ædesii, p. 72. ‡ See a very splendid example in the life of Agricola, particularly c. 20, 21. The lieutenant of Britain was intrusted with

The influence of the revenue, the authority of law, and the command of a military force, concurred to render their power supreme and absolute; and whenever they were tempted to violate their allegiance, the royal province which they involved in their rebellion, was scarcely sensible of any change in its political state. From the time of Commodus to the reign of Constantine, near one hundred governors might be enumerated, who with various success, erected the standard of revolt; and though the innocent were too often sacrificed, the guilty might be sometimes prevented, by the suspicious cruelty of their master.* To secure his throne and the public tranquillity from these formidable servants, Constantine resolved to divide the military from the civil administration; and to establish, as a permanent and professional distinction, a practice which had been adopted only as an occasional expedient. The supreme jurisdiction exercised by the prætorian prefects over the armies of the empire was transferred to the two *masters-general* whom he instituted, the one for the cavalry, the other for the infantry; and though each of these *illustrious* officers was more peculiarly responsible for the discipline of those troops which were under his immediate inspection, they both indifferently commanded in the field the several bodies, whether of horse or foot, which were united in the same army.† Their number was soon doubled, by the division of the east and west; and as separate generals of the same rank and title were appointed on the four important frontiers of the Rhine, of the Upper and of the Lower Danube, and of the Euphrates, the defence of the Roman empire was at length committed to eight *masters-general* of the cavalry and the infantry. Under their orders, thirty-five military commanders were stationed in the provinces: three in Britain, six in Gaul, one in Spain, one in Italy, five on the Upper, and four on the Lower Danube; in Asia eight, three in Egypt, and four in Africa. The titles of *counts* and

the same powers which Cicero, proconsul of Cilicia, had exercised in the name of the senate and people.

* The abbé Dubos, who has examined with accuracy (see *Hist. de la Monarchie Française*, tom. i, p. 41—100, edit. 1742,) the institutions of Augustus and of Constantine, observes, that if Otho had been put to death the day before he executed his conspiracy, Otho would now appear in history as innocent as Corbulo.

† Zozimus, l. 2, p. 110. Before the end of the reign of

dukes,* by which they were properly distinguished, have obtained in modern languages so very different a sense, that the use of them may occasion some surprise. But it should be recollected, that the second of those appellations is only a corruption of the Latin word, which was indiscriminately applied to any military chief. All these provincial generals were therefore *dukes*; but no more than ten among them were dignified with the rank of *counts*, or companions, a title of honour, or rather of favour, which had been recently invented in the court of Constantine. A gold belt was the ensign which distinguished the office of the counts and dukes; and besides their pay they received a liberal allowance, sufficient to maintain one hundred and ninety servants, and one hundred and fifty-eight horses. They were strictly prohibited from interfering in any matter which related to the administration of justice or the revenue; but the command which they exercised over the troops of their department, was independent of the authority of the magistrates. About the same time that Constantine gave a legal sanction to the ecclesiastical order, he instituted in the Roman empire the nice balance of the civil and the military powers. The emulation, and sometimes the discord, which reigned between two professions of opposite interests and incompatible manners, was productive of beneficial and of pernicious consequences. It was seldom to be expected that the general and the civil governor of a province should either conspire for the disturbance, or should unite for the service, of their country. While the one delayed to offer the assistance which the other disdained to solicit, the troops very frequently remained without orders or without supplies; the public safety was betrayed, and the defenceless subjects were left exposed to the fury of the barbarians. The divided administration, which had been formed by Constantine, relaxed the vigour of the state, while it secured the tranquillity of the monarch.

The memory of Constantine has been deservedly censured for another innovation which corrupted military discipline,

Constantius, the *magistri militum* were already increased to four. See Valesius ad Ammian. l. 16, c. 7.

* Though the military counts and dukes are frequently mentioned, both in history and the codes, we must have recourse to the *Notitia* for the exact knowledge of their number and stations. For the institution, rank, privileges, &c. of the

and prepared the ruin of the empire. The nineteen years which preceded his final victory over Licinius had been a period of license and intestine war. The rivals who contended for the possession of the Roman world had withdrawn the greatest part of their forces from the guard of the general frontier; and the principal cities which formed the boundary of their respective dominions were filled with soldiers, who considered their countrymen as their most implacable enemies. After the use of these internal garrisons had ceased with the civil war, the conqueror wanted either wisdom or firmness to revive the severe discipline of Diocletian, and to suppress a fatal indulgence, which habit had endeared and almost confirmed to the military order. From the reign of Constantine a popular and even legal distinction was admitted between the *Palatines** and the *Borderers*; the troops of the court, as they were improperly styled, and the troops of the frontier. The former, elevated by the superiority of their pay and privileges, were permitted, except in the extraordinary emergencies of war, to occupy their tranquil stations in the heart of the provinces. The most flourishing cities were oppressed by the intolerable weight of quarters. The soldiers insensibly forgot the virtues of their profession, and contracted only the vices of civil life. They were either degraded by the industry of mechanic trades, or enervated by the luxury of baths and theatres. They soon became careless of their martial exercises, curious in their diet and apparel; and while they inspired terror to the subjects of the empire, they trembled at the hostile approach of the barbarians.† The chain of fortifications which Diocletian and his colleagues had extended along the banks of the great rivers, was no longer maintained with the same care, or defended with the same vigilance. The numbers which still remained under the

counts in general, see Cod. Theod. l. 6, tit. 12. 20, with the commentary of Godefroy.

* Zosimus, l. 2, p. 111. The distinction between the two classes of Roman troops is very darkly expressed in the historians, the laws, and the Notitia. Consult, however, the copious *paratitlon* or abstract, which Godefroy has drawn up of the seventh book, de Re Militari, of the Theodosian Code, l. 7, tit. 1, leg. 18; l. 8, tit. 1, leg. 10.

† *Ferox erat in suos miles et rapax, ignavus vero in hostes et fractus.* Ammian. l. 22, c. 4. He observes, that they love downy beds and houses of marble; and that their cups were heavier

name of the troops of the frontier, might be sufficient for the ordinary defence: but their spirit was degraded by the humiliating reflection, that *they* who were exposed to the hardships and dangers of a perpetual warfare, were rewarded only with about two-thirds of the pay and emoluments which were lavished on the troops of the court. Even the bands or legions that were raised the nearest to the level of those unworthy favourites, were in some measure disgraced by the title of honour which they were allowed to assume. It was in vain that Constantine repeated the most dreadful menaces of fire and sword against the borderers who should dare to desert their colours, to connive at the inroads of the barbarians, or to participate in the spoil.* The mischiefs which flow from injudicious counsels are seldom removed by the application of partial severities; and though succeeding princes laboured to restore the strength and number of the frontier garrisons, the empire till the last moment of its dissolution, continued to languish under the mortal wound which had been so rashly or so weakly inflicted by the hand of Constantine.

The same timid policy of dividing whatever is united, of reducing whatever is eminent, of dreading every active power, and of expecting that the most feeble will prove the most obedient, seems to pervade the institutions of several princes, and particularly those of Constantine. The martial pride of the legions, whose victorious camps had so often been the scene of rebellion, was nourished by the memory of their past exploits, and the consciousness of their actual strength. As long as they maintained their ancient establishment of six thousand men, they subsisted, under the reign of Diocletian, each of them singly, a visible and important object in the military history of the Roman empire. A few years afterwards, these gigantic bodies were shrunk to a very diminutive size; and when *seven* legions, with some auxiliaries, defended the city of Amida against the Persians, the total garrison, with the inhabitants of both sexes, and the peasants of the deserted country, did not exceed the number of

than their swords. * Cod. Theod. l. 7, tit. 1, leg. 1; tit. 12, leg. 1. See Howell's Hist. of the World, vol. ii, p. 19. That learned historian, who is not sufficiently known, labours to justify the character and policy of Constantine.

twenty thousand persons.* From this fact, and from similar examples, there is reason to believe, that the constitution of the legionary troops, to which they partly owed their valour and discipline, was dissolved by Constantine; and that the bands of Roman infantry, which still assumed the same names and the same honours, consisted only of one thousand or fifteen hundred men.† The conspiracy of so many separate detachments, each of which was awed by the sense of its own weakness, could easily be checked; and the successors of Constantine might indulge their love of ostentation, by issuing their orders to one hundred and thirty-two legions, inscribed on the muster-roll of their numerous armies. The remainder of their troops was distributed into several hundred cohorts of infantry, and squadrons of cavalry. Their arms, and titles, and ensigns, were calculated to inspire terror, and to display the variety of nations who marched under the imperial standard. And not a vestige was left of that severe simplicity, which, in the ages of freedom and victory, had distinguished the line of battle of a Roman army from the confused host of an Asiatic monarch.‡ A more particular enumeration, drawn from the *Notitia*, might exercise the diligence of an antiquary; but the historian will content himself with observing, that the number of permanent stations or garrisons established on the frontiers of the empire, amounted to five hundred and eighty-three; and that under the successors of Constantine, the complete force of the military establishment was computed at six hundred and forty-five thousand soldiers.§ An effort so prodigious surpassed the wants of a more ancient, and the faculties of a later period.

In the various states of society, armies are recruited from very different motives. Barbarians are urged by the love of war; the citizens of a free republic may be prompted by

* Ammian. l. 19. c. 2. He observes (c. 5) that the desperate sallies of two Gallic legions were like a handful of water thrown on a great conflagration.

† Pancirolus ad *Notitiam*, p. 96. *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. xxv, p. 491.

‡ *Romana acies unius prope formæ erat et hominum et armorum genere. Regia acies varia magis multis gentibus dissimilitudine armorum auxiliorumque erat.* T. Liv. l. 37, c. 39. 40. Flaminius, even before this event, had compared the army of Antiochus to a supper, in which the flesh of one vile animal was diversified by the skill of the cooks. See the life of Flaminius in Plutarch.

§ *Agathias*. l. 5, p. 157, edit. Louvre.

a principle of duty; the subjects, or at least the nobles, of a monarchy, are animated by a sentiment of honour; but the timid and luxurious inhabitants of a declining empire must be allured into the service by the hopes of profit, or compelled by the dread of punishment. The resources of the Roman treasury were exhausted by the increase of pay, by the repetition of donatives, and by the invention of new emoluments and indulgences, which, in the opinion of the provincial youth, might compensate the hardships and dangers of a military life. Yet, although the stature was lowered,* although slaves, at least by a tacit connivance, were indiscriminately received into the ranks, the insurmountable difficulty of procuring a regular and adequate supply of volunteers, obliged the emperors to adopt more effectual and coercive methods. The lands bestowed on the veterans, as the free reward of their valour, were henceforward granted under a condition which contains the first rudiments of the feudal tenures; that their sons, who succeeded to the inheritance, should devote themselves to the profession of arms as soon as they attained the age of manhood; and their cowardly refusal was punished by the loss of honour, of fortune, or even of life.† But as the annual growth of the sons of the veterans bore a very small proportion to the demands of the service, levies of men were frequently required from the provinces, and every proprietor was obliged either to take arms, or to procure a substitute, or to purchase his exemption by the payment of a heavy fine. The sum of forty-two pieces of gold, to which it was *reduced*, ascertains the exorbitant price of volunteers, and the reluctance with which the government admitted of this alternative.‡ Such was the horror for the profession of a

* Valentinian (Cod. Theodos. l. 7, tit. 13. leg. 3.) fixes the standard at five feet seven inches, about five feet four inches and a half English measure. It had formerly been five feet ten inches, and in the best corps six Roman feet. Sed tunc erat amplior multitudo, et plures sequebantur militiam armati. Vegetius de Re Militari, l. 1, c. 5.

† See the two titles, De Veteranis, and De Filiis Veteranorum, in the seventh book of the Theodosian Code. The age at which their military service was required, varied from twenty-five to sixteen. If the sons of the veterans appeared with a horse, they had a right to serve in the cavalry; two horses gave them some valuable privileges.

‡ Cod. Theod. l. 7, tit. 13. leg. 7. According to the historian Socrates, (see Godefroy ad loc.) the same emperor Valens sometimes

soldier, which had affected the minds of the degenerate Romans, that many of the youth of Italy, and the provinces, chose to cut off the fingers of their right hand to escape from being pressed into the service; and this strange expedient was so commonly practised, as to deserve the severe animadversion of the laws,* and a peculiar name in the Latin language.†

The introduction of barbarians into the Roman armies became every day more universal, more necessary, and more fatal. The most daring of the Scythians, of the Goths, and of the Germans, who delighted in war, and who found it more profitable to defend than to ravage the provinces, were enrolled, not only in the auxiliaries of their respective nations, but in the legions themselves, and among the most distinguished of the Palatine troops. As they freely mingled with the subjects of the empire, they gradually learned to despise their manners and to imitate their arts. They abjured the implicit reverence which the pride of Rome had exacted from their ignorance, while they acquired the knowledge and possession of those advantages by which alone she supported her declining greatness. The barbarian soldiers, who displayed any military talents, were advanced without exception, to the most important commands; and the names of the tribunes, of the counts and dukes, and of the generals themselves, betray a foreign origin, which they no longer condescended to disguise. They were often intrusted with the conduct of a war against their countrymen; and though most of them preferred the ties of alle-

required eighty pieces of gold for a recruit. In the following law it is faintly expressed, that slaves shall not be admitted inter optimas lectissimorum militum turmas.

* The person and property of a Roman knight, who had mutilated his two sons, were sold at public auction by order of Augustus. (Sueton. in August. c. 27.) The moderation of that artful usurper proves, that this example of severity was justified by the spirit of the times. Ammianus makes a distinction between the effeminate Italians and the hardy Gauls. (l. 15, c. 12.) Yet only fifteen years afterwards, Valentinian, in a law addressed to the prefect of Gaul, is obliged to enact that these cowardly deserters shall be burnt alive. (Cod. Theod. l. 7, tit. 13. leg. 5.) Their numbers in Illyricum were so considerable, that the province complained of a scarcity of recruits. (Id. leg. 10.) † They were called *Murci*. *Murcidus* is found in Plautus and Festus, to denote a lazy and cowardly person, who, according to Arnobius and Augustin, was under the immediate protection of the goddess *Murcia*. From this particular

giance to those of blood, they did not always avoid the guilt, or at least the suspicion, of holding a treasonable correspondence with the enemy, of inviting his invasion, or of sparing his retreat. The camps and the palace of the son of Constantine were governed by the powerful faction of the Franks, who preserved the strictest connexion with each other and with their country, and who resented every personal affront as a national indignity.* When the tyrant Caligula was suspected of an intention to invest a very extraordinary candidate with the consular robes, the sacrilegious profanation would have scarcely excited less astonishment, if, instead of a horse, the noblest chieftain of Germany or Britain had been the object of his choice. The revolution of three centuries had produced so remarkable a change in the prejudices of the people, that, with the public approbation, Constantine showed his successors the example of bestowing the honours of the consulship on the barbarians, who, by their merit and services, had deserved to be ranked among the first of the Romans.† But as these hardy veterans, who had been educated in the ignorance or contempt of the laws, were incapable of exercising any civil offices, the powers of the human mind were contracted by the irreconcilable separation of talents as well as of professions. The accomplished citizens of the Greek and Roman republics, whose characters could adapt themselves to the bar, the senate, the camp, or the schools, had learned to write, to speak, and to act, with the same spirit, and with equal abilities.

IV. Besides the magistrates and generals, who at a distance from the court diffused their delegated authority over the provinces and armies, the emperor conferred the rank of *illustrious* on seven of his more immediate servants, to whose fidelity he intrusted his safety, or his counsels, or his

instance of cowardice, *murcare* is used as synonymous to *mutilare*, by the writers of the middle Latinity. See Liudenbrogius, and Valesius ad Ammian. Marcellin. l. 15, c. 12. * Malarichus....adhibitis Francis quorum ea tempestate in palatio multitudo florebat, erectius jam loquebatur tumultuabaturque. Ammian. l. 15, c. 5. † Barbaros omnium primus, ad usque fasces auxerat et trabeas consulares. Ammian. l. 20. c. 10. Eusebius (in Vit. Constantin. l. 4, c. 17,) and Aurelius Victor seem to confirm the truth of this assertion; yet in the thirty two consular Fasti of the reign of Constantine, I cannot discover the name of a single barbarian. I should therefore interpret the liberality

treasures. 1. The private apartments of the palace were governed by a favourite eunuch, who, in the language of that age, was styled the *præpositus* or prefect of the sacred bedchamber. His duty was to attend the emperor in his hours of state, or in those of amusement, and to perform about his person all those menial services which can only derive their splendour from the influence of royalty. Under a prince who deserved to reign, the great chamberlain (for such we may call him) was a useful and an humble domestic; but an artful domestic, who improves every occasion of unguarded confidence, will insensibly acquire over a feeble mind that ascendant which harsh wisdom and uncomplying virtue can seldom obtain. The degenerate grandsons of Theodosius, who were invisible to their subjects and contemptible to their enemies, exalted the prefects of their bedchamber above the heads of all the ministers of the palace;* and even his deputy, the first of the splendid train of slaves who waited in the presence, was thought worthy to rank before the *respectable* proconsuls of Greece or Asia. The jurisdiction of the chamberlain was acknowledged by the *counts*, or superintendants, who regulated the two important provinces, of the magnificence of the wardrobe, and of the luxury of the imperial table.† 2. The principal administration of public affairs was committed to the diligence and abilities of the *master of the offices*.‡ He was the supreme magistrate of the palace, inspected the discipline of the civil and military *schools*, and received appeals from all parts of the empire; in the causes which related to that numerous army of privileged persons, who, as the servants of the court, had obtained for themselves and families, a right to decline the authority of the ordinary judges. The

of that prince as relative to the ornaments, rather than to the office, of the consulship. * Cod. Theod. l. 6, tit. 8. † By a very singular metaphor, borrowed from the military character of the first emperors, the steward of their household was styled the count of their camp (*comes castrensis*). Cassiodorus very seriously represents to him, that his own fame, and that of the empire, must depend on the opinion which foreign ambassadors may conceive of the plenty and magnificence of the royal table. (*Variar. lib. 6, epistol. 9.*)

‡ Gutherius (*de Officiis Domûs Augustæ, l. 2, c. 20. l. 3.*) has very accurately explained the functions of the master of the offices, and the constitution of his subordinate *scrinia*. But he vainly attempts, on the most doubtful authority, to deduce from the time of the Anto-

correspondence between the prince and his subjects was managed by the four *scrinia*, or offices of this minister of state. The first was appropriated to memorials, the second to epistles, the third to petitions, and the fourth to papers and orders of a miscellaneous kind. Each of these was directed by an inferior *master*, of *respectable* dignity, and the whole business was dispatched by a hundred and forty-eight secretaries, chosen for the most part from the profession of the law, on account of the variety of abstracts of reports and references which frequently occurred in the exercise of their several functions. From a condescension, which in former ages would have been esteemed unworthy of the Roman majesty, a particular secretary was allowed for the Greek language; and interpreters were appointed to receive the ambassadors of the barbarians: but the department of foreign affairs, which constitutes so essential a part of modern policy, seldom diverted the attention of the master of the offices. His mind was more seriously engaged by the general direction of the posts and arsenals of the empire. There were thirty-four cities, fifteen in the east, and nineteen in the west, in which regular companies of workmen were perpetually employed in fabricating defensive armour, offensive weapons of all sorts, and military engines, which were deposited in the arsenals, and occasionally delivered for the service of the troops. 3. In the course of nine centuries, the office of *quæstor* had experienced a very singular revolution. In the infancy of Rome two inferior magistrates were annually elected by the people, to relieve the consuls from the invidious management of the public treasure;* a similar assistant was granted to every proconsul, and to every prætor, who exercised a military or provincial command: with the extent of conquest, the two

nines, or even of Nero, the origin of a magistrate who cannot be found in history before the reign of Constantine. * Tacitus (*Annal.* 11, 22) says, that the first quæstors were elected by the people, sixty-four years after the foundation of the republic; but he is of opinion, that they had, long before that period, been annually appointed by the consuls, and even by the kings. But this obscure point of antiquity is contested by other writers. [M. Niebuhr (*Lectures*, vol. i, p. 324) says, that "Tacitus, Plutarch, even Ulpian himself, (not so Gaius), are mistaken with regard to this point," and confound the two "*Quæstores paricidii*," the public accusers, who impeached political offenders before the Curia, with the six "*Quæstores Classici*," referring to the

quæstors were gradually multiplied to the number of four, of eight, of twenty, and, for a short time, perhaps, of forty;* and the noblest citizens ambitiously solicited an office which gave them a seat in the senate, and a just hope of obtaining the honours of the republic. Whilst Augustus affected to maintain the freedom of election, he consented to accept the annual privilege of recommending, or rather indeed of nominating, a certain proportion of candidates; and it was his custom to select one of these distinguished youths to read his orations or epistles in the assemblies of the senate.† The practice of Augustus was imitated by succeeding princes; the occasional commission was established as a permanent office; and the favoured quæstor, assuming a new and more illustrious character, alone survived the suppression of his ancient and useless colleagues.‡ As the orations, which he composed in the name of the emperor,§ acquired the force, and at length, the form, of absolute edicts, he was considered as the representative of the legis-

latter what applies only to the former.—Ed.] * Tacitus (Annal. 11, 12) seems to consider twenty as the highest number of quæstors; and Dion. (l. 43, p. 374) insinuates, that if the dictator Cæsar once created forty, it was only to facilitate the payment of an immense debt of gratitude. Yet the augmentation which he had made of prætors subsisted under the succeeding reigns. † Sueton. in August. c. 65. and Torrent. ad loc. Dion. Cas. p. 755. ‡ The youth and inexperience of the quæstors, who entered on that important office in their twenty-fifth year (Lips. Excurs. ad Tacit. l. 3. D.), engaged Augustus to remove them from the management of the treasury; and though they were restored by Claudius, they seem to have been finally dismissed by Nero. (Tacit. Annal. 22, 29. Sueton. in Aug. c. 36., in Claud. c. 24. Dion. p. 696—961, &c. Plin. Epistol. 10. 20, et alibi). In the provinces of the imperial division, the place of the quæstors was more ably supplied by the *procurators*, (Dion. Cass. p. 707. Tacit. in Vit. Agricol. c. 15.) or, as they were afterward called, *rationales*. (Hist. August. p. 130.) But in the provinces of the senate we may still discover a series of quæstors till the reign of Marcus Antoninus. (See the Inscriptions of Gruter, the Epistles of Pliny, and a decisive fact in the Augustan History, p. 64.) From Ulpian we may learn (Pandect. l. 1, tit. 13,) that under the government of the house of Severus, their provincial administration was abolished; and in the subsequent troubles, the annual or triennial elections of quæstors must have naturally ceased.

§ Cum patris nomine et epistolas ipse dictaret, et edicta conscriberet, orationesque in senatu recitaret, etiam quæstoris vice. (Sueton. in tit. c. 6.) The office must have acquired new dignity, which was occasionally executed by the heir apparent of the empire. Trajan entrusted the same care to Hadrian, his quæstor and cousin. See Dodwell, Prolæction. Cambden. 10, 11. p. 362—394.

lative power, the oracle of the council, and the original source of the civil jurisprudence. He was sometimes invited to take his seat in the supreme judicature of the imperial consistory, with the prætorian prefects, and the master of the offices; and he was frequently requested to resolve the doubts of inferior judges; but as he was not oppressed with a variety of subordinate business, his leisure and talents were employed to cultivate that dignified style of eloquence, which, in the corruption of taste and language, still preserves the majesty of the Roman laws.* In some respects, the office of the imperial quaestor may be compared with that of a modern chancellor; but the use of a great seal, which seems to have been adopted by the illiterate barbarians, was never introduced to attest the public acts of the emperors.

4. The extraordinary title of *count of the sacred largesses* was bestowed on the treasurer-general of the revenue, with the intention perhaps of inculcating, that every payment flowed from the voluntary bounty of the monarch. To conceive the almost infinite detail of the annual expense of the civil and military administration in every part of a great empire would exceed the powers of the most vigorous imagination. The actual account employed several hundred persons, distributed into eleven different offices, which were artfully contrived to examine and control their respective operations. The multitude of these agents had a natural tendency to increase; and it was more than once thought expedient to dismiss to their native homes the useless supernumeraries, who, deserting their honest labours, had pressed with too much eagerness into the lucrative profession of the finances.† Twenty-nine provincial receivers, of whom eighteen were honoured with the title of count, corresponded with the treasurer; and he extended his jurisdiction over the mines from whence the precious metals were extracted, over the mints in which they were converted into the current coin, and over the public treasuries of the most important cities, where they were deposited for the service

* — Terris edicta daturus;
 Supplicibus responsa.—Oracula regis
 Eloquio crevere tuo; nec dignius unquam
 Majestas meminit sese Romana locutam.

Claudian in Consulat. Mall. Theodor. 33. See likewise Symmachus (Epistol. 1. 17. and Cassiodorus. (Variar. 6. 5.) † Cod. Theod.

of the state. The foreign trade of the empire was regulated by this minister, who directed likewise all the linen and woollen manufactures, in which the successive operations of spinning, weaving, and dyeing, were executed, chiefly by women of a servile condition, for the use of the palace and army. Twenty-six of these institutions are enumerated in the west, where the arts had been more recently introduced, and a still larger proportion may be allowed for the industrious provinces of the east.* 5. Besides the public revenue, which an absolute monarch might levy and expend according to his pleasure, the emperors, in the capacity of opulent citizens, possessed a very extensive property, which was administered by the *count*, or treasurer of the *private estate*. Some part had perhaps been the ancient demesnes of kings and republics; some accessions might be derived from the families which were successively invested with the purple; but the most considerable portion flowed from the impure source of confiscations and forfeitures. The imperial estates were scattered through the provinces, from Mauritania to Britain; but the rich and fertile soil of Cappadocia tempted the monarch to acquire in that country his fairest possessions,† and either Constantine or his successors embraced the occasion of justifying avarice by religious zeal. They suppressed the rich temple of Comana, where the high-priest of the goddess of war supported the dignity of a sovereign prince; and they applied to their private use the consecrated lands, which were inhabited by six thousand subjects or

l. 6. tit. 30. Cod. Justinian. l. 12, tit. 24. * In the departments of the two counts of the treasury, the eastern part of the *Notitia* happens to be very defective. It may be observed, that we had a treasury-chest in London, and a gynæceum or manufactory at Winchester. But Britain was not thought worthy either of a mint or of an arsenal. Gaul alone possessed three of the former, and eight of the latter. [Cunobeline had a mint at Camalodunum, from which in his time, the tribute money of Britain was issued. There is certainly no such evidence of a similar establishment after his capital became a Colonia, and the land of the Trinobantes part of a regular Roman province. But Morant (Hist. of Essex, vol. i, p. 424) supposes that the Comes Littoris Saxonici had a residence on the neighbouring island of Mersey. This was most probably the Toliapis, placed by Ptolemy on that coast (Geog. l. 2, c. 3), and its name, a nautical abbreviation or corruption of the *Tituli lapis*, where the mariners, who were the geographer's informants, usually paid their *portorium*, at the entrance of the double harbour, on both branches of which innumerable vestiges of Roman dominion have been discovered.—ED.] † Cod. Theod.

slaves of the deity and her ministers.* But these were not the valuable inhabitants; the plains that stretch from the foot of mount Argæus to the banks of the Sarus bred a generous race of horses, renowned above all others in the ancient world, for their majestic shape, and incomparable swiftness. These sacred animals, destined for the service of the palace and the imperial games, were protected by the laws from the profanation of a vulgar master.† The demesnes of Cappadocia were important enough to require the inspection of a *count*;‡ officers of an inferior rank were stationed in the other parts of the empire; and the deputies of the private, as well as those of the public, treasurer, were

l. 6. tit. 30. leg. 2. and Godefroy ad loc. * Strabon. Geograph. l. 12, p. 809. The other temple of Comana, in Pontus, was a colony from that of Cappadocia (l. 12, p. 825). The president Des Brosses (see his Salluste, tom. ii, p. 21) conjectures, that the deity adored in both Comanas was Beltis, the Venus of the east, the goddess of generation; a very different being indeed from the goddess of war. [Two other towns of the same name are placed by Ptolemy in Pamphylia and Pisidia; both stood on the Cataractes; but nothing more is known of them. Of the two celebrated temples, that in Cappadocia was the wealthiest. So great was its antiquity, that the Greeks fabled its foundation by Orestes and his sister; they fancied that its name was derived from her hair, and that she carried thither the worship of Diana from Tauris. But the deity to whom it was dedicated is so uncertain, that besides Diana, the Armenian Anaitis, the Syrian Beltis, and the Roman Bellona, have all been represented as the divinity of the place. In that of Pontus, a prohibition of pork, corresponding with the Mosaical injunction, was enforced; and Strabo relates very circumstantially the fate of Cleo, who, for having assisted Antony and Augustus in their eastern campaigns, was made high-priest of Comana, and within a month after his appointment, died in consequence of having eaten the forbidden food. Much more than can be compressed into a note, might be said on the Druidical character of these priest-hoods and their rites, as well as on the Celtic origin of the places, together with the neighbouring districts of Commagene, Cammanene, Catacecaumene, and others between the Euphrates and Ægean Sea. Those who take any interest in such inquiries may find clues to guide them, if carefully compared and connected, in Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. 1, c. 6; Ap. Hirtii de Bell. Alex. 53, 54; T. Liv. Hist. l. 38, c. 16, 17; Strabonis Geog. l. 12; Ptol. Geog. l. 5, c. 5, 6, 7; Eochart. Geog. Sac. p. 195; Universal Hist. vol. i. p. 375.—ED.] † Cod. Theod. l. 10, tit. 6. de Grege Dominico. Godefroy has collected every circumstance of antiquity relative to the Cappadocian horses. One of the finest breeds, the Palmatian, was the forfeiture of a rebel, whose estate lay about sixteen miles from Tyana, near the great road between Constantinople and Antioch. ‡ Justinian (Novell. 30) subjected the pro-

maintained in the exercise of their independent functions, and encouraged to control the authority of the provincial magistrates.* 6, 7. The chosen bands of cavalry and infantry, which guarded the person of the emperor, were under the immediate command of the *two counts of the domestics*. The whole number consisted of three thousand five hundred men, divided into seven *schools*, or troops, of five hundred each; and in the east, this honourable service was almost entirely appropriated to the Armenians. Whenever, on public ceremonies, they were drawn up in the courts and porticoes of the palace, their lofty stature, silent order, and splendid arms of silver and gold, displayed a martial pomp, not unworthy of the Roman majesty.† From the seven schools two companies of horse and foot were selected, of the protectors, whose advantageous station was the hope and reward of the most deserving soldiers. They mounted guard in the interior apartments, and were occasionally dispatched into the provinces, to execute with celerity and vigour, the orders of their master.‡ The counts of the domestics had succeeded to the office of the prætorian prefects; like the prefects, they aspired from the service of the palace to the command of armies.

The perpetual intercourse between the court and the provinces was facilitated by the construction of roads and the institution of posts. But these beneficial establishments were accidentally connected with a pernicious and intolerable abuse. Two or three hundred *agents* or messengers were employed, under the jurisdiction of the master of the offices, to announce the names of the annual consuls, and the edicts or victories of the emperors. They insensibly assumed the license of reporting whatever they could observe of the conduct either of magistrates or of private citizens; and were soon considered as the eyes of the monarch,§ and

vince of the count of Cappadocia to the immediate authority of the favourite eunuch, who presided over the sacred bedchamber.

* Cod. Theod. l. 6. tit. 30. leg. 4. &c. † Pancirolus. p. 102—136. The appearance of these military domestics is described in the Latin poem of Corippus, de Laudibus Justin. l. 3, 157—179. p. 419—429, of the Appendix Hist. Byzantin. Rom. 177. ‡ Ammianus Marcellinus, who served so many years, obtained only the rank of a protector. The first ten among these honourable soldiers were *Clarissimi*.

§ Xenophon, Cyropæd. l. 8. Brisson, de Regno Persico, l. 1. no. 190, p. 264. The emperors adopted with pleasure this Persian metaphor.

the scourge of the people. Under the warm influence of a feeble reign, they multiplied to the incredible number of ten thousand, disdained the mild though frequent admonitions of the laws, and exercised in the profitable management of the posts a rapacious and insolent oppression. These official spies, who regularly corresponded with the palace, were encouraged, by favour and reward, anxiously to watch the progress of every treasonable design, from the faint and latent symptoms of disaffection, to the actual preparation of an open revolt. Their caeiless or criminal violation of truth and justice was covered by the consecrated mask of zeal: and they might securely aim their poisoned arrows at the breast either of the guilty or the innocent, who had provoked their resentment, or refused to purchase their silence. A faithful subject, of Syria, perhaps, or of Britain, was exposed to the danger, or at least to the dread, of being dragged in chains to the court of Milan or Constantinople, to defend his life and fortune against the malicious charge of these privileged informers. The ordinary administration was conducted by those methods which extreme necessity can alone palliate; and the defects of evidence were diligently supplied by the use of torture.*

The deceitful and dangerous experiment of the criminal *question*, as it is emphatically styled, was admitted, rather than approved, in the jurisprudence of the Romans. They applied this sanguinary mode of examination only to servile bodies, whose sufferings were seldom weighed by those haughty republicans in the scale of justice or humanity: but they would never consent to violate the sacred person of a citizen, till they possessed the clearest evidence of his guilt.† The annals of tyranny, from the reign of Tiberius to that of Domitian, circumstantially relate the executions of many innocent victims; but, as long as the faintest remembrance was kept alive of the national freedom and honour, the last hours of a Roman were secure from the

* For the *Agentes in Rebus*, see Ammian. l. 15, c. 3; l. 16, c. 5; l. 22, c. 7; with the curious annotations of Valesius. Cod. Theod. l. 6, tit. 27—29. Among the passages collected in the Commentary of Godefroy, the most remarkable one is from Libanius, in his discourse concerning the death of Julian. † The Pandects (l. 48, tit. 18) contain the sentiments of the most celebrated civilians on the subject of torture. They strictly confine it to slaves; and Ulpian himself is ready to acknowledge, that *Res est fragilis, et periculosa, et quæ veritatem*

danger of ignominious torture.* The conduct of the provincial magistrates was not, however, regulated by the practice of the city, or the strict maxims of the civilians. They found the use of torture established not only among the slaves of oriental despotism, but among the Macedonians, who obeyed a limited monarch: among the Rhodians, who flourished by the liberty of commerce; and even among the sage Athenians, who had asserted and adorned the dignity of human kind.† The acquiescence of the provincials encouraged their governors to acquire or perhaps to usurp, a discretionary power of employing the rack, to extort from vagrants or plebeian criminals the confession of their guilt, till they insensibly proceeded to confound the distinction of rank, and to disregard the privileges of Roman citizens. The apprehensions of the subjects urged them to solicit, and the interest of the sovereign engaged him to grant, a variety of special exemptions, which tacitly allowed, and even authorized, the general use of torture. They protected all persons of illustrious or honourable rank, bishops and their presbyters, professors of the liberal arts, soldiers and their families, municipal officers, and their posterity to the third generation, and all children under the age of puberty.‡ But a fatal maxim was introduced into the new jurisprudence of the empire, that in the case of treason, which included every offence that the subtlety of lawyers could derive from an *hostile intention* towards the prince or republic,§ all privileges were suspended, and all conditions were reduced to the same ignominious level. As the safety of the emperor was avowedly preferred to every consideration of justice or humanity, the dignity of age, and the tenderness of youth, were alike exposed to the most cruel tortures; and the

fallat. * In the conspiracy of Piso against Nero, Epicharis (libertina mulier) was the only person tortured; the rest were *intacti tormentis*. It would be superfluous to add a weaker, and it would be difficult to find a stronger example. Tacit. Annal. 15, 57.

† Dicendum . . . de Institutis Atheniensium, Rhodiorum, doctissimorum hominum, apud quos etiam (id quod acerbissimum est) liberi civesque torquentur. Cicero. Partit. Orat. c. 34. We may learn from the trial of Philotas the practice of the Macedonians. Diodor. Sicul. l. 17, p. 604. Q. Curt. l. 6, c. 11. ‡ Heineccius (Element. Jur. Civil. part 7, p. 81.) has collected these exemptions into one view.

§ This definition of the sage Ulpian (Pandect. l. 48, tit. 4.) seems to have been adapted to the court of Caracalla, rather than to that of

terrors of a malicious information, which might select them as the accomplices, or even as the witnesses, perhaps, of an imaginary crime, perpetually hung over the heads of the principal citizens of the Roman world.*

These evils, however terrible they may appear, were confined to the smaller number of Roman subjects whose dangerous situation was in some degree compensated by the enjoyment of those advantages, either of nature or of fortune, which exposed them to the jealousy of the monarch. The obscure millions of a great empire have much less to dread from the cruelty than from the avarice of their masters; and *their* humble happiness is principally affected by the grievance of excessive taxes, which, gently pressing on the wealthy, descend with accelerated weight on the meaner and more indigent classes of society. An ingenious philosopher† has calculated the universal measure of the public impositions by the degrees of freedom and servitude; and ventures to assert, that, according to an invariable law of nature, it must always increase with the former, and diminish in a just proportion to the latter. But this reflection, which would tend to alleviate the miseries of despotism, is contradicted at least by the history of the Roman empire; which accuses the same princes of despoiling the senate of its authority, and the provinces of their wealth. Without abolishing all the various customs and duties on merchandises, which are imperceptibly discharged by the apparent choice of the purchaser, the policy of Constantine and his successors preferred a simple and direct mode of taxation, more congenial to the spirit of an arbitrary government.‡

The name and use of the *indictions*.§ which serve to ascer-

Alexander Severus. See the Codes of Theodosius and Justinian ad leg. Julian. majestatis.

* Arcadius Charisius is the oldest lawyer quoted in the Pandects to justify the universal practice of torture in all cases of treason; but this maxim of tyranny, which is admitted by Ammianus (l. 19. c. 12) with the most respectful terror, is enforced by several laws of the successors of Constantine. See Cod. Theod. l. 9, tit. 35. In majestatis crimine omnibus aqua est conditio.

† Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix*, l. 12, c. 13. ‡ Mr. Hume (*Essays*, vol. i. p. 359) has seen this important truth, with some degree of perplexity.

§ The cycle of indictions, which may be traced as high as the reign of Constantius, or perhaps of his father Constantine, is still employed by the Papal court: but the commencement of the year has been very reasonably altered to the 1st of Ja-

tain the chronology of the middle ages, were derived from the regular practice of the Roman tributes.* The emperor subscribed with his own hand, and in purple ink, the solemn edict, or indiction, which was fixed up in the principal city of each diocese, during two months previous to the 1st day of September. And, by a very easy connexion of ideas, the word *indiction* was transferred to the measure of tribute which it prescribed, and to the annual term which it allowed for the payment. This general estimate of the supplies was proportioned to the real and imaginary wants of the state; but as often as the expense exceeded the revenue, or the revenue fell short of the computation, an additional tax, under the name of superindiction, was imposed on the people; and the most valuable attribute of sovereignty was communicated to the prætorian prefects, who, on some occasions, were permitted to provide for the unforeseen and extraordinary exigencies of the public service. The execution of these laws (which it would be tedious to pursue in their minute and intricate detail) consisted of two distinct operations; the resolving the general imposition into its constituent parts, which were assessed on the provinces, the cities, and the individuals, of the Roman world; and the collecting the separate contributions of the individuals, the cities, and the provinces, till the accumulated sums were poured into the imperial treasuries. But as the account

mary. See l'Art de Vérifier les Dates, p. 11, and Dictionnaire Raison. de la Diplomatie, tom. ii, p. 25, two accurate treatises, which come from the workshop of the Benedictines. [M. Guizot has here denied the introduction of the Indictions by Constantine, and referred to Aur. Victor (De Cæs. c. 29) and Lactantius (De M. P. c. 7) to prove, that "Diocletian was the author of this despotic institution." Further evidence of this is also deduced by him from the remission of taxation granted to the city of Autun, by Constantine. This generous act has been already mentioned by Gibbon (ch. 14, vol. i, p. 489.) It only shows, that the capitation-tax existed at that time, not that it was levied in the more systematic and oppressive form of "the Indictions." This was given to it by Constantine. In "L'Art de vérifier les Dates," its commencement is dated in A.D. 313, the eighth year of his reign. Clinton, with greater accuracy, fixes it at A.D. 312, and adds, "the Indictions were not in use before the reign of Constantine." (F. R. i, p. 364; ii, p. 211.)—ED.] * The first twenty-eight titles of the eleventh book of the Theodosian Code are filled with the circumstantial regulations on the important subject of tributes; but they suppose a clearer knowledge of fundamental principles than it is at present in our power to attain.

between the monarch and the subject was perpetually open, and as the renewal of the demand anticipated the perfect discharge of the preceding obligation, the weighty machine of the finances was moved by the same hands round the circle of its yearly revolution. Whatever was honourable or important in the administration of the revenue, was committed to the wisdom of the prefects, and their provincial representatives; the lucrative functions were claimed by a crowd of subordinate officers, some of whom depended on the treasurer, others on the governor of the province; and who, in the inevitable conflicts of a perplexed jurisdiction, had frequent opportunities of disputing with each other the spoils of the people. The laborious offices, which could be productive only of envy and reproach, of expense and danger, were imposed on the *decurions*, who formed the corporations of the cities, and whom the severity of the imperial laws had condemned to sustain the burdens of civil society.* The whole landed property of the empire (with-

* The title concerning the Decurions (l. 12, tit. 1), is the most ample in the whole Theodosian Code: since it contains not less than one hundred and ninety-two distinct laws to ascertain the duties and privileges of that useful order of citizens. [After the census or survey had been prepared by the *tabularii*, the decurions were required to assess the amount payable by each proprietor. This hateful task was imperatively assigned to the wealthiest citizens in every town. They had no salaries, and their only recompense was, that they were exempted from some corporal chastisements, which in certain cases might have been inflicted. This office of decurion was the ruin of all the opulent. They endeavoured, therefore, to evade this dangerous honour; they concealed themselves—they entered the army; but such efforts were useless; they were caught—compelled to take upon themselves the office, and their repugnance was condemned as *impiety*.—Guzot.] [The following abstract of Niebuhr's observations on these subjects, will make them more intelligible. Diocletian devised, and Constantine completed, the system of *indictions*. A province was valued in the lump, and assessed at a fixed sum, which was divided into *capita* or quotas, and these were imposed in an arbitrary manner, sometimes several on one man, and sometimes one on several of an inferior grade. To apportion them was the duty of the decurions. From the earliest times every Latin town had a council of a hundred members. These were divided into ten decuries, and this gave rise to the term *decurions*, which is equivalent to our present town-councillors. They were an assembly of burghers, each representing a class, and composed the local magistracy. When the assessment of the *indictions* was imposed on them, the richest individuals were selected, and they were made personally answerable for the money. If they could

out excepting the patrimonial estates of the monarchy) was the object of ordinary taxation; and every new purchaser contracted the obligations of the former proprietor. An accurate *census*,* or survey, was the only equitable mode of ascertaining the proportion which every citizen should be obliged to contribute for the public service; and from the well-known period of the indictions, there is reason to believe that this difficult and expensive operation was repeated at the regular distance of fifteen years. The lands were measured by surveyors, who were sent into the provinces; their nature, whether arable or pasture, or vineyards or woods, was distinctly reported; and an estimate was made of their common value from the average produce of five years. The numbers of slaves and of cattle constituted an essential part of the report; an oath was administered to the proprietors, which bound them to disclose the true state of their affairs; and their attempts to prevaricate, or elude the intention of the legislator, were severely watched, and punished as a capital crime, which included the double guilt of treason and sacrilege.† A large portion of the tribute was paid in money; and of the current coin of the empire, gold alone could be legally accepted.‡ The remainder of the taxes, according to the proportions determined by the annual indiction, was furnished in a manner still more direct, and still more oppressive. According to the different nature of lands, their real produce, in the various articles of wine or

not pay it, torture was even used to force them; and they in their turns might employ the same means of exacting it from the rate-payers. Many would, therefore, rather be sold for slaves, than accept the office. Severe laws were enacted to compel them, and define what pleas for exemption might be admitted. So early as the third century, the burden of taxation began to cause revolts, and afterwards produced the peasant-wars of the Bagaudæ, which have so much puzzled the French antiquaries. Niebuhr's Lectures on Roman History, vol. i, p. 120; vol. iii, p. 301. 331.—Ed.]

* *Habemus enim et hominum numerum qui delati sunt, et agrum modum.* Eumenius in Panegy. Vet. 8. 6. See Cod. Theod. l. 13, tit. 10, 11, with Godefroy's Commentary.

† *Siquis sacrilega vitem falce succiderit, aut feracium ramorum foetus hebetaverit, quo declinet fidem censuum, et mentiatu callide paupertatis ingenium, mox detectus capitale subibit exitium, et bona ejus in fisci jura migrabunt.* Cod. Theod. l. 13, tit. 11, leg. 1. Although this law is not without its studied obscurity, it is, however, clear enough to prove the minuteness of the inquisition, and the disproportion of the penalty.

‡ The astonishment of Pliny would have ceased. *Equidem miror P. R. victis gentibus argentum semper*

oil, corn or barley, wood or iron, was transported by the labour or at the expense of the provincials to the imperial magazines, from whence they were occasionally distributed, for the use of the court, of the army, and of the two capitals, Rome and Constantinople.* The commissioners of the revenue were so frequently obliged to make considerable purchases, that they were strictly prohibited from allowing any compensation, or from receiving in money the value of those supplies which were exacted in kind. In the primitive simplicity of small communities, this method may be well adapted to collect the almost voluntary offerings of the people; but it is at once susceptible of the utmost latitude, and of the utmost strictness, which in a corrupt and absolute monarchy must introduce a perpetual contest between the power of oppression and the arts of fraud.† The agriculture of the Roman provinces was insensibly ruined, and, in the progress of despotism, which tends to disappoint its own purpose, the emperors were obliged to derive some merit from the forgiveness of debts, or the remission of tributes, which their subjects were utterly incapable of paying. According to the new division of Italy, the fertile and happy province of Campania, the scene of the early victories and of the delicious retirements of the citizens of Rome, extended between the sea and the Apennine from the Tiber to the Silanus. Within sixty years after the death of Constantine, and on the evidence of an

imperitasse, non aurum. Hist. Natur. 33. 15.

* These articles were not transported at the expense of the proprietors. In the maritime provinces, and on the banks of navigable rivers, there were companies of boatmen and captains of galleys on whom this devolved, and who furnished the means of conveyance at their own charge. To compensate them for this, they were wholly or in part relieved from the indictions and other taxes. They enjoyed certain privileges: these and their obligations were marked out by fixed regulations. Cod. Theod. l. 13, tit. 5—9. The land carriage was conducted on the same principle by a privileged body called *Bastagi*, and its members *Bastagarii*. Ib. l. 8, tit. 5.—Gutzor. [*Bastaga* was the Latinized form of the Greek *Βασταγή*, a burden, from *βάσταν*, to carry. The later Romans took from this, *Basta* or *Bastum*, which they used for their ancient word *clitella*, or pack-saddle.—ED.]

† Some precautions were taken (see Cod. Theod. l. 11, tit. 2. and Cod. Justinian, l. 10, tit. 27, leg. 1—3.) to restrain the magistrates from the abuse of their authority, either in the exaction or in the purchase of corn: but those who had learning enough to read the orations of Cicero against Verres (3 de *Frumento*), might instruct themselves in all the various arts of oppres-

actual survey, an exemption was granted in favour of three hundred and thirty thousand English acres of desert and uncultivated land; which amounted to one-eighth of the whole surface of the province. As the footsteps of the barbarians had not yet been seen in Italy, the cause of this amazing desolation, which is recorded in the laws, can be ascribed only to the administration of the Roman emperors.*

Either from design or from accident, the mode of assessment seemed to unite the substance of a land-tax with the forms of a capitation.† The returns which were sent of every province or district, expressed the number of tributary subjects, and the amount of the public impositions. The latter of these sums was divided by the former; and the estimate, that such a province contained so many *capita*, or heads of tribute; and that each *head* was rated at such a price, was universally received, not only in the popular, but even in the legal computation. The value of a tributary head must have varied, according to many accidental, or at least fluctuating circumstances: but some knowledge has been preserved of a very curious fact, the more important, since it relates to one of the richest provinces of the Roman empire, and which now flourishes as the most splendid of the European kingdoms. The rapacious ministers of Constantius had exhausted the wealth of Gaul, by exacting twenty-five pieces of gold for the annual tribute of every head. The humane policy of his successor reduced the capitation to seven pieces.‡ A moderate proportion between these opposite extremes of extraordinary oppression and of transient indulgence may therefore be fixed at sixteen pieces

sion, with regard to the weight, the price, the quality, and the carriage. The avarice of an unlettered governor would supply the ignorance of precept or precedent.

* Cod. Theod. l. 11, tit. 28, leg. 2, published the 24th of March, A.D. 395, by the emperor Honorius, only two months after the death of his father Theodosius. He speaks of five hundred and twenty-eight thousand and forty-two Roman jugera, which I have reduced to the English measure. The jugerum contained twenty-eight thousand eight hundred square Roman feet.

† Godefroy (Cod. Theod. tom. vi, p. 116) argues with weight and learning on the subject of the capitation; but while he explains the *caput*, as a share or measure of property, he too absolutely excludes the idea of a personal assessment.

‡ Quid profuerit (*Julianus*) anhelantibus extremâ penuriâ Gallis, hinc maxime claret, quod primitus partes eas ingressus, pro *capitibus* singulis tributo nomine

of gold, or about 9*l.* sterling, the common standard perhaps of the impositions of Gaul.* But this calculation, or rather indeed, the facts from whence it is deduced, cannot fail of suggesting two difficulties to a thinking mind, who will be at once surprised by the *equality*, and by the *enormity* of the capitation. An attempt to explain them may perhaps reflect some light on the interesting subject of the finances of the declining empire.

I. It is obvious, that, as long as the immutable constitution of human nature produces and maintains so unequal a division of property, the most numerous part of the community would be deprived of their subsistence, by the equal assessment of a tax from which the sovereign would derive a very trifling revenue. Such indeed might be the theory of the Roman capitation; but in the practice, this unjust equality was no longer felt, as the tribute was collected on the principle of a *real*, not of a *personal*, imposition. Several indigent citizens contributed to compose a single *head*, or share of taxation; while the wealthy provincial, in proportion to his fortune, alone represented several of those imaginary beings. In a poetical request, addressed to one of the last and most deserving of the Roman princes who reigned in Gaul, Sidonius Apollinaris personifies his tribute under the figure of a triple monster, the Geryon of the Grecian fables, and entreats the new Hercules that he would most graciously be pleased to save his life by cutting

vicanos quinos aureos reperit flagitari; discedens vero septenos tantum munera universa complentes. Ammian. l. 16, c. 5.

* In the calculation of any sum of money under Constantine and his successors, we need only refer to the excellent discourse of Mr. Greaves on the Denarius, for the proof of the following principles: 1. That the ancient and modern Roman pound, containing five thousand two hundred and fifty-six grains of troy weight, is about one-twelfth lighter than the English pound, which is composed of five thousand seven hundred and sixty of the same grains. 2. That the pound of gold, which had once been divided into forty-eight *aurei*, was at this time coined into seventy-two smaller pieces of the same denomination. 3. That five of these aurei were the legal tender for a pound of silver, and that consequently the pound of gold was exchanged for fourteen pounds eight ounces of silver, according to the Roman, or about thirteen pounds according to the English weight. 4. That the English pound of silver is coined into sixty-two shillings. From these elements we may compute the Roman pound of gold, the usual method of reckoning large sums, at 4*l.* sterling, and we may fix the currency of the *aureus* at somewhat more than eleven shillings.

off three of his heads.* The fortune of Sidonius far exceeded the customary wealth of a poet; but if he had pursued the allusion, he must have painted many of the Gallic nobles with the hundred heads of the deadly hydra, spreading over the face of the country, and devouring the substance of a hundred families. II. The difficulty of allowing an annual sum of about 9*l.* sterling, even for the average of the capitation of Gaul, may be rendered more evident by the comparison of the present state of the same country, as it is now governed by the absolute monarch of an industrious, wealthy, and affectionate people. The taxes of France cannot be magnified, either by fear or by flattery, beyond the annual amount of eighteen millions sterling, which ought perhaps to be shared among four-and-twenty millions of inhabitants.† Seven millions of these, in the capacity of fathers, or brothers, or husbands, may discharge the obligations of the remaining multitude of women and children; yet the equal proportion of each tributary subject

* Geryones nos esse puta monstrumque tributum,
Hic capita ut vivam, tu mihi tolle tria.

Sidon. Apollinar. carm. 13.

The reputation of father Sirmond led me to expect more satisfaction than I have found in his note (p. 144) on this remarkable passage. The words, suo vel *suorum* nomine, betray the perplexity of the commentator. † This assertion, however formidable it may seem, is founded on the original registers of births, deaths, and marriages, collected by public authority, and now deposited in the *Contrôle General* at Paris. The annual average of births, throughout the whole kingdom, taken in five years from 1770 to 1774 (both inclusive), is four hundred and seventy-nine thousand six hundred and forty-nine boys, and four hundred and forty-nine thousand two hundred and sixty-nine girls; in all, nine hundred and twenty-eight thousand nine hundred and eighteen children. The province of French Hainault alone furnishes nine thousand nine hundred and six births; and we are assured, by an actual enumeration of the people, annually repeated from the year 1773 to the year 1776, that, upon an average, Hainault contains two hundred and fifty-seven thousand and ninety-seven inhabitants. By the rules of fair analogy, we might infer, that the ordinary proportion of annual births to the whole people, is about one to twenty-six; and that the kingdom of France contains twenty-four millions one hundred and fifty-one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight persons of both sexes and of every age. If we content ourselves with the more moderate proportion of one to twenty-five, the whole population will amount to twenty-three millions two hundred and twenty-two thousand nine hundred and fifty. From the diligent researches of the French government (which are not unworthy of our

will scarcely rise above fifty shillings of our money, instead of a proportion almost four times as considerable, which was regularly imposed on their Gallic ancestors. The reason of this difference may be found, not so much in the relative scarcity or plenty of gold and silver, as in the different state of society in ancient Gaul and in modern France. In a country where personal freedom is the privilege of every subject, the whole mass of taxes, whether they are levied on property or on consumption, may be fairly divided among the whole body of the nation. But the far greater part of the lands of ancient Gaul, as well as of the other provinces of the Roman world, were cultivated by slaves or by peasants, whose dependent condition was a less rigid servitude.* In such a state the poor were maintained at the expense of the masters, who enjoyed the fruits of their labour; and as the rolls of tribute were filled only with the names of those citizens who possessed the means of an honourable, or at least of a decent subsistence, the comparative smallness of their numbers explains and justifies the high rate of their capitation. The truth of this assertion may be illustrated by the following example. The Ædui, one of the most powerful and civilized tribes or *cities* of Gaul, occupied an extent of territory which now contains above five hundred thousand inhabitants, in the two ecclesiastical dioceses of Autun and Nevers;† and with the probable accession of those of Châlons and Maçon,‡ the popu-

own imitation), we may hope to obtain a still greater degree of certainty on this important subject. * Cod. Theod. l. 5, tit. 9—11.

Cod. Justinian, l. 11, tit. 53. *Coloni appellantur, qui conditionem debent genitili solo, propter agriculturam sub dominio possessorum.* Augustin. de Civitate Dei, l. 10, c. 1.

† The ancient jurisdiction of (*Augustodunum*) Autun in Burgundy, the capital of the Ædui, comprehended the adjacent territory of (*Noviodunum*) Nevers. See D'Anville, Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule, p. 491. The two dioceses of Autun and Nevers are now composed, the former of six hundred and ten, and the latter of one hundred and sixty parishes. The registers of births, taken during eleven years, in four hundred and seventy-six parishes of the same province of Burgundy, and multiplied by the moderate proportion of twenty-five, (see Messance, Recherches sur la Population, p. 142,) may authorize us to assign an average number of six hundred and sixty-six persons for each parish, which being again multiplied by the seven hundred and seventy parishes of the dioceses of Nevers and Autun, will produce the sum of five hundred and five thousand one hundred and twenty persons for the extent of country which was once possessed by the Ædui. ‡ We might derive an

lation would amount to eight hundred thousand souls. In the time of Constantine, the territory of the Ædui afforded no more than twenty-five thousand *heads* of capitation, of whom seven thousand were discharged by that prince from the intolerable weight of tribute.* A just analogy would seem to countenance the opinion of an ingenious historian,† that the free and tributary citizens did not surpass the number of half a million; and if, in the ordinary administration of government, their annual payments may be computed at about four millions and a half of our money, it would appear, that although the share of each individual was four times as considerable, a fourth part only of the modern taxes of France was levied on the imperial province of Gaul. The exactions of Constantius may be calculated at 7,000,000*l.* sterling, which were reduced to 2,000,000*l.* by the humanity or the wisdom of Julian.

But this tax, or capitation, on the proprietors of land, would have suffered a rich and numerous class of free citizens to escape. With the view of sharing that species of wealth which is derived from art or labour, and which exists in money or in merchandise, the emperors imposed a distinct and personal tribute on the trading part of their subjects.‡ Some exemptions, very strictly confined, both in time and place, were allowed to the proprietors who disposed of the produce of their own estates. Some indulgence was granted to the profession of the liberal arts; but every other branch of commercial industry was affected by the severity of the law. The honourable merchant of Alexandria, who imported the gems and spices of India for the use of the western world; the usurer, who derived from the interest of money

additional supply of three hundred and one thousand seven hundred and fifty inhabitants from the dioceses of Châlons (*Cubillonum*) and of Maçon (*Matisco*), since they contain, the one two hundred, and the other two hundred and sixty, parishes. This accession of territory might be justified by very specious reasons. 1. Châlons and Maçon were undoubtedly within the original jurisdiction of the Ædui. See D'Anville, Notice, p. 187—443. 2. In the *Notitia* of Gaul, they are enumerated not as *Civitates*, but merely as *Castra*. 3. They do not appear to have been episcopal seats before the fifth and sixth centuries. Yet there is a passage in Eumenius (*Panegy. Vet.* 8. 7). which very forcibly deters me from extending the territory of the Ædui in the reign of Constantine along the beautiful banks of the navigable Saône.

* Eumenius in *Panegy. Vet.* 8. 11.

† L'abbé du Bos, *Hist.*

Critique de la M. F. tom. i, p. 121. ‡ See *Cod. Theod.* l. 13, tit. 1. 4.

a silent and ignominious profit; the ingenious manufacturer, the diligent mechanic, and even the most obscure retailer of a sequestered village, were obliged to admit the officers of the revenue into the partnership of their gain: and the sovereign of the Roman empire, who tolerated the profession, consented to share the infamous salary of public prostitutes.* As this general tax upon industry was collected every fourth year, it was styled the *lustral contribution*: and the historian Zosimus† laments that the approach of the fatal period was announced by the tears and terrors of the citizens, who were often compelled by the impending scourge to embrace the most abhorred and unnatural methods of procuring the sum at which their property had been assessed. The testimony of Zosimus cannot indeed be justified from the charge of passion and prejudice; but, from the nature of this tribute, it seems reasonable to conclude, that it was arbitrary in the distribution, and extremely rigorous in the mode of collecting. The secret wealth of commerce, and the precarious profits of art or labour, are susceptible only of a discretionary valuation, which is seldom disadvantageous to the interest of the treasury; and as the person of the trader supplies the want of a visible and permanent security, the payment of the imposition, which, in the case of a land-tax, may be obtained by the seizure of property, can rarely be extorted by any other means than those of corporal punishments. The cruel treatment of the insolvent debtors of the state, is attested, and was perhaps mitigated, by a very humane edict of Constantine, who, disclaiming the use of racks and of scourges, allots a spacious and airy prison for the place of their confinement.‡

These general taxes were imposed and levied by the absolute authority of the monarch; but the occasional offerings

* The emperor Theodosius, by a legal enactment, abandoned this shameful branch of revenue. (Godef. ad Cod. Theod. lib. 13, tit. 1). But before he relinquished it, he secured what would make good the loss. Florentius, a rich patrician, indignant at a licentiousness thus protected by law, protested against it, and as an inducement for its abolition, tendered his own property to the emperor to compensate for the sacrifice. Theodosius was so mean as to accept the offer.—GUIZOT.

† Zosimus, l. 2, p. 115. There is probably as much passion and prejudice in the attack of Zosimus, as in the elaborate defence of the memory of Constantine by the zealous Dr. Howell. Hist. of the World, vol. ii, p. 20. ‡ Cod. Theod. l. 11, tit. 7, leg. 3.

of the *coronary gold* still retained the name and semblance of popular consent. It was an ancient custom that the allies of the republic, who ascribed their safety or deliverance to the success of the Roman arms, and even the cities of Italy, who admired the virtues of their victorious general, adorned the pomp of his triumph by their voluntary gifts of crowns of gold, which, after the ceremony, were consecrated in the temple of Jupiter, to remain a lasting monument of his glory to future ages.* The progress of zeal and flattery soon multiplied the number, and increased the size, of these popular donations; and the triumph of Cæsar was enriched with two thousand eight hundred and twenty-two massy crowns, whose weight amounted to twenty thousand four hundred and fourteen pounds of gold. This treasure was immediately melted down by the prudent dictator, who was satisfied that it would be more serviceable to his soldiers than to the gods; his example was imitated by his successors; and the custom was introduced of exchanging these splendid ornaments for the more acceptable present of the current gold coin of the empire.† The spontaneous offering was at length exacted as the debt of duty; and instead of being confined to the occasion of a triumph, it was supposed to be granted by the several cities and provinces of the monarchy as often as the emperor condescended to announce his accession, his consulship, the birth of a son, the creation of a Cæsar, a victory over the barbarians, or any other real or imaginary event which graced the annals of his reign. The peculiar free gift of the senate of Rome was fixed by custom at sixteen hundred pounds of gold, or about 64,000*l.* sterling. The oppressed subjects celebrated their own felicity, that their sovereign should graciously consent to accept this feeble but voluntary testimony of their loyalty and gratitude.‡

* This custom was derived by the Romans from Greece. The oration of Demosthenes is universally known, the subject of which is the golden crown decreed to him by his fellow-citizens, and opposed by Æschines.—GUIZOT. † See Lipsius de Magnitud. Romana, l. 2, c. 9. The Tarragonese Spain presented the emperor Claudius with a crown of gold of seven, and Gaul with another of nine, *hundred* pounds weight. I have followed the rational emendation of Lipsius.

‡ Cod. Theod. l. 12, tit. 13. The senators were supposed to be exempt from the *Aurum Coronarium*; but the *Auri Oblatio*, which was required at their hands, was precisely of the same nature.

A people elated by pride, or soured by discontent, are seldom qualified to form a just estimate of their actual situation. The subjects of Constantine were incapable of discerning the decline of genius and manly virtue, which so far degraded them below the dignity of their ancestors; but they could feel and lament the rage of tyranny, the relaxation of discipline, and the increase of taxes. The impartial historian, who acknowledges the justice of their complaints, will observe some favourable circumstances which tended to alleviate the misery of their condition. The threatening tempest of barbarians, which so soon subverted the foundations of Roman greatness, was still repelled, or suspended, on the frontiers. The arts of luxury and literature were cultivated, and the elegant pleasures of society were enjoyed, by the inhabitants of a considerable portion of the globe. The forms, the pomp, and the expense of the civil administration, contributed to restrain the irregular licence of the soldiers; and although the laws were violated by power, or perverted by subtlety, the sage principles of the Roman jurisprudence preserved a sense of order and equity unknown to the despotic governments of the east. The rights of mankind might derive some protection from religion and philosophy; and the name of freedom, which could no longer alarm, might sometimes admonish, the successors of Augustus, that they did not reign over a nation of slaves or barbarians.*

CHAPTER XVIII.—CHARACTER OF CONSTANTINE.—GOTHIC WAR.—DEATH OF CONSTANTINE.—DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE AMONG HIS THREE SONS.—PERSIAN WAR.—TRAGIC DEATHS OF CONSTANTINE THE YOUNGER AND CONSTANS.—USURPATION OF MAGNENTIUS.—CIVIL WAR.—VICTORY OF CONSTANTIUS.

THE character of the prince who removed the seat of empire, and introduced such important changes into the civil and religious constitution of his country, has fixed the attention, and divided the opinions, of mankind. By the grateful zeal of the Christians, the deliverer of the church has been decorated with every attribute of a hero, and even

* The great Theodosius, in his judicious advice to his son, (Claudian in 4 consulat Honorii, 214, &c.), distinguishes the station of a

of a saint; while the discontent of the vanquished party has compared Constantine to the most abhorred of those tyrants, who, by their vice and weakness, dishonoured the imperial purple. The same passions have in some degree been perpetuated to succeeding generations, and the character of Constantine is considered, even in the present age, as an object either of satire or of panegyric. By the impartial union of those defects which are confessed by his warmest admirers, and of those virtues which are acknowledged by his most implacable enemies, we might hope to delineate a just portrait of that extraordinary man, which the truth and candour of history should adopt without a blush.* But it would soon appear, that the vain attempt to blend such discordant colours, and to reconcile such inconsistent qualities, must produce a figure monstrous rather than human, unless it is viewed in its proper and distinct lights, by a careful separation of the different periods of the reign of Constantine.

The person, as well as the mind of Constantine, had been

Roman prince from that of a Parthian monarch. Virtue was necessary for the one; birth might suffice for the other.

* On ne se trompera point sur Constantin, en croyant tout le mal qu'en dit Eusèbe, et tout le bien qu'en dit Zosime. Fleury, Hist. Ecclésiastique, tom. iii, p. 233. Eusebius and Zosimus form indeed the two extremes of flattery and invective. The intermediate shades are expressed by those writers whose character or situation variously tempered the influence of their religious zeal. [There are many points of resemblance between Constantine and our Henry the Eighth. The policy of self-advantage was equally the guide of both: neither the one nor the other had the faintest idea of principle. They both plundered the rich establishments, which they overthrew; they both resisted error and assisted truth, only as far as the one prejudiced and the other served their own interests. But by similar proceedings they awakened two different spirits; one led to twelve centuries of gloom; the other kindled a light which has been growing brighter for three hundred and fifty years, and whose future glories can be circumscribed by no imaginable limits. The following sketch of Constantine by Niebuhr is appropriate. "Gibbon judged of him with great fairness; otherwise he has scarcely met with any but fanatical admirers or detractors; and the manner in which he was idolized by the eastern church is so bad, that it might easily drive us into the opposite extreme. His motives in establishing the Christian religion appear to have been very strange. Whatever religion was in his head, must have been a confused mixture. On his coins he has the "Sol invictus:" he worships Pagan deities, consults the haruspices, holds heathen superstitions, and yet he shuts up the temples and

enriched by nature with her choicest endowments. His stature was lofty, his countenance majestic, his deportment graceful; his strength and activity were displayed in every manly exercise, and from his earliest youth, to a very advanced season of life, he preserved the vigour of his constitution by a strict adherence to the domestic virtues of chastity and temperance. He delighted in the social intercourse of familiar conversation; and though he might sometimes indulge his disposition to raillery with less reserve than was required by the severe dignity of his station, the courtesy and liberality of his manners gained the hearts of all who approached him. The sincerity of his friendship has been suspected; yet he showed, on some occasions, that he was not incapable of a warm and lasting attachment. The disadvantage of an illiterate education had not prevented him from forming a just estimate of the value of learning; and the arts and sciences derived some encouragement from the munificent protection of Constantine. In the dispatch of business, his diligence was indefatigable; and the active powers of his mind were almost continually exercised in reading, writing, or meditating, in giving audience to ambassadors, and in examining the complaints of his subjects. Even those who censured the propriety of his measures were compelled to acknowledge that he possessed magnanimity to conceive, and patience to execute, the most arduous designs, without being checked either by the prejudices of education, or by the clamours of the multitude. In the field, he infused his own intrepid spirit into the troops, whom he conducted with the talents of a consummate general; and to his abilities, rather than to his fortune, we may ascribe the signal victories which he obtained over the foreign and domestic foes of the republic. He loved glory, as the reward, perhaps as the motive, of his labours. The boundless ambition, which, from the moment of his accepting the purple at York, appears as the ruling passion of his soul, may be justified by the dangers of his

builds churches. As president of the Nicene Council, we can only look upon him with disgust; he was himself no Christian, and would never be baptized till he was at the point of death. He had taken up the Christian faith as a superstition, which he mingled with his other superstitions. When therefore eastern writers speak of him as an *ἰσαπέστολος*, they do not know what they are saying, and

own situation, by the character of his rivals, by the consciousness of superior merit, and by the prospect that his success would enable him to restore peace and order to the distracted empire. In his civil wars against Maxentius and Licinius, he had engaged on his side the inclinations of the people, who compared the undissembled vices of those tyrants with the spirit of wisdom and justice which seemed to direct the general tenor of the administration of Constantine.*

Had Constantine fallen on the banks of the Tiber, or even in the plains of Hadrianople, such is the character which, with a few exceptions, he might have transmitted to posterity. But the conclusion of his reign (according to the moderate and indeed tender sentence of a writer of the same age,) degraded him from the rank which he had acquired among the most deserving of the Roman princes.† In the life of Augustus, we behold the tyrant of the republic, converted, almost by imperceptible degrees, into the father of his country and of human kind. In that of Constantine we may contemplate a hero, who had so long inspired his subjects with love and his enemies with terror, degenerating into a cruel and dissolute monarch, corrupted by his fortune, or raised by conquest above the necessity of dissimulation. The general peace which he maintained during the last fourteen years of his reign, was a period of apparent splendour rather than of real prosperity; and the old age of Constantine was disgraced by the opposite yet reconcilable vices of rapaciousness and prodigality. The accumulated treasures found in the palaces of Maxentius and Licinius, were lavishly consumed; the various innovations introduced by the conqueror were attended with an

to call him a saint is a profanation of the term." (Lectures on Rom. Hist. vol iii, p. 303).—ED.]

* The virtues of Constantine are collected for the most part from Eutropius, and the younger Victor, two sincere Pagans, who wrote after the extinction of his family. Even Zosimus, and the Emperor Julian, acknowledge his personal courage and military achievements. † See Eutropius, 10. 6. In

primo Imperii tempore optimis principibus, ultimo mediis comparandus. From the ancient Greek version of Paganus, (edit. Havercamp, p. 697,) I am inclined to suspect that Eutropius had originally written *vis* mediis; and that the offensive monosyllable was dropped by the wilful inadvertency of transcribers. Aurelius Victor expresses the general opinion by a vulgar and indeed obscure proverb, *Trachala*

increasing expense; the cost of his buildings, his court, and his festivals, required an immediate and plentiful supply; and the oppression of the people was the only fund which could support the magnificence of the sovereign.* His unworthy favourites, enriched by the boundless liberality of their master, usurped with impunity the privilege of rapine and corruption.† A secret but universal decay was felt in every part of the public administration; and the emperor himself, though he still retained the obedience, gradually lost the esteem of his subjects. The dress and manners, which, towards the decline of life, he chose to affect, served only to degrade him in the eyes of mankind. The Asiatic pomp, which had been adopted by the pride of Diocletian, assumed an air of softness and effeminacy in the person of Constantine. He is represented with false hair of various colours, laboriously arranged by the skilful artists of the times; a diadem of a new and more expensive fashion; a profusion of gems and pearls, of collars and bracelets, and a variegated flowing robe of silk, most curiously embroidered with flowers of gold. In such apparel, scarcely to be excused by the youth and folly of Elagabalus, we are at a loss to discover the wisdom of an aged monarch, and the simplicity of a Roman veteran.‡ A mind thus relaxed by prosperity and indulgence was incapable of rising to that magnanimity which disdains suspicion, and dares to forgive. The deaths of Maximian and Licinius may perhaps be justified by the maxims of policy as they are taught in the schools of tyrants; but an impartial narrative of the executions, or rather murders, which sullied the declining age of Constantine, will suggest to our most candid thoughts the idea

decem annis præstantissimus; duodecim sequentibus latro; decem novissimis pupillus ob immodicas profusiones. * Julian, Orat. 1,

p. 8, in a flattering discourse pronounced before the son of Constantine; and Cæsars. p. 335. Zosimus, p. 114, 115. The stately buildings of Constantinople, &c. may be quoted as a lasting and unexceptionable proof of the profuseness of their founder.

† The impartial Ammianus deserves all our confidence. Proximorum fauces aperuit primus omnium Constantinus (l. 16, c. 8). Eusebius himself confesses the abuse, (Vit. Constantin. l. 4, c. 29. 54.) and some of the imperial laws feebly point out the remedy. See above, p. 212 of this volume.

‡ Julian, in the Cæsars, attempts to ridicule his uncle. His suspicious testimony is confirmed however by the learned Spanheim, with the authority of medals. (See Commentaire, p. 156, 299, 397, 459.) Eusebius (Orat. c. 5) alleges, that Constantine dressed for the public,

of a prince, who could sacrifice without reluctance the laws of justice, and the feelings of nature, to the dictates either of his passions or of his interest.

The same fortune, which so invariably followed the standard of Constantine, seemed to secure the hopes and comforts of his domestic life. Those among his predecessors who had enjoyed the longest and most prosperous reigns, Augustus, Trajan, and Diocletian, had been disappointed of posterity; and the frequent revolutions had never allowed sufficient time for any imperial family to grow up and multiply under the shade of the purple. But the royalty of the Flavian line, which had been first ennobled by the Gothic Claudius, descended through several generations; and Constantine himself derived from his royal father the hereditary honours which he transmitted to his children. The emperor had been twice married. Minervina, the obscure but lawful object of his youthful attachment,* had left him only one son, who was called Crispus. By Fausta, the daughter of Maximian, he had three daughters and three sons, known by the kindred names of Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. The unambitious brothers of the great Constantine, Julius Constantius, Dalmatius, and Hannibalianus,† were permitted to enjoy the most honourable rank, and the most affluent fortune, that could be consistent with a private station. The youngest of the three lived without a name, and died without posterity. His two elder brothers obtained in marriage the daughters of wealthy senators, and propagated new branches of the imperial race. Gallus and Julian afterwards became the most illustrious of the children of Julius Constantius, the *patrician*. The two sons of Dalmatius, who had been decorated with the vain title of *Censor*, were named Dalmatius and Hannibalianus. The two sisters of the great Constantine, Anastasia and Eutropia, were bestowed on Optatus and Nepotianus, two senators of noble birth and of consular dignity.

not for himself. Were this admitted, the vainest coxcomb could never want an excuse. [Eckhel (D. Num. Vet. 8, 79) remarks, that some coins of Constantine are the first on which the diadem is seen on the emperor's head.—Ed.] * Zosimus and Zonaras agree in representing Minervina as the concubine of Constantine; but Ducange has very gallantly rescued her character, by producing a decisive passage from one of the panegyrics: "Ab ipso fine pueritiæ te matrimonii legibus dedisti." † Ducange (Familie Byzantinæ, p. 44) bestows on him, after Zonaras, the name of Constantine; a name somewhat unlikely, as

His third sister, Constantia, was distinguished by her pre-eminence of greatness and of misery. She remained the widow of the vanquished Licinius; and it was by her entreaties, that an innocent boy, the offspring of their marriage, preserved for some time his life, the title of Cæsar, and a precarious hope of the succession. Besides the females, and the allies of the Flavian house, ten or twelve males, to whom the language of modern courts would apply the title of princes of the blood, seemed according to the order of their birth, to be destined either to inherit or to support the throne of Constantine. But in less than thirty years, this numerous and increasing family was reduced to the persons of Constantius and Julian, who alone had survived a series of crimes and calamities, such as the tragic poets have deplored in the devoted lines of Pelops and of Cadmus.

Crispus, the eldest son of Constantine, and the presumptive heir of the empire, is represented by impartial historians as an amiable and accomplished youth. The care of his education, or at least of his studies, was intrusted to Lactantius, the most eloquent of the Christians; a preceptor admirably qualified to form the taste, and to excite the virtues of his illustrious disciple.* At the age of seventeen, Crispus was invested with the title of Cæsar, and the administration of the Gallic provinces, where the inroads of the Germans gave him an early occasion of signaling his military prowess. In the civil war which broke out soon afterward, the father and son divided their powers; and this history has already celebrated the valour as well as conduct displayed by the latter in forcing the straits of the Hellespont, so obstinately defended by the superior fleet of Licinius. This naval victory contributed to determine the event of the war; and the names of Constantine and of Crispus were united in the joyful acclamations of their eastern subjects, who loudly proclaimed, that the world had been subdued, and was now governed, by an emperor endowed with every virtue; and by his illustrious son, a prince beloved of heaven,

it was already occupied by the elder brother. That of Hannibalianus is mentioned in the Paschal Chronicle, and is approved by Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 527. * Jerom. in Chron. The

poverty of Lactantius may be applied either to the praise of the disinterested philosopher, or to the shame of the unfeeling patron. See Tillemont, *Mem. Ecclesiast.* tom. vi, part 1, p. 345. Dupin, *Bibliothèque Ecclesiast.* tom. i, p. 205. Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel*

and the lively image of his father's perfections. The public favour, which seldom accompanies old age, diffused its lustre over the youth of Crispus. He deserved the esteem, and he engaged the affections, of the court, the army, and the people. The experienced merit of a reigning monarch is acknowledged by his subjects with reluctance, and frequently denied with partial and discontented murmurs; while, from the opening virtues of his successor, they fondly conceive the most unbounded hopes of private as well as public felicity.*

This dangerous popularity soon excited the attention of Constantine, who, both as a father and as a king, was impatient of an equal. Instead of attempting to secure the allegiance of his son, by the generous ties of confidence and gratitude, he resolved to prevent the mischiefs which might be apprehended from dissatisfied ambition. Crispus soon had reason to complain that while his infant brother Constantius was sent, with the title of Cæsar, to reign over his peculiar department of the Gallie provinces,† *he*, a prince of mature years, who had performed such recent and signal services, instead of being raised to the superior rank of Augustus, was confined almost a prisoner to his father's court; and exposed, without power or defence to every calumny which the malice of his enemies could suggest. Under such painful circumstances, the royal youth might not always be able to compose his behaviour, or suppress his discontent: and we may be assured that he was encompassed by a train of indiscreet or perfidious followers, who assiduously studied to inflame, and who were perhaps instructed to betray, the unguarded warmth of his resentment. An edict of Constantine, published about this time, manifestly indicates his real or affected suspicions that a secret conspiracy had been formed against his person and government. By all

History, part 2, vol. vii, p. 66. [Lactantius is not named as the preceptor of Crispus till A.D. 317 (See vol. i, p. 513). It was probably after the treaty of peace with Licinius, that Constantine invited him from Nicomedia to Gaul, to finish his son's education.—ED.]

* Eusebii Historia Ecclesiastica, l. 10, c. 9. Eutropius (10. 6) styles him "egregium virum;" and Julian (Orat. 1) very plainly alludes to the exploits of Crispus in the civil war. See Spanheim, Comment. p. 92. † Compare Idiatus and the Paschal Chronicle, with Ammianus (l. 14, c. 5). The year in which Constantius was created Cæsar seems to be more accurately fixed by the two chronologists; but the historian who lived in his court, could not be

the allurements of honours and rewards, he invites informers of every degree to accuse without exception his magistrates or ministers, his friends or his most intimate favourites, protesting with a solemn asseveration, that he himself will listen to the charge, that he himself will revenge his injuries; and concluding with a prayer, which discovers some apprehension of danger, that the providence of the Supreme Being may still continue to protect the safety of the emperor and of the empire.*

The informers who complied with so liberal an invitation, were sufficiently versed in the arts of courts to select the friends and adherents of Crispus as the guilty persons; nor is there any reason to distrust the veracity of the emperor, who had promised an ample measure of revenge and punishment. The policy of Constantine maintained, however, the same appearances of regard and confidence towards a son, whom he began to consider as his most irreconcilable enemy. Medals were struck with the customary vows for the long and auspicious reign of the young Cæsar;† and as the people, who were not admitted into the secrets of the palace, still loved his virtues, and respected his dignity, a poet, who solicits his recall from exile, adores with equal devotion the majesty of the father and that of the son.‡ The time was now arrived for celebrating the august ceremony of the twentieth year of the reign of Constantine; and the emperor, for that purpose, removed his court from Nicomedia to Rome, where the most splendid preparations had been made for his reception. Every eye and every tongue affected to express their sense of the general happiness, and the veil of ceremony and dissimulation was drawn for a while over the darkest designs of revenge and murder.§ In the midst of the festival, the unfortunate Crispus was apprehended by order of the emperor, who laid aside the tenderness of a father, without assuming the equity of a judge.

ignorant of the *day* of the anniversary. For the appointment of the new Cæsar to the provinces of Gaul, see Julian, *Orat.* 1, p. 12. Godefroy, *Chronol. Legum*, p. 26, and Blondel de la *Primauté de l'Eglise*, p. 1183. * *Cod. Theod.* l. 9, tit. 4. Godefroy suspected the secret motives of this law. *Comment. tom. iii*, p. 9. † Ducange, *Fam. Byzant.* p. 28. Tillemont, *tom. iv*, p. 610. ‡ His name was Porphyrius Optatianus. The date of his panegyric, written, according to the taste of the age, in vile acrostics, is settled by Scaliger (*ad Euseb.* p. 250), Tillemont, *tom. iv*, p. 607, and Fabricius, *Biblioth. Latin.* l. 4, c. 1. § Zosim. l. 2, p. 103. Godefroy, *Chronol. Legum*, p. 23.

The examination was short and private;* and, as it was thought decent to conceal the fate of the young prince from the eyes of the Roman people, he was sent under a strong guard to Pola, in Istria, where soon afterwards he was put to death, either by the hand of the executioner, or by the more gentle operation of poison.† The Cæsar Licinius, a youth of amiable manners, was involved in the ruin of Crispus,‡ and the stern jealousy of Constantine was unmoved by the prayers and tears of his favourite sister, pleading for the life of a son, whose rank was his only crime, and whose loss she did not long survive. The story of these unhappy princes, the nature and evidence of their guilt, the forms of their trial, and the circumstances of their death, were buried in mysterious obscurity; and the courtly bishop, who has celebrated in an elaborate work the virtues and piety of his hero, observes a prudent silence on the subject of these tragic events.§ Such haughty contempt for the opinion of mankind, whilst it imprints an indelible stain on the memory of Constantine, must remind us of the very different behaviour of one of the greatest monarchs of the present age. The Czar Peter, in the full possession of despotic power, submitted to the judgment of Russia, of Europe, and of poste-

* *Ἀκρίτως*, without a trial, is the strong, and most probably the just expression of Suidas. The elder Victor, who wrote under the next reign, speaks with becoming caution. “Natu grandior incertum quâ causâ, patris iudicio occidisset.” If we consult the succeeding writers, Eutropius, the younger Victor, Orosius, Jerome, Zosimus, Philostorgius, and Gregory of Tours, their knowledge will appear gradually to increase, as their means of information must have diminished; a circumstance which frequently occurs in historical disquisition. † Ammianus, (l. 14, c. 11) uses the general expression of *peremptum*. Codinus, (p. 34) beheads the young prince; but Sidonius Apollinaris, (Epistol. 5. 8) for the sake perhaps of an antithesis to Fausta's warm bath, chooses to administer a draught of cold poison. ‡ Sororis filium, commodæ indolis juvenem. Eutropius, 10. 6. May I not be permitted to conjecture, that Crispus had married Helena, the daughter of the emperor Licinius, and that on the happy delivery of the princess, in the year 322, a general pardon was granted by Constantine? See Ducange, Fam. Byzant. p. 47, and the law (l. 9, tit. 37) of the Theodosian Code, which has so much embarrassed the interpreters. Godefroy, tom. iii, p. 267. [This conjecture is very doubtful. The law cited from the Theodosian Code is too obscure to authorize any inference from it; and there is only one known medal, which can be thought to denote a Helena, the wife of Crispus. Eckhel, Doct. Num. Vet. tom. viii, p. 102. 145. —Guzot.] § See the Life of Constantine, particularly l. 2, c. 19, 20.

rity, the reasons which had compelled him to subscribe the condemnation of a criminal, or at least of a degenerate son.*

The innocence of Crispus was so universally acknowledged, that the modern Greeks, who adore the memory of their founder, are reduced to palliate the guilt of parricide, which the common feelings of human nature forbade them to justify. They pretend, that as soon as the afflicted father discovered the falsehood of the accusation by which his credulity had been so fatally misled, he published to the world his repentance and remorse; that he mourned forty days, during which he abstained from the use of the bath, and all the ordinary comforts of life; and that, for the lasting instruction of posterity, he erected a golden statue of Crispus, with this memorable inscription: "To my son, whom I unjustly condemned."† A tale so moral and so interesting would deserve to be supported by less exceptionable authority; but if we consult the more ancient and authentic writers, they will inform us, that the repentance of Constantine was manifested only in acts of blood and revenge; and that he atoned for the murder of an innocent son, by the execution, perhaps, of a guilty wife. They ascribe the misfortunes of Crispus to the arts of his stepmother Fausta, whose implacable hatred, or whose disappointed love, renewed in the palace of Constantine the ancient tragedy of Hippolytus and of Phædra.‡ Like the daughter of Minos, the daughter of Maximian accused her son-in-law of an incestuous attempt on the chastity of his father's wife; and easily obtained, from the jealousy of the emperor, a sentence of death against a young prince, whom she considered with reason as the most formidable rival of her own children. But Helena, the aged mother of Constantine, lamented and revenged the untimely fate of her

Two hundred and fifty years afterwards, Evagrius (l. 3, c. 41) deduced from the silence of Eusebius a vain argument against the reality of the fact. * *Histoire de Pierre le Grand, par Voltaire, part 2, c. 10.*

† In order to prove that the statue was erected by Constantine, and afterwards concealed by the malice of the Arians, Codinus very readily creates (p. 34) two witnesses, Hippolytus and the younger Herodotus, to whose imaginary histories he appeals with unblushing confidence.

‡ Zosimus (l. 2, p. 103) may be considered as our original. The ingenuity of the moderns, assisted by a few hints from the ancients, has illustrated and improved his obscure and imperfect narrative.

grandson Crispus; nor was it long before a real or pretended discovery was made, that Fausta herself entertained a criminal connexion with a slave belonging to the imperial stables.* Her condemnation and punishment were the instant consequences of the charge; and the adulteress was suffocated by the steam of a bath, which for that purpose had been heated to an extraordinary degree.† By some it will perhaps be thought, that the remembrance of a conjugal union of twenty years, and the honour of their common offspring, the destined heirs of the throne, might have softened the obdurate heart of Constantine; and persuaded him to suffer his wife, however guilty she might appear, to expiate her offences in a solitary prison. But it seems a superfluous labour to weigh the propriety, unless we could ascertain the truth, of this singular event; which is attended with some circumstances of doubt and perplexity. Those who have attacked and those who have defended, the character of Constantine, have alike disregarded two very remarkable passages of two orations pronounced under the succeeding reign. The former celebrates the virtues, the beauty, and the fortune of the empress Fausta, the daughter, wife, sister, and mother of so many princes.‡ The latter asserts, in explicit terms, that the mother of the younger Constantine, who was slain three years after his father's death, survived to weep over the fate of her son.§ Notwithstanding the positive testimony of

* Philostorgius, l. 2, c. 4. Zosinus (l. 2, p. 104—116) imputes to Constantine the death of two wives, of the innocent Fausta, and of an adulteress, who was the mother of his three successors. According to Jerome, three or four years elapsed between the death of Crispus and that of Fausta. The elder Victor is prudently silent. † If Fausta was put to death, it is reasonable to believe that the private apartments of the palace were the scene of her execution. The orator Chrysostom indulges his fancy by exposing the naked empress on a desert mountain, to be devoured by wild beasts. ‡ Julian, Orat. 1. He seems to call her the mother of Crispus. She might assume that title by adoption. At least, she was not considered as his mortal enemy. Julian compares the fortune of Fausta with that of Parysatis, the Persian queen. A Roman would have more naturally recollected the second Agrippina :

Et moi, qui sur le trône ai suivi mes ancêtres :

Moi, fille, femme, sœur, et mère de vos maîtres.

§ Monod. in Constantin. Jun. c. 4, ad calcem Eutrop., edit. Havercamp. The orator styles her the most divine and pious of queens.

several writers of the Pagan as well as of the Christian religion, there may still remain some reason to believe, or at least to suspect, that Fausta escaped the blind and suspicious cruelty of her husband. The deaths of a son and of a nephew, with the execution of a great number of respectable, and perhaps innocent friends,* who were involved in their fall, may be sufficient, however, to justify the discontent of the Roman people, and to explain the satirical verses affixed to the palace-gate, comparing the splendid and bloody reigns of Constantine and Nero.†

By the death of Crispus, the inheritance of the empire seemed to devolve on the three sons of Fausta, who have been already mentioned under the names of Constantine, of Constantius, and of Constans. These young princes were successively invested with the title of Cæsar; and the dates of their promotion may be referred to the tenth, the twentieth, and the thirtieth years of the reign of their father.‡ This conduct, though it tended to multiply the future masters of the Roman world, might be excused by the partiality of paternal affection: but it is not easy to understand the motives of the emperor, when he endangered the safety both of his family and of his people, by the unnecessary elevation of his two nephews, Dalmatius and Hannibalianus. The former was raised, by the title of Cæsar, to an equality with his cousins. In favour of the latter, Constantine invented the new and singular appellation of *Nobilissimus*;§ to which he annexed the flattering distinction of a robe of purple and gold. But of the whole series of Roman princes in any age of the empire, Hannibalianus alone was distinguished by the title of *King*; a name which the subjects of Tiberius would have detested, as the profane and cruel insult of capricious tyranny. The use of such a title, even

* *Interfecit numerosos amicos.*—Eutrop. 20. 6.

† *Saturni aurea sæcula quis requirat?*

Sunt hæc gemmea, sed Neroniana.—Sidon. Apollinar. 5. 8.

It is somewhat singular, that these satirical lines should be attributed, not to an obscure libeller, or a disappointed patriot, but to Ablavius, prime minister and favourite of the emperor. We may now perceive that the imprecations of the Roman people were dictated by humanity, as well as by superstition. Zosim. l. 2, p. 105. ‡ Euseb. Orat. in Const. c. 3. These dates are sufficiently correct to justify the orator.

§ Zosim. l. 2, p. 117. Under the predecessors of Constantine, *Nobilissimus* was a vague epithet, rather than a legal and determined title.

as it appears under the reign of Constantine, is a strange and unconnected fact, which can scarcely be admitted on the joint authority of imperial medals and contemporary writers.*

The whole empire was deeply interested in the education of these five youths, the acknowledged successors of Constantine. The exercises of the body prepared them for the fatigues of war, and the duties of active life. Those who occasionally mention the education or talents of Constantius, allow that he excelled in the gymnastic arts of leaping and running; that he was a dexterous archer, a skilful horseman, and a master of all the different weapons used in the service either of the cavalry or of the infantry.† The same assiduous cultivation was bestowed, though not perhaps with equal success, to improve the minds of the sons and nephews of Constantine.‡ The most celebrated professors of the Christian faith, of the Grecian philosophy, and of the Roman jurisprudence, were invited by the liberality of the emperor, who reserved for himself the important task of instructing the royal youths in the science of government, and the knowledge of mankind. But the genius of Constantine himself had been formed by adversity and experience. In the free intercourse of private life and amidst the dangers of the court of Galerius, he had learned to command his own passions, to encounter those of his equals, and to depend for his present safety and future greatness on the prudence and firmness of his personal conduct. His destined successors had the misfortune of being born and educated in the imperial purple. Incessantly surrounded

* *Adstruunt nummi veteres ac singulares.* Spanheim *de Usu Numismat.* Dissertat. 12. vol. ii, p. 357. Ammianus speaks of this Roman king (lib. 14, c. 1, and Valesius *ad loc.*). The Valesian fragment styles him king of kings; and the Paschal Chronicle, (p. 286,) by employing the word *Πηγα*, acquires the weight of Latin evidence. [The title given to Hannibalianus did not apply to him as a *Roman* prince, but as *king* of a territory assigned to him in Asia, as will be seen in the next page. On all the coins where he is thus designated, the river Euphrates is introduced, to mark the seat of his royalty. Clinton, *F. R.* i, p. 390. Eckhel, *D. Num. Vet.* 8, p. 104. Humphrey's Manual, ii, 649, Bohn's Edition.--ED.]

† His dexterity in martial exercises is celebrated by Julian, (*Orat.* 1. p. 11. *Orat.* 2. p. 53,) and allowed by Ammianus (l. 21, c. 16).

‡ Euseb. in *Vit. Constantin.* l. 4, c. 51. Julian. *Orat.* 1, p. 11—16, with Spanheim's elaborate commentary. Libanius, *Orat.* 3. p. 109. Constantius studied with laudable diligence; but the dulness of his

by a train of flatterers, they passed their youth in the enjoyment of luxury and the expectation of a throne; nor would the dignity of their rank permit them to descend from that elevated station from whence the various characters of human nature appear to wear a smooth and uniform aspect. The indulgence of Constantine admitted them, at a very tender age, to share the administration of the empire; and they studied the art of reigning at the expense of the people intrusted to their care. The younger Constantine was appointed to hold his court in Gaul; and his brother Constantius exchanged that department, the ancient patrimony of their father, for the more opulent, but less martial, countries of the east. Italy, the western Illyricum, and Africa, were accustomed to revere Constans, the third of his sons, as the representative of the great Constantine. He fixed Dalmatius on the Gothic frontier, to which he annexed the government of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece. The city of Cæsarea was chosen for the residence of Hannibalianus; and the provinces of Pontus, Cappadocia, and the lesser Armenia, were destined to form the extent of his new kingdom. For each of these princes a suitable establishment was provided. A just proportion of guards, of legions, and of auxiliaries, was allotted for their respective dignity and defence. The ministers and generals, who were placed about their persons, were such as Constantine could trust to assist, and even to control, these youthful sovereigns in the exercise of their delegated power. As they advanced in years and experience, the limits of their authority were insensibly enlarged: but the emperor always reserved for himself the title of Augustus; and while he shewed the *Cæsars* to the armies and provinces, he maintained every part of the empire in equal obedience to its supreme head.* The tranquillity of the last fourteen years of his reign was scarcely interrupted by the contemptible insurrection of a camel-driver in the island of Cyprus,† or by the active part

fancy prevented him from succeeding in the art of poetry, or even of rhetoric. * Eusebius, (l. 4, c. 51, 52,) with a design of exalting the authority and glory of Constantine, affirms, that he divided the Roman empire as a private citizen might have divided his patrimony. His distribution of the provinces may be collected from Eutropius, the two Victors, and the Valesian fragment. † Calocerus, the obscure leader of this rebellion or rather tumult, was apprehended and burnt alive in the market-place of Tarsus, by the vigilance of Dalmatius

which the policy of Constantine engaged him to assume in the wars of the Goths and Sarmatians.

Among the different branches of the human race, the Sarmatians form a very remarkable shade; as they seem to unite the manners of the Asiatic barbarians with the figure and complexion of the ancient inhabitants of Europe. According to the various accidents of peace and war, of alliance or conquest, the Sarmatians were sometimes confined to the banks of the Tanais; and they sometimes spread themselves over the immense plains which lie between the Vistula and the Volga.* The care of their numerous flocks and herds, the pursuit of game, and the exercise of war, or rather of rapine, directed the vagrant motions of the Sarmatians. The moveable camps or cities, the ordinary residence of their wives and children, consisted only of large wagons drawn by oxen, and covered in the form of tents. The military strength of the nation was composed of cavalry; and the custom of their warriors, to lead in their hand one or two spare horses, enabled them to advance and to retreat with a rapid diligence, which surprised the security, and eluded the pursuit, of a distant enemy.† Their poverty of iron prompted their rude industry to invent a sort of cuirass, which was capable of resisting a sword or javelin, though it was formed only of horses' hoofs, cut into thin and polished slices, carefully laid over each other in the manner of scales or feathers, and strongly sewed upon an under-garment of coarse linen.‡ The offensive arms of the Sarmatians were short daggers, long lances, and a weighty bow with a quiver of arrows. They were reduced to the necessity of employing fish-bones for the points of their weapons; but the custom of dipping them in a venomous liquor, that poisoned the wounds which they inflicted, is

See the elder Victor, the Chronicle of Jerome, and the doubtful traditions of Theophanes and Cedrenus.

* Cellarius has collected the opinions of the ancients concerning the European and Asiatic Sarmatia; and M. D'Anville has applied them to modern geography with the skill and accuracy which always distinguish that excellent writer. [The notes added to chapter 9 of this work, on the nations of the East and Northern Europe, may be here again referred to.—Ed].

† Ammian. l. 17, c. 12. The Sarmatian horses were castrated, to prevent the mischievous accidents which might happen from the noisy and ungovernable passions of the males. ‡ Pausanias, l. 1, p. 50, edit. Kuhn. That inquisitive traveller had carefully examined a Sarmatian cuirass, which was preserved in the temple of Æsculapius at Athens.

alone sufficient to prove the most savage manners; since a people impressed with a sense of humanity would have abhorred so cruel a practice, and a nation skilled in the arts of war would have disdained so impotent a resource.* Whenever these barbarians issued from their deserts in quest of prey, their shaggy beards, uncombed locks, the furs with which they were covered from head to foot, and their fierce countenances, which seemed to express the innate cruelty of their minds, inspired the more civilized provincials of Rome with horror and dismay.

The tender Ovid, after a youth spent in the enjoyment of fame and luxury, was condemned to a hopeless exile on the frozen banks of the Danube, where he was exposed, almost without defence, to the fury of these monsters of the desert, with whose stern spirits, he feared that his gentle shade might hereafter be confounded. In his pathetic, but sometimes unmanly lamentations,† he describes in the most lively colours, the dress and manners, the arms and inroads of the Getæ and Sarmatians, who were associated for the purposes of destruction; and from the accounts of history, there is some reason to believe that these Sarmatians were the Jazygæ, one of the most numerous and warlike tribes of the nation. The allurements of plenty engaged them to seek a permanent establishment on the frontiers of the empire. Soon after the reign of Augustus, they obliged the Dacians, who subsisted by fishing on the banks of the river Teyss or Tibiscus, to retire into the hilly country, and to abandon to the victorious Sarmatians the fertile plains of the Upper Hungary, which are bounded by the course of the Danube and the semicircular enclosure of the Carpa-

* *Aspicis et mitti sub adunco toxica ferro,
Et telum causas mortis habere duas.*

—Ovid. ex Ponto, l. 4, ep. 7. v. 7.

See in the *Recherches sur les Américains*, tom. ii, p. 236—271, a very curious dissertation on poisoned darts. The venom was commonly extracted from the vegetable reign; but that employed by the Scythians appears to have been drawn from the viper, and a mixture of human blood. The use of poisoned arms, which has been spread over both worlds, never preserved a savage tribe from the arms of a disciplined enemy. † The nine books of Poetical Epistles, which Ovid composed during the seven first years of his melancholy exile, possess, besides the merit of elegance, a double value. They exhibit a picture of the human mind under very singular circumstances; and they contain many curious observations, which no Roman, except Ovid, could

thian mountains.* In this advantageous position they watched or suspended the moment of attack, as they were provoked by injuries or appeased by presents; they gradually acquired the skill of using more dangerous weapons; and, although the Sarmatians did not illustrate their name by any memorable exploits, they occasionally assisted their eastern and western neighbours, the Goths and the Germans, with a formidable body of cavalry. They lived under the irregular aristocracy of their chieftains; † but after they had received into their bosom the fugitive Vandals, who yielded to the pressure of the Gothic power, they seem to have chosen a king from that nation, and from the illustrious race of the Astingi, who had formerly dwelt on the shores of the northern ocean. ‡

have an opportunity of making. Every circumstance which tends to illustrate the history of the barbarians, has been drawn together by the very accurate Count de Buat. (*Hist. Ancienne des Peuples de l'Europe*, tom. iv, c. 16, p. 286—317).

* The Sarmatian Jazygæ were settled on the banks of the Pathissus or Tibiscus, when Pliny, in the year 79, published his *Natural History*. See l. 4, c. 25. In the time of Strabo and Ovid, sixty or seventy years before, they appear to have inhabited beyond the Getæ, along the coast of the Euxine. † *Principis Sarmatarum Jazygum penes quos civitatis regimen . . . plebem quoque et vim equitum, quâ solâ valent, offerebant.* Tacit. *Hist.* 3. 5. This offer was made in the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian.

‡ This hypothesis of a Vandal king reigning over Sarmatian subjects, seems necessary to reconcile the Goth Jornandes with the Greek and Latin historians of Constantine. It may be observed that Isidore, who lived in Spain under the dominion of the Goths, gives them for enemies, not the Vandals, but the Sarmatians. See his *Chronicle* in Grotius, p. 709. [I have already noticed the confusion, which has been brought into history, by applying a name purely geographical, like that of Sarmatia, as the designation of a people. To extricate himself from the difficulty thus created and without any other reason, Gibbon has been obliged here to suppose, that the Sarmatians chose a king for themselves from among the Vandals, which is contrary to all that we know of barbarian habits. Dacia was not at that time in the possession of Sarmatians, who have never formed a distinct race, but of Vandals, whom the ancients often confounded under the generic term of Sarmatians. Gatterer, *Weltgeschichte*, p. 464.—GUIZOT.] [The little dependence that can be placed on the names, given by ancient writers to countries and their inhabitants, has been shown in former notes. Least of all can we trust to their poets, who used barbarian epithets indiscriminately to suit the measure of their verse. Ovid was unquestionably among Getæ or Goths, probably Massagete, who had gained a quiet settlement in that region during its defenceless state, after the fall of Persens, and from whom the province had afterwards the name of Mœsia. But he was not quite so exposed “to the fury of those monsters of the desert,” as his own figurative language and

This motive of enmity must have inflamed the subjects of contention, which perpetually arise on the confines of warlike and independent nations. The Vandal princes were stimulated by fear and revenge; the Gothic kings aspired to extend their dominion from the Euxine to the frontiers of Germany; and the waters of the Maros, a small river which falls into the Teyss, were stained with the blood of the contending barbarians. After some experience of the superior strength and number of their adversaries, the Sarmatians implored the protection of the Roman monarch, who beheld with pleasure the discord of the nations, but who was justly alarmed by the progress of the Gothic arms. As soon as Constantine had declared himself in favour of the weaker party, the haughty Araric, king of the Goths, instead of expecting the attack of the legions, boldly passed the Danube, and spread terror and devastation through the province of Mæsia. To oppose the inroad of this destroying host, the aged emperor took the field in person; but on this occasion either his conduct or his fortune betrayed the glory which he had acquired in so many foreign and domestic wars. He had the mortification of seeing his troops fly before an inconsiderable detachment of the barbarians, who

the lively imagination of Gibbon paint him. He there heard of Sarmatians, who occupied the lands abandoned by the Goths on the left bank of the river, and he might perhaps occasionally see some stragglers, who came across. This was enough for him: but he evidently knew no difference between their languages, for *Geticus* or *Sarmaticus* dropped into the poetic line, according to the quantities wanted. Countries received from tribes names which they still retained, when those tribes had departed and other races had become the occupants. Then these, in their turns, were named from the districts, where they were perhaps in time succeeded by others. These wanderings and changes of barbarian life were either not observed or misunderstood by ancient writers. Sarmatians (*Scourmata*, *Sarmata*) must have been a generic name, and was apparently the oldest, by which the Slavonic races were known. In the days of Herodotus (Melpom. 21) they were found only on the eastern side of the Tanais, where a large tract was consequently denominated *Sarmatia Asiatica*. Then, as history advances, they are found slowly creeping on, first to the Borysthenes or Dnieper, then towards the lower Danube, and spreading northwards to the Vistula, where a large central part of Europe received from them the name of *Sarmatia*. In the later days of Rome, these were the seats of the Slavonic tribes, where they are seen constantly contending with the Goths and pressing them to the westward, as these had already driven before them the Celtae. This is the simple outline of the early history of these tribes, by which subsidiary events, otherwise unintelligible may often be explained, and to

pursued them to the edge of their fortified camp, and obliged him to consult his safety by a precipitate and ignominious retreat. The event of a second and more successful action retrieved the honour of the Roman name; and the powers of art and discipline prevailed, after an obstinate contest, over the efforts of irregular valour. The broken army of the Goths abandoned the field of battle, the wasted province, and the passage of the Danube: and although the eldest of the sons of Constantine was permitted to supply the place of his father, the merit of the victory, which diffused universal joy, was ascribed to the auspicious counsels of the emperor himself.

He contributed at least to improve this advantage, by his negotiations with the free and warlike people of Chersonesus,* whose capital, situate on the western coast of the Tauric or Crimæan peninsula, still retained some vestiges of a Grecian colony, and was governed by a perpetual magistrate, assisted by a council of senators, emphatically styled the Fathers of the City. The Chersonites were animated against the Goths, by the memory of the wars, which, in the preceding century, they had maintained with unequal forces against the invaders of their country. They were connected with the Romans, by the mutual benefits of commerce; as they were supplied from the provinces of Asia with corn and manufactures, which they purchased with their own pro-

which they may be reconciled, so as to clear up much of the long prevailing confusion.—ED.] * I may stand in need of some apology, for having used, without scruple, the authority of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in all that relates to the wars and negotiations of the Chersonites. I am aware that he was a Greek of the tenth century, and that his accounts of ancient history are frequently confused and fabulous. But on this occasion his narrative is, for the most part, consistent and probable; nor is there much difficulty in conceiving that an emperor might have access to some secret archives, which had escaped the diligence of meaner historians. For the situation and history of Cherson, see Peyssonel, *des Peuples barbares qui ont habité les Bords du Danube*, c. 16. p. 84—90. [Dean Milman has adduced one of St. Martin's notes on Lebeau, in which Gibbon is accused or having here "confounded the inhabitants of the city of Cherson with the people of the Chersonesus Taurica." This charge is not sustained by the text. Like other free states, the Chersonites had a small territory, of which their city was the capital. The term is so applied by Gibbon, and not to the whole of the Cimmerian peninsula, where he had before (ch. 14, vol. i, p. 328) placed the kingdom of Bosphorus, the capital of which was Panticapœum, on the eastern side of the Chersonesus. Arrian. *Perip. Mar. Eux.* v. 131.—ED.]

ductions, salt, wax, and hides. Obedient to the requisition of Constantine, they prepared, under the conduct of their magistrate Diogenes, a considerable army, of which the principal strength consisted in crossbows and military chariots. The speedy march and intrepid attack of the Chersonites, by diverting the attention of the Goths, assisted the operations of the imperial generals. The Goths vanquished on every side, were driven into the mountains, where in the course of a severe campaign, above a hundred thousand were computed to have perished by cold and hunger. Peace was at length granted to their humble supplications; the eldest son of Ararie was accepted as the most valuable hostage; and Constantine endeavoured to convince their chiefs, by a liberal distribution of honours and rewards, how far the friendship of the Romans was preferable to their enmity. In the expressions of his gratitude towards the faithful Chersonites, the emperor was still more magnificent. The pride of the nation was gratified by the splendid and almost royal decorations bestowed on their magistrate and his successors. A perpetual exemption from all duties was stipulated for their vessels which traded to the ports of the Black Sea. A regular subsidy was promised of iron, corn, oil, and every supply which could be useful either in peace or war. But it was thought that the Sarmatians were sufficiently rewarded by their deliverance from impending ruin; and the emperor, perhaps with too strict an economy, deducted some part of the expenses of the war from the customary gratifications which were allowed to that turbulent nation.

Exasperated by this apparent neglect the Sarmatians soon forgot, with the levity of barbarians, the services which they had so lately received, and the dangers which still threatened their safety. Their inroads on the territory of the empire provoked the indignation of Constantine to leave them to their fate, and he no longer opposed the ambition of Geberic, a renowned warrior, who had recently ascended the Gothic throne. Wisumar, the Vandal king, whilst alone and unassisted, he defended his dominions with undaunted courage, was vanquished and slain in a decisive battle, which swept away the flower of the Sarmatian youth. The remainder of the nation embraced the desperate expedient of arming their slaves, a hardy race of hunters and herdsmen, by whose tumultuary aid they revenged their defeat, and expelled the invader from their confines. But they soon discovered that

they had exchanged a foreign for a domestic enemy, more dangerous and more implacable. Enraged by their former servitude, elated by their present glory, the slaves, under the name of Limigantes, claimed and usurped the possession of the country which they had saved. Their masters unable to withstand the ungoverned fury of the populace, preferred the hardships of exile to the tyranny of their servants. Some of the fugitive Sarmatians solicited a less ignominious dependence under the hostile standard of the Goths. A more numerous band retired beyond the Carpathian mountains, among the Quadi, their German allies, and were easily admitted to share a superfluous waste of uncultivated land. But the far greater part of the distressed nation turned their eyes towards the fruitful provinces of Rome. Imploring the protection and forgiveness of the emperor, they solemnly promised, as subjects in peace, and as soldiers in war, the most inviolable fidelity to the empire which should graciously receive them into its bosom. According to the maxims adopted by Probus and his successors, the offers of this barbarian colony were eagerly accepted; and a competent portion of lands in the provinces of Pannonia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Italy, were immediately assigned for the habitation and subsistence of three hundred thousand Sarmatians.*

By chastising the pride of the Goths, and by accepting the homage of a suppliant nation, Constantine asserted the majesty of the Roman empire; and the ambassadors of Æthiopia, Persia, and the most remote countries of India, congratulated the peace and prosperity of his government.† If he reckoned among the favours of fortune, the death of

* The Gothic and Sarmatian wars are related in so broken and imperfect a manner, that I have been obliged to compare the following writers, who mutually supply, correct, and illustrate each other. Those who will take the same trouble, may acquire a right of criticising my narrative. Ammianus, l. 17, c. 12. Anonym. Valesian, p. 715. Eutropius, 10. 7. Sextus Rufus de Provinciis, c. 26. Julian. Orat. l. p. 9, and Spanheim. Comment. p. 94. Hieronym. in Chron. Euseb. in Vit. Constantin. l. 4, c. 6. Socrates, l. 1, c. 18. Sozomen, l. 1, c. 8. Zosimus, l. 2, p. 108. Jornandes de Reb. Geticis, c. 22. Isidorus in Chron. p. 709; in Hist. Gothorum Grotii. Constantin. Porphyrogenitus de Administrat. Imperii. c. 53, p. 208, edit. Meursii. † Eusebius (in Vit. Const. l. 4, c. 50,) remarks three circumstances relative to these Indians. 1. They came from the shores of the eastern ocean: a description which might be applied to the coast of China or Coromandel. 2. They presented shining gems and unknown animals

his eldest son, of his nephew, and perhaps of his wife, he enjoyed an uninterrupted flow of private as well as public felicity, till the thirtieth year of his reign; a period which none of his predecessors, since Augustus, had been permitted to celebrate. Constantine survived that solemn festival about ten months; and, at the mature age of sixty-four, after a short illness, he ended his memorable life at the palace of Aquyrion, in the suburbs of Nicomedia, whither he had retired for the benefit of the air, and with the hope of recruiting his exhausted strength by the use of the warm baths. The excessive demonstrations of grief, or at least of mourning, surpassed whatever had been practised on any former occasion. Notwithstanding the claims of the senate and people of ancient Rome, the corpse of the deceased emperor, according to his last request, was transported to the city, which was destined to preserve the name and memory of its founder. The body of Constantine, adorned with the vain symbols of greatness, the purple and diadem, was deposited on a golden bed in one of the apartments of the palace, which for that purpose had been splendidly furnished and illuminated. The forms of the court were strictly maintained. Every day, at the appointed hours, the principal officers of the state, the army, and the household, approaching the person of their sovereign with bended knees and a composed countenance, offered their respectful homage as seriously as if he had been still alive. From motives of policy, this theatrical representation was for some time continued; nor could flattery neglect the opportunity of remarking, that Constantine alone, by the peculiar indulgence of heaven, had reigned after his death.*

But this reign could subsist only in empty pageantry; and it was soon discovered that the will of the most absolute monarch is seldom obeyed, when his subjects have no longer any thing to hope from his favour or to dread from his resentment. The same ministers and generals who bowed with such reverential awe before the inanimate corpse of their deceased sovereign, were engaged in secret consultations to exclude his two nephews, Dalmatius and Hanni-

3. They protested their kings had erected statues to represent the supreme majesty of Constantine. * *Funus relatum in urbem sui nominis, quod sane P. R. regerrime tulit.* (Aurelius Victor). Constantine had prepared for himself a stately tomb in the church of the Holy Apostles. Euseb. l. 4, c. 66. The best and indeed almost the only account of the sickness, death, and funeral of Constantine, is contained

belianus, from the share which he had assigned them in the succession of the empire. We are too imperfectly acquainted with the court of Constantine to form any judgment of the real motives which influenced the leaders of the conspiracy; unless we should suppose they were actuated by a spirit of jealousy and revenge against the prefect Ablavius, a proud favourite, who had long directed the counsels and abused the confidence of the late emperor. The arguments by which they solicited the concurrence of the soldiers and people, are of a more obvious nature; and they might with decency, as well as truth, insist on the superior rank of the children of Constantine, the danger of multiplying the number of sovereigns, and the impending mischiefs which threatened the republic, from the discord of so many rival princes who were not connected by the tender sympathy of fraternal affection. The intrigue was conducted with zeal and secrecy, till a loud and unanimous declaration was procured from the troops, that they would suffer none except the sons of their lamented monarch to reign over the Roman empire.* The younger Dalmatius, who was united with his collateral relations by the ties of friendship and interest, is allowed to have inherited a considerable share of the abilities of the great Constantine; but, on this occasion, he does not appear to have concerted any measures for supporting, by arms, the just claims which himself and his royal brother derived from the liberality of their uncle. Astonished and overwhelmed by the tide of popular fury, they seem to have remained, without the power of flight or of resistance, in the hands of their implacable enemies. Their fate was suspended till the arrival of Constantius, the second,† and perhaps the most favoured of the sons of Constantine.

The voice of the dying emperor had recommended the care of his funeral to the piety of Constantius; and that prince, by the vicinity of his eastern station, could easily prevent the diligence of his brothers, who resided in their

in the fourth book of his life, by Eusebius. * Eusebius (l. 4, c. 6.) terminates his narrative by this loyal declaration of the troops, and avoids all the invidious circumstances of the subsequent massacre.

† The character of Dalmatius is advantageously though concisely drawn by Entropius (10. 19). Dalmatius Cæsar, prosperrimâ indole, neque patruo absimilis, *hauri multo* post, oppressus est factione militari. As both Jerome and the Alexandrian Chronicle mention the third year of the Cæsar, which did not commence till the 18th or 24th of September.

distant governments of Italy and Gaul. As soon as he had taken possession of the palace of Constantinople, his first care was to remove the apprehensions of his kinsmen by a solemn oath, which he pledged for their security. His next employment was to find some specious pretence which might release his conscience from the obligation of an imprudent promise. The arts of fraud were made subservient to the designs of cruelty; and a manifest forgery was attested by a person of the most sacred character. From the hands of the bishop of Nicomedia, Constantius received a fatal scroll, affirmed to be the genuine testament of his father; in which the emperor expressed his suspicions that he had been poisoned by his brothers; and conjured his sons to revenge his death, and to consult their own safety, by the punishment of the guilty.* Whatever reasons might have been alleged by these unfortunate princes to defend their life and honour against so incredible an accusation, they were silenced by the furious clamours of the soldiers, who declared themselves at once, their enemies, their judges, and their executioners. The spirit, and even the forms, of legal proceedings, were repeatedly violated in a promiscuous massacre, which involved the two uncles of Constantius, seven of his cousins, of whom Dalmatius and Hannibalianus were the most illustrious, the patrician Optatus, who had married a sister of the late emperor, and the prefect Ablavius, whose power and riches had inspired him with some hopes of obtaining the purple. If it were necessary to aggravate the horrors of this bloody scene, we might add, that Constantius himself had espoused the daughter of his uncle Julius, and that he had bestowed his sister in marriage on his cousin Hannibalianus. These alliances, which the policy of Constantine, regardless of the public prejudice,† had formed

A.D. 337, it is certain that these military factions continued above four months.

* I have related this singular anecdote on the authority of Philostorgius, l. 2, c. 16. But if such a pretext was ever used by Constantius and his adherents, it was laid aside with contempt, as soon as it had served their immediate purpose. Athanasius (tom. i, p. 856,) mentions the oath which Constantius had taken for the security of his kinsmen. [The authority of Philostorgius is so questionable, that it cannot be taken for such a fact, which Gibbon ought not to have related in his history as certain, while in a note he admits it to be doubtful.—GUIZOT.] † *Conjugia sobrinarum diu ignorata, tempore addito percrebuisse.* Tacit. *Annal.* 12. 6, and Lipsius ad loc. The repeal of the ancient law, and the practice of five hundred years, were insufficient to eradicate the prejudices of the Romans; who still con-

between the several branches of the imperial house, served only to convince mankind, that these princes were as cold to the endearments of conjugal affection, as they were insensible to the ties of consanguinity, and the moving entreaties of youth and innocence. Of so numerous a family, Gallus and Julian alone, the two youngest children of Julius Constantius, were saved from the hands of the assassins, till their rage, satiated with slaughter, had in some measure subsided. The emperor Constantius, who, in the absence of his brothers, was the most obnoxious to guilt and reproach, discovered, on some future occasions, a faint and transient remorse for those cruelties which the perfidious counsels of his ministers, and the irresistible violence of the troops, had extorted from his unexperienced youth.*

The massacre of the Flavian race was succeeded by a new division of the provinces; which was ratified in a personal interview of the three brothers. Constantine, the eldest of the Cæsars, obtained, with a certain pre-eminence of rank, the possession of the new capital, which bore his own name and that of his father.† Thrace and the countries of the east, were allotted for the patrimony of Con-

sidered the marriages of cousins german, as a species of imperfect incest (Augustin de Civitate Dei, l. 5. c. 6); and Julian, whose mind was biassed by superstition and resentment, stigmatizes these unnatural alliances between his own cousins with the opprobrious epithet of *γαμῶν τε ὄν γαμῶν*. (Orat. 7, p. 228.) The jurisprudence of the canons has since revived and enforced this prohibition, without being able to introduce it either into the civil or the common law of Europe. See on the subject of these marriages, Taylor's Civil Law, p. 331. Brouer de Jure Connub. l. 2, c. 12. Hericourt des Loix Ecclesiastiques, part 3, c. 5. Fleury, Institutions du Droit Canonique, tom. i, p. 331. Paris, 1767, and Fra. Paolo, Istoria del Concilio Trident. l. 8.

* Julian (ad S. P. Q. Athen. p. 270), charges his cousin Constantius with the whole guilt of a massacre, from which he himself so narrowly escaped. His assertion is confirmed by Athanasius, who, for reasons of a very different nature, was not less an enemy of Constantius (tom. i, p. 856). Zosimus joins in the same accusation. But the three abbreviators, Eutropius and the Vietors, use very qualifying expressions; "sinente potius quam jubente;" "incertum quo suasore;" "vi militum." † The countries ruled by him, were Gaul, Spain, and Britain, which his father allotted to him when he gave him the rank of Cæsar; it appears that he had Thrace also (Chron. Alex. p. 670). This first division was made at Constantinople A.D. 337. In the following year the three brothers had a meeting in Pamœnia, to

stantius; and Constans was acknowledged as the lawful sovereign of Italy, Africa, and the western Illyricum. The armies submitted to their hereditary right; and they condescended, after some delay, to accept from the Roman senate, the title of *Augustus*. When they first assumed the reins of government, the eldest of these princes was twenty-one, the second twenty, and the third only seventeen years of age.*

While the martial nations of Europe followed the standards of his brothers, Constantius, at the head of the effeminate troops of Asia, was left to sustain the weight of the Persian war. At the decease of Constantine, the throne of the east was filled by Sapor, son of Hormouz or Hormisdas, and grandson of Narses, who, after the victory of Galerius, had humbly confessed the superiority of the Roman power. Although Sapor was in the thirtieth year of his long reign, he was still in the vigour of youth, as the date of his accession, by a very strange fatality, had preceded that of his birth. The wife of Hormouz remained pregnant at the time of her husband's death; and the uncertainty of the sex, as well as of the event, excited the ambitious hopes of the princes of the house of Sassan. The apprehensions of civil war were at length removed by the positive assurance of the magi, that the widow of Hormouz had conceived, and would safely produce a son. Obedient to the voice of superstition, the Persians prepared, without delay, the ceremony of his coronation. A royal bed, on which the queen lay in state, was exhibited in the midst of the palace; the diadem was placed on the spot, which might be supposed to conceal the future heir of Artaxerxes, and the prostrate satraps adored the majesty of their invisible and insensible sovereign.† If any credit can be given to this marvellous tale,

make some changes. Constantius then obtained Constantinople and Thrace. The dominions placed under Constantine and Constans are so obscurely stated, that I will not attempt to define them. See Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp. Vie de Constance*, art. 2.—GUIZOT.

* Enseb. in *Vit. Constantin.* l. 4, c. 69. Zosimus. l. 2, p. 117. Idat. in *Chron.* See two notes of Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 1086—1091. The reign of the eldest brother at Constantinople is noticed only in the Alexandrian Chronicle.

† Agathias, who lived in the sixth century, is the author of this story (l. 4, p. 135, edit. Louvre). He derived his information from some extracts of the *Persian Chronicles*, obtained and translated by the interpreter Sergius,

which seems however to be countenanced by the manners of the people, and by the extraordinary duration of his reign, we must admire not only the fortune, but the genius of Sapor. In the soft sequestered education of a Persian haram, the royal youth could discover the importance of exercising the vigour of his mind and body; and by his personal merit deserved a throne, on which he had been seated, while he was yet unconscious of the duties and temptations of absolute power. His minority was exposed to the almost inevitable calamities of domestic discord; his capital was surprised and plundered by Thair, a powerful king of Yemen, or Arabia; and the majesty of the royal family was degraded by the captivity of a princess the sister of the deceased king. But as soon as Sapor attained the age of manhood, the presumptuous Thair, his nation, and his country, fell beneath the first effort of the young warrior; who used his victory with so judicious a mixture of rigour and clemency, that he obtained, from the fears and gratitude of the Arabs, the title of *Dhoulacny*, or protector of the nation.*

The ambition of the Persian, to whom his enemies ascribe the virtues of a soldier and a statesman, was animated by the desire of revenging the disgrace of his fathers, and of wresting from the hands of the Romans the five provinces beyond the Tigris. The military fame of Constantine, and the real or apparent strength of his government, suspended the attack; and while the hostile conduct of Sapor provoked the resentment, his artful negotiations amused the patience of the imperial court. The death of Constantine was the signal of war,† and the actual condition of the Syrian and Armenian frontier, seemed to encourage the Persians, by the prospect of a rich spoil and an easy conquest. The example of the massacres of the palace diffused a spirit of licentiousness and sedition among the troops of the east, who were no longer restrained by the habits of obedience to a veteran commander. By the prudence of Constantius,

during his embassy at that court. The coronation of the mother of Sapor is likewise mentioned by Schikard (*Tarikh*, p. 116) and D'Herbelot. (*Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 753.) * D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 764.

† Sextus Rufus, (c. 26) who on this occasion is no contemptible authority, affirms that the Persians sued in vain for peace, and that Constantine was preparing to march against

who, from the interview with his brothers in Pannonia, immediately hastened to the banks of the Euphrates, the legions were gradually restored to a sense of duty and discipline; but the season of anarchy had permitted Sapor to form the siege of Nisibis, and to occupy several of the most important fortresses of Mesopotamia.* In Armenia, the renowned Tiridates had long enjoyed the peace and glory which he deserved by his valour and fidelity to the cause of Rome. The firm alliance which he maintained with Constantine was productive of spiritual as well as of temporal benefits; by the conversion of Tiridates, the character of a saint was applied to that of a hero, the Christian faith was preached and established from the Euphrates to the shores of the Caspian, and Armenia was attached to the empire by the double ties of policy and of religion. But as many of the Armenian nobles still refused to abandon the plurality of their gods and of their wives, the public tranquillity was disturbed by a discontented faction, which insulted the feeble age of their sovereign, and impatiently expected the hour of his death. He died at length after a reign of fifty-six years, and the fortune of the Armenian monarchy expired with Tiridates. His lawful heir was driven into exile; the Christian priests were either murdered or expelled from their churches; the barbarous tribes of Albania were solicited to descend from their mountains; and two of the most powerful governors, usurping the ensigns or the powers of royalty, implored the assistance of Sapor, and opened the gates of their cities to the Persian garrisons. The Christian party, under the guidance of the archbishop of Artaxata, the immediate successor of St. Gregory the illuminator, had recourse to the piety of Constantius. After the troubles had continued about three years, Antiochus, one of the officers of the household, executed with success the imperial commission of restoring Chosroes the son of Tiridates, to the throne of his fathers, of distributing honours and rewards among the faithful servants of the house of Arsaces, and of proclaiming a general amnesty, which was accepted by the greater part of the rebellious satrape. But the Romans derived more

them: yet the superior weight of the testimony of Eusebius obliges us to admit the preliminaries, if not the ratification, of the treaty. See Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 420. * Julian,

honour than advantage from this revolution. Chosroes was a prince of a puny stature, and a pusillanimous spirit. Unequal to the fatigues of war, averse to the society of mankind, he withdrew from his capital to a retired palace, which he built on the banks of the river Eleutherus, and in the centre of a shady grove; where he consumed his vacant hours in the rural sports of hunting and hawking. To secure this inglorious ease, he submitted to the conditions of peace which Sapor condescended to impose; the payment of an annual tribute, and the restitution of the fertile province of Atropatene, which the courage of Tiridates, and the victorious arms of Galerius, had annexed to the Armenian monarchy.*

During the long period of the reign of Constantius, the provinces of the east were afflicted by the calamities of the Persian war. The irregular incursions of the light troops alternately spread terror and devastation beyond the Tigris, and beyond the Euphrates, from the gates of Ctesiphon to those of Antioch; and this active service was performed by the Arabs of the desert, who were divided in their interests and affections; some of their independent chiefs being enlisted in the party of Sapor, whilst others had engaged their doubtful fidelity to the emperor.† The more grave and important operations of the war were conducted with equal vigour; and the armies of Rome and Persia encountered each other in nine bloody fields, in two of which Constantius himself commanded in person.‡ The event of

Orat. 1, p. 20.

* Julian. Orat. 1. p. 20, 21. Moses of Chorene, l. 2, c. 89; l. 3, c. 1—9, p. 226—240. The perfect agreement between the vague hints of the contemporary orator, and the circumstantial narrative of the national historian, gives light to the former and weight to the latter. For the credit of Moses it may be likewise observed, that the name of Antiochus is found a very few years before in a civil office of inferior dignity. See Godefroy, Cod. Theod. tom. vi, p. 350.

† Ammianus (14. 4) gives a lively description of the wandering and predatory life of the Saracens, who stretched from the confines of Assyria to the cataracts of the Nile. It appears, from the adventures of Malchus, which Jerome has related in so entertaining a manner, that the high road between Beroea and Edessa was infested by these robbers. See Hieronym. tom. i, p. 256. ‡ We shall take from

Eutropius the general idea of the war (10. 10). *A Persis enim multa et gravia perpressus, sæpe captis oppidis, obsessis urbibus, cæsis exercitibus, nullumque ei contra Saporem prosperum prælium fuit, nisi quod apud Singaram, &c.* This honest account is confirmed by the hints of

the day was most commonly adverse to the Romans, but in the battle of Singara, their imprudent valour had almost achieved a signal and decisive victory. The stationary troops of Singara retired on the approach of Sapor, who passed the Tigris over three bridges, and occupied near the village of Hilleh an advantageous camp, which, by the labour of his numerous pioneers, he surrounded in one day with a deep ditch, and a lofty rampart. His formidable host, when it was drawn out in order of battle, covered the banks of the river, the adjacent heights, and the whole extent of a plain of above twelve miles, which separated the two armies. Both were alike impatient to engage; but the barbarians, after a slight resistance, fled in disorder; unable to resist, or desirous to weary, the strength of the heavy legions, who, fainting with heat and thirst, pursued them across the plain, and cut in pieces a line of cavalry, clothed in complete armour, which had been posted before the gates of the camp to protect their retreat. Constantius, who was hurried along in the pursuit, attempted, without effect, to restrain the ardour of his troops, by representing to them the dangers of the approaching night, and the certainty of completing their success with the return of day. As they depended much more on their own valour, than on the experience or the abilities of their chief, they silenced by their clamours his timid remonstrances; and rushing with fury to the charge, filled up the ditch, broke down the rampart, and dispersed themselves through the tents to recruit their exhausted strength, and to enjoy the rich harvest of their labours. But the prudent Sapor had watched the moment of victory. His army, of which the greater part, securely posted on the heights, had been spectators of the action, advanced in silence and under the shadow of the night; and his Persian archers, guided by the illumination of the camp, poured a shower of arrows on the disarmed and licentious crowd. The sincerity of his-

Ammianus, Rufus, and Jerome. The two first orations of Julian, and the third oration of Libanius, exhibit a more flattering picture; but the recantation of both those orators, after the death of Constantius, while it restores us to the possession of the truth, degrades their own character, and that of the emperor. The commentary of Spanheim on the first oration of Julian is profusely learned. See likewise the judicious observations of Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 656.

tory * declares that the Romans were vanquished with a dreadful slaughter, and that the flying remnant of the legions was exposed to the most intolerable hardships. Even the tenderness of panegyric, confessing that the glory of the emperor was sullied by the disobedience of his soldiers, chooses to draw a veil over the circumstances of this melancholy retreat. Yet one of those venal orators, so jealous of the fame of Constantius, relates with amazing coolness an act of such incredible cruelty, as, in the judgment of posterity, must imprint a far deeper stain on the honour of the imperial name. The son of Sapor, the heir of his crown, had been made a captive in the Persian camp. The unhappy youth, who might have excited the compassion of the most savage enemy, was scourged, tortured, and publicly executed by the inhuman Romans.†

Whatever advantages might attend the arms of Sapor in the field, though nine repeated victories diffused among the nations the fame of his valour and conduct, he could not hope to succeed in the execution of his designs, while the fortified towns of Mesopotamia, and, above all, the strong and ancient city of Nisibis remained in the possession of the Romans. In the space of twelve years, Nisibis, which, since the time of Lucullus, had been deservedly esteemed the bulwark of the east, sustained three memorable sieges against the power of Sapor; and the disappointed monarch, after urging his attacks above sixty, eighty, and a hundred days, was thrice repulsed with loss and ignominy.‡ This large and populous city was situate about two days' journey from the Tigris, in the midst of a pleasant and fertile plain at the foot of Mount Masius. A treble enclosure of brick walls was defended by a deep ditch;§ and the intrepid resis-

* *Acerimâ nocturnâ concertatione pugnatum est, nostrorum copiis ingenti strage confossis.* Ammian. 18. 5. See likewise Eutropius, 10. 10, and S. Rufus, c. 27. † Libanius, Orat. 3, p. 133, with Julian Orat. 1, p. 24, and Spanheim's Commentary, p. 179.

‡ See Julian. Orat. 1, p. 27. Orat. 2, p. 62, &c., with the Commentary of Spanheim (p. 188—202), who illustrates the circumstances, and ascertains the time, of the three sieges of Nisibis. Their dates are likewise examined by Tillemont. (*Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 668. 671. 674). Something is added from Zosimus, l. 3, p. 151, and the Alexandrine Chronicle, p. 290. § Sallust Fragment. 84, edit. Bosses, and Plutarch in Lucull. tom. iii, p. 184. Nisibis is now reduced to one hundred and fifty houses; the marshy lands produce

taunce of Count Lucilianus, and his garrison, was seconded by the desperate courage of the people. The citizens of Nisibis were animated by the exhortations of their bishop,* inured to arms by the presence of danger, and convinced of the intentions of Sapor to plant a Persian colony in their room, and to lead them away into distant and barbarous captivity. The event of the two former sieges elated their confidence and exasperated the haughty spirit of the great king, who advanced a third time towards Nisibis, at the head of the united forces of Persia and India. The ordinary machines invented to batter or undermine the walls were rendered ineffectual by the superior skill of the Romans; and many days had vainly elapsed, when Sapor embraced a resolution, worthy of an eastern monarch, who believed that the elements themselves were subject to his power. At the stated season of the melting of the snows in Armenia, the river Mygdonius, which divides the plain and city of Nisibis, forms, like the Nile,† an inundation over the adjacent country. By the labour of the Persians, the course of the river was stopped below the town, and the waters were confined on every side by solid mounds of earth. On this artificial lake, a fleet of armed vessels, filled with soldiers, and with engines which discharged stones of five hundred pounds weight, advanced in order of battle, and engaged, almost upon a level, the troops which defended the ramparts. The irresistible force of the waters was alternately fatal to the contending parties, till at length a portion of the walls, unable to sustain the accumulated pressure, gave way at once, and exposed an ample breach of one hundred and fifty feet. The Persians were instantly driven to the assault, and the fate of Nisibis depended on the event of the day. The heavy-armed cavalry, who led the van of a deep column,

rice, and the fertile meadows, as far as Mosul and the Tigris, are covered with the ruins of towns and villages. See Niebuhr, *Voyages*, tom. ii, p. 300—309. * The miracles which Theodoret (l. 2, c. 30) ascribes to St. James, bishop of Edessa, were at least performed in a

worthy cause, the defence of his country. He appeared on the walls under the figure of the Roman emperor, and sent an army of gnats to sting the trunks of the elephants, and to discomfit the host of the new Sennacherib. † Julian. *Orat.* 1, p. 27. Though Niebuhr (tom. ii, p. 307,) allows a very considerable swell to the Mygdonius, over which

he saw a bridge of twelve arches, it is difficult, however, to understand this parallel of a trifling rivulet with a mighty river. There are many

were embarrassed in the mud, and great numbers were drowned in the unseen holes which had been filled by the rushing waters. The elephants, made furious by their wounds, increased the disorder, and trampled down thousands of the Persian archers. The great king, who, from an exalted throne, beheld the misfortunes of his arms, sounded, with reluctant indignation, the signal of the retreat, and suspended for some hours the prosecution of the attack. But the vigilant citizens improved the opportunity of the night; and the return of day discovered a new wall of six feet in height, rising every moment to fill up the interval of the breach. Notwithstanding the disappointment of his hopes, and the loss of more than twenty thousand men, Sapor still pressed the reduction of Nisibis, with an obstinate firmness, which could have yielded only to the necessity of defending the eastern provinces of Persia against a formidable invasion of the Massagetæ.* Alarmed by this intelligence, he hastily relinquished the siege, and marched with rapid diligence from the banks of the Tigris to those of the Oxus. The danger and difficulties of the Scythian war engaged him soon afterwards to conclude, or at least to observe, a truce with the Roman emperor, which was equally grateful to both princes; as Constantius himself, after the deaths of his two brothers, was involved, by the revolutions of the west, in a civil contest, which required, and seemed to exceed, the most vigorous exertion of his undivided strength.

After the partition of the empire, three years had scarcely elapsed before the sons of Constantine seemed impatient to convince mankind that they were incapable of contenting themselves with the dominions which they were unqualified to govern. The eldest of those princes soon complained that he was defrauded of his just proportion of the spoils of their murdered kinsmen; and though he might yield to the superior guilt and merit of Constantius, he exacted from Constans the cession of the African provinces, as an equivalent for the rich countries of Macedonia and Greece,

circumstances obscure, and almost unintelligible, in the description of those stupendous waterworks.

* We are obliged to Zonaras (tom. ii, l. 13, p. 11,) for this invasion of the Massagetæ, which is perfectly consistent with the general series of events, to which we are darkly led by the broken history of Ammianus.

which his brother had acquired by the death of Dalmatius. The want of sincerity which Constantine experienced in a tedious and fruitless negotiation, exasperated the fierceness of his temper; and he eagerly listened to those favourites, who suggested to him that his honour, as well as his interest, was concerned in the prosecution of the quarrel. At the head of a tumultuary band, suited for rapine rather than for conquest, he suddenly broke into the dominions of Constans, by the way of the Julian Alps, and the country round Aquileia felt the first effects of his resentment. The measures of Constans, who then resided in Dacia, were directed with more prudence and ability. On the news of his brother's invasion, he detached a select and disciplined body of his Illyrian troops, proposing to follow them in person, with the remainder of his forces. But the conduct of his lieutenants soon terminated the unnatural contest. By the artful appearances of flight, Constantine was betrayed into an ambuscade, which had been concealed in a wood, where the rash youth, with a few attendants, was surprised, surrounded, and slain. His body, after it had been found in the obscure stream of the Alsa, obtained the honours of an imperial sepulchre; but his provinces transferred their allegiance to the conqueror, who, refusing to admit his elder brother Constantius to any share in these new acquisitions, maintained the undisputed possession of more than two-thirds of the Roman empire.*

The fate of Constans himself was delayed about ten years longer, and the revenge of his brother's death was reserved for the more ignoble hand of a domestic traitor. The pernicious tendency of the system introduced by Constantine was displayed in the feeble administration of his sons; who, by their vices and weakness, soon lost the esteem and affections of their people. The pride assumed by Constans, from the unmerited success of his arms, was rendered more contemptible by his want of abilities and application. His fond partiality towards some German captives, distinguished only by the charms of youth, was an object of scandal to

* The causes and the events of this civil war are related with much perplexity and contradiction. I have chiefly followed Zonaras, and the younger Victor. The monody (ad calcem Eutrop. edit. Havercamp.) pronounced on the death of Constantine, might have been very instructive; but prudence and false taste engaged the orator to involve

the people;* and Magnentius, an ambitious soldier, who was himself of barbarian extraction, was encouraged by the public discontent to assert the honour of the Roman name.† The chosen bands of Jovians and Herculians, who acknowledged Magnentius, as their leader, maintained the most respectable and important station in the imperial camp. The friendship of Marcellinus, count of the sacred largesses, supplied with a liberal hand the means of seduction. The soldiers were convinced by the most specious arguments, that the republic summoned them to break the bonds of hereditary servitude; and, by the choice of an active and vigilant prince, to reward the same virtues which had raised the ancestors of the degenerate Constans from a private condition to the throne of the world. As soon as the conspiracy was ripe for execution, Marcellinus, under the pretence of celebrating his son's birthday, gave a splendid entertainment to the *illustrious* and *honourable* persons of the court of Gaul, which then resided in the city of Autun. The intemperance of the feast was artfully protracted till a very late hour of the night; and the unsuspecting guests were tempted to indulge themselves in a dangerous and guilty freedom of conversation. On a sudden the doors were thrown open, and Magnentius, who had retired for a few moments, returned into the apartment invested with the diadem and purple. The conspirators instantly saluted him with the titles of Augustus and emperor. The surprise, the terror, the intoxication, the ambitious hopes, and the mutual ignorance of the rest of the assembly, prompted them to join their voices to the general acclamation. The guards hastened to take the oath of fidelity: the gates of the town were shut; and before the dawn of day, Magnentius became master of the troops and treasure of the palace

himself in vague declamation. * *Quarum (gentium) obsides pretio quæsitos pueros venustiores, quod cultius habuerat, libidine hujusmodi arsisse pro certo habetur.* Had not the depraved taste of Constans been publicly avowed, the elder Victor, who held a considerable office in his brother's reign, would not have asserted it in such positive terms. † Julian. *Orat.* 1 and 2. Zosim. *lib.* 2, p. 134. Victor in *Epitome*. There is reason to believe that Magnentius was born in one of those barbarian colonies which Constantius Chlorus had established in Gaul. (See this history, vol. i, p. 434.) His behaviour may remind us of the patriot Eur. of Leicester, the famous Simon de Montfort, who could persuade the good people of England, that he, a

and city of Autun. By his secrecy and diligence he entertained some hopes of surprising the person of Constans, who was pursuing in the adjacent forest his favourite amusement of hunting, or perhaps some pleasures of a more private and criminal nature. The rapid progress of fame allowed him, however, an instant for flight, though the desertion of his soldiers and subjects deprived him of the power of resistance. Before he could reach a seaport in Spain, where he intended to embark, he was overtaken near Helena,* at the foot of the Pyrenees, by a party of light cavalry, whose chief, regardless of the sanctity of a temple, executed his commission by the murder of the son of Constantine.†

As soon as the death of Constans had decided this easy but important revolution, the example of the court of Autun was imitated by the provinces of the west. The authority of Magnentius was acknowledged through the whole extent of the two great prefectures of Gaul and Italy; and the usurper prepared, by every act of oppression, to collect a treasure, which might discharge the obligation of an immense donative, and supply the expenses of a civil war. The martial countries of Illyricum, from the Danube to the extremity of Greece, had long obeyed the government of Vetrico, an aged general, beloved for the simplicity of his manners, and who had acquired some reputation by his experience and services in war.‡ Attached by habit, by duty, and by gratitude, to the house of Constantine, he immediately gave the strongest assurances to the only surviving son of his late master, that he would expose, with unshaken fidelity, his person and his troops, to inflict a just revenge on the traitors of Gaul. But the legions of Vetrico were seduced rather than provoked by the example of rebellion; their leader soon betrayed a want of firmness or

Frenchman by birth, had taken arms to deliver them from foreign favourites.

* This ancient city had once flourished under the name of Illiberis. (Pomponius Mela, 2, 5.) The munificence of Constantine gave it new splendour, and his mother's name. Helena (it is still called Elne) became the seat of a bishop, who long afterwards transferred his residence to Perpignan, the capital of modern Rousillon. See D'Anville, *Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule*, p. 380. Longuerue, *Description de la France*, p. 223, and the *Marca Hispanica*, lib. 1, c. 2.

† Zosimus, l. 2, p. 119, 120. Zonaras, tom. ii, l. 13, p. 13, and the Abbreviators. ‡ Eutropius (10, 10) describes Vetrico with more tamper, and probably with more truth than either of the two Victors.

a want of sincerity; and his ambition derived a specious pretence from the approbation of the princess Constantina. That cruel and aspiring woman, who had obtained from the great Constantine her father the rank of *Augusta*, placed the diadem with her own hands on the head of the Illyrian general; and seemed to expect from his victory the accomplishment of those unbounded hopes, of which she had been disappointed by the death of her husband Hannibalianus. Perhaps it was without the consent of Constantina, that the new emperor formed a necessary, though dishonourable, alliance with the usurper of the west, whose purple was so recently stained with her brother's blood.*

The intelligence of these important events, which so deeply affected the honour and safety of the imperial house, recalled the arms of Constantius from the inglorious prosecution of the Persian war. He recommended the care of the east to his lieutenants, and afterwards to his cousin Gallus, whom he raised from a prison to a throne; and marched towards Europe, with a mind agitated by the conflict of hope and fear, of grief and indignation. On his arrival at Heraclea in Thrace, the emperor gave audience to the ambassadors of Magnentius and Vetranio. The first author of the conspiracy, Marcellinus, who in some measure had bestowed the purple on his new master, boldly accepted this dangerous commission; and his three colleagues were selected from the illustrious personages of the state and army. These deputies were instructed to soothe the resentment, and to alarm the fears of Constantius. They were empowered to offer him the friendship and alliance of the western princes, to cement their union by a double marriage; of Constantius with the daughter of Magnentius, and of Magnentius himself with the ambitious Constantina; and to acknowledge in the treaty the pre-eminence of rank which might justly be claimed by the emperor of the east. Should pride and mistaken piety urge him to refuse these equitable conditions, the ambassadors were ordered to expatiate on the inevitable ruin which must attend his rashness, if he ventured to provoke the sovereigns of the west to exert

Vetranio was born of obscure parents in the wildest parts of *Moesia*; and so much had his education been neglected, that, after his elevation he studied the alphabet. * The doubtful, fluctuating conduct of Vetranio is described by Julian in his first oration, and accurately

their superior strength; and to employ against him that valour, those abilities, and those legions, to which the house of Constantine had been indebted for so many triumphs. Such propositions and such arguments appeared to deserve the most serious attention; the answer of Constantius was deferred till the next day; and as he had reflected on the importance of justifying a civil war in the opinion of the people, he thus addressed his council, who listened with real or affected credulity: "Last night," said he, "after I retired to rest, the shade of the great Constantine, embracing the corpse of my murdered brother, rose before my eyes; his well-known voice awakened me to revenge, forbade me to despair of the republic, and assured me of the success and immortal glory which would crown the justice of my arms." The authority of such a vision, or rather of the prince who alleged it, silenced every doubt, and excluded all negotiation. The ignominious terms of peace were rejected with disdain. One of the ambassadors of the tyrant was dismissed with the haughty answer of Constantius; his colleagues, as unworthy of the privileges of the law of nations, were put in irons; and the contending powers prepared to wage an implacable war.*

Such was the conduct, and such perhaps was the duty, of the brother of Constans towards the perfidious usurper of Gaul. The situation and character of Vetricano admitted of milder measures; and the policy of the eastern emperor was directed to disunite his antagonists, and to separate the forces of Illyricum from the cause of rebellion. It was an easy task to deceive the frankness and simplicity of Vetricano, who, fluctuating some time between the opposite views of honour and interest, displayed to the world the insincerity of his temper, and was insensibly engaged in the snares of an artful negotiation. Constantius acknowledged him as a legitimate and equal colleague in the empire, on condition that he would renounce his disgraceful alliance with Magnentius, and appoint a place of interview on the frontiers of their respective provinces; where they might pledge their friendship by mutual vows of fidelity, and regulate by common consent the future operations of the civil war. In consequence of this agreement, Vetricano advanced to the

explained by Spanheim. who discusses the situation and behaviour of Constantina. * See Peter the patrician, in the *Excerpta Legatio-*

city of Sardica,* at the head of twenty thousand horse, and a more numerous body of infantry; a power so far superior to the forces of Constantius, that the Illyrian emperor appeared to command the life and fortunes of his rival, who, depending on the success of his private negotiations, had seduced the troops, and undermined the throne of Vetranio. The chiefs, who had secretly embraced the party of Constantius, prepared in his favour a public spectacle, calculated to discover and inflame the passions of the multitude.† The united armies were commanded to assemble in a large plain near the city. In the centre, according to the rules of ancient discipline, a military tribunal, or rather scaffold, was erected, from whence the emperors were accustomed, on solemn and important occasions, to harangue the troops. The well-ordered ranks of Romans and barbarians, with drawn swords, or with erected spears, the squadrons of cavalry, and the cohorts of infantry, distinguished by the variety of their arms and ensigns, formed an immense circle round the tribunal; and the attentive silence which they preserved was sometimes interrupted by loud bursts of clamour or of applause. In the presence of this formidable assembly, the two emperors were called upon to explain the situation of public affairs; the precedence of rank was yielded to the royal birth of Constantius; and though he was indifferently skilled in the arts of rhetoric, he acquitted himself, under these difficult circumstances, with firmness, dexterity, and eloquence. The first part of his oration seemed to be pointed only against the tyrant of Gaul; but while he tragically lamented the cruel murder of Constans, he insinuated, that none, except a brother, could claim a right to the succession of his brother. He displayed, with some complacency, the glories of his imperial race; and recalled to the memory of the troops, the valour, the triumphs, the liberality of the great Constantine, to whose sons they had engaged their allegiance by an oath of fidelity, which the ingratitude of his most favoured servants had tempted them to violate. The officers, who surrounded the

num, p. 27. * Zonaras, tom. ii, l. 13, p. 16. The position of Sardica, near the modern city of Sophia, appears better suited to this interview than the situation of either Naissus or Sirmium, where it is placed by Jerome, Soerates, and Sozomen. † See the two first orations of Julian, particularly p. 31, and Zosimus, l. 2. p. 122. The dis-

tribunal, and were instructed to act their parts in this extraordinary scene, confessed the irresistible power of reason and eloquence, by saluting the emperor Constantius as their lawful sovereign. The contagion of loyalty and repentance was communicated from rank to rank; till the plain of Sardica resounded with the universal acclamation of "Away with these upstart usurpers! Long life and victory to the son of Constantine! Under his banners alone we will fight and conquer." The shout of thousands, their menacing gestures, the fierce clashing of their arms, astonished and subdued the courage of Vetranio, who stood amidst the defection of his followers, in anxious and silent suspense. Instead of embracing the last refuge of generous despair, he tamely submitted to his fate; and taking the diadem from his head, in the view of both armies, fell prostrate at the feet of his conqueror. Constantius used his victory with prudence and moderation; and raising from the ground the aged suppliant, whom he affected to style by the endearing name of father, he gave him his hand to descend from the throne. The city of Prusa was assigned for the exile or retirement of the abdicated monarch, who lived six years in the enjoyment of ease and affluence. He often expressed his grateful sense of the goodness of Constantius, and with a very amiable simplicity, advised his benefactor to resign the sceptre of the world, and to seek for content (where alone it could be found) in the peaceful obscurity of a private condition.*

The behaviour of Constantius, on this memorable occasion, was celebrated with some appearance of justice; and his courtiers compared the studied orations which a Pericles or a Demosthenes addressed to the populace of Athens, with the victorious eloquence which had persuaded an armed multitude to desert and depose the object of their partial choice.† The approaching contest with Magnentius was of a more serious and bloody kind. The tyrant advanced by

tinct narrative of the historian serves to illustrate the diffuse, but vague, descriptions of the orator. * The younger Victor assigns to his exile the emphatical appellation of "voluptarium otium." Socrates (lib. ii, c. 28) is the voucher for the correspondence with the emperor, which would seem to prove, that Vetranio was, indeed, *prope ad stultitiam simplicissimus*. † Eum Constantius *facundia vi dejectum imperio in privatum otium removit. Quae gloria post natum imperium soli processit eloquio clementiaque, &c. Aurelius Victor,*

rapid marches to encounter Constantius. at the head of a numerous army, composed of Gauls and Spaniards, of Franks and Saxons ; of those provincials who supplied the strength of the legions, and of those barbarians who were dreaded as the most formidable enemies of the republic. The fertile plains* of the Lower Pannonia, between the Drave, the Save, and the Danube, presented a spacious theatre ; and the operations of the civil war were protracted during the summer months by the skill or timidity of the combatants.† Constantius had declared his intention of deciding the quarrel in the fields of Cibalis, a name that would animate his troops by the remembrance of the victory which, on the same auspicious ground, had been obtained by the arms of his father Constantine. Yet by the impregnable fortifications with which the emperor encompassed his camp, he appeared to decline, rather than to invite, a general engagement. It was the object of Magnentius to tempt or to compel his adversary to relinquish this advantageous position ; and he employed, with that view, the various marches, evolutions, and stratagems, which the knowledge of the art of war could suggest to an experienced officer. He carried by assault the important town of Siscia ; made an attack on the city of Sirmium, which lay in the rear of the imperial camp ; attempted to force a passage over the Save into the eastern provinces of Illyricum ; and cut in pieces a numerous detachment, which he had allured into the narrow passes of Adarne. During the greater part of the summer, the tyrant of Gaul showed himself master of the field. The troops of Constantius were harassed and dispirited ; his reputation declined in the eye of the world ; and his pride condescended to solicit a treaty of peace, which would have resigned to the assassin of Constans the sovereignty of the provinces beyond the Alps. These offers were enforced by

Julian, and Themistius (Orat. 3 and 4), adorn this exploit with all the artificial and gaudy colouring of their rhetoric.

* Busbequius (p. 112) traversed the Lower Hungary and Slavonia at a time when they were reduced almost to a desert, by the reciprocal hostilities of the Turks and Christians. Yet he mentions with admiration the unconquerable fertility of the soil ; and observes, that the height of the grass was sufficient to conceal a loaded wagon from his sight. See likewise Browne's Travels, in Harris's Collection, vol. ii, p. 762, &c.

† Zosimus gives a very large account of the war and the negotiation (l. ii, p. 123—130). But as he neither shews himself a soldier nor

the eloquence of Philip, the imperial ambassador; and the council as well as the army of Magnentius were disposed to accept them. But the haughty usurper, careless of the remonstrances of his friends, gave orders that Philip should be detained as a captive, or at least as a hostage, while he dispatched an officer to reproach Constantius with the weakness of his reign, and to insult him by the promise of a pardon, if he would instantly abdicate the purple. "That he should confide in the justice of his cause, and the protection of an avenging Deity," was the only answer which honour permitted the emperor to return. But he was so sensible of the difficulties of his situation, that he no longer dared to retaliate the indignity which had been offered to his representative. The negotiation of Philip was not, however, ineffectual, since he determined Sylvanus the Frank, a general of merit and reputation, to desert with a considerable body of cavalry, a few days before the battle of Mursa.

The city of Mursa, or Essek, celebrated in modern times for a bridge of boats five miles in length, over the river Drave, and the adjacent morasses,* has been always considered as a place of importance in the wars of Hungary. Magnentius directing his march towards Mursa, set fire to the gates, and by a sudden assault, had almost sealed the walls of the town. The vigilance of the garrison extinguished the flames; the approach of Constantius left him no time to continue the operations of the siege; and the emperor soon removed the only obstacle that could embarrass his motions, by forcing a body of troops which had taken post in an adjoining amphitheatre. The field of battle round Mursa was a naked and level plain; on this ground the army of Constantius formed, with the Drave on their right, while their left, either from the nature of their disposition, or from the superiority of their cavalry, extended far beyond the right flank of Magnentius.† The troops on both sides remained under arms, in anxious expectation,

a politician, his narrative must be weighed with attention, and received with caution. * This remarkable bridge, which is flanked with towers, and supported on large wooden piles, was constructed, A.D. 1566, by Sultan Soliman, to facilitate the march of his armies into Hungary. See Browne's Travels, and Busching's System of Geography, vol. ii, p. 90. † This position, and the subsequent evolutions, are clearly, though cursorily, described by Julian, *Orat.* 1, p. 36.

during the greatest part of the morning; and the son of Constantine, after animating his soldiers by an eloquent speech, retired into a church at some distance from the field of battle, and committed to his generals the conduct of this decisive day.* They deserved his confidence by the valour and military skill which they exerted. They wisely began the action upon the left; and advancing their whole wing of cavalry in an oblique line, they suddenly wheeled it on the right flank of the enemy, which was unprepared to resist the impetuosity of their charge. But the Romans of the west soon rallied, by the habits of discipline; and the barbarians of Germany supported the renown of their national bravery. The engagement soon became general; was maintained with various and singular turns of fortune; and scarcely ended with the darkness of the night. The signal victory which Constantius obtained, is attributed to the arms of his cavalry.

His cuirassiers are described as so many massy statues of steel, glittering with their scaly armour, and breaking with their ponderous lances the firm array of the Gallic legions. As soon as the legions gave way, the lighter and more active squadrons of the second line rode sword in hand into the intervals, and completed the disorder. In the meanwhile the huge bodies of the Germans were exposed, almost naked, to the dexterity of the oriental archers; and whole troops of those barbarians were urged by anguish and despair to precipitate themselves into the broad and rapid stream of the Drave.† The number of the slain was computed at fifty-four thousand men and the slaughter of the conquerors was more considerable than that of the vanquished,‡ a cir-

* Sulpicius Severus, l. ii, p. 405. The emperor passed the day in prayer with Valens, the Arian bishop of Mursa, who gained his confidence by announcing the success of the battle. M. de Tillemont (*Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. ii, p. 1110) very properly remarks the silence of Julian with regard to the personal prowess of Constantius in the battle of Mursa. The silence of flattery is sometimes equal to the most positive and authentic evidence. † Julian. *Orat.* 1, p. 36, 37, and *Orat.* 2, p. 59, 60. Zonaras, tom. ii, l. 13, p. 17. Zosimus, l. ii, p. 130—133. The last of these celebrates the dexterity of the archer Menelaus, who could discharge three arrows at the same time; an advantage which, according to his apprehension of military affairs, materially contributed to the victory of Constantius. ‡ According to Zonaras, Constantius, out of eighty thousand men, lost thirty thousand; and Magnentius lost twenty-four thousand out of thirty-six thousand. The other

cumstance which proves the obstinacy of the contest, and justifies the observation of an ancient writer, that the forces of the empire were consumed in the fatal battle of Mursa, by the loss of a veteran army sufficient to defend the frontiers, or to add new triumphs to the glory of Rome.* Notwithstanding the invectives of a servile orator, there is not the least reason to believe that the tyrant deserted his own standard in the beginning of the engagement. He seems to have displayed the virtues of a general and of a soldier till the day was irrecoverably lost, and his camp in the possession of the enemy. Magnentius then consulted his safety, and throwing away the imperial ornaments, escaped with some difficulty from the pursuit of the light horse, who incessantly followed his rapid flight from the banks of the Drave to the foot of the Julian Alps.†

The approach of winter supplied the indolence of Constantius with specious reasons for deferring the prosecution of the war till the ensuing spring. Magnentius had fixed his residence in the city of Aquileia, and showed a seeming resolution to dispute the passage of the mountains and morasses which fortified the confines of the Venetian province. The surprisal of a castle in the Alps, by the secret march of the imperialists, could scarcely have determined him to relinquish the possession of Italy, if the inclinations of the people had supported the cause of their tyrant.‡ But the memory of the cruelties exercised by his ministers after the

articles of this account seem probable and authentic. but the numbers of the tyrant's army must have been mistaken, either by the author or his transcribers. Magnentius had collected the whole force of the west, Romans and barbarians, into one formidable body, which cannot fairly be estimated at less than one hundred thousand men. Julian. Orat. 1, p. 34, 35. * *Ingentes R. I. vires eâ dimitatione consumptæ sunt, ad quælibet bella externa idoneæ, quæ multum triumphorum possent securitatisque conferre.* Eutropius, 10, 13. The younger Victor expresses himself to the same effect. † On this occasion, we must prefer the unsuspected testimony of Zosimus and Zonaras to the flattering assertions of Julian. The younger Victor paints the character of Magnentius in a singular light: "*Sermonis acer, animi tumidi, et immodice timidus; artifex tamen ad occultandam audaciæ speciem formidinem.*" Is it most likely that in the battle of Mursa his behaviour was governed by nature or by art? I should incline for the latter.

‡ Julian. Orat. 1, p. 38, 39. In that place, however, as well as in Oration 2, p. 97, he insinuates the general disposition of the senate, the people, and the soldiers of Italy, towards the party of the emperor.

unsuccessful revolt of Nepotian, had left a deep impression of horror and resentment on the minds of the Romans. That rash youth, the son of the princess Eutropia, and the nephew of Constantine, had seen with indignation the sceptre of the west usurped by a perfidious barbarian. Arming a desperate troop of slaves and gladiators, he overpowered the feeble guard of the domestic tranquillity of Rome, received the homage of the senate, and, assuming the title of Augustus, precariously reigned during a tumult of twenty-eight days. The march of some regular forces put an end to his ambitious hopes; the rebellion was extinguished in the blood of Nepotian, of his mother Eutropia, and of his adherents; and the proscription was extended to all who had contracted a fatal alliance with the name and family of Constantine.* But as soon as Constantius, after the battle of Mursa, became master of the sea-coast of Dalmatia, a band of noble exiles, who had ventured to equip a fleet in some harbour of the Hadriatic, sought protection and revenge in his victorious camp. By their secret intelligence with their countrymen, Rome and the Italian cities were persuaded to display the banners of Constantius on their walls. The grateful veterans, enriched by the liberality of the father, signalized their gratitude and loyalty to the son. The cavalry, the legions, and the auxiliaries, of Italy, renewed their oath of allegiance to Constantius; and the usurper, alarmed by the general desertion, was compelled, with the remains of his faithful troops, to retire beyond the Alps into the provinces of Gaul. The detachments, however, which were ordered either to press or to intercept the flight of Magnentius, conducted themselves with the usual imprudence of success; and allowed him, in the plains of Pavia, an opportunity of turning on his pursuers, and of gratifying his despair, by the carnage of a useless victory.†

The pride of Magnentius was reduced, by repeated misfortunes, to sue, and to sue in vain, for peace. He first

* The elder Victor describes in a pathetic manner the miserable condition of Rome, "Cujus stolidum ingenium adeo P. R. patribusque, exitio fuit, uti passim domus, fora, viae, templaque, cruore, cadaveribusque opplerenter bustorum modo." Athanasius (tom. i. p. 677) deplors the fate of several illustrious victims; and Julian (Orat. 2, p. 58) execrates the cruelty of Marcellinus, the implacable enemy of the house of Constantine. † Zosim. lib. 2, p. 133. Victor in Epitoma. The panegyrist of Constantius, with their usual candour, forget to

dispatched a senator, in whose abilities he confided, and afterwards several bishops, whose holy character might obtain a more favourable audience, with the offer of resigning the purple, and the promise of devoting the remainder of his life to the service of the emperor. But Constantius, though he granted fair terms of pardon and reconciliation to all who abandoned the standard of rebellion,* avowed his inflexible resolution to inflict a just punishment on the crimes of an assassin, whom he prepared to overwhelm on every side by the effort of his victorious arms. An imperial fleet acquired the easy possession of Africa and Spain, confirmed the wavering faith of the Moorish nations, and landed a considerable force, which passed the Pyrenees, and advanced towards Lyons, the last and fatal station of Magnentius.† The temper of the tyrant, which was never inclined to clemency, was urged by distress to exercise every act of oppression which could extort an immediate supply from the cities of Gaul.‡ Their patience was at length exhausted; and Treves, the seat of prætorian government, gave the signal of revolt, by shutting her gates against Decentius, who had been raised by his brother to the rank either of Cæsar or of Augustus.§ From Treves, Decentius was obliged to retire to Sens, where he was soon surrounded by an army of Germans, whom the pernicious arts of Constantius had introduced into the civil dissensions of Rome.¶ In the mean time, the imperial troops forced the passages of the Cottian Alps, and in the bloody combat of Mount Seleucus, irrevocably fixed the title of rebels on the party

mention this accidental defeat. * Zonaras, tom. ii, l. 13, p. 17.

Julian, in several places of the two orations, expatiates on the clemency of Constantius to the rebels. † Zosim. lib. ii, p. 133. Julian, Orat. 1, p. 40, 2, p. 74.

‡ Ammian, 15, 6. Zosim. 1, 2, p. 123.

Julian, who (Orat. 1, p. 40) inveighs against the cruel effects of the tyrant's despair, mentions (Orat. 1, p. 34) the oppressive edicts which were dictated by his necessities or by his avarice. His subjects were compelled to purchase the imperial demesnes; a doubtful and dangerous species of property, which, in case of a revolution, might be imputed to them as a treasonable usurpation. § The medals of Magnentius celebrate the victories of the two Augusti, and of the Cæsar.

The Cæsar was another brother, named Desiderius. See Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, p. 757. ¶ Julian, Orat. 1, p. 40, 2, p. 74, with Spanheim, p. 263. His Commentary illustrates the transactions of this civil war.

Mons Seleuci was a small place in the Cottian Alps, a few miles distant from Vapincum, or Gap, an episcopal city of

of Magnentius.* He was unable to bring another army into the field; the fidelity of his guards was corrupted; and when he appeared in public to animate them by his exhortations, he was saluted with the unanimous shout of "Long live the emperor Constantius!" The tyrant, who perceived that they were preparing to deserve pardon and rewards by the sacrifice of the most obnoxious criminal, prevented their design by falling on his sword;† a death more easy and more honourable than he could hope to obtain from the hands of an enemy, whose revenge would have been coloured with the specious pretence of justice and fraternal piety. The example of suicide was imitated by Decentius, who strangled himself on the news of his brother's death. The author of the conspiracy, Marcellinus, had long since disappeared in the battle of Mursa.‡ and the public tranquillity was confirmed by the execution of the surviving leaders of a guilty and unsuccessful faction. A severe inquisition was extended over all who, either from choice or from compulsion, had been involved in the cause of rebellion. Paul, surnamed Catena, from his superior skill in the judicial exercise of tyranny, was sent to explore the latent remains of the conspiracy in the remote province of Britain. The honest indignation expressed by Martin, vice-prefect of the island, was interpreted as an evidence of his own guilt; and the governor was urged to the necessity of turning against his breast the sword with which he had been provoked to wound the imperial minister. The most innocent subjects of the west were exposed to exile and confiscation, to death and torture; and, as the timid are always cruel, the mind of Constantius was inaccessible to mercy.§

Dauphiné. See D'Anville, Notice de la Gaule, p. 464, and Longuerue, Description de la France, p. 327. * Zosimus, l. 2, p. 134. Liban. Orat. 10, p. 268, 269. The latter most vehemently arraigns this cruel and selfish policy of Constantius. † Julian, Orat. 1, p. 49. Zosimus, l. 2, p. 134. Socrates, l. 2, c. 32. Sozomen, l. 4, c. 7. The younger Victor describes his death with some horrid circumstances: *Transfosso latere, ut erat vasti corporis, vulnere naribusque et ore cruorem effundens, expiravit.* If we can give credit to Zonaras, the tyrant, before he expired, had the pleasure of murdering with his own hands his mother and his brother Desiderius. ‡ Julian (Orat. 1, p. 58, 59) seems at a loss to determine, whether he inflicted on himself the punishment of his crimes, whether he was drowned in the Drave, or whether he was carried by the avenging demons from the field of battle to his destined place of eternal tortures. § Ammian. 14, 5, 21, 16.

CHAPTER XIX.—CONSTANTIUS SOLE EMPEROR.—ELEVATION AND DEATH OF GALLUS.—DANGER AND ELEVATION OF JULIAN.—SARMATIAN AND PERSIAN WARS.—VICTORIES OF JULIAN IN GAUL.

THE divided provinces of the empire were again united by the victory of Constantius; but as that feeble prince was destitute of personal merit, either in peace or war; as he feared his generals, and distrusted his ministers; the triumph of his arms served only to establish the reign of the *eunuchs* over the Roman world. Those unhappy beings, the ancient production of oriental jealousy and despotism,* were introduced into Greece and Rome by the contagion of Asiatic luxury.† Their progress was rapid; and the eunuchs, who in the time of Augustus, had been abhorred, as the monstrous retinue of an Egyptian queen,‡ were gradually admitted into the families of matrons, of senators, and of the emperors themselves.§ Restrained by the severe edicts of Domitian and Nerva,¶ cherished by the pride of Diocletian, reduced to an humble station by the prudence of Constantine,** they multiplied in the palaces of his degenerate sons, and insensibly acquired the knowledge, and at length the direction, of the secret councils of Con-

* Ammianus (lib. 14, c. 6) imputes the first practice of castration to the cruel ingenuity of Semiramis, who is supposed to have reigned above nineteen hundred years before Christ. The use of eunuchs is of high antiquity both in Asia and Egypt. They are mentioned in the law of Moses, Deuteron. xxiii, 1. See Goguet, Origines des Loix, &c. part 1, lib. i, c. 4.

† Eunuchum dixi velle te;

Quia soke utuntur his reginæ—Terent. Eunuch. act. 1, sc. 2.

This play is translated from Menander, and the original must have appeared soon after the eastern conquests of Alexander.

‡ Miles . . spadonibus

Servire rugosis potest.—Horat. Epod. ix, 13. and Dacier ad loc.

By the word *spado*, the Romans very forcibly expressed their abhorrence of this mutilated condition. The Greek appellation of eunuchs, which insensibly prevailed, had a milder sound and a more ambiguous sense. § We need only mention Posides, a freedman and eunuch of

Claudius, in whose favour the emperor prostituted some of the most honourable rewards of military valour. See Sueton. in Claudio, c. 28. Posides employed a great part of his wealth in building.

Ut *spado* vincebat Capitolia nostra

Posides.

Juvenal. Sat. 14.

¶ *Castrari mares vetuit.* Sueton. in Domitian. c. 7. See Dion. Cessius, l. 67, p. 1107; l. 68, p. 1119. ** There is a passage in the

stantius. The aversion and contempt which mankind has so uniformly entertained for that imperfect species appears to have degraded their character, and to have rendered them almost as incapable as they were supposed to be, of conceiving any generous sentiment, or of performing any worthy action.* But the eunuchs were skilled in the arts of flattery and intrigue; and they alternately governed the mind of Constantius by his fears, his indolence, and his vanity.† Whilst he viewed in a deceitful mirror the fair appearance of public prosperity, he supinely permitted them to intercept the complaints of the injured provinces, to accumulate immense treasures by the sale of justice and of honours; to disgrace the most important dignities, by the promotion of those who had purchased at their hands the power of oppression,‡ and to gratify their resentment against the few independent spirits, who arrogantly refused to solicit the protection of slaves. Of these slaves the most distinguished was the chamberlain Eusebius, who ruled the monarch and the palace with such absolute sway, that Constantius, according to the sarcasm of an impartial historian, possessed some credit with his haughty

Augustan history, p. 137, in which Lampridius, whilst he praises Alexander Severus and Constantine, for restraining the tyranny of the eunuchs, deploras the mischiefs which they occasioned in other reigns. *Huc accedit quod eunuchos nec in consiliis nec in ministeriis habuit; qui soli principes perdunt, dum eos more gentium aut regum Persarum volunt vivere; qui a populo etiam amicissimum semovent; qui internuntii sunt, aliud quam respondetur referentes; claudentes principem suum, et agentes ante omnia ne quid sciat.* * Xenophon (*Cyropædia*, l. 8, p. 540,) has stated the specious reasons which engaged Cyrus to intrust his person to the guard of eunuchs. He had observed in animals, that although the practice of castration might tame their ungovernable fierceness, it did not diminish their strength or spirit; and he persuaded himself, that those who were separated from the rest of human kind, would be more firmly attached to the person of their benefactor. But a long experience has contradicted the judgment of Cyrus. Some particular instances may occur of eunuchs distinguished by their fidelity, their valour, and their abilities; but if we examine the general history of Persia, India, and China, we shall find that the power of the eunuchs has uniformly marked the decline and fall of every dynasty. † See Ammianus Marcellinus, l. 21, c. 16; l. 22, c. 4. The whole tenor of his impartial history serves to justify the invectives of Mamertinus, of Libanius, and of Julian himself, who have insulted the vices of the court of Constantius. ‡ Aurelius Victor censures the negligence of his sovereign in choosing the governors

Victor censures the negligence of his sovereign in choosing the governors

favourite.* By his artful suggestions, the emperor was persuaded to subscribe the condemnation of the unfortunate Gallus, and to add a new crime to the long list of unnatural murders which pollute the honour of the house of Constantine.

When the two nephews of Constantine, Gallus and Julian, were saved from the fury of the soldiers, the former was about twelve, and the latter about six years of age; and as the eldest was thought to be of a sickly constitution, they obtained with the less difficulty a precarious and dependent life, from the affected pity of Constantius, who was sensible that the execution of these helpless orphans would have been esteemed, by all mankind, an act of the most deliberate cruelty.† Different cities of Ionia and Bithynia were assigned for the places of their exile and education; but as soon as their growing years excited the jealousy of the emperor, he judged it more prudent to secure those unhappy youths in the strong castle of Macellum, near Cæsarea. The treatment which they experienced during a six years' confinement, was partly such as they could hope from a careful guardian, and partly such as they might dread from a suspicious tyrant.‡ Their prison was an ancient palace, the residence of the kings of Cappadocia; the situation was pleasant, the building stately, the enclosure spacious. They pursued their studies, and practised their exercises, under the tuition of the most skilful masters; and the numerous household appointed to attend, or rather to guard, the nephews of Constantine, was not unworthy the dignity of their birth. But they could not disguise to themselves that

of the provinces, and the generals of the army, and concludes his history with a very bold observation, as it is much more dangerous under a feeble reign to attack the ministers than the master himself. "Uti verum absolvam brevi, ut imperatore ipso clarius ita apparitorum perisque magis atrox nihil."

* Apud quem (si vere dici debeat) multum Constantius potuit. Ammian. l. 18, c. 4. † Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. 3, p. 90,) reproaches the apostate with his ingratitude towards Mark, bishop of Arethusa, who had contributed to save his life; and we learn, though from a less respectable authority (Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, p. 916) that Julian was concealed in the sanctuary of a church. ‡ The most authentic account of the education and adventures of Julian is contained in the epistle or manifesto which he himself addressed to the senate and people of Athens. Libanius (Orat. Parentalis), on the side of the Pagans, and Sozrates (l. 3, c. 1) on that of the Christians, have preserved several

they were deprived of fortune, of freedom, and of safety; secluded from the society of all whom they could trust or esteem, and condemned to pass their melancholy hours in the company of slaves, devoted to the commands of a tyrant, who had already injured them beyond the hope of reconciliation. At length, however, the emergencies of the state compelled the emperor, or rather his eunuchs, to invest Gallus, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, with the title of Cæsar, and to cement this political connexion by his marriage with the princess Constantina. After a formal interview, in which the two princes mutually engaged their faith never to undertake anything to the prejudice of each other, they repaired without delay to their respective stations. Constantius continued his march towards the west, and Gallus fixed his residence at Antioch, from whence, with a delegated authority, he administered the five great dioceses of the eastern prefecture*. In this fortunate change, the new Cæsar was not unmindful of his brother Julian, who obtained the honours of his rank, the appearances of liberty, and the restitution of an ample patrimony.†

The writers the most indulgent to the memory of Gallus, and even Julian himself, though he wished to cast a veil over the frailties of his brother, are obliged to confess that the Cæsar was incapable of reigning. Transported from a prison to a throne, he possessed neither genius, nor application, nor docility, to compensate for the want of knowledge and experience. A temper naturally morose and violent, instead of being corrected, was soured by solitude and adversity; the remembrance of what he had endured disposed him to retaliation rather than to sympathy; and the ungoverned sallies of his rage were often fatal to those who

interesting circumstances.

* For the promotion of Gallus, see Idatius, Zosimus, and the two Victors. According to Philostorgius, (l. 4, c. 1) Theophilus, an Arian bishop, was the witness, and, as it were, the guarantee of this solemn engagement. He supported that character with generous firmness; but M. de Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, p. 1120,) thinks it very improbable that a heretic should have possessed such virtue.

† Julian was at first permitted to pursue his studies at Constantinople, but the reputation which he acquired soon excited the jealousy of Constantius; and the young prince was advised to withdraw himself to the less conspicuous scenes of Bithynia and Ionia. [Gallus and Julian were not uterine brothers. Their father, Julius Constantius, had the former by his

approached his person, or were subject to his power.* Constantina, his wife, is described, not as a woman, but as one of the infernal furies, tormented with an insatiate thirst of human blood.† Instead of employing her influence to insinuate the mild counsels of prudence and humanity, she exasperated the fierce passions of her husband; and as she retained the vanity, though she had renounced the gentleness of her sex, a pearl necklace was esteemed an equivalent price for the murder of an innocent and virtuous nobleman.‡ The cruelty of Gallus was sometimes displayed in the undissembled violence of popular or military executions; and was sometimes disguised by the abuse of law, and the forms of judicial proceedings. The private houses of Antioch, and the places of public resort, were besieged by spies and informers; and the Cæsar himself, concealed in a plebeian habit, very frequently condescended to assume that odious character. Every apartment of the palace was adorned with the instruments of death and torture, and a general consternation was diffused through the capital of Syria. The prince of the east, as if he had been conscious how much he had to fear, and how little he deserved to reign, selected for the objects of his resentment, the provincials accused of some imaginary treason, and his own courtiers, whom with more reason he suspected of incensing, by their secret correspondence, the timid and suspicious mind of Constantius. But he forgot that he was depriving himself of his only support, the affection of the people; whilst he furnished the malice of his enemies with the arms

first wife Galla, and the latter was his son by a second marriage with Basilina. Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, Vie de Constantin. art. 3.—GUIZOT.]

* See Julian ad S. P. Q. A. p. 271. Jerom. in Chron. Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, 10, 14. I shall copy the words of Eutropius, who wrote his abridgment about fifteen years after the death of Gallus, when there was no longer any motive either to flatter or to depreciate his character. “Multis incivilibus gestis Gallus Cæsar . . . vir naturâ ferox et ad tyrannidem pronior, si suo jure imperare licuisset.”

† Megara quidem mortalis, inflammatrix sævientis assidua, humani cruoris avida, &c. Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 14, c. 1. The sincerity of Ammianus would not suffer him to misrepresent facts or characters, but his love of *ambitious* ornaments frequently betrayed him into an unnatural vehemence of expression.

‡ His name was Clematius of Alexandria, and his only crime was a refusal to gratify the desires of his mother-in-law; who solicited his death because she had been disappointed of his love. Ammian. l. 14, c. 1.

of truth, and afforded the emperor the fairest pretence of exacting the forfeit of his purple, and of his life.*

As long as the civil war suspended the fate of the Roman world, Constantius dissembled his knowledge of the weak and cruel administration to which his choice had subjected the east; and the discovery of some assassins secretly dispatched to Antioch by the tyrant of Gaul, was employed to convince the public, that the emperor and the Cæsar were united by the same interest, and pursued by the same enemies.† But when the victory was decided in favour of Constantius, his dependent colleague became less useful and less formidable. Every circumstance of his conduct was severely and suspiciously examined; and it was privately resolved, either to deprive Gallus of the purple, or at least to remove him from the indolent luxury of Asia to the hardships and dangers of a German war. The death of Theophilus, consular of the province of Syria, who in a time of scarcity had been massacred by the people of Antioch, with the connivance, and almost at the instigation, of Gallus, was justly resented, not only as an act of wanton cruelty, but as a dangerous insult on the supreme majesty of Constantius. Two ministers of illustrious rank, Domitian, the oriental prefect, and Montius, quæstor of the palace, were empowered by a special commission to visit and reform the state of the east. They were instructed to behave towards Gallus with moderation and respect, and, by the gentlest arts of persuasion, to engage him to comply with the invitation of his brother and colleague. The rashness of the prefect disappointed these prudent measures, and hastened his own ruin, as well as that of his enemy. On his arrival at Antioch, Domitian passed disdainfully before the gates of the palace, and alleging a slight pretence of indisposition, continued several days in sullen retirement, to prepare an inflammatory memorial, which he transmitted to the imperial court. Yielding at length to the pressing solicitations of

* See in Ammianus (lib. 14, c. 1. 7,) a very ample detail of the cruelties of Gallus. His brother Julian (p. 272) insinuates, that a secret conspiracy had been formed against him; and Zosimus names (l. 2, p. 135) the persons engaged in it; a minister of considerable rank, and two obscure agents, who were resolved to make their fortune.

† Zonaras, l. 13, tom. ii, p. 17, 18. The assassins had seduced a great number of legionaries; but their designs were discovered and revealed by an old woman in whose cottage they lodged.

Gallus, the prefect condescended to take his seat in council, but his first step was to signify a concise and haughty mandate, importing that the Cæsar should immediately repair to Italy, and threatening that he himself would punish his delay or hesitation, by suspending the usual allowance of his household. The nephew and daughter of Constantine, who could ill brook the insolence of a subject, expressed their resentment by instantly delivering Domitian to the custody of a guard. The quarrel still admitted of some terms of accommodation. They were rendered impracticable by the imprudent behaviour of Montius, a statesman, whose art and experience were frequently betrayed by the levity of his disposition.* The quæstor reproached Gallus in haughty language, that a prince who was scarcely authorized to remove a municipal magistrate should presume to imprison a prætorian prefect; convoked a meeting of the civil and military officers; and required them, in the name of their sovereign, to defend the person and dignity of his representatives. By this rash declaration of war, the impatient temper of Gallus was provoked to embrace the most desperate counsels. He ordered his guards to stand to their arms, assembled the populace of Antioch, and recommended to their zeal the care of his safety and revenge. His commands were too fatally obeyed. They rudely seized the prefect and the quæstor, and tying their legs together with ropes, they dragged them through the streets of the city, inflicted a thousand insults and a thousand wounds on these unhappy victims, and at last precipitated their mangled and lifeless bodies into the stream of the Orontes.†

After such a deed, whatever might have been the designs of Gallus, it was only in a field of battle that he could assert his innocence with any hope of success. But the mind of that prince was formed of an equal mixture of violence and

* In the present text of Ammianus, we read *asper*, quidem, sed ad *lenitatem* propensior; which forms a sentence of contradictory nonsense. With the aid of an old manuscript, Valesius has rectified the first of these corruptions, and we perceive a ray of light in the substitution of the word *vafer*. If we venture to change *lenitatem* into *levitatem*, this alteration of a single letter would render the whole passage clear and consistent. †

Instead of being obliged to collect scattered and imperfect hints from various sources, we now enter into the full stream of the history of Ammianus, and need only refer to the seventh and ninth chapters of his fourteenth book. Philostorgius,

weakness. Instead of assuming the title of Augustus, instead of employing in his defence the troops and treasures of the east, he suffered himself to be deceived by the affected tranquillity of Constantius, who, leaving him the vain pageantry of a court, imperceptibly recalled the veteran legions from the provinces of Asia. But as it still appeared dangerous to arrest Gallus in his capital, the slow and safer arts of dissimulation were practised with success. The frequent and pressing epistles of Constantius were filled with professions of confidence and friendship; exhorting the Cæsar to discharge the duties of his high station, to relieve his colleague from a part of the public cares, and to assist the west by his presence, his counsels, and his arms. After so many reciprocal injuries, Gallus had reason to fear and to distrust. But he had neglected the opportunities of flight and of resistance; he was seduced by the flattering assurances of the tribune Scudilo, who, under the semblance of a rough soldier, disguised the most artful insinuation; and he depended on the credit of his wife Constantina, till the unseasonable death of that princess completed the ruin in which he had been involved by her impetuous passions.*

After a long delay, the reluctant Cæsar set forward on his journey to the imperial court. From Antioch to Hadrianople, he traversed the wide extent of his dominions with a numerous and stately train; and as he laboured to conceal his apprehension from the world, and perhaps from himself, he entertained the people of Constantinople with an exhibition of the games of the circus. The progress of the journey might, however, have warned him of the impending danger. In all the principal cities he was met by ministers of confidence, commissioned to seize the offices of government, to observe his motions, and to prevent the hasty sallies of his despair. The persons dispatched to secure the provinces which he left behind, passed him with cold salutations, or affected disdain; and the troops, whose station lay along the public road, were studiously removed on his approach, lest they might be tempted to offer their swords for the service of a civil war.† After Gallus had been permitted to

however, (l. 3, c. 28) though partial to Gallus, should not be entirely overlooked.

* She had preceded her husband; but died of a fever on the road, at a little place in Bithynia, called *Cenun Gallicanum*.

† The Thebæan legions, which were then quartered at Hadrianopla,

repose himself a few days at Hadrianople, he received a mandate, expressed in the most haughty and absolute style, that his splendid retinue should halt in that city, while the Cæsar himself, with only ten post-carriages, should hasten to the imperial residence at Milan. In this rapid journey, the profound respect which was due to the brother and colleague of Constantius, was insensibly changed into rude familiarity; and Gallus, who discovered in the countenances of the attendants, that they already considered themselves as his guards, and might soon be employed as his executioners, began to accuse his fatal rashness, and to recollect with terror and remorse the conduct by which he had provoked his fate. The dissimulation which had hitherto been preserved, was laid aside at Petovio in Pannonia. He was conducted to a palace in the suburbs, where the general Barbatio, with a select band of soldiers, who could neither be moved by pity, nor corrupted by rewards, expected the arrival of his illustrious victim. In the close of the evening he was arrested, ignominiously stripped of the ensigns of Cæsar, and hurried away to Pola in Istria, a sequestered prison which had been so recently polluted with royal blood. The horror which he felt was soon increased by the appearance of his implacable enemy the eunuch Eusebius, who, with the assistance of a notary and a tribune, proceeded to interrogate him concerning the administration of the east. The Cæsar sank under the weight of shame and guilt, confessed all the criminal actions, and all the treasonable designs, with which he was charged; and by imputing them to the advice of his wife, exasperated the indignation of Constantius, who reviewed with partial prejudice the minutes of the examination. The emperor was easily convinced, that his own safety was incompatible with the life of his cousin: the sentence of death was signed, dispatched, and executed; and the nephew of Constantine, with his hands tied behind his back, was beheaded in prison like the vilest male-

sent a deputation to Gallus, with a tender of their services. Ammian. l. 14, c. 11. The Notitia (s. 6. 20. 38, edit. Labb.) mentions three several legions which bore the name of Thebæan. The zeal of M. de Voltaire, to destroy a despicable though celebrated legend, has tempted him, on the slightest grounds, to deny the existence of a Thebæan legion in the Roman armies. See Œuvres de Voltaire, tom. xv, p. 414, quarto edition.

factor.* Those who are inclined to palliate the cruelties of Constantius, assert that he soon relented, and endeavoured to recal the bloody mandate; but that the second messenger intrusted with the reprieve was detained by the eunuchs, who dreaded the unforgiving temper of Gallus, and were desirous of reuniting to *their* empire the wealthy provinces of the east.†

Besides the reigning emperor, Julian alone survived, of all the numerous posterity of Constantius Chlorus. The misfortune of his royal birth involved him in the disgrace of Gallus. From his retirement in the happy country of Ionia, he was conveyed under a strong guard to the court of Milan; where he languished above seven months, in the continual apprehension of suffering the same ignominious death, which was daily inflicted, almost before his eyes, on the friends and adherents of his persecuted family. His looks, his gestures, his silence, were scrutinized with malignant curiosity, and he was perpetually assaulted by enemies whom he had never offended, and by arts to which he was a stranger.‡ But in the school of adversity, Julian insensibly acquired the virtues of firmness and discretion. He defended his honour, as well as his life, against the ensnaring subtleties of the eunuchs, who endeavoured to extort some declaration of his sentiments; and whilst he cautiously suppressed his grief and resentment, he nobly disdained to flatter the tyrant, by any seeming approbation of his brother's murder. Julian most devoutly ascribes his miraculous deliverance to the protection of the gods, who had exempted his innocence from the sentence of destruction pronounced by their justice against the impious house of Constantine.§ As the most

* See the complete narrative of the journey and death of Gallus in Ammianus, l. 14, c. 11. Julian complains that his brother was put to death without a trial; attempts to justify, or at least to excuse, the cruel revenge which he had inflicted on his enemies; but seems at last to acknowledge that he might justly have been deprived of the purple.

† Philostorgius, l. 4, c. 1. Zonaras, l. 13, tom. ii, p. 19. But the former was partial towards an Arian monarch, and the latter transcribed, without choice or criticism, whatever he found in the writings of the ancients.

‡ See Ammianus Marcellin. l. 15, c. 1. 3. 8. Julian himself, in his epistle to the Athenians, draws a very lively and just picture of his own danger, and of his sentiments. He shews, however, a tendency to exaggerate his sufferings, by insinuating, though in obscure terms, that they lasted above a year; a period which cannot be reconciled with the truth of chronology.

§ Julian has worked

effectual instrument of their providence, he gratefully acknowledges the steady and generous friendship of the empress Eusebia,* a woman of beauty and merit, who, by the ascendant which she had gained over the mind of her husband, counterbalanced in some measure, the powerful conspiracy of the eunuchs. By the intercession of his patroness, Julian was admitted into the imperial presence; he pleaded his cause with a decent freedom, he was heard with favour; and, notwithstanding the efforts of his enemies, who urged the danger of sparing an avenger of the blood of Gallus, the milder sentiment of Eusebia prevailed in the council. But the effects of a second interview were dreaded by the eunuchs; and Julian was advised to withdraw for awhile into the neighbourhood of Milan, till the emperor thought proper to assign the city of Athens for the place of his honourable exile. As he had discovered from his earliest youth, a propensity, or rather passion, for the language, the manners, the learning, and the religion, of the Greeks, he obeyed with pleasure an order so agreeable to his wishes. Far from the tumult of arms and the treachery of courts, he spent six months amidst the groves of the Academy, in a free intercourse with the philosophers of the age, who studied to cultivate the genius, to encourage the vanity, and to inflame the devotion, of their royal pupil. Their labours were not unsuccessful; and Julian inviolably preserved for Athens that tender regard, which seldom fails to arise in a liberal mind, from the recollection of the place where it has discovered and exercised its growing powers. The gentleness and affability of manners, which his temper suggested, and his situation imposed, insensibly engaged the affections of the strangers, as well as citizens, with whom he conversed. Some of his fellow-students might perhaps examine his behaviour with an eye of prejudice and aversion; but Julian established, in the school of Athens, a general prepossession in

the crimes and misfortunes of the family of Constantine into an allegorical fable, which is happily conceived and agreeably related. It forms the conclusion of the seventh oration, from whence it has been detached and translated by the abbé de la Bletterie. *Vie de Jovien*, tom. ii, p. 385—408. * She was a native of Thessalonica, in Macedonia, of a noble family, and the daughter as well as sister of consuls. Her marriage with the emperor may be placed in the year 352. In a divided age, the historians of all parties agree in her praises. See their testimonies collected by Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv,

favour of his virtues and talents, which was soon diffused over the Roman world.*

Whilst his hours were passed in studious retirement, the empress, resolute to achieve the generous design which she had undertaken, was not unmindful of the care of his fortune. The death of the late Cæsar had left Constantius invested with the sole command, and oppressed by the accumulated weight, of a mighty empire. Before the wounds of civil discord could be healed, the provinces of Gaul were overwhelmed by a deluge of barbarians. The Sarmatians no longer respected the barrier of the Danube. The impunity of rapine had increased the boldness and numbers of the wild Isaurians: those robbers descended from their craggy mountains to ravage the adjacent country, and had even presumed, though without success, to besiege the important city of Seleucia, which was defended by a garrison of three Roman legions. Above all, the Persian monarch, elated by victory, again threatened the peace of Asia, and the presence of the emperor was indispensably required, both in the west and in the east. For the first time, Constantius sincerely acknowledged, that his single strength was unequal to such an extent of care and of dominion.† Insensible to the voice of flattery, which assured him that his all-powerful virtue, and celestial fortune, would still continue to triumph over every obstacle, he listened with complacency to the advice of Eusebia, which gratified his indolence, without offending his suspicious pride. As she perceived that the remembrance of Gallus dwelt on the emperor's mind, she artfully turned his attention to the opposite characters of the two brothers, which from their infancy had been compared to those of Domitian and of

p. 750—754.

* Libanius and Gregory Nazianzen have exhausted the arts as well as the powers of their eloquence, to represent Julian as the first of heroes, or the worst of tyrants. Gregory was his fellow-student at Athens; and the symptoms which he so tragically describes, of the future wickedness of the apostate, amount only to some bodily imperfections, and to some peculiarities in his speech and manner. He protests, however, that he *then* foresaw and foretold the calamities of the church and state. (Greg. Nazianzen, Orat. 4. p. 121, 122.)

† Succumbere tot necessitatibus tamque crebris unum se quod nunquam fecerat apertè demonstrans. Ammian. l. 15, c. 8. He then expresses, in their own words, the flattering assurances of the courtiers.

Titus.* She accustomed her husband to consider Julian as a youth of a mild, unambitious disposition, whose allegiance and gratitude might be secured by the gift of the purple, and who was qualified to fill, with honour, a subordinate station, without aspiring to dispute the commands, or to shade the glories, of his sovereign and benefactor. After an obstinate, though secret struggle, the opposition of the favourite eunuchs submitted to the ascendancy of the empress; and it was resolved that Julian, after celebrating his nuptials with Helena, sister of Constantius, should be appointed, with the title of Cæsar, to reign over the countries beyond the Alps.†

Although the order which recalled him to court was probably accompanied by some intimation of his approaching greatness, he appeals to the people of Athens to witness his tears of undissembled sorrow, when he was reluctantly torn away from his beloved retirement.‡ He trembled for his life, for his fame, and even for his virtue; and his sole confidence was derived from the persuasion, that Minerva inspired all his actions, and that he was protected by an invisible guard of angels, whom for that purpose she had borrowed from the sun and moon. He approached with horror the palace of Milan; nor could the ingenuous youth conceal his indignation, when he found himself accosted with false and servile respect by the assassins of his family. Eusebia, rejoicing in the success of her benevolent schemes, embraced him with the tenderness of a sister; and endeavoured, by the most soothing caresses, to dispel his terrors, and reconcile him to his fortune. But the ceremony of shaving his beard, and his awkward demeanor, when he first exchanged the cloak of a Greek philosopher for the military habit of a Roman prince, amused, during a few days, the levity of the imperial court §

* *Tantum a temperatis moribus Juliani differens fratris quantum inter Vespasiani filios fuit, Domitianum et Titum.* Ammian. l. 14. c. 11. The circumstances and education of the two brothers were so nearly the same, as to afford a strong example of the innate difference of character. † Ammianus, l. 15, c. 8. Zosimus, lib. 3, p. 137, 138.

‡ Julian, ad S. P. Q. A. p. 275, 276. Libanius, Orat. 10. p. 268. Julian did not yield till the gods had signified their will by repeated visions and omens. His piety then forbade him to resist.

§ Julian himself relates, (p. 274) with some humour, the circum-

The emperors of the age of Constantine no longer deigned to consult with the senate in the choice of a colleague; but they were anxious that their nomination should be ratified by the consent of the army. On this solemn occasion, the guards, with the other troops whose stations were in the neighbourhood of Milan, appeared under arms; and Constantius ascended his lofty tribunal, holding by the hand his cousin Julian, who entered the same day into the twenty-fifth year of his age.* In a studied speech, conceived and delivered with dignity, the emperor represented the various dangers which threatened the prosperity of the republic, the necessity of naming a Cæsar for the administration of the west, and his own intention, if it was agreeable to their wishes, of rewarding with the honours of the purple the promising virtues of the nephew of Constantine. The approbation of the soldiers was testified by a respectful murmur: they gazed on the manly countenance of Julian, and observed with pleasure, that the fire which sparkled in his eyes was tempered by a modest blush, on being thus exposed, for the first time, to the public view of mankind. As soon as the ceremony of his investiture had been performed, Constantius addressed him with the tone of authority which his superior age and station permitted him to assume, and exhorting the new Cæsar to deserve, by heroic deeds, that sacred and immortal name, the emperor gave his colleague the strongest assurances of a friendship which should never be impaired by time, nor interrupted by their separation into the most distant climates. As soon as the speech was ended, the troops, as a token of applause, clashed their shields against their knees;† while the officers who surrounded the tribunal expressed, with decent reserve, their sense of the merits of the representative of Constantius.

The two princes returned to the palace in the same stances of his own metamorphosis, his downcast looks, and his perplexity at being thus suddenly transported into a new world, where every object appeared strange and hostile. * See Ammian. Marcellin. l. 15, c. 8. Zosimus, l. 3, p. 139. Aurelius Victor. Victor Junior in Epitom. Eutrop. 10. 14. † *Militares omnes horrendo fragore scuta genibus illidentes; quod est prosperitatis indicium plenum; nam contra cum hastis clypei feriuntur, ira documentum est et doloris . . .* Ammianus adds, with a nice distinction, *Eumque ut potiori reverentia servaretur, nec supra modum laudabant nec infra quam decebat*

chariot; and during the slow procession, Julian repeated to himself a verse of his favourite Homer, which he might equally apply to his fortune and to his fears.* The four-and-twenty days which the Cæsar spent at Milan after his investiture, and the first months of his Gallic reign, were devoted to a splendid but severe captivity; nor could the acquisition of honour compensate for the loss of freedom.† His steps were watched, his correspondence was intercepted; and he was obliged, by prudence, to decline the visits of his most intimate friends. Of his former domestics, four only were permitted to attend him; two pages, his physician, and his librarian; the last of whom was employed in the care of a valuable collection of books, the gift of the empress, who studied the inclinations as well as the interest of her friend. In the room of these faithful servants, a household was formed, such indeed as became the dignity of a Cæsar: but it was filled with a crowd of slaves, destitute, and perhaps incapable, of any attachment for their new master, to whom, for the most part, they were either unknown or suspected. His want of experience might require the assistance of a wise counsel; but the minute instructions which regulated the service of his table, and the distribution of his hours, were adapted to a youth still under the discipline of his preceptors, rather than to the situation of a prince intrusted with the conduct of an important war. If he aspired to deserve the esteem of his subjects, he was checked by the fear of displeasing his sovereign; and even the fruits of his marriage-bed were blasted by the jealous artifices of Eusebia ‡ herself, who, on

* Ἐλλαβεὶ πορφύρεος θάνατος, καὶ μοῖρα κραταίη. The word *purple*, which Homer had used as a vague but common epithet for death, was applied by Julian to express, very aptly, the nature and object of his own apprehensions. † He represents, in the most

pathetic terms, (p. 277) the distress of his new situation. The provision for his table was however so elegant and sumptuous, that the young philosopher rejected it with disdain. Quam legeret libellum assiduè, quem Constantinus ut privignum ad studia mittens manū suā conscripserat, prælicenter disponens quid in convivio Cæsaris impendi deberet, Phasianum, et vulvam et sumen exigi vetuit et inferri. Ammian. Marcellin. l. 16, c. 5. ‡ If we recollect that Constantine, the father of Helena, died above eighteen years before in a mature old age, it will appear probable, that the daughter, though a virgin, could not be very young at the time of her marriage. She was soon afterwards delivered of a son, who died immediately, quod obstetrix cor-

this occasion alone, seems to have been unmindful of the tenderness of her sex, and the generosity of her character. The memory of his father and of his brothers reminded Julian of his own danger, and his apprehensions were increased by the recent and unworthy fate of Sylvanus. In the summer which preceded his own elevation, that general had been chosen to deliver Gaul from the tyranny of the barbarians; but Sylvanus soon discovered that he had left his most dangerous enemies in the imperial court. A dexterous informer, countenanced by several of the principal ministers, procured from him some recommendatory letters; and erasing the whole of the contents, except the signature, filled up the vacant parchment with matters of high and treasonable import. By the industry and courage of his friends, the fraud was, however, detected, and in a great council of the civil and military officers, held in the presence of the emperor himself, the innocence of Sylvanus was publicly acknowledged. But the discovery came too late; the report of the calumny and the hasty seizure of his estate had already provoked the indignant chief to the rebellion of which he was so unjustly accused. He assumed the purple at his head-quarters of Cologne, and his active powers appeared to menace Italy with an invasion, and Milan with a siege. In this emergency, Ursicinus, a general of equal rank, regained, by an act of treachery, the favour which he had lost by his eminent services in the east. Exasperated, as he might speciously allege, by injuries of a similar nature, he hastened with a few followers to join the standard, and to betray the confidence, of his too credulous friend. After a reign of only twenty-eight days, Sylvanus was assassinated; the soldiers who, without any criminal intention, had blindly followed the example of their leader, immediately returned to their allegiance; and the flatterers of Constantius celebrated the wisdom and

rupta mercede, mox natum præsecto plusquam convenerat umbilico necavit. She accompanied the emperor and empress in their journey to Rome, and the latter, *quæsitum venenum bibere per fraudem illexit, ut quotiescunque concepisset, immaturum abjiceret partum.* *Am-mian.* l. 16, c. 10. Our physicians will determine whether there exists such a poison. For my own part, I am inclined to hope that the public malignity imputed the effects of accident as the guilt of

felicity of the monarch who had extinguished a civil war without the hazard of a battle.*

The protection of the Rhatian frontier, and the persecution of the Catholic church, detained Constantius in Italy above eighteen months after the departure of Julian. Before the emperor returned into the east, he indulged his pride and curiosity in a visit to the ancient capital.† He proceeded from Milan to Rome along the Æmilian and Flaminian ways; and as soon as he approached within forty miles of the city, the march of a prince who had never vanquished a foreign enemy, assumed the appearance of a triumphal procession. His splendid train was composed of all the ministers of luxury; but in a time of profound peace, he was encompassed by the glittering arms of the numerous squadrons of his guards and cuirassiers. Their streaming banners of silk, embossed with gold, and shaped in the form of dragons, waved round the person of the emperor. Constantius sat alone in a lofty car resplendent with gold and precious gems; and, except when he bowed his head to pass under the gates of the cities, he affected a stately demeanour of inflexible and, as it might seem, of insensible gravity. The severe discipline of the Persian youth had been introduced by the eunuchs into the imperial palace; and such were the habits of patience which they had inculcated, that during a slow and sultry march, he was never seen to move his hand towards his face, or to turn his eyes either to the right or to the left. He was received by the magistrates and senate of Rome; and the emperor surveyed with attention, the civil honours of the republic, and the consular images of the noble families. The streets were lined with an innumerable multitude. Their repeated acclamations expressed their joy at beholding, after an absence of thirty-two years, the sacred person of their sovereign; and Constantius himself expressed, with some pleasantry, his affected surprise that the human race should thus suddenly be collected on the same spot. The son of

Eusebia. * Ammianus (15. 5) was perfectly well informed of the conduct and fate of Sylvanus. He himself was one of the few followers who attended Ursicinus in his dangerous enterprise. † For the particulars of the visit of Constantius to Rome, see Ammianus, l. 16, c. 10. We have only to add, that Themistius was appointed deputy

Constantine was lodged in the ancient palace of Augustus; he presided in the senate, harangued the people from the tribunal which Cicero had so often ascended, assisted with unusual courtesy at the games of the circus, and accepted the crowns of gold as well as the panegyrics which had been prepared for the ceremony by the deputies of the principal cities. His short visit of thirty days was employed in viewing the monuments of art and power, which were scattered over the seven hills and the interjacent valleys. He admired the awful majesty of the Capitol, the vast extent of the baths of Caracalla and Diocletian, the severe simplicity of the Pantheon, the massy greatness of the amphitheatre of Titus, the elegant architecture of the theatre of Pompey and the temple of Peace, and, above all, the stately structure of the forum and column of Trajan; acknowledging that the voice of fame, so prone to invent and to magnify, had made an inadequate report of the metropolis of the world. The traveller, who has contemplated the ruins of ancient Rome, may conceive some imperfect idea of the sentiments which they must have inspired when they reared their heads in the splendour of unsullied beauty.

The satisfaction which Constantius had received from this journey excited him to the generous emulation of bestowing on the Romans some memorial of his own gratitude and munificence. His first idea was to imitate the equestrian and colossal statue which he had seen in the forum of Trajan; but when he had maturely weighed the difficulties of the execution,* he chose rather to embellish the capital by the gift of an Egyptian obelisk. In a remote but polished age, which seems to have preceded the invention of alphabetical writing, a great number of these obelisks had been erected, in the cities of Thebes and Heliopolis, by the ancient sovereigns of Egypt, in a just confidence that the simplicity of the form, and the hardness of their sub-

from Constantinople, and that he composed his fourth oration for this ceremony. [The third and fourth orations of Themistius were "intended to be recited to Constantius at Rome, but were in reality read by him to the Senate of Constantinople." Clin. F. R. 1, 437.—ED.]

* Hormisdas, a fugitive prince of Persia, observed to the emperor, that if he made such a horse, he must think of preparing a similar stable (the forum of Trajan). Another saying of Hormisdas is recorded, "that one thing only had *displeased* him, to find that mer

stance, would resist the injuries of time and violence.* Several of these extraordinary columns had been transported to Rome by Augustus and his successors, as the most durable monuments of their power and victory;† but there remained one obelisk, which, from its size or sanctity, escaped for a long time the rapacious vanity of the conquerors. It was designed by Constantine to adorn his new city;‡ and, after being removed by his order from the pedestal where it stood before the temple of the sun at Heliopolis, was floated down the Nile to Alexandria. The death of Constantine suspended the execution of his purpose, and this obelisk was destined by his son to the ancient capital of the empire. A vessel of uncommon strength and capaciousness was provided to convey this enormous weight of granite, at least a hundred and fifteen feet in length, from the banks of the Nile to those of the Tiber. The obelisk of Constantius was landed about three miles from the city, and elevated, by the efforts of art and labour, in the great circus of Rome.§

The departure of Constantius from Rome was hastened by the alarming intelligence of the distress and danger of the Illyrian provinces. The distractions of civil war, and the irreparable loss which the Roman legions had sustained in the battle of Mursa, exposed those countries, almost without defence, to the light cavalry of the barbarians; and particularly to the inroads of the Quadi, a fierce and powerful nation, who seem to have exchanged the institutions of Germany for the arms and military arts of their Sarmatian

died at Rome as well as elsewhere." If we adopt this reading of the text of Ammianus (*displacuisse* instead of *placuisse*), we may consider it as a reproof of Roman vanity. The contrary sense would be that of a misanthrope.

* When Germanicus visited the ancient monuments of Thebes, the eldest of the priests explained to him the meaning of these hieroglyphics. Tacit. Annal. 2. c. 60. But it seems probable, that before the useful invention of an alphabet, these natural or arbitrary signs were the common characters of the Egyptian nation. See Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses, vol. iii, p. 69—243.

† See Plin. Hist. Natur. l. 36, c. 14, 15. ‡ Ammian. Marcellin. l. 17, c. 4. He gives us a Greek interpretation of the hieroglyphics, and his commentator Lindenbrogius adds a Latin inscription, which in twenty verses of the age of Constantius, contains a short history of the obelisk. [Constantius intended to remove *another* obelisk to Constantinople, but was prevented by death. Julian, Ep. 58, p. 443. —Ed.] § See Donat. Roma Antiqua, l. 3, c. 14; l. 4, c. 12, and

allies.* The garrisons of the frontier were insufficient to check their progress; and the indolent monarch was at length compelled to assemble, from the extremities of his dominions, the flower of the Palatine troops, to take the field in person, and to employ a whole campaign, with the preceding autumn and the ensuing spring, in the serious prosecution of the war. The emperor passed the Danube on a bridge of boats, cut in pieces all that encountered his march, penetrated into the heart of the country of the Quadi, and severely retaliated the calamities which they had inflicted on the Roman province. The dismayed barbarians were soon reduced to sue for peace; they offered the restitution of his captive subjects, as an atonement for the past, and the noblest hostages as a pledge of their future conduct. The generous courtesy which was shewn to the first among their chieftains, who implored the clemency of Constantius, encouraged the more timid or the more obstinate, to imitate their example; and the imperial camp was crowded with the princes and ambassadors of the most distant tribes, who occupied the plains of the Lesser Poland, and who might have deemed themselves secure behind the lofty ridge of the Carpathian mountains. While Constantius gave laws to the barbarians beyond the Danube, he distinguished with specious compassion the Sarmatian exiles, who had been expelled from their native country by the rebellion of their slaves, and who formed a very considerable accession to the power of the Quadi. The emperor, embracing a generous but artful system of policy, released the Sarmatians from the bands of this humiliating dependence, and restored them, by a separate treaty, to the dignity of a nation united under the government of a king, the friend and ally of the republic. He declared his resolution of asserting the justice of their cause, and of securing the peace of the provinces by the extirpation, or at least the banishment, of the Limigantes, whose manners were still infected with the vices of their servile origin. The execution of this design was attended with more difficulty than

the learned, though confused, Dissertation of Bargaens on Obelisks, inserted in the fourth volume of Grævius's Roman Antiquities, p. 1897—1936. This dissertation is dedicated to Pope Sixtus V., who erected the obelisk of Constantius in the square before the patriarchal church of St. John Lateran. * The events of this Quadian and Sarmatian war are related by Ammianus. 16, 11. 17, 12, 13. 21, 11.

glory. The territory of the Limigantes was protected against the Romans by the Danube, against the hostile barbarians by the Teyss. The marshy lands, which lay between those rivers, and were often covered by their inundations, formed an intricate wilderness, pervious only to the inhabitants, who were acquainted with its secret paths and inaccessible fortresses. On the approach of Constantius, the Limigantes tried the efficacy of prayers, of fraud, and of arms; but he sternly rejected their supplications, defeated their rude stratagems, and repelled with skill and firmness the efforts of their irregular valour. One of their most warlike tribes, established in a small island towards the conflux of the Teyss and the Danube, consented to pass the river with the intention of surprising the emperor during the security of an amicable conference. They soon became the victims of the perfidy which they meditated. Encompassed on every side, trampled down by the cavalry, slaughtered by the swords of the legions, they disdained to ask for mercy; and with an undaunted countenance still grasped their weapons in the agonies of death. After this victory a considerable body of Romans was landed on the opposite banks of the Danube; the Taifailæ, a Gothic tribe engaged in the service of the empire, invaded the Limigantes on the side of the Teyss; and their former masters, the free Sarmatians, animated by hope and revenge, penetrated through the hilly country into the heart of their ancient possessions. A general conflagration revealed the huts of the barbarians, which were seated in the depth of the wilderness; and the soldier fought with confidence on marshy ground, which it was dangerous for him to tread. In this extremity the bravest of the Limigantes were resolved to die in arms, rather than to yield; but the milder sentiment, enforced by the authority of the elders, at length prevailed; and the suppliant crowd, followed by their wives and children, repaired to the imperial camp, to learn their fate from the mouth of the conqueror. After celebrating his own clemency, which was still inclined to pardon their repeated crimes, and to spare the remnant of a guilty nation, Constantius assigned for the place of their exile a remote country, where they might enjoy a safe and honourable repose. The Limigantes obeyed with reluctance; but before they could reach, at least before they could occupy, their destined habitations, they returned to the banks of the

Danube, exaggerating the hardships of their situation, and requesting, with fervent professions of fidelity, that the emperor would grant them an undisturbed settlement within the limits of the Roman provinces. Instead of consulting his own experience of their incurable perfidy, Constantius listened to his flatterers, who were ready to represent the honour and advantage of accepting a colony of soldiers, at a time when it was much easier to obtain the pecuniary contributions, than the military service, of the subjects of the empire. The Limigantes were permitted to pass the Danube; and the emperor gave audience to the multitude in a large plain near the modern city of Buda. They surrounded the tribunal, and seemed to hear with respect an oration full of mildness and dignity; when one of the barbarians, casting his shoe into the air, exclaimed with a loud voice, *Marha! Marha!* a word of defiance, which was received as the signal of the tumult. They rushed with fury to seize the person of the emperor; his royal throne and golden couch were pillaged by these rude hands; but the faithful defence of his guards, who died at his feet, allowed him a moment to mount a fleet horse, and to escape from the confusion. The disgrace which had been incurred by a treacherous surprise, was soon retrieved by the numbers and discipline of the Romans; and the combat was only terminated by the extinction of the name and nation of the Limigantes. The free Sarmatians were reinstated in the possession of their ancient seats; and although Constantius distrusted the levity of their character, he entertained some hopes that a sense of gratitude might influence their future conduct. He had remarked the lofty stature and obsequious demeanour of Zizais, one of the noblest of their chiefs. He conferred on him the title of king; and Zizais proved that he was not unworthy to reign, by a sincere and lasting attachment to the interest of his benefactor, who, after this splendid success, received the name of *Sarmaticus* from the acclamations of his victorious army.*

While the Roman emperor and the Persian monarch, at the distance of three thousand miles, defended their extreme limits against the barbarians of the Danube and of the Oxus, their intermediate frontier experienced the

* Genti Sarmatarum magno decori considens apud eos regem dedit. Aurelius Victor. In a pompous oration pronounced by Constantius

vicissitudes of a languid war, and a precarious truce. Two of the eastern ministers of Constantius, the prætorian prefect Musonian, whose abilities were disgraced by the want of truth and integrity, and Cassian, Duke of Mesopotamia, a hardy and veteran soldier, opened a secret negotiation with the satrap Tamsapor.* These overtures of peace, translated into the servile and flattering language of Asia, were transmitted to the camp of the great king; who resolved to signify, by an ambassador, the terms which he was inclined to grant to the suppliant Romans. Narses, whom he invested with that character, was honourably received in his passage through Antioch and Constantinople; he reached Sirmium after a long journey, and at his first audience, respectfully unfolded the silken veil which covered the haughty epistle of his sovereign. Sapor, king of kings, and brother of the sun and moon (such were the lofty titles affected by oriental vanity), expressed his satisfaction that his brother, Constantius Cæsar, had been taught wisdom by adversity. As the lawful successor of Darius Hystaspes, Sapor asserted that the river Strymon in Macedonia was the true and ancient boundary of his empire; declaring, however, that as an evidence of his moderation, he would content himself with the provinces of Armenia and Mesopotamia, which had been fraudulently extorted from his ancestors. He alleged that, without the restitution of these disputed countries, it was impossible to establish any treaty on a solid and permanent basis; and he arrogantly threatened, that if his ambassador returned in vain, he was prepared to take the field in the spring, and to support the justice of his cause by the strength of his invincible arms. Narses, who was endowed with the most polite and amiable manners, endeavoured, as far as was consistent with his duty, to soften the harshness of the message.† Both the style and substance were maturely weighed in the imperial council, and he was dismissed with the following answer: "Constantius had a right to disclaim the officious-

himself, he expatiates on his own exploits with much vanity and some truth.

* Ammian. 16. 9. † Ammianus (17. 5), transcribes the haughty letter. Themistius (Orat. 4, p. 57, edit. Petav.) takes notice of the silken covering. Idatius and Zonaras mention the journey of the ambassador; and Peter the Patrician (in *Excerpt. Legat.* p. 28,) has informed us of his conciliating behaviour.

ness of his ministers, who had acted without any specific orders from the throne: he was not, however, averse to an equal and honourable treaty; but it was highly indecent, as well as absurd, to propose to the sole and victorious emperor of the Roman world, the same conditions of peace which he had indignantly rejected at the time when his power was contracted within the narrow limits of the east: the chance of arms was uncertain; and Sapor should recollect, that if the Romans had sometimes been vanquished in battle, they had almost always been successful in the event of the war." A few days after the departure of Narses, three ambassadors were sent to the court of Sapor, who was already returned from the Scythian expedition to his ordinary residence of Ctesiphon. A count, a notary, and a sophist, had been selected for this important commission; and Constantius, who was secretly anxious for the conclusion of the peace, entertained some hopes that the dignity of the first of these ministers, the dexterity of the second, and the rhetoric of the third,* would persuade the Persian monarch to abate of the rigour of his demands. But the progress of their negotiation was opposed and defeated by the hostile arts of Antoninus,† a Roman subject of Syria, who had fled from oppression, and was admitted into the councils of Sapor, and even to the royal table, where, according to the custom of the Persians, the most important business was frequently discussed.‡ The dexterous fugitive promoted his interest by the same conduct which gratified his revenge. He incessantly urged the ambition of his new master, to embrace the favourable opportunity when the bravest of the Palatine troops were employed with the emperor in a

* Ammianus, 17. 5, and Valesius ad loc. The sophist, or philosopher (in that age these words were almost synonymous), was Eustathius the Cappadocian, the disciple of Jaumblichus, and the friend of St. Basil. Eunapius (in Vit. Ædesii, p. 44—47,) fondly attributes to this philosophic ambassador the glory of enchanting the barbarian king by the persuasive charms of reason and eloquence. See Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, p. 828. 1132. † Ammian. 18, 5, 6, 8. The decent and respectful behaviour of Antoninus towards the Roman general, sets him in a very interesting light; and Ammianus himself speaks of the traitor with some compassion and esteem.

‡ This circumstance, as it is noticed by Ammianus, serves to prove the veracity of Herodotus, (l. 1, c. 133,) and the permanency of the Persian manners. In every age the Persians have been addicted to intemperance, and the wines of Shiraz have triumphed over the law of

distant war on the Danube. He pressed Sapor to invade the exhausted and defenceless provinces of the east, with the numerous armies of Persia, now fortified by the alliance and accession of the fiercest barbarians. The ambassadors of Rome retired without success, and a second embassy of a still more honourable rank, was detained in strict confinement, and threatened either with death or exile.

The military historian,* who was himself dispatched to observe the army of the Persians, as they were preparing to construct a bridge of boats over the Tigris, beheld from an eminence the plain of Assyria, as far as the edge of the horizon, covered with men, with horses, and with arms. Sapor appeared in the front, conspicuous by the splendour of his purple. On his left hand, the place of honour among the orientals, Grumbates, king of the Chionites, displayed the stern countenance of an aged and renowned warrior. The monarch had reserved a similar place on his right hand for the king of the Albanians, who led his independent tribes from the shores of the Caspian. The satraps and generals were distributed according to their several ranks, and the whole army, besides the numerous train of oriental luxury, consisted of more than one hundred thousand effective men, inured to fatigue, and selected from the bravest nations of Asia. The Roman deserter, who in some measure guided the councils of Sapor, had prudently advised, that instead of wasting the summer in tedious and difficult sieges, he should march directly to the Euphrates, and press forwards without delay to seize the feeble and wealthy metropolis of Syria. But the Persians were no sooner advanced into the plains of Mesopotamia, than they discovered that every precaution had been used which could retard their progress, or defeat their design. The inhabitants, with their cattle, were secured in places of strength, the green forage throughout the country was set on fire, the fords of the river were fortified by sharp stakes, military engines were planted on the opposite banks, and a seasonable swell of the waters of the Euphrates deterred the barbarians from attempting the ordinary passage of the bridge of Thapsacus. Their skilful guide, changing his plan of operations, then conducted the army by a longer

Mahomet. *Brisson de Regno Pers.* l. 2, p. 462—472, and *Chardin, Voyages en Perse*, tom. iii, p. 90.

* *Ammian.* l. 18, 6—10.

circuit, but through a fertile territory, towards the head of the Euphrates, where the infant river is reduced to a shallow and accessible stream. Sapor overlooked, with prudent disdain, the strength of Nisibis; but as he passed under the walls of Amida, he resolved to try whether the majesty of his presence would not awe the garrison into immediate submission. The sacrilegious insult of a random dart, which glanced against the royal tiara, convinced him of his error; and the indignant monarch listened with impatience to the advice of his ministers, who conjured him not to sacrifice the success of his ambition to the gratification of his resentment. The following day Grumbates advanced towards the gates with a select body of troops, and required the instant surrender of the city, as the only atonement which could be accepted for such an act of rashness and insolence. His proposals were answered by a general discharge, and his only son, a beautiful and valiant youth, was pierced through the heart by a javelin, shot from one of the balistæ. The funeral of the prince of the Chionites was celebrated according to the rites of his country; and the grief of his aged father was alleviated by the solemn promise of Sapor, that the guilty city of Amida should serve as a funeral pile to expiate the death, and to perpetuate the memory of his son.

The ancient city of Amid, or Amida,* which sometimes assumes the provincial appellation of Diarbekir,† is advantageously situated in a fertile plain, watered by the natural and artificial channels of the Tigris, of which the least inconsiderable stream bends in a semicircular form round the eastern part of the city. The emperor, Constantius, had recently conferred on Amida the honour of his own name, and the additional fortifications of strong walls and lofty towers. It was provided with an arsenal of military engines, and the ordinary garrison had been reinforced to the amount of seven legions, when the place was invested by the arms

* For the description of Amida, see D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 108. *Histoire de Timur Bec*, par Cherefeddin Ali, l. 3, c. 41. *Ahmed Arabsiades*, tom. i. p. 331, c. 43. *Voyages d'Otter*, tom. ii, p. 273, and *Voyages de Niebulr*, tom. ii, p. 324—328. The last of these travellers, a learned and accurate Dane, has given a plan of Amida, which illustrates the operations of the siege.

† Diarbekir, which is styled Amid, or Kara-Amid, in the public writings of the Turks, contains above sixteen thousand houses, and is the residence of a *pasha* with three tails. The epithet of *Kara* is

of Sapor.* His first and most sanguine hopes depended on the success of a general assault. To the several nations which followed his standard their respective posts were assigned; the south to the Vertæ, the north to the Albanians, the east to the Chionites, inflamed with grief and indignation; the west to the Segestans, the bravest of his warriors, who covered their front with a formidable line of Indian elephants.† The Persians, on every side, supported their efforts, and animated their courage; and the monarch himself, careless of his rank and safety, displayed, in the prosecution of the siege, the ardour of a youthful soldier. After an obstinate combat, the barbarians were repulsed; they incessantly returned to the charge; they were again driven back with a dreadful slaughter, and two rebel legions of Gauls, who had been banished into the east, signalized their undisciplined courage by a nocturnal sally into the heart of the Persian camp. In one of the fiercest of these repeated assaults, Amida was betrayed by the treachery of a deserter, who indicated to the barbarians a secret and neglected staircase, scooped out of the rock that hangs over the stream of the Tigris. Seventy chosen archers of the royal guard ascended in silence to the third story of a lofty tower which commanded the precipice; they elevated on high the Persian banner, the signal of confidence to the assailants, and of dismay to the besieged; and if this devoted band could have maintained their post a few minutes longer, the reduction of the place might have been purchased by the sacrifice of their lives. After Sapor had tried, without success, the efficacy of force and of stratagem, he had recourse to the slower but more certain operations of a regular siege, in the conduct of which he was instructed by the skill of the Roman deserters. The trenches were

derived from the *blackness* of the stone which composes the strong and ancient wall of Amida.

* The operations of the siege of Amida are very minutely described by Ammianus (19. 1—9), who acted an honourable part in the defence, and escaped with difficulty when the city was stormed by the Persians.

† Of these four nations, the Albanians are too well known to require any description. The Segestans inhabited a large and level country, which still preserves their name, to the south of Khorasan, and the west of Hindostan (see *Geographia Nubiensis*, p. 133, and *D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 797). Notwithstanding the boasted victory of Bahram (vol. i, p. 410), the Segestans, above fourscore years afterward, appear as an independent nation, the ally of Persia. We are ignorant of the situation of the Vertæ and Chionites, but I am inclined to place them (at

opened at a convenient distance, and the troops destined for that service advanced, under the portable covers of strong hurdles, to fill up the ditch, and undermine the foundations of the walls. Wooden towers were at the same time constructed, and moved forward on wheels, till the soldiers, who were provided with every species of missile weapons, could engage almost on level ground with the troops who defended the rampart. Every mode of resistance which art could suggest, or courage could execute, was employed in the defence of Amida, and the works of Sapor were more than once destroyed by the fire of the Romans. But the resources of a besieged city may be exhausted. The Persians repaired their losses, and pushed their approaches; a large breach was made by the battering ram, and the strength of the garrison, wasted by the sword and by disease, yielded to the fury of the assault. The soldiers, the citizens, their wives, their children, all who had not time to escape through the opposite gate, were involved by the conquerors in a promiscuous massacre.

But the ruin of Amida was the safety of the Roman provinces. As soon as the first transports of victory had subsided, Sapor was at leisure to reflect, that to chastise a disobedient city, he had lost the flower of his troops, and the most favourable season for conquest.* Thirty thousand of his veterans had fallen under the walls of Amida, during the continuance of a siege which lasted seventy-three days; and the disappointed monarch returned to his capital with affected triumph and secret mortification. It was more than probable, that the inconstancy of his barbarian allies was tempted to relinquish a war in which they had encountered such unexpected difficulties; and that the aged king

least the latter) towards the confines of India and Scythia. See Ammian. 16, 9.

* Ammianus has marked the chronology of this year by three signs, which do not perfectly coincide with each other, or with the series of the history. 1. The corn was ripe when Sapor invaded Mesopotamia; "Cum jam stipulâ flavente turgent;" a circumstance which, in the latitude of Aleppo, would naturally refer us to the month of April or May. See Harmer's Observations on Scripture, vol. i, p. 41. Shaw's Travels, p. 335, edit. 4to. 2. The progress of Sapor was checked by the overflowing of the Euphrates, which generally happens in July and August. Plin. Hist. Nat. 5, 21. Viaggi di Pietro della Valle, tom. i, p. 696. 3. When Sapor had taken Amida, after a siege of seventy-three days, the autumn was far advanced: "Autumno precipiti hædorumque inprobo sidere exerto." To reconcile these apparent contradictions, we must allow for some delay in

of the Chionites, satiated with revenge, turned away with horror from a scene of action where he had been deprived of the hope of his family and nation. The strength as well as spirit of the army with which Sapor took the field in the ensuing spring, was no longer equal to the unbounded views of his ambition. Instead of aspiring to the conquest of the east, he was obliged to content himself with the reduction of two fortified cities of Mesopotamia, Singara and Bezabde;* the one situate in the midst of a sandy desert, the other in a small peninsula, surrounded almost on every side by the deep and rapid stream of the Tigris. Five Roman legions, of the diminutive size to which they had been reduced in the age of Constantine, were made prisoners, and sent into remote captivity on the extreme confines of Persia. After dismantling the walls of Singara, the conqueror abandoned that solitary and sequestered place; but he carefully restored the fortifications of Bezabde, and fixed in that important post a garrison or colony of veterans, amply supplied with every means of defence, and animated by high sentiments of honour and fidelity. Towards the close of the campaign, the arms of Sapor incurred some disgrace by an unsuccessful enterprise against Virtha, or Tecrit, a strong, or, as it was universally esteemed till the age of Tamerlane, an impregnable fortress of the independent Arabs.†

The defence of the east against the arms of Sapor required, and would have exercised, the abilities of the most consummate general; and it seemed fortunate for the state, that it was the actual province of the brave Ursicinus, who alone deserved the confidence of the soldiers and people. In the hour of danger, Ursicinus‡ was removed from his station

the Persian king, some inaccuracy in the historian, and some disorder in the seasons. [Clinton (F. R. i, 442) sees "no such difficulty as Gibbon has here supposed." He makes Sapor to have passed the Tigris in May, reached the Euphrates July 8, arrived before Amida July 27, and stormed the place October 7.—ED.] * The account of the sieges is given by Ammianus, 20, 6, 7. [For the situation of Singara, see ch. 13, vol. 1, p. 448.—ED.] † For the identity of Virtha and Tecrit, see D'Anville, *Geographie Ancienne*, tom. ii, p. 201. For the siege of that castle by Timur Bec, or Tamerlane, see Cherefeddin, l. 3, c. 33. The Persian biographer exaggerates the merit and difficulty of this exploit, which delivered the caravans of Bagdad from a formidable gang of robbers. [Tecrit, on the Tigris, between Mosul and Bagdad, is now a small town, with the remains of a castle on a high rock, rising from the river. It was the birthplace of Saladin. Layard's *Nineveh*, p. 467.—ED.]

‡ Ammianus (18, 5, 6. 19, 3. 20, 2), represents the merit and disgrace

by the intrigues of the eunuchs; and the military command of the east was bestowed, by the same influence, on Sabinian, a wealthy and subtle veteran, who had attained the infirmities, without acquiring the experience, of age. By a second order, which issued from the same jealous and inconstant counsels, Ursicinus was again dispatched to the frontier of Mesopotamia, and condemned to sustain the labours of a war, the honours of which had been transferred to his unworthy rival. Sabinian fixed his indolent station under the walls of Edessa; and while he amused himself with the idle parade of military exercise, and moved to the sound of flutes in the Pyrrhic dance, the public defence was abandoned to the boldness and diligence of the former general of the east. But whenever Ursicinus recommended any vigorous plan of operations; when he proposed, at the head of a light and active army, to wheel round the foot of the mountains, to intercept the convoys of the enemy, to harass the wide extent of the Persian lines, and to relieve the distress of Amida; the timid and envious commander alleged, that he was restrained by his positive orders from endangering the safety of the troops. Amida was at length taken; its bravest defenders, who had escaped the sword of the barbarians, died in the Roman camp by the hand of the executioner; and Ursicinus himself, after supporting the disgrace of a partial inquiry, was punished for the misconduct of Sabinian by the loss of his military rank. But Constantius soon experienced the truth of the prediction which honest indignation had extorted from his injured lieutenant, that as long as such maxims of government were suffered to prevail, the emperor himself would find it no easy task to defend his eastern dominions from the invasion of a foreign enemy. When he had subdued or pacified the barbarians of the Danube, Constantius proceeded by slow marches into the east; and after he had wept over the smoking ruins of Amida, he formed with a powerful army the siege of Bezabde. The walls were shaken by the reiterated efforts of the most enormous of the battering rams; the town was reduced to the last extremity; but it was still defended by the patient and intrepid valour of the garrison, till the

of Ursicinus with that faithful attention which a soldier owed to his general. Some partiality may be suspected, yet the whole account is

approach of the rainy season obliged the emperor to raise the siege, and ingloriously to retreat into his winter-quarters at Antioch.* The pride of Constantius, and the ingenuity of his courtiers, were at a loss to discover any materials for panegyric in the events of the Persian war; while the glory of his cousin Julian, to whose military command he had intrusted the provinces of Gaul, was proclaimed to the world in the simple and concise narrative of his exploits.

In the blind fury of civil discord, Constantius had abandoned to the barbarians of Germany the countries of Gaul, which still acknowledged the authority of his rival. A numerous swarm of Franks and Allemanni were invited to cross the Rhine by presents and promises, by the hopes of spoil, and by a perpetual grant of all the territories which they should be able to subdue.† But the emperor, who for a temporary service had thus imprudently provoked the rapacious spirit of the barbarians, soon discovered and lamented the difficulty of dismissing these formidable allies, after they had tasted the richness of the Roman soil. Regardless of the nice distinction of loyalty and rebellion, these undisciplined robbers treated as their natural enemies all the subjects of the empire, who possessed any property which they were desirous of acquiring. Forty-five flourishing cities, Tongres, Cologne, Treves, Worms, Spire, Strasbourg, &c., besides a far greater number of towns and villages, were pillaged, and for the most part reduced to ashes. The barbarians of Germany, still faithful to the maxims of their ancestors, abhorred the confinement of walls, to which they applied the odious names of prisons and sepulchres; and fixing their independent habitations on the banks of rivers, the Rhine, the Moselle, and the Meuse, they secured themselves against the danger of a surprise, by a rude and hasty

consistent and probable.

* Ammian. 20, 11. *Omisso vano incepto, hiematurus Antiochiæ redit in Syriam ærummosam, perpressus et ulcerum sed et atrociam, diuque defendenda.* It is *thus* that James Gronovius has restored an obscure passage; and he thinks that this correction alone would have deserved a new edition of his author, whose sense may now be darkly perceived. I expected some additional light from the recent labours of the learned Ernesti. (Lipsiæ, 1773.)

† The ravages of the Germans, and the distress of Gaul, may be collected from Julian himself. *Orat. ad S. P. Q. Athen. p. 277.*

fortification of large trees, which were felled and thrown across the roads. The Allemanni were established in the modern countries of Alsace and Lorraine; the Franks occupied the island of the Batavians, together with an extensive district of Brabant, which was then known by the appellation of Toxandria,* and may deserve to be considered as the original seat of their Gallic monarchy.† From the sources, to the mouth, of the Rhine, the conquests of the Germans extended above forty miles to the west of that river, over a country peopled by colonies of their own name and nation; and the scene of their devastations was three times more extensive than that of their conquests. At a still greater distance the open towns of Gaul were deserted, and the inhabitants of the fortified cities, who trusted to their strength and vigilance, were obliged to content themselves with such supplies of corn as they could raise on the vacant land within the enclosure of their walls. The diminished legions, destitute of pay and provisions, of arms and discipline, trembled at the approach, and even at the name, of the barbarians.

Under these melancholy circumstances, an inexperienced youth was appointed to save and to govern the provinces of Gaul, or rather, as he expresses it himself, to exhibit the vain image of imperial greatness. The retired scholastic education of Julian, in which he had been more conversant with books than with arms, with the dead than with the living, left him in profound ignorance of the practical arts of war and government; and when he awkwardly repeated some military exercise which it was necessary for him to

Ammian. 15, 11. Libanius, Orat. 10. Zosimus, l. 3, p. 140. Sozomen, l. 3, c. 1.

* Ammianus, (16, 8). This name seems to be derived from the Toxandri of Pliny, and very frequently occurs in the histories of the middle age. Toxandria was a country of woods and morasses, which extended from the neighbourhood of Tongres to the conflux of the Vahal and the Rhine. See Valesius, Notit. Gallia, p. 558.

† The paradox of P. Daniel, that the Franks never obtained any permanent settlement on this side of the Rhine before the time of Clovis, is refuted with much learning and good sense by M. Biet, who has proved, by a chain of evidence, their uninterrupted possession of Toxandria one hundred and thirty years before the accession of Clovis. The dissertation of M. Biet was crowned by the Academy of Soissons, in the year 1736, and seems to have been justly preferred to the discourse of his more celebrated competitor, the abbé le Bœuf, an antiquarian, whose name was happily expressive of his talents.

learn, he exclaimed with a sigh, "O Plato, Plato, what a task for a philosopher!" Yet even this speculative philosophy, which men of business are too apt to despise, had filled the mind of Julian with the noblest precepts, and the most shining examples: had animated him with the love of virtue, the desire of fame, and the contempt of death. The habits of temperance, recommended in the schools, are still more essential in the severe discipline of a camp. The simple wants of nature regulated the measure of his food and sleep. Rejecting with disdain the delicacies provided for his table, he satisfied his appetite with the coarse and common fare which was allotted to the meanest soldiers. During the rigour of a Gallic winter, he never suffered a fire in his bed-chamber; and after a short and interrupted slumber, he frequently rose in the middle of the night from a carpet spread on the floor, to dispatch any urgent business, to visit his rounds, or to steal a few moments for the prosecution of his favourite studies.* The precepts of eloquence, which he had hitherto practised on fancied topics of declamation, were more usefully applied to excite or assuage the passions of an armed multitude; and although Julian, from his early habits of conversation and literature, was more familiarly acquainted with the beauties of the Greek language, he had attained a competent knowledge of the Latin tongue.† Since Julian was not originally designed for the character of a legislator or a judge, it is probable that the civil jurisprudence of the Romans had not engaged any considerable share of his attention; but he derived from his philosophic studies an inflexible regard for justice, tempered by a disposition to clemency; the knowledge of the general principles of equity and evidence, and the faculty of patiently investigating the most intricate and tedious questions which could be proposed for his discussion. The measures of policy, and the operations of war, must submit to the various accidents of circumstance and

* The private life of Julian in Gaul, and the severe discipline which he embraced, are displayed by Ammianus, (16, 5) who professes to praise, and, by Julian himself, who affects to ridicule (Misopogon, 340,) a conduct which, in a prince of the house of Constantine, might justly excite the surprise of mankind.

† *Aderat Latine suoque disserenti sufficiens sermo.* Ammianus, 16, 5. But Julian, educated in the schools of Greece, always considered the language of the Romans as a foreign and popular dialect, which he might use on

character, and the unpractised student will often be perplexed in the application of the most perfect theory. But in the acquisition of this important science, Julian was assisted by the active vigour of his own genius, as well as by the wisdom and experience of Sallust, an officer of rank who soon conceived a sincere attachment for a prince so worthy of his friendship; and whose incorruptible integrity was adorned by the talent of insinuating the harshest truths, without wounding the delicacy of a royal ear.*

Immediately after Julian had received the purple at Milan, he was sent into Gaul, with a feeble retinue of three hundred and sixty soldiers. At Vienne, where he passed a painful and anxious winter, in the hands of those ministers to whom Constantius had intrusted the direction of his conduct, the Cæsar was informed of the siege and deliverance of Autun. That large and ancient city, protected only by a ruined wall and pusillanimous garrison, was saved by the generous resolution of a few veterans, who resumed their arms for the defence of their country. In his march from Autun, through the heart of the Gallie provinces, Julian embraced with ardour the earliest opportunity of signaling his courage. At the head of a small body of archers and heavy cavalry, he preferred the shorter but the more dangerous of two roads; and sometimes eluding, and sometimes resisting, the attacks of the barbarians, who were masters of the field, he arrived with honour and safety at the camp near Rheims, where the Roman troops had been ordered to assemble. The aspect of their young prince revived the drooping spirit of the soldiers, and they marched from Rheims in search of the enemy, with a confidence which had almost proved fatal to them. The Allemanni, familiarized to the knowledge of the country, secretly collected their scattered forces, and seizing the opportunity of a dark and rainy day, poured with unexpected fury on the rear-guard of the Romans. Before the inevitable disorder could be remedied, two legions were destroyed; and Julian was taught by experience, that caution and vigilance are

necessary occasions.

* We are ignorant of the actual office of this excellent minister, whom Julian afterwards created prefect of Gaul. Sallust was speedily recalled by the jealousy of the emperor; and we may still read a sensible but pedantic discourse (p. 240—252), in which Julian deploras the loss of so valuable a friend, to whom he

the most important lessons of the art of war. In a second and more successful action, he recovered and established his military fame; but as the agility of the barbarians saved them from the pursuit, his victory was neither bloody nor decisive. He advanced, however, to the banks of the Rhine, surveyed the ruins of Cologne, convinced himself of the difficulties of the war, and retreated on the approach of winter, discontented with the court, with his army, and with his own success.* The power of the enemy was yet unbroken; and the Cæsar had no sooner separated his troops, and fixed his own quarters at Sens, in the centre of Gaul, than he was surrounded and besieged by a numerous host of Germans. Reduced in this extremity to the resources of his own mind, he displayed a prudent intrepidity, which compensated for all the deficiencies of the place and garrison; and the barbarians, at the end of thirty days, were obliged to retire with disappointed rage.

The conscious pride of Julian, who was indebted only to his sword for this signal deliverance, was embittered by the reflection, that he was abandoned, betrayed, and perhaps devoted to destruction, by those who were bound to assist him by every tie of honour and fidelity. Marcellus, master-general of the cavalry in Gaul, interpreting too strictly the jealous orders of the court, beheld with supine indifference the distress of Julian, and had restrained the troops under his command from marching to the relief of Sens. If the Cæsar had dissembled in silence so dangerous an insult, his person and authority would have been exposed to the contempt of the world: and if an action so criminal had been suffered to pass with impunity, the emperor would have confirmed the suspicions which received a very specious colour from his past conduct towards the princes of the Flavian family. Marcellus was recalled, and gently dismissed from his office.† In his room Severus was appointed general of the cavalry; an experienced soldier, of approved courage and fidelity, who could advise with respect, and

acknowledges himself indebted for his reputation. See La Bleterie, *Preface à la Vie de Jovien*, p. 20. * Ammianus (16. 2, 3,) appears much better satisfied with the success of this first campaign than Julian himself; who very fairly owns that he did nothing of consequence, and that he fled before the enemy. † Ammian. 16, 7. Libanius speaks rather more advantageously of the military talents of

execute with zeal; and who submitted, without reluctance, to the supreme command which Julian, by the interest of his patroness Eusebia, at length obtained over the armies of Gaul.* A very judicious plan of operations was adopted for the approaching campaign. Julian himself, at the head of the remains of the veteran bands, and of some new levies which he had been permitted to form, boldly penetrated into the centre of the German cantonments, and carefully re-established the fortifications of Saverne in an advantageous post, which would either check the incursions, or intercept the retreat of the enemy. At the same time Barbatio, general of the infantry, advanced from Milan with an army of thirty thousand men, and passing the mountains, prepared to throw a bridge over the Rhine, in the neighbourhood of Basil. It was reasonable to expect that the Allemanni, pressed on either side by the Roman arms, would soon be forced to evacuate the provinces of Gaul, and to hasten to the defence of their native country. But the hopes of the campaign were defeated by the incapacity, or the envy, or the secret instructions, of Barbatio, who acted as if he had been the enemy of the Cæsar, and the secret ally of the barbarians. The negligence with which he permitted a troop of pillagers freely to pass, and to return almost before the gates of his camp, may be imputed to his want of abilities; but the treasonable act of burning a number of boats, and a superfluous stock of provisions, which would have been of the most essential service to the army of Gaul, was an evidence of his hostile and criminal intentions. The Germans despised an enemy who appeared destitute either of power or of inclination to offend them; and the ignominious retreat of Barbatio deprived Julian of the expected support; and left him to extricate himself from a hazardous situation, where he could neither remain with safety, nor retire with honour.†

As soon as they were delivered from the fears of invasion, Marcellus, *Orat.* 10, p. 272. And Julian insinuates, that he would not have been so easily recalled, unless he had given other reasons of offence to the court, p. 278. * *Severus, non discors, non arrogans, sed longa militie frugalitate compertus; et eum recta preeuntem secuturus, ut ductorem morigerus miles.* *Ammian.* 16, 11. *Zosimus*, l. 3, p. 110. † On the design and failure of the co-operation between Julian and Barbatio, see *Ammianus* (15, 11) and *Libanius*, *Orat.* 10, p. 273.

the Allemanni prepared to chastise the Roman youth, who presumed to dispute the possession of that country, which they claimed as their own by the right of conquest and of treaties. They employed three days and as many nights, in transporting over the Rhine their military powers. The fierce Chnodomar, shaking the ponderous javelin, which he had victoriously wielded against the brother of Magnentius, led the van of the barbarians, and moderated by his experience the martial ardour which his example inspired.* He was followed by six other kings, by ten princes of regal extraction, by a long train of high-spirited nobles, and by thirty-five thousand of the bravest warriors of the tribes of Germany. The confidence derived from the view of their own strength, was increased by the intelligence which they received from a deserter, that the Cæsar, with a feeble army of thirteen thousand men, occupied a post about one-and-twenty miles from their camp of Strasburg. With this inadequate force, Julian resolved to seek and to encounter the barbarian host; and the chance of a general action was preferred to the tedious and uncertain operation of separately engaging the dispersed parties of the Allemanni. The Romans marched in close order, and in two columns, the cavalry on the right, the infantry on the left; and the day was so far spent when they appeared in sight of the enemy, that Julian was desirous of deferring the battle till the next morning, and of allowing his troops to recruit their exhausted strength by the necessary refreshments of sleep and food. Yielding, however, with some reluctance, to the clamours of the soldiers, and even to the opinion of his council, he exhorted them to justify by their valour the eager impatience, which, in case of a defeat, would be universally branded with the epithets of rashness and presumption. The trumpets sounded, the military shout was heard through the field, and the two armies rushed with equal fury to the charge. The Cæsar, who conducted in person his right wing, depended on the dexterity of his

* Ammianus (16, 12) describes with his inflated eloquence, the figure and character of Chnodomar. *Audax et fidens ingenti robore laceratorum, ubi ardor prælii sperabatur immanis. equo spumante, sublimior, erectus in jaculum formidandæ vastitatis, armorumque nitore conspicuus: antea strenuus et miles, et utilis prætor cæteros ductor Decentium Cæsarem superavit æquo Marte congressus.*

archers, and the weight of his cuirassiers. But his ranks were instantly broken by an irregular mixture of light-horse and of light-infantry, and he had the mortification of beholding the flight of six hundred of his most renowned cuirassiers.* The fugitives were stopped and rallied by the presence and authority of Julian, who, careless of his own safety, threw himself before them, and urging every motive of shame and honour, led them back against the victorious enemy. The conflict between the two lines of infantry was obstinate and bloody. The Germans possessed the superiority of strength and stature, the Romans that of discipline and temper; and as the barbarians, who served under the standard of the empire, united the respective advantages of both parties, their strenuous efforts, guided by a skilful leader, at length determined the event of the day. The Romans lost four tribunes and two hundred and forty-three soldiers, in this memorable battle of Strasburg, so glorious to the Cæsar,† and so salutary to the afflicted provinces of Gaul. Six thousand of the Allemanni were slain in the field, without including those who were drowned in the Rhine, or transfixed with darts while they attempted to swim across the river.‡ Chnodomar himself was surrounded and taken prisoner, with three of his brave companions who had devoted themselves to follow in life or death the fate of their chieftain. Julian received him with military pomp in the council of his officers; and expressing a generous pity for the fallen state, dissembled his inward

* After the battle, Julian ventured to revive the rigour of ancient discipline, by exposing these fugitives in female apparel to the derision of the whole camp. In the next campaign, these troops nobly retrieved their honour. Zosimus, l. 3. p. 142. † Julian himself (ad S. P. Q. Athen. p. 279) speaks of the battle of Strasburg with the modesty of conscious merit *ἔμαχασάμην οὐκ ἀκλειῶς, ἴσως καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀφίκετο ἡ τοιαύτη μάχη*. Zosimus compares it with the victory of Alexander over Darius: and yet we are at a loss to discover any of those strokes of military genius which fix the attention of ages on the conduct and success of a single day. ‡ Ammianus, 16, 12. Libanius adds two thousand more to the number of the slain. (Orat. 10, p. 274.) But these trifling differences disappear before the sixty thousand barbarians whom Zosimus has sacrificed to the glory of his hero. l. 3, p. 141). We might attribute this extravagant number to the carelessness of transcribers, if this credulous or partial historian had not swelled the army of thirty-five thousand Allemanni to an innumerable multitude of barbarians, *πλήθος ἀπειρον βαρβάρων*. It is our

contempt for the abject humiliation of his captive. Instead of exhibiting the vanquished king of the Allemanni, as a grateful spectacle to the cities of Gaul, he respectfully laid at the feet of the emperor this splendid trophy of his victory. Chnodomar experienced an honourable treatment; but the impatient barbarian could not long survive his defeat, his confinement, and his exile.*

After Julian had repulsed the Allemanni from the provinces of the Upper Rhine, he turned his arms against the Franks, who were seated nearer to the ocean on the confines of Gaul and Germany; and who, from their numbers, and still more from their intrepid valour, had ever been esteemed the most formidable of the barbarians.† Although they were strongly actuated by the allurements of rapine, they professed a disinterested love of war, which they considered as the supreme honour and felicity of human nature; and their minds and bodies were so completely hardened by perpetual action, that, according to the lively expression of an orator, the snows of winter were as pleasant to them as the flowers of spring. In the month of December, which followed the battle of Strasburg, Julian attacked a body of six hundred Franks, who had thrown themselves into two castles on the Meuse.‡ In the midst of that severe season they sustained, with inflexible constancy, a siege of fifty-four days; till at length, exhausted by hunger, and satisfied that the vigilance of the enemy in breaking the ice of the river, left them no hopes of escape, the Franks consented, for the first time, to dispense with the ancient law, which commanded them to conquer or to die. The Cæsar immediately sent his captives to the court of Constantius, who, accepting them as a valuable present,§ rejoiced in the

own fault if this detection does not inspire us with proper distrust on similar occasions.

* Ammian. 16, 12. Libanius, Orat. 10, p. 276.

† Libanius (Orat. 3, p. 137) draws a very lively picture of the manners of the Franks.

‡ Ammianus, 17, 2. Libanius, Orat. 10, p. 278. The Greek orator, by misapprehending a passage of Julian, has been induced to represent the Franks as consisting of a thousand men; and as his head was always full of the Peloponnesian war, he compares them to the Lacedæmonians, who were besieged and taken in the island of Sphacteria.

§ Julian. ad S. P. Q. Athen. p. 280. Libanius, Orat. 10, p. 278. According to the expression of Libanius, the emperor *ἑὸν ἀνὴρα ὠνόμαζε*, which La Bletterie understands (Vie de Julien, p. 118) as an honest confession, and Valesius (ad Ammian. 17, 2) as a mean evasion of

opportunity of adding so many heroes to the choicest troops of his domestic guards. The obstinate resistance of this handful of Franks, apprized Julian of the difficulties of the expedition which he meditated for the ensuing spring, against the whole body of the nation. His rapid diligence surprised and astonished the active barbarians. Ordering his soldiers to provide themselves with biscuit for twenty days, he suddenly pitched his camp near Tongres, while the enemy still supposed him in his winter-quarters of Paris, expecting the slow arrival of his convoys from Aquitain. Without allowing the Franks to unite or deliberate, he skilfully spread his legions from Cologne to the ocean; and by the terror, as well as by the success, of his arms, soon reduced the suppliant tribes to implore the clemency, and to obey the commands, of their conqueror. The Chamavians submissively retired to their former habitations beyond the Rhine; but the Salians were permitted to possess their new establishment of Toxandria, as the subjects and auxiliaries of the Roman empire.* The treaty was ratified by solemn oaths; and perpetual inspectors were appointed to reside among the Franks, with the authority of enforcing the strict observance of the conditions. An incident is related, interesting enough in itself, and by no means repugnant to the character of Julian, who ingeniously contrived both the plot and the catastrophe of the tragedy. When the Chamavians sued for peace, he required the son of their king, as the only hostage on whom he could rely. A mournful silence, interrupted by tears and groans, declared the sad perplexity of the barbarians; and their aged chief lamented in pathetic language, that his private loss was now imbittered by a sense of the public calamity. While the Chamavians lay prostrate at the foot of his throne, the royal captive, whom they believed to have been slain, unexpectedly appeared before their eyes; and as soon as the tumult of joy was hushed into attention, the Cæsar addressed the assembly in the following terms: "Behold

the truth. Dom. Bouquet (Historiens de France, tom. i, p. 733) by substituting another word, ἐνόμισε, would suppress both the difficulty and the spirit of this passage. * Ammian. 17, 18. Zosimus, l. 3, p. 146—150, (his narrative is darkened by a mixture of fable) and Julian .ad S. P. Q. Athen. p. 280. His expression, ὅπερ ἐξάμην μὲν μοι ραν τοῦ Σαλιῶν ἔθνος, Χαράρονε δὲ ἐξήλασα. This difference of

the son, the prince whom you wept. You had lost him by your fault. God and the Romans have restored him to you. I shall still preserve and educate the youth, rather as a monument of my own virtue, than as a pledge of your sincerity. Should you presume to violate the faith which you have sworn, the arms of the republic will avenge the perfidy not on the innocent, but on the guilty." The barbarians withdrew from his presence, impressed with the warmest sentiments of gratitude and admiration.*

It was not enough for Julian to have delivered the provinces of Gaul from the barbarians of Germany. He aspired to emulate the glory of the first and most illustrious of the emperors; after whose example he composed his own commentaries of the Gallic war.† Cæsar has related, with conscious pride, the manner in which he *twice* passed the Rhine. Julian could boast, that before he assumed the title of Augustus, he had carried the Roman eagles beyond that great river in *three* successful expeditions.‡ The consternations of the Germans, after the battle of Strasburg, encouraged him to the first attempt; and the reluctance of the troops soon yielded to the persuasive eloquence of a leader, who shared the fatigues and dangers which he imposed on the meanest of the soldiers. The villages on either side of the Meyn, which were plentifully stored with corn and cattle, felt the ravages of an invading army. The principal houses, constructed with some imitation of Roman elegance, were consumed by the flames; and the Cæsar boldly advanced about ten miles, till his progress was stopped by a dark and impenetrable forest, undermined by subterraneous passages, which threatened, with secret

treatment confirms the opinion, that the Salian Franks were permitted to retain the settlement in Toxandria. * This interesting story which Zosimus has abridged, is related by Eunapius (in Excerpt. Legationum, p. 15—17) with all the amplifications of Grecian rhetoric; but the silence of Libanius, of Ammianus, and of Julian himself, renders the truth of it extremely suspicious. † Libanius, the friend of Julian, clearly insinuates (Orat. 4, p. 178) that this hero had composed the history of his Gallic campaigns. But Zosimus (l. 3, p. 140) seems to have derived his information only from the Orations (λόγοις) and the Epistles of Julian. The discourse which is addressed to the Athenians contains an accurate, though general, account of the war against the Germans. ‡ See Ammian. 17. 1—10, 18, 2, and Zosim. l. 3, p. 141. Julian. ad S. P. Q. Athen. p. 250.

snare and ambush, every step of the assailants. The ground was already covered with snow; and Julian, after repairing an ancient castle, which had been erected by Trajan, granted a truce of ten months to the submissive barbarians. At the expiration of the truce, Julian undertook a second expedition beyond the Rhine, to humble the pride of Surmar and Hortaire, two of the kings of the Allemanni, who had been present at the battle of Strasburg. They promised to restore all the Roman captives who yet remained alive; and as the Cæsar had procured an exact account, from the cities and villages of Gaul, of the inhabitants whom they had lost, he detected every attempt to deceive him with a degree of readiness and accuracy, which almost established the belief of his supernatural knowledge. His third expedition was still more splendid and important than the two former. The Germans had collected their military powers, and moved along the opposite banks of the river, with a design of destroying the bridge, and of preventing the passage of the Romans. But this judicious plan of defence was disconcerted by a skilful diversion. Three hundred light-armed and active soldiers were detached in forty small boats, to fall down the stream in silence, and to land at some distance from the posts of the enemy. They executed their orders with so much boldness and celerity, that they had almost surprised the barbarian chiefs, who returned in the fearless confidence of intoxication from one of their nocturnal festivals. Without repeating the uniform and disgusting tale of slaughter and devastation, it is sufficient to observe, that Julian dictated his own conditions of peace to six of the haughtiest kings of the Allemanni, three of whom were permitted to view the severe discipline and martial pomp of a Roman camp. Followed by twenty thousand captives, whom he had rescued from the chains of the barbarians, the Cæsar repossessed the Rhine, after terminating a war, the success of which has been compared to the ancient glories of the Punic and Cimbric victories.

As soon as the valour and conduct of Julian had secured an interval of peace, he applied himself to a work more congenial to his humane and philosophic temper. The cities of Gaul, which had suffered from the inroads of the barbarians, he diligently repaired; and seven important posts, between Mentz and the mouth of the Rhine, are par-

ticularly mentioned, as having been rebuilt and fortified by the order of Julian.* The vanquished Germans had submitted to the just but humiliating condition of preparing and conveying the necessary materials. The active zeal of Julian urged the prosecution of the work; and such was the spirit which he had diffused among the troops, that the auxiliaries themselves, waiving their exemption from any duties of fatigue, contended in the most servile labours with the diligence of the Roman soldiers. It was incumbent on the Cæsar to provide for the subsistence, as well as for the safety of the inhabitants and of the garrisons. The desertion of the former, and the mutiny of the latter, must have been the fatal and inevitable consequences of famine. The tillage of the provinces of Gaul had been interrupted by the calamities of war; but the scanty harvests of the continent were supplied, by his paternal care, from the plenty of the adjacent island. Six hundred large barks, framed in the forest of the Ardennes, made several voyages to the coast of Britain; and, returning from thence laden with corn, sailed up the Rhine, and distributed their cargoes to the several towns and fortresses along the banks of the river.† The arms of Julian had restored a free and secure navigation, which Constantius had offered to purchase at the expense of his dignity, and of a tributary present of two thousand pounds of silver. The emperor parsimoniously refused to his soldiers the sums which he granted with a lavish and trembling hand to the barbarians. The dexterity, as well as the firmness of Julian, was put to a severe trial, when he took the field with a discontented army, which had

* Ammian. 18, 2. Libanius, Orat. 10, p. 279, 280. Of these seven posts, four are at present towns of some consequence; Bingen, Andernach, Bonn, and Nuyss. The other three, Tricesimæ, Quadriburgium, and Castra Herculis, or Heraclea, no longer subsist; but there is room to believe, that on the ground of Quadriburgium, the Dutch have constructed the fort of Schenk, a name so offensive to the fastidious delicacy of Boileau. See D'Anville, Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule, p. 183. Boileau, Epître 4, and the notes.

† We may credit Julian himself, Orat. ad. S. P. Q. Atheniensem, p. 280, who gives a very particular account of the transaction. Zosimus adds two hundred vessels more, l. 3, p. 145. If we compute the six hundred corn ships of Julian at only seventy tons each, they were capable of exporting one hundred and twenty thousand quarters (see Arbuthnot's Weights and Measures, p. 237); and the country which could bear so large an exportation must already have attained

already served two campaigns without receiving any regular pay, or any extraordinary donative.*

A tender regard for the peace and happiness of his subjects, was the ruling principle which directed, or seemed to direct the administration of Julian.† He devoted the leisure of his winter quarters to the offices of civil government; and affected to assume, with more pleasure, the character of a magistrate, than that of a general. Before he took the field, he devolved on the provincial governors most of the public and private causes which had been referred to his tribunal; but, on his return, he carefully revised their proceedings, mitigated the rigour of the law, and pronounced a second judgment on the judges themselves. Superior to the last temptation of virtuous minds, an indiscreet and intemperate zeal for justice, he restrained, with calmness and dignity, the warmth of an advocate who prosecuted, for extortion, the president of the Narbonnese province. “Who will ever be found guilty (exclaimed the vehement Delphidius) if it be enough to deny?” “And who (replied Julian) will ever be innocent, if it be sufficient to affirm?” In the general administration of peace and war, the interest of the sovereign is commonly the same as that of his people; but Constantius would have thought himself deeply injured, if the virtues of Julian had defrauded him of any part of the tribute which he extorted from an oppressed and exhausted country. The prince who was invested with the ensigns of royalty, might sometimes presume to correct the rapacious insolence of his inferior agents; to expose their corrupt arts, and to introduce an equal and easier mode of collection. But the management of the finances was more safely intrusted to Florentius, prætorian prefect of Gaul, an effeminate tyrant, incapable of pity or remorse; and the haughty minister complained of the most decent and gentle opposition, while Julian himself was rather inclined to censure the weakness of his own behaviour. The Cæsar had rejected with abhorrence a mandate for the levy of an extraordinary tax; a new superindiction, which the prefect had offered for his signature; and

an improved state of agriculture. * The troops once broke out into a mutiny, immediately before the second passage of the Rhine. *Am-
mian.* 17, 9. † *Ammian.* 16, 5, 18, 1. *Mamertinus in Panegy-
r.* Vet. 11, 4.

the faithful picture of the public misery, by which he had been obliged to justify his refusal, offended the court of Constantius. We may enjoy the pleasure of reading the sentiments of Julian, as he expresses them with warmth and freedom, in a letter to one of his most intimate friends. After stating his own conduct, he proceeds in the following terms: "Was it possible for the disciple of Plato and Aristotle to act otherwise than I have done? Could I abandon the unhappy subjects intrusted to my care? Was I not called upon to defend them from the repeated injuries of these unfeeling robbers? A tribune who deserts his post is punished with death, and deprived of the honours of burial. With what justice could I pronounce *his* sentence, if, in the hour of danger, I myself neglected a duty far more sacred and far more important? God has placed me in this elevated post; his providence will guard and support me. Should I be condemned to suffer, I shall derive comfort from the testimony of a pure and upright conscience. Would to heaven that I still possessed a counsellor like Sallust! If they think proper to send me a successor, I shall submit without reluctance; and had much rather improve the short opportunity of doing good, than enjoy a long and lasting impunity of evil."* The precarious and dependent situation of Julian displayed his virtues and concealed his defects. The young hero, who supported in Gaul the throne of Constantius, was not permitted to reform the vices of the government; but he had courage to alleviate or to pity the distress of the people. Unless he had been able to revive the martial spirit of the Romans, or to introduce the arts of industry and refinement among their savage enemies, he could not entertain any rational hopes of securing the public tranquillity, either by the peace or conquest of Germany. Yet the victories of Julian suspended, for a short time, the inroads of the barbarians, and delayed the ruin of the western empire.

His salutary influence restored the cities of Gaul, which had been so long exposed to the evils of civil discord, barbarian war, and domestic tyranny; and the spirit of industry was revived with the hope of enjoyment. Agri-

* Ammian. 17, 3. Julian. Epistol. 15, edit. Spanheim. Such a conduct almost justifies the encomium of Mamertinus. "Ita illi anni spatia divisa sunt, ut aut barbaros domitet, aut civibus jura

culture, manufactures, and commerce, again flourished under the protection of the laws; and the *curiæ*, or civil corporations, were again filled with useful and respectable members: the youth were no longer apprehensive of marriage; and married persons were no longer apprehensive of posterity: the public and private festivals were celebrated with customary pomp; and the frequent and secure intercourse of the provinces displayed the image of national prosperity.* A mind, like that of Julian, must have felt the general happiness of which he was the author; but he viewed with peculiar satisfaction and complacency, the city of Paris; the seat of his winter residence, and the object even of his partial affection.† That splendid capital, which now embraces an ample territory on either side of the Seine, was originally confined to the small island in the midst of the river, from whence the inhabitants derived a supply of pure and salubrious water. The river bathed the foot of the walls; and the town was accessible only by two wooden bridges. A forest overspread the northern side of the Seine; but on the south, the ground, which now bears the name of the university, was insensibly covered with houses, and adorned with a palace and amphitheatre, baths, an aqueduct, and a field of Mars for the exercise of the Roman troops. The severity of the climate was tempered by the neighbourhood of the ocean; and with some precautions, which experience had taught, the vine and fig-tree were successfully cultivated. But, in remarkable winters, the Seine was deeply frozen; and the huge pieces of ice that floated down the stream, might be compared, by an Asiatic, to the blocks of white marble which were extracted from the quarries of Phrygia. The licentiousness and corruption of Antioch, recalled to the memory of Julian the severe and simple manners of his beloved Lutetia,‡ where the amuse-

restituat; perpetuum professus, aut contra hostem, aut contra vitia, certamen.

* Libanius, Orat. Parental. in Imp. Julian. c. 38, in Fabricius Bibliothec. Græc. tom. vii, p. 263, 264. † See Julian. in Misopogon. p. 340, 341. The primitive state of Paris is illustrated by Henry Valesius (ad Ammian. 20, 4), his brother Hadrian Valesius, or de Valois, and M. D'Anville (in their respective Notitias of ancient Gaul), the abbé de Longuerue, (Description de la France, tom. 1, p. 12, 13), and M. Bonamy (in the Mém. de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. 15. p. 656—691. ‡ Τῆν φιλήν Λευκετίαν. Julian. in Misopogon. p. 340. Leucetia, or Lutetia, was the ancient name of the city which,

ments of the theatre were unknown or despised. He indignantly contrasted the effeminate Syrians with the brave and honest simplicity of the Gauls, and almost forgave the intemperance, which was the only stain of the Celtic character.* If Julian could now revisit the capital of France, he might converse with men of science and genius, capable of understanding and of instructing a disciple of the Greeks; he might excuse the lively and graceful follies of a nation, whose martial spirit has never been enervated by the indulgence of luxury, and he must applaud the perfection of that inestimable art, which softens and refines and embellishes the intercourse of social life.

CHAPTER XX.—THE MOTIVES, PROGRESS, AND EFFECTS, OF THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE.—LEGAL ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN OR CATHOLIC CHURCH.

THE public establishment of Christianity may be considered as one of those important and domestic revolutions which excite the most lively curiosity, and afford the most valuable instruction. The victories and the civil policy of Constantine no longer influence the state of Europe; but a considerable portion of the globe still retains the impression which it received from the conversion of that monarch; and the ecclesiastical institutions of his reign are still connected, by an indissoluble chain, with the opinions, the passions, and the interests of the present generation.

In the consideration of a subject which may be examined with impartiality, but cannot be viewed with indifference, a difficulty immediately arises of a very unexpected nature—that of ascertaining the real and precise date of the conversion of Constantine. The eloquent Lactantius, in the midst of his court, seems impatient† to proclaim to the according to the fashion of the fourth century, assumed the territorial appellation of *Parisii*. [The Parisii occupied that part of Gaul when it was first known to the Romans (Cæs. B. G. 6, 3), and from them Julian's favourite residence had the name of *Lutetia Parisiorum*. - Ed.] * Julian in *Misopogon*. p. 359, 360.

† The date of the Divine Institutions of Lactantius has been accurately discussed, difficulties have been started, solutions proposed, and an expedient imagined, of two *original* editions; the former published during the persecution of Diocletian, the latter under that of Licinius. See Dufresnoy, *Prefat.* p. 5. Tillemont, *Mem. Ecclesiast.* tom. vi, p. 465—470. Lardner's *Credibility*, part 2, vol. vii, p. 78—86. For my

world the glorious example of the sovereign of Gaul; who, in the first moments of his reign, acknowledged and adored the majesty of the true and only God.* The learned Eusebius has ascribed the faith of Constantine to the miraculous sign which was displayed in the heavens whilst he meditated and prepared the Italian expedition.† The historian Zosimus maliciously asserts, that the emperor had embued his hands in the blood of his eldest son, before he publicly renounced the gods of Rome and of his ancestors.‡ The perplexity produced by these discordant authorities, is derived from the behaviour of Constantine himself. According to the strictness of ecclesiastical language, the first of the *Christian* emperors was unworthy of that name till the moment of his death; since it was only during his last illness that he received as a catechumen, the imposition of hands.§ and was afterwards admitted, by the initiatory rites of baptism, into the number of the faithful.¶ The Christianity of Constantine must be allowed in a much more vague and qualified sense; and the nicest accuracy is required in tracing the slow and almost imperceptible gradations by

own part, I am *almost* convinced that Lactantius dedicated his institutions to the sovereign of Gaul, at a time when Galerius, Maximin, and even Licinius, persecuted the Christians; that is, between the year 306 and 311. * Lactant. *Divin. Institut.* 1, 1, 7, 27. The first and most important of these passages is indeed wanting in twenty-eight manuscripts but it is found in nineteen. If we weigh the comparative value of those manuscripts, one of nine hundred years old, in the king of France's library, may be alleged in its favour; but the passage is omitted in the correct manuscript of Bologna, which the P. de Montfaucon ascribes to the sixth or seventh century. (*Diarium Italic.* p. 109.) The taste of most of the editors (except Isæus, see Lactant. edit. Dufresnoy, tom. i. p. 596) has felt the genuine style of Lactantius.

† Euseb. in *Vit. Constant.* lib. 1, c. 27—32. ‡ Zosimus, l. 2, p. 104. § That rite was *always* used in making a catechumen (see Bingham's *Antiquities*, lib. 10, c. 1, p. 419. Dom. Chardon, *Hist. des Sacremens*, tom. i, p. 62) and Constantine received it for the *first* time (Euseb. in *Vit. Constant.* lib. 4, c. 6, 1) immediately before his baptism and death. From the connexion of these two facts, Valesius (ad loc. Euseb.) has drawn the conclusion which is reluctantly admitted by Tillemont (*Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 628), and opposed with feeble arguments by Mosheim (p. 968). ¶ Euseb. in *Vit. Constant.* l. 4, c. 61—63. The legend of Constantine's baptism at Rome, thirteen years before his death, was invented in the eighth century, as a proper motive for his *donation*. Such has been the gradual progress of knowledge, that a story of which Cardinal Baronius (*Annal. Ecclesiast.* A.D. 324, No. 43—49) declared himself the unblushing advocate, is now

which the monarch declared himself the protector, and at length the proselyte, of the church. It was an arduous task to eradicate the habits and prejudices of his education, to acknowledge the divine power of Christ, and to understand that the truth of *his* revelation was incompatible with the worship of the gods. The obstacles which he had probably experienced in his own mind, instructed him to proceed with caution in the momentous change of a national religion; and he insensibly discovered his new opinions, as far as he could enforce them with safety and with effect. During the whole course of his reign, the stream of Christianity flowed with a gentle, though accelerated, motion; but its general direction was sometimes checked, and sometimes diverted, by the accidental circumstances of the times, and by the prudence, or possibly by the caprice, of the monarch. His ministers were permitted to signify the intentions of their master in the various language which was best adapted to their respective principles;* and he artfully balanced the hopes and fears of his subjects, by publishing in the same year two edicts: the first of which enjoined the solemn observance of Sunday,† and the second directed the regular consultation of the Aruspices.‡ While this important revolution yet remained in suspense, the Christians and the Pagans watched the conduct of their sovereign with the same anxiety, but with very opposite sentiments. The former were prompted by every motive of zeal, as well as vanity, to exaggerate the marks of his favour, and the evidences of his faith. The latter, till their just apprehensions were changed into despair and resentment, attempted to conceal from the world, and from themselves,

feebly supported, even within the verge of the Vatican. See the *Antiquitates Christianæ*, tom. ii, p. 232, a work published with six approbations at Rome, in the year 1751, by Father Mamachi, a learned Dominican.

* The quæstor, or secretary, who composed the law of the Theodosian Code, makes his master say with indifference,—“*hominibus supradictæ religionis*” (lib. 16, tit. 2, leg. 1). The minister of ecclesiastical affairs was allowed a more devout and respectful style, τῆ ἐπιθέσμου καὶ ἀγιωπότης καθολικῆς θρησκείας; the legal, most holy, and Catholic worship. See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. 10, c. 6.

† Cod. Theodos. l. 2, tit. 8, leg. 1. Cod. Justinian. l. 3, tit. 12, leg. 3. Constantine styles the Lord's day *dies solis*, a name which could not offend the ears of his Pagan subjects. ‡ Cod. Theodos. l. 16, tit. 10, leg. 1. Godefroy, in the character of a commentator, endeavours (tom. vi, p. 257) to excuse Constantine; but the more zealous Baronius (*Annal.*

that the gods of Rome could no longer reckon the emperor in the number of their votaries. The same passions and prejudices have engaged the partial writers of the times to connect the public profession of Christianity with the most glorious or the most ignominious era of the reign of Constantine.

Whatever symptoms of Christian piety might transpire in the discourses or actions of Constantine, he persevered till he was near forty years of age in the practice of the established religion;* and the same conduct, which in the court of Nicomedia might be imputed to his fear, could be ascribed only to the inclination or policy of the sovereign of Gaul. His liberality restored and enriched the temples of the gods; the medals which issued from his imperial mint are impressed with the figures and attributes of Jupiter and Apollo, of Mars and Hercules; and his filial piety increased the council of Olympus by the solemn apotheosis of his father Constantius.† But the devotion of Constantine was more peculiarly directed to the genius of the Sun, the Apollo of Greek and Roman mythology; and he was pleased to be represented with the symbols of the god of light and poetry. The unerring shafts of that deity, the brightness of his eyes, his laurel wreath, immortal beauty, and elegant accomplishments, seem to point him out as the patron of a young hero. The altars of Apollo were crowned with the votive offerings of Constantine; and the credulous multitude were taught to believe, that the emperor was permitted to behold, with mortal eyes, the visible majesty of their tutelar deity; and that either waking or in a vision he was blessed with the auspicious omens of a long and victorious reign. The Sun was universally celebrated as the invincible guide and protector of Constantine; and the Pagans might reasonably expect, that the insulted god

Eccles. A.D. 321, No. 18) censures his profane conduct with truth and asperity. * Theodoret (l. 1, c. 18) seems to insinuate that Helena gave her son a Christian education; but we may be assured, from the superior authority of Eusebius (in Vit. Constant. l. 3, c. 47), that she herself was indebted to Constantine for the knowledge of Christianity.

† See the medals of Constantine in Ducange and Banduri. As few cities had retained the privilege of coining, almost all the medals of that age issued from the mint under the sanction of the imperial authority. [The coins of Constantine and his sons were issued from Rome and Constantinople. See Eckhel (D. Num. Vet. 8, 95.)—Ed.]

would pursue, with unrelenting vengeance, the impiety of his ungrateful favourite.*

As long as Constantine exercised a limited sovereignty over the provinces of Gaul, his Christian subjects were protected by the authority, and perhaps by the laws, of a prince, who wisely left to the gods the care of vindicating their own honour. If we may credit the assertion of Constantine himself, he had been an indignant spectator of the savage cruelties which were inflicted by the hands of Roman soldiers, on those citizens whose religion was their only crime.† In the east and in the west, he had seen the different effects of severity and indulgence; and as the former was rendered still more odious by the example of Galerius, his implacable enemy, the latter was recommended to his imitation by the authority and advice of a dying father. The son of Constantius immediately suspended or repealed the edicts of persecution, and granted the free exercise of their religious ceremonies to all those who had already professed themselves members of the church. They were soon encouraged to depend on the favour as well as on the justice of their sovereign, who had imbibed a secret and sincere reverence for the name of Christ, and for the God of the Christians.‡

About five months after the conquest of Italy, the emperor made a solemn and authentic declaration of his sentiments, by the celebrated edict of Milan, which restored peace to the Catholic church. In the personal interview of the two western princes, Constantine, by the ascendant of genius and power, obtained the ready concurrence of his colleague Licinius; the union of their names and authority disarmed the fury of Maximin; and, after the

* The panegyric of Eumenius (7. inter Panegyr. Vet.), which was pronounced a few months before the Italian war, abounds with the most unexceptionable evidence of the Pagan superstition of Constantine, and of his particular veneration for Apollo, or the Sun; to which Julian alludes. (Orat. 7, p. 228, ἀπολαίπων σέ.) See Commentaire de Spanheim sur les Césars, p. 317. † Constantin.

Orat. ad Sanctos, c. 25. But it might easily be shown, that the Greek translator has improved the sense of the Latin original; and the aged emperor might recollect the persecution of Diocletian with a more lively abhorrence than he had actually felt in the days of his youth and Paganism.

‡ See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. 8. 13; l. 9. 9, and in Vit. Const. l. 1, c. 16, 17. Lactant. Divin. Institut. l. 1. Cæcilius de

death of the tyrant of the east, the edict of Milan was received as a general and fundamental law of the Roman world.*

The wisdom of the emperors provided for the restitution of all the civil and religious rights of which the Christians had been so unjustly deprived. It was enacted, that the places of worship, and public lands, which had been confiscated, should be restored to the church, without dispute, without delay, and without expense: and this severe injunction was accompanied with a gracious promise, that if any of the purchasers had paid a fair and adequate price, they should be indemnified from the imperial treasury. The salutary regulations which guard the future tranquillity of the faithful are framed on the principles of enlarged and equal toleration; and such an equality must have been interpreted by a recent sect as an advantageous and honourable distinction. The two emperors proclaim to the world, that they have granted a free and absolute power to the Christians, and to all others, of following the religion which each individual thinks proper to prefer, to which he has addicted his mind, and which he may deem the best adapted to his own use. They carefully explain every ambiguous word, remove every exception, and exact from the governors of the provinces a strict obedience to the true and simple meaning of an edict, which was designed to establish and secure, without any limitation, the claims of religious liberty. They condescend to assign two weighty reasons which have induced them to allow this universal toleration; the humane intention of consulting the peace and happiness of their people; and the pious hope, that by such a conduct, they shall appease and propitiate *the Deity*, whose seat is in heaven. They gratefully acknowledge the many signal proofs which they have received of the Divine favour; and they trust that the same Providence will for ever continue to protect the prosperity of the prince and people. From these vague and indefinite expressions of piety, three suppositions may be deduced, of a different, but not of an incompatible, nature. The mind of Constantine might fluctuate between the Pagan and the Christian religions. According

Mort. Persecut. c. 25.

* Cæcilius (de Mort. Persecut. c. 48.) has preserved the Latin original; and Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. l. 10, c. 5.) has given a Greek translation of this perpetual edict, which refers to

to the loose and complying notions of Polytheism, he might acknowledge the god of the Christians as *one* of the *many* deities who composed the hierarchy of heaven. Or perhaps he might embrace the philosophic and pleasing idea, that notwithstanding the variety of names, of rites, and of opinions, all the sects and all the nations of mankind are united in the worship of the Common Father and Creator of the universe.*

But the councils of princes are more frequently influenced by views of temporal advantage, than by considerations of abstract and speculative truth. The partial and increasing favour of Constantine may naturally be referred to the esteem which he entertained for the moral character of the Christians; and to a persuasion, that the propagation of the gospel would inculcate the practice of private and public virtue. Whatever latitude an absolute monarch may assume in his own conduct, whatever indulgence he may claim for his own passions, it is undoubtedly his interest that all his subjects should respect the natural and civil obligations of society. But the operation of the wisest laws is imperfect and precarious. They seldom inspire virtue, they cannot always restrain vice. Their power is insufficient to prohibit all that they condemn, nor can they always punish the actions which they prohibit. The legislators of antiquity had summoned to their aid the powers of education and of opinion: But every principle which had once maintained the vigour and purity of Rome and Sparta was long since extinguished in a declining and despotic empire. Philosophy still exercised her temperate sway over the human mind, but the cause of virtue derived very feeble support from the influence of the Pagan superstition. Under these discouraging circumstances, a prudent magistrate might observe

some provisional regulations.

* A panegyric of Constantine, pronounced seven or eight months after the edict of Milan, (see Gothofred. Chronolog. Legum, p. 7. and Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 246.) uses the following remarkable expression: "Summe rerum sator, cujus tot nomina sunt, quot linguas gentium esse voluisti, quem enim te ipse dici velis, scire non possumus." (Panegyric. Vet. 9. 26.) In explaining Constantine's progress in the faith, Mosheim (p. 971, &c.) is ingenious, subtle, prolix. [Pope must have had this in his mind when he commenced his Universal Prayer, making "Saint, savage, and sage," use "Jehovah, Jove, or Lord," only as different names for one Supreme Being.—Ed.]

with pleasure the progress of a religion, which diffused among the people a pure, benevolent, and universal system of ethics, adapted to every duty and every condition of life; recommended as the will and reason of the Supreme Deity, and enforced by the sanction of eternal rewards or punishments. The experience of Greek and Roman history could not inform the world how far the system of national manners might be reformed and improved by the precepts of a divine revelation; and Constantine might listen with some confidence to the flattering, and indeed reasonable, assurances of Lactantius. The eloquent apologist seemed firmly to expect, and almost ventured to promise, *that* the establishment of Christianity would restore the innocence and felicity of the primitive age; *that* the worship of the true God would extinguish war and dissension among those who mutually considered themselves as the children of a common parent; *that* every impure desire, every angry or selfish passion, would be restrained by the knowledge of the gospel; and *that* the magistrates might sheath the sword of justice among a people who would be universally actuated by the sentiments of truth and piety, of equity and moderation, of harmony and universal love.*

The passive and unresisting obedience, which bows under the yoke of authority, or even of oppression, must have appeared, in the eyes of an absolute monarch, the most conspicuous and useful of the evangelic virtues.† The primitive Christians derived the institution of civil government, not from the consent of the people, but from the decrees of Heaven. The reigning emperor, though he had usurped the sceptre by treason and murder, immediately assumed the sacred character of vicegerent of the Deity. To the Deity alone he was accountable for the abuse of his power; and his subjects were indissolubly bound, by their oath of fidelity, to a tyrant, who had violated every law of nature and society. The humble Christians were sent into the world as sheep among wolves; and since they were not permitted to employ force, even in the defence of their religion, they would be still more criminal if they were

* See the elegant description of Lactantius (Divin. Institut. 5. 8), who is much more perspicuous and positive than becomes a discreet prophet. † The political system of the Christians is explained by Grotius, *de Jure Belli et Pacis*, l. 1, c. 3, 4. Grotius was a republican

tempted to shed the blood of their fellow-creatures, in disputing the vain privileges, or the sordid possessions, of this transitory life. Faithful to the doctrine of the apostle, who in the reign of Nero had preached the duty of unconditional submission, the Christians of the three first centuries preserved their conscience pure and innocent of the guilt of secret conspiracy, or open rebellion. While they experienced the rigour of persecution, they were never provoked either to meet their tyrants in the field, or indignantly to withdraw themselves into some remote and sequestered corner of the globe.* The Protestants of France, of Germany, and of Britain, who asserted with such intrepid courage their civil and religious freedom, have been insulted by the invidious comparison between the conduct of the primitive and of the reformed Christians.† Perhaps, instead of censure, some applause may be due to the superior sense and spirit of our ancestors, who had convinced themselves that religion cannot abolish the unalienable rights of human nature.‡ Perhaps the patience of the primitive church may be ascribed to its weakness, as well as to its virtue. A sect of unwarlike plebeians, without leaders, without arms, without fortifications, must have encountered inevitable destruction in a rash and fruitless resistance to the master of the Roman legions. But the Christians, when they deprecated the wrath of Diocletian, or solicited the favour of Constantine, could allege with truth and confidence, that they held the principle of passive obedience, and that, in the space of three centuries, their conduct had always been conformable to their principles. They might add, that the throne of the emperors would be established on a fixed and permanent basis,

and an exile, but the mildness of his temper inclined him to support the established powers.

* Tertullian, Apolog. c. 32, 34—36. *Tamen nunquam Albiniani, nec Nigriani vel Cassiani inveniri potuerunt Christiani. Ad Scapulam, c. 2.* If this assertion be strictly true, it excludes the Christians of that age from all civil and military employments, which would have compelled them to take an active part in the service of their respective governors. See Moyle's Works, vol. ii, p. 349.

† See the artful Bossuet (*Hist. des Variations des Eglises Protestantes*, tom. iii, p. 219—258), and the malicious Bayle, (tom. ii, p. 620). I name Bayle, for he was certainly the author of the *Avis aux Réfugiés*; consult the *Dictionnaire Critique de Chauffepié*, tom. i, part 2, p. 145.

‡ Buchanan is the earliest, or at least the most celebrated, of the reformers, who has justified the theory of resistance. See his *dialogue, de Jure Regni apud Scotos*, tom. ii, p. 28—30, edit. fol. Ruddiman.

if all their subjects embracing the Christian doctrine, should learn to suffer and to obey.

In the general order of Providence, princes and tyrants are considered as the ministers of heaven, appointed to rule or to chastise the nations of the earth. But sacred history affords many illustrious examples of the more immediate interposition of the Deity in the government of his chosen people. The sceptre and the sword were committed to the hands of Moses, of Joshua, of Gideon, of David, of the Maccabees; the virtues of those heroes were the motive or the effect of the divine favour, the success of their arms was destined to achieve the deliverance or the triumph of the church. If the judges of Israel were occasional and temporary magistrates, the kings of Judah derived from the royal unction of their great ancestor an hereditary and indefeasible right, which could not be forfeited by their own vices, nor recalled by the caprice of their subjects. The same extraordinary providence, which was no longer confined to the Jewish people might elect Constantine and his family as the protectors of the Christian world; and the devout Lactantius announces, in a prophetic tone, the future glories of his long and universal reign.* Galerius and Maximin, Maxentius and Licinius, were the rivals who shared with the favourite of heaven the provinces of the empire. The tragic deaths of Galerius and Maximin soon gratified the resentment, and fulfilled the sanguine expectations of the Christians. The success of Constantine against Maxentius and Licinius, removed the two formidable competitors who still opposed the triumph of the second David, and his cause might seem to claim the peculiar interposition of Providence. The character of the Roman tyrant disgraced the purple and human nature; and though the Christians might enjoy his precarious favour, they were exposed, with the rest of his subjects, to the effects of his wanton and capricious cruelty. The conduct of Licinius soon betrayed the reluctance with which he had consented to the wise and humane regulations of the edict of Milan. The convocation of provincial synods was prohibited in his dominions; his Christian officers were ignominiously dismissed; and if he avoided the guilt, or rather danger, of a

* Lactant. Divin. Institut. lib. 1. Eusebius, in the course of his history, his life, and his oration, repeatedly inculcates the divine right

general persecution, his partial oppressions were rendered still more odious by the violation of a solemn and voluntary engagement.* While the east, according to the lively expression of Eusebius, was involved in the shades of infernal darkness, the auspicious rays of celestial light warmed and illuminated the provinces of the west. The piety of Constantine was admitted as an unexceptionable proof of the justice of his arms; and his use of victory confirmed the opinion of the Christians, that their hero was inspired and conducted by the Lord of hosts. The conquest of Italy produced a general edict of toleration; and as soon as the defeat of Licinius had invested Constantine with the sole dominion of the Roman world, he immediately, by circular letters, exhorted all his subjects to imitate, without delay, the example of their sovereign, and to embrace the divine truth of Christianity.†

The assurance that the elevation of Constantine was intimately connected with the designs of providence instilled into the minds of the Christians two opinions, which, by very different means, assisted the accomplishment of the prophecy. Their warm and active loyalty exhausted in his favour every resource of human industry; and they confidently expected that their strenuous efforts would be seconded by some divine and miraculous aid. The enemies of Constantine have imputed to interested motives the alliance which he insensibly contracted with the Catholic church, and which apparently contributed to the success of his ambition. In the beginning of the fourth century the Christians still bore a very inadequate proportion to the inhabitants of the empire; but among a degenerate people, who viewed the change of masters with the indifference of slaves, the spirit and union of a religious party might assist the popular leader, to whose service, from a principle of conscience, they had devoted their lives and fortunes.‡

of Constantine to the empire.

* Our imperfect knowledge of the persecution of Licinius is derived from Eusebius. (Hist. Eccles. l. 10, c. 8. Vit. Constantin. l. 1, c. 49—56; l. 2, c. 1, 2.) Aurelius Victor mentions his cruelty in general terms. † Euseb. in Vit. Constant. l. 2, c. 24—42. 48—60.

‡ In the beginning of the last century, the Papists of England were only a *thirtieth*, and the Protestants of France only a *fiftieth*, part of the respective nations, to whom their spirit and power were a constant object of apprehension. See the relations which Bentivoglio (who was then nuncio at Brussels, and

The example of his father had instructed Constantine to esteem and to reward the merit of the Christians; and in the distribution of public offices, he had the advantage of strengthening his government by the choice of ministers or generals, in whose fidelity he could repose a just and unreserved confidence. By the influence of these dignified missionaries, the proselytes of the new faith must have multiplied in the court and army; the barbarians of Germany, who filled the ranks of the legions, were of a careless temper, which acquiesced without resistance in the religion of their commander; and when they passed the Alps, it may fairly be presumed, that a great number of the soldiers had already consecrated their swords to the service of Christ and of Constantine.* The habits of mankind, and the interest of religion, gradually abated the horror of war and bloodshed, which had so long prevailed among the Christians: and in the councils which were assembled under the gracious protection of Constantine, the authority of the bishops was seasonably employed to ratify the obligation of the military oath, and to inflict the penalty of excommunication on those soldiers who threw away their arms during the peace of the church.† While Constantine in his own dominions, increased the number and zeal of his faithful adherents, he could depend on the support of a powerful faction in those provinces which were still possessed or usurped by his rivals. A secret disaffection was diffused among the Christian subjects of Maxentius and Licinius; and the resentment which the latter did not attempt to conceal, served only to engage them still more deeply in the interest of his competitor. The regular correspondence which connected the bishops of the most distant provinces, enabled them freely to communicate their wishes and their designs, and to transmit without danger any useful intelligence, or any pious contributions, which might promote

afterwards cardinal) transmitted to the court of Rome. (Relazione, tom. ii, p. 211—241). Bentivoglio was curious, well informed, but somewhat partial.

* This careless temper of the Germans appears almost uniformly in the history of the conversion of each of the tribes. The legions of Constantine were recruited with Germans (Zosimus, l. 2, p. 86); and the court even of his father had been filled with Christians. See the first book of the life of Constantine, by Eusebius.

† De his qui arma projiciunt in pace, placuit, eos abstinere a communione. Concil. Arelat. canon 3. The best critics apply these words

the service of Constantine, who publicly declared that he had taken up arms for the deliverance of the church*

The enthusiasm which inspired the troops, and perhaps the emperor himself, had sharpened their swords while it satisfied their conscience. They marched to battle with the full assurance, that the same God who had formerly opened a passage to the Israelites through the waters of Jordan, and had thrown down the walls of Jericho at the sound of the trumpets of Joshua, would display his visible majesty and power in the victory of Constantine. The evidence of ecclesiastical history is prepared to affirm, that their expectations were justified by the conspicuous miracle to which the conversion of the first Christian emperor has been almost unanimously ascribed. The real or imaginary cause of so important an event, deserves and demands the attention of posterity; and I shall endeavour to form a just estimate of the famous vision of Constantine, by a distinct consideration of the *standard*, the *dream*, and the *celestial sign*; by separating the historical, the natural, and the marvellous parts of this extraordinary story, which, in the composition of a specious argument, have been artfully confounded in one splendid and brittle mass.

I. An instrument of the tortures which were inflicted only on slaves and strangers, became an object of horror in the eyes of a Roman citizen; and the ideas of guilt, of pain, and of ignominy, were closely united with the idea of the cross.† The piety, rather than the humanity, of Constantine, soon abolished in his dominions the punishment which

to the *peace of the church*.

* Eusebius always considers the second civil war against Licinius as a sort of religious crusade. At the invitation of the tyrant, some Christian officers had resumed their *zons*; or, in other words, had returned to the military service. Their conduct was afterwards censured by the twelfth canon of the council of Nice; if this particular application may be received, instead of the loose and general sense of the Greek interpreters, Balsamon, Zonaras, and Alexis Aristenus. See Beveridge, Pandect. Eccl. Græc. i, 72, ii, 78, Annotation.

† *Nomen ipsum crucis absit non modo a corpore civium Romanorum, sed etiam a cogitatione, oculis, auribus.* Cicero pro Rabirio, c. 5. The Christian writers, Justin, Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Jerome, and Maximus of Turin, have investigated with tolerable success the figure or likeness of a cross in almost every object of nature or art; in the intersection of the meridian and equator, the human face, a bird flying, a man swimming, a mast and yard, a plough, a *standard*, &c. &c. &c. See Lipsius de Cruce, l. 1, c. 9.

the Saviour of mankind had condescended to suffer;* but the emperor had already learned to despise the prejudices of his education and of his people, before he could erect in the midst of Rome his own statue, bearing a cross in its right hand; with an inscription which referred the victory of his arms, and the deliverance of Rome, to the virtue of that salutary sign, the true symbol of force and courage.† The same symbol sanctified the arms of the soldiers of Constantine; the cross glittered on their helmets, was engraved on their shields, was interwoven into their banners; and the consecrated emblems, which adorned the person of the emperor himself, were distinguished only by richer materials and more exquisite workmanship.‡ But the principal standard which displayed the triumph of the cross was styled the *Labarum*,§ an obscure, though celebrated name, which has been vainly derived from almost all the languages of the world. It is described¶ as a long pike intersected by a transversal beam. The silken veil which hung down from

* See Aurelius Victor, who considers this law as one of the examples of Constantine's piety. An edict so honourable to Christianity deserved a place in the Theodosian Code, instead of the indirect mention of it, which seems to result from the comparison of the fifth and eighteenth titles of the ninth book. † Eusebius, in Vit. Constantin. l. 1, c. 40. The statue, or at least the cross and inscription, may be ascribed with more probability to the second, or even third, visit of Constantine to Rome. Immediately after the defeat of Maxentius, the minds of the senate and people were scarcely ripe for this public monument.

‡ Agnoscas regina libens mea signa necesse est ;
In quibus effigies *crucis* aut gemmata refulget
Aut longis solido ex auro præfertur in hastis.
Hoc signo invictus, transmissis Alpibus Ultor
Servitium solvit miserabile Constantinus

* * * * *
Christus *purpureum* gemmanti textus in auro
Signabat *Labarum*, clypeorum insignia Christus
Scripterat; ardebat summis *cruc* addita cristis.

Prudent. in Symmachum, l. 2. 464. 486.

§ The derivation and meaning of the word *Labarum* or *Laborum*, which is employed by Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, Prudentius, &c still remain totally unknown, in spite of the efforts of the critics, who have ineffectually tortured the Latin, Greek, Spanish, Celtic, Teutonic, Illyric, Armenian, &c. in search of an etymology. See Ducange, in Gloss. Med. et infim. Latinitat. sub voce *Labarum*, and Ducfroy, ad Cod. Theodos. tom. ii, p. 143. ¶ Euseb. in Vit. Constantin. l. 1,

the beam, was curiously inwrought with the images of the reigning monarch and his children. The summit of the pike supported a crown of gold, which inclosed the mysterious monogram, at once expressive of the figure of the cross, and the initial letters of the name of Christ.* The safety of the labarum was intrusted to fifty guards of approved valour and fidelity; their station was marked by honours and emoluments; and some fortunate accidents soon introduced an opinion, that as long as the guards of the labarum were engaged in the execution of their office, they were secure and invulnerable amidst the darts of the enemy. In the second civil war, Licinius felt and dreaded the power of this consecrated banner, the sight of which, in the distress of battle, animated the soldiers of Constantine with an invincible enthusiasm, and scattered terror and dismay through the ranks of the adverse legions.† The Christian emperors who respected the example of Constantine, displayed in all their military expeditions the standard of the cross; but when the degenerate successors of Theodosius had ceased to appear in person at the head of their armies, the labarum was deposited as a venerable but useless relic in the palace of Constantinople.‡ Its honours are still preserved on the medals of the Flavian family. Their grateful devotion has placed the monogram of Christ in the midst of the ensigus of Rome. The solemn epithets of,

c. 30, 31. Baronius (Annal. Eceles. A.D. 312, No. 26,) has engraved a representation of the Labarum.

* *Transversâ X literâ, summo capite circumflexo, Christum in sentis notat.* Cæcilius de M. P. C. 44. Cuper (ad M. P. in edit. Laetant. tom. ii, p. 500), and Baronius (A.D. 312, No. 25), have engraved from ancient monuments several specimens of these monograms, which became extremely fashionable in the Christian world.

Ⲡ or Ⲛ



† Euseb in Vit. Constantin. l. 2, c. 7—9. He introduces the labarum before the Italian expedition; but his narrative seems to indicate that it was never shown at the head of an army, till Constantine, above ten years afterwards, declared himself the enemy of Licinius, and the deliverer of the church.


‡ See Cod. Theod. l. 6, tit. 25. Sozomen, l. 1. c. 2. Theophan. Chronograph. p. 11. Theophanes lived towards the eighth century, almost five hundred years after Constantine. The modern Greeks were not inclined to display in the field the standard of the empire and of Christianity; and though they depended on every superstitious

Safety of the republic, Glory of the army, Restoration of public happiness, are equally applied to the religious and military trophies; and there is still extant a medal of the emperor Constantius, where the standard of the labarum is accompanied with these memorable words, "By this sign thou shalt conquer."*

II. In all occasions of danger or distress, it was the practice of the primitive Christians to fortify their minds and bodies by the sign of the cross, which they used in all their ecclesiastical rites, in all the daily occurrences of life, as an infallible preservative against every species of spiritual or temporal evil.† The authority of the church might alone have had sufficient weight to justify the devotion of Constantine, who, in the same prudent and gradual progress, acknowledged the truth, and assumed the symbol, of Christianity. But the testimony of a contemporary writer, who in a formal treatise has avenged the cause of religion, bestows on the piety of the emperor a more awful and sublime character. He affirms, with the most perfect confidence, that in the night which preceded the last battle against Maxentius, Constantine was admonished in a dream to inscribe the shields of his soldiers with the *celestial sign of God*, the sacred monogram of the name of Christ; that he executed the commands of heaven, and that his valour and obedience were rewarded by the decisive victory of the Milvian bridge. Some considerations might perhaps incline a sceptical mind to suspect the judgment or the veracity of the rhetorician whose pen, either from zeal or interest,

hope of *defence*, the promise of *victory* would have appeared too bold a fiction. * The abbé du Voisin, p. 103, &c. alleges several of these medals, and quotes a particular dissertation of a Jesuit, the père de Grainville, on this subject. [No genuine coins of Constantine have been found with Christian emblems. Eckhel (Num. Vet. 8, 84) rejects, as decidedly spurious, one preserved in the Museum of Pisa, on which they are shewn. The monogram on later coins have two forms

 and , the first of which resembles some on early tetradrachms of Athens. Coins of the Ptolemies also are inscribed with the Greek letters X P, the meaning of which is not known. Humphrey's Manual (p. 226, edit. Bohn) exhibits the monogram of Achaia, about 350 B.C.

, which approaches very nearly to the Christian emblem.—ED.]

† Tertullian, de Corona, c. 3. Athanasius, tom. i, p. 101. The learned jesuit, Petavius, (Dogmata Theolog. l. 15, c. 9, 10,) has collected many similar passages on the virtues of the cross, which in the last age

was devoted to the cause of the prevailing faction.* He appears to have published his deaths of the persecutors at Nicomedia, about three years after the Roman victory; but the interval of a thousand miles, and a thousand days, will allow an ample latitude for the invention of declaimers, the credulity of party, and the tacit approbation of the emperor himself, who might listen without indignation to a marvellous tale, which exalted his fame, and promoted his designs. In favour of Licinius, who still dissembled his animosity to the Christians, the same author has provided a similar vision, of a form of prayer, which was communicated by an angel, and repeated by the whole army before they engaged the legions of the tyrant Maximin. The frequent repetition of miracles serves to provoke, where it does not subdue, the reason of mankind;† but if the dream of Constantine is separately considered, it may be naturally explained either by the policy or the enthusiasm of the emperor. Whilst his anxiety for the approaching day, which must decide the fate of the empire, was suspended by a short and interrupted slumber, the venerable form of Christ, and the well-known symbol of his religion, might forcibly offer themselves to the active fancy of a prince who revered the name, and had perhaps secretly implored the power, of the God of the Christians. As readily might a consummate statesman indulge himself in the use of one of

embarrassed our Protestant disputants. [The early influence of such a notion caused the Greek translator of Matthew's Hebrew Gospel, to render *Tephillin* by *phylacteria*. (C. xxiii. v. 5.) By this, the prayer-signs of the Jews, which are strictly religious symbols, were assimilated to the talismans, which eastern nations imagined possessed the virtue of protecting them against diseases and calamities; and hence arose the still prevailing but mistaken idea, that these remembrancers of devotion were used as "amulets and charms."—ED.]

* Cæcilius, de M. P. c. 44. It is certain, that this historical declamation was composed and published, while Licinius, sovereign of the east, still preserved the friendship of Constantine, and of the Christians. Every reader of taste must perceive, that the style is of a very different and inferior character to that of Lactantius; and such indeed is the judgment of Le Clerc and Lardner. (Bibliothèque Ancienne et Moderne, tom. iii, p. 438. Credibility of the Gospel. &c. part 2, vol. vii, p. 94). Three arguments from the title of the book, and from the names of Donatus and Cæcilius, are produced by the advocates for Lactantius. (See the P. Lestocq, tom. ii, p. 46—60). Each of these proofs is singly weak and defective, but their concurrence has great weight. I have often fluctuated, and shall *tandem* follow the Colbert MS. in calling the author (whatever he was) Cæcilius. † Cæcilius, de M. P.

those military stratagems, one of those pious frauds, which Philip and Sertorius had employed with such art and effect.* The preternatural origin of dreams was universally admitted by the nations of antiquity, and a considerable part of the Gallic army was already prepared to place their confidence in the salutary sign of the Christian religion. The secret vision of Constantine could be disproved only by the event; and the intrepid hero who had passed the Alps and the Appennine, might view with careless despair the consequences of a defeat under the walls of Rome. The senate and people, exulting in their own deliverance from an odious tyrant, acknowledged that the victory of Constantine surpassed the powers of man, without daring to insinuate that it had been obtained by the protection of the *gods*. The triumphal arch, which was erected about three years after the event, proclaims in ambiguous language, that by the greatness of his own mind, and by an *instinct* or impulse of the Divinity, he had saved and avenged the Roman republic.† The Pagan orator, who had seized an earlier opportunity of celebrating the virtues of the conqueror, supposes that he alone enjoyed a secret and intimate commerce with the Supreme Being, who delegated the care of mortals to his subordinate deities; and thus assigns a very plausible reason why the subjects of Constantine should not presume to embrace the new religion of their sovereign.‡

III. The philosopher, who with calm suspicion examines the dreams and omens, the miracles and prodigies, of pro-

c. 46. There seems to be some reason in the observation of M. de Voltaire (*Œuvres*, tom. 14, p. 307,) who ascribes to the success of Constantine the superior fame of his labarum above the angel of Licinius. Yet even this angel is favourably entertained by Pagi, Tillemont, Fleury, &c. who are fond of increasing their stock of miracles.

* Besides these well-known examples, Tollius (Preface to Boileau's translation of Longinus) has discovered a vision of Antigonus, who assured his troops that he had seen a pentagon (the symbol of safety) with these words, "In this conquer." But Tollius has most inexcusably omitted to produce his authority; and his own character, literary as well as moral, is not free from reproach. (See *Chauffepié*, *Dictionnaire Critique*, tom. iv, p. 460.) Without insisting on the silence of Diodorus, Plutarch, Justin, &c. it may be observed that Polyænus, who in a separate chapter (l. 4, c. 6,) has collected nineteen military stratagems of Antigonus, is totally ignorant of this remarkable vision. † *Instinctu Divinitatis, mentis magnitudine*. The inscription on the triumphal arch of Constantine, which has been copied by Baronius, Gruter, &c. may still be perused by every curious traveller.

‡ *Habeas profecto, aliquid cum illa mente Divinâ secretum; quæ*

fane or even of ecclesiastical history, will probably conclude, that if the eyes of the spectators have sometimes been deceived by fraud, the understanding of the readers has much more frequently been insulted by fiction. Every event, or appearance, or accident, which seems to deviate from the ordinary course of nature, has been rashly ascribed to the immediate action of the Deity; and the astonished fancy of the multitude has sometimes given shape and colour, language and motion, to the fleeting but uncommon meteors of the air.* Nazarius and Eusebius are the two most celebrated orators, who, in studied panegyrics, have laboured to exalt the glory of Constantine. Nine years after the Roman victory, Nazarius† describes an army of divine warriors, who seemed to fall from the sky: he marks their beauty, their spirit, their gigantic forms, the stream of light which beamed from their celestial armour, their patience in suffering themselves to be heard as well as seen by mortals; and their declaration that they were sent, that they flew, to the assistance of the great Constantine. For the truth of this prodigy, the Pagan orator appeals to the whole Gallic nation, in whose presence he was then speaking; and seems to hope that the ancient apparitions‡ would now obtain credit from this recent and public event.

The Christian fable of Eusebius, which in the space of twenty-six years, might arise from the original dream, is cast in a much more correct and elegant mould. In one of the marches of Constantine, he is reported to have seen with his own eyes the luminous trophy of the cross, placed above the meridian sun, and inscribed with the following words: "By this, conquer." This amazing object in the sky astonished the whole army, as well as the emperor himself, who was yet undetermined in the choice of a religion;

delegatâ nostrâ Diis Minoribus curâ uni se tibi dignatur ostendere. Paneyr. Vet. 9. 2.

* M. Freret (Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. iv. p. 411--437,) explains, by physical causes, many of the prodigies of antiquity; and Fabricius, who is abused by both parties, vainly tries to introduce the celestial cross of Constantine among the solar halos. Bibliothec. Græc. tom. iv, p. 8--39.

† Nazarius inter Paneyr. Vet. 10. 14, 15. It is unnecessary to name the moderns, whose undistinguishing and ravenous appetite has swallowed even the Pagan bait of Nazarius. ‡ The apparitions of

Castor and Pollux, particularly to announce the Macedonian victory, are attested by historians and public monuments. See Cicero de Natura Deorum, ii. 2, iii. 5, 6. Florus, ii. 12. Valerius Maximus, l. 1, §. 8. No. 1. Yet the most recent of these miracles is omitted, and indi-

but his astonishment was converted into faith by the vision of the ensuing night. Christ appeared before his eyes; and displaying the same celestial sign of the cross, he directed Constantine to frame a similar standard, and to march, with an assurance of victory, against Maxentius and all his enemies.* The learned bishop of Cæsarea appears to be sensible, that the recent discovery of this marvellous anecdote would excite some surprise and distrust among the most pious of his readers. Yet, instead of ascertaining the precise circumstances of time and place, which always serve to detect falsehood, or establish truth; † instead of collecting and recording the evidence of so many living witnesses, who must have been spectators of this stupendous miracle; ‡ Eusebius contents himself with alleging a very singular testimony—that of the deceased Constantine, who, many years after the event, in the freedom of conversation, had related to him this extraordinary incident of his own life, and had attested the truth of it by a solemn oath. The prudence and gratitude of the learned prelate forbade him to suspect the veracity of his victorious master; but he plainly intimates, that, in a fact of such a nature, he should have refused his assent to any meaner authority. This motive of credibility could not survive the power of the Flavian family; and the celestial sign, which the infidels might afterwards deride, § was disregarded by the Christians of the age which immediately followed the conversion of Constantine. ¶ But the Catholic church, both of the east and of the west, has adopted a prodigy, which favours, or

rectly denied by Livy (45. 1). * Eusebius, L 1, c. 23—30. The silence of the same Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, is deeply felt by those advocates for the miracle who are not absolutely callous.

† The narrative of Constantine seems to indicate, that he saw the cross in the sky before he passed the Alps against Maxentius. The scene has been fixed by provincial vanity at Treves, Besançon, &c. See Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, p. 573. ‡ The pious Tillemont (Mém. Eccles. tom. vii, p. 1317,) rejects with a sigh the useful acts of Artemius, a veteran and a martyr, who attests as an eye-witness the vision of Constantine. § Gelasius Cyzic. in Act. Concil. Nicen. l. i, c. 4. ¶ The advocates for the vision are unable to produce a single testimony from the fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, who, in their voluminous writings, repeatedly celebrate the triumph of the church and of Constantine. As these venerable men had not any dislike to a miracle, we may suspect (and the suspicion is confirmed by the ignorance of Jerome) that they were all unacquainted with the life of Constantine by Eusebius. This tract was recovered by the dili-

seems to favour, the popular worship of the cross. The vision of Constantine maintained an honourable place in the legend of superstition, till the bold and sagacious spirit of criticism presumed to depreciate the triumph, and to arraign the truth, of the first Christian emperor.*

The Protestant and philosophic readers of the present age, will incline to believe, that in the account of his own conversion, Constantine attested a wilful falsehood by a solemn and deliberate perjury. They may not hesitate to pronounce, that, in the choice of a religion, his mind was determined only by a sense of interest; and that (according to the expression of a profane poet†) he used the altars of the church as a convenient footstool to the throne of the empire. A conclusion so harsh and so absolute is not, however, warranted by our knowledge of human nature, of Constantine, or of Christianity. In an age of religious fervour, the most artful statesmen are observed to feel some part of the enthusiasm which they inspire; and the most orthodox saints assume the dangerous privilege of defending the cause of truth by the arms of deceit and falsehood. Personal interest is often the standard of our belief, as well as of our practice; and the same motives of temporal advantage which might influence the public conduct and professions of Constantine, would insensibly dispose his mind to embrace a religion so propitious to his fame and fortunes. His vanity was gratified by the flattering assurance that *he* had been chosen by heaven to reign over the earth; success had justified his divine title to the throne, and that title was founded on the truth of the Christian revelation. As real virtue is sometimes excited by undeserved applause, the

gence of those who translated or continued his Ecclesiastical History, and who have represented in various colours the vision of the cross.

* Godefroy was the first who, in the year 1643 (Not. ad Philostorgium, l. 1, c. 6, p. 16,) expressed any doubt of a miracle, which had been supported with equal zeal by cardinal Baronius, and the Centuriators of Magdeburg. Since that time, many of the Protestant critics have inclined towards doubt and disbelief. The objections are urged with great force, by M. Chauffepié (Dictionnaire Critique, tom. iv, p. 6—11), and, in the year 1774, a doctor of Sorbonne, the abbé du Voisin, published an Apology, which deserves the praise of learning and moderation.

† Lors Constantin dit ces propres paroles :
 J'ai renversé le culte des idoles :
 Sur les débris de leurs temples fumans
 Au Dieu du ciel j'ai prodigué l'encens.

specious piety of Constantine, if at first it was only specious, might gradually, by the influence of praise, of habit, and of example, be matured into serious faith and fervent devotion. The bishops and teachers of the new sect, whose dress and manners had not qualified them for the residence of a court, were admitted to the imperial table; they accompanied the monarch in his expeditions; and the ascendancy which one of them, an Egyptian or a Spaniard,* acquired over his mind, was imputed by the Pagans to the effect of magic.† Lactantius, who has adorned the precepts of the gospel with the eloquence of Cicero;‡ and Eusebius, who has consecrated the learning, and philosophy of the Greeks to the service of religion,§ were both received into the friendship and familiarity of their sovereign; and those able masters of controversy could patiently watch the soft and yielding moments of persuasion, and dexterously apply the arguments which were the best adapted to his character and understanding. Whatever advantages might be derived from the acquisition of an imperial proselyte, he was distinguished by the splendour of his purple, rather than by the superiority of wisdom or virtue, from the many thousands of his subjects who had embraced the doctrines of Chris-

Mais tous mes soins pour sa grandeur suprême
N'eurent jamais d'autre objet que moi-même;
Les saints autels n'étoient à mes regards
Qu'un marche-pié du trône des Césars.
L'ambition, la fureur, les délices
Etoient mes Dieux, avoient mes sacrifices.
L'or des Chrétiens, leurs intrigues, leur sang,
Ont cimenté ma fortune et mon rang.

The poem which contains these lines may be read with pleasure, but cannot be named with decency. * This favourite was probably

the great Osius, bishop of Cordova, who preferred the pastoral care of the whole church to the government of a particular diocese. His character is magnificently, though concisely, expressed by Athanasius (tom. i, p. 703). See Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.* tom. vii, p. 524—561. Osius was accused, perhaps unjustly, of retiring from court with a very ample fortune. † See Eusebius (in *Vit. Constant.* passim) and Zosimus, l. 2, p. 104. ‡ The Christianity of Lactantius was of a moral, rather than of a mysterious cast. “*Erāt pæne rudis* (says the orthodox Bull) *disciplinæ Christianæ, et in rhetoricâ melius quam in theologiâ versatus.*” *Defensio Fidei Nicenæ*, sect. 2. c. 14.

§ Fabricius, with his usual diligence, has collected a list of between three and four hundred authors quoted in the *Evangelical Preparation of Eusebius*. See *Bibliothec. Græc.* l. 5, c. 4. tom. vi, p. 37—56.

tianity. Nor can it be deemed incredible, that the mind of an unlettered soldier should have yielded to the weight of evidence, which, in a more enlightened age, has satisfied or subdued the reason of a Grotius, a Pascal, or a Locke. In the midst of the incessant labours of his great office, this soldier employed, or affected to employ, the hours of the night in the diligent study of the Scriptures, and the composition of theological discourses; which he afterwards pronounced in the presence of a numerous and applauding audience. In a very long discourse, which is still extant, the royal preacher expatiates on the various proofs of religion; but he dwells with peculiar complacency on the Sybilline verses,* and the fourth eclogue of Virgil.† Forty years before the birth of Christ, the Mantuan bard, as if inspired by the celestial muse of Isaiah, had celebrated, with all the pomp of oriental metaphor, the return of the virgin, the fall of the serpent, the approaching birth of a godlike child, the offspring of the great Jupiter, who should expiate the guilt of human kind, and govern the peaceful universe with the virtues of his father; the rise and appearance of a heavenly race, a primitive nation throughout the world; and the gradual restoration of the innocence and felicity of the golden age. The poet was perhaps unconscious of the secret sense and object of these sublime predictions, which have been so unworthily applied to the infant son of a consul, or a triumvir;‡ but if a more splendid, and indeed specious, interpretation of the fourth eclogue contributed to the conversion of the first Christian emperor, Virgil may deserve to be ranked among the most successful missionaries of the gospel.§

* See Constantin. Orat. ad Sanctos, c. 19, 20. He chiefly depends on a mysterious acrostic, composed in the sixth age after the deluge by the Erythraean Sybil, and translated by Cicero into Latin. The initial letters of the thirty-four Greek verses form this prophetic sentence—*Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour of the World.*

† In his paraphrase of Virgil, the emperor has frequently assisted and improved the literal sense of the Latin text. See Blondel des Sybilles, l. 1, c. 14—16. ‡ The different claims of an elder and younger son of Pollio, of Julia, of Drusus, of Marcellus, are found to be incompatible with chronology, history, and the good sense of Virgil.

§ See Lowth de Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum, Prælect. 21, p. 289—293. In the examination of the fourth eclogue, the respectable bishop of London has displayed learning, taste, ingenuity, and a temperate enthusiasm, which exalts his fancy without degrading his judgment.

The awful mysteries of the Christian faith and worship were concealed from the eyes of strangers, and even of catechumens, with an affected secrecy, which served to excite their wonder and curiosity.* But the severe rules of discipline which the prudence of the bishops had instituted, were relaxed by the same prudence in favour of an imperial proselyte, whom it was so important to allure, by every gentle condescension, into the pale of the church; and Constantine was permitted, at least by a tacit dispensation, to enjoy *most* of the privileges, before he had contracted *any* of the obligations, of a Christian. Instead of retiring from the congregation, when the voice of the deacon dismissed the profane multitude, he prayed with the faithful, disputed with the bishops, preached on the most sublime and intricate subjects of theology, celebrated with sacred rites the vigil of Easter, and publicly declared himself not only a partaker, but, in some measure, a priest and hierophant of the Christian mysteries.† The pride of Constantine might assume, and his services had deserved, some extraordinary distinction; an ill-timed rigour might have blasted the unripened fruits of his conversion; and if the doors of the church had been strictly closed against a prince who had deserted the altars of the gods, the master of the empire would have been left destitute of any form of religious worship. In his last visit to Rome, he piously disclaimed and insulted the superstition of his ancestors, by refusing to lead the military procession of the equestrian order, and to offer the public vows to the Jupiter of the Capitoline hill.‡ Many years before his baptism and death, Constantine had proclaimed to the world, that neither his person nor his image should ever more be seen within the walls of an idolatrous temple; while he distributed through the pro-

* The distinction between the public and the secret parts of divine service, the *missa catechumenorum*, and the *missa fidelium*, and the mysterious veil which piety or policy had cast over the latter, are very judiciously explained by Thiers, *Exposition du Saint Sacrement*, l. 1, c. 8—12, p. 59—91, but as on this subject, the Papists may reasonably be suspected, a Protestant reader will depend with more confidence on the learned Bingham. (*Antiquities*, l. 10, c. 5.)

† See Eusebius in *Vit. Const.* l. 4, c. 15—22, and the whole tenor of Constantine's sermon. The faith and devotion of the emperor have furnished Baronius with a specious argument in favour of his early baptism.

‡ *Zosimus*, l. 2, p. 105.

vinces a variety of medals and pictures, which represented the emperor in an humble and suppliant posture of Christian devotion.*

The pride of Constantine, who refused the privileges of a catechumen, cannot easily be explained or excused; but the delay of his baptism may be justified by the maxims and the practice of ecclesiastical antiquity. The sacrament of baptism † was regularly administered by the bishop himself, with his assistant clergy, in the cathedral church of the diocese, during the fifty days between the solemn festivals of Easter and Pentecost; and this holy term admitted a numerous band of infants and adult persons into the bosom of the church. The discretion of parents often suspended the baptism of their children till they could understand the obligations which they contracted; the severity of ancient bishops exacted from the new converts a noviciate of two or three years; and the catechumens themselves, from different motives of a temporal or a spiritual nature, were seldom impatient to assume the character of perfect and initiated Christians. The sacrament of baptism was supposed to contain a full and absolute expiation of sin; and the soul was instantly restored to its original purity, and entitled to the promise of eternal salvation. Among the proselytes of Christianity, there were many who judged it imprudent to precipitate a salutary rite, which could not be repeated; to throw away an inestimable privilege, which could never be recovered. By the delay of their baptism, they could venture freely to indulge their passions in the enjoyments of this world, while they still retained in their own hands the means of a sure and easy absolution.‡ The sublime theory

* Eusebius in *Vit. Constant.* l. 4, c. 15, 16. † The theory and practice of antiquity with regard to the sacrament of baptism, have been copiously explained by Dom Chardon, *Hist. des Sacremens*, tom. i, p. 3—405. Dom Martenne, *de Ritibus Ecclesiæ Antiquis*, tom. i, and by Bingham, in the tenth and eleventh books of his *Christian Antiquities*. One circumstance may be observed, in which the modern churches have materially departed from the ancient custom. The sacrament of baptism (even when it was administered to infants) was immediately followed by confirmation and the holy communion. ‡ The fathers, who censured this criminal delay, could not deny the certain and victorious efficacy even of a death-bed baptism. The ingenious rhetoric of Chrysostom could find only three arguments against these prudent Christians. 1. That we should love and pursue virtue for her own sake, and not merely for the reward. 2. That we may be surprised by

of the gospel had made a much fainter impression on the heart, than on the understanding, of Constantine himself. He pursued the great object of his ambition through the dark and bloody paths of war and policy; and, after the victory, he abandoned himself, without moderation, to the abuse of his fortune. Instead of asserting his just superiority above the imperfect heroism and profane philosophy of Trajan and the Antonines, the mature age of Constantine forfeited the reputation which he had acquired in his youth. As he gradually advanced in the knowledge of truth, he proportionally declined in the practice of virtue; and the same year of his reign in which he convened the council of Nice, was polluted by the execution, or rather murder, of his eldest son. This date is alone sufficient to refute the ignorant and malicious suggestions of Zosimus,* who affirms that, after the death of Crispus, the remorse of his father accepted from the ministers of Christianity the expiation which he had vainly solicited from the Pagan pontiffs. At the time of the death of Crispus, the emperor could no longer hesitate in the choice of religion; he could no longer be ignorant that the church was possessed of an infallible remedy, though he chose to defer the application of it, till the approach of death had removed the temptation and danger of a relapse. The bishops, whom he summoned in his last illness to the palace of Nicomedia, were edified by the fervour with which he requested and received the sacrament of baptism, by the solemn protestation that the remainder of his life should be worthy of a disciple of Christ, and by his humble refusal to wear the imperial purple after he had been clothed in the white garment of a neophyte. The example and reputation of Constantine seemed to

death without an opportunity of baptism. 3. That although we shall be placed in heaven, we shall only twinkle like little stars, when compared to the suns of righteousness who have run their appointed course with labour, with success, and with glory. Chrysostom in Epist. ad Hebræos, Homil. 13, apud Chardon. Hist. des Sacremens, tom. i, p. 49. I believe that this delay of baptism, though attended with the most pernicious consequences, was never condemned by any general or provincial council, or by any public act or declaration of the church. The zeal of the bishops was easily kindled on much slighter occasions. * Zosimus, l. 2, p. 104. For this disingenuous falsehood he has deserved and experienced the harshest treatment from all the ecclesiastical writers, except cardinal Baronius, (A.D. 324.

countenance the delay of baptism.* Future tyrants were encouraged to believe, that the innocent blood which they might shed in a long reign would instantly be washed away in the waters of regeneration; and the abuse of religion dangerously undermined the foundations of moral virtue.

The gratitude of the church has exalted the virtues and excused the failings of a generous patron, who seated Christianity on the throne of the Roman world; and the Greeks, who celebrate the festival of the imperial saint, seldom mention the name of Constantine without adding the title of "equal to the apostles."† Such a comparison, if it allude to the character of those divine missionaries, must be imputed to the extravagance of impious flattery. But if the parallel be confined to the extent and number of their evangelic victories, the success of Constantine might perhaps equal that of the apostles themselves. By the edicts of toleration, he removed the temporal disadvantages which had hitherto retarded the progress of Christianity; and its active and numerous ministers received a free permission, a liberal encouragement, to recommend the salutary truths of revelation by every argument which could affect the reason or piety of mankind. The exact balance of the two religions continued but a moment; and the piercing eye of ambition and avarice soon discovered that the profession of Christianity might contribute to the interest of the present as well as of a future life.‡ The hopes of wealth and honours, the example of an emperor, his exhortations, his irresistible smiles, diffused conviction among the venal and obsequious crowds which usually fill the apartments of a palace. The cities, which signalized a forward zeal by the voluntary destruction of their temples, were distinguished by municipal privileges, and rewarded with popular donatives; and the new capital of the east gloried in the singular advantage, that Constantinople was

No. 15—28), who had occasion to employ the infidel on a particular service against the Arian Eusebius. * Eusebius, l. 4, c. 61—63.

The bishop of Cesarea supposes the salvation of Constantine with the most perfect confidence. † See Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 429. The Greeks, the Russians, and, in the darker ages, the Latins themselves, have been desirous of placing Constantine in the catalogue of saints.

‡ See the third and fourth books of his life. He was accustomed to say, that whether Christ was preached in pretence, or in truth, he should still rejoice (l. 3, c. 58).

never profaned by the worship of idols.* As the lower ranks of society are governed by imitation, the conversion of those who possessed any eminence of birth, of power, or of riches, was soon followed by dependent multitudes.† The salvation of the common people was purchased at an easy rate, if it be true, that, in one year, twelve thousand men were baptized at Rome, besides a proportionable number of women and children; and that a white garment, with twenty pieces of gold, had been promised by the emperor to every convert.‡ The powerful influence of Constantine was not circumscribed by the narrow limits of his life, or of his dominions. The education which he bestowed on his sons and nephews, secured to the empire a race of princes, whose faith was still more lively and sincere, as they imbibed, in their earliest infancy, the spirit, or at least the doctrine of Christianity. War and commerce had spread the knowledge of the gospel beyond the confines of the Roman provinces; and the barbarians, who had disdained an humble and proscribed sect, soon learned to esteem a religion which had been so lately embraced by the greatest monarch and the most civilized nation of the globe.§ The Goths and Germans, who enlisted under the

* M. de Tillemont (*Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv, p. 374. 616,) has defended, with strength and spirit, the virgin purity of Constantinople against some malevolent insinuations of the Pagan Zosimus.

† The author of the *Histoire Politique et Philosophique des deux Indes* (tom. i, p. 9,) condemns a law of Constantine, which gave freedom to all the slaves who should embrace Christianity. The emperor did indeed publish a law which restrained the Jews from circumcising, perhaps from keeping, any Christian slaves. (See Euseb. in *Vit. Constant. l. 4, c. 27*, and *Cod. Theod. l. 16, tit. 9*, with Godefroy's *Commentary*, tom. vi, p. 247.) But this imperfect exception related only to the Jews; and the great body of slaves, who were the property of Christian or Pagan masters, could not improve their temporal condition by changing their religion. I am ignorant by what guides the abbé Raynal was deceived; as the total absence of quotations is the unpardonable blemish of his entertaining history. ‡ See *Acta Sti. Silvestri*, and *Hist. Eccles. Nicephor. Callist. l. 7, c. 34*. ap *Baronium Annal. Eccles. A.D. 324, No. 67. 74*. Such evidence is contemptible enough; but these circumstances are in themselves so probable, that the learned Dr. Howell (*History of the World*, vol. iii, p. 14,) has not scrupled to adopt them.

§ The conversion of the barbarians under the reign of Constantine is celebrated by the ecclesiastical historians. (See *Sozomen, l. 2, c. 6*. and *Theodoret, l. 1, c. 23, 24*.) But Rufinus, the Latin translator of

standard of Rome, revered the cross which glittered at the head of the legions, and their fierce countrymen received at the same time the lessons of faith and of humanity. The kings of Iberia and Armenia worshipped the god of their protector; and their subjects, who have invariably preserved the name of Christians, soon formed a sacred and perpetual connexion with their Roman brethren. The Christians of Persia were suspected, in time of war, of preferring their religion to their country; but as long as peace subsisted between the two empires, the persecuting spirit of the magi was effectually restrained by the interposition of Constantine.* The rays of the gospel illuminated the coast of India. The colonies of Jews, who had penetrated into Arabia and Ethiopia,† opposed the progress of Christianity; but the labour of the missionaries was in some measure facilitated by a previous knowledge of the Mosaic revelation; and Abyssinia still reveres the memory of Frumentius, who, in the time of Constantine, devoted his life to the conversion of those sequestered regions. Under the reign of his son Constantius, Theophilus,‡ who was himself of Indian extraction, was invested with the double character of ambassador and bishop. He embarked on the Red Sea with two hundred horses of the purest breed of Cappadocia, which were sent by the emperor to the prince of the Sabæans, or Homerites. Theophilus was

Eusebius, deserves to be considered as an original authority. His information was curiously collected from one of the companions of the apostle of Æthiopia, and from Bacurius, an Iberian prince, who was count of the domestics. Father Mamachi has given an ample compilation on the progress of Christianity, in the first and second volumes of his great but imperfect work. * See in Eusebius (in Vit. Constant. l. 4, c. 9.) the pressing and pathetic epistle of Constantine in favour of his Christian brethren of Persia. † See Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, tom. vii, p. 182; tom. viii, p. 333; tom. ix, p. 810. The curious diligence of this writer pursues the Jewish exiles to the extremities of the globe. ‡ Theophilus had been given in his infancy as a hostage by his countrymen of the isle of Diva, and was educated by the Romans in learning and piety. The Maldives, of which Male, or *Diva*, may be the capital, are a cluster of one thousand nine hundred, or two thousand, minute islands in the Indian ocean. The ancients were imperfectly acquainted with the Maldives; but they are described in the two Mahometan travellers of the ninth century, published by Renaudot. *Geograph. Nubiensis*, p. 30, 31. D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 704. *Hist. Generale des Voyages*, tom. viii.

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intrusted with many other useful or curious presents, which might raise the admiration, and conciliate the friendship, of the barbarians; and he successfully employed several years in a pastoral visit to the churches of the torrid zone.*

The irresistible power of the Roman emperors was displayed in the important and dangerous change of the national religion. The terrors of a military force silenced the faint and unsupported murmurs of the Pagans, and there was reason to expect, that the cheerful submission of the Christian clergy, as well as people, would be the result of conscience and gratitude. It was long since established, as a fundamental maxim of the Roman constitution, that every rank of citizens was alike subject to the laws, and that the care of religion was the right as well as the duty of the civil magistrate. Constantine and his successors could not easily persuade themselves that they had forfeited, by their conversion, any branch of their imperial prerogatives, or that they were incapable of giving laws to a religion which they had protected and embraced. The emperors still continued to exercise a supreme jurisdiction over the ecclesiastical order; and the sixteenth book of the Theodosian Code represents, under a variety of titles, the authority which they assumed in the government of the Catholic church.

But the distinction of the spiritual and temporal powers,† which had never been imposed on the free spirit of Greece and Rome, was introduced and confirmed by the legal establishment of Christianity. The office of supreme pontiff, which, from the time of Numa to that of Augustus, had always been exercised by one of the most eminent of the senators, was at length united to the imperial dignity. The first magistrate of the state, as often as he was prompted by superstition or policy, performed with his own hands the sacerdotal functions;‡ nor was there any order of priests,

* Philostorgius, l. 3, c. 4—6, with Godefroy's learned observations. The historical narrative is soon lost in an inquiry concerning the seat of paradise, strange monsters, &c. † See the epistle of Osius, ap. Athanasium, vol. i, p. 840. The public remonstrance which Osius was forced to address to the son, contained the same principles of ecclesiastical and civil government which he had secretly instilled into the mind of the father. ‡ M. de la Bastie (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. xv, p. 38—61,) has evidently proved, that Augustus and his successors exercised in person all the sacred functions of Pon-

either at Rome or in the provinces, who claimed a more sacred character among men, or a more intimate communication with the gods. But in the Christian church, which intrusts the service of the altar to a perpetual succession of consecrated ministers, the monarch, whose spiritual rank is less honourable than that of the meanest deacon, was seated below the rails of the sanctuary, and confounded with the rest of the faithful multitude.* The emperor might be saluted as the father of his people, but he owed a filial duty and reverence to the fathers of the church; and the same marks of respect which Constantine had paid to the persons of saints and confessors, were soon exacted by the pride of the episcopal order.† A secret conflict between the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions embarrassed the operations of the Roman government; and a pious emperor was alarmed by the guilt and danger of touching with a profane hand the ark of the covenant. The separation of men into the two orders of the clergy and of the laity was, indeed, familiar to many nations of antiquity; and the priests of India, of Persia, of Assyria, of Judea, of Æthiopia, of Egypt, and of Gaul, derived from a celestial origin the temporal power and possessions which they had acquired. These venerable institutions had gradually assimilated themselves to the manners and government of their respective countries:‡ but the opposition or contempt of the civil power served to cement the discipline of the primitive church. The Christians had been obliged to elect their own magistrates, to raise and distribute a peculiar revenue,

* Maximus, or high-priest of the Roman empire. * Something of a contrary practice had insensibly prevailed in the church of Constantinople; but the rigid Ambrose commanded Theodosius to retire below the rails, and taught him to know the difference between a king and a priest. See Theodoret, l. 5, c. 18. † At the table of the emperor Maximus, Martin, bishop of Tours, received the cup from an attendant, and gave it to the presbyter, his companion, before he allowed the emperor to drink; the empress waited on Martin at table. Sulpicius Severus, in Vit. Sti Martin. c. 23, and Dialogue, 2. 7. Yet it may be doubted, whether these extraordinary compliments were paid to the bishop or the saint. The honours usually granted to the former character may be seen in Bingham's Antiquities, l. 2, c. 9, and Vales. ad Theodoret, l. 4, c. 6. See the haughty ceremonial which Leontius, bishop of Tripoli, imposed on the empress. Tillemont, Hist. des Empe-reurs, tom. iv, p. 754. (Patres Apostol. tom. ii, p. 179.) ‡ Plutarch, in his treatise of Isis and Osiris, informs us, that the kings of Egypt,

and to regulate the internal policy of their republic, by a code of laws, which were ratified by the consent of the people, and the practice of three hundred years. When Constantine embraced the faith of the Christians, he seemed to contract a perpetual alliance with a distinct and independent society; and the privileges granted or confirmed by that emperor, or by his successors, were accepted not as the precarious favours of the court, but as the just and inalienable rights of the ecclesiastical order.

The Catholic church was administered by the spiritual and legal jurisdiction of eighteen hundred bishops;* of whom one thousand were seated in the Greek, and eight hundred in the Latin, provinces of the empire. The extent and boundaries of their respective dioceses had been variously and accidentally decided by the zeal and success of the first missionaries, by the wishes of the people, and by the propagation of the gospel. Episcopal churches were closely planted along the banks of the Nile, on the sea-coast of Africa, in the proconsular Asia, and through the southern provinces of Italy. The bishops of Gaul and Spain, of Thraee and Pontus, reigned over an ample territory, and delegated their rural suffragans to execute the subordinate duties of the pastoral office.† A Christian diocese might be spread over a province, or reduced to a village; but all the bishops possessed an equal and indelible character: they all derived the same powers and privileges from the apostles, from the people, and from the laws. While the *civil* and *military* professions were separated by the policy of Constantine, a new and perpetual order of *ecclesiastical* ministers, always respectable, sometimes dan-

wno were not already priests, were initiated, after their election, into the sacerdotal order.

* The numbers are not ascertained by any ancient writer, or original catalogue; for the partial lists of the eastern churches are comparatively modern. The patient diligence of Charles à S^{to} Paolo, of Luke Holstenius, and of Bingham, has laboriously investigated all the episcopal sees of the Catholic church, which was almost commensurate with the Roman empire. The ninth book of the *Christian Antiquities* is a very accurate map of ecclesiastical geography.

† On the subject of rural bishops, or *Chorepiscopi*, who voted in synods, and conferred the minor orders, see Thomassin, *Discipline de l'Eglise*, tom. i, p. 447, &c. and Chardon, *Hist. des Sacremens*, tom. v, p. 395, &c. They do not appear till the fourth century; and, his equivocal character, which had excited the jealousy of the pre-

gerous, was established in the church and state. The important review of their station and attributes may be distributed under the following heads: I. Popular election; II. Ordination of the clergy; III. Property; IV. Civil jurisdiction; V. Spiritual censures; VI. Exercise of public oratory; VII. Privilege of legislative assemblies.

I. The freedom of elections subsisted long after the legal establishment of Christianity;* and the subjects of Rome enjoyed in the church the privilege which they had lost in the republic, of choosing the magistrates whom they were bound to obey. As soon as a bishop had closed his eyes, the metropolitan issued a commission to one of his suffragans to administer the vacant see, and prepare, within a limited time, the future election. The right of voting was vested in the inferior clergy, who were best qualified to judge of the merit of the candidates; in the senators or nobles of the city, all those who were distinguished by their rank or property; and finally, in the whole body of the people, who, on the appointed day, flocked in multitudes from the most remote parts of the diocese,† and sometimes

lates, was abolished before the end of the tenth, both in the east and the west. * Thomassin (*Discipline de l'Eglise*, tom. ii, l. 2, c. 1—8, p. 673—721,) has copiously treated of the election of bishops during the five first centuries, both in the east and in the west; but he shews a very partial bias in favour of the episcopal aristocracy. Bingham (l. 4, c. 2) is moderate; and Chardon (*Hist. des Sacremens*, tom. v, p. 108—128) is very clear and concise. [This freedom of election was never very extensive, and soon ceased. In the third century, the appointment of deacons was already taken from the communities at large and vested in their bishops. Although Cyprian's letters (see No. 58) seem to indicate, that in his time no presbyter was elected without the consent of the community; still such election was far from being perfectly free. The bishop nominated to the parishioners the candidate of his choice, and they were at liberty to object to him, if they were dissatisfied with his conduct or morals. This appears from No. 33, in the same series of Epistles. But even this privilege was lost by about the middle of the fourth century.—GUIZOT.] [The course of proceeding, pointed out by M. Guizot in this note, relates only to the election of presbyters, and has no immediate connection with that of bishops, which is the subject of Gibbon's observations. It illustrates, however, the influence which these gradually acquired in appointing the inferior clergy, by means of which, they of course operated indirectly on the choice of those who were selected to fill vacancies in their own ranks.—ED.] † *Incredibilis multitudo, non solum ex eo oppido (Tours), sed etiam ex vicinis urbibus ad suffragia*

silenced, by their tumultuous acclamations, the voice of reason and the laws of discipline. These acclamations might accidentally fix on the head of the most deserving competitor, of some ancient presbyter, some holy monk, or some layman, conspicuous for his zeal and piety. But the episcopal chair was solicited, especially in the great and opulent cities of the empire, as a temporal rather than as a spiritual dignity. The interested views, the selfish and angry passions, the arts of perfidy and dissimulation, the secret corruption, the open and even bloody violence which had formerly disgraced the freedom of election in the commonwealths of Greece and Rome, too often influenced the choice of the successors of the apostles. While one of the candidates boasted the honours of his family, a second allured his judges by the delicacies of a plentiful table, and a third, more guilty than his rivals, offered to share the plunder of the church among the accomplices of his sacrilegious hopes.* The civil as well as ecclesiastical laws attempted to exclude the populace from this solemn and important transaction. The canons of ancient discipline, by requiring several episcopal qualifications of age, station, &c., restrained in some measure the indiscriminate caprice of the electors. The authority of the provincial bishops, who were assembled in the vacant church to consecrate the choice of the people, was interposed to moderate their passions, and to correct their mistakes. The bishops could refuse to ordain an unworthy candidate; and the rage of contending factions sometimes accepted their impartial mediation. The submission, or the resistance, of the clergy and people, on various occasions, afforded different precedents, which were insensibly converted into positive laws and provincial customs;† but it was everywhere admitted, as a fundamental maxim of religious policy, that no bishop could be imposed on an orthodox church, without the consent of its members. The emperors, as the guardians of

ferenda convenerat, &c. Sulpicius Severus, in vit. Martin. c. 7. The council of Laodicea (canon 13) prohibits mobs and tumults; and Justinian confines the right of election to the nobility. Novell. 123. 1.

* The epistles of Sidonius Apollinaris (4. 25. 7. 5—9,) exhibit some of the scandals of the Gallican church; and Gaul was less polished and less corrupt than the east. † A compromise was sometimes introduced by law or by consent; either the bishops or the people

the public peace, and as the first citizens of Rome and Constantinople, might effectually declare their wishes in the choice of a primate; but those absolute monarchs respected the freedom of ecclesiastical elections; and while they distributed and resumed the honours of the state and army, they allowed eighteen hundred perpetual magistrates to receive their important offices from the free suffrages of the people.* It was agreeable to the dictates of justice, that these magistrates should not desert an honourable station from which they could not be removed; but the wisdom of councils endeavoured, without much success, to enforce the residence, and to prevent the translation, of bishops. The discipline of the west was indeed less relaxed than that of the east; but the same passions which made those regulations necessary rendered them ineffectual. The reproaches which angry prelates have so vehemently urged against each other, serve only to expose their common guilt, and their mutual indiscretion.

II. The bishops alone possessed the faculty of *spiritual* generation; and this extraordinary privilege might compensate, in some degree, for the painful celibacy† which was imposed as a virtue, as a duty, and at length as a positive obligation. The religions of antiquity, which established a separate order of priests, dedicated a holy race, a tribe or family, to the perpetual service of the gods.‡ Such institutions were formed for possession, rather than

chose one of the three candidates who had been named by the other party.

* All the examples quoted by Thomassin (*Discipline de l'Eglise*, tom. ii, l. 2, c. 6, p. 704—714,) appear to be extraordinary acts of power, and even of oppression. The confirmation of the bishop of Alexandria is mentioned by Philostorgius as a more regular proceeding. (*Hist. Eccles.* l. 2. 11.)

† The celibacy of the clergy during the first five or six centuries, is a subject of discipline, and indeed of controversy, which has been very diligently examined. See in particular Thomassin, *Discipline de l'Eglise*, tom. i, l. 2, c. 60, 61, p. 886—902, and Bingham's *Antiquities*, l. 4, c. 5. By each of these learned but partial critics, one half of the truth is produced, and the other is concealed.

‡ Diodorus Siculus attests and approves the hereditary succession of the priesthood among the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Indians. (l. 1, p. 84; l. 2, p. 142—153, ed. Wesseling). The magi are described by Ammianus as a very numerous family: "Per sæcula multa ad presens unâ eademque prosapiâ multitudo creata. Deorum cultibus dedicata. (23. 6.) Ausonius celebrates the *Stirps Druidærum* (*De Professorib.* Burdigal. 4.) but we may infer from the remark of

conquest. The children of the priests enjoyed, with proud and indolent security, their sacred inheritance; and the fiery spirit of enthusiasm was abated by the cares, the pleasures, and the endearments of domestic life. But the Christian sanctuary was open to every ambitious candidate who aspired to its heavenly promises, or temporal possessions. The office of priests, like that of soldiers or magistrates, was strenuously exercised by those men whose temper and abilities had prompted them to embrace the ecclesiastical profession, or who had been selected by a discerning bishop as the best qualified to promote the glory and interest of the church. The bishops* (till the abuse was restrained by the prudence of the laws) might constrain the reluctant, and protect the distressed; and the imposition of hands for ever bestowed some of the most valuable privileges of civil society. The whole body of the Catholic clergy, more numerous perhaps than the legions, was exempted, by the emperors, from all service, private or public, all municipal offices, and all personal taxes and contributions, which pressed on their fellow-citizens with intolerable weight: and the duties of their holy profession were accepted as a full discharge of their obligations to the republic.† Each bishop acquired an absolute and indefeasible right to the perpetual obedience of the clerk whom he ordained: the clergy of each episcopal church, with its dependent parishes, formed a regular and per-

Cæsar, (6. 13) that, in the Celtic hierarchy, some room was left for choice and emulation.

* The subject of the vocation, ordination, obedience, &c. of the clergy is laboriously discussed by Thomassiu, (*Discipline de l'Eglise*, tom. ii, p. 1—83,) and Bingham, (in the fourth book of his *Antiquities*, more especially the fourth, sixth, and seventh chapters). When the brother of St. Jerome was ordained in Cyprus, the deacons forcibly stopped his mouth, lest he should make a solemn protestation, which might invalidate the holy rites. † The charter of immunities, which the clergy obtained from the Christian emperors, is contained in the sixteenth book of the Theodosian Code; and is illustrated with tolerable candour by the learned Godefroy, whose mind was balanced by the opposite prejudices of a civilian and a Protestant. [There were limits to this exemption from municipal service. Of such duties there were two kinds, the personal, or those which attached to the inhabitants of a place, and the proprietary, or those incumbent on the owners of property there. From the first Constantine relieved the clergy. (*Cod. Theod.* l. 16, tit. 11, c. 1, 2. *Euseb. Hist. Ecc.* l. 3, c. 7). They wanted likewise to be excused from the second (munera

manent society; and the cathedrals of Constantinople* and Carthage† maintained their peculiar establishment of five hundred ecclesiastical ministers. Their ranks‡ and numbers were insensibly multiplied by the superstition of the times, which introduced into the church the splendid ceremonies of a Jewish or Pagan temple; and a long train of priests, deacons, subdeacons, acolythes, exorcists, readers, singers, and door-keepers, contributed, in their respective stations, to swell the pomp and harmony of religious worship. The clerical name and privilege were extended to many pious fraternities, who devoutly supported the ecclesiastical throne.§ Six hundred *parabolani*, or adventurers, visited the sick at Alexandria; eleven hundred *copiatae*, or grave-diggers, buried the dead at Constantinople; and the swarms of monks, who arose from the Nile, overspread and darkened the face of the Christian world.¶

patrimoniorum). To acquire this privilege, the wealthy obtained small ecclesiastical appointments, till Constantine checked the abuse, by an edict, issued A.D. 320. In this he enacted that opulent citizens (*decuriones et curiales*) should not be admitted into the clerical order, and that bishops should create no new ecclesiastics, except to fill vacancies caused by the decease of those who held the office. (Godefroy ad Cod. Theod. l. 12, tit. 1, De Dec.) Valentinian I., by a more general rescript, declared that no rich citizen should be allowed to hold any office in the church. (De Episc. l. 17.) He decreed that all ecclesiastics, who wished to be exempted from the services that devolved upon them as owners of property, should transfer their property to their relations. (Cod. Theod. l. 12, tit. 1, leg. 49.)—GUIZOT.]

* Justinian, Novell. 103. Sixty presbyters or priests, one hundred deacons, forty deaconesses, ninety subdeacons, one hundred and ten readers, twenty-five chanters, and one hundred door-keepers; in all, five hundred and twenty-five. This moderate number was fixed by the emperor, to relieve the distress of the church, which had been involved in debt and usury by the expense of a much higher establishment.

† *Universus clerus ecclesie Carthaginensis fere quingenti vel amplius; inter quos quamplurimi erant lectores infantuli.* Victor Vitensis, de Persecut. Vandal. 5. 9, p. 78, edit. Ruinart. This remnant of a more prosperous state subsisted under the oppression of the Vandals.

‡ The number of seven orders has been fixed in the Latin church, exclusive of the episcopal character. But the four inferior ranks, the minor orders, are now reduced to empty and useless titles.

§ See Cod. Theodos. l. 16, tit. 2, leg. 42, 43. Godefroy's Commentary, and the Ecclesiastical History of Alexandria, shew the danger of these pious institutions, which often disturbed the peace of that turbulent capital.

¶ Gibbon has here laid open the true cause, which produced the fall of the Roman empire, and the dark ages that

III. The edict of Milan secured the revenue as well as the peace of the church.* The Christians not only recovered the lands and houses of which they had been stripped by the persecuting laws of Diocletian, but they acquired a perfect title to all the possessions which they had hitherto enjoyed by the connivance of the magistrate. As soon as Christianity became the religion of the emperor and the empire, the national clergy might claim a decent and honourable maintenance; and the payment of an annual tax might have delivered the people from the more oppressive tribute which superstition imposes on her votaries. But as the wants and expenses of the church increased with her prosperity, the ecclesiastical order was still supported and enriched by the voluntary oblations of the faithful. Eight years after the edict of Milan, Constantine granted to all his subjects the free and universal permission of bequeathing their fortunes to the holy Catholic church; † and their devout liberality, which during their lives was checked by luxury or avarice, flowed with a profuse stream at the hour of their death. The wealthy Christians were encouraged by the example of their sovereign. An absolute monarch, who is rich without patrimony, may be charitable without merit; and Constantine too easily believed that he should purchase the favour of Heaven, if he maintained the idle at the expense of the industrious, and distributed

followed. But he has not traced its working distinctly. M. Schreiter has justly accused him of confounding Christianity with its hierarchy, and ascribing to the former, evils which are strictly attributable only to the latter. The mischief originated in the abuse, which ingrafted on Christianity a powerful, ambitious, and imperious priesthood. The awe which this institution inspired, and the submission which it exacted, led to a torpidity of spirit and prostration of mind, which gradually enfeebled and ruined the whole social system. This power and the universal decay began together and progressed together. They were coëval, co-gradient, co-regent, for fifteen centuries, "darkening the face of the Christian world," till the Reformation, by dethroning the one, checked the other and gave a new impulse to liberated mind.—Ed.

* The edict of Milan (de M. P. c. 48,) acknowledges, by reciting, that there existed a species of landed property, *ad jus corporis eorum, id est, ecclesiarum non hominum singulorum pertinentia*. Such a solemn declaration of the supreme magistrate must have been received in all the tribunals as a maxim of civil law.

† *Habeat unusquisque licentiam sanctissimo Catholice (ecclesie) venerabilique concilio, decedens bonorum quod optavit relinquere.* (Cod. Theodos. l. 16, tit. 2, leg. 4.) This law was published at

among the saints the wealth of the republic. The same messenger who carried over to Africa the head of Maxentius, might be intrusted with an epistle to Cæcilian, bishop of Carthage. The emperor acquaints him that the treasurers of the province are directed to pay into his hands the sum of three thousand *folles*, or 18,000*l.* sterling, and to obey his farther requisitions for the relief of the churches of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania.* The liberality of Constantine increased in a just proportion to his faith and to his vices. He assigned in each city a regular allowance of corn, to supply the fund of ecclesiastical charity; and the persons of both sexes, who embraced the monastic life, became the peculiar favourites of their sovereign. The Christian temples of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Constantinople, &c., displayed the ostentations piety of a prince ambitious, in a declining age, to equal the perfect labours of antiquity.† The form of these religious edifices was simple and oblong; though they might sometimes swell into the shape of a dome, and sometimes branch into the figure of a cross. The timbers were framed for the most part of cedars of Libanus; the roof was covered with tiles, perhaps of gilt brass; and the walls, the columns, the pavement, were incrusted with variegated marbles. The most precious ornaments of gold and silver, of silk and gems, were profusely dedicated to the service of the altar; and this specious magnificence was supported on the solid and perpetual basis of landed property. In the space of two centuries, from the reign of Constantine to that of Justinian, the eighteen hundred churches of the empire were enriched by the frequent and unalienable gifts of the prince and people. An annual income of 600*l.* sterling may be reasonably assigned to the bishops, who were placed at

Rome, A.D. 321, at a time when Constantine might foresee the probability of a rupture with the emperor of the east. * Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. l. 10. 6. in Vit. Constantin. lib. 4, c. 28. He repeatedly expatiates on the liberality of the Christian hero, which the bishop himself had an opportunity of knowing, and even of tasting.

† Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. l. 10. c. 2—4. The bishop of Cæsarea, who studied and gratified the taste of his master, pronounced in public an elaborate description of the church of Jerusalem, (in Vit. Cons. l. 4, c. 46). It no longer exists; but he has inserted in the life of Constantine, (l. 3, c. 36), a short account of the architecture and ornaments. He likewise mentions the church of the holy apostles at Con-

an equal distance between riches and poverty;* but the standard of their wealth insensibly rose with the dignity and opulence of the cities which they governed. An authentic but imperfect † rent-roll specifies some houses, shops, gardens, and farms, which belonged to the three *basilicæ* of Rome, St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John Lateran, in the provinces of Italy, Africa, and the east. They produced, besides a reserved rent of oil, linen, paper, aromatics, &c., a clear annual revenue of twenty-two thousand pieces of gold, or 12,000*l.* sterling. In the age of Constantine and Justinian, the bishops no longer possessed, perhaps they no longer deserved, the unsuspecting confidence of their clergy and people. The ecclesiastical revenues of each diocese were divided into four parts; for the respective uses of the bishop himself, of his inferior clergy, of the poor, and of the public worship; and the abuse of this sacred trust was strictly and repeatedly checked. ‡ The patrimony of the church was still subject to all the public impositions of the state. §

The clergy of Rome, Alexandria, Thessalonica, &c., might solicit and obtain some partial exemptions; but the prema-

stantinople, (l. 4, c. 59).

* See Justinian. Novell. 123. 3. The revenue of the patriarchs, and the most wealthy bishops, is not expressed: the highest annual valuation of a bishopric is stated at *thirty*, and the lowest at *two*, pounds of gold; the medium might be taken at *sixteen*, but these valuations are much below the real value.

† See Baronius (Annal. Eccles. A.D. 324, No. 58, 65, 70, 71). Every record which comes from the Vatican is justly suspected; yet these rent-rolls have an ancient and authentic colour; and it is at least evident, that, if forged, they were forged in a period when *farms*, not *kingdoms*, were the objects of Papal avarice.

‡ See Thomassin, Discipline de l'Eglise, tom. iii, l. 2, c. 13—15, p. 689—706. The legal division of ecclesiastical revenue does not appear to have been established in the time of Ambrose and Chrysostom. Simplicius and Gelasius, who were bishops of Rome in the latter part of the fifth century, mention it in their pastoral letters as a general law, which was already confirmed by the custom of Italy.

§ Ambrose, the most strenuous asserter of ecclesiastical privileges, submits without a murmur to the payment of the land-tax. "Si tributum petit imperator, non negamus; agri ecclesiæ solvunt tributum; solvimus quæ sunt Cæsaris Cæsari, et quæ sunt Dei Deo: tributum Cæsaris est; non negatur." Baronius labours to interpret this tribute as an act of charity rather than of duty (Annal. Eccles. A.D. 387); but the words, if not the intentions, of Ambrose, are more candidly explained by Thomassin, Discipline de l'Eglise tom. iii, lib. 1, c. 34, p. 268.

ture attempt of the great council of Rimini, which aspired to universal freedom, was successfully resisted by the son of Constantine.*

IV. The Latin clergy, who erected their tribunal on the ruins of the civil and common law, have modestly accepted as the gift of Constantine,† the independent jurisdiction, which was the fruit of time, of accident, and of their own industry. But the liberality of the Christian emperors had actually endowed them with some legal prerogatives, which secured and dignified the sacerdotal character.‡ 1. Under a despotic government, the bishops alone enjoyed and asserted the inestimable privilege of being tried only by their *peers*; and even in a capital accusation, a synod of their brethren were the sole judges of their guilt or innocence. Such a tribunal, unless it was inflamed by personal resentment or religious discord, might be favourable, or even partial, to the sacerdotal order: but Constantine was satisfied,§ that secret impunity would be less pernicious than public scandal: and the Nicene council was edified by

* In Ariminense synodo super ecclesiarum et clericorum privilegiis tractatû habito, usque eo dispositio progressa est, ut juga quæ viderentur ad ecclesiam pertinere, a publicâ functione cessarent inquietudine desistente; quod nostra videtur dudum sanctio repulsisse. Cod. Theod. (lib. 16, tit. 2, leg. 15). Had the synod of Rimini carried this point, such practical merit might have atoned for some speculative heresies.

† From Eusebius (in Vit. Constant. lib. 4, c. 27), and Sozomen (lib. 1, c. 9), we are assured that the episcopal jurisdiction was extended and confirmed by Constantine; but the forgery of a famous edict, which was never fairly inserted in the Theodosian Code, (see at the end, tom. vi, p. 303), is demonstrated by Godefroy in the most satisfactory manner. It is strange that M. de Montesquieu, who was a lawyer as well as a philosopher, should allege this edict of Constantine, (*Esprit des Loix*, lib. 29, c. 16.) without intimating any suspicion.

‡ The subject of ecclesiastical jurisdiction has been involved in a mist of passion, of prejudice, and of interest. Two of the fairest books which have fallen into my hands, are, the *Institutes of the Canon Law*, by the abbé de Fleury, and the *Civil History of Naples*, by Giannone. Their moderation was the effect of situation as well as of temper. Fleury was a French ecclesiastic, who respected the authority of the parliaments; Giannone was an Italian lawyer, who dreaded the power of the church. And here let me observe, that as the general propositions which I advance are the result of many particular and imperfect facts, I must either refer the reader to those modern authors who have expressly treated the subject, or swell these notes to a disagreeable and disproportioned size

§ Tillemont has collected from Rufinus, Theodoret, &c. the sentiments and language

his public declaration, that if he surprised a bishop in the act of adultery, he should cast his imperial mantle over the episcopal sinner. 2. The domestic jurisdiction of the bishops was at once a privilege and a restraint of the ecclesiastical order, whose civil causes were decently withdrawn from the cognizance of a secular judge. Their venial offences were not exposed to the shame of a public trial or punishment; and the gentle correction which the tenderness of youth may endure from its parents or instructors, was inflicted by the temperate severity of the bishops. But if the clergy were guilty of any crime which could not be sufficiently expiated by their degradation from an honourable and beneficial profession, the Roman magistrate drew the sword of justice, without any regard to ecclesiastical immunities. 3. The arbitration of the bishops was ratified by a positive law; and the judges were instructed to execute, without appeal or delay, the episcopal decrees, whose validity had hitherto depended on the consent of the parties. The conversion of the magistrates themselves, and of the whole empire, might gradually remove the fears and scruples of the Christians. But they still resorted to the tribunal of the bishops, whose abilities and integrity they esteemed; and the venerable Austin enjoyed the satisfaction of complaining that his spiritual functions were perpetually interrupted by the invidious labour of deciding the claim or the possession of silver and gold, of lands and cattle. 4. The ancient privilege of sanctuary was transferred to the Christian temples, and extended, by the liberal piety of the younger Theodosius, to the precincts of consecrated ground.* The fugitive, and even guilty, suppliants were permitted to implore, either the justice, or the mercy, of the Deity and his ministers. The rash violence of despotism was suspended by the mild interposition of the church; and the lives or fortunes of the most eminent subjects might be protected by the mediation of the bishop.

V. The bishop was the perpetual censor of the morals of his people. The discipline of penance was digested into a

of Constantine. *Mém. Ecclés.* tom. iii, p. 749, 750.

* See *Cod.*

Theod. lib. 9, tit. 45, leg. 4. In the works of Fra. Paolo (tom. iv, p. 192, &c.), there is an excellent discourse on the origin, claims, abuses, and limits, of sanctuaries. He justly observes, that ancient Greece might perhaps contain fifteen or twenty *azyla* or sanctuaries; a

system of canonical jurisprudence,* which accurately defined the duty of private or public confession, the rules of evidence, the degrees of guilt, and the measure of punishment. It was impossible to execute this spiritual censure, if the Christian pontiff, who punished the obscure sins of the multitude, respected the conspicuous vices and destructive crimes of the magistrate; but it was impossible to arraign the conduct of the magistrate, without controlling the administration of civil government. Some considerations of religion, or loyalty, or fear, protected the sacred persons of the emperors from the zeal or resentment of the bishops; but they boldly censured and excommunicated the subordinate tyrants, who were not invested with the majesty of the purple. St. Athanasius excommunicated one of the ministers of Egypt; and the interdict which he pronounced, of fire and water, was solemnly transmitted to the churches of Cappadocia.† Under the reign of the younger Theodosius, the polite and eloquent Synesius, one of the descendants of Hercules,‡ filled the episcopal seat of Ptolemais, near the ruins of ancient Cyrene,§ and the philosophic

number which at present may be found in Italy within the walls of a single city.

* The penitential jurisprudence was continually improved by the canons of the councils. But as many cases were still left to the discretion of the bishops, they occasionally published, after the example of the Roman prætor, the rules of discipline which they proposed to observe. Among the canonical epistles of the fourth century, those of Basil the Great were the most celebrated. They are inserted in the *Pandects of Beveridge*, (tom. ii, p. 47—151), and are translated by Chardon. (*Hist. des Sacremens*, tom. iv, p. 219—277).

† Basil Epistol. 47. (in Baronius, *Annal. Eccles. A.D. 370*, No. 91), who declares that he purposely relates it, to convince governors that they were not exempt from a sentence of excommunication. In his opinion, even a royal head is not safe from the thunders of the Vatican; and the cardinal shows himself much more consistent than the lawyers and theologians of the Gallican church.

‡ The long series of his ancestors, as high as Eurysthenes, the first Doric king of Sparta, and the fifth in lineal descent from Hercules, was inscribed in the public registers of Cyrene, a Lacedæmonian colony. (*Synes. Epist. 57*, p. 197, edit. Petav.) Such a pure and illustrious pedigree of seventeen hundred years, without adding the royal ancestors of Hercules, cannot be equalled in the history of mankind. [Clinton (*F. H. i*, 101) gives the pedigree of Hercules, beginning with Danaus. The kingdom of Lacedæmon was founded by his descendant, Aristodemus, whose sons Eurysthenes and Procles commenced, B. C. 1102, the bi-regal succession of the Agidæ and Proclidæ, which subsisted so many centuries at Sparta. To the former of these lines belonged Battus, who founded Cyrene, B. C. 631.—ED.]

§ Synesius

bishop supported with dignity the character which he had assumed with reluctance.* He vanquished the monster of Lybia, the president Andronicus, who abused the authority of a venal office, invented new modes of rapine and torture, and aggravated the guilt of oppression by that of sacrilege.† After a fruitless attempt to reclaim the haughty

(de Regno, p. 2), pathetically deplores the fallen and ruined state of Cyrene, πόλις Ἑλληνικὴ παλαιὸν ὄνομα καὶ σεμνὸν, καὶ ἐν ᾧ δὴ μυριάτων πάλοι σόφων, νῦν πέντης καὶ κατηφῆς, καὶ μέγα ἐρειπίον. Ptolemais, a new city, eighty-two miles to the westward of Cyrene, assumed the metropolitan honours of the Pentapolis, or Upper Libya, which were afterwards transferred to Sozusa. See Wesseling, Itinerar. p. 67, 68. 732; Cellarius, Geograph. tom. ii, part 2, p. 72—74; Carolus à S^{to} Paulo, Geograph. Sacra, p. 273; D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. iii, p. 43, 44; Mémoires de l'Acad. des Inscriptions, tom. xxxvii, p. 363—391.

* Synesius had previously represented his own disqualifications. (Epist. c. 5, p. 246—250). He loved profane studies and profane sports; he was incapable of supporting a life of celibacy; he disbelieved the resurrection; and he refused to preach *fables* to the people, unless he might be permitted to *philosophize* at home. Theophilus, primate of Egypt, who knew his merit, accepted this extraordinary compromise. See the life of Synesius in Tillemont. Mém. Eccles. tom. xii, p. 492—554. [Synesius was a native of Cyrene, and might be honestly proud of the “ancient and illustrious name,” which was adverted to in a note on the first chapter in this history. In the last days of ancient learning, he feebly supported the philosophic character, which the place of his birth had early acquired and long maintained. The celebrity which he gained, while studying at Alexandria, under the talented but unfortunate Hypatia, recommended him to Theophilus. His philosophy embraced many of the mystical absurdities of the New Platonists, without, however, running into their wild extravagance. The resurrection which he disbelieved, was that of *the body*; he could not have borne the patristic of his school, had he denied the immortality of the soul. Brucker (Hist. of Philos. vol. ii, p. 312), admits that he “held opinions not perfectly consistent with the popular creed.” Yet Dupin (Hist. Ecc. vol. i, p. 410), says, that notwithstanding this, he was “a very wise, prudent, and good bishop.” Warburton (Div. Leg. vol. iii, p. 196), was so scandalized by the philosophical heresies of Synesius, that he calls him “no small fool;” and proceeds thus: “He went into the church a Platonist, and a Platonist he remained, as extravagant and absurd as any he had left behind him.” Synesius will come before us again in ch. 30.—ED.]

† See the invective of Synesius, epist. 57, p. 191—201. The promotion of Andronicus was illegal; since he was a native of Berenice, in the same province. The instruments of torture are curiously specified, the *πιεστήριον*, or press, the *δακτυλῆθρα*, the *ποδοστρακῆ*, the *μυρογάβεις*, the *ὄταρα*, and the *χειλοτρόφιον*, that variously pressed or distended the fingers, the feet, the nose, the ears, and the lips of the victims.

magistrate by mild and religious admonition, Synesius proceeds to inflict the last sentence of ecclesiastical justice,* which devotes Andronicus, with his associates and their families, to the abhorrence of earth and heaven. The impenitent sinners, more cruel than Phalaris or Sennacherib, more destructive than war, pestilence, or a cloud of locusts, are deprived of the name and privileges of Christians, of the participation of the sacraments, and of the hope of paradise. The bishop exhorts the clergy, the magistrates, and the people, to renounce all society with the enemies of Christ; to exclude them from their houses and tables; and to refuse them the common offices of life, and the decent rites of burial. The church of Ptolemais, obscure and contemptible as she may appear, addresses this declaration to all her sister churches of the world; and the profane, who reject her decrees, will be involved in the guilt and punishment of Andronicus and his impious followers. These spiritual terrors were enforced by a dexterous application to the Byzantine court; the trembling president implored the mercy of the church; and the descendant of Hercules enjoyed the satisfaction of raising a prostrate tyrant from the ground.† Such principles, and such examples, insensibly prepared the triumph of the Roman pontiffs, who have trampled on the necks of kings.

VI. Every popular government has experienced the effects of rude or artificial eloquence. The coldest nature is animated, the firmest reason is moved, by the rapid communication of the prevailing impulse; and each hearer is affected by his own passions, and by those of the surrounding multitude. The ruin of civil liberty had silenced the demagogues of Athens, and the tribunes of Rome; the custom of preaching, which seems to constitute a considerable part of Christian devotion, had not been introduced into the temples of antiquity; and the ears of monarchs were never invaded by the harsh sound of popular eloquence, till the pulpits of the empire were filled with sacred orators, who possessed some advantages unknown to their profane predecessors.‡ The arguments and rhetoric of the tribune

* The sentence of excommunication is expressed in a rhetorical style. (Synesius, epist. 58, p. 201—203). The method of involving whole families, though somewhat unjust, was improved into national interdicts.

† See Synesius, Epist. 47, p. 186, 187; epist. 72, p. 218, 219; epist. 89, p. 230, 231.

‡ See Thomassin (*Disciplina*).

were instantly opposed, with equal arms, by skilful and resolute antagonists; and the cause of truth and reason might derive an accidental support from the conflict of hostile passions. The bishop, or some distinguished presbyter, to whom he cautiously delegated the powers of preaching, harangued, without the danger of interruption or reply, a submissive multitude, whose minds had been prepared and subdued by the awful ceremonies of religion. Such was the strict subordination of the Catholic church, that the same concerted sounds might issue at once from a hundred pulpits of Italy or Egypt, if they were *tuned** by the master hand of the Roman or Alexandrian primate. The design of this institution was laudable, but the fruits were not always salutary. The preachers recommended the practice of the social duties, but they exalted the perfection of monastic virtue, which is painful to the individual, and useless to mankind. Their charitable exhortations betrayed a secret wish, that the clergy might be permitted to manage the wealth of the faithful, for the benefit of the poor. The most sublime representations of the attributes and laws of the Deity were sullied by an idle mixture of metaphysical subtleties, puerile rites, and fictitious miracles; and they expatiated, with the most fervent zeal, on the religious merit of hating the adversaries, and obeying the ministers, of the church. When the public peace was distracted by heresy and schism, the sacred orators sounded the trumpet of discord and perhaps of sedition. The understandings of

de l'Eglise, tom. ii, lib. 3, c. 83, p. 1761—1770), and Bingham. (Antiquities, vol. i, lib. 14, c. 4, p. 688—717.) Preaching was considered as the most important office of the bishop; but this function was sometimes intrusted to such presbyters as Chrysostom and Augustin. [For this powerful assistant, the early church was again indebted to philosophy. The lectures of the schools were the examples on which the first meetings of the Greek believers and the addresses of their preachers were modelled. It was thus that the "traditions of the apostles" and the interpretations of the conferences at Antioch were made known. Rival lecturers saw with jealousy the increasing numbers of those who attended; and this made Origen say, in reply to Celsus: "How would the philosophers rejoice to gather such hearers of their exhortations to the beautiful!" (Cont. Cels. lib. 3.)—ED.]

* Queen Elizabeth used this expression, and practised this art, whenever she wished to prepossess the minds of her people in favour of any extraordinary measure of government. The hostile effects of this *music* were apprehended by her successor, and

their congregations were perplexed by mystery, their passions were inflamed by invectives; and they rushed from the Christian temples of Antioch or Alexandria, prepared either to suffer or to inflict martyrdom. The corruption of taste and language is strongly marked in the vehement declamations of the Latin bishops; but the compositions of Gregory and Chrysostom have been compared with the most splendid models of Attic, or at least of Asiatic, eloquence.*

VII. The representatives of the Christian republic were regularly assembled in the spring and autumn of each year; and these synods diffused the spirit of ecclesiastical discipline and legislation through the hundred and twenty provinces of the Roman world.† The archbishop, or metropolitan, was empowered, by the laws, to summon the suffragan bishops of his province; to revise their conduct, to vindicate their rights, to declare their faith, and to examine the merit of the candidates who were elected by the clergy and people to supply the vacancies of the episcopal college. The primates of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage, and afterwards Constantinople, who exercised a more ample jurisdiction, convened the numerous assembly of their dependent bishops. But the convocation of great and extraordinary synods was the prerogative of the emperor alone. Whenever the emergencies of the church required this decisive measure, he dispatched a peremptory summons to the bishops, or the deputies of each province, with an order for the use of post-horses, and a competent allowance for the expenses of their journey. At an early period, when Constantine was the protector, rather than the proselyte of Christianity, he referred the African controversy to the council of Arles; in which the bishops of York, of Treves, of Milan, and of Carthage, met as friends and brethren, to debate, in their native tongue, on the common

severely felt by his son. "When pulpit, drum ecclesiastic," &c. See Heylin's *Life of Archbishop Laud*, p. 153. * Those modest orators

acknowledged that, as they were destitute of the gift of miracles, they endeavoured to acquire the arts of eloquence. † The council of

Nice, in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh canons, has made some fundamental regulations concerning synods, metropolitans, and primates. The Nicene canons have been variously tortured, abused, interpolated, or forged, according to the interest of the clergy. The *Suburbicarian* churches, assigned (by Rufinus) to the bishop of Rome,

interest of the Latin or western church.* Eleven years afterwards, a more numerous and celebrated assembly was convened at Nice in Bithynia, to extinguish, by their final sentence, the subtle disputes which had arisen in Egypt on the subject of the Trinity. Three hundred and eighteen bishops obeyed the summons of their indulgent master; the ecclesiastics of every rank, and sect, and denomination, have been computed at two thousand and forty-eight persons;† the Greeks appeared in person; and the consent of the Latins was expressed by the legates of the Roman pontiff. The session, which lasted about two months, was frequently honoured by the presence of the emperor. Leaving his guards at the door, he seated himself (with the permission of the council) on a low stool in the midst of the hall. Constantine listened with patience, and spoke with modesty; and while he influenced the debates, he humbly professed that he was the minister, not the judge, of the successors of the apostles, who had been established as priests and as gods upon earth.‡ Such profound reverence of an absolute monarch towards a feeble and unarmed assembly of his own subjects, can only be compared to the respect with which the senate had been treated by the Roman princes who adopted the policy of Augustus. Within the space of fifty years, a philosophic spectator of the vicissitudes of human affairs, might have contemplated Tacitus in the senate of Rome, and Constantine in the council of Nice. The fathers of the Capitol, and those of the church, had alike degenerated from the virtues of their founders; but as the bishops were more deeply rooted in the public opinion, they sustained their dignity with more decent pride, and sometimes opposed, with a manly spirit, the wishes of their sovereign. The progress of time and superstition erased the memory of the weakness, the passion, the ignorance,

have been made the subject of vehement controversy. See Sirmond. Opera, tom. iv, p. 1—238.

* We have only thirty-three or forty-seven episcopal subscriptions; but Ado, a writer indeed of small account, reckons six hundred bishops in the council of Arles. Tillemont, Mem. Eccles. tom. vi, p. 422.

† See Tillemont, tom. vi, p. 915, and Beausobre, Hist. du Manichéisme, tom. i, p. 529. The name of *bishop*, which is given by Eutychius to the two thousand and forty-eight ecclesiastics (Annal. tom. i, p. 440, vers. Pocock), must be extended far beyond the limits of an orthodox or even episcopal ordination.

‡ See Euseb. in Vit. Constantin. lib. 3, c. 6—21. Tillemont, Mém.

which disgraced these ecclesiastical synods; and the Catholic world has unanimously submitted* to the *infallible* decrees of the general councils.†

CHAPTER XXI.—PERSECUTION OF HERESY.—THE SCHISM OF THE DONATISTS.—THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY.—ATHANASIUS.—DISTRACTED STATE OF THE CHURCH AND EMPIRE UNDER CONSTANTINE AND HIS SONS.—TOLERATION OF PAGANISM.

THE grateful applause of the clergy has consecrated the memory of a prince who indulged their passions and promoted their interest. Constantine gave them security, wealth, honours, and revenge; and the support of the orthodox faith was considered as the most sacred and important duty of the civil magistrate. The edict of Milan, the great charter of toleration, had confirmed to each individual of the Roman world, the privilege of choosing and professing his own religion. But this inestimable privilege was soon violated: with the knowledge of truth the emperor imbibed the maxims of persecution; and the sects which dissented from the Catholic church, were afflicted and oppressed by the triumph of Christianity. Constantine easily believed that the heretics, who presumed to dispute *his* opinions, or to oppose *his* commands, were guilty of the most absurd and criminal obstinacy; and that a seasonable application of moderate severities might save those unhappy men from the danger of an everlasting condemnation. Not a moment was lost in excluding the ministers and teachers of the separated congregations from

Ecclésiastiques, tom. vi, p. 669—759.

* Sancimus igitur vicem legum obtinere, quæ a quatuor Sanctis Conciliis . . . expositæ sunt aut firmatæ. Predictarum enim quatuor synodorum dogmata sicut sanctas scripturas et regulas sicut leges observamus. Justinian. Novel. 131. Beveridge (ad Pandect. proleg. p. 2), remarks, that the emperors never made new laws in ecclesiastical matters; and Giannone observes, in a very different spirit, that they gave a legal sanction to the canons of councils. Istoria Civile di Napoli, tom. i, p. 136.

† See the article *Concile* in the Encyclopédie, tom. iii, p. 668—679, edition de Lucques. The author, M. le docteur Bouchaud, has discussed, according to the principles of the Gallican church, the principal questions which relate to the form and constitution of general, national, and provincial councils. The editors (see Preface, p. 16) have reason to b

any share of the rewards and immunities which the emperor had so liberally bestowed on the orthodox clergy. But as the sectaries might still exist under the cloud of royal disgrace, the conquest of the east was immediately followed by an edict which announced their total destruction.* After a preamble filled with passion and reproach, Constantine absolutely prohibits the assemblies of the heretics, and confiscates their public property to the use either of the revenue or of the Catholic church. The sects against whom the imperial severity was directed, appear to have been the adherents of Paul of Samosata; the Montanists of Phrygia, who maintained an enthusiastic succession of prophecy; the Novatians, who sternly rejected the temporal efficacy of repentance; the Marcionites and Valentinians, under whose leading banners the various Gnostics of Asia and Egypt had insensibly rallied; and perhaps the Manichæans, who had recently imported from Persia a more artful composition of oriental and Christian theology.† The design of extirpating the name, or at least of restraining the progress, of these odious heretics, was prosecuted with vigour and effect. Some of the penal regulations were copied from the edicts of Diocletian; and this method of conversion was applauded by the same bishops who had felt the hand of oppression, and had pleaded for the rights of humanity. Two immaterial circumstances may serve, however, to prove that the mind of Constantine was not entirely corrupted by the spirit of zeal and bigotry. Before he condemned the Manichæans, and their kindred sects, he resolved to make an accurate inquiry into the nature of their religious principles. As if he distrusted the impartiality of his ecclesiastical counsellors, this delicate commission was intrusted to a civil magistrate, whose learning and moderation he justly esteemed, and of whose venal character he was probably ignorant.‡ The emperor was soon convinced, that he

proud of *this* article. Those who consult their immense compilation, seldom depart so well satisfied.

* Eusebius in Vit. Constantin. lib. 3, c. 63—66. † After some examination of the various opinions of Tillemont, Beausobre, Lardner, &c., I am convinced that Manes did not propagate this sect, even in Persia, before the year 270. It is strange, that a philosophic and foreign heresy should have penetrated so rapidly into the African provinces; yet I cannot easily reject the edict of Diocletian against the Manichæans, which may be found in **Baronius**. (Annal. Eccl. A.D. 287)

‡ Constantinus enim, cum

had too hastily proscribed the orthodox faith and the exemplary morals of the Novatians, who had dissented from the church in some articles of discipline which were not perhaps essential to salvation. By a particular edict, he exempted them from the general penalties of the law;* allowed them to build a church at Constantinople; respected the miracles of their saints; invited their bishop Acesius to the council of Nice; and gently ridiculed the narrow tenets of his sect by a familiar jest; which, from the mouth of a sovereign, must have been received with applause and gratitude.†

The complaints and mutual accusations which assailed the throne of Constantine as soon as the death of Maxentius had submitted Africa to his victorious arms, were ill adapted to edify an imperfect proselyte. He learned with surprise, that the provinces of that great country, from the confines of Cyrene to the columns of Hercules, were distracted with religious discord.‡ The source of the division was derived from a double election in the church of Car-

linatius superstitionum quæreret sectas, Manichæorum et similium, &c. Ammian. 15, 15. Strategius, who from this commission obtained the surname of *Musonianus*, was a Christian of the Arian sect. He acted as one of the counts at the council of Sardica. Libanius praises his mildness and prudence. Vales. ad locum Ammian.

* Cod. Theod. lib. 16, tit. 5. leg. 2. As the general law is not inserted in the Theodosian Code, it is probable that in the year 438, the sects which it had condemned were already extinct.

† Sozomen, lib. 1, c. 22. Socrates, lib. 1, c. 10. These historians have been suspected, but I think without reason, of an attachment to the Novatian doctrine. The emperor said to the bishop: "Acesius, take a ladder, and get up to heaven by yourself." Most of the Christian sects have, by turns, borrowed the ladder of Acesius. [These very first acts of Constantine manifest the influence, not of the religion, which he rather used than embraced, but of the hierarchy, through whom he saw that the masses might be made subservient to his designs. To secure these chiefs of the church, their artful patron indulged their desire to exclude all rivals, and bestowed on them new rewards and immunities. So, too, the schisms, which are the subjects of this chapter, would never have distracted the world, had there been no such objects of ambitious desires as episcopal thrones and revenues.—Ed.] ‡ The best materials for this part of ecclesiastical history may be found in the edition of Optatus Milevitanus, published (Paris, 1700) by M. Dupin, who has enriched it with critical notes, geographical discussions, original records, and an accurate abridgment of the whole controversy. M. de Tillemont has bestowed on the Donatists the greatest part of a volume (tom. vi, part 1); and I

thage; the second, in rank and opulence, of the ecclesiastical thrones of the west. Cæcilian and Majorinus were the two rival primates of Africa; and the death of the latter soon made room for Donatus, who, by his superior abilities and apparent virtues, was the firmest support of his party. The advantage which Cæcilian might claim from the priority of his ordination, was destroyed by the illegal, or at least indecent haste, with which it had been performed, without expecting the arrival of the bishops of Numidia. The authority of these bishops, who, to the number of seventy, condemned Cæcilian, and consecrated Majorinus, is again weakened by the infamy of some of their personal characters; and by the female intrigues, sacrilegious bargains, and tumultuous proceedings, which are imputed to this Numidian council.* The bishops of the contending factions maintained, with equal ardour and obstinacy, that their adversaries were degraded, or at least dishonoured, by the odious crime of delivering the Holy Scriptures to the officers of Diocletian. From their mutual reproaches, as well as from the story of this dark transaction, it may justly be inferred that the late persecution had embittered the zeal, without reforming the manners, of the African Christians. That divided church was incapable of affording an impartial judicature; the controversy was solemnly tried in five successive tribunals, which were appointed by the emperor; and the whole proceeding, from the first appeal to the final sentence, lasted above three years. A severe inquisition which was taken by the prætorian vicar and the pro-consul of Africa, the report of two episcopal visitors who had been sent to Carthage, the decrees of the councils of Rome and of Arles, and the supreme judgment of Constantine himself in his sacred

am indebted to him for an ample collection of all the passages of his favourite St. Augustin, which relate to those heretics. * Schisma

igitur illo tempore confusæ mulieris iracundia peperit; ambitus nutrit; avaritia roboravit. Optatus, lib. 1, c. 19. The language of Purpurius is that of a furious madman: Dicitur te necasse filios sororis tuæ duos. Purpurius respondit: Putas me terri à te . . . occidi: et occido eos qui contra me faciunt. Acta Concil. Cirtensis. ad calc. Optat. p. 274. When Cæcilian was invited to an assembly of bishops, Purpurius said to his brethren, or rather to his accomplices: "Let him come hither to receive our imposition of hands; and we will break his head by way of penance." Optat. lib. 1, c. 19.

consistory, were all favourable to the cause of Cæcilian, and he was unanimously acknowledged by the civil and ecclesiastical powers, as the true and lawful primate of Africa. The honours and estates of the church were attributed to *his* suffragan bishops; and it was not without difficulty that Constantine was satisfied with inflicting the punishment of exile on the principal leaders of the Donatist faction. As their cause was examined with attention, perhaps it was determined with justice. Perhaps their complaint was not without foundation, that the credulity of the emperor had been abused by the insidious arts of his favourite Osius. The influence of falsehood and corruption might procure the condemnation of the innocent, or aggravate the sentence of the guilty. Such an act, however, of injustice, if it concluded an importunate dispute, might be numbered among the transient evils of a despotic administration, which are neither felt nor remembered by posterity.

But this incident, so inconsiderable that it scarcely deserves a place in history, was productive of a memorable schism, which afflicted the provinces of Africa above three hundred years, and was extinguished only with Christianity itself. The inflexible zeal of freedom and fanaticism animated the Donatists to refuse obedience to the usurpers, whose election they disputed, and whose spiritual powers they denied. Excluded from the civil and religious communion of mankind, they boldly excommunicated the rest of mankind who had embraced the impious party of Cæcilian, and of the traitors, from whom he derived his pretended ordination. They asserted with confidence, and almost with exultation, that the apostolical succession was interrupted; that *all* the bishops of Europe and Asia were infected by the contagion of guilt and schism; and that the prerogatives of the Catholic church were confined to the chosen portion of the African believers, who alone had preserved inviolate the integrity of their faith and discipline. This rigid theory was supported by the most uncharitable conduct. Whenever they acquired a proselyte, even from the distant provinces of the east, they carefully repeated the sacred rites of baptism* and ordination; as they

* The councils of Arles, of Nice, and of Trent, confirmed the wise and moderate practice of the church of Rome. The Donatists, however, had the advantage of maintaining the sentiment of Cyprian, and

rejected the validity of those which he had already received from the hands of heretics or schismatics. Bishops, virgins, and even spotless infants, were subjected to the disgrace of a public penance, before they could be admitted to the communion of the Donatists. If they obtained possession of a church which had been used by their Catholic adversaries, they purified the unhallowed building with the same jealous care which a temple of idols might have required. They washed the pavement, scraped the walls, burnt the altar, which was commonly of wood, melted the consecrated plate, and cast the holy eucharist to the dogs, with every circumstance of ignominy which could provoke and perpetuate the animosity of religious factions.* Notwithstanding this irreconcilable aversion, the two parties, who were mixed and separated in all the cities of Africa, had the same language and manners, the same zeal and learning, the same faith and worship. Proscribed by the civil and ecclesiastical powers of the empire, the Donatists still maintained in some provinces, particularly in Numidia, their superior numbers; and four hundred bishops acknowledged the jurisdiction of their primate. But the invincible spirit of the sect sometimes preyed on its own vitals; and the bosom of their schismatical church was torn by intestine divisions. A fourth part of the Donatist bishops followed the independent standard of the Maximianists. The narrow and solitary path which their first leaders had marked out, continued to deviate from the great society of mankind. Even the imperceptible sect of the Rogatians could affirm, without a blush, that when Christ should descend to judge the earth, he would find his true religion preserved only in a few nameless villages of the Cæsarean Mauritania.†

The schism of the Donatists was confined to Africa: the more diffusive mischief of the Trinitarian controversy successively penetrated into every part of the Christian

of a considerable part of the primitive church. Vincentius Lirinensis (p. 332, ap. Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.* tom. vi, p. 138) has explained why the Donatists are eternally burning with the devil, while St. Cyprian reigns in heaven with Jesus Christ.

* See the sixth book of

Optatus Milevitanus, p. 91—100.

† Tillemont, *Mém. Ecclésiastiques*, tom. vi, part I, p. 253.

He laughs at their partial credulity. He revered Augustin, the great doctor of the system of predestination

world. The former was an accidental quarrel, occasioned by the abuse of freedom; the latter was a high and mysterious argument, derived from the abuse of philosophy. From the age of Constantine to that of Clovis and Theodoric, the temporal interests both of the Romans and Barbarians were deeply involved in the theological disputes of Arianism. The historian may therefore be permitted respectfully to withdraw the veil of the sanctuary; and to deduce the progress of reason and faith, of error and passion, from the school of Plato to the decline and fall of the empire.

The genius of Plato, informed by his own meditation or by the traditional knowledge of the priests of Egypt,* had ventured to explore the mysterious nature of the Deity. When he had elevated his mind to the sublime contemplation of the first self-existent necessary cause of the universe, the Athenian sage was incapable of conceiving *how* the simple unity of his essence could admit the infinite variety of distinct and successive ideas which compose the model of the intellectual world; *how* a Being purely incorporeal could execute that perfect model, and mould with a plastic hand the rude and independent chaos. The vain hope of extricating himself from these difficulties, which must ever oppress the feeble powers of the human mind, might induce Plato to consider the divine nature under the threefold modification of the first cause, the reason or *Logos*, and the soul or spirit of the universe. His poetical imagination sometimes fixed and animated these metaphysical abstractions; the three *archical* or original principles were represented in the Platonic system as three gods, united with each other by a mysterious and ineffable generation; and the *Logos* was particularly considered under the more accessible character of the Son of an eternal Father, and the Creator and Governor of the

* Plato *Ægyptum peragravit, ut a sacerdotibus barbaris numeros et celestia acciperet.* Cicero de Finibus, 5. 25. The Egyptians might still preserve the traditional creed of the patriarchs. Josephus has persuaded many of the Christian fathers, that Plato derived a part of his knowledge from the Jews; but this vain opinion cannot be reconciled with the obscure state and unsocial manners of the Jewish people, whose scriptures were not accessible to Greek curiosity till more than one hundred years after the death of Plato. See Marsham, *Canon Chron.* p. 144. Le Clerc, *Epistol. Critic.* 7, p. 177—194.

world. Such appear to have been the secret doctrines which were cautiously whispered in the gardens of the Academy; and which, according to the more recent disciples of Plato, could not be perfectly understood till after an assiduous study of thirty years.*

The arms of the Macedonians diffused over Asia and Egypt the language and learning of Greece; and the theological system of Plato was taught with less reserve, and perhaps with some improvements, in the celebrated school of Alexandria.† A numerous colony of Jews had been invited, by the favour of the Ptolemies, to settle in their new capital.‡ While the bulk of the nation practised the legal ceremonies, and pursued the lucrative occupations of commerce, a few Hebrews, of a more liberal spirit, devoted their lives to religious and philosophical contemplation.§ They cultivated with diligence, and embraced with ardour, the theological system of the Athenian sage. But their national pride would have been mortified by a fair confession of their former poverty: and they boldly marked,

* The modern guides who led me to the knowledge of the Platonic system, are, Cudworth (*Intellectual System*, p. 568—620); Basnage (*Hist. des Juifs*, lib. 4, c. 4, p. 53—86); Le Clerc (*Epist. Crit.* 7, p. 194—209); and Brucker (*Hist. Philosoph.* tom. i, p. 675—706). As the learning of these writers was equal, and their intention different, an inquisitive observer may derive instruction from their disputes, and certainly from their agreement. [In a very profound disquisition, M. Guizot has endeavoured to show, that “the true meaning of Plato’s philosophical writings is here not presented to us,” and that “in no part of them is there any real personification of the pretended beings who are said to form his trinity.” Yet he admits that most of Plato’s interpreters, as well ancient as modern, have been betrayed into this error, by the very nature of his doctrine, by the ambiguities of his figurative style, and by dwelling on detached passages, instead of comprehending all his ideas in one entire system. The question, however, is not how Plato’s words ought to be interpreted, but how they were understood at the period of which Gibbon was writing. M. Guizot has confessed that the Greek philosopher was then and has been since generally considered to have personified or substantialized his three principles. This may have been an error, but the fact justifies Gibbon.—ED.] † Brucker, *Hist. Philosoph.* tom. i, p. 1349—1357. The Alexandrian school is celebrated by Strabo (lib. 17), and Ammianus (22, 6).

‡ *Josephi Antiquitat.* lib. 12, c. 1—3. Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, lib. 7, c. 7. [According to Josephus they were also settled at Cyrene.—ED.] § For the origin of the Jewish philosophy, see Eusebius, *Præparat. Evangel.* 8, 9, 10. According to Philo, the Therapeutæ studied philosophy: and Brucker has proved (*Hist. Philosoph.* tom. ii, p. 787,) that they gave the preference to that of Plato.

as the sacred inheritance of their ancestors, the gold and jewels which they had so lately stolen from their Egyptian masters. One hundred years before the birth of Christ, a philosophical treatise, which manifestly betrays the style and sentiments of the school of Plato, was produced by the Alexandrian Jews, and unanimously received as a genuine and valuable relic of the inspired wisdom of Solomon.* A similar union of the Mosaic faith and the Grecian philosophy distinguishes the works of Philo, which were composed, for the most part, under the reign of Augustus† The material soul of the universe ‡ might offend the piety of the Hebrews: but they applied the character of the *Logos* to the Jehovah of Moses and the patriarchs: and the Son

* See Calmet, Dissertations sur la Bible, tom. ii, p. 277. The book of the Wisdom of Solomon was received by many of the fathers as the work of that monarch, and although rejected by the Protestants for want of a Hebrew original, it has obtained, with the rest of the Vulgate, the sanction of the council of Trent. † The Platonism of Philo, which was famous to a proverb, is proved beyond a doubt by Le Clerc (Epist. Crit, 8, p. 211—228). Basnage (Hist. des Juifs, lib. 4, c. 5), has clearly ascertained, that the theological works of Philo were composed before the death, and most probably before the birth of Christ. In such a time of darkness, the knowledge of Philo is more astonishing than his errors. Bull. Defens. Fid. Nicen. s. 1, c. 1, p. 12. [Gibbon's accuracy is here again impugned by M. Guizot, who contends that "the philosophy taught in the schools of Alexandria was not derived from that of Plato alone, but from a bewildering confusion of Jewish, Greek, and Egyptian systems," and that the first of these consisted of "oriental notions acquired at Babylon." From these he maintains that Philo took his *Logos*, which "is consequently very different from that of Plato," and that his "sensible and ideal worlds" are borrowed from the same source. This still evades the main question, which is, not how the opinions of a few Jews may have been tinged by Chaldean or Magian fancies; but how the *general mind of educated Greeks* was affected when the knowledge of a spiritual Deity, worshipped by the Hebrew race, mingled with and gave preciseness and consistency to the imperfect notions of such a Being, which their philosophy had created. From this point attention should not be withdrawn by apocryphal episodes or slight shades of difference. M. Guizot has trusted too much to Mosheim's fallacious "oriental philosophy." It was not there that Philo found his "sensible and ideal worlds," but in Aristotle's *ἐκ τῆ ἀσθητᾶ* and *ἐκ τῆ νοητᾶ*. (Metaphys. Zeta. c. 7, et passim). The chief of the Peripatetics is here strangely overlooked or kept in the background.—ED.]

‡ Mens agitatur molem et magno se corpore miscet.

Besides this material soul, Cudworth has discovered (p. 562) in Amelius, Porphyry, Plotinus, and, as he thinks, in Plato himself, a superior, spiritual, *supercosmian* soul of the universe. But this double

of God was introduced upon earth under a visible and even human appearance, to perform those familiar offices which seem incompatible with the nature and attributes of the universal cause.*

The eloquence of Plato, the name of Solomon, the authority of the school of Alexandria, and the consent of the Jews and Greeks, were insufficient to establish the truth of a mysterious doctrine, which might please, but could not satisfy, a rational mind. A prophet, or apostle, inspired by the Deity, can alone exercise a lawful dominion over the faith of mankind; and the theology of Plato might have been for ever confounded with the philosophical visions of the Academy, the Porch, and the Lyceum, if the name and divine attributes of the *Logos* had not been confirmed by the celestial pen of the last and most sublime of the evangelists.† The Christian revelation, which was consummated

soul is exploded by Brucker, Basnage, and Le Clerc, as an idle fancy of the latter Platonists.

* Petav. *Dogmata Theologica*, tom. ii, lib. 8, c. 2, p. 791. Bull. Defens. Fid. Nicen. s. i, c. 1, p. 8—13. This notion, till it was abused by the Arians, was freely adopted in the Christian theology. Tertullian (adv. Praxeam, c. 16) has a remarkable and dangerous passage. After contrasting, with indiscreet wit, the nature of God and the actions of Jehovah, he concludes: *Scilicet ut hæc de Filio Dei non credenda fuisset, si non scripta essent; fortasse non credenda de Patre licet scripta.* [These things could surely not have been believed of the Son of God, had they not been written; and are perhaps not to be believed of the Father, although written.—Translation by Ed.]

† The Platonists admired the beginning of the Gospel of St. John, as containing an exact transcript of their own principles. Augustin. *de Civitat. Dei*, 10. 29; Amelius apud Cyril. *advers. Julian.* lib. 8, p. 283. But in the third and fourth centuries, the Platonists of Alexandria might improve their trinity by the secret study of the Christian theology. [In a long note, M. Guizot has here taken great pains to make it appear that "St. John did not borrow his *Logos* from the philosophy of Plato." He asserts that, in the time of the evangelist, this term had only two meanings, one "adopted by the Jews of Palestine, and the other by the school of Alexandria, especially Philo." Of the first he finds proofs in such expressions as "the Word of the Lord," (Ps. 33, v. 6), and in the description of Wisdom (Prov. c. 8, v. 22, 23), forgetting that the two royal authors, to whom he refers, lived six hundred years before Plato; and he relies equally on similar passages in Ecclesiasticus (c. 24, v. 3. 5. 9. 20,) and the Book of Wisdom (c. 7 and 9), the last of which, Dean Milman, in his comment on this note, reminds him, was not produced in Palestine, but "is clearly Alexandrian." On the other hand, M. Guizot takes no account of the several Greek schools, the Old Academy, or direct followers of Plato;

under the reign of Nerva, disclosed to the world the amazing secret, that the *Logos*, who was with God from the beginning, and was God, who had made all things, and for whom all things had been made, was incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; who had been born of a virgin, and suffered death on the cross. Besides the general design of fixing on a perpetual basis the divine honours of Christ, the most ancient and respectable of the ecclesiastical writers have ascribed to the evangelical theologian, a particular intention to confute two opposite heresies, which disturbed the peace of the primitive church.* I. The faith of the Ebionites,† perhaps of the Nazarenes,‡ was gross the New Academy or disciples of Carneades, and the Peripatetic adherents of Aristotle, all of whom had their *Logos*, agreeing in some points and differing in others. These had teachers in every city, and studied not only the works of their two great masters and those of Xenophon, which we now possess, but also the sixty treatises of Xenocrates and others, which have since been lost. For some time Antioch continued to be the centre of Christian energy. After going forth from that city to preach to the Gentiles, Paul and Barnabas returning thither, reported their success to those “by whom they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled,” and projected with them future missions (Acts, c. 14, v. 26. 28; c. 15, v. 26.) It is evident, therefore, that Plato’s *Logos* was well known to the educated Greeks, among whom the new faith was introduced. Of this M. Guizot affirms, that “St. John knew nothing or very little,” although he had lived sixty years in the midst of it, and, as pointed out by Dean Milman, had long resided “at Ephesus, the centre of the mingling opinions of the east and the west.” It was not till after this, and when he was ninety years old, that his gospel was written; and then, as we learn from Jerome (Prologue to his Commentary on Matthew), and Chrysostom (Introd. to his Homilies on Matthew, and again, fourth Homily on John), the importunities of the Asiatic bishops obtained, from the last surviving apostle, a confirmation of their faith. “*Coactus est*,” are the words of Jerome, “de Divinitate Salvatoris alius scribere.” There are other mistakes in M. Guizot’s note, on which it is not necessary to dilate. He concludes, however, by admitting, that the philosophy of the age “greatly favoured the progress of Christianity, although during the two first centuries, the fathers of the church were led by it to a doctrine tending to that which was afterwards held by Arius.”—Ed.]

* See Beausobre, *Hist. Critique du Manichéisme*, tom. i, p. 377. The Gospel according to St. John is supposed to have been published about seventy years after the death of Christ. † The sentiments of the Ebionites are fairly stated by Mosheim (p. 331,) and Le Clerc, (*Hist. Eccles.* p. 535.) The Clementines, published among the apostolical fathers, are attributed by the critics to one of these sectaries.

‡ Staunch polemic, like Bull (*Judicium Eccles. Cathol.* c. 2), insist

and imperfect. They revered Jesus as the greatest of the prophets, endowed with supernatural virtue and power. They ascribed to his person and to his future reign all the predictions of the Hebrew oracles which relate to the spiritual and everlasting kingdom of the promised Messiah.* Some of them might confess that he was born of a virgin; but they obstinately rejected the preceding existence and divine perfections of the *Logos*, or Son of God, which are so clearly defined in the Gospel of St. John. About fifty years afterwards, the Ebionites, whose errors are mentioned by Justin Martyr with less severity than they seem to deserve,† formed a very inconsiderable portion of the Christian name. II. The Gnostics, who were distinguished by the epithet of *Docetes*, deviated into the contrary extreme; and betrayed the human, while they asserted the divine, nature of Christ.‡ Educated in the school of Plato,

on the orthodoxy of the Nazarenes: which appears less pure and certain in the eyes of Mosheim, p. 330.

* The humble condition and sufferings of Jesus, have always been a stumbling-block to the Jews. "Deus . . . contrariis coloribus Messiam depinxerat; futurus erat Rex, Judex, Pastor," &c. See Limborch et Orobio Amica Collat. p. 8. 19, 53—76, 192—234. But this objection has obliged the believing Christians to lift up their eyes to a spiritual and everlasting kingdom. † Justin. Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryphonte, p. 143, 144. See Le Clerc. Hist. Eccles. p. 615. Bull, and his editor Grabe (Judicium Eccles. Cathol. c. 7, and appendix), attempt to distort either the sentiments or the words of Justin; but their violent correction of the text is rejected even by the Benedictine editors.

‡ Most of the Docetes rejected the actual divinity of Jesus Christ, as well as his human nature; they rank among the Gnostics, whose opinions some philosophers derive from those of Plato, and in this Gibbon concurs. These philosophers did not consider that Platonism had undergone continual alterations; and that those which gave it some resemblance to Gnosticism were made subsequently to the recognized birth of the sects comprehended under that name. They are proved by Mosheim to have originated in a combination of oriental philosophy with the cabalistic philosophy of the Jews. (Inst. Hist. Ecc. maj. sec. 1, p. 136. 339.) There is an evident coincidence between their doctrines and our remaining memorials of those entertained by eastern nations, like the Chaldeans and Persians; the errors of the Christian Gnostics arose from their desire to reconcile these ancient tenets with their new faith. Therefore, while denying the human nature of Christ, they denied also his intimate union with God, and believed him to be no more than one of the *substances* (*æons*) created by God. In their system, matter was eternal, and *the principle of evil*; it was opposed to the Deity, the first cause and *principle of good*; they would not admit that a pure substance, one of the *æons*,

accustomed to the sublime idea of the *Logos*, they readily conceived that the brightest *æon*, or *emanation* of the Deity, might assume the outward shape and visible appearances of a mortal;* but they vainly pretended that the imperfections of matter are incompatible with the purity of a celestial substance. While the blood of Christ yet smoked on mount Calvary, the Docetes invented the impious and extravagant hypothesis, that instead of issuing from the womb of the Virgin,† he had descended on the banks of the Jordan in the form of perfect manhood; that

emanating from the Deity, had, by uniting itself to a material nature, contracted an alliance with the principle of evil. This was their reason for rejecting the real human nature of Jesus Christ. (Walch. Hist. of Heresies. Germ. edit. vol. i, p. 217. Brucker. Hist. Philos. tom. ii, p. 639.)—GUIZOT. [Some modifications of Platonism had undoubtedly been made in the course of four centuries, especially by the New Academy; but its fundamental principles remained the same, and to a certain extent, even the school of Aristotle was but one of its branches. In the Augustan æra, this philosophy became more widely known, and had more various constructions put on its mysterious doctrines. This, as observed in a former note, gave rise to Gnosticism, in the fifty subdivisions of which there must have been such a medley of opinions, that some might be picked out of them to suit any theory. We must look only at the broad facts of the case. If Mosheim's idea had been correct, Gnosticism ought to have prevailed most in Palestine. Instead of this, its adherents "were almost without exception of the race of the Gentiles:" they were the most anti-Jewish, too, in their notions, denying the "divine legation" of Moses, disputing and even ridiculing many portions of the Hebrew scriptures, and severely criticising the history of the people. On the other hand, he has greatly overrated the influence of oriental philosophy, which few but himself have been able to perceive. (See the note of his English translator, Inst. of Ecc. Hist. vol. i, p. 68.) Some infusion of it there may have been. But when Manes tried this more copiously, it was a secondary object with him to form a Christian sect; his first was, to construct a Christianity which the Persians might receive. (Beausobre, l. 2, c. 2, p. 179.) It can then have been only from various constructions of their own philosophy, that "the most polite, the most learned, and the most wealthy" of the Christian Greeks derived those tenets, to which the appellation of Gnosticism was given. If, at an after period, Ammonius Saccas conformed to any of these his New Platonism, which is apparently the later change alluded to by M. Guizot, this indicates more clearly the original source.—ED.] * The Arians reproached the orthodox party with borrowing their trinity from the Valentinians and Marcionites. See Beausobre, Hist. du Manichéisme, l. 3, c. 5—7.

† Non dignum est ex utero credere Deum et Deum Christum . . . non dignum est ut tanta majestas per sordes et squalores mulieris transire credatur. The Gnostics asserted the impurity of matter and of

he had imposed on the senses of his enemies, and of his disciples; and that the ministers of Pilate had wasted their impotent rage on an airy phantom, who *seemed* to expire on the cross, and after three days to rise from the dead.*

The divine sanction which the apostle had bestowed on the fundamental principle of the theology of Plato, encouraged the learned proselytes of the second and third centuries to admire and study the writings of the Athenian sage, who had thus marvellously anticipated one of the most surprising discoveries of the Christian revelation. The respectable name of Plato was used by the orthodox,†

marriage; and they were scandalized by the gross interpretations of the fathers, and even of Augustin himself. See Beausobre, tom. ii, p. 523.

* *Apostolis adhuc in sæculo superstitibus apud Judæam Christi sanguine recente, et phantasma corpus Domini asserebatur.* Cotelierius thinks (*Patres Apostol.* tom. ii, p. 24,) that those who will not allow the *Docetes* to have arisen in the time of the apostles, may with equal reason deny that the sun shines at noon-day. These *Docetes*, who formed the most considerable party among the Gnostics, were so called, because they granted only a *seeming* body to Christ. [The name of Docetes was not given to these sectaries, till some time in the second century. It did not properly designate a sect so called, but was applied to all the sects that held the natural body of Jesus Christ to be unreal: such were the Valentinians, the Basilidians, the Ophites, the Marionites, against whom Tertullian wrote his Treatise, *De Carne Christi*, and some other Gnostics. A sect of Docetes is indeed expressly mentioned by Clemens Alexandrinus (*Stromat.* l. 3, c. 13, p. 552,) and one Cassianus is named among its leaders; but all circumstances concur to make us think that this was not a separate sect. Philastrius (*de Hæres.* c. 31) reproaches Saturninus for being a Docete. Irenæus (*adv. Hæres.* c. 23) condemns Basilides for the same. Epiphanius and Philastrius, who have fully particularized each heresy, make no special mention of any Docetes. The bishop of Antioch, Serapion, (*Euseb. Hist. Ecc.* l. 4, c. 12) and Clemens Alexandrinus, (*Stromat.* l. 7, p. 900) seem to be the first who used it as a generic name; it is found in no earlier record, although the error which it designated existed in the time of the apostles. (*Walch. Hist. of Heresies*, vol. i, p. 233. *Tillemont. Mém. pour servir à l'Hist. Ecc.* tom. ii, p. 50. *Buddæus. de Ecc. Apost.* c. 5, § 7.)—GUIZOT.] [Gibbon's words do not imply, that the Docetes were a separate sect, but that the term denoted the holders of an opinion, common to the largest portion of the fifty sects into which Gnosticism was divided. The early origin and philosophical character of these variations of Christianity are here placed beyond all doubt.—ED.] † Some proofs of the respect which the Christians entertained for the person and doctrine of Plato, may be found in *De la Mothe le Vayer*, v. 135, &c. edit. 1757; and *Basnage, Hist. des Juifs*, iv, 29, 79, &c. [They studied the Greek philosophers *before* they became Christians, and used them in training others to believe. Examples of this

and abused by the heretics,* as the common support of truth and error: the authority of his skilful commentators, and the science of dialectics, were employed to justify the remote consequences of his opinions, and to supply the discreet silence of the inspired writers. The same subtle and profound questions, concerning the nature, the generation, the distinction, and the equality, of the three divine persons of the mysterious *Triad*, or *Trinity*,† were agitated in the philosophical and in the Christian schools of Alexandria. An eager spirit of curiosity urged them to explore the secrets of the abyss; and the pride of the professors, and of their disciples, was satisfied with the science of words. But the most sagacious of the Christian theologians, the great Athanasius himself, has candidly confessed,‡ that whenever he forced his understanding to meditate on the divinity of the *Logos*, his toilsome and unavailing efforts recoiled on themselves; that the more he thought, the less he comprehended: and the more he wrote the less capable was he of expressing his thoughts. In every step of the inquiry, we are compelled to feel and acknowledge the immeasurable disproportion between the size of the object and the capacity of the human mind. We may strive to abstract the notions of time, of space, and of matter, which so closely adhere to all the perceptions of our experimental knowledge; but as soon as we presume to reason of infinite substance, of spiritual generation; as often as we deduce any positive conclusions from a negative idea, we are involved in darkness, perplexity, and inevitable contradiction. As these difficulties arise from the nature

have been given in former notes, to which many more might be added. —ED.] * *Doleo bona fide, Platonem omnium hereticorum condimentarium factum.* Tertullian. de Anima, c. 23. Petavius (Dogm. Theolog. tom. iii, proleg. 2^o) shews that this was a general complaint. Beausobre (tom. i, l. 3, c. 9, 10), has deduced the Gnostic errors from Platonic principles; and as, in the school of Alexandria, those principles were blended with the Oriental philosophy (Brucker, tom. i, p. 1356), the sentiment of Beausobre may be reconciled with the opinion of Mosheim, General History of the Church, vol. i, p. 37.

† If Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, (see Dupin, Bibliothèque Ecclésiastique, tom. i, p. 66,) was the first who employed the word *Triad*, *Trinity*, that abstract term, which was already familiar to the schools of philosophy, must have been introduced into the theology of the Christians after the middle of the second century. ‡ Athanasius, tom. i,

808. His expressions have an uncommon energy; and as he was

of the subject, they oppress, with the same insuperable weight, the philosophic and the theological disputant; but we may observe two essential and peculiar circumstances, which discriminated the doctrines of the Catholic church from the opinions of the Platonic school.

I. A chosen society of philosophers, men of a liberal education and curious disposition, might silently meditate, and temperately discuss, in the gardens of Athens, or the library of Alexandria, the abstruse questions of metaphysical science. The lofty speculations, which neither convinced the understanding, nor agitated the passions, of the Platonists themselves, were carelessly overlooked by the idle, the busy, and even the studious part of mankind.* But after the *Logos* had been revealed as the sacred object of the faith, the hope, and the religious worship of the Christians, the mysterious system was embraced by a numerous and increasing multitude in every province of the Roman world. Those persons who, from their age, or sex, or occupations, were the least qualified to judge, who were the least exercised in the habits of abstract reasoning, aspired to contemplate the economy of the divine nature; and it is the boast of Tertullian,† that a Christian mechanic could readily answer such questions as had perplexed the wisest of the Grecian sages. Where the subject lies so far beyond our reach, the difference between the highest and the lowest of human understandings may indeed be calculated as infinitely small; yet the degree of weakness may perhaps be measured by the degree of obstinacy and dogmatic confidence. These speculations, instead of being treated as the amusement of a vacant hour, became the most serious business of the present, and the most useful preparation for a future life. A theology, which it was incumbent to believe, which it was impious to doubt, and which it might be dangerous, and even fatal, to mistake, became the familiar

writing to monks, there could not be any occasion for him to affect a rational language. * In a treatise which professed to explain the opinions of the ancient philosophers concerning the nature of the gods, we might expect to discover the theological trinity of Plato. But Cicero very honestly confessed, that although he had translated the *Timæus*, he could never understand that mysterious dialogue. See Hieronym. præf. ad l. 12, in *Isaian*, tom. v, p. 154. † Tertullian in *Apolog.* c. 46. See Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, au mot *Simonde*. His remarks on the presumption of Tertullian are profound and interesting.

topic of private meditation and popular discourse. The cold indifference of philosophy was inflamed by the fervent spirit of devotion; and even the metaphors of common language suggested the fallacious prejudices of sense and experience. The Christians, who abhorred the gross and impure generation of the Greek mythology,* were tempted to argue from the familiar analogy of the filial and paternal relations. The character of *Son* seemed to imply a perpetual subordination to the voluntary author of his existence;† but as the act of generation, in the most spiritual and abstracted sense, must be supposed to transmit the properties of a common nature,‡ they durst not presume to circumscribe the powers or the duration of the Son of an eternal and omnipotent Father. Fourscore years after the death of Christ, the Christians of Bithynia declared, before the tribunal of Pliny, that they invoked him as a God; and his divine honours have been perpetuated in every age and country, by the various sects who assume the name of his disciples.§ Their tender reverence for the memory of Christ, and their horror for the profane worship of any created being, would have engaged them to assert the equal and absolute divinity of the *Logos*, if their rapid ascent towards the throne of heaven had not been imperceptibly checked by the apprehension of violating the unity and sole supremacy of the great Father of Christ and of the universe. The suspense and fluctuation produced in the minds of the Christians, by these opposite tendencies, may be observed in the writings of the theologians who flourished after the end of the apostolic age, and before the origin of

* Lactantius, 4. 8. Yet the *Probole* or *Prolatio*, which the most orthodox divines borrowed without scruple from the Valentinians, and illustrated by the comparisons of a fountain and stream, the sun and its rays, &c. either meant nothing, or favoured a material idea of the divine generation. See Beausobre, tom. i, l. 3, c. 7, p. 548.

† Many of the primitive writers have frankly confessed, that the Son owed his being to the *will* of the Father. See Clarke's Scripture Trinity, p. 280—287. On the other hand, Athanasius and his followers seem unwilling to grant what they are afraid to deny. The schoolmen extricate themselves from this difficulty by the distinction of a *preceding* and a *concomitant* will. Petav. Dogm. Theolog. tom. ii, l. 6, c. 8, p. 587—603. ‡ See Petav. Dogm. Theolog. tom. ii, l. 2, c. 10, p. 159.

§ Carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem. Plin. Epist. 10. 97. The sense of *Deus*, Θεός, *Elohim*, in the ancient languages, is critically examined by Le Clerc (*Ars Critica*, p. 150—156), and the

the Arian controversy. Their suffrage is claimed with equal confidence, by the orthodox and by the heretical parties; and the most inquisitive critics have fairly allowed, that if they had the good fortune of possessing the Catholic verity, they have delivered their conceptions in loose, inaccurate, and sometimes contradictory language.*

II. The devotion of individuals was the first circumstance which distinguished the Christians from the Platonists; the second was the authority of the church. The disciples of philosophy asserted the rights of intellectual freedom, and their respect for the sentiments of their teachers was a liberal and voluntary tribute, which they offered to superior reason. But the Christians formed a numerous and disciplined society; and the jurisdiction of their laws and magistrates was strictly exercised over the minds of the faithful. The loose wanderings of the imagination were gradually confined by creeds and confessions; † the freedom of private judgment submitted to the public wisdom of synods; the authority of a theologian was determined by his ecclesiastical rank; and the episcopal successors of the apostles inflicted the censures of the church on those who deviated from the orthodox belief. But in an age of religious controversy, every act of oppression adds new force to the elastic vigour of the mind; and the zeal or obstinacy of a spiritual rebel was sometimes stimulated by secret motives of ambition or avarice. A metaphysical argument became the cause or pretence of political contests; the subtleties of the Platonic school were used as the badges of popular factions; and the distance which separated their respective tenets was enlarged or magnified by the acrimony of dispute. As long as the dark heresies of Praxeas and Sabellius laboured to confound the *Father* with the *Son*, ‡

propriety of worshipping a very excellent creature is ably defended by the Socinian Emlyn. (Tracts, p. 29—36, 51—145.) * See Daillé de Usu Patrum, and Le Clerc, Bibliothèque Universelle, tom. x, p. 409. To arraign the faith of the Anti-Nicene fathers, was the object, or at least has been the effect, of the stupendous work of Petavius on the Trinity (Dogm. Theolog. tom. ii); nor has the deep impression been erased by the learned defence of bishop Bull. † The most ancient creeds were drawn up with the greatest latitude. See Bull (Judicium Eccles. Cathol.), who tries to prevent Episcopius from deriving any advantage from this observation. ‡ The heresies of Praxeas, Sabellius, &c. are accurately explained by Mosheim. (p. 425, 680—714.) Praxeas, who came to Rome about the end of the second century,

the orthodox party might be excused if they adhered more strictly and more earnestly to the *distinction*, than to the *equality*, of the divine persons. But as soon as the heat of controversy had subsided, and the progress of the Sabellians was no longer an object of terror to the churches of Rome, of Africa, or of Egypt, the tide of theological opinion began to flow with a gentle but steady motion towards the contrary extreme; and the most orthodox doctors allowed themselves the use of the terms and definitions which had been censured in the mouth of the sectaries.* After the edict of toleration had restored peace and leisure to the Christians, the Trinitarian controversy was revived in the ancient seat of Platonism, the learned, the opulent, the tumultuous, city of Alexandria; and the flame of religious discord was rapidly communicated from the schools to the clergy, the people, the province, and the east. The abstruse question of the eternity of the *Logos* was agitated in ecclesiastical conferences, and popular sermons; and the heterodox opinions of Arius† were soon made public by his own zeal and by that of his adversaries. His most implacable adversaries have acknowledged the learning and blameless life of that eminent presbyter, who, in a former election, had declared, and perhaps generously declined, his pretensions to the episcopal throne.‡ His competitor, Alexander, assumed the office of his judge. The important cause was argued before him; and if at first he seemed to hesitate, he at length pronounced his final sentence, as an absolute rule of faith.§ The undaunted presbyter, who presumed to resist the authority of his angry bishop, was separated from the communion of the church; but the

deceived for some time the simplicity of the bishop, and was confuted by the pen of the angry Tertullian.

* Socrates acknowledges, that the heresy of Arius proceeded from his strong desire to embrace an opinion the most diametrically opposite to that of Sabellius. † The figure and manners of Arius, the character and numbers of his first proselytes, are painted in very lively colours by Epiphanius (tom. i, Hæres. 69. 3, p. 729); and we cannot but regret that he should soon forget the historian, to assume the task of controversy. ‡ See Philostorgius (lib. 1. c. 3) and Godefroy's ample Commentary. § Yet the credibility of Philostorgius is lessened,

in the eyes of the orthodox, by his Arianism, and of those of rational critics by his passion, his prejudice, and his ignorance. § Sozomen (lib. 1, c. 15) represents Alexander as indifferent, and even ignorant, in the beginning of the controversy; while Socrates (lib. 1, c. 5) ascribes the origin of the dispute to the vain curiosity of his theological specu-

pride of Arius was supported by the applause of a numerous party. He reckoned among his immediate followers, two bishops of Egypt, seven presbyters, twelve deacons and (what may appear almost incredible) seven hundred virgins. A large majority of the bishops of Asia appeared to support or favour his cause; and their measures were conducted by Eusebius of Cæsarea, the most learned of the Christian prelates; and by Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had acquired the reputation of a statesman without forfeiting that of a saint. Synods in Palestine and Bithynia were opposed to the synods of Egypt. The attention of the prince and people was attracted by this theological dispute; and the decision, at the end of six years,* was referred to the supreme authority of the general council of Nice.

When the mysteries of the Christian faith were dangerously exposed to public debate, it might be observed, that the human understanding was capable of forming three distinct, though imperfect, systems, concerning the nature of the divine Trinity; and it was pronounced, that none of these systems, in a pure and absolute sense, were exempt from heresy and error.† I. According to the first hypothesis, which was maintained by Arius and his disciples, the *Logos* was a dependent and spontaneous production, created from nothing by the will of the Father. The Son, by whom all things were made,‡ had been begotten before all worlds,

lations. Dr. Jortin (Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii, p. 178) has censured, with his usual freedom, the conduct of Alexander; *πρὸς ὄργην ἐξαπύεται . . . ὁμοίως φρόνειν ἐκέλευσε.* * The flames of

Arianism might burn for some time in secret; but there is reason to believe that they burst out with violence as early as the year 319. Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.* tom. vi. p. 774—780. † Quid credidit?

Certe, *aut* tria nomina audiens tres Deos esse credidit, et idololatra effectus est; *aut* in tribus vocabulis trinominem credens Deum, in Sabellii hæresi incurrit; *aut* edoctus ab Arianis unum esse verum Deum Patrem, Filium et Spiritum Sanctum credidit creaturas. *Aut* extra hæc credere potuerit nescio. (Hieronym. adv. Luciferianos.) [What did he believe? Certainly, *either* hearing three names, he believed that there were three Gods, and so became an idolater; *or*, believing that the three words were three names of one God, he fell into Sabellianism; *or*, taught by the Arians, he believed that there was only one true God, the Father, and that the Son and the Holy Ghost were created beings. What else he could have believed, I know not.—Trans. by Ed.] Jerome reserves for the last the orthodox system, which is more complicated and difficult.

‡ As the doctrine of absolute creation from nothing, was gradually introduced among the Christians (Beaumont, tom. 2, p. 165—215), the dignity of the *workman* very naturally

and the longest of the astronomical periods could be compared only as a fleeting moment to the extent of his duration; yet this duration was not infinite,* and there *had* been a time which preceded the ineffable generation of the *Logos*. On this only begotten Son the Almighty Father had transfused his ample spirit, and impressed the effulgence of his glory. Visible image of invisible perfection, he saw, at an immeasurable distance beneath his feet, the thrones of the brightest archangels; yet he shone only with a reflected light, and, like the sons of the Roman emperors, who were invested with the titles of Cæsar or Augustus,† he governed the universe in obedience to the will of his Father and Monarch. II. In the second hypothesis, the *Logos* possessed all the inherent, incommunicable perfections, which religion and philosophy appropriate to the Supreme God. Three distinct and infinite minds or substances, three coequal and coeternal beings, composed the divine essence;‡ and it would have implied contradiction, that any of them should not have existed, or that they should ever cease to exist.§ The advocates of a system which seemed to establish three independent deities, attempted to preserve the unity of the First Cause, so conspicuous in the design and order of the world, by the perpetual concord of their administration, and the essential agreement of their will. A faint resemblance of this unity of action may be discovered in the societies of men, and even of animals. The causes which disturb their harmony proceed only from the imperfection and inequality of their faculties; but the omnipotence, which is guided by infinite wisdom and goodness, cannot fail of choosing the same means for the accomplishment of the same ends. III. Three beings, who, by the self-derived necessity of their existence, possess all the divine attributes in their

rose with that of the *work*. * The metaphysics of Dr. Clarke (Scripture Trinity, p. 276—280) could digest an eternal generation from an infinite cause.

† This profane and absurd simile is employed by several of the primitive fathers, particularly by Athenagoras, in his apology to the emperor Marcus and his son; and it is alleged, without censure, by Bull himself. See *Defens. Fid. Nicen.* s. 3, c. 5. No. 4.

‡ See Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, p. 559, 579. This dangerous hypothesis was countenanced by the two Gregories, of Nyssa and Nazianzen, by Cyril of Alexandria, John of Damascus, &c. See Cudworth, p. 603. Le Clerc, *Bibliothèque Universelle*, tom. xviii, p. 97—105.

§ Augustin seems to envy the freedom of the philosophers. *Liberis verbis loquuntur philosophi . . . Nos autem non dicimus duo vel tria principia, duos vel tres Deos.* de *Civitat. Dei*, 10, 23.

most perfect degree; who are eternal in duration, infinite in space, and intimately present to each other, and to the whole universe; irresistibly force themselves on the astonished mind, as one and the same Being,* who, in the economy of grace, as well as in that of nature, may manifest himself under different forms, and be considered under different aspects. By this hypothesis, a real substantial Trinity is refined into a trinity of names, and abstract modifications, that subsist only in the mind which conceives them. The *Logos* is no longer a person, but an attribute; and it is only in a figurative sense that the epithet of Son can be applied to the eternal reason which was with God from the beginning, and by *which*, not by *whom*, all things were made. The incarnation of the *Logos* is reduced to a mere inspiration of the divine wisdom, which filled the soul, and directed all the actions of the man Jesus. Thus, after revolving round the theological circle, we are surprised to find that the Sabellian ends where the Ebionite had begun; and that the incomprehensible mystery which excites our adoration eludes our inquiry.†

If the bishops of the council of Nice‡ had been permitted

* Boetius, who was deeply versed in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, explains the unity of the Trinity by the *indifference* of the three persons. See the judicious remarks of Le Clerc, *Bibliothèque Choisie*, tom. xvi, p. 225, &c. † If the Sabellians were startled at this conclusion, they were driven down another precipice into the confession, that the Father was born of a virgin, that *he* had suffered on the cross; and thus deserved the odious epithet of *Patri-passians*, with which they were branded by their adversaries. See the invectives of Tertullian against Praxeas, and the temperate reflections of Mosheim (p. 423. 681) and Beausobre (tom. i, lib. 3, c. 6, p. 533). ‡ The transactions of the council of Nice are related by the ancients, not only in a partial, but in a very imperfect manner. Such a picture as Fra. Paolo would have drawn can never be recovered; but such rude sketches as have been traced by the pencil of bigotry, and that of reason, may be seen in Tillemont (*Mém. Eccles.* tom. v, p. 669—759) and in Le Clerc. (*Bibliothèque Universelle*, tom. x, p. 435—454.) [That the decisions of councils should be considered as so authoritative, must appear extraordinary to those who examine the truth of their history. The following words of Neander on this subject, in his *History of Christianity* (vol. iii, p. 189, Bohn,) may be of use to the thoughtful: "However emphatically the emperors might declare, that the bishops alone were entitled to decide in matters of doctrine, still *human passions proved mightier than theoretical forms*. Although these councils were to serve as organs, to express the decision of the Divine Spirit, yet the Byzantine court had already prejudged the question, as to which party ought

to follow the unbiassed dictates of their conscience, Arius and his associates could scarcely have flattered themselves with the hopes of obtaining a majority of votes, in favour of an hypothesis so directly adverse to the two most popular opinions of the Catholic world. The Arians soon perceived the danger of their situation, and prudently assumed those modest virtues, which, in the fury of civil and religious dissensions, are seldom practised, or even praised, except by the weaker party. They recommended the exercise of Christian charity and moderation; urged the incomprehensible nature of the controversy; disclaimed the use of any terms or definitions which could not be found in the Scriptures; and offered by very liberal concessions, to satisfy their adversaries, without renouncing the integrity of their own principles. The victorious faction received all their proposals with haughty suspicion, and anxiously sought for some irreconcilable mark of distinction, the rejection of which might involve the Arians in the guilt and consequences of heresy. A letter was publicly read, and ignominiously torn, in which their patron, Eusebius of Nicomedia, ingenuously confessed, that the admission of the *homoousion*, or consubstantial, a word already familiar to the Platonists, was incompatible with the principles of their theological system. The fortunate opportunity was eagerly embraced by the bishops, who governed the resolutions of the synod; and, according to the lively expression of

to be considered pious and which impious, whenever it could be contrived to gain over the court, in favour of any particular doctrinal interest. Before the assembling of the council of Nice, Constantine had been persuaded that the Arian doctrine contained a blasphemy against the divinity of Christ, and that the *ὁμοούσιον* was absolutely required, in order to maintain the dignity of Christ's person. When the court persecuted *one* of the contending doctrinal parties, merely out of dislike to the man who stood at the head of it, then the doctrinal question was turned into a means of gratifying personal grudges. At the first council of Ephesus, the revenge of Pulcheria, who governed the imperial court, turned the doctrinal controversy into the means of removing the patriarch Nestorius from Constantinople. The emperors were under no necessity of employing force against the bishops; by indirect means they could sufficiently influence the minds of all those, with whom worldly interests stood for more than the cause of truth, or who were not yet superior to the fear of man. It was nothing but the influence of the emperor Constantine which induced the eastern bishops at the council of Nice, to suffer the imposition of a doctrinal

Ambrose,* they used the sword, which heresy itself had drawn from the scabbard, to cut off the head of the hated monster. The consubstantiality of the Father and the Son was established by the council of Nice, and has been unanimously received as a fundamental article of the Christian faith by the consent of the Greek, the Latin, the Oriental, and the Protestant churches. But if the same word had not served to stigmatise the heretics, and to unite the Catholics, it would have been inadequate to the purpose of the majority, by whom it was introduced into the orthodox creed. This majority was divided into two parties, distinguished by a contrary tendency to the sentiments of the Tritheists and of the Sabellians. But as those opposite extremes seemed to overthrow the foundations either of natural or revealed religion, they mutually agreed to qualify the rigour of their principles; and to disavow the just, but invidious, consequences, which might be urged by their antagonists. The interest of the common cause inclined them to join their numbers, and to conceal their differences: their animosity was softened by the healing councils of toleration, and their disputes were suspended by the use of the mysterious *Homoousion* which either party was free to interpret according to their peculiar tenets. The Sabellian sense, which, about fifty years before, had obliged the council of Antioch† to prohibit this celebrated term, had endeared it to those theologians who entertained a secret but partial affection for a nominal Trinity. But the more fashionable saints of the Arian times, the intrepid Athanasius, the learned Gregory Nazianzen, and the other pillars of the church, who supported with ability and success the Nicene doctrine, appeared to consider the expression of *substance* as if it had been synonymous with that of *nature*; and they ventured to

formula, which they detested, and from which indeed they sought immediately to rid themselves." The secular interests, which thus prevailed under the guise of orthodoxy, were themselves secretly impelled by the intrigues and instructions of the ambitious spirituals who wanted to debase their rivals. Ecclesiastical history requires honest expositors and unprejudiced students.—ED.]

* We are indebted to Ambrose (de Fide, lib 3, cap. ult.) for the knowledge of this curious anecdote. Hoc verbum posuerunt patres, quod viderunt adversariis esse formidini; ut tanquam evaginato ab ipsis gladio, ipsum nefandæ caput hereseos amputarent.

† See Bull, Defens. Fid. Nicen. sect. 2. c. 1, p. 25—36. He thinks it his duty to reconcile two

illustrate their meaning, by affirming that three men, as they belong to the same common species, are consubstantial or homoousian to each other.* This pure and distinct equality was tempered, on the one hand, by the internal connexion, and spiritual penetration, which indissolubly unites the Divine Persons,† and, on the other, by the pre-eminence of the Father, which was acknowledged as far as it is compatible with the independence of the Son.‡ Within these limits the almost invisible and tremulous ball of orthodoxy was allowed securely to vibrate. On either side, beyond this consecrated ground, the heretics and the demons lurked in ambush to surprise and devour the unhappy wanderer. But as the degrees of theological hatred depend on the spirit of the war, rather than on the importance of the controversy, the heretics who degraded, were treated with more severity than those who annihilated, the person of the Son. The life of Athanasius was consumed in irreconcilable opposition to the impious *madness* of the Arians;§ but he defended above twenty years the Sabellianism of Marcellus of Ancyra; and when at last he was compelled to withdraw himself from his communion, he continued to mention with an ambiguous smile, the venial errors of his respectable friend.¶

The authority of a general council, to which the Arians themselves had been compelled to submit, inscribed on the banners of the orthodox party the mysterious characters of

orthodox synods. * According to Aristotle, the stars were homoousian to each other. "That *Homoousios* means of one substance in *kind*, hath been shewn by Petavius, Curcellæus, Cudworth, Le Clerc, &c. and to prove it would be *actum agere*." This is the just remark of Dr. Jortin (vol. ii, p. 212), who examines the Arian controversy with learning, candour, and ingenuity. † See Petavius (Dogm. Theolog. tom. ii, lib. 4, c. 16, p. 453, &c.), Cudworth (p. 559), and Bull (sect. 4, p. 285—290, edit. Grab.) The *περιχώρησις*, *circumincessio*, is perhaps the deepest and darkest corner of the whole theological abyss.

‡ The third section of Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith, which some of his antagonists have called nonsense, and others heresy, is consecrated to the supremacy of the Father. § The ordinary appellation with which Athanasius and his followers chose to compliment the Arians, was that of *Ariomanites*. ¶ Epiphanius, tom. i, Hæres. 72, 4, p. 837. See the adventures of Marcellus, in Tillemont (*Mém. Eccles.* tom. vii, p. 880—899). His works in *one* book, of the unity of God, was answered in the *three* books, which are still extant, of Eusebius. After a long and careful examination, Petavius (tom. ii,

the word *Homoousion*, which essentially contributed, notwithstanding some obscure disputes, some nocturnal combats, to maintain and perpetuate the uniformity of faith, or at least of language. The Consubstantialists, who by their success have deserved and obtained the title of Catholics, gloried in the simplicity and steadiness of their own creed, and insulted the repeated variations of their adversaries, who were destitute of any certain rule of faith. The sincerity or the cunning of the Arian chiefs, the fear of the laws or of the people, their reverence for Christ, their hatred of Athanasius, all the causes, human and divine, that influence and disturb the counsels of a theological faction, introduced among the sectaries a spirit of discord and inconstancy, which, in the course of a few years, erected eighteen different models of religion,* and avenged the violated dignity of the church. The zealous Hilary,† who, from the peculiar hardships of his situation, was inclined to extenuate rather than to aggravate the errors of the oriental clergy, declares, that in the wide extent of the ten provinces of Asia, to which he had been banished, there could be found very few prelates who had preserved the knowledge of the true God.‡ The oppression which he had felt, the disorders of which he was the spectator and the victim, appeased, during a short interval, the angry passions of his soul; and in the following passage, of which I shall transcribe a few lines, the bishop of Poitiers unwarily deviates into the style of a Christian philosopher. "It is a thing," says Hilary, "equally deplorable and dangerous, that there are as many creeds as opinions among men, as many doctrines as inclinations, and as many sources of blasphemy as there are faults among us;

lib. 1, c. 14, p. 78) has reluctantly pronounced the condemnation of Marcellus. * Athanasius, in his epistle concerning the synods of Seleucia and Rimini (tom. i, p. 886—905) has given an ample list of Arian creeds, which has been enlarged and improved by the labours of the indefatigable Tillemont. (Mem. Eccles. tom. vi, p. 477.)

† Erasmus, with admirable sense and freedom, has delineated the just character of Hilary. To revise his text, to compose the annals of his life, and to justify his sentiments and conduct is the province of the Benedictine editors. ‡ Absque episcopo Eleusio et paucis cum eo, ex majore parte Asiæ decem provinciæ, inter quas consisto, vere Deum nesciunt. Atque utinam penitus nescirent! cum proclivore enim veniã ignorarent quam obtrectarent. Hilar. de Synodis, sive de Fide Orientalium, c. 63, p. 1186, edit. Benedict. In the celebrated parallel between Atheism and superstition, the bishop of Poitiers

because we make creeds arbitrarily, and explain them as arbitrarily. The Homousion is rejected, and received, and explained away by successive synods. The partial or total resemblance of the Father and of the Son, is a subject of dispute, for these unhappy times. Every year, nay every moon, we make new creeds, to describe invisible mysteries. We repent of what we have done, we defend those who repent, we anathematize those whom we defended. We condemn either the doctrine of others in ourselves, or our own in that of others; and reciprocally tearing one another to pieces, we have been the cause of each other's ruin.'*"

It will not be expected, it would not perhaps be endured, that I should swell this theological digression, by a minute examination of the eighteen creeds, the authors of which, for the most part, disclaimed the odious name of their parent Arius. It is amusing enough to delineate the form, and to trace the vegetation, of a singular plant; but the tedious detail of leaves without flowers, and of branches without fruit, would soon exhaust the patience, and disappoint the curiosity, of the laborious student. One question which gradually arose from the Arian controversy may, however, be noticed, as it served to produce and discriminate the three sects, who were united only by their common aversion to the Homousion of the Nicene synod. 1. If they were asked, whether the Son was *like* unto the Father, the question was resolutely answered in the negative by the heretics who adhered to the principles of Arius, or indeed to those of philosophy; which seem to establish an infinite difference between the Creator and the most excellent of his creatures. This obvious consequence was maintained by Ætius,† on whom the zeal of his adversaries bestowed the surname of the Atheist. His restless and aspiring spirit urged him to try almost every profession of human life. He was successively a slave, or at least a husband-

would have been surprised in the philosophic society of Bayle and Plutarch. * Hilarius ad Constantium, lib. 1, c. 4, 5, p. 1227, 1228.

This remarkable passage deserved the attention of Mr. Locke, who has transcribed it (vol. iii, p. 470) into the model of his new common-place book. † In Philostorgius (lib. 3, c. 15) the character and adventures of Ætius appear singular enough, though they are carefully softened by the hand of a friend. The editor Godefroy (p. 153), who was more attached to his principles than to his author, has collected the odious circumstances which his various adversaries have preserved or

man, a travelling tinker, a goldsmith, a physician, a schoolmaster, a theologian, and at last the apostle of a new church, which was propagated by the abilities of his disciple Eunomius.* Armed with texts of Scripture, and with captious syllogisms from the logic of Aristotle, the subtle Ætius had acquired the fame of an invincible disputant, whom it was impossible either to silence or to convince. Such talents engaged the friendship of the Arian bishops, till they were forced to renounce, and even to persecute, a dangerous ally, who, by the accuracy of his reasoning, had prejudiced their cause in the popular opinion, and offended the piety of their most devoted followers.

2. The omnipotence of the Creator suggested a specious and respectful solution of the *likeness* of the Father and the Son; and faith might humbly receive what reason could not presume to deny, that the supreme God might communicate his infinite perfections, and create a being similar only to himself.† These Arians were powerfully supported by the weight and abilities of their leaders, who had succeeded to the management of the Eusebian interest, and who occupied the principal thrones of the east. They detested, perhaps with some affectation, the impiety of Ætius; they professed to believe, either without reserve, or according to the Scriptures, that the Son was different from all *other* creatures, and similar only to the Father. But they denied that he was either of the same, or of a similar substance; sometimes boldly justifying their dissent, and sometimes objecting to the use of the word substance, which seems to imply an adequate, or at least a distinct notion of the nature of the Deity. 3. The sect which asserted the doctrine of a similar substance was the most numerous, at least in the provinces of Asia; and when the leaders of both parties were assembled in the council of

invented. * According to the judgment of a man who respected both these sectaries, Ætius had been endowed with a stronger understanding, and Eunomius had acquired more art and learning. (Philostorgius, lib. 8, c. 18.) The confession and apology of Eunomius (Fabricius, *Bibliot. Græc.* tom. viii, p. 258—305) is one of the few heretical pieces which have escaped.

† Yet, according to the opinion of Estius and Bull (p. 297), there is one power, that of creation, which God *cannot* communicate to a creature. Estius, who so accurately defined the limits of omnipotence, was a Dutchman by birth,

Seleucia,* *their* opinion would have prevailed by a majority of one hundred and five to forty-three bishops. The Greek word, which was chosen to express this mysterious resemblance, bears so close an affinity to the orthodox symbol, that the profane of every age have derided the furious contests which the difference of a single diphthong excited between the Homousians and the Homoiousians. As it frequently happens, that the sounds and characters which approach the nearest to each other accidentally represent the most opposite ideas, the observation would be itself ridiculous, if it were possible to mark any real and sensible distinction between the doctrine of the Semi-Arians, as they were improperly styled, and that of the Catholics themselves. The bishop of Poitiers, who, in his Phrygian exile, very wisely aimed at a coalition of parties, endeavours to prove that, by a pious and faithful interpretation,† the *Homoiousion* may be reduced to a consubstantial sense. Yet he confesses that the word has a dark and suspicious aspect; and, as if darkness were congenial to theological disputes, the Semi-Arians, who advanced to the doors of the church, assailed them with the most unrelenting fury.

The provinces of Egypt and Asia, which cultivated the language and manners of the Greeks, had deeply imbibed the venom of the Arian controversy. The familiar study of the Platonic system, a vain and argumentative disposition, a copious and flexible idiom, supplied the clergy and people of the east with an inexhaustible flow of words and distinctions; and, in the midst of their fierce contentions they easily forgot the doubt which is recommended by philosophy, and the submission which is enjoined by religion. The inhabitants of the west were of a less inquisitive spirit; their passions were not so forcibly moved by invisible objects; their minds were less frequently exercised by the habits of

and by trade a scholastic divine. Dupin, *Bibliot. Eccles.* tom. xvii, p. 45.

* Sabinus (ap. Socrat. lib. 2, c. 39) had copied the acts; Athanasius and Hilary have explained the divisions of this Arian Synod; the other circumstances which are relative to it are carefully collected by Baronius and Tillemont.

† *Fideli et piâ intelligentiâ* De Synod. c. 77, p. 1193. In his short apologetical notes (first published by the Benedictines from a MS. of Chartres) he observes, that he used this cautious expression, *qui intelligerem et impiam*, p. 1206. See p. 1146. Philostorgius, who saw those objects through a different

dispute, and such was the happy ignorance of the Gallican church, that Hilary himself, above thirty years after the first general council, was still a stranger to the Nicene creed.* The Latins had received the rays of divine knowledge through the dark and doubtful medium of a translation. The poverty and stubbornness of their native tongue was not always capable of affording just equivalents for the Greek terms, for the technical words of the Platonic philosophy,† which had been consecrated by the gospel or by the church, to express the mysteries of the Christian faith; and a verbal defect might introduce into the Latin theology a long train of error or perplexity.‡ But as the western provincials had the good fortune of deriving their religion from an orthodox source, they preserved with steadiness the doctrine which they had accepted with docility; and when the Arian pestilence approached their frontiers, they were supplied with the seasonable preservative of the Homœo-union, by the paternal care of the Roman pontiff. Their sentiments and their temper were displayed in the memorable synod of Rimini, which surpassed in numbers the council of Nice, since it was composed of above four hundred bishops of Italy, Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum. From the first debates it appeared, that only fourscore prelates adhered to the party, though *they* affected to anathematize the name and memory of Arius. But this inferiority was compensated by the advantages of skill, of experience, and of discipline; and the minority was conducted by Valens and Ursacius, two bishops of Illyricum, who had spent their lives in the intrigues of courts and councils, and who had been trained under the Eusebian

medium, is inclined to forget the difference of the important diphthong. See in particular, 8, 17, and Godefroy, p. 352. * Testor Deum cœli atque terræ me cum neutrum audissem, semper tamen utrumque sensisse . . . Regeneratur pridem et in episcopatu aliquantisper manens fidem Nicenam nunquam nisi exsulaturus audivi. Hilar. de Synodis, c. 91, p. 1205. The Benedictines are persuaded that he governed the diocese of Poitiers several years before his exile.

† Seneca (Epist. 58) complains that even the τὸ ὄν of the Platonists (the *ens* of the bolder schoolmen) could not be expressed by a Latin noun. ‡ The preference which the fourth council of the Lateran at length gave to a *numerical* rather than a *generic* unity (see Petav. tom. ii, l. 4, c. 13, p. 424) was favoured by the Latin language: τριας seems to excite the idea of substance, trinitas of qualities.

banner, in the religious wars of the east. By their arguments and negotiations, they embarrassed, they confounded, they at last deceived, the honest simplicity of the Latin bishops, who suffered the palladium of the faith to be extorted from their hands by fraud and importunity, rather than by open violence. The council of Rimini was not allowed to separate, till the members had imprudently subscribed a captious creed, in which some expressions, susceptible of an heretical sense, were inserted in the room of the Homousion. It was on this occasion, that, according to Jerome, the world was surprised to find itself Arian.* But the bishops of the Latin provinces had no sooner reached their respective dioceses, than they discovered their mistake, and repented of their weakness. The ignominious capitulation was rejected with disdain and abhorrence; and the Homousian standard, which had been shaken, but not overthrown, was more firmly replanted in all the churches of the west.†

Such was the rise and progress, and such were the natural revolutions of those theological disputes, which disturbed the peace of Christianity under the reigns of Constantine and of his sons. But as those princes presumed to extend their despotism over the faith, as well as over the lives and fortunes of their subjects, the weight of their suffrage sometimes inclined the ecclesiastical balance, and the prerogatives of the King of Heaven were settled, or changed, or modified, in the cabinet of an earthly monarch.

The unhappy spirit of discord which pervaded the provinces of the east interrupted the triumph of Constantine; but the emperor continued for some time to view, with cool and careless indifference, the object of the dispute. As he was yet ignorant of the difficulty of appeasing the quarrels of theologians, he addressed to the contending parties, to Alexander and to Arius, a moderating epistle;‡ which may

* *Ingemuit totus cœcis, et Arianum se esse miratus est.* Hieronym. adv. Lucifer, tom. i, p. 145. The story of the council of Rimini is very elegantly told by Sulpicius Severus (*Hist. Sacra* l. 2, p. 419—430, edit. Lugd. Bat. 1647), and by Jerome, in his dialogue against the Luciferians. The design of the latter is to apologize for the conduct of the Latin bishops, who were deceived, and who repented.

‡ Eusebius, in *Vit. Constant.* lib. ii, c. 64—72. The principles of toleration and religious indifference, contained in this epistle, have given great offence to Baronius, Tillemont, &c., who suppose that the

be ascribed, with far greater reason, to the untutored sense of a soldier and statesman, than to the dictates of any of his episcopal counsellors. He attributes the origin of the whole controversy to a trifling and subtle question, concerning an incomprehensible point of the law, which was foolishly asked by the bishop, and imprudently resolved by the presbyter. He laments that the Christian people, who had the same God, the same religion, and the same worship, should be divided by such inconsiderable distinctions; and he seriously recommends to the clergy of Alexandria the example of the Greek philosophers, who could maintain their arguments without losing their temper, and assert their freedom without violating their friendship. The indifference and contempt of the sovereign would have been, perhaps, the most effectual method of silencing the dispute, if the popular current had been less rapid and impetuous, and if Constantine himself, in the midst of faction and fanaticism, could have preserved the calm possession of his own mind. But his ecclesiastical ministers soon contrived to seduce the impartiality of the magistrate, and to awaken the zeal of the proselyte. He was provoked by the insults which had been offered to his statues; he was alarmed by the real, as well as the imaginary, magnitude of the spreading mischief; and he extinguished the hope of peace and toleration, from the moment that he assembled three hundred bishops within the walls of the same palace. The presence of the monarch swelled the importance of the debate; his attention multiplied the arguments; and he exposed his person with a patient intrepidity, which animated the valour of the combatants. Notwithstanding the applause which has been bestowed on the eloquence and sagacity of Constantine,* a Roman general, whose religion might be still a subject of doubt, and whose mind had not been enlightened either by study or inspiration, was indifferently qualified to discuss, in the Greek language, a metaphysical question, or an article of faith. But the credit of his favourite Osius, who appears to have presided in the council of Nice, might dispose the emperor in favour of the orthodox party; and a well-timed insinuation, that the same Eusebius of Nico-

emperor had some evil counsellor, either Satan or Eusebius, at his elbow. See Jortin's Remarks, tom ii, p. 183. * Eusebius, in Vit.

media, who now protected the heretic, had lately assisted the tyrant,* might exasperate him against their adversaries. The Nicene creed was ratified by Constantine; and his firm declaration, that those who resisted the divine judgment of the synod, must prepare themselves for an immediate exile, annihilated the murmurs of a feeble opposition, which, from seventeen, was almost instantly reduced to two, protesting bishops. Eusebius of Cæsarea yielded a reluctant and ambiguous consent to the Homœousion,† and the wavering conduct of the Nicomedian Eusebius served only to delay, about three months, his disgrace and exile.‡ The impious Arius was banished into one of the remote provinces of Illyricum; his person and disciples were branded, by law, with the odious name of Porphyrians; his writings were condemned to the flames, and a capital punishment was denounced against those in whose possession they should be found. The emperor had now imbibed the spirit of controversy, and the angry sarcastic style of his edicts was designed to inspire his subjects with the hatred which he had conceived against the enemies of Christ.§

But, as if the conduct of the emperor had been guided by passion instead of principle, three years from the council of Nice were scarcely elapsed, before he discovered some symptoms of mercy, and even of indulgence, towards the proscribed sect, which was secretly protected by his favourite sister. The exiles were recalled; and Eusebius, who gradually resumed his influence over the mind of Constantine, was restored to the episcopal throne, from which he had been ignominiously degraded. Arius himself

Constantin. l. 3, c. 13.

* Theodoret has preserved (l. 1, c. 20) an epistle from Constantine to the people of Nicomedia, in which the monarch declares himself the public accuser of one of his subjects: he styles Eusebius, *ὁ τῆς τυραννικῆς ὀμοσῆτος συμμύστης*; and he complains of his hostile behaviour during the civil war.

† See in Socrates (l. 1, c. 8), or rather in Theodoret (l. 1, c. 12), an original letter of Eusebius of Cæsarea, in which he attempts to justify his subscribing the Homœousion. The character of Eusebius has always been a problem; but those who have read the second critical epistle of Le Clerc (*Ars Critica*, tom. iii, p. 30—69) must entertain a very unfavourable opinion of the orthodoxy and sincerity of the bishop of Cæsarea.

‡ Athanasius, tom. i, p. 727. Philostorgius, l. 1, c. 10, and Godefroy's Commentary, p. 41.

§ Socrates, l. 1, c. 9. In his circular letters, which were addressed to the several cities, Constantine employed against the heretics the arms of ridicule and comic raillery.

was treated by the whole court with the respect which would have been due to an innocent and oppressed man; his faith was approved by the synod of Jerusalem; and the emperor seemed impatient to repair his injustice, by issuing an absolute command, that he should be solemnly admitted to the communion in the cathedral of Constantinople. On the same day which had been fixed for the triumph of Arius, he expired;—and the strange and horrid circumstances of his death might excite a suspicion, that the orthodox saints had contributed more efficaciously than by their prayers, to deliver the church from the most formidable of her enemies.* The three principal leaders of the Catholics, Athanasius of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, and Paul of Constantinople, were deposed on various accusations, by the sentence of numerous councils, and were afterwards banished into distant provinces by the first of the Christian emperors, who, in the last moments of his life, received the rites of baptism from the Arian bishop of Nicomedia. The ecclesiastical government of Constantine cannot be justified from the reproach of levity and weakness. But the credulous monarch, unskilled in the stratagems of theological warfare, might be deceived by the modest and specious professions of the heretics whose sentiments he never perfectly understood; and while he protected Arius, and persecuted Athanasius, he still considered the council of Nice as the bulwark of the Christian faith, and the peculiar glory of his own reign.†

The sons of Constantine must have been admitted from their childhood into the rank of catechumens, but they imitated, in the delay of their baptism, the example of their father. Like him, they presumed to pronounce their judgment on mysteries into which they had never been regu-

* We derive the original story from Athanasius (tom. i. p. 670), who expresses some reluctance to stigmatize the memory of the dead. He might exaggerate, but the perpetual commerce of Alexandria and Constantinople would have rendered it dangerous to invent. Those who press the literal narrative of the death of Arius (his bowels suddenly burst out in a privy) must make their option between *poison* and *miracle*. † The change in the sentiments, or at least in the conduct of Constantine, may be traced in Eusebius (in Vit. Constant. lib. 3, c. 23, lib. 4, c. 41), Socrates (lib. 1, c. 23—39), Sozomen (lib. 2, c. 16—34), Theodoret (lib. 1, c. 14—34), and Philostorgius (lib. 2, c. 1—17). But the first of these writers was too near the scene of action, and the

larly initiated;* and the fate of the Trinitarian controversy depended, in a great measure, on the sentiments of Constantius, who inherited the provinces of the east, and acquired the possession of the whole empire. The Arian presbyter or bishop, who had secreted for his use the testament of the deceased emperor, improved the fortunate occasion which had introduced him to the familiarity of a prince whose public councils were always swayed by his domestic favourites. The eunuchs and slaves diffused the spiritual poison through the palace, and the dangerous infection was communicated by the female attendants to the guards, and by the empress to her unsuspecting husband.† The partiality which Constantius always expressed towards the Eusebian faction was insensibly fortified by the dexterous management of their leaders: and his victory over the tyrant Magnentius increased his inclination, as well as ability, to employ the arms of power in the cause of Arianism. While the two armies were engaged in the plains of Mursa, and the fate of the two rivals depended on the chance of war, the son of Constantine passed the anxious moments in a church of the martyrs, under the walls of the city. His spiritual comforter, Valens, the Arian bishop of the diocese, employed the most artful precautions to obtain such early intelligence as might secure either his favour or his escape. A secret chain of swift and trusty messengers informed him of the vicissitudes of the battle: and while the courtiers stood trembling round their affrighted master, Valens assured him that the Gallic legions gave way, and insinuated, with some presence of mind, that the glorious event had been revealed to him by an angel. The grateful emperor ascribed his success to the merits and intercession of the bishop of Mursa, whose faith had deserved the public and miraculous

others were too remote from it. It is singular enough, that the important task of continuing the history of the church, should have been left for two laymen and a heretic. * *Quia etiam tum catechumenus sacramentum fidei merito videretur potuisse nescire.* Sulp. Sever. *Hist. Sacra.* l. 2, p. 410. † Socrates, lib. 2, c. 2. Sozomen, l. 3, c. 18. Athanas. tom. i, p. 813, 834. He observes, that the eunuchs are the natural enemies of the *Son*. Compare Dr. Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History (vol. iv, p. 3.) with a certain genealogy in *Candide* (c. 4), which ends with one of the first companions of Christopher Columbus.

approbation of Heaven.* The Arians, who considered as their own the victory of Constantius, preferred his glory to that of his father.† Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, immediately composed the description of a celestial cross, encircled with a splendid rainbow, which, during the festival of Pentecost, about the third hour of the day, had appeared over the mount of Olives, to the edification of the devout pilgrims, and the people of the holy city.‡ The size of the meteor was gradually magnified; and the Arian historian has ventured to affirm, that it was conspicuous to the two armies in the plains of Pannonia; and that the tyrant, who is purposely represented as an idolater, fled before the auspicious sign of orthodox Christianity.§

The sentiments of a judicious stranger, who has impartially considered the progress of civil or ecclesiastical discord, are always entitled to our notice; and a short passage of Ammianus, who served in the armies, and studied the character of Constantius, is perhaps of more value than many pages of theological invectives. “The Christian religion, which, in itself,” says that moderate historian, “is plain and simple, *he* confounded by the dotage of superstition. Instead of reconciling parties by the weight of his authority, he cherished and propagated, by verbal disputes, the differences which his vain curiosity had excited. The highways were covered with troops of bishops, galloping from every side to the assemblies, which they call synods; and while they laboured to reduce the whole sect to their own particular opinions, the public establishment of the posts was almost ruined by their hasty and repeated

* Sulpicius Severus, in *Hist. Sacra*. l. 2, p. 405, 406. † Cyril (apud Baron. A.D. 353, No. 26) expressly observes, that in the reign of Constantine the cross had been found in the bowels of the earth; but that it had appeared, in the reign of Constantius, in the midst of the heavens. This opposition evidently proves, that Cyril was ignorant of the stupendous miracle to which the conversion of Constantine is attributed; and this ignorance is the more surprising, since it was no more than twelve years after his death that Cyril was consecrated bishop of Jerusalem, by the immediate successor of Eusebius of Cesarea. See Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.* tom. viii, p. 715. ‡ It is not easy to determine how far the ingenuity of Cyril might be assisted by some natural appearance of a solar halo. § Philostorgius, lib. 3, c. 26. He is followed by the author of the *Alexandrian Chronicle*, by Cedrenus, and by Nicephorus. (See Gothofred. *Dissert.* p. 188.) They could not refuse a miracle, even from the hand of an enemy.

journeys.”* Our more intimate knowledge of the ecclesiastical transactions of the reign of Constantius, would furnish an ample commentary on this remarkable passage; which justifies the rational apprehensions of Athanasius, that the restless activity of the clergy, who wandered round the empire in search of the true faith, would excite the contempt and laughter of the unbelieving world.† As soon as the emperor was relieved from the terrors of the civil war, he devoted the leisure of his winter-quarters at Arles, Milan, Sirmium, and Constantinople, to the amusement or toils of controversy; the sword of the magistrate, and even of the tyrant, was unsheathed to enforce the reasons of the theologian; and as he opposed the orthodox faith of Nice, It is readily confessed that his incapacity and ignorance were equal to his presumption.‡ The eunuchs, the women, and the bishops, who governed the vain and feeble mind of the emperor, had inspired him with an insuperable dislike to the Homoousion; but his timid conscience was alarmed by the impiety of Ætius. The guilt of that Atheist was aggravated by the suspicious favour of the unfortunate Gallus; and even the deaths of the imperial ministers, who had been massacred at Antioch, were imputed to the suggestions of that dangerous sophist. The mind of Constantius, which could neither be moderated by reason, nor fixed by faith, was blindly impelled to either side of the dark and empty abyss, by his horror of the opposite extreme; he alternately embraced and condemned the sentiments; he successively banished and recalled the leaders of the Arian and Semi-Arian factions.§ During the season

* So curious a passage well deserves to be transcribed. Christianam religionem absolutam et simplicem, anili superstitione confundens; in quâ scrutandâ perplexius, quam componendâ gravius excitaret discidia plurima; quæ progressa fusius aluit concertatione verborum, ut catervis anti-titum jumentis publicis ultro citroque discurrentibus, per synodos (quas appellant) dum ritum omnem ad suum trahere conantur (Valesius reads *conatur*) rei vehiculariæ consideret nervos. Ammianus, 21, 16. [The drain upon the treasury thus caused (fere ærarium deficeret) is assigned among the circumstances that assisted in alienating the mind of Julian from Christianity. Eckhel. De Num. Vet. vol. viii, p. 130.—Ed.] † Athanas. tom. i, p. 870. ‡ Socrates, l. 2, c. 35—47. Sozomen, l. 4, c. 12—30. Theodoret, l. 2, c. 18—32. Philostorg. l. 4, c. 4—12. l. 5, c. 1—4. l. 6, c. 1—5. § Sozomen, l. 4, c. 23. Athanas. tom. i, p. 831. Tillemont (Mém. Eccles. tom. vii, p. 947) has collected several instances of the haughty fanaticism of Constantius from the detached

of public business or festivity, he employed whole days, and even nights, in selecting the words and weighing the syllables, which composed his fluctuating creeds. The subject of his meditations still pursued and occupied his slumbers; the incoherent dreams of the emperor were received as celestial visions; and he accepted with complacency the lofty title of bishop of bishops, from those ecclesiastics who forgot the interest of their order for the gratification of their passions.* The design of establishing a uniformity of doctrine, which had engaged him to convene so many synods in Gaul, Italy, Illyricum, and Asia, was repeatedly baffled by his own levity, by the divisions of the Arians, and by the resistance of the Catholics; and he resolved, as the last and decisive effort, imperiously to dictate the decrees of a general council. The destructive earthquake of Nicomedia, the difficulty of finding a convenient place, and perhaps some secret motives of policy, produced an alteration in the summons. The bishops of the east were directed to meet at Seleucia, in Isauria; while those of the west held their deliberations at Rimini, on the coast of the Adriatic; and, instead of two or three deputies from each province, the whole episcopal body was ordered to march. The eastern council, after consuming four days in fierce and unavailing debate, separated without any definitive conclusion. The council of the west was protracted till the seventh month. Taurus, the prætorian præfect, was instructed not to dismiss the prelates till they should all be united in the same opinion: and his efforts were supported by a power of banishing fifteen of the most refractory, and a promise of the consulship if he

treatises of Lucifer of Cagliari. The very titles of these treatises inspire zeal and terror; "Moriendum pro Dei Filio." "De Regibus Apostaticis." "De non conveniendo cum Hæretico." "De non parcendo in Deum delinquentibus." [* Gibbon here treats too lightly and ironically the growing evil, from which the darkness and misery of future ages were even then looming. The aspiring hierarchy never saw anything in "the interest of their order," but "the gratification of their passions." For the former they demanded power only as a means of grasping wealth to satisfy the latter. This object was ever before them, amid the pretences of sanctity and the strife of disputation. Whether they intimidated and crushed the general intellect, or intrigued in the palace and flattered the sovereign, they sought alike only the security or augmentation of their revenues.—ED.]

achieved so difficult an adventure. His prayers and threats, the authority of the sovereign, the sophistry of Valens and Ursacius, the distress of cold and hunger, and the tedious melancholy of a hopeless exile, at length extorted the reluctant consent of the bishops of Rimini. The deputies of the east and of the west attended the emperor in the palace of Constantinople, and he enjoyed the satisfaction of imposing on the world a profession of faith which established the *likeness*, without expressing the *consubstantiality*, of the Son of God.* But the triumph of Arianism had been preceded by the removal of the orthodox clergy, whom it was impossible either to intimidate or to corrupt; and the reign of Constantius was disgraced by the unjust and ineffectual persecution of the great Athanasius.

We have seldom an opportunity of observing, either in active or speculative life, what effect may be produced, or what obstacles may be surmounted, by the force of a single mind when it is inflexibly applied to the pursuit of a single object. The immortal name of Athanasius † will never be separated from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, to whose defence he consecrated every moment and every faculty of his being. Educated in the family of Alexander, he had vigorously opposed the early progress of the Arian heresy: he exercised the important functions of secretary under the aged prelate: and the fathers of the Nicene council beheld, with surprise and respect, the rising virtues of the young deacon. In a time of public danger, the dull claims of age and of rank are sometimes superseded; and within five months after his return from Nice, the deacon, Athanasius, was seated on the archiepiscopal throne of Egypt. He filled that eminent station above forty-six

* Sulp. Sever. Hist. Sacra. lib. 2, p. 418—430. The Greek historians were very ignorant of the affairs of the west.

† We may regret that Gregory Nazianzen composed a panegyric instead of a life of Athanasius, but we should enjoy and improve the advantage of drawing our most authentic materials from the rich fund of his own epistles and apologies (tom. i, p. 670—951). I shall not imitate the example of Socrates (lib. 2, c. 1), who published the first edition of his history without giving himself the trouble to consult the writings of Athanasius. Yet even Socrates, the more curious Sozomen, and the learned Theodoret, connect the life of Athanasius with the series of ecclesiastical history. The diligence of Tillemont (tom. viii), and of the Benedictine editors, has collected every fact, and examined every difficulty.

years, and his long administration was spent in a perpetual combat against the powers of Arianism. Five times was Athanasius expelled from his throne; twenty years he passed as an exile or a fugitive; and almost every province of the Roman empire was successively witness to his merit, and his sufferings in the cause of the Homousion, which he considered as the sole pleasure and business, as the duty, and as the glory, of his life. Amidst the storms of persecution, the archbishop of Alexandria was patient of labour, jealous of fame, careless of safety; and although his mind was tainted by the contagion of fanaticism, Athanasius displayed a superiority of character and abilities which would have qualified him, far better than the degenerate sons of Constantine, for the government of a great monarchy. His learning was much less profound and extensive than that of Eusebius of Cæsarea, and his rude eloquence could not be compared with the polished oratory of Gregory or Basil; but whenever the primate of Egypt was called upon to justify his sentiments, or his conduct, his unpremeditated style, either of speaking or writing, was clear, forcible, and persuasive. He has always been revered in the orthodox school, as one of the most accurate masters of the Christian theology; and he was supposed to possess two profane sciences, less adapted to the episcopal character—the knowledge of jurisprudence,* and that of divination.† Some fortunate conjectures of future events, which impartial reasoners might ascribe to the experience and judgment of Athanasius, were attributed by his friends to heavenly inspiration, and imputed by his enemies to infernal magic.

But as Athanasius was continually engaged with the prejudices and passions of every order of men, from the monk to the emperor, the knowledge of human nature was his first and most important science. He preserved a distinct and unbroken view of a scene which was incessantly shifting, and never failed to improve those decisive moments which are irrecoverably past before they are perceived by a

* Sulpicius Severus (Hist. Sacra. l. 2, p. 396) calls him a lawyer, a *juris-consult*. This character cannot now be discovered in the life or writings of Athanasius.

† *Dicebatur enim fatidicarum sortium fidem, quæve augurales portenderent alites scientissimæ callens aliquoties prædixisse futura.* Ammianus 15, 7. A prophecy, or rather a joke is related by Sozomen (l. 4, c. 10), which evidently proves (if the

common eye. The archbishop of Alexandria was capable of distinguishing how far he might boldly command, and where he must dexterously insinuate; how long he might contend with power, and when he must withdraw from persecution; and while he directed the thunders of the church against heresy and rebellion, he could assume, in the bosom of his own party, the flexible and indulgent temper of a prudent leader. The election of Athanasius has not escaped the reproach of irregularity and precipitation;* but the propriety of his behaviour conciliated the affections both of the clergy and of the people. The Alexandrians were impatient to rise in arms for the defence of an eloquent and liberal pastor. In his distress he always derived support, or at least consolation, from the faithful attachment of his parochial clergy; and the hundred bishops of Egypt adhered, with unshaken zeal, to the cause of Athanasius. In the modest equipage, which pride and policy would affect, he frequently performed the episcopal visitation of his provinces, from the mouth of the Nile to the confines of Æthiopia, familiarly conversing with the meanest of the populace, and humbly saluting the saints and hermits of the desert.† Nor was it only in ecclesiastical assemblies, among men whose education and manners were similar to his own, that Athanasius displayed the ascendancy of his genius. He appeared with easy and respectful firmness in the courts of princes: and in the various turns of his prosperous and adverse fortune, he never lost the confidence of his friends, or the esteem of his enemies.

In his youth, the primate of Egypt resisted the great Constantine, who had repeatedly signified his will that Arius should be restored to the Catholic communion.‡ The

crows speak Latin) that Athanasius understood the language of the crows.

* The irregular ordination of Athanasius was slightly mentioned in the councils which were held against him. See Philostorg. l. 2, c. 11, and Godefroy, p. 71. But it can scarcely be supposed that the assembly of the bishops of Egypt would solemnly attest a public falsehood. Athanas. tom. i, p. 726.

† See the History of the Fathers of the Desert, published by Rosweide; and Tillemont, Mém. Eccles. tom. vii, in the lives of Antony, Pachomius, &c. Athanasius himself who did not disdain to compose the life of his friend Antony, has carefully observed how often the holy monk deplored and prophesied the mischiefs of the Arian heresy. Athanas. tom. ii, p. 492—493, &c.

‡ At first Constantine threatened in speaking, but

emperor respected, and might forgive, this inflexible resolution; and the faction who considered Athanasius as their most formidable enemy, were constrained to dissemble their hatred, and silently to prepare an indirect and distant assault. They scattered rumours and suspicions, represented the archbishop as a proud and oppressive tyrant, and boldly accused him of violating the treaty which had been ratified in the Nieene council, with the schismatic followers of Meletius.* Athanasius had openly disapproved that ignominious peace, and the emperor was disposed to believe that he had abused his ecclesiastical and civil power to persecute those odious sectaries: that he had sacrilegiously broken a chalice in one of their churches of Mareotis; that he had whipped or imprisoned six of their bishops; and that Arsenius, a seventh bishop of the same party, had been murdered, or at least mutilated, by the cruel hand of the primate.† These charges, which affected his honour and his life, were referred by Constantine to his brother Dalmatius the censor, who resided at Antioch; the synods of Cæsarea and Tyre were successively convened; and the bishops of the east were instructed to judge the cause of

requested in *writing*, *καὶ ἀγράφως μὲν ἠπειλεῖ γράφων ἐξ ἡζίου*. His letters gradually assumed a menacing tone; but while he required that the entrance of the church should be open to all, he avoided the odious name of Arius. Athanasius, like a skilful politician, has accurately marked these distinctions (tom. i. p. 788), which allowed him some scope for excuse and delay. * The Meletians in Egypt, like the Donatists in Africa, were produced by an episcopal quarrel which arose from the persecution. I have not leisure to pursue the obscure controversy which seems to have been misrepresented by the partiality of Athanasius, and the ignorance of Epiphanius. See Mosheim's General History of the Church, vol. i. p. 201. [Meletius was bishop of Lycopolis, in the Thebaid, at the commencement of the fourth century. Not even the rigours of Diocletian's persecution could repress his polemical tendencies; for while in confinement, he had angry disputations with his fellow-prisoners. Having regained his liberty, he mixed up these sentiments with his claim to exercise the authority of Peter, archbishop of Alexandria, who had fled from danger and sought safety in concealment. His evident object was, to displace and succeed the fugitive primate of Egypt. Each had numerous adherents, and their fierce contests produced a schism, which for more than a century added to the other distractions of the church. Neander (vol. iii, sec. 2, edit. Bohn,) has given an account of this heresy, correcting Epiphanius by documents, which Maffei published from a MS. in the chapter of the cathedral at Verona.—Ed.] † The treatment of the six bishops is specified by Sozomen (l. 2, c. 25), but

Athanasius, before they proceeded to consecrate the new church of the Resurrection at Jerusalem. The primate might be conscious of his innocence; but he was sensible that the same implacable spirit which had dictated the accusation, would direct the proceeding, and pronounce the sentence. He prudently declined the tribunal of his enemies, despised the summons of the synod of Cæsarea; and, after a long and artful delay, submitted to the peremptory commands of the emperor, who threatened to punish his criminal disobedience, if he refused to appear in the council of Tyre.* Before Athanasius, at the head of fifty Egyptian prelates, sailed from Alexandria, he had wisely secured the alliance of the Meletians; and Arsenius himself, his imaginary victim, and his secret friend, was privately concealed in his train. The synod of Tyre was conducted by Eusebius of Cæsarea, with more passion and with less art, than his learning and experience might promise; his numerous faction repeated the names of homicide and tyrant; and their clamours were encouraged by the seeming patience of Athanasius, who expected the decisive moment to produce Arsenius alive, and unhurt, in the midst of the assembly. The nature of the other charges did not admit of such clear and satisfactory replies; yet the archbishop was able to prove, that, in the village, where he was accused of breaking a consecrated chalice, neither church, nor altar, nor chalice could really exist. The Arians, who had secretly determined the guilt and condemnation of their enemy, attempted, however, to disguise their injustice by the imitation of judicial forms; the synod appointed an episcopal commission of six delegates to collect evidence on the spot; and this measure, which was vigorously opposed by the Egyptian bishops, opened new scenes of violence and perjury.† After the return of the deputies from Alexandria,

Athanasius himself, so copious on the subject of Arsenius and the chalice, leaves this grave accusation without a reply. * Athanas. tom. 1, p. 788. Socrates, l. 1, c. 25. Sozomen, l. 2, c. 25. The emperor, in his epistle of convocation (Euseb. in Vit. Constant. l. 4, c. 42), seems to prejudge some members of the clergy, and it was more than probable that the synod would apply those reproaches to Athanasius.

† See, in particular, the second Apology of Athanasius (tom. 1, p. 763—808), and his Epistles to the Monks (p. 808—866). They are justified by the original and authentic documents; but they would inspire more confidence, if he appeared less innocent, and his enemies less absurd.

the majority of the council pronounced the final sentence of degradation and exile against the primate of Egypt. The decree, expressed in the fiercest language of malice and revenge, was communicated to the emperor and the Catholic church; and the bishops immediately resumed a mild and devout aspect, such as became their holy pilgrimage to the sepulchre of Christ.*

But the injustice of these ecclesiastical judges had not been countenanced by the submission, or even by the presence of Athanasius. He resolved to make a bold and dangerous experiment, whether the throne was inaccessible to the voice of truth; and before the final sentence could be pronounced at Tyre, the intrepid primate threw himself into a bark which was ready to hoist sail for the imperial city. The request of a formal audience might have been opposed or eluded; but Athanasius concealed his arrival, watched the moment of Constantine's return from an adjacent villa, and boldly encountered his angry sovereign as he passed on horseback through the principal street of Constantinople. So strange an apparition excited his surprise and indignation; and the guards were ordered to remove the importunate suitor; but his resentment was subdued by involuntary respect; and the haughty spirit of the emperor was awed by the courage and eloquence of a bishop, who implored his justice, and awakened his conscience.† Constantine listened to the complaints of Athanasius with impartial, and even gracious, attention; the members of the synod of Tyre were summoned to justify their proceedings; and the arts of the Eusebian faction would have been confounded, if they had not aggravated the guilt of the primate, by the dexterous supposition of an unpardonable offence; a criminal design to intercept and detain the corn-fleet of Alexandria, which supplied the subsistence of the new capital.‡ The emperor was satisfied that the peace of Egypt would be secured by the absence

* Eusebius in Vit. Constantin. lib. 4, c. 41—47.

† Athanas.

tom. i, p. 804. In a church dedicated to St. Athanasius, this situation would afford a better subject for a picture, than most of the stories of miracles and martyrdoms.

‡ Athanas. tom. i, p. 729. Eunapius has related (in Vit. Sophist. p. 36, 37, edit. Commelin,) a strange example of the cruelty and credulity of Constantine on a similar occasion. The eloquent Sopater, a Syrian philosopher, enjoyed his friendship, and provoked the resentment of Ablavius, his pretorian prefect. The corn-fleet was detained for want of a south wind; the

of a popular leader; but he refused to fill the vacancy of the archiepiscopal throne; and the sentence which, after long hesitation, he pronounced was that of a jealous ostracism, rather than of an ignominious exile. In the remote province of Gaul, but in the hospitable court of Treves, Athanasius passed about twenty-eight months. The death of the emperor changed the face of public affairs; and amidst the general indulgence of a young reign, the primate was restored to his country by an honourable edict of the younger Constantine, who expressed a deep sense of the innocence and merit of his venerable guest.*

The death of that prince exposed Athanasius to a second persecution; and the feeble Constantius, the sovereign of the east, soon became the secret accomplice of the Eusebians. Ninety bishops of that sect or faction assembled at Antioch, under the specious pretence of dedicating the cathedral. They composed an ambiguous creed, which is faintly tinged with the colours of Semi-Arianism, and twenty-five canons, which still regulate the discipline of the orthodox Greeks.† It was decided, with some appearance of equity, that a bishop, deprived by a synod, should not resume his episcopal functions, till he had been absolved by the judgment of an equal synod: the law was immediately applied to the case of Athanasius; the council of Antioch pronounced, or rather confirmed, his degradation: a stranger, named Gregory, was seated on his throne, and Philagrius,‡ the prefect of Egypt, was instructed to support the new primate with the civil and military powers of the province. Oppressed by the conspiracy of the Asiatic

people of Constantinople were discontented, and Sopater was beheaded on a charge that he had *bound* the winds by the power of magic. Suidas adds, that Constantine wished to prove, by this execution, that he had absolutely renounced the superstition of the Gentiles.

* In his return he saw Constantius twice, at Viminiacum and at Cæsarea in Cappadocia. (Athanas. tom. i, p. 676.) Tillemont supposes that Constantine introduced him to the meeting of the three royal brothers in Pannonia. (Mémoires Eccles. tom. viii, p. 69.)

† See Beveridge Pandect. tom. i, p. 429—452, and tom. ii. Annotation, p. 182. Tillemont, Mém. Eccles. tom. vi, p. 310—324. St. Hilary of Poitiers, has mentioned this synod of Antioch with too much favour and respect. He reckons ninety-seven bishops.

‡ This magistrate, so odious to Athanasius, is praised by Gregory Nazianzen, tom. i, Orat. 21, p. 390, 391.

Sæpe premente Deo fert Deus alter opem.

For the credit of human nature, I am always pleased to discover *SOLA*

Prelates, Athanasius withdrew from Alexandria, and passed three* years as an exile and a suppliant on the holy threshold of the Vatican.† By the assiduous study of the Latin language, he soon qualified himself to negotiate with the western clergy; his decent flattery swayed and directed the haughty Julius: the Roman pontiff was persuaded to consider his appeal as the peculiar interest of the apostolic see, and his innocence was unanimously declared in a council of fifty bishops of Italy. At the end of three years, the primate was summoned to the court of Milan by the emperor Constans, who, in the indulgence of unlawful pleasures, still professed a lively regard for the orthodox faith. The cause of truth and justice was promoted by the influence of gold,‡ and the ministers of Constans advised their sovereign to require the convocation of an ecclesiastical assembly, which might act as the representatives of the Catholic church. Ninety-four bishops of the west, seventy-six bishops of the east, encountered each other at Sardica, on the verge of the two empires, but in the dominions of the protector of Athanasius. Their debates soon degenerated into hostile altercations; the Asiatics, apprehensive for their personal safety, retired to Philippopolis in Thrace; and the rival synods reciprocally hurled

good qualities in those men whom party has represented as tyrants and monsters.

* The chronological difficulties which perplex the residence of Athanasius at Rome, are strenuously agitated by Valesius (*Observat. ad Calcem*, tom. ii. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. 1, c. 1—5), and Tillemont (*Mém. Eccles.* tom. viii, p. 674, &c.). I have followed the simple hypothesis of Valesius, who allows only one journey, after the intrusion of Gregory. [Clinton has removed all obscurity on this subject. Athanasius arrived at Rome in the beginning of May, 341. He remained there three years, and then went to Milan and Gaul. Thence he accompanied Osius, in 347, to the synod of Sardica, and returned to Alexandria in the middle of the year 349. (*Fasti Rom.* 1, 403, 411, 415.)—ED.]

† I cannot forbear transcribing a judicious observation of Wetstein: (*Prolegomen. N. T.* p. 19.) *Si tamen Historiam Ecclesiasticam velimus consulere patebit jam inde a seculo quarto, cum, ortis controversiis ecclesie Græciæ doctores in duas partes scinderentur, ingenio, eloquentiâ, numero, tantum non æquales, eam partem quæ vincere cupiebat Romam confugisse, majestatemque pontificis comiter coluisse, eoque pacto oppressis per pontificem et episcopos Latinos adversariis prævaluisse, atque orthodoxiam in consiliis stabilivisse. Eam ob causam Athanasius, non sine comitatu, Romam petiit, pluresque annos ibi hæsit.*

‡ *Philostorgius*, lib. 3, c. 12. If any corruption was used to promote the interest of religion, an advocate of Athanasius might justify or excuse this questionable conduct, by the example of Cato and Sidney; the former of whom is

their spiritual thunders against their enemies, whom they piously condemned as the enemies of the true God. Their decrees were published and ratified in their respective provinces; and Athanasius, who in the west was revered as a saint, was exposed as a criminal to the abhorrence of the east.* The council of Sardica reveals the first symptoms of discord and schism between the Greek and Latin churches, which were separated by the accidental difference of faith, and the permanent distinction of language.

During his second exile in the west, Athanasius was frequently admitted to the imperial presence; at Capua, Lodi, Milan, Verona, Padua, Aquileia, and Treves. The bishop of the diocese usually assisted at these interviews; the master of the offices stood before the veil or curtain of the sacred apartment; and the uniform moderation of the primate might be attested by these respectful witnesses, to whose evidence he solemnly appeals.† Prudence would undoubtedly suggest the mild and respectful tone that became a subject and a bishop. In these familiar conferences with the sovereign of the west, Athanasius might lament the error of Constantius; but he boldly arraigned the guilt of his eunuchs and his Arian prelates; deplored the distress and danger of the Catholic church; and excited Constantius to emulate the zeal and glory of his father. The emperor declared his resolution of employing the troops and treasures of Europe in the orthodox cause; and signified, by a concise and peremptory epistle to his brother Constantius, that unless he consented to the immediate restoration of Athanasius, he himself, with a fleet and army, would seat the archbishop on the throne of Alexandria.‡ But this religious war, so horrible to nature, was prevented by the

said to have given, and the latter to have received, a bribe, in the cause of liberty.

* The canon, which allows appeals to the Roman pontiffs, has almost raised the council of Sardica to the dignity of a general council; and its acts have been ignorantly or artfully confounded with those of the Nicene synod. See Tillemont, tom. vii, p. 659, and Geddes's Tracts, vol. ii, p. 419—460. † As Athanasius dispersed secret invectives against Constantius (see the Epistle to the Monks), at the same time that he assured him of his profound respect, we might distrust the professions of the archbishop. Tom. i, p. 677.

‡ Notwithstanding the discreet silence of Athanasius, and the manifest forgery of a letter inserted by Socrates, these menaces are proved by the unquestionable evidence of Lucifer of Cagliari, and even of Constantius himself. See Tillemont tom. viii, p. 693.

timely compliance of Constantius; and the emperor of the east condescended to solicit a reconciliation with a subject whom he had injured. Athanasius waited, with decent pride, till he had received three successive epistles, full of the strongest assurances of the protection, the favour, and the esteem of his sovereign; who invited him to resume his episcopal seat, and who added the humiliating precaution of engaging his principal ministers to attest the sincerity of his intentions. They were manifested in a still more public manner, by the strict orders which were dispatched into Egypt, to recall the adherents of Athanasius, to restore their privileges, to proclaim their innocence, and to erase from the public registers the illegal proceedings which had been obtained during the prevalence of the Eusebian faction. After every satisfaction and security had been given, which justice or even delicacy could require, the primate proceeded, by slow journeys, through the provinces of Thrace, Asia, and Syria; and his progress was marked by the abject homage of the oriental bishops, who excited his contempt without deceiving his penetration.* At Antioch he saw the emperor Constantius; sustained, with modest firmness, the embraces and protestations of his master, and eluded the proposal of allowing the Arians a single church at Alexandria, by claiming in the other cities of the empire, a similar toleration for his own party; a reply which might have appeared just and moderate in the mouth of an independent prince. The entrance of the archbishop into his capital was a triumphal procession; absence and persecution had endeared him to the Alexandrians; his authority, which he exercised with rigour, was more firmly established; and his fame was diffused from Æthiopia to Britain, over the whole extent of the Christian world.†

But the subject who has reduced his prince to the necessity of dissembling, can never expect a sincere and lasting forgiveness, and the tragic fate of Constans soon deprived

* I have always entertained some doubts concerning the retraction of Ursacius and Valens. (Athanas. tom. i, p. 776.) Their epistles to Julius, bishop of Rome, and to Athanasius himself, are of so different a cast from each other, that they cannot both be genuine. The one speaks the language of criminals who confess their guilt and infamy; the other of enemies, who solicit on equal terms an honourable reconciliation.

† The circumstances of his second return may be collected from Athanasius himself, tom. i, p. 769. 822—843. Socrates

Athanasius of a powerful and generous protector. The civil war between the assassin and the only surviving brother of Constans, which afflicted the empire above three years, secured an interval of repose to the Catholic church; and the two contending parties were desirous to conciliate the friendship of a bishop, who, by the weight of his personal authority, might determine the fluctuating resolutions of an important province. He gave audience to the ambassadors of the tyrant with whom he was afterwards accused of holding a secret correspondence;* and the emperor Constantius repeatedly assured his dearest father, the most reverend Athanasius, that, notwithstanding the malicious rumours which were circulated by their common enemies, he had inherited the sentiments, as well as the throne of his deceased brother.† Gratitude and humanity would have disposed the primate of Egypt to deplore the untimely fate of Constans, and to abhor the guilt of Magnentius; but as he clearly understood that the apprehensions of Constantius were his only safeguard, the fervour of his prayers for the success of the righteous cause might perhaps be somewhat abated. The ruin of Athanasius was no longer contrived by the obscure malice of a few bigoted or angry bishops, who abused the authority of a credulous monarch. The monarch himself avowed the resolution, which he had so long suppressed, of avenging his private injuries;‡ and the first winter after his victory, which he passed at Arles, was employed against an enemy more odious to him than the vanquished tyrant of Gaul.

If the emperor had capriciously decreed the death of the most eminent and virtuous citizen of the republic, the cruel order would have been executed without hesitation, by the ministers of open violence, or of specious injustice. The caution, the delay, the difficulty with which he proceeded in the condemnation and punishment of a popular bishop, discovered to the world that the privileges of the church

lib. 2, c. 18. Sozomen, lib. 3, c. 19. Theodoret, lib. 2, c. 11, 12. Philostorgius, lib. 3, c. 12.

* Athanasius (tom. i, p. 677, 678,) defends his innocence by pathetic complaints, solemn assertions, and specious arguments. He admits that letters had been forged in his name; but he requests that his own secretaries, and those of the tyrant, may be examined whether those letters had been written by the former, or received by the latter. † Athanas. tom. i, p. 825—844.

‡ Athanas. tom. i, p. 861. Theodoret, lib. 2, c. 16. The emperor

had already revived a sense of order and freedom in the Roman government. The sentence which was pronounced in the synod of Tyre, and subscribed by a large majority of the eastern bishops, had never been expressly repealed; and as Athanasius had been once degraded from his episcopal dignity by the judgment of his brethren, every subsequent act might be considered as irregular, and even criminal. But the memory of the firm and effectual support which the primate of Egypt had derived from the attachment of the western church, engaged Constantius to suspend the execution of the sentence till he had obtained the concurrence of the Latin bishops. Two years were consumed in ecclesiastical negotiations; and the important cause between the emperor and one of his subjects, was solemnly debated, first in the synod of Arles, and afterwards in the great council of Milan,* which consisted of above three hundred bishops. Their integrity was gradually undermined by the arguments of the Arians, the dexterity of the eunuchs, and the pressing solicitations of a prince, who gratified his revenge at the expense of his dignity; and exposed his own passions, whilst he influenced those of the clergy. Corruption, the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty, was successfully practised; honours, gifts, and immunities, were offered and accepted as the price of an episcopal vote;† and the condemnation of the Alexandrian primate was artfully represented as the only measure which could restore the peace and union of the Catholic church. The friends of Athanasius were not, however, wanting to their leader, or to their cause. With a manly spirit, which the sanctity of their character rendered less dangerous, they maintained, in public debate, and in private conference with the emperor, the eternal obligation of religion and justice. They

declared, that he was more desirous to subdue Athanasius, than he had been to vanquish Magnentius or Sylvanus.

* The affairs of the council of Milan are so imperfectly and erroneously related by the Greek writers, that we must rejoice in the supply of some letters of Eusebius, extracted by Baronius, from the archives of the church of Verceilæ, and of an old life of Dionysius of Milan, published by Bollandus. See Baronius, A.D. 355, and Tillemont, tom. 7, p. 1415.

† The honours, presents, feasts, which seduced so many bishops, are mentioned with indignation by those who were too pure or too proud to accept them. "We combat," (says Hilary of Poitiers), "against Constantius the antichrist, who strokes the belly instead of scourging

declared, that neither the hope of his favour, nor the fear of his displeasure, should prevail on them to join in the condemnation of an absent, an innocent, a respectable brother.* They affirmed, with apparent reason, that the illegal and obsolete decrees of the council of Tyre had long since been tacitly abolished by the imperial edicts, the honourable re-establishment of the archbishop of Alexandria, and the silence or recantation of his most clamorous adversaries. They alleged, that his innocence had been attested by the unanimous bishops of Egypt, and had been acknowledged in the councils of Rome and Sardica,† by the impartial judgment of the Latin church. They deplored the hard condition of Athanasius, who, after enjoying so many years his seat, his reputation, and the seeming confidence of his sovereign, was again called upon to confute the most groundless and extravagant accusations. Their language was specious; their conduct was honourable; but in this long and obstinate contest, which fixed the eyes of the whole empire on a single bishop, the ecclesiastical factions were prepared to sacrifice truth and justice to the more interesting object of defending, or removing, the intrepid champion of the Nicene faith. The Arians still thought it prudent to disguise in ambiguous language, their real sentiments and designs: but the orthodox bishops armed with the favour of the people, and the decrees of a general council, insisted on every occasion, and particularly at Milan, that their adversaries should purge themselves from the suspicion of heresy, before they presumed to arraign the conduct of the great Athanasius.‡

But the voice of reason (if reason was indeed on the side of Athanasius) was silenced by the clamours of a factious or

the back:” *qui non dorsa cædit; sed ventrem palpat.* Hilarius contra Constant. c. 5, p. 1240.

* Something of this opposition is mentioned by Ammianus (15, 7), who had a very dark and superficial knowledge of ecclesiastical history. Liberius perseveranter renitebatur, nec visum hominem, nec auditum damnare nefas ultimum sæpe exclamans; aperte scilicet recalcitrans imperatoris arbitrio. Id enim ille Athanasio semper infestus, &c. † More properly by the orthodox part of the council of Sardica. If the bishops of both parties had fairly voted, the division would have been ninety-four to seventy-six. M. de Tillemont (see tom. viii, p. 1147—1158,) is justly surprised that so small a majority should have proceeded so vigorously against their adversaries, the principal of whom they immediately deposed.

‡ Sulp. Severus in Hist. Sacra. lib. 2, p. 412.

venal majority; and the councils of Arles and Milan were not dissolved, till the archbishop of Alexandria had been solemnly condemned and deposed by the judgment of the western, as well as of the eastern, church. The bishops who had opposed, were required to subscribe, the sentence, and to unite in religious communion with the suspected leaders of the adverse party. A formulary of consent was transmitted by the messengers of state to the absent bishops; and all those who refused to submit their private opinion to the public and inspired wisdom of the councils of Arles and Milan were immediately banished by the emperor, who affected to execute the decrees of the Catholic church. Among those prelates who led the honourable band of confessors and exiles, Liberius of Rome, Osius of Cordova, Paulinus of Treves, Dionysius of Milan, Eusebius of Vercellæ, Lucifer of Cagliari, and Hilary of Poitiers, may deserve to be particularly distinguished. The eminent station of Liberius, who governed the capital of the empire; the personal merit and long experience of the venerable Osius, who was revered as the favourite of the great Constantine, and the father of the Nicene faith; placed those prelates at the head of the Latin church: and their example, either of submission or resistance, would probably be imitated by the episcopal crowd. But the repeated attempts of the emperor, to seduce or to intimidate the bishops of Rome and Cordova, were for some time ineffectual. The Spaniard declared himself ready to suffer under Constantius, as he had suffered threescore years before under his grandfather Maximian. The Roman, in the presence of his sovereign, asserted the innocence of Athanasius, and his own freedom. When he was banished to Beræa in Thrace, he sent back a large sum which had been offered for the accommodation of his journey; and insulted the court of Milan by the haughty remark, that the emperor and his eunuchs might want that gold to pay their soldiers and their bishops.* The resolution of Liberius and Osius was at length subdued by the hardships of exile and confinement. The Roman pontiff purchased his return by some criminal compliances; and afterwards expiated his guilt by a seasonable repentance. Persuasion and violence were employed to

* The exile of Liberius is mentioned by Ammianus, 15, 7. See Theodoret, lib. 2, c. 16. Athanas. tom. i, p. 834—837. Hilar. Fragment. 1

extort the reluctant signature of the decrepit bishop of Cordova, whose strength was broken, and whose faculties were perhaps impaired, by the weight of a hundred years; and the insolent triumph of the Arians provoked some of the orthodox party to treat with inhuman severity the character, or rather the memory, of an unfortunate old man, to whose former services Christianity itself was so deeply indebted.*

The fall of Liberius and Osius reflected a brighter lustre on the firmness of those bishops who still adhered with unshaken fidelity to the cause of Athanasius and religious truth. The ingenious malice of their enemies had deprived them of the benefit of mutual comfort and advice, separated those illustrious exiles into distant provinces, and carefully selected the most inhospitable spots of a great empire.† Yet they soon experienced that the deserts of Libya, and the most barbarous tracts of Cappadocia were less inhospitable, than the residence of those cities in which an Arian bishop could satiate, without restraint, the exquisite rancour of theological hatred.‡ Their consolation was derived from the consciousness of rectitude and independence; from the applause, the visits, the letters, and the liberal alms of their adherents;§ and from the satisfaction which they soon enjoyed of observing the intestine divisions of the adversaries of the Nicene faith. Such was the nice and capricious taste of the emperor Constantius; and so easily was he offended by the slightest deviation from his imaginary

* The life of Osius is collected by Tillemont (tom. vii, p. 524—561), who in the most extravagant terms first admires, and then reprobates, the bishop of Cordova. In the midst of their lamentations on his fall, the prudence of Athanasius may be distinguished from the blind and intemperate zeal of Hilary. † The confessors of the west were successively banished to the deserts of Arabia or Thebais, the lonely places of Mount Taurus, the wildest parts of Phrygia, which were in the possession of the impious Montanists, &c. When the heretic Ætius was too favourably entertained at Mopsuestia in Cilicia, the place of his exile was changed, by the advice of Acacius, to Amblada, a district inhabited by savages, and infested by war and pestilence. Philostorg. lib. 5, c. 2. ‡ See the cruel treatment and strange obstinacy of Eusebius, in his own letters, published by Baronius, A.D. 356, No. 92—102. § *Cæterum exules satis constat, totius orbis studiis celebratos pecuniasque eis in sumptum affatim congestas legationibus quoque eos plebis Catholicæ ex omnibus fere provinciis frequentatos.* Sulp. Sever. Hist. Sacra. p. 414. Athanas. tom. i, p. 836. 840.

standard of Christian truth, that he persecuted, with equal zeal, those who defended the *consubstantiality*, those who asserted the *similar substance*, and those who denied the *likeness*, of the Son of God. Three bishops, degraded and banished for those adverse opinions, might possibly meet in the same place of exile; and according to the difference of their temper, might either pity or insult the blind enthusiasm of their antagonists, whose present sufferings would never be compensated by future happiness.

The disgrace and exile of the orthodox bishops of the west were designed as so many preparatory steps to the ruin of Athanasius himself.* Six-and-twenty months had elapsed, during which the imperial court secretly laboured, by the most insidious arts, to remove him from Alexandria, and to withdraw the allowance which supplied his popular liberality. But when the primate of Egypt, deserted and proscribed by the Latin church, was left destitute of any foreign support, Constantius dispatched two of his secretaries with a verbal commission to announce and execute the order of his banishment. As the justice of the sentence was publicly avowed by the whole party, the only motive which could restrain Constantius from giving his messengers the sanction of a written mandate, must be imputed to his doubt of the event; and to a sense of the danger to which he might expose the second city, and the most fertile province, of the empire, if the people should persist in the resolution of defending, by force of arms, the innocence of their spiritual father. Such extreme caution afforded Athanasius a specious pretence respectfully to dispute the truth of an order, which he could not reconcile, either with the equity, or with the former declarations, of his gracious master. The civil powers of Egypt found themselves inadequate to the task of persuading or compelling the primate to abdicate his episcopal throne; and they were obliged to conclude a treaty with the popular leaders of Alexandria, by which it was

* Ample materials for the history of this third persecution of Athanasius may be found in his own works. See particularly his very able Apology to Constantius (tom. i, p. 673); his first Apology for his flight (p. 701); his prolix Epistle to the Solitaries (p. 808); and the original protest of the people of Alexandria against the violences committed by Syrianus (p. 866). Sozomen (lib. 4, c. 9,) has thrown into the narrative two or three luminous and important circumstances.

stipulated that all proceedings and all hostilities should be suspended till the emperor's pleasure had been more distinctly ascertained. By this seeming moderation, the Catholics were deceived into a false and fatal security; while the legions of the Upper Egypt, and of Libya, advanced, by secret orders and hasty marches, to besiege, or rather to surprise, a capital habituated to sedition, and inflamed by religious zeal.* The position of Alexandria, between the sea and the lake Mareotis, facilitated the approach and landing of the troops; who were introduced into the heart of the city, before any effectual measures could be taken either to shut the gates, or to occupy the important posts of defence. At the hour of midnight, twenty-three days after the signature of the treaty, Syrianus, duke of Egypt, at the head of five thousand soldiers, armed and prepared for an assault, unexpectedly invested the church of St. Theonas, where the archbishop, with a part of his clergy and people, performed their nocturnal devotions. The doors of the sacred edifice yielded to the impetuosity of the attack, which was accompanied with every horrid circumstance of tumult and bloodshed; but as the bodies of the slain, and the fragments of military weapons, remained the next day an unexceptionable evidence in the possession of the Catholics, the enterprise of Syrianus may be considered as a successful irruption, rather than as an absolute conquest. The other churches of the city were profaned by similar outrages; and, during at least four months, Alexandria was exposed to the insults of a licentious army, stimulated by the ecclesiastics of a hostile faction. Many of the faithful were killed, who may deserve the name of martyrs, if their deaths were neither provoked nor revenged; bishops and presbyters were treated with cruel ignominy; consecrated virgins were stripped naked, scourged, and violated; the houses of wealthy citizens were plundered; and, under the mask of religious zeal, lust, avarice, and private resentment, were gratified with impunity, and even with applause. The Pagans of Alexandria, who still formed

* Athanasius had lately sent for Antony and some of his chosen monks. They descended from their mountain, announced to the Alexandrians the sanctity of Athanasius, and were honourably conducted by the archbishop as far as the gates of the city. Athanas. tom. ii, p. 491, 492. See likewise, Rufinus, 3. 164, in Vit. Patr. p. 524

a numerous and discontented party, were easily persuaded to desert a bishop whom they feared and esteemed. The hopes of some peculiar favours, and the apprehension of being involved in the general penalties of rebellion, engaged them to promise their support to the destined successor of Athanasius, the famous George of Cappadocia. The usurper, after receiving the consecration of an Arian synod, was placed on the episcopal throne by the arms of Sebastian, who had been appointed count of Egypt for the execution of that important design. In the use, as well as in the acquisition of power, the tyrant George disregarded the laws of religion, of justice, and of humanity; and the same scenes of violence and scandal which had been exhibited in the capital, were repeated in more than ninety episcopal cities of Egypt. Encouraged by success, Constantius ventured to approve the conduct of his ministers. By a public and passionate epistle, the emperor congratulates the deliverance of Alexandria from a popular tyrant, who deluded his blind votaries by the magic of his eloquence; expatiates on the virtues and piety of the most reverend George, the elected bishop; and aspires, as the patron and benefactor of the city, to surpass the fame of Alexander himself. But he solemnly declares his unalterable resolution, to pursue with fire and sword the seditious adherents of the wicked Athanasius, who, by flying from justice, has confessed his guilt, and escaped the ignominious death which he had so often deserved.*

Athanasius had indeed escaped from the most imminent dangers; and the adventures of that extraordinary man deserve and fix our attention. On the memorable night when the church of St. Theonas was invested by the troops of Syrianus, the archbishop, seated on his throne, expected, with calm and intrepid dignity, the approach of death. While the public devotion was interrupted by shouts of rage and cries of terror, he animated his trembling congregation to express their religious confidence, by chanting one of the psalms of David, which celebrates the triumph of the God of Israel over the haughty and imperious tyrant of Egypt. The doors were at length burst open; a cloud of arrows was discharged among the people; the soldiers, with drawn swords, rushed forward into the sanctuary; and

* Athanas. tom. i, p. 694. The emperor, or his Arian secretaries,

the dreadful gleam of their armour was reflected by the holy luminaries which burnt round the altar.* Athanasius still rejected the pious importunity of the monks and presbyters, who were attached to his person; and nobly refused to desert his episcopal station, till he had dismissed in safety the last of the congregation. The darkness and tumult of the night favoured the retreat of the archbishop; and though he was oppressed by the waves of an agitated multitude, though he was thrown to the ground, and left without sense or motion, he still recovered his undaunted courage, and eluded the eager search of the soldiers, who were instructed by their Arian guides, that the head of Athanasius would be the most acceptable present to the emperor. From that moment the primate of Egypt disappeared from the eyes of his enemies, and remained above six years concealed in impenetrable obscurity.†

The despotic power of his implacable enemy filled the whole extent of the Roman world; and the exasperated monarch had endeavoured, by a very pressing epistle to the Christian princes of Æthiopia, to exclude Athanasius from the most remote and sequestered regions of the earth. Counts, prefects, tribunes, whole armies, were successively employed to pursue a bishop and a fugitive; the vigilance of the civil and military powers was excited by the imperial edicts; liberal rewards were promised to the man who should produce Athanasius, either alive or dead, and the most severe penalties were denounced against those who should dare to protect the public enemy.‡ But the deserts of Thebais were now peopled by a race of wild, yet submissive fanatics, who preferred the commands of their abbot to the laws of their sovereign. The numerous disciples of

while they express their resentment, betray their fears and esteem of Athanasius.

* These minute circumstances are curious, as they are literally transcribed from the protest, which was publicly presented three days afterwards by the Catholics of Alexandria. See Athanas. tom. i, p. 867.

† The Jansenists have often compared Athanasius and Arnauld, and have expatiated with pleasure on the faith and zeal, the merit and exile of those celebrated doctors. This concealed parallel is very dexterously managed by the abbé de la Bleterie. Vie de Jovien, tom. i, p. 130.

‡ Hinc jam toto orbe profugus Athanasius, nec ullus ei tutus ad latendum supererat locus. Tribuni, præfecti, comites, exercitus quoque, ad pervestigandum eum moventur edictis imperialibus; præmia delatoribus proponuntur, si quis eum vivum, si id minus, caput certe Athanasii detulisset. Rufin. l. 1, c. 16.

Antony and Pachomius received the fugitive primate as their father, admired the patience and humility with which he conformed to their strictest institutions, collected every word which dropped from his lips as the genuine effusions of inspired wisdom, and persuaded themselves, that their prayers, their fasts, and their vigils, were less meritorious than the zeal which they expressed, and the dangers which they braved, in the defence of truth and innocence.* The monasteries of Egypt were seated in lonely and desolate places, on the summit of mountains, or in the islands of the Nile; and the sacred horn or trumpet of Tabenne was the well-known signal which assembled several thousand robust and determined monks, who, for the most part, had been the peasants of the adjacent country. When their dark retreats were invaded by a military force, which it was impossible to resist, they silently stretched out their necks to the executioner; and supported their national character, that tortures could never wrest from an Egyptian the confession of a secret which he was resolved not to disclose.† The archbishop of Alexandria, for whose safety they eagerly devoted their lives, was lost among a uniform and well-disciplined multitude; and on the nearer approach of danger, he was swiftly removed, by their officious hands, from one place of concealment to another, till he reached the formidable deserts, which the gloomy and credulous temper of superstition had peopled with demons and savage monsters. The retirement of Athanasius, which ended only with the life of Constantius, was spent, for the most part, in the society of the monks, who faithfully served him as guards, as secretaries, and as messengers: but the importance of maintaining a more intimate connexion with the Catholic party tempted him, whenever the diligence of the pursuit was abated, to emerge from the desert, to introduce himself into Alexandria, and to trust his person to the discretion of his friends and adherents. His various adventures might have furnished the subject of a very entertaining romance. He was once secreted in a dry cistern, which he had scarcely left before he was betrayed by the treachery of

* Gregor. Nazianzen. tom. i, Orat. 21, p. 384, 385. See Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.* tom. vii, p. 176—410. 820—880.

† Et nulla tormentorum vis inveneri adhuc potuit; quæ obdurato illius tractu latroni invito elicere potuit, ut nomen proprium dicat. *Ammian.*

a female slave;* and he was once concealed in a still more extraordinary asylum, the house of a virgin, only twenty years of age, and who was celebrated in the whole city for her exquisite beauty. At the hour of midnight, as she related the story many years afterwards, she was surprised by the appearance of the archbishop in a loose undress, who, advancing with hasty steps, conjured her to afford him the protection which he had been directed by a celestial vision to seek under her hospitable roof. The pious maid accepted and preserved the sacred pledge which was intrusted to her prudence and courage. Without imparting the secret to any one, she instantly conducted Athanasius into her most secret chamber, and watched over his safety with the tenderness of a friend, and the assiduity of a servant. As long as the danger continued, she regularly supplied him with books and provisions, washed his feet, managed his correspondence, and dexterously concealed from the eye of suspicion, this familiar and solitary intercourse between a saint whose character required the most unblemished chastity, and a female whose charms might excite the most dangerous emotions.† During the six years of persecution and exile, Athanasius repeated his visits to his fair and faithful companion; and the formal declaration, that he *saw* the councils of Rimini and Seleucia,‡ forces us to believe that he was secretly present at the time and place of their convocation. The advantage of personally negotiating with his friends, and of observing and improving the divisions of his enemies, might justify, in a prudent statesman, so bold and dangerous an enterprise; and Alexandria was connected by trade and navigation with every sea-port of the Mediterranean. From the depth of his inaccessible retreat, the intrepid primate waged an incessant and offensive war against the protector

22, 16, and Valesius ad locum.

* Rufin. lib. 1, c. 18. Sozomen,

lib. 4, c. 10. This and the following story will be rendered impossible, if we suppose that Athanasius always inhabited the asylum which he accidentally or occasionally had used. † Palladius (Hist. Lausiaca.

c. 136, in Vit. Patrum. p. 776), the original author of this anecdote had conversed with the damsel, who, in her old age, still remembered with pleasure so pious and honourable a connexion. I cannot indulge the delicacy of Baronius, Valesius, Tillemont, &c., who almost reject a story so unworthy, as they deem it, of the gravity of ecclesiastical history.

‡ Athanas. tom. i. p. 869. I agree with Tillemont (tom. viii, p. 1197), that his expressions imply a personal, though per-

of the Arians; and his seasonable writings, which were diligently circulated and eagerly perused, contributed to unite and animate the orthodox party. In his public apologies, which he addressed to the emperor himself, he sometimes affected the praise of moderation; whilst at the same time, in secret and vehement invectives, he exposed Constantius as a weak and wicked prince, the executioner of his family, the tyrant of the republic, and the antichrist of the church. In the height of his prosperity, the victorious monarch who had chastised the rashness of Gallus, and suppressed the revolt of Sylvanus, who had taken the diadem from the head of Vetricano, and vanquished in the field the legions of Magnentius, received from an invisible hand a wound, which he could neither heal nor revenge; and the son of Constantine was the first of the Christian princes who experienced the strength of those principles, which, in the cause of religion, could resist the most violent exertions of the civil power.*

The persecution of Athanasius, and of so many respectable bishops, who suffered for the truth of their opinions, or at least for the integrity of their conscience, was a just subject of indignation and discontent to all Christians, except those who were blindly devoted to the Arian faction. The people regretted the loss of their faithful pastors, whose banishment was usually followed by the intrusion of a stranger,† into the episcopal chair; and loudly complained that the right of election was violated, and that they were condemned to obey a mercenary usurper, whose person was unknown, and whose principles were suspected. The Catholics might prove to the world, that they were not involved in the guilt and heresy of their ecclesiastical

haps secret, visit to the synods.

* The Epistle of Athanasius to the monks is filled with reproaches, which the public must feel to be true (vol. i, p. 834—856); and, in compliment to his readers, he has introduced the comparisons of Pharaoh, Ahab, Belshazzar, &c. The boldness of Hilary was attended with less danger, if he published his invective in Gaul, after the revolt of Julian; but Lucifer sent his libels to Constantius, and almost challenged the reward of martyrdom. See Tillemont, tom. vii, p. 905.

† Athanasius (tom. i, p. 811,) complains in general of this practice, which he afterwards exemplifies (p. 861) in the pretended election of Felix. Three eunuchs represented the Roman people, and three prelates, who followed the court, assumed the functions of the bishops of the Suburbicarian provinces.

governor, by publicly testifying their dissent, or by totally separating themselves from his communion. The first of these methods was invented at Antioch, and practised with such success, that it was soon diffused over the Christian world. The doxology, or sacred hymn, which celebrates the *glory* of the Trinity, is susceptible of very nice, but material inflections; and the substance of an orthodox, or an heretical creed, may be expressed by the difference of a disjunctive, or a copulative particle. Alternate responses, and a more regular psalmody,* were introduced into the public service by Flavianus and Diodorus, two devout and active laymen, who were attached to the Nicene faith. Under their conduct, a swarm of monks issued from the adjacent desert, bands of well-disciplined singers were stationed in the cathedral of Antioch, the glory to the Father, *and* the Son, *and* the Holy Ghost,† was triumphantly chanted by a full chorus of voices; and the Catholics insulted, by the purity of their doctrine, the Arian prelate, who had usurped the throne of the venerable Eustathius. The same zeal which inspired their songs, prompted the more scrupulous members of the orthodox party to form separate assemblies, which were governed by the presbyters till the death of their exiled bishop allowed the election and consecration of a new episcopal pastor.‡ The revolutions of the court multiplied the number of pretenders; and the same city was often disputed, under the reign of Constantius, by two or three, or even four bishops, who exercised their spiritual jurisdiction over their respective followers, and alternately lost and regained the

* Thomassin (*Discipline de l'Eglise*, tom. i, lib. 2, c. 72, 73, p. 966—984), has collected many curious facts concerning the origin and progress of church-singing, both in the east and west.

† Philostorgius, lib. 3, c. 13. Godefroy has examined this subject with singular accuracy (p. 147, &c.). There were three heterodox forms: "To the Father, *by* the Son, *and* in the Holy Ghost." "To the Father, *and* the Son, *in* the Holy Ghost;" and "To the Father in the Son, *and* the Holy Ghost."

‡ After the exile of Eustathius, under the reign of Constantine, the rigid party of the orthodox formed a separation, which afterwards degenerated into a schism, and lasted above fourscore years. See Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.* tom. vii, p. 35—54, 1137—1158, tom. viii, p. 537—632, 1314—1332. In many churches, the Arians and Homoousians, who had renounced each other's *communion*, continued for some time to join in prayer. Philostorgius, lib. 3, c. 14.

temporal possessions of the church. The abuse of Christianity introduced into the Roman government new causes of tyranny and sedition; the bands of civil society were torn asunder by the fury of religious factions; and the obscure citizen who might calmly have surveyed the elevation and fall of successive emperors, imagined and experienced, that his own life and fortune were connected with the interests of a popular ecclesiastic. The example of the two capitals, Rome and Constantinople, may serve to represent the state of the empire, and the temper of mankind, under the reign of the sons of Constantine.

I. The Roman pontiff, as long as he maintained his station and his principles, was guarded by the warm attachment of a great people; and could reject with scorn the prayers, the menaces, and the oblations of an heretical prince. When the eunuchs had secretly pronounced the exile of Liberius, the well-grounded apprehension of a tumult engaged them to use the utmost precautions in the execution of the sentence. The capital was invested on every side, and the præfect was commanded to seize the person of the bishop, either by stratagem, or by open force. The order was obeyed, and Liberius, with the greatest difficulty, at the hour of midnight, was swiftly conveyed beyond the reach of the Roman people, before their consternation was turned into rage. As soon as they were informed of his banishment into Thrace, a general assembly was convened, and the clergy of Rome bound themselves by a public and solemn oath, never to desert their bishop, never to acknowledge the usurper Felix, who, by the influence of the eunuchs, had been irregularly chosen and consecrated within the walls of a profane palace. At the end of two years, their pious obstinacy subsisted entire and unshaken; and when Constantius visited Rome, he was assailed by the importunate solicitations of a people, who had preserved as the last remnant of their ancient freedom, the right of treating their sovereign with familiar insolence. The wives of many of the senators and most honourable citizens, after pressing their husbands to intercede in favour of Liberius, were advised to undertake a commission, which, in their hands would be less dangerous, and might prove more successful. The emperor received with politeness these female deputies, whose wealth and dignity were displayed in the magnificence

of their dress and ornaments; he admired their inflexible resolution of following their beloved pastor to the most distant regions of the earth; and consented that the two bishops, Liberius and Felix, should govern in peace their respective congregations. But the ideas of toleration were so repugnant to the practice, and even to the sentiments, of those times, that when the answer of Constantius was publicly read in the circus of Rome, so reasonable a project of accommodation was rejected with contempt and ridicule. The eager vehemence which animated the spectators in the decisive moment of a horse-race, was now directed towards a different object; and the circus resounded with the shout of thousands who repeatedly exclaimed. *One God. one Christ, one bishop.* The zeal of the Roman people in the cause of Liberius, was not confined to words alone; and the dangerous and bloody sedition which they excited soon after the departure of Constantius, determined that prince to accept the submission of the exiled prelate, and to restore him to the undivided dominion of the capital. After some ineffectual resistance, his rival was expelled from the city by the permission of the emperor, and the power of the opposite faction; the adherents of Felix were inhumanly murdered in the streets, in the public places, in the baths, and even in the churches: and the face of Rome, upon the return of a Christian bishop, renewed the horrid image of the massacres of Marius, and the proscriptions of Sylla.*

* See on this ecclesiastical revolution of Rome, Ammianus, 15, 7. Athanas. tom. i, p. 834—861. Sozomen. l. 4, c. 15. Theodoret. l. 2, c. 17. Sulp. Sever. Hist. Sacra. l. 2, p. 413. Hieronym. Chron. Marcellin. et Faustin. Libell. p. 3, 4. Tillemont. Mém. Eccles. tom. vi, p. 336. [Neander has given some farther particulars, omitted by Gibbon, but which illustrate strikingly the spirit of the age and the tendency of hierarchical action. To regain possession of his diocese, Liberius, in the year 358 subscribed a creed, drawn up by Arian prelates at Sirmium. But in the mean time a presbyter, named Eusebius, had gathered a congregation at Rome, who assembled in a private house and refused to hold communion with those, who were favoured by the court. On the return of Liberius, these Eusebians refused to recognize him as bishop, on account of his recantation, and continued their separate meetings, till they were suppressed by force, and their leader confined to a room in his own house. Then followed twenty years of strife and bloodshed, disgraced by the tragic scenes, that will be found noticed in Gibbon's twenty-fifth chapter. To terminate these contests, Gratian was obliged to issue a particular decree, when the

II. Notwithstanding the rapid increase of Christians under the reign of the Flavian family, Rome, Alexandria, and the other great cities of the empire, still contained a strong and powerful faction of infidels, who envied the prosperity, and who ridiculed even in their theatres, the theological disputes of the church. Constantinople alone enjoyed the advantage of being born and educated in the bosom of the faith. The capital of the east had never been polluted by the worship of idols; and the whole body of the people had deeply imbibed the opinions, the virtues, and the passions, which distinguished the Christians of that age from the rest of mankind. After the death of Alexander, the episcopal throne was disputed by Paul and Macedonius.* By their zeal and abilities they both deserved the eminent station to which they aspired; and if the moral character of Macedonius was less exceptionable, his competitor had the advantage of a prior election and a more orthodox doctrine. His firm attachment to the Nicene creed, which has given Paul a place in the calendar among saints and martyrs, exposed him to the resentment of the Arians. In the space of fourteen years, he was five times driven from his throne; to which he was more frequently restored by the violence of the people, than by the permission of the prince; and the power of Macedonius could be secured only by the death of his rival. The unfortunate Paul was dragged in chains from the sandy deserts of Mesopotamia to the most desolate places of Mount Taurus,† confined in a dark and narrow

haughty and ostentatious Damasus was left in quiet possession of the rich prize, for which he had sacrificed his own character, the peace of Rome, and the lives of some hundred desperate fanatics. "In this schism," says Neander, "we observe the corrupting influence of worldly prosperity and abundance on the church of Rome, and how spiritual concerns were confounded with secular. We see what a mighty interest of profane passions was already existing there." But neither the triumph of Damasus, nor the banishment of his competitor, nor the decree of Gratian could at once restore tranquillity; the division was still prolonged, and other bishops joined in the agitation. *Hist. of Christianity*, vol. iii, p. 313—315.—ED.]

* Eusebius of Nicomedia succeeded Alexander; he died in 342, after which the contest arose between Paul and Macedonius. Paul was put to death in 352. *Clin. F. R. I.*, 397, 407, 423.—ED.

† Cucusus was the last stage of his life and sufferings. The situation of that lonely town, on the confines of Cappadocia, Cilicia, and the Lesser Armenia, has occasioned some geographical perplexity; but we are directed to the true spot by the course of the Roman road from Cesarea to Anazarbus. See Cellarii *Geograph.* tom. ii, p. 213. Wesseling *ad Itinerar.* p. 179—703.

dungeon, left six days without food, and at length strangled by the order of Philip, one of the principal ministers of the emperor Constantius.* The first blood which stained the new capital was spilt in this ecclesiastical contest; and many persons were slain on both sides, in the furious and obstinate seditions of the people. The commission of enforcing a sentence of banishment against Paul had been intrusted to Hermogenes, the master-general of the cavalry: but the execution of it was fatal to himself. The Catholics rose in the defence of their bishop; the palace of Hermogenes was consumed; the first military officer of the empire was dragged by the heels through the streets of Constantinople, and, after he expired, his lifeless corpse was exposed to their wanton insults.† The fate of Hermogenes instructed Philip, the prætorian prefect, to act with more precaution on a similar occasion. In the most gentle and honourable terms, he required the attendance of Paul in the baths of Zeuxippus, which had a private communication with the palace and the sea. A vessel which lay ready at the garden-stairs, immediately hoisted sail, and while the people were still ignorant of the meditated sacrilege, their bishop was already embarked on his voyage to Thessalonica. They soon beheld with surprise and indignation, the gates of the palace thrown open, and the usurper Macedonius seated by the side of the prefect on a lofty chariot, which was surrounded by troops of guards with drawn swords. The military procession advanced towards the cathedral; the Arians and the Catholics eagerly rushed to occupy that important post; and three thousand one hundred and fifty persons lost their lives in the confusion of the tumult. Macedonius, who was supported by a regular force, obtained a decisive victory; but his reign was disturbed by clamour and sedition; and the causes which appeared the least connected with the subject of dispute were sufficient to nourish and to kindle the flame of civil discord. As the chapel, in which the body of the great Constantine had been deposited, was in a ruinous

* Athanasius (tom. i, p. 703. 813, 814) affirms, in the most positive terms, that Paul was murdered; and appeals not only to common fame, but even to the unsuspecting testimony of Philagrius, one of the Arian persecutors. Yet he acknowledges, that the heretics attributed to disease, the death of the bishop of Constantinople. Athanasius is servilely copied by Socrates (l. 2, c. 26); but Sozomen, who discovers a more liberal temper, presumes (l. 4, c. 2) to insinuate a prudent doubt.

† Ammianus (14, 10) refers to his own account of this tragic event

condition, the bishop transported those venerable remains into the church of St. Acacius. This prudent, and ever-pious measure, was represented as a wicked profanation by the whole party which adhered to the Homoousian doctrine. The factions immediately flew to arms; the consecrated ground was used as their field of battle; and one of the ecclesiastical historians has observed, as a real fact, not as a figure of rhetoric, that the well before the church overflowed with a stream of blood, which filled the porticoes and the adjacent courts. The writer who should impute these tumults solely to a religious principle would betray a very imperfect knowledge of human nature; yet it must be confessed, that the motive which misled the sincerity of zeal, and the pretence which disguised the licentiousness of passion, suppressed the remorse, which in another cause would have succeeded to the rage of the Christians of Constantinople.*

The cruel and arbitrary disposition of Constantius, which did not always require the provocations of guilt and resistance was justly exasperated by the tumults of his capital, and the criminal behaviour of a faction, which opposed the authority and religion of their sovereign. The ordinary punishments of death, exile, and confiscation, were inflicted with partial rigour; and the Greeks still revere the holy memory of two clerks, a reader and a sub-deacon, who were accused of the murder of Hermogenes, and beheaded at the gates of Constantinople. By an edict of Constantius

But we no longer possess that part of his history. [The sedition, in which Hermogenes fell, is accurately fixed by Socrates (ii, 12, 13) to the year 342. From various authorities Clinton has shown (F. R. 1, 423), that the final exile and death of Paul, through the agency of Philippus, took place in 352. Between the two events related by Gibbon, ten years of strife intervened.—Ed.]

* See Socrates, l. 2, c. 6, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 27, 28, 38, and Sozomen, l. 3, 3, 4 7, 9; l. 4, c. 2, 21. The acts of St. Paul of Constantinople, of which Photius has made an abstract. (Phot. Biblioth. p. 1419—1430) are an indifferent copy of these historians; but a modern Greek, who could write the life of a saint, without adding fables and miracles, is entitled to some commendation. [Religion is profaned by the mere idea, that it can contain principles or inspire feelings, that prompt to such atrocities. The guilt rests with those, who give the name of religion to *that*, which they use only as the instrument of their ambition. The transactions, which occupy the late pages of this history, never would have disgraced human nature, had there been no hierarchical prizes to inflame the cupidity of rival claimants and hire the services of venal factions. Again, let the reader mark the advance of that pernicious

against the Catholics, which has not been judged worthy of a place in the Theodosian Code, those who refused to communicate with the Arian bishops, and particularly with Macedonius, were deprived of the immunities of ecclesiastics, and of the rights of Christians; they were compelled to relinquish the possession of the churches, and were strictly prohibited from holding their assemblies within the walls of the city. The execution of this unjust law, in the provinces of Thrace and Asia Minor, was committed to the zeal of Macedonius; the civil and military powers were directed to obey his commands; and the cruelties exercised by this Semi-Arian tyrant in the support of the *Homoiousion*, exceeded the commission, and disgraced the reign, of Constantius. The sacraments of the church were administered to the reluctant victims, who denied the vocation, and abhorred the principles, of Macedonius. The rites of baptism were conferred on women and children, who, for that purpose, had been torn from the arms of their friends and parents; the mouths of the communicants were held open by a wooden engine, while the consecrated bread was forced down their throats; the breasts of tender virgins were either burnt with red-hot egg-shells, or inhumanly compressed between sharp and heavy boards.* The Novatians of Constantinople and the adjacent country, by their firm attachment to the Homoousian standard, deserved to be confounded with the Catholics themselves. Macedonius was informed that a large district of Paphlagonia† was almost entirely inhabited by those sectaries. He resolved either to convert or to extirpate them; and as he distrusted, on this occasion, the efficacy of an ecclesiastical mission, he commanded a body of four thousand legionaries to march against the rebels, and to reduce the territory of Mantinium

influence, and observe, how it produced the irritations of enfeebled mind and the exhausting paroxysms of passion, which were the immediate causes and heralds of social decay.—ED.] * Socrates, l. 2, c. 27. 38. Sozomen, l. 4, c. 21. The principal assistants of Macedonius, in the work of persecution, were the two bishops of Nicomedia and Cyzicus, who were esteemed for their virtues, and especially for their charity. I cannot forbear reminding the reader, that the difference between the *Homocousion* and *Homoiousion* is almost invisible to the nicest theological eye. † We are ignorant of the precise situation of Mantinium. In speaking of these *four bands* of legionaries, Socrates, Sozomen, and the author of the acts of St. Paul, use the indefinite terms of *ἀριθμοί, φελαγγεῖς, τάγματα*, which Nicephorus

very properly translates *thousands*. Vales. ad Socrat. l. 2, c. 38.

under his spiritual dominion. The Novatian peasants, animated by despair and religious fury, boldly encountered the invaders of their country; and though many of the Paphlagonians were slain, the Roman legions were vanquished by an irregular multitude, armed only with scythes and axes; and, except a few who escaped by an ignominious flight, four thousand soldiers were left dead on the field of battle. The successor of Constantius has expressed, in a concise but lively manner, some of the theological calamities which afflicted the empire, and more especially the east, in the reign of a prince who was the slave of his own passions, and of those of his eunuchs. "Many were imprisoned, and persecuted, and driven into exile. Whole troops of those who were styled heretics were massacred, particularly at Cyzicus, and at Samosata. In Paphlagonia, Bithynia, Galatia, and in many other provinces, towns and villages were laid waste, and utterly destroyed." *

While the flames of the Arian controversy consumed the vitals of the empire, the African provinces were infested by their peculiar enemies the savage fanatics, who, under the name of *Circumcellions*, formed the strength and scandal of the Donatist party.† The severe execution of the laws of Constantine had excited a spirit of discontent and resistance; the strenuous efforts of his son Constans, to restore the unity of the church, exasperated the sentiments of mutual hatred, which had first occasioned the separation; and the methods of force and corruption employed by the two imperial commissioners, Paul and Macarius, furnished the schismatics with a specious contrast between the maxims of the apostles and the conduct of their pretended

* Julian, Epistol. 52. p. 436, edit. Spanheim. † See Optatus Milevitanus (particularly 3, 4), with the Donatist history, by M. Dupin, and the original pieces at the end of his edition. The numerous circumstances which Augustin has mentioned, of the fury of the Circumcellions against others, and against themselves, have been laboriously collected by Tillemont (Mém. Eccles. tom. vi, p. 147—165), and he has often, though without design, exposed the injuries which had provoked those fanatics [According to Neander (Hist. of Christianity, vol. iii, p. 272), who appeals to Augustine (Enarrat. in ψ 132, s. 6). "it is clear that these people were called *circumcelliones* by their opponents alone, while they gave to themselves the name of *ajnostici*." These once so violent, long extinct and now almost forgotten, schismatics, are only worthy of notice, inasmuch as they hold up a mirror, wherein fanaticism of every kind may see its own image, and read the destiny of all the nonsense, for which its dupes so manfully tear them

successors.* The peasants who inhabited the villages of Numidia and Mauritania, were a ferocious race, who had been imperfectly reduced under the authority of the Roman laws; who were imperfectly converted to the Christian faith; but who were actuated by a blind and furious enthusiasm in the cause of their Donatist teachers. They indignantly supported the exile of their bishops, the demolition of their churches, and the interruption of their secret assemblies. The violence of the officers of justice, who were usually sustained by a military guard, was sometimes repelled with equal violence; and the blood of some popular ecclesiastics, which had been shed in the quarrel, inflamed their rude followers with an eager desire of revenging the death of these holy martyrs. By their own cruelty and rashness, the ministers of persecution sometimes provoked their fate; and the guilt of an accidental tumult precipitated the criminals into despair and rebellion. Driven from their native villages, the Donatist peasants assembled in formidable gangs on the edge of the Getulian desert, and readily exchanged the habits of labour for a life of idleness and rapine, which was consecrated by the name of religion, and faintly condemned by the doctors of the sect. The leaders of the Circumcellions assumed the title of captains of the saints; their principal weapon, as they were indifferently

themselves and others to pieces.—ED.] * It is amusing enough to observe the language of opposite parties, when they speak of the same men and things. Gratus, bishop of Carthage, begins the acclamations of an orthodox synod, “Gratias Deo omnipotenti et Christo Jesu . . . qui imperavit religiosissimo Constanti imperatori, ut votum gereret unitatis, et mitteret ministros sancti operis *familios Dei* Paulum et Macarium.” [Thanks to Almighty God and Jesus Christ, who commanded the most religious Emperor Constans to issue an edict of uniformity, and send *the servants of God*, Paulus and Macarius, as ministers of the holy work.—Trans. by ED.] Monument. Vet. ad Calcem Optati, p. 313. “Ecce subito, (says the Donatist author of the Passion of Marcellus) de Constantis regis tyrannicâ domo . . . pollutum Macarianæ persecutionis murmur increpuit, et *duabus bestiis* ad Africam missis, eodem scilicet Macario et Paulo execrandum prorsus ac dirum ecclesiæ certamen indictum est; ut populus Christianus ad unionem cum traditoribus faciendam, nudatis militum gladiis et draconum presentibus signis, et tubarum vocibus cogeretur.” [Then on a sudden was heard from the tyrannical palace of Constans, the cry of the Macarian persecution, and *the two beasts*, Macarian and Paulus, were sent to Africa, to wage a dire and execrable war with the church, and force the people of Christ to unite with traitors, by the naked swords of soldiers, their frightful ensigns, and the clangor of their trumpets.—Trans. by ED.] Monument. p. 304.

provided with swords and spears, was a huge and weighty club, which they termed an *Israelite*; and the well-known sound of *Praise be to God*, which they used as their cry of war, diffused consternation over the unarmed provinces of Africa. At first their depredations were coloured by the plea of necessity; but they soon exceeded the measure of subsistence, indulged without control their intemperance and avarice, burnt the villages which they had pillaged, and reigned the licentious tyrants of the open country. The occupations of husbandry, and the administration of justice, were interrupted; and as the Circumcellions pretended to restore the primitive equality of mankind, and to reform the abuses of civil society, they opened a secure asylum for the slaves and debtors, who flocked in crowds to their holy standard. When they were not resisted, they usually contented themselves with plunder, but the slightest opposition provoked them to acts of violence and murder; and some Catholic priests, who had imprudently signalized their zeal, were tortured by the fanatics with the most refined and wanton barbarity. The spirit of the Circumcellions was not always exerted against their defenceless enemies; they engaged, and sometimes defeated, the troops of the province; and in the bloody action of Bagai, they attacked in the open field, but with unsuccessful valour, an advanced guard of the imperial cavalry. The Donatists who were taken in arms, received, and they soon deserved, the same treatment which might have been shewn to the wild beasts of the desert. The captives died, without a murmur either by the sword, the axe, or the fire; and the measures of retaliation were multiplied in a rapid proportion, which aggravated the horrors of rebellion, and excluded the hope of mutual forgiveness. In the beginning of the present century, the example of the Circumcellions has been renewed in the persecution, the boldness, the crimes, and the enthusiasm of the Camisards; and if the fanatics of Languedoc surpassed those of Numidia, by their military achievements, the Africans maintained their fierce independence with more resolution and perseverance.*

Such disorders are the natural effects of religious tyranny; but the rage of the Donatists was inflamed by a frenzy of

* The *Histoire des Camisards*, in three vols. 12mo. Villefranche, 1760, may be recommended as accurate and impartial. It requires some attention to discover the religion of the author.

a very extraordinary kind; and which, if it really prevailed among them in so extravagant a degree, cannot surely be paralleled in any country, or in any age. Many of these fanatics were possessed with the horror of life, and the desire of martyrdom; and they deemed it of little moment by what means or by what hands they perished, if their conduct was sanctified by the intention of devoting themselves to the glory of the true faith, and the hope of eternal happiness.* Sometimes they rudely disturbed the festivals, and profaned the temples of Paganism, with the design of exciting the most zealous of the idolaters to revenge the insulted honour of their gods. They sometimes forced their way into the courts of justice, and compelled the affrighted judge to give orders for their immediate execution. They frequently stopped travellers on the public highways, and obliged them to inflict the stroke of martyrdom, by the promise of a reward, if they consented, and by the threat of instant death, if they refused to grant so very singular a favour. When they were disappointed of every other resource, they announced the day on which, in the presence of their friends and brethren they should cast themselves headlong from some lofty rock; and many precipices were shown, which had acquired fame by the number of religious suicides. In the actions of these desperate enthusiasts, who were admired by one party as the martyrs of God, and abhorred by the other as the victims of Satan, an impartial philosopher may discover the influence and the last abuse of that inflexible spirit, which was originally derived from the character and principles of the Jewish nation.

The simple narrative of the intestine divisions, which distracted the peace, and dishonoured the triumph of the church, will confirm the remark of a Pagan historian, and justify the complaint of a venerable bishop. The experience of Ammianus had convinced him that the enmity of the Christians towards each other surpassed the fury of savage beasts against man;† and Gregory Nazianzen most pathetically laments, that the kingdom of heaven was converted, by discord, into the image of chaos, of a nocturnal tempest,

* The Donatist suicides alleged in their justification the example of Razias, which is related in the fourteenth chapter of the second book of the Maccabees. † Nullas intestas hominibus bestias, ut sunt sibi ferales plerique Christianorum, exertus. Ammian. 22. 5.

and of hell itself.* The fierce and partial writers of the times, ascribing all virtue to themselves, and imputing all guilt to their adversaries, have painted the battle of the angels and demons. Our calmer reason will reject such pure and perfect monsters of vice or sanctity, and will impute an equal, or at least an indiscriminate measure of good and evil to the hostile sectaries, who assumed and bestowed the appellations of orthodox and heretics. They had been educated in the same religion, and the same civil society. Their hopes and fears in the present, or in a future life, were balanced in the same proportion. On either side the error might be innocent, the faith sincere, the practice meritorious or corrupt. Their passions were excited by similar objects; and they might alternately abuse the favour of the court or of the people. The metaphysical opinions of the Athanasians and the Arians could not influence their moral character; and they were alike actuated by the intolerant spirit which has been extracted from the pure and simple maxims of the gospel.†

A modern writer, who, with a just confidence, has prefixed to his own history the honourable epithets of political and philosophical,‡ accuses the timid prudence of Montesquieu, for neglecting to enumerate, among the causes of the decline of the empire, a law of Constantine, by which the exercise of the Pagan worship was absolutely suppressed, and a considerable part of his subjects was left destitute of priests, of temples, and of any public religion. The zeal of the philosophic historian for the rights of mankind, has induced him to acquiesce in the ambiguous testimony of those ecclesiastics who have too lightly ascribed to their favourite hero the merit of a general persecution.§

* Gregor. Nazianzen. Orat. 1, p. 33. See Tillemont, tom. vi, p. 501, 4to. edit.

† Is it necessary to repeat here the protest already made against the idea of that "intolerant spirit" having been "extracted from the pure and simple maxims of the gospel," which emanated wholly from the selfish avidities of the pseudo-teachers by whom those maxims were neglected, perverted, or corrupted?—ED.

‡ Histoire Politique et Philosophique des Etablissemens des Européens dans les deux Indes, tom. i, p. 9. § According to Eusebius (in Vit. Constantin. lib. 2, c. 45), the emperor prohibited, both in cities and in the country, τα μυσάα . . . τῆς Εἰδωλολατρίας; the abominable acts or parts of idolatry. Socrates (lib. 1, c. 17), and Sozomen (lib. 2, c. 4, 5), have represented the conduct of Constantine

Instead of alleging this imaginary law, which would have blazed in the front of the imperial codes, we may safely appeal to the original epistle, which Constantine addressed to the followers of the ancient religion, at a time when he no longer disguised his conversion, nor dreaded the rivals of his throne. He invites and exhorts, in the most pressing terms, the subjects of the Roman empire to imitate the example of their master; but he declares that those who still refuse to open their eyes to the celestial light, may freely enjoy their temples and their fancied gods. A report that the ceremonies of Paganism were suppressed, is formally contradicted by the emperor himself, who wisely assigns, as the principle of his moderation, the invincible force of habit, of prejudice, and of superstition.* Without violating the sanctity of his promise, without alarming the fears of the Pagans, the artful monarch advanced, by slow and cautious steps, to undermine the irregular and decayed fabric of Polytheism. The partial acts of severity which he occasionally exercised, though they were secretly prompted by a Christian zeal, were coloured by the fairest pretences of justice and the public good; and while Constantine designed to ruin the foundations, he seemed to reform the abuses, of the ancient religion. After the example of the wisest of his predecessors, he condemned, under the most rigorous penalties, the occult and impious arts of divination; which excited the vain hopes, and sometimes the criminal attempts, of those who were discontented with their present condition. An ignominious silence was imposed on the oracles, which had been publicly convicted of fraud and falsehood; the effeminate priests of the Nile were abolished; and Constantine discharged the duties of a Roman censor, when he gave orders for the demolition of several temples of Phœnicia, in which every mode of prostitution was devoutly practised in the face of day and to the honour of

with a just regard to truth and history; which has been neglected by Theodoret (lib. 5, c. 21), and Orosius (7. 28). Tum deinde (says the latter) primus Constantinus *justo ordine et pio vicem vertit edicto*: siquidem statuit citra ullam hominum cædem, Paganorum templa claudi. * See Eusebius in Vit. Constantin. lib. 2, c. 56. 60. In the sermon to the assembly of saints, which the emperor pronounced when he was mature in years and piety, he declares to the idolaters (c. 12), that they are permitted to offer sacrifices, and to exercise every part

Venus.* The imperial city of Constantinople was, in some measure, raised at the expense, and was adorned with the spoils, of the opulent temples of Greece and Asia; the sacred property was confiscated; the statues of gods and heroes were transported, with rude familiarity, among a people who considered them as objects, not of adoration, but of curiosity; the gold and silver were restored to circulation; and the magistrates, the bishops, and the eunuchs improved the fortunate occasion of gratifying at once their zeal, their avarice, and their resentment. But these depredations were confined to a small part of the Roman world, and the provinces had been long since accustomed to endure the same sacrilegious rapine, from the tyranny of princes and proconsuls, who could not be suspected of any design to subvert the established religion.†

The sons of Constantine trod in the footsteps of their father, with more zeal and with less discretion. The pretences of rapine and oppression were insensibly multiplied,‡ every indulgence was shown to the illegal behaviour of the Christians; every doubt was explained to the disadvantage of Paganism; and the demolition of the temples was celebrated as one of the auspicious events of the reign of Constans and Constantius.§ The name of Constantius is prefixed to a concise law, which might have superseded the necessity of any future prohibitions. "It is our pleasure, that in all places, and in all cities, the temples be immediately shut, and carefully guarded, that none may have

of their religious worship.

* See Eusebius in *Vit. Constantin.* lib. 3, c. 54—58, and lib. 4, c. 23—25. These acts of authority may be compared with the suppression of the Bacchanals and the demolition of the temple of Isis, by the magistrates of Pagan Rome.

† Eusebius (in *Vit. Constant.* lib. 3, c. 54), and Libanius (*Orat. pro Templis*, p. 9, 10, edit. Gothofred.), both mention the pious sacrilege of Constantine, which they viewed in very different lights. The latter expressly declares, that "he made use of the sacred money, but made no alteration in the legal worship; the temples indeed were impoverished, but the sacred rites were performed there." Lardner's *Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, vol. iv, p. 140.

‡ Ammianus (22, 4,) speaks of some court-eunuchs who were *spoliis templorum* pasti. Libanius says (*Orat. pro Templ.* p. 23,) that the emperor often gave away a temple, like a dog, or a horse, or a slave, or a gold cup; but the devout philosopher takes care to observe, that these sacrilegious favourites very seldom prospered.

§ See Gothofred. *Cod. Theodos.* tom. vi, p. 262. Liban. *Orat. Parental.* c. 10, in *Fabric. Bibl.*

the power of offending. It is likewise our pleasure, that all our subjects should abstain from sacrifices. If any one should be guilty of such an act, let him feel the sword of vengeance, and after his execution let his property be confiscated to the public use. We denounce the same penalties against the governors of the provinces if they neglect to punish the criminals."* But there is the strongest reason to believe, that this formidable edict was either composed without being published, or was published without being executed. The evidence of facts, and the monuments which are still extant of brass and marble, continue to prove the public exercise of the Pagan worship during the whole reign of the sons of Constantine. In the east, as well as in the west; in cities, as well as in the country, a great number of temples were respected, or at least were spared; and the devout multitude still enjoyed the luxury of sacrifices, of festivals, and of processions, by the permission, or by the connivance of the civil government. About four years after the supposed date of his bloody edict, Constantius visited the temples of Rome; and the decency of his behaviour is recommended by a Pagan orator as an example worthy of the imitation of succeeding princes. "That emperor," says Symmachus, "suffered the privileges of the vestal virgins to remain inviolate; he bestowed the sacerdotal dignities on the nobles of Rome, granted the customary allowance to defray the expenses of the public rites and sacrifices; and, though he had embraced a different religion, he never attempted to deprive the empire of the sacred worship of antiquity."† The senate still presumed

Græc. tom. vii, p. 235.

* *Placuit omnibus locis atque urbibus universis claudi protinus templa, et accessu vetitis omnibus licentiam delinquendi perditis abnegari. Voluimus etiam cunctos a sacrificiis abstinere. Quod si quis aliquid forte hujusmodi perpetraverit, gladio sternatur: facultates etiam perempti fisco decernimus vindicari: et similiter adfligi rectores provinciarum si facinora vindicare neglexerint. Cod. Theodos. lib. 16, tit. 10, leg. 4.* Chronology has discovered some contradiction in the date of this extravagant law; the only one, perhaps, by which the negligence of magistrates is punished by death and confiscation. M. de la Bastie (*Mém. de l'Académie*, tom. xv, p. 98) conjectures, with a show of reason, that this was no more than the minutes of a law, the heads of an intended bill, which were found in Seriniis *Memorie*, among the papers of Constantius, and afterwards inserted, as a worthy model, in the Theodosian Code. † Symmach.

to consecrate, by solemn decrees, the *divine* memory of their sovereigns; and Constantine himself was associated, after his death, to those gods whom he had renounced and insulted during his life. The title, the ensigns, the prerogatives of *sovereign pontiff*, which had been instituted by Numa, and assumed by Augustus, were accepted, without hesitation, by seven Christian emperors; who were invested with a more absolute authority over the religion which they had deserted, than over that which they professed *

The divisions of Christianity suspended the ruin of *Paganism*; † and the holy war against the infidels was less

Epistol. 10. 54. * The fourth Dissertation of M. de la Bastie, sur le Souverain Pontificat des Empereurs Romains (in the Mém. de l'Acad. tom. xv, p. 75—144,) is a very learned and judicious performance, which explains the state, and proves the toleration, of Paganism from Constantine to Gratian. The assertion of Zosimus, that Gratian was the first who refused the pontifical robe, is confirmed beyond a doubt; and the murmurs of bigotry, on that subject, are almost silenced.

† As I have freely anticipated the use of *Pagans* and *Paganism*, I shall now trace the singular revolutions of those celebrated words. 1. Πάγη, in the Doric dialect so familiar to the Italians, signifies a fountain; and the rural neighbourhood which frequented the same fountain, derived the common appellation of *Pagus* and *Pagans*. (Festus sub voce, and Servius ad Virgil. Georgic. 2. 382.) 2. By an easy extension of the word, *Pagan* and rural became almost synonymous (Plin. Hist. Natur. 28. 5); and the meaner rustics acquired that name, which has been corrupted into *peasants* in the modern languages of Europe. 3. The amazing increase of the military order introduced the necessity of a correlative term (Hume's Essays, vol. i, p. 555), and all the *people* who were not enlisted in the service of the prince, were branded with the contemptuous epithets of Pagans. (Tacit. Hist. 3. 24. 43. 77. Juvenal. Satir. 16. Tertullian de Pallio, c. 4.) 4. The Christians were the soldiers of Christ; their adversaries, who refused his *sacrament*, or military oath of baptism, might deserve the metaphorical name of Pagans; and this popular reproach was introduced as early as the reign of Valentinian (A.D. 365,) into imperial laws (Cod. Theodos. l. 16, tit. 2, leg. 18) and theological writings. 5. Christianity gradually filled the cities of the empire; the old religion, in the time of Prudentius (advers. Symmachum, lib. 1, ad fin), and Orosius (in Prefat. Hist.), retired and languished in obscure villages: and the word *Pagans*, with its new signification, reverted to its primitive origin. 6. Since the worship of Jupiter and his family has expired, the vacant title of Pagans has been successively applied to all the idolaters and Polytheists of the old and new world. 7. The Latin Christians bestowed it, without scruple, on their mortal enemies the Mahometans; and the purest *Unitarians* were branded with the unjust reproach of idolatry and Paganism. See Gerard Vossius Etymologicon

vigorously prosecuted by princes and bishops, who were more immediately alarmed by the guilt and danger of domestic rebellion. The extirpation of *idolatry** might have been justified by the established principles of intolerance: but the hostile sects, which alternately reigned in the imperial court, were mutually apprehensive of alienating, and perhaps exasperating, the minds of a powerful though declining faction. Every motive of authority and fashion, of interest and reason, now militated on the side of Christianity: but two or three generations elapsed before their victorious influence was universally felt. The religion which had so long and so lately been established in the Roman empire was still revered by a numerous people, less attached indeed to speculative opinion than to ancient custom. The honours of the state and army were indif-

Linguae Latinae, in his works, tom. i, p. 420. Godefroy's Commentary on the Theodosian Code, tom. vi, p. 250, and Ducange, mediae et infimae Latinitat. Glossar. [In the very first stage of Roman polity, the country and city tribes were distinguished as *pagi* and *vici*. (Niebuhr's Lectures, vol. i, p. 174.) Beside the word which Gibbon has brought before us, *pagus* has furnished the root of many others, which, through the corrupt Latinity of the middle ages and French polish, have come to us in significations very remote from their origin. *Pagius*, first a villager, then a rural labourer, then a servant of any kind, ended as an attendant *page*. *Pagina*, first the inclosed square of cultivated land, near the village, graduated into the *page* of a book. *Pagare*, from denoting the field-service, that compensated the provider of food and raiment, was applied eventually to every form in which the changes of society required the benefited to *pay* for what they received. See Ducange ad Voc. Gibbon is right in making Etymology the handmaid of History.—ED.]

In the pure language of Æonia and Athens, Εἰώλον and Λατρεία were ancient and familiar words. The former expressed a likeness, an apparition (Homer. Od. 11. 601), a representation, an *image*, created either by fancy or art. The latter denoted any sort of *service* or slavery. The Jews of Egypt, who translated the Hebrew Scriptures, restrained the use of these words (Exod. xx, 4, 5) to the religious worship of an image. The peculiar idiom of the Hellenists, or Grecian Jews, has been adopted by the sacred and ecclesiastical writers; and the reproach of *idolatry* (Εἰώλατρεία) has stigmatized that visible and abject mode of superstition, which some sects of Christianity should not hastily impute to the Polytheists of Greece and Rome. [The Latin *Imago*, formed from or supplying the verb *imitari*, is the root of our *Imagination*, the creator of mental *images* of all kinds, out of the stores of memory. Hitherto this has been the most active and potential of our faculties, making too little way for its superior—Reason. The prevailing *worship of imaginary* god, is no less *Idolatry* than was that of the ancient

ferently bestowed on all the subjects of Constantine and Constantius; and a considerable portion of knowledge and wealth and valour was still engaged in the service of Polytheism. The superstition of the senator and of the peasant, of the poet and the philosopher, was derived from very different causes; but they met with equal devotion in the temples of the gods. Their zeal was insensibly provoked by the insulting triumph of a proscribed sect; and their hopes were revived by the well-grounded confidence, that the presumptive heir of the empire, a young and valiant hero, who had delivered Gaul from the arms of the barbarians, had secretly embraced the religion of his ancestors.

CHAPTER XXII. — JULIAN IS DECLARED EMPEROR BY THE LEGIONS OF GAUL. — HIS MARCH AND SUCCESS. — THE DEATH OF CONSTANTIUS. — CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF JULIAN.

WHILE the Romans languished under the ignominious tyranny of eunuchs and bishops, the praises of Julian were repeated with transport in every part of the empire, except in the palace of Constantius. The barbarians of Germany had felt, and still dreaded, the arms of the young Cæsar; his soldiers were the companions of his victory; the grateful provincials enjoyed the blessings of his reign; but the favourites, who had opposed his elevation, were offended by his virtues; and they justly considered the friend of the people as the enemy of the court. As long as the fame of Julian was doubtful, the buffoons of the palace, who were skilled in the language of satire, tried the efficacy of those arts which they had so often practised with success. They easily discovered, that his simplicity was not exempt from affectation: the ridiculous epithets of a hairy savage, of an ape invested with the purple, were applied to the dress and person of the philosophic warrior; and his modest dispatches were stigmatized as the vain and elaborate fictions of a loquacious Greek, a speculative soldier, who had studied the art of war amidst the groves of the academy.* The

for their inanimate statues; and like that, it will in time be superseded by advancing Religion.—ED.] * Omnes qui plus poterant in palatio, adulandi professores jam docti, recte consulta, prosperequo

voice of malicious folly was at length silenced by the shouts of victory; the conqueror of the Franks and Allemanni could no longer be painted as an object of contempt; and the monarch himself was meanly ambitious of stealing from his lieutenant the honourable reward of his labours. In the letters crowned with laurel, which, according to ancient custom, were addressed to the provinces, the name of Julian was omitted. Constantius had made his dispositions in person: he had signalized his valour in the foremost ranks; his military conduct had secured the victory; and the captive king of the barbarians was presented to him on the field of battle, from which he was at that time distant about forty days' journey.* So extravagant a fable was incapable, however, of deceiving the public credulity, or even of satisfying the pride of the emperor himself. Secretly conscious that the applause and favour of the Romans accompanied the rising fortunes of Julian, his discontented mind was prepared to receive the subtle poison of those artful sycophants, who coloured their mischievous designs with the fairest appearances of truth and candour.† Instead of

completa vertebant in deridiculum; talia sine modo strepentes insulse; in odium venit cum victoriis suis; capella, non homo; ut hirsutum Julianum carpentes, appellantesque loquacem talpam, et purpuratam simiam, et litterionem Græcum: et his congruentia plurima atque vernacula principi resonantes, audire hæc taliaque gestienti, virtutes ejus obruere verbis impudentibus conabantur, ut segnem incessentes et timidum et umbratilem, gestaque secus verbis compitioribus exornantem. Ammianus, s. 17, 11.

* Ammian. 16, 12. The orator Themistius (4. p. 56, 57,) believed whatever was contained in the imperial letters, which were addressed to the senate of Constantinople. Aurelius Victor, who published his abridgement in the last year of Constantius, ascribes the German victories to the *wisdom* of the emperor and the *fortune* of the Cæsar. Yet the historian, soon afterwards, was indebted to the favour or esteem of Julian for the honour of a brass statue; and the important offices of consular of the second Pannonia, and prefect of the city. Ammian. 21. 10. [One of Julian's coins has the inscription VICTORIA AUGUSTORUM. It is explained by Eckhel, as giving to Constantius the honour of sharing the young Cæsar's successful career against the Germans. In this, he no doubt conformed to the custom of the age, no less than to the advice of his patroness, Eusebia, who, when Constantius was hesitating to depute his cousin as his representative in Gaul, assured him, that the faithful subordinate would ascribe to his superior whatever conquests he might achieve—"faciet ut imperatori felices illi successus adscribantur." Eckhel Num. Vet. vol. viii, p. 128.—Ed.]

† Callido nocendi artificio accusatoriam diritatem laudum titulis peragebant. . . . Hæ

depreciating the merits of Julian, they acknowledged, and even exaggerated, his popular fame, superior talents, and important services. But they darkly insinuated, that the virtues of the Cæsar might instantly be converted into the most dangerous crimes, if the inconstant multitude should prefer their inclinations to their duty; or if the general of a victorious army should be tempted from his allegiance by the hopes of revenge, and independent greatness.

The personal fears of Constantius were interpreted by his council as a laudable anxiety for the public safety; whilst in private, and perhaps in his own breast, he disguised, under the less odious appellation of fear, the sentiments of hatred and envy, which he had secretly conceived for the inimitable virtues of Julian.

The apparent tranquillity of Gaul, and the imminent danger of the eastern provinces, offered a specious pretence for the design which was artfully concerted by the imperial ministers. They resolved to disarm the Cæsar; to recall those faithful troops who guarded his person and dignity; and to employ, in a distant war against the Persian monarch, the hardy veterans who had vanquished, on the banks of the Rhine, the fiercest nations of Germany. While Julian used the laborious hours of his winter-quarters at Paris, in the administration of power, which, in his hands, was the exercise of virtue, he was surprised by the hasty arrival of a tribune and a notary, with positive orders from the emperor, which *they* were directed to execute, and *he* was commanded not to oppose. Constantius signified his pleasure, that four entire legions, the Celtæ, and Petulants, the Heruli and the Batavians, should be separated from the standard of Julian, under which they had acquired their fame and discipline; that in each of the remaining bands three hundred of the bravest youths should be selected; and that this numerous detachment, the strength of the Gallie army, should instantly begin their march, and exert their utmost diligence to arrive, before the opening of the campaign, on the frontiers of Persia.* The Cæsar foresaw and lamented

voces fuerunt ad inflammanda odia probris omnibus potentiores. See Mamertin. in *Actione Gratiarum*, in *Vet. Panegyri*. 11. 5, 6.

* The minute interval which may be interposed between the *hymne adultæ* and the *primo vere* of Ammianus (20. 1. 4), instead of allowing a sufficient space for a march of three thousand miles, would render

the consequences of this fatal mandate. Most of the auxiliaries, who engaged their voluntary service, had stipulated that they should never be obliged to pass the Alps. The public faith of Rome and the personal honour of Julian, had been pledged for the observance of this condition. Such an act of treachery and oppression would destroy the confidence, and excite the resentment, of the independent warriors of Germany, who considered truth as the noblest of their virtues, and freedom as the most valuable of their possessions. The legionaries, who enjoyed the title and privileges of Romans, were enlisted for the general defence of the republic; but those mercenary troops heard with cold indifference the antiquated names of the republic and of Rome. Attached, either from birth or long habit, to the climate and manners of Gaul, they loved and admired Julian; they despised, and perhaps hated, the emperor; they dreaded the laborious march, the Persian arrows, and the burning deserts of Asia. They claimed as their own the country which they had saved; and excused their want of spirit, by pleading the sacred and more immediate duty of protecting their families and friends. The apprehensions of the Gauls were derived from the knowledge of the impending and inevitable danger. As soon as the provinces were exhausted of their military strength, the Germans would violate a treaty which had been imposed on their fears; and, notwithstanding the abilities and valour of Julian, the general of a nominal army, to whom the public calamities would be imputed, must find himself, after a vain resistance, either a prisoner in the camp of the barbarians, or a criminal in the palace of Constantius. If Julian complied with the orders which he had received, he subscribed his own destruction, and that of a people who deserved his affection. But a positive refusal was an act of rebellion, and a declaration of war. The inexorable jealousy of the emperor, the peremptory, and perhaps insidious, nature of his commands, left not any room for a fair apology or candid interpretation; and the dependent station of the Cæsar scarcely allowed him to pause or to deliberate. Solitude increased the per-

the orders of Constantius as extravagant as they were unjust. The troops of Gaul could not have reached Syria till the end of autumn. The memory of Ammianus must have been inaccurate, and his language incorrect.

plexity of Julian ; he could no longer apply to the faithful counsels of Sallust, who had been removed from his office by the judicious malice of the eunuchs ; he could not even enforce his representations by the concurrence of the ministers, who would have been afraid, or ashamed, to approve the ruin of Gaul. The moment had been chosen, when Lupicinus,* the general of the cavalry, was dispatched into Britain, to repulse the inroads of the Scots and Picts ; and Florentius was occupied at Vienna by the assessment of the tribute. The latter, a crafty and corrupt statesman, declining to assume a responsible part on this dangerous occasion, eluded the pressing and repeated invitations of Julian, who represented to him, that, in every important measure, the presence of the prefect was indispensable in the council of the prince. In the meanwhile, the Cæsar was oppressed by the rude and importunate solicitations of the imperial messenger, who presumed to suggest, that if he expected the return of his ministers, he would charge himself with the guilt of the delay, and reserve for them the merit of the execution. Unable to resist, unwilling to comply, Julian expressed, in the most serious terms, his wish, and even his intention, of resigning the purple, which he could not preserve with honour, but which he could not abdicate with safety.

After a painful conflict, Julian was compelled to acknowledge, that obedience was the virtue of the most eminent subject ; and that the sovereign alone was entitled to judge of the public welfare. He issued the necessary orders for carrying into execution the commands of Constantius ; a part of the troops began their march for the Alps ; and the detachments from the several garrisons moved towards their respective places of assembly. They advanced with difficulty through the trembling and affrighted crowds of provincials, who attempted to excite their pity by silent despair, or loud lamentations ; while the wives of the soldiers, holding their infants in their arms, accused the desertion of their husbands,

* Ammianus, 20, 1. The valour of Lupicinus and his military skill, are acknowledged by the historian, who, in his affected language, accuses the general of exalting the horns of his pride, bellowing in a tragic tone, and exciting a doubt whether he was more cruel or avaricious. The danger from the Scots and Picts was so serious, that Julian himself had some thoughts of passing over into the island.

in the mixed language of grief, of tenderness, and of indignation. This scene of general distress afflicted the humanity of the Cæsar; he granted a sufficient number of post-wagons to transport the wives and families of the soldiers,* endeavoured to alleviate the hardships which he was constrained to inflict, and increased, by the most laudable arts, his own popularity, and the discontent of the exiled troops. The grief of an armed multitude is soon converted into rage; their licentious murmurs, which every hour were communicated from tent to tent with more boldness and effect, prepared their minds for the most daring acts of sedition; and by the connivance of their tribunes, a seasonable libel was secretly dispersed, which painted, in lively colours, the disgrace of the Cæsar, the oppression of the Gallic army, and the feeble vices of the tyrant of Asia. The servants of Constantius were astonished and alarmed by the progress of this dangerous spirit. They pressed the Cæsar to hasten the departure of the troops; but they imprudently rejected the honest and judicious advice of Julian, who proposed that they should not march through Paris, and suggested the danger and temptation of a last interview.

As soon as the approach of the troops was announced, the Cæsar went out to meet them, and ascended his tribunal, which had been erected in a plain before the gates of the city. After distinguishing the officers and soldiers who by their rank or merit deserved a peculiar attention, Julian addressed himself in a studied oration to the surrounding multitude; he celebrated their exploits with

* He granted them the permission of the *cursus clavularis*, or *clavularis*. These post-wagons are often mentioned in the Code, and were supposed to carry fifteen hundred pounds weight. See Vales. ad Ammian. 20, 4. [This was first called *Cursus Angarialis*. See Ducange. That name was derived, through the Greeks, from the *Angari*, or public messengers of the Persians, who invented that mode of rapid communication between places far asunder. (Herodot. Uran. c. 98.) The quick conveyance of intelligence, also practised among the same people, as described by Diodorus Siculus (l. 19, p. 233) seems to have been more like a vocal telegraph, audible sounds being shouted from hill to hill, so that they traversed, in one day, the length of a thirty days' march. But the letter-bearers, employed by Antigonus (Ib. p. 326) seem to have been the same as the *Angari*. The drivers of the chariots or wagons, used by the Romans for this purpose, were denominated *clavati* or *clavulares*, from the *clavus*, club or stick, which they bore, and thence the original exotic appellation was supplanted by the

grateful applause; encouraged them to accept, with alacrity, the honour of serving under the eye of a powerful and liberal monarch; and admonished them, that the commands of Augustus required an instant and cheerful obedience. The soldiers, who were apprehensive of offending their general by an indecent clamour, or of belying their sentiments by false and venal acclamations, maintained an obstinate silence, and, after a short pause, were dismissed to their quarters. The principal officers were entertained by the Cæsar, who professed, in the warmest language of friendship, his desire and his inability to reward, according to their deserts, the brave companions of his victories. They retired from the feast full of grief and perplexity; and lamented the hardship of their fate, which tore them from their beloved general and their native country. The only expedient which could prevent their separation was boldly agitated and approved; the popular resentment was insensibly moulded into a regular conspiracy; their just reasons of complaint were heightened by passion, and their passions were inflamed by wine; as on the eve of their departure, the troops were indulged in licentious festivity. At the hour of midnight, the impetuous multitude, with swords, and bows, and torches in their hands, rushed into the suburbs; encompassed the palace,* and careless of future dangers, pronounced the fatal and irrevocable words, JULIAN AUGUSTUS! The prince, whose anxious suspense was in-

indigenous *cursus clavularis* of Ammianus Marcellinus and the Code. —ED.] * Most probably the palace of the baths (*Thermaarum*), of which a solid and lofty hall still subsists in the *rue de la Harpe*. The buildings covered a considerable space of the modern quarter of the university; and the gardens, under the Merovingian kings, communicated with the abbey of St. Germain des Prez. By the injuries of time and the Normans, this ancient palace was reduced, in the twelfth century, to a maze of ruins; whose dark recesses were the scenes of licentious love,

Explicat aula sinus montemque amplectitur alis;
 Multiplici latebrâ scelerum tersura ruborem.
 - - - - - pereuntis sæpe pudoris
 Celatura nefas, Venerisque accommoda *furtis*.

(These lines are quoted from the Architrenius, l. 4, c. 8, a poetical work of John de Hauteville, or Hanville, a monk of St. Albans, about the year 1190. See Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. i. dissert. 2.) Yet such *thefts* might be less pernicious to mankind, than the theological disputes of the Sorbonne, which have been since

interrupted by their disorderly acclamations, secured the doors against their intrusion; and, as long as it was in his power, secluded his person and dignity from the accidents of a nocturnal tumult. At the dawn of day, the soldiers, whose zeal was irritated by opposition, forcibly entered the palace, seized, with respectful violence, the object of their choice, guarded Julian with drawn swords through the streets of Paris, placed him on the tribunal, and with repeated shouts saluted him as their emperor. Prudence as well as loyalty inculcated the propriety of resisting their treasonable designs, and of preparing, for his oppressed virtue, the excuse of violence. Addressing himself by turns to the multitude and to individuals, he sometimes implored their mercy, and sometimes expressed his indignation; conjured them not to sully the fame of their immortal victories; and ventured to promise, that if they would immediately return to their allegiance, he would undertake to obtain from the emperor, not only a free and gracious pardon, but even the revocation of the orders which had excited their resentment. But the soldiers, who were conscious of their guilt, chose rather to depend on the gratitude of Julian, than on the clemency of the emperor. Their zeal was insensibly turned into impatience, and their impatience into rage. The inflexible Cæsar sustained, till the third hour of the day, their prayers, their reproaches, and their menaces: nor did he yield, till he had been repeatedly assured, that if he wished to live, he must consent to reign. He was exalted on a shield in the presence, and amidst the unanimous acclamations, of the troops; a rich military collar, which was offered by chance, supplied the want of a diadem:* the ceremony was concluded by the promise of a moderate donative;† and the new emperor, overwhelmed with real or affected grief, retired into the most secret recesses of his apartment.‡

agitated on the same ground. Bonamy, *Mém. de l'Académie*, tom. xv, p. 678. 682. * Even in this tumultuous moment Julian attended to the forms of superstitious ceremony, and obstinately refused the inauspicious use of a female necklace, or a horse collar, which the impatient soldiers would have employed in the room of a diadem.

† An equal proportion of gold and silver, five pieces of the former, one pound of the latter; the whole amounting to about five pounds ten shillings of our money. ‡ For the whole narrative of this revolt, we may appeal to authentic and original materials; Julian himself, *œd S. P. Q. Atheniensem*, p 282—284). Libanius (*Orat. Parental*

The grief of Julian could proceed only from his innocence; but his innocence must appear extremely doubtful* in the eyes of those who have learned to suspect the motives and the professions of princes. His lively and active mind was susceptible of the various impressions of hope and fear, of gratitude and revenge, of duty and of ambition, of the love of fame and of the fear of reproach. But it is impossible for us to calculate the respective weight and operation of these sentiments; or to ascertain the principles of action, which might escape the observation, while they guided, or rather impelled, the steps, of Julian himself. The discontent of the troops was produced by the malice of his enemies; their tumult was the natural effect of interest and of passion; and if Julian had tried to conceal a deep design under the appearances of chance, he must have employed the most consummate artifice without necessity, and probably without success. He solemnly declares, in the presence of Jupiter, of the Sun, of Mars, of Minerva, and of all the other deities, that till the close of the evening which preceded his elevation, he was utterly ignorant of the designs of the soldiers;† and it may seem ungenerous to distrust the honour of a hero, and the truth of a philosopher. Yet the superstitious confidence that Constantius was the enemy, and that he himself was the favourite, of the gods, might prompt him to desire, to solicit, and even to hasten, the auspicious moment of his reign, which was predestined to restore the ancient religion of mankind. When Julian had received the intelligence of the conspiracy, he resigned himself to a short slumber, and afterwards related to his friends, that he had seen the Genius of the empire waiting with some impatience at his door, pressing for admittance, and reproaching his want of spirit

c. 44—48, in Fabricius *Bibliot. Grec.* tom. vii, p. 269—273.) Ammianus, (20, 4,) and Zosimus, (l. 3, p. 151—153,) who, in the reign of Julian, appears to follow the more respectable authority of Eusebius. With such guides we *might* neglect the abbreviators and ecclesiastical historians.

* Eutropius, a respectable witness, uses a doubtful expression, “*consensu militum.*” (10, 15.) Gregory Nazianzen, whose ignorance might excuse his fanaticism, directly charges the apostate with presumption, madness, and impious rebellion, ἀθάρεια, ἀπόνοια, ἀσίβεια. Orat. 3, p. 67.

† Julian ad S. P. Q. Athen. p. 284. The devout abbé de la Bleterie (*Vie de Julien*, p. 159,) is almost inclined to

and ambition.* Astonished and perplexed, he addressed his prayers to the great Jupiter; who immediately signified, by a clear and manifest omen, that he should submit to the will of heaven and of the army. The conduct which disclaims the ordinary maxims of reason, excites our suspicion and eludes our inquiry. Whenever the spirit of fanaticism, at once so credulous and so crafty, has insinuated itself into a noble mind, it insensibly corrodes the vital principles of virtue and veracity.

To moderate the zeal of his party, to protect the persons of his enemies,† to defeat and to despise the secret enterprises which were formed against his life and dignity, were the cares which employed the first days of the reign of the new emperor. Although he was firmly resolved to maintain the station which he had assumed, he was still desirous of saving his country from the calamities of civil war, of declining a contest with the superior forces of Constantius, and of preserving his own character from the reproach of perfidy and ingratitude. Adorned with the ensigns of military and imperial pomp, Julian shewed himself in the field of Mars to the soldiers, who glowed with ardent enthusiasm in the cause of their pupil, their leader, and their friend. He recapitulated their victories, lamented their sufferings, applauded their resolution, animated their hopes, and checked their impetuosity; nor did he dismiss the assembly, till he had obtained a solemn promise from the troops, that if the emperor of the east would subscribe an equitable treaty, they would renounce any views of conquest, and satisfy themselves with the tranquil possession of the Gallic provinces. On this foundation he composed, in his own name, and in that of the army, a specious and moderate epistle,‡ which was delivered to Pentadius, his

respect the *devout* protestations of a Pagan. * Ammian. 20, 5, with the note of Lindenbrogius on the Genius of the empire. Julian himself, in a confidential letter to his friend and physician, Oribasius, (Epist. 17, p. 384.) mentions another dream, to which, before the event, he gave credit, of a stately tree thrown to the ground, of a small plant striking a deep root into the earth. Even in his sleep, the mind of the Cæsar must have been agitated by the hopes and fears of his fortune. Zosimus (l. 3, p. 155) relates a subsequent dream. † The difficult situation of the prince of a rebellious army, is finely described by Tacitus. (Hist. 1. 80—85.) But Otho had much more guilt, and much less abilities, than Julian. ‡ To this ostensible epistle, he added,

master of the offices, and to his chamberlain Eutherius; two ambassadors whom he appointed to receive the answer, and observe the dispositions of Constantius. This epistle is inscribed with the modest appellation of Cæsar; but Julian solicits, in a peremptory, though respectful manner, the confirmation of the title of Augustus. He acknowledges the irregularity of his own election; while he justifies in some measure, the resentment and violence of the troops which had extorted his reluctant consent. He allows the supremacy of his brother Constantius; and engages to send him an annual present of Spanish horses, to recruit his army with a select number of barbarian youths, and to accept from his choice a prætorian præfect of approved discretion and fidelity. But he reserves for himself the nomination of his other civil and military officers, with the troops, the revenue, and the sovereignty, of the provinces beyond the Alps. He admonishes the emperor to consult the dictates of justice; to distrust the arts of those venal flatterers who subsist only by the discord of princes; and to embrace the offer of a fair and honourable treaty, equally advantageous to the republic and to the house of Constantine. In this negotiation, Julian claimed no more than he already possessed. The delegated authority which he had long exercised over the provinces of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, was still obeyed under a name more independent and august. The soldiers and the people rejoiced in a revolution which was not stained even with the blood of the guilty. Florentius was a fugitive; Lupicinus a prisoner. The persons who were disaffected to the new government were disarmed and secured; and the vacant offices were distributed, according to the recommendation of merit, by a prince who despised the intrigues of the palace, and the clamours of the soldiers.*

The negotiations of peace were accompanied and supported by the most vigorous preparations for war. The army, which Julian held in readiness for immediate action, was recruited and augmented by the disorders of the times. The cruel persecutions of the faction of Magnentius had filled Gaul with numerous bands of outlaws and robbers. They cheerfully accepted the offer of a general pardon from

says Ammianus, private letters, *objurgatorias et mordaces*, which the historian had not seen, and would not have published. Perhaps they never existed. * See the first transactions of his reign in Julian ad

a prince whom they could trust, submitted to the restraints of military discipline, and retained only their implacable hatred to the person and government of Constantius.* As soon as the season of the year permitted Julian to take the field, he appeared at the head of his legions; threw a bridge over the Rhine in the neighbourhood of Cleves; and prepared to chastise the perfidy of the Attuarii, a tribe of Franks, who presumed that they might ravage, with impunity, the frontiers of a divided empire. The difficulty, as well as glory, of this enterprise, consisted in a laborious march; and Julian had conquered, as soon as he could penetrate into a country which former princes had considered as inaccessible. After he had given peace to the barbarians, the emperor carefully visited the fortifications along the Rhine from Cleves to Basil; surveyed, with peculiar attention, the territories which he had recovered from the hands of the Allemanni, passed through Besançon,† which had severely suffered from their fury, and fixed his head-quarters at Vienna‡ for the ensuing winter. The barrier of Gaul was improved and strengthened with additional fortifications; and Julian entertained some hopes, that the Germans, whom he had so often vanquished, might, in his absence, be restrained by the terror of his name. Vadomair§ was the only prince of the Allemanni

S. P. Q. Athen. p. 285, 286. Ammianus, 20, 5. 8. Liban. Orat. Parent. c. 49, 50, p. 273—275. * Liban. Orat. Parent. c. 50, p. 275, 276.

A strange disorder, since it continued above seven years. In the factions of the Greek republics, the exiles amounted to twenty thousand persons; and Isocrates assures Philip, that it would be easier to raise an army from the vagabonds than from the cities. See Hume's Essays, tom. i, pp. 426, 427. [According to Niebuhr (Lectures, vol. iii, p. 332) the wars of the peasants in Gaul, who, under the name of Bagaude, "took up arms in self-defence against the extortions of the government," as already stated by Gibbon (ch. 13, vol. i, p. 427) continued with little intermission from the reign of Gallienus to the dissolution of the empire. It is most probable, that these insurgents furnished the recruits for Julian's army: they would be ready to support a prince, who had manifested his desire to mitigate the weight of taxation.—ED.] † Julian (Epist. 38, p. 414) gives a short description of Vesontio, or Besançon; a rocky peninsula almost encircled by the river Doux; once a magnificent city, filled with temples, &c. now reduced to a small town, emerging, however, from its ruins. ‡ Now Vienne, on the Rhone, below Lyons. It is sometimes mistaken for Vindobonum, the modern Vienna, and capital of Austria.—ED.

§ Vadomair entered into the Roman service, and was promoted from a barbarian kingdom to

whom he esteemed or feared; and while the subtle barbarian affected to observe the faith of treaties, the progress of his arms threatened the state with an unseasonable and dangerous war. The policy of Julian condescended to surprise the prince of the Allemanni by his own arts; and Vadomair, who, in the character of a friend, had incautiously accepted an invitation from the Roman governors, was seized in the midst of the entertainment, and sent away prisoner into the heart of Spain. Before the barbarians were recovered from their amazement, the emperor appeared in arms on the banks of the Rhine, and, once more crossing the river, renewed the deep impressions of terror and respect which had been already made by four preceding expeditions.*

The ambassadors of Julian had been instructed to execute with the utmost diligence, their important commission. But, in their passage through Italy and Illyricum, they were detained by the tedious and affected delays of the provincial governors; they were conducted by slow journeys from Constantinople to Cæsarea in Cappadocia; and when at length they were admitted to the presence of Constantius, they found that he had already conceived from the dispatches of his own officers, the most unfavourable opinion of the conduct of Julian, and of the Gallic army. The letters were heard with impatience; the trembling messengers were dismissed with indignation and contempt; and the looks, the gestures, the furious language of the monarch, expressed the disorder of his soul. The domestic connection which might have reconciled the brother and the husband of Helena, was recently dissolved by the death of that princess, whose pregnancy had been several times fruitless, and was at last fatal to herself.† The empress Eusebia had preserved to the last moment of her life, the warm and even jealous affection which she had conceived for Julian; and her mild influence might have moderated the resentment of a prince, who, since her death, was abandoned to his own passions, and to the arts of his eunuchs. But the terror of

the military rank of duke of Phœnicia. He still retained the same artful character; (Ammian. 21. 4.) but, under the reign of Valens, he signalized his valour in the Armenian war. (29. 1.) * Ammian. 20, 10. 21, 3, 4. Zosimus, l. 3, p. 155. † Her remains were sent to Rome, and interred near those of her sister Constantina, in the suburb

a foreign invasion obliged him to suspend the punishment of a private enemy; he continued his march towards the confines of Persia, and thought it sufficient to signify the conditions which might entitle Julian and his guilty followers to the clemency of their offended sovereign. He required, that the presumptuous Cæsar should expressly renounce the appellation and rank of Augustus, which he had accepted from the rebels; that he should descend to his former station of a limited and dependent minister; that he should vest the powers of the state and army in the hands of those officers who were appointed by the imperial court; and that he should trust his safety to the assurances of pardon which were announced by Épictetus, a Gallic bishop, and one of the Arian favourites of Constantius. Several months were ineffectually consumed in a treaty which was negotiated at the distance of three thousand miles between Paris and Antioch; and as soon as Julian perceived that his moderate and respectful behaviour served only to irritate the pride of an implacable adversary, he boldly resolved to commit his life and fortune to the chance of a civil war. He gave a public and military audience to the questor Leonas; the haughty epistle of Constantius was read to the attentive multitude; and Julian protested with the most flattering deference, that he was ready to resign the title of Augustus, if he could obtain the consent of those whom he acknowledged as the authors of his elevation. The faint proposal was impetuously silenced; and the acclamations of "Julian Augustus, continue to reign, by the authority of the army, of the people, of the republic, which you have saved," thundered at once from every part of the field, and terrified the pale ambassador of Constantius. A part of the letter was afterwards read, in which the emperor arraigned the ingratitude of Julian, whom he had invested with the honours of the purple; whom he had educated with so much care and tenderness; whom he had preserved in his infancy, when he was left a helpless orphan. "An

of the *Via Nomentana*. Ammian. 21, 1. Libanius has composed a very weak apology to justify his hero from a very absurd charge of poisoning his wife, and rewarding her physician with his mother's jewels. (See the seventh of seventeen new orations, published at Venice, 1754, from a MS. in St. Mark's library, p. 117—127) Elpidius, the prætorian præfect of the east, to whose evidence the accuser of Julian appeals, is arraigned by Libanius, as *effeminate* and *ungrateful*; yet the

orphan!" interrupted Julian, who justified his cause by indulging his passions; "Does the assassin of my family reproach me that I was left an orphan? He urges me to revenge those injuries which I have long studied to forget." The assembly was dismissed; and Leonas, who, with some difficulty, had been protected from the popular fury, was sent back to his master, with an epistle, in which Julian expressed, in a strain of the most vehement eloquence, the sentiments of contempt, of hatred, and of resentment, which had been suppressed and embittered by the dissimulation of twenty years. After this message, which might be considered as a signal of irreconcilable war, Julian, who some weeks before had celebrated the Christian festival of the Epiphany,* made a public declaration, that he committed the care of his safety to the IMMORTAL GODS; and thus publicly renounced the religion, as well as the friendship of Constantius.†

The situation of Julian required a vigorous and immediate resolution. He had discovered, from intercepted letters, that his adversary, sacrificing the interest of the state to that of the monarch, had again excited the barbarians to invade the provinces of the west. The position of two magazines, one of them collected on the banks of the lake of Constance, the other formed at the foot of the Cottian Alps, seemed to indicate the march of two armies; and the size of those magazines, each of which consisted of six hun-

religion of Elpidius is praised by Jerom, (tom. i, p. 243,) and his humanity by Ammianus. (21, 6.) * *Feriarum die quem celebrantes mense Januario, Christiani Epiphania* dictitant, progressus in eorum ecclesiam, solemniter numine orato discessit. Ammian. 21, 2. Zonaras observes that it was on Christmas-day, and his assertion is not inconsistent; since the churches of Egypt, Asia, and perhaps Gaul, celebrated on the same day (the sixth of January) the nativity and baptism^x of their Saviour. The Romans, as ignorant as their brethren of the real date of his birth, fixed the solemn festival to the 25th of December, the *Brumalia*, or winter solstice, when the Pagans annually celebrated the birth of the sun. See Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, l. 20, c. 4, and Beausobre, *Hist. Critique du Manichéisme*, tom. ii, p. 690—700. † The public and secret negotiations between Constantius and Julian must be extracted, with some caution, from Julian himself; (Orat. ad S. P. Q. Athen. p. 286.) Libanius; (Orat. Parent. c. 51, p. 276.) Ammianus; (20. 9.) Zosimus; (l. 3, p. 154,) and even Zonaras, (tom. ii, l. 13, p. 20—22,) who, on this occasion, appears

dred thousand quarters of wheat, or rather flour,* was a threatening evidence of the strength and numbers of the enemy who prepared to surround him. But the imperial legions were still in their distant quarters of Asia; the Danube was feebly guarded; and if Julian could occupy, by a sudden incursion, the important provinces of Illyricum, he might expect that a people of soldiers would resort to his standard, and that the rich mines of gold and silver would contribute to the expenses of the civil war. He proposed this bold enterprise to the assembly of the soldiers; inspired them with a just confidence in their general, and in themselves; and exhorted them to maintain their reputation, of being terrible to the enemy, moderate to their fellow-citizens, and obedient to their officers. His spirited discourse was received with the loudest acclamations, and the same troops which had taken up arms against Constantius, when he summoned them to leave Gaul, now declared with alacrity, that they would follow Julian to the farthest extremities of Europe or Asia. The oath of fidelity was administered; and the soldiers clashing their shields, and pointing their drawn swords to their throats, devoted themselves, with horrid imprecations, to the service of a leader whom they celebrated as the deliverer of Gaul, and the conqueror of the Germans.† This solemn engagement, which seemed to be dictated by affection rather than by duty, was singly opposed by Nebridius, who had been admitted to the office of prætorian prefect. That faithful minister, alone and unassisted, asserted the rights of Constantius in the midst of an armed and angry multitude, to whose fury he had almost fallen an honourable but useless sacrifice. After losing one of his hands by the stroke of a sword, he embraced the knees of the prince whom he had offended. Julian covered the prefect with his imperial mantle, and, protecting him from the zeal of his followers, dismissed him to his own house, with less respect than was perhaps due

te have possessed and used some valuable materials. * Three hundred myriads, or three millions of *medimni*, a corn-measure familiar to the Athenians, and which contained six Roman *modii*. Julian explains, like a soldier and a statesman, the danger of his situation, and the necessity and advantages of an offensive war (ad S. F. Q. Athen. p. 286, 287). † See his oration, and the behaviour of his

to the virtue of an enemy.* The high office of Nebridius was bestowed on Sallust; and the provinces of Gaul, which were now delivered from the intolerable oppression of taxes, enjoyed the mild and equitable administration of the friend of Julian, who was permitted to practise those virtues which he had instilled into the mind of his pupil.†

The hopes of Julian depended much less on the number of his troops, than on the celerity of his motions. In the execution of a daring enterprise, he availed himself of every precaution, as far as prudence could suggest; and where prudence could no longer accompany his steps, he trusted the event to valour and to fortune. In the neighbourhood of Basil he assembled and divided his army.‡ One body, which consisted of ten thousand men, was directed under the command of Nevitta, general of the cavalry, to advance through the midland parts of Rætia and Noricum. A similar division of troops, under the orders of Jovius and Jovinus, prepared to follow the oblique course of the highways, through the Alps, and the northern confines of Italy. The instructions to the generals were conceived with energy and precision; to hasten their march in close and compact columns, which, according to the disposition of the ground, might readily be changed into any order of battle; to secure themselves against the surprises of the night by strong posts and vigilant guards; to prevent resistance by their unexpected arrival; to elude examination by their sudden departure; to spread the opinion of their strength, and the terror of his name; and to join their sovereign under the walls of Sirmium. For himself, Julian had reserved a more difficult and extraordinary part. He selected three thousand brave and active volunteers, resolved, like their leader, to cast behind them every hope of a retreat; at the head of this faithful band, he fearlessly plunged into the recesses of

troops, in Ammian. 21, 5. * He sternly refused his hand to the suppliant prefect, whom he sent into Tuscany. (Ammian. 21, 5.) Libanius, with savage fury, insults Nebridius, applauds the soldiers, and almost censures the humanity of Julian. (Orat. Parent. c. 53. p. 278.)

† Ammian. 21, 8. In this promotion, Julian obeyed the law which he publicly imposed on himself. *Neque civilis quisquam iudex nec militaris rector, alio quodam præter merita suffragante, ad potiorem veniat gradum.* (Ammian. 20, 5.) Absence did not weaken his regard for Sallust, with whose name (A.D. 363) he honoured the consulship.

‡ Ammianus (21, 8) ascribes the same practice, and the same

the Marcian or Black Forest, which conceals the sources of the Danube,* and for many days, the fate of Julian was unknown to the world. The secrecy of his march, his diligence, and vigour, surmounted every obstacle; he forced his way over mountains and morasses, occupied the bridges, or swam the rivers, pursued his direct course,† without reflecting whether he traversed the territory of the Romans or of the barbarians, and at length emerged, between Ratisbon and Vienna, at the place where he designed to embark his troops on the Danube. By a well-concerted stratagem, he seized a fleet of light brigantines.‡ as it lay at anchor; secured a supply of coarse provisions, sufficient to satisfy the indelicate, but voracious appetite, of a Gallic army; and boldly committed himself to the stream of the Danube. The labours of his mariners, who plied their oars with incessant diligence, and the steady continuance of a favourable wind, carried his fleet above seven hundred miles in eleven days,§

motive, to Alexander the Great, and other skilful generals. * This wood was a part of the great Hercynian forest, which, in the time of Caesar, stretched away from the country of the Rauraci (Basil) into the boundless regions of the north. See Cluver. *Germania Antiqua*, l. 3. c. 47. † Compare Libanius, *Orat. Parent.* c. 53, p. 278, 279, with Gregory Nazianzen, *Orat.* 3, p. 68. Even the saint admires the speed and secrecy of this march. A modern divine might apply to the progress of Julian, the lines which were originally designed for another apostate—

“ ————— So eagerly the fiend,
O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.”

‡ In that interval the *Notitia* places two or three fleets, the *Lauriacensis* (at Lauriacum, or Lorch) the *Arlapensis*, the *Maginensis*; and mentions five legions, or cohorts, of *Liburnarii*, who should be a sort of marines. *Sect.* 58. edit. Labb. [These were the crews of the *Liburnæ*, or light vessels of the Roman navy. The *Liburni* were an Illyrian people, on that north-eastern coast of the Adriatic, now called Croatia. To carry on the piracy, by which they subsisted, they used small ships, so constructed, as to move with great speed through the water. Octavius had many of these in his fleet at Actium, and was much indebted for his victory to the advantage which their celerity of movement, gave them over Antony's heavy Egyptian galleys. From that time such barks were a favourite part of the Roman marine, under the name of *Liburnæ*, and were especially employed on large rivers like the Danube. These particulars may be found in *Vegetius* (*De. Re. Milit.* l. 4.) and in *Appian* (l. 4): they explain Horace's meaning (*Carm.* l. 1, 37, 30, and *Epod.* l. 1.)—ED.] § *Zosimus* alone (l. 3,

and he had already disembarked his troops at Bononia, only nineteen miles from Sirmium, before his enemies could receive any certain intelligence that he had left the banks of the Rhine. In the course of this long and rapid navigation, the mind of Julian was fixed on the object of his enterprise; and though he accepted the deputation of some cities, which hastened to claim the merit of an early submission, he passed before the hostile stations, which were placed along the river, without indulging the temptation of signaling a useless and ill-timed valour. The banks of the Danube were crowded on either side with spectators, who gazed on the military pomp, anticipated the importance of the event, and diffused through the adjacent country the fame of a young hero, who advanced with more than mortal speed at the head of the innumerable forces of the west. Lucilian, who, with the rank of general of the cavalry, commanded the military powers of Illyricum, was alarmed and perplexed by the doubtful reports, which he could neither reject nor believe. He had taken some slow and irresolute measures for the purpose of collecting his troops, when he was surprised by Dagalaiphus, an active officer, whom Julian, as soon as he landed at Bononia, had pushed forward with some light infantry. The captive general, uncertain of his life or death, was hastily thrown upon a horse, and conducted to the presence of Julian, who kindly raised him from the ground, and dispelled the terror and amazement which seemed to stupify his faculties. But Lucilian had no sooner recovered his spirits, than he betrayed his want of discretion, by presuming to admonish his conqueror, that he had rashly ventured, with a handful of men, to expose his person in the midst of his enemies. "Reserve for your master Constantius these timid remonstrances," replied Julian, with a smile of contempt; "when I gave you my purple to kiss, I received you not as a counsellor, but as a suppliant." Conscious that success alone could justify his attempt, and that boldness only could command success, he instantly advanced, at the head of three thousand soldiers to attack the strongest and most populous city of the Illy-

p. 156) has specified this interesting circumstance. Mamertinus, (in Panegy. Vet. II. 6—8), who accompanied Julian, as count of the sacred largesses, describes this voyage in a florid and picturesque manner, challenges Triptolemus and the Argonauts of Greece, &c.

rian provinces. As he entered the long suburb of Sirmium, he was received by the joyful acclamations of the army and people; who, crowned with flowers and holding lighted tapers in their hands, conducted their acknowledged sovereign to his imperial residence. Two days were devoted to the public joy, which was celebrated by the games of the circus; but, early on the morning of the third day, Julian marched to occupy the narrow pass of Succii, in the defiles of mount Hæmus; which, almost in the midway between Sirmium and Constantinople, separates the provinces of Thrace and Dacia, by an abrupt descent towards the former, and a gentle declivity on the side of the latter.* The defence of this important post was intrusted to the brave Nevitta; who, as well as the generals of the Italian division, successfully executed the plan of the march and junction which their master had so ably conceived.†

The homage which Julian obtained, from the fears or the inclination of the people, extended far beyond the immediate effect of his arms.‡ The prefectures of Italy and Illyricum were administered by Taurus and Florentius, who united that important office with the vain honours of the consulship; and as those magistrates had retired with precipitation to the court of Asia, Julian, who could not always restrain the levity of his temper, stigmatized their flight by adding, in all the acts of the year, the epithet of *fugitive* to the names of the two consuls. The provinces which had been deserted by their first magistrates, acknowledged the authority of an emperor, who, conciliating the qualities of a soldier with those of a philosopher, was equally admired in the camps of the Danube and in the cities of Greece. From his palace, or, more properly, from his

* The description of Ammianus, which might be supported by collateral evidence, ascertains the precise situation of the *Angustie Succorum*, or passes of *Succii*. M. D'Anville, from the trifling resemblance of names, has placed them between Sardica and Naissus. For my own justification, I am obliged to mention the *only* error which I have discovered in the maps or writings of that admirable geographer. [The Balkan of modern times was the mount Hæmus of the ancients. See Clarke's Travels, 8vo. edit., vol. viii, p. 220. The "*Boucoze*, or narrowest passage," described by that traveller, is probably the pass of Succii.—ED.]

† Whatever circumstances we may borrow elsewhere, Ammianus (21, 8—10,) still supplies the series of the narrative. ‡ Ammian. 21, 9, 10. Libanius, Orat. Parent. c. 54, p. 279, 280. Zosimus, lib. 3,

head-quarters, of Sirmium and Naissus, he distributed to the principal cities of the empire, a laboured apology for his own conduct; published the secret dispatches of Constantius; and solicited the judgment of mankind between two competitors, the one of whom had expelled, and the other had invited the barbarians.* Julian, whose mind was deeply wounded by the reproach of ingratitude, aspired to maintain, by argument as well as by arms, the superior merits of his cause; and to excel, not only in the arts of war, but in those of composition. His epistle to the senate and people of Athens † seems to have been dictated by an elegant enthusiasm, which prompted him to submit his actions and his motives to the degenerate Athenians of his own times, with the same humble deference, as if he had been pleading in the days of Aristides, before the tribunal of the Areopagus. His application to the senate of Rome, which was still permitted to bestow the titles of imperial power, was agreeable to the forms of the expiring republic. An assembly was summoned by Tertullus, prefect of the city; the epistle of Julian was read; and as he appeared to be master of Italy, his claims were admitted without a dissenting voice. His oblique censure of the innovations of Constantine, and his passionate invective against the vices of Constantius, were heard with less satisfaction; and the senate, as if Julian had been present, unanimously exclaimed,—“Respect, we beseech you, the author of your own fortune,” ‡ an artful expression, which, according to the chance of war, might be differently explained, as a manly reproof of the ingratitude of the usurper, or as a

p. 156, 157. * Julian (ad S. P. Q. Athen. p. 286) positively asserts, that he intercepted the letters of Constantius to the barbarians: and Libanius as positively affirms, that he read them on his march to the troops and the cities. Yet Ammianus (21. 4.) expresses himself with cool and candid hesitation, *si famæ solius admittenda est fides*. He specifies, however, an intercepted letter from Vadomar to Constantius, which supposes an intimate correspondence between them. “*Cæsartus disciplinam non habet.*” † Zosimus mentions his Epistles to the Athenians, the Corinthians, and the Lacedæmonians. The substance was probably the same, though the address was properly varied. The epistle to the Athenians is still extant (p. 268—287), and has afforded much valuable information. It deserves the praises of the abbé de la Bletterie (Pref. à l’Histoire de Jovien, p. 24, 25), and is one of the best manifestoes to be found in any language. ‡ *Auctoritate reverentiam rogamus.* Ammian. 21, 10. It is amusing enough that

flattering confession, that a single act of such benefit to the state ought to atone for all the failings of Constantius.

The intelligence of the march and rapid progress of Julian was speedily transmitted to his rival, who, by the retreat of Sapor, had obtained some respite from the Persian war. Disguising the anguish of his soul under the semblance of contempt, Constantius professed his intention of returning into Europe, and of giving chase to Julian; for he never spoke of his military expedition in any other light than that of a hunting party.* In the camp of Hierapolis, in Syria, he communicated this design to his army; slightly mentioned the guilt and rashness of the Cæsar; and ventured to assure them, that if the mutineers of Gaul presumed to meet them in the field, they would be unable to sustain the fire of their eyes, and the irresistible weight of their shout of onset. The speech of the emperor was received with military applause, and Theodotus, the president of the council of Hierapolis, requested, with tears of adulation, that *his* city might be adorned with the head of the vanquished rebel.† A chosen detachment was dispatched away in post wagons, to secure, if it were yet possible, the pass of Succii; the recruits, the horses, the arms, and the magazines which had been prepared against Sapor, were appropriated to the service of the civil war; and the domestic victories of Constantius inspired his partisans with the most sanguine assurances of success. The notary Gaudentius had occupied in his name the provinces of Africa; the subsistence of Rome was intercepted; and the distress of Julian was increased, by an unexpected event, which might have been productive of fatal consequences. Julian had received the submission of two legions and a cohort of archers, who were stationed at Sirmium; but he suspected, with reason, the fidelity of those troops which had been distinguished by the emperor; and it was thought expedient, under the pretence of the exposed state of the Gallic frontier, to dismiss them from

observe the secret conflicts of the senate between flattery and fear. See Tacit. Hist. l. 85.

* *Tanquam venaticiam prædam caperet: hoc enim ad leniendum suorum metum subinde prædicabat.* Ammian. 21, 7.

† See the speech and preparations in Ammianus, 21, 13. The vile Theodotus afterwards implored and obtained his pardon from the merciful conqueror, who signified his wish of diminishing *his* enemies, and increasing the numbers of his friends (22, 14).

the most important scene of action. They advanced, with reluctance, as far as the confines of Italy; but, as they dreaded the length of the way, and the savage fierceness of the Germans, they resolved, by the instigation of one of their tribunes, to halt at Aquileia, and to erect the banners of Constantius on the walls of that impregnable city. The vigilance of Julian perceived at once the extent of the mischief, and the necessity of applying an immediate remedy. By his order, Jovinus led back a part of the army into Italy; and the siege of Aquileia was formed with diligence, and prosecuted with vigour. But the legionaries, who seemed to have rejected the yoke of discipline, conducted the defence of the place with skill and perseverance; invited the rest of Italy to imitate the example of their courage and loyalty; and threatened the retreat of Julian, if he should be forced to yield to the superior numbers of the armies of the east.*

But the humanity of Julian was preserved from the cruel alternative, which he pathetically laments, of destroying, or of being himself destroyed: and the seasonable death of Constantius delivered the Roman empire from the calamities of civil war. The approach of winter could not detain the monarch at Antioch; and his favourites durst not oppose his impatient desire of revenge. A slight fever, which was perhaps occasioned by the agitation of his spirits, was increased by the fatigues of the journey; and Constantius was obliged to halt at the little town of Mopsucrene, twelve miles beyond Tarsus, where he expired, after a short illness, in the forty-fifth year of his age, and the twenty-fourth of his reign.† His genuine character, which was composed of pride and weakness, of superstition and cruelty, has been fully displayed in the preceding

* Ammian. 21, 7, 11, 12. He seems to describe, with superfluous labour, the operations of the siege of Aquileia, which, on this occasion, maintained its impregnable fame. Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. 3, p. 68), ascribes this accidental revolt to the wisdom of Constantius, whose assured victory he announces with some appearance of truth.—Constantio quem credebatur proculdubio fore victorem: nemo enim omnium tunc ab hac constanti sententia discrepebat. Ammian. 21, 7.

† His death and character are faithfully delineated by Ammianus (21, 14—16), and we are authorized to despise and detest the foolish calumny of Gregory (Orat. 3, p. 68), who accuses Julian of contriving the death of his benefactor. The private repentance of the emperor, that he had spared and promoted Julian (p. 69, and Orat. 21, p. 389), is not improbable in itself, nor incompatible with the public verbal

narrative of civil and ecclesiastical events. The long abuse of power rendered him a considerable object in the eyes of his contemporaries; but as personal merit can alone deserve the notice of posterity, the last of the sons of Constantine may be dismissed from the world with the remark, that he inherited the defects, without the abilities of his father. Before Constantius expired, he is said to have named Julian for his successor; nor does it seem improbable, that his anxious concern for the fate of a young and tender wife, whom he left with child, may have prevailed, in his last moments, over the harsher passions of hatred and revenge. Eusebius and his guilty associates made a faint attempt to prolong the reign of the eunuchs, by the election of another emperor; but their intrigues were rejected with disdain by an army which now abhorred the thought of civil discord; and two officers of rank were instantly dispatched, to assure Julian, that every sword in the empire would be drawn for his service. The military designs of that prince, who had formed three different attacks against Thrace, were prevented by this fortunate event. Without shedding the blood of his fellow-citizens he escaped the dangers of a doubtful conflict, and acquired the advantages of a complete victory. Impatient to visit the place of his birth, and the new capital of the empire, he advanced from Naïssus through the mountains of Hæmus and the cities of Thrace. When he reached Heraclea, at the distance of sixty miles, all Constantinople was poured forth to receive him; and he made his triumphal entry amidst the dutiful acclamations of the soldiers, the people, and the senate. An innumerable multitude pressed around him with eager respect, and were perhaps disappointed, when they beheld the small stature, and simple garb, of a hero whose unexperienced youth had vanquished the barbarians of Germany, and who had now traversed, in a successful career, the whole continent of Europe, from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Bosphorus.* A few days afterwards, when the remains of the deceased emperor were landed in the harbour, the subjects of Julian applauded the real or affected humanity of their sovereign. On foot, without his diadem, and clothed in a mourning habit, he accompanied

testament, which prudential considerations might dictate in the last moments of his life.

* In describing the triumph of Julian, Ammianus (22, 1, 2,) assumes the lofty tone of an orator or poet;

the funeral as far as the church of the Holy Apostles, where the body was deposited: and if these marks of respect may be interpreted as a selfish tribute to the birth and dignity of his imperial kinsman, the tears of Julian professed to the world, that he had forgotten the injuries, and remembered only the obligations, which he had received from Constantius.* As soon as the legions of Aquileia were assured of the death of the emperor, they opened the gates of the city, and, by the sacrifice of their guilty leaders, obtained an easy pardon from the prudence or lenity of Julian; who, in the thirty-second year of his age, acquired the undisputed possession of the Roman empire.†

Philosophy had instructed Julian to compare the advantages of action and retirement; but the elevation of his birth, and the accidents of his life, never allowed him the freedom of choice. He might perhaps sincerely have preferred the groves of the academy, and the society of Athens: but he was constrained, at first by the will, and afterwards by the injustice, of Constantius, to expose his person and fame to the dangers of imperial greatness; and to make himself accountable to the world and to posterity for the happiness of millions.‡ Julian recollected with terror the observation of his master Plato,§ that the government of our flocks and herds is always committed to

while Libanius (*Orat. Parent. c. 56, p. 281,*) sinks to the grave simplicity of an historian.

* The funeral of Constantius is described by Ammianus (21, 16); Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. 4, p. 119*); Mamerlinus (in *Panegy. Vet. 11, 27*); Libanius (*Orat. Parent. c. 56, p. 283*); and Philostorgius (*lib. 6, c. 6, with Godefroy's Dissertations, p. 265*). These writers and their followers, Pagans, Catholics, Arians, beheld with very different eyes both the dead and the living emperor.

† The day and year of the birth of Julian are not perfectly ascertained. The day is probably the 6th of November, and the year must be either 331 or 332. Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, p. 693*. Ducange, *Fam. Byzantin. p. 50*. I have preferred the earlier date. [The birth of Julian at Constantinople, A.D. 331, is proved by passages in his own writings, for which see *Clin. F. R. i, 386, 421*. The month is not determined. According to Idatius, Constantius died Nov. 3, and Julian entered Constantinople, Dec. 3, A.D. 361, at which time he had just completed his thirtieth year.—ED.]

‡ Julian himself (*p. 253—267,*) has expressed these philosophical ideas with much eloquence and some affectation, in a very elaborate epistle to Themistius. The abbé de la Bleterie (*tom. ii, p. 146—193*), who has given an elegant translation, is inclined to believe that it was the celebrated Themistius, whose orations are still extant.

§ Julian *ad Themist. p. 253*. Petavius (*not. p. 95*) observes, that

beings of a superior species; and that the conduct of nations requires and deserves the celestial powers of the gods or of the genii. From this principle he justly concluded that the man who presumes to reign should aspire to the perfection of the divine nature; that he should purify his soul from her mortal and terrestrial part; that he should extinguish his appetites, enlighten his understanding, regulate his passions, and subdue the wild beast, which, according to the lively metaphor of Aristotle,* seldom fails to ascend the throne of a despot. The throne of Julian, which the death of Constantius fixed on an independent basis, was the seat of reason, of virtue, and perhaps of vanity. He despised the honours, renounced the pleasures, and discharged with incessant diligence the duties of his exalted station; and there were few among his subjects who would have consented to relieve him from the weight of the diadem, had they been obliged to submit their time and their actions to the rigorous laws which that philosophic emperor imposed on himself. One of his most intimate friends,† who had often shared the frugal simplicity of his table, has remarked, that his light and sparing diet (which was usually of the vegetable kind) left his mind and body always free and active for the various and important business of an author, a pontiff, a magistrate, a general, and a prince. In one and the same day, he gave audience to several ambassadors, and wrote, or dictated a great number of letters to his generals, his civil magistrates, his private friends, and the different cities of his dominions. He listened to the memorials which had been received, considered the subject of the petitions, and signified his intentions more rapidly than they could be taken in shorthand by the diligence of his secretaries. He possessed such flexibility of thought, and such firmness of attention, that he could employ his hand to write, his ear to listen,

this passage is taken from the fourth book de Legibus; but either Julian quoted from memory, or his MSS. were different from ours. Xenophon opens the Cyropædia with a similar reflection.

* *Ὁ δὲ ἀνθρώπου κελύων ἄρχειν, προστιθησι καὶ θήριον.* Aristot. ap. Juhan. p. 261. The MS. of Vossius, unsatisfied with the single beast, affords the stronger reading of *θήρια*, which the experience of despotism, may warrant. † Libanius (Orat. Parentalis, c. 84, 85, p. 310—312.) has given this interesting detail of the private life of Julian. He himself (in Misopogon. p. 350,) mentions his vegetable diet, and upbraids the gross and sensual appetite of the people of Antioch.

and his voice to dictate; and pursue at once three several trains of ideas, without hesitation, and without error. While his ministers reposed, the prince flew with agility from one labour to another, and after a hasty dinner, retired into his library, till the public business, which he had appointed for the evening, summoned him to interrupt the prosecution of his studies. The supper of the emperor was still less substantial than the former meal; his sleep was never clouded by the fumes of indigestion; and, except in the short interval of a marriage, which was the effect of policy rather than love, the chaste Julian never shared his bed with a female companion.* He was soon awakened by the entrance of fresh secretaries, who had slept the preceding day; and his servants were obliged to wait alternately, while their indefatigable master allowed himself scarcely any other refreshment than the change of occupations. The predecessors of Julian, his uncle, his brother, and his cousin, indulged their puerile taste for the games of the circus, under the specious pretence of complying with the inclinations of the people; and they frequently remained the greatest part of the day, as idle spectators, and as a part of the splendid spectacle, till the ordinary round of twenty-four races † was completely finished. On solemn festivals, Julian, who felt and professed an unfashionable dislike to these frivolous amusements, condescended to appear in the circus; and after bestowing a careless glance at five or six of the races, he hastily withdrew, with the impatience of a philosopher who considered every moment

* *Lectulus . . . Vestalium toris purior*, is the praise which Mamer-tinus (Panegy. Vet. 11. 13,) addresses to Julian himself. Libanius affirms, in sober peremptory language, that Julian never knew a woman before his marriage, or after the death of his wife. (Orat. Parent. c. 88, p. 313.) The chastity of Julian is confirmed by the impartial testimony of Ammianus (25, 4), and the partial silence of the Christians. Yet Julian ironically urges the reproach of the people of Antioch, that he *almost always* (ὡς ἐπιπαν, in Misopogon, p. 345,) lay alone. This suspicious expression is explained by the abbé de la Bleterie (Hist. de Jovien, tom. ii, p. 103—109,) with candour and ingenuity.

† See Salmasius ad Sueton. in Claud. c. 21. A twenty-fifth race, or *missus*, was added, to complete the number of one hundred chariots, four of which, the four colours, started each heat.

Centum quadrijugos agitabo ad flumina currus.

It appears that they ran five or seven times round the *Meta*; (Sueton. in Domitian. c. 4), and (from the measure of the Circus Maximus at Rome, the Hippodrome at Constantinople, &c.), it might be about a

as lost that was not devoted to the advantage of the public or the improvement of his own mind.* By this avarice of time, he seemed to protract the short duration of his reign; and if the dates were less securely ascertained, we should refuse to believe that only sixteen months elapsed between the death of Constantius and the departure of his successor for the Persian war. The actions of Julian can only be preserved by the care of the historian; but the portion of his voluminous writings, which is still extant, remains as a monument of the application, as well as of the genius, of the emperor. The *Misopogon*, the *Cæsars*, several of his orations, and his elaborate work against the Christian religion, were composed in the long nights of the two winters, the former of which he passed at Constantinople, and the latter at Antioch.

The reformation of the imperial court was one of the first and most necessary acts of the government of Julian.† Soon after his entrance into the palace of Constantinople, he had occasion for the service of a barber. An officer, magnificently dressed, immediately presented himself. "It is a barber," exclaimed the prince, with affected surprise, "that I want, and not a receiver-general of the finances.‡" He questioned the man concerning the profits of his employment; and was informed, that, besides a large salary, and some valuable perquisites, he enjoyed a daily allowance for twenty servants, and as many horses. A thousand barbers, a thousand cup-bearers, a thousand cooks, were distributed in the several offices of luxury; and the number of eunuchs could be compared only with the insects of a summer's day.§ The monarch, who resigned to his subjects the superiority of merit and virtue, was distinguished by the oppressive mag-

four-mile course. * Julian, in *Misopogon*, p. 240. Julius Cæsar had offended the Roman people by reading his dispatches during the actual race. Augustus indulged their taste, or his own, by his constant attention to the important business of the circus, for which he professed the warmest inclination. Sueton. in August. c. 45.

† The reformation of the palace is described by Ammianus (22, 4). Libanius, (*Orat. Parent.* c. 62, p. 288, &c.) Mamertinus (in *Panegyry.* Vet. 11. 11). Socrates (*lib.* 3, c. 1), and Zonaras (*tom.* ii, *lib.* 13, p. 24).

‡ Ego non *rationalem* jussi sed tonsorem acciri. Zonaras uses the less natural image of a *senator*. Yet an officer of the finances, who was satiated with wealth, might desire and obtain the honours of the senate.

§ Μαγειρους μὲν χιλίους, κοφίας δὲ οὐκ ἐλάττους, οἰνοχόους δὲ πλείους, σμήνην τραπεζοποιῶν, ἐννοχόους ὑπὲρ τὰς μυρίας παρὰ τοῖς ποιμέσιν ἐν ἡρῶι, are the original words of Libanius, which I have

nificence of his dress, his table, his buildings, and his train. The stately palaces erected by Constantine and his sons were decorated with many-coloured marbles, and ornaments of massy gold. The most exquisite dainties were procured to gratify their pride, rather than their taste; birds of the most distant climates, fish from the most remote seas, fruits out of their natural season, winter roses, and summer snows.* The domestic crowd of the palace surpassed the expense of the legions; yet the smallest part of this costly multitude was subservient to the use, or even to the splendour, of the throne. The monarch was disgraced, and the people were injured, by the creation and sale of an infinite number of obscure, and even titular employments; and the most worthless of mankind might purchase the privilege of being maintained, without the necessity of labour, from the public revenue. The waste of an enormous household, the increase of fees and perquisites, which were soon claimed as a lawful debt, and the bribes which they extorted from those who feared their enmity, or solicited their favour, suddenly enriched these haughty menials. They abused their fortune, without considering their past or their future condition; and their rapine and venality could be equalled only by the extravagance of their dissipations. Their silken robes were embroidered with gold, their tables were served with delicacy and profusion; the houses which they built for their own use would have covered the farm of an ancient consul; and the most honourable citizens were obliged to dismount from their horses, and respectfully to salute a eunuch whom they met on the public highway. The luxury of the palace excited the contempt and indignation of Julian, who usually slept on the ground; who yielded with reluctance to the indispensable calls of nature; and who placed his vanity, not in emulating, but in despising, the pomp of royalty. By the total extirpation of a mischief which was magnified even beyond its real extent, he was impatient to relieve the distress, and to appease the mur-

faithfully quoted, lest I should be suspected of magnifying the abuses of the royal household.

* The expressions of Mamertinus are lively and forcible. *Quin etiam prandiorum et cœnarum laboratas magnitudines Romanus populus sensit; cum quæsitissimæ dapes non gustu sed difficultatibus æstimarentur; miracula avium, longinquis maris pisces, alieni temporis poma, æstivæ nives, hybernæ rosæ.*

murs of the people, who support with less uneasiness the weight of taxes, if they are convinced that the fruits of their industry are appropriated to the service of the state. But in the execution of this salutary work, Julian is accused of proceeding with too much haste and inconsiderate severity. By a single edict, he reduced the palace of Constantinople to an immense desert, and dismissed with ignominy the whole train of slaves and dependents,* without providing any just, or at least benevolent, exceptions for the age, the services, or the poverty, of the faithful domestics of the imperial family. Such, indeed, was the temper of Julian, who seldom recollected the fundamental maxim of Aristotle, that true virtue is placed at an equal distance between the opposite vices. The splendid and effeminate dress of the Asiatics, the curls and paint, the collars and bracelets, which had appeared so ridiculous in the person of Constantine, were consistently rejected by his philosophic successor. But with the topperies, Julian affected to renounce the decencies, of dress; and seemed to value himself for his neglect of the laws of cleanliness. In a satirical performance, which was designed for the public eye, the emperor descants with pleasure, and even with pride, on the length of his nails, and the inky blackness of his hands; protests, that although the greatest part of his body was covered with hair, the use of the razor was confined to his head alone; and celebrates, with visible complacency, the shaggy and *populous*† beard, which he fondly cherished, after the example of the philosophers of Greece. Had Julian consulted the simple dictates of reason, the first magistrate of the Romans would have scorned the affectation of Diogenes, as well as that of Darius.

* Yet Julian himself was accused of bestowing whole towns on the eunuchs. (Orat. 7, against Polyelet. p. 117—127.) Libanius contents himself with a cold but positive denial of the fact, which seems indeed to belong more properly to Constantius. This charge, however, may allude to some unknown circumstance.

† In the *Misopogon* (p. 338, 339), he draws a very singular picture of himself, and the following words are strangely characteristic:—*Αὐτὸς προσέθεικα τὸν βαθὺν τουτόν. πώγωνα . . . ταῦτά τοι διαθέοντων ἀνεχομαι τῶν βλετιῶν ὡσπερ ἐν λοχμῷ τῶν θηρίων.* The friends of the abbé de la Bletterie adjured him, in the name of the French nation, not to translate this passage, so offensive to their delicacy. (Hist. de Jovien, tom. ii, p. 94.) Like him, I have contented myself with a transient allusion; but the little animal, which Julian *names*, is a beast familiar

But the work of public reformation would have remained imperfect, if Julian had only corrected the abuses, without punishing the crimes, of his predecessor's reign. "We are now delivered," says he, in a familiar letter to one of his intimate friends, "we are now surprisingly delivered from the voracious jaws of the hydra.* I do not mean to apply the epithet to my brother Constantius. He is no more: may the earth lie light on his head! But his artful and cruel favourites studied to deceive and exasperate a prince, whose natural mildness cannot be praised without some efforts of adulation. It is not, however, my intention, that even those men should be oppressed: they are accused, and they shall enjoy the benefit of a fair and impartial trial." To conduct this inquiry, Julian named six judges of the highest rank in the state and army; and as he wished to escape the reproach of condemning his personal enemies, he fixed this extraordinary tribunal at Chalcedon, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus; and transferred to the commissioners an absolute power to pronounce and execute their final sentence, without delay, and without appeal. The office of president was exercised by the venerable prefect of the east, a *second* Sallust,† whose virtues conciliated the esteem of Greek sophists, and of Christian bishops. He was assisted by the eloquent Mamertinus,‡ one of the consuls elect, whose merit is loudly celebrated by the doubtful evidence of his own applause. But the civil wisdom of two magistrates was overbalanced by the ferocious violence of four generals, Nevitta, Agilo, Jovinus, and Arbetio. Arbetio, whom the public would have seen with less surprise at the bar than on the bench, was supposed to possess the secret of

to man, and signifies love.

* Julian. Epist. 23, p. 389. He used the words *πολυκέφαλον ὕδραν*, in writing to his friend Hermogenes, who, like himself, was conversant with the Greek poets.

† The two Sallusts, the prefect of Gaul, and the prefect of the east, must be carefully distinguished. (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, p. 696.) I have used the surname of *Secundus*, as a convenient epithet. The second Sallust extorted the esteem of the Christians themselves; and Gregory Nazianzen, who condemned his religion, has celebrated his virtues. (Orat. 3, p. 90.) See a curious note of the abbé de la Bleterie, Vie. de Julien, p. 363. [Clinton (F. R. ii, 112) has clearly distinguished the two Sallusts, who have been confounded by Wolf, Valesius, and Reitemeier. The prefect of Gaul was Julian's colleague in the consulship, A.D. 363.—ED.] ‡ Mamertinus praises the emperor (11. 1,) for bestowing the offices of treasurer and prefect on a man of wisdom, firmness, integrity, &c. like himself. Yet Ammianus ranks

the commission; the armed and angry leaders of the Jovian and Herculian bands encompassed the tribunal; and the judges were alternately swayed by the laws of justice, and by the clamours of faction.*

The chamberlain Eusebius, who had so long abused the favour of Constantius, expiated, by an ignominious death, the insolence, the corruption, and cruelty, of his servile reign. The executions of Paul and Apodemius (the former of whom was burnt alive) were accepted as an inadequate atonement by the widows and orphans of so many hundred Romans, whom those legal tyrants had betrayed and murdered. But justice herself (if we may use the pathetic expression of Ammianus†) appeared to weep over the fate of Ursulus, the treasurer of the empire; and his blood accused the ingratitude of Julian, whose distress had been seasonably relieved by the intrepid liberality of that honest minister. The rage of the soldiers, whom he had provoked by his indiscretion, was the cause and the excuse of his death; and the emperor, deeply wounded by his own reproaches and those of the public, offered some consolation to the family of Ursulus, by the restitution of his confiscated fortunes. Before the end of the year in which they had been adorned with the ensigns of the prefecture and consulship,‡ Taurus and Florentius were reduced to implore the clemency of the inexorable tribunal of Chalcedon. The former was banished to Vercellæ in Italy, and a sentence of death was pronounced against the latter. A wise prince should have rewarded the crime of Taurus: the faithful minister, when he was no longer able to oppose the progress of a rebel, had taken refuge in the court of his benefactor and his lawful sovereign. But the guilt of Florentius justified the severity of the judges; and his escape served to display the magnanimity of Julian; who nobly checked the interested diligence of an informer, and refused to learn what place concealed the wretched fugitive from his just

him (21, 1.) among the ministers of Julian, *quorum merita nôrat et fidem.* * The proceedings of this chamber of justice are related by Ammianus (22, 3), and praised by Libanius. (Orat. Parent. c. 74, p. 299, 300.) † *Ursuli vero necem ipsa mihi videtur flêsse justitia.*

Libanius, who imputes his death to the soldiers, attempts to criminate the Count of the largesses. ‡ Such respect was still entertained for the venerable names of the commonwealth, that the public was surprised and scandalized to hear Taurus summoned as a criminal under the consulship of Taurus. The summons of his colleague

resentment.* Some months after the tribunal of Chalcedon had been dissolved, the prætorian vicegerent of Africa, the notary Gaudentius, and Artemius,† duke of Egypt, were executed at Antioch. Artemius had reigned the cruel and corrupt tyrant of a great province; Gaudentius had long practised the arts of calumny against the innocent, the virtuous, and even the person of Julian himself. Yet the circumstances of their trial and condemnation were so unskilfully managed, that these wicked men obtained, in the public opinion, the glory of suffering for the obstinate loyalty with which they had supported the cause of Constantius. The rest of his servants were protected by a general act of oblivion; and they were left to enjoy with impunity the bribes which they had accepted, either to defend the oppressed, or to oppress the friendless. This measure, which, on the soundest principles of policy, may deserve our approbation, was executed in a manner which seemed to degrade the majesty of the throne. Julian was tormented by the importunities of a multitude, particularly of Egyptians, who loudly re-demanded the gifts which they had imprudently or illegally bestowed; he foresaw the endless prosecution of vexatious suits; and he engaged a promise, which ought always to have been sacred, that, if they would repair to Chalcedon, he would meet them in person, to hear and determine their complaints. But as soon as they were landed, he issued an absolute order, which prohibited the watermen from transporting any Egyptian to Constantinople; and thus detained his disappointed clients on the Asiatic shore, till their patience and money being utterly exhausted, they were obliged to return with indignant murmurs to their native country.‡

The numerous army of spies, of agents, and informers, enlisted by Constantius to secure the repose of one man, and to interrupt that of millions, was immediately dis-

Florentius was probably delayed till the commencement of the ensuing year.

* Ammian. 20, 7. † For the guilt and punishment of Artemius, see Julian (Epist. 10, p. 379), and Ammianus (22, 6. and Vales. ad loc). The merit of Artemius, who demolished temples, and was put to death by an apostate, has tempted the Greek and Latin churches to honour him as a martyr. But as ecclesiastical history attests, that he was not only a tyrant, but an Arian, it is not altogether easy to justify this indiscreet promotion. Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles. tom. vii, p. 1319.* ‡ See Ammian. 22, 6, and Vales. ad locum, and the *Codex*

banded by his generous successor. Julian was slow in his suspicions, and gentle in his punishments: and his contempt of treason was the result of judgment, of vanity, and of courage. Conscious of superior merit, he was persuaded that few among his subjects would dare to meet him in the field, to attempt his life, or even to seat themselves on his vacant throne. The philosopher could excuse the hasty sallies of discontent; and the hero could despise the ambitious projects which surpassed the fortune or the abilities of the rash conspirators. A citizen of Ancyra had prepared for his own use a purple garment; and this indiscreet action, which, under the reign of Constantius, would have been considered as a capital offence,* was reported to Julian by the officious importunity of a private enemy. The monarch, after making some inquiry into the rank and character of his rival, dispatched the informer with a present of a pair of purple slippers, to complete the magnificence of his imperial habit. A more dangerous conspiracy was formed by ten of the domestic guards, who had resolved to assassinate Julian in the field of exercise near Antioch. Their intemperance revealed their guilt; and they were conducted in chains to the presence of their injured sovereign, who, after a lively representation of the wickedness and folly of their enterprise, instead of a death or torture, which they deserved and expected, pronounced a sentence of exile against the two principal offenders. The only instance in which Julian seemed to depart from his accustomed clemency, was the execution of a rash youth, who, with a feeble hand, had aspired to seize the reins of empire. But that youth was the son of Marcellus, the general of cavalry, who, in the first campaign of the Gallic war, had deserted the standard of the Cæsar, and the republic. Without appearing to indulge his personal resentment, Julian might easily confound the crime of the son and of the father; but he was reconciled by the distress of

Theodosianus, lib. 2, tit. 39, leg. 1, and Godefroy's Commentary, tom. i, p. 218, ad locum.

* The president Montesquieu (Considerations sur la Grandeur, &c. des Romains, c. 14 in his works, tom. iii, p. 448, 449,) excuses this minute and absurd tyranny, by supposing, that actions the most indifferent in our eyes, might excite in a Roman mind the idea of guilt and danger. This strange apology is supported by a strange misapprehension of the English laws,—“chez une nation . . . où il est défendu de boire à la santé d'une certaine personne.”

Marcellus, and the liberality of the emperor ex. leavoured to heal the wound which had been inflicted by the hand of justice.*

Julian was not insensible of the advantages of freedom.† From his studies he had imbibed the spirit of ancient sages and heroes; his life and fortunes had depended on the caprice of a tyrant; and when he ascended the throne, his pride was sometimes mortified by the reflection, that the slaves who would not dare to censure his defects, were not worthy to applaud his virtues.‡ He sincerely abhorred the system of oriental despotism which Diocletian, Constantine, and the patient habits of fourscore years, had established in the empire. A motive of superstition prevented the execution of the design which Julian had frequently meditated, of relieving his head from the weight of a costly diadem: § but he absolutely refused the title of *Dominus* or *Lord*; ¶ a word which was grown so familiar to the ears of the Romans, that they no longer remembered its servile and humiliating origin. The office, or rather the name, of consul, was cherished by a prince who contemplated with reverence the ruins of the republic; and the same behaviour which had been assumed by the prudence of Augustus, was adopted by Julian from choice and inclination. On the calends of January, at break of day, the new consuls, Mamertinus and Nevitta, hastened to the palace to salute the emperor. As soon as he was informed of their approach, he leaped from his throne, eagerly advanced to meet them,

* The clemency of Julian and the conspiracy which was formed against his life at Antioch, are described by Ammianus (22, 9, 10, and Vales. ad loc), and Libanius. (Orat. Parent. c. 99, p. 323.)

† According to some, says Aristotle, (as he is quoted by Julian ad Themist. p. 261,) the form of absolute government, the *παρβασιλεια*, is contrary to nature. Both the prince and the philosopher choose, however, to involve this eternal truth in artful and laboured obscurity.

‡ That sentiment is expressed almost in the words of Julian himself. Ammian, 22, 10.

§ Libanius (Orat. Parent. c. 95, p. 320), who mentions the wish and design of Julian, insinuates, in mysterious language (*θεῶν οὐτῶ γρότων . . . ἀλλ' ἦν ἀμεινων ὁ κωλύων*), that the emperor was restrained by some particular revelation.

¶ Julian in Misopogon. p. 343. As he never abolished, by any public law, the proud appellation of *Despot*, or *Dominus*, they are still extant on his medals (Ducange, Fam. Byzantin. p. 38, 39); and the private displeasure which he affected to express, only gave a different tone to the servility of the court. The abbé de la Bletterie (Hist. de Jovien, tom. ii, p. 99—102,) has curiously traced the origin and progress of

and compelled the blushing magistrates to receive the demonstrations of his affected humility. From the palace they proceeded to the senate. The emperor, on foot, marched before their litters; and the gazing multitude admired the image of ancient times, or secretly blamed a conduct which, in their eyes, degraded the majesty of the purple.* But the behaviour of Julian was uniformly supported. During the games of the circus he had, imprudently or designedly, performed the manumission of a slave in the presence of the consul. The moment he was reminded that he had trespassed on the jurisdiction of another magistrate, he condemned himself to pay a fine of ten pounds of gold; and embraced this public occasion of declaring to the world, that he was subject like the rest of his fellow-citizens, to the laws,† and even to the forms of the republic. The spirit of his administration, and his regard for the place of his nativity, induced Julian to confer on the senate of Constantinople the same honours, privileges, and authority, which were still enjoyed by the senate of ancient Rome.‡ A legal fiction was introduced, and gradually established, that one-half of the national council had migrated into the east: and the despotic successors of Julian, accepting the title of Senators, acknowledged themselves the members of a respectable body, which was permitted to represent the majesty of the Roman name. From Constantinople, the attention of the monarch was extended to the municipal senates of the provinces. He abolished, by repeated edicts, the unjust and pernicious exemptions, which had withdrawn so many idle citizens from the service of their country; and by imposing the word *Dominus* under the imperial government. [For this title on Julian's coins, see Eckhel (*Num. Vet.* vol. viii, p. 127). General remarks on the words *Dominus* (*inimicum libertati nomen*), ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ, and ΔΕΙΟΤΗΣ, may be found, *ib.* p. 364—366 and 501.—ED.

* Ammian. 22, 7. The consul Marcellinus (in Panegy. *Vet.* 11. 28—30,) celebrates the auspicious day, like an eloquent slave astonished and intoxicated by the condescension of his master.

† Personal satire was condemned by the laws of the twelve tables:

Si mala coniderit in quem quis carmina, jus est,
Judiciumque. ————— Horat. Sat. ii, 1, 82.

Julian (in *Misopogon.* p. 337,) owns himself subject to the law; and the abbé de la Bletterie (*Hist. de Jovien.* tom. ii, p. 92,) has eagerly embraced a declaration so agreeable to his own system, and indeed to the true spirit of the imperial constitution. ‡ Zosimus, l. 3. p. 158.

an equal distribution of public duties, he restored the strength, the splendour, or, according to the glowing expression of Libanius,* the soul of the expiring cities of his empire. The venerable age of Greece excited the most tender compassion in the mind of Julian, which kindled into rapture, when he recollected the gods, the heroes, and the men superior to heroes and to gods, who had bequeathed to the latest posterity the monuments of their genius, or the example of their virtues. He relieved the distress, and restored the beauty of the cities of Epirus and Peloponnesus.† Athens acknowledged him for her benefactor; Argos, for her deliverer. The pride of Corinth, again rising from her ruins with the honours of a Roman colony, exacted a tribute from the adjacent republics, for the purpose of defraying the games of the isthmus, which were celebrated in the amphitheatre with the hunting of bears and panthers. From this tribute the cities of Elis, of Delphi, and of Argos, which had inherited from their remote ancestors the sacred office of perpetuating the Olympic, the Pythian, and the Nemean games, claimed a just exemption. The immunity of Elis and Delphi was respected by the Corinthians; but the poverty of Argos tempted the insolence of oppression; and the feeble complaints of its deputies were silenced by the decree of a provincial magistrate, who seems to have consulted only the interest of the capital in which he resided. Seven years after this sentence, Julian ‡ allowed the cause to be referred to a superior tribunal; and his eloquence was interposed, most probably with success, in the defence of a

* Ἡ τῆς βούλης ἰσχυρὸς ψύχη πόλειος ἔστιν. See Libanius (Orat. Parent. c. 71, p. 296), Ammianus (22, 9), and the Theodosian Code (lib. 12, tit. 1, leg. 50—55), with Godefroy's Commentary (tom. iv, p. 390—402). Yet the whole subject of the *Curie*, notwithstanding very ample materials, still remains the most obscure in the legal history of the empire. [Niebuhr has thrown some light on this subject in his History, but more in his Lectures (vol. i, p. 119, 161, &c. Bohn's edit.)—Ed.]

† Que paulo ante arida et siti anhelantia visebantur, ea nunc perlui, mundari, madere; Fora, Deambulacra, Gymnasia, ketis et gaudentibus populis frequentari; dies festos, et celebrari veteres, et novos in honorem principis consecrari. (Mamertin. 11. 9.) He particularly restored the city of Nicopolis, and the Actiæ games, which had been instituted by Augustus.

‡ Julian, Epist. 35, p. 407—411. This epistle, which illustrates the declining age of Greece, is omitted by the abbé de la Bleterie; and strangely disfigured

city which had been the royal seat of Agamemnon,* and had given to Macedonia a race of kings and conquerors.†

The laborious administration of military and civil affairs, which were multiplied in proportion to the extent of the empire, exercised the abilities of Julian; but he frequently assumed the two characters of orator ‡ and of judge,§ which are almost unknown to the modern sovereigns of Europe. The arts of persuasion, so diligently cultivated by the first Cæsars, were neglected by the military ignorance and Asiatic pride of their successors; and if they condescended to harangue the soldiers, whom they feared, they treated with silent disdain the senators, whom they despised. The assemblies of the senate, which Constantius had avoided, were considered by Julian as the place where he could exhibit, with the most propriety, the maxims of a republican, and the talents of a rhetorician. He alternately practised, as in a school of declamation, the several modes by the Latin translator, who, by rendering ἀπίθεια, *tributum*, and ἰσώται, *populus*, directly contradicts the sense of the original.

* He reigned in Mycenæ, at the distance of fifty stadia, or six miles, from Argos: but these cities, which alternately flourished, are confounded by the Greek poets. Strabo, lib. 8, p. 579, edit. Amstel. 1707.

† Marsham, Canon. Chron. p. 421. This pedigree from Temenus and Hercules may be suspicious; yet it was allowed, after a strict inquiry by the judges of the Olympic games (Herodot. lib. 5, c. 22), at a time when the Macedonian kings were obscure and unpopular in Greece. When the Achaean league declared against Philip, it was thought decent that the deputies of Argos should retire. (T. Liv. 32. 22.) [For the pedigree of the Macedonian kings, consult Clinton (F. H. ii, 221). Caranus, the first of them, was the seventh in descent from Temenus, who was the fourth from Hyllus, a son of Hercules (ib. i, 247). But Hercules was descended from Danaus, not from Inachus and Argus (ib. i, 101).—Ed.] ‡ His eloquence is celebrated by Libanius (Orat. Parent. c. 75, 76, p. 300, 301), who distinctly mentions the orators of Homer. Socrates (lib. 3, c. 1,) has rashly asserted that Julian was the only prince, since Julius Cæsar, who harangued the senate. All the predecessors of Nero (Tacit. Annal. 13, 3), and many of his successors, possessed the faculty of speaking in public; and it might be proved, by various examples, that they frequently exercised it in the senate.

§ Ammianus (22, 10), has impartially stated the merits and defects of his judicæal proceedings. Libanius (Orat. Parent. c. 90, 91, p. 315, &c.) has seen only the fair side, and his picture, if it flatters the person, expresses at least the duties of the judge. Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. 4, p. 120), who suppresses the virtues, and exaggerates even the venial faults of the apostate, triumphantly asks, "Whether such a judge was fit to be seated between Minos and Rhadamanthus in the Elysian fields?"

of praise, of censure, of exhortation; and his friend Libanius has remarked, that the study of Homer taught him to imitate the simple, concise style of Menelaus, the copiousness of Nestor, whose words descended like the flakes of a winter's snow, or the pathetic and forcible eloquence of Ulysses. The functions of a judge, which are sometimes incompatible with those of a prince, were exercised by Julian, not only as a duty, but as an amusement; and although he might have trusted the integrity and discernment of his prætorian prefects, he often placed himself by their side on the seat of judgment. The acute penetrator of his mind was agreeably occupied in detecting and defeating the chicanery of the advocates, who laboured to disguise the truth of facts, and to pervert the sense of the laws. He sometimes forgot the gravity of his station, asked indiscreet or unseasonable questions, and betrayed, by the loudness of his voice, and the agitation of his body, the earnest vehemence with which he maintained his opinion against the judges, the advocates, and their clients. But his knowledge of his own temper prompted him to encourage, and even to solicit, the reproof of his friends and ministers; and whenever they ventured to oppose the irregular sallies of his passions, the spectators could observe the shame, as well as the gratitude, of their monarch. The decrees of Julian were almost always founded on the principles of justice; and he had the firmness to resist the two most dangerous temptations which assault the tribunal of a sovereign, under the specious forms of compassion and equity. He decided the merits of the cause without weighing the circumstances of the parties; and the poor, whom he wished to relieve, were condemned to satisfy the just demands of a noble and wealthy adversary. He carefully distinguished the judge from the legislator;* and though he meditated a necessary reformation of the Roman jurisprudence, he pronounced sentence according to the strict and literal interpretation of those laws, which the magistrates were bound to execute, and the subjects to obey.

The generality of princes, if they were stripped of their purple, and cast naked into the world, would immediately sink to the lowest rank of society, without a hope of

* Of the laws which Julian enacted in a reign of sixteen months, fifty-four have been admitted into the codes of Theodosius and Jus-

emerging from their obscurity. But the personal merit of Julian was, in some measure, independent of his fortune. Whatever had been his choice of life, by the force of intrepid courage, lively wit, and intense application, he would have obtained, or at least he would have deserved, the highest honours of his profession; and Julian might have raised himself to the rank of minister, or general of the state in which he was born a private citizen. If the jealous caprice of power had disappointed his expectations; if he had prudently declined the paths of greatness, the employment of the same talents in studious solitude, would have placed, beyond the reach of kings, his present happiness and his immortal fame. When we inspect, with minute, or perhaps malevolent attention, the portrait of Julian, something seems wanting to the grace and perfection of the whole figure. His genius was less powerful and sublime than that of Cæsar; nor did he possess the consummate prudence of Augustus. The virtues of Trajan appear more steady and natural, and the philosophy of Marcus is more simple and consistent. Yet Julian sustained adversity with firmness, and prosperity with moderation. After an interval of one hundred and twenty years from the death of Alexander Severus, the Romans beheld an emperor who made no distinction between his duties and his pleasures; who laboured to relieve the distress, and to revive the spirit of his subjects; and who endeavoured always to connect authority with merit, and happiness with virtue. Even faction, and religious faction, was constrained to acknowledge the superiority of his genius, in peace as well as in war; and to confess with a sigh, that the apostate Julian was a lover of his country, and that he deserved the empire of the world.*

tinian. (Gothofred Chron. Legum, p. 64—67.) The abbé de la Bletterie (tom. ii, p. 329—336) has chosen one of these laws, to give an idea of Julian's Latin style, which is forcible and elaborate, but less pure than his Greek.

- . . . Ductor fortissimus armis ;
 Conditor et legum celeberrimus ; ore manûque
 Consultor patriæ ; sed non consultor habendæ
 Religionis ; amans tercentûm millia Divûm.
 Perfidus ille Deo, sed non et perfidus orbi.

Prudent. Apotheosis, 450, &c.

The consciousness of a generous sentiment seems to have raised the Christian poet above his usual mediocrity.

CHAPTER XXIII.—THE RELIGION OF JULIAN.—UNIVERSAL TOLERATION.—HE ATTEMPTS TO RESTORE AND REFORM THE PAGAN WORSHIP.—TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.—HIS ARTFUL PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS.—MUTUAL ZEAL AND INJUSTICE.

THE character of apostate has injured the reputation of Julian;* and the enthusiasm which clouded his virtues has exaggerated the real and apparent magnitude of his faults. Our partial ignorance may represent him as a philosophic monarch, who studied to protect, with an equal hand, the religious factions of the empire; and to allay the theological fever which had inflamed the minds of the people, from the edicts of Diocletian to the exile of Athanasius. A more accurate view of the character and conduct of Julian will remove this favourable prepossession for a prince who did not escape the general contagion of the times. We enjoy the singular advantage of comparing the pictures which have been delineated by his fondest admirers and his implacable enemies. The actions of Julian are faithfully related by a judicious and candid historian, the impartial spectator of his life and death. The unanimous evidence of his contemporaries is confirmed by the public and private declarations of the emperor himself; and his various writings express the uniform tenor of his religious sentiments, which policy would have prompted him to dissemble rather than to affect. A devout and sincere attachment for the gods of Athens and Rome constituted the ruling passion of Julian; † the powers of an enlightened understanding were betrayed and corrupted by the influence of superstitious prejudice; and the phantoms which existed

* Eckhel has a curious note on this obnoxious epithet. He maintains that apostacy denotes simply a change of opinion, and is not in itself a contumelious term, but becomes so when used by those whom the convert forsakes. He, though a Christian, avers that Constantine was an apostate as well as Julian. "Non vereretur Christianus ego, spectata ejus vocis natura, ipsum Constantinum M. vocare apostatam, quippe qui, abjecto polytheismo, Christianam sacra respexit." Num. Vet. vol. viii, p. 130, note.—Ed.

† I shall transcribe some of his own expressions from a short religious discourse which the imperial pontiff composed to censure the bold impiety of a cynic.—*Ἄλλ' ὁμῶς οὕτω εἴη τι τοὺς θεοὺς πείφειν, καὶ φιλεῖν, καὶ σέβειν, καὶ ἄζομαι, καὶ πάνθ' ἀπλῶς τὰ τοιαῦτα πρὸς αὐτοὺς πάσχω, ὅσα περ ἂν τις καὶ οἷα πρὸς ἀγαθοὺς δεσπότης, πρὸς*

only in the mind of the emperor, had a real and pernicious effect on the government of the empire. The vehement zeal of the Christians, who despised the worship and overturned the altars of those fabulous deities, engaged their votary in a state of irreconcilable hostility with a very numerous party of his subjects; and he was sometimes tempted by the desire of victory, or the shame of a repulse, to violate the laws of prudence, and even of justice. The triumph of the party, which he deserted and opposed, has fixed a stain of infamy on the name of Julian; and the unsuccessful apostate has been overwhelmed with a torrent of pious invectives, of which the signal was given by the sonorous trumpet* of Gregory Nazianzen.† The interesting nature of the events which were crowded into the short reign of this active emperor deserve a just and circumstantial narrative. His motives, his councils, and his actions, as far as they are connected with the history of religion, will be the subject of the present chapter.

The cause of his strange and fatal apostacy may be derived from the early period of his life, when he was left an orphan in the hands of the murderers of his family. The names of Christ and of Constantius, the ideas of slavery and of religion, were soon associated in a youthful imagination, which was susceptible of the most lively impressions. The care of his infancy was intrusted to Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia,‡

εὐασκάλους, πρὸς πατέρας, πρὸς κηδεμόνας. Orat. 7, p. 212. The variety and copiousness of the Greek tongue seem inadequate to the fervour of his devotion. * The orator, with some eloquence, much enthusiasm, and more vanity, addresses his discourse to heaven and earth, to men and angels, to the living and the dead; and, above all, to the great Constantius (*εἰ τις αἰσθησις*, an odd Pagan expression). He concludes with a bold assurance, that he has erected a monument not less durable, and much more portable, than the columns of Hercules. See Greg. Nazianzen. Orat. 3, p. 50. 4, p. 134.

† See this long invective, which has been injudiciously divided into two orations in Gregory's Works, tom. i, p. 49—134. Paris, 1630. It was published by Gregory and his friend Basil (4, p. 133), about six months after the death of Julian, when his remains had been carried to Tarsus (4, p. 120), but while Jovian was still on the throne (8, p. 54. 4, p. 117). I have derived much assistance from a French version and remarks, printed at Lyons, 1735. ‡ Nicomediæ ab Eusebio educatus Episcopo, quem genere longius contingebat. (Ammian. 22, 9.) Julian never expresses any gratitude towards that Arian prelate; but he celebrates his preceptor, the eunuch Marlonius, and describes his mode of education, which inspired his pupil with a passionate admi-

who was related to him on the side of his mother; and till Julian reached the twentieth year of his age, he received from his Christian preceptors the education not of a hero but of a saint. The emperor, less jealous of a heavenly,

ration for the genius, and perhaps the religion of Homer. Misopogon. p. 351, 352. [Every incident in the education of so remarkable a man is interesting and important. Neander, both in his "Julian" and in his History of the Christian Religion has devoted much attention to this subject; and as all his information is drawn from the highest sources, a few portions of it may be usefully employed, in correcting some errors into which Gibbon was betrayed, and supplying some of his omissions. In No. 11 of the Appendix to his "Julian," Neander questions the correctness of the statement made by Ammianus, that Julian was educated at Nicomedia, by Eusebius, the bishop of that place, since "this prelate was appointed bishop of Constantinople, before the synod of Antioch, A.D. 341, and died soon after;" and Julian did not reside at Nicomedia till the year 351. Still as part of his childhood was passed at Constantinople, the bishop may have had, for a short time, some care of his education there. Neander, however, in his second section, says, that the emperor's young cousin was quite neglected by his relations, and intrusted to "an aged tutor, Mardonius, an hereditary slave of his mother's family, whom her father had brought up and educated, in order to instruct her in elegant literature." His mind thus received its first bent. But the boy was naturally endowed with a spirit that carried him to high thoughts. In after days, writing of himself, he said (Hymn. ad Solem. p. 130), "From my earliest age, a powerful attachment to the splendour of the god of the sun (Helios) was implanted in me. The appearance of the heavenly light used to carry me entirely out of myself, even in my childhood, so that I not only strove to look upon it with a steady eye, but often went out into the open air, on bright, cloudless nights, and careless of aught else, I gazed in admiration on the beauty of the starry heavens, without thinking of myself, without hearing what was said to me. I could say much more than this, if I attempted to relate, how at such times I thought of the gods." Then trained for six years in the solitude of Macellum, he was there taught by Nicocles, a devoted admirer of the genius of ancient Greece, to study Homer, "through the medium of an allegorical interpretation, as the guide to higher wisdom." At that period of life, when the feelings of youth are moulded into the principles of manhood, this ardent spirit was thus steeped in an enthusiasm, which effused a sublime, unearthly radiance over all the forms it pervaded. From this retirement Julian was removed to Constantinople, where he was not permitted to attend the lectures of the first rhetorician of the day, Libanius, an avowed Pagan; but his tutor was Ekebolius, a man of inferior talent and no principle, who, "under Constantius, was a zealous Christian and a violent antagonist of Paganism; then, under Julian, became an equally zealous Pagan and antagonist of Christianity; and after Julian's death, once more played the Christian and subjected himself to the penances of the

than of an earthly crown, contented himself with the imperfect character of a catechumen, while he bestowed the advantages of baptism* on the nephews of Constantine.† They were even admitted to the inferior offices of the ecclesiastical order; and Julian publicly read the Holy Scriptures in the church of Nicomedia. The study of religion, which they assiduously cultivated, appeared to produce the fairest fruits of faith and devotion.‡ They prayed, they fasted, they distributed alms to the poor, gifts to the clergy, and oblations to the tombs of the martyrs; and the splendid monument of St. Mamas, at Cæsarea, was erected, or at least was undertaken, by the joint labour of Gallus and Julian.§

church, that he might be readmitted to its communion." When the emperor was called away to the west he sent his cousin to Nicomedia. The young scholar, then twenty years of age and so illustrious, as a member of the imperial family, was there courted by the philosophers, especially by the Antichristian portion of the new Platonists, who had then many schools in Asia Minor. Their most celebrated teachers were Ædesius, Chrysanthius, Eusebius, and Maximus. The latter was "an adroit juggler," and pretended to have power over supernatural agents. Hearing of the distinguished visitor at Nicomedia, he went there and established himself in such credit, that he induced the susceptible prince to accompany him on his return to Ephesus, where the artifices and flatteries of the Ionian sophists, acting upon previous tendencies, effected Julian's secret conversion to Paganism. After the murder of his half-brother, Gallus, he was twice called to the court at Milan, and twice permitted to reside at Athens. The fame of this place, its monuments of ancient glory, the graceful and majestic symbols of heroism and divinity, that surrounded him, the visible representations of all that he mentally believed, the conversations and homage of learned men, justly proud of their glorious ancestry, and indignant at the idea of such renown being superseded by what they deemed an upstart system of yesterday,—all these completed and confirmed in Julian's mind a change, if a gradually developed sentiment can be called a change, which it would have been fatal to him to avow during the life of Constantius. This is the substance of Neander's account in his *History of the Christian Religion* (vol. iii, sec. 1, p. 49—58) and in his *Emperor Julian* (sec. 2, p. 71—87).—ED.] * *Greg. Naz.* 3. p. 70. He laboured to efface that holy mark in the blood, perhaps, of a Taurobolium. *Baron. Annal. Eccles. A.D. 361, No. 3, 4.*

† Julian himself (*Epist.* 51, p. 454) assures the Alexandrians that he had been a Christian (he must mean a sincere one) till the twentieth year of his age. ‡ See his Christian and even his ecclesiastical education, in *Gregory* (3, p. 55), *Socrates* (lib. 3. c. 1), and *Sozomen*, lib. 5, c. 2). He escaped very narrowly from being a bishop, and perhaps a saint. § The share of the work which had been allotted to Gallus, was prosecuted with vigour and success; but the earth obstinately

They respectfully conversed with the bishops who were eminent for superior sanctity, and solicited the benediction of the monks and hermits, who had introduced into Cappadocia the voluntary hardships of the ascetic life.* As the two princes advanced towards the years of manhood, they discovered, in their religious sentiments the difference of their characters. The dull and obstinate understanding of Gallus embraced, with implicit zeal, the doctrines of Christianity, which never influenced his conduct, or moderated his passions. The mild disposition of the younger brother was less repugnant to the precepts of the gospel; and his active curiosity might have been gratified by a theological system which explains the mysterious essence of the Deity, and opens the boundless prospect of invisible and future worlds. But the independent spirit of Julian refused to yield the passive and unresisting obedience which was required, in the name of religion, by the haughty ministers of the church. Their speculative opinions were imposed as positive laws, and guarded by the terrors of eternal punishments; but while they prescribed the rigid formulary of the thoughts, the words, and the actions of the young prince; whilst they silenced his objections, and severely checked the freedom of his inquiries, they secretly provoked his impatient genius to disclaim the authority of his ecclesiastical guides. He was educated in the Lesser Asia, amidst the scandals of the Arian controversy.† The fierce contests of

rejected and subverted the structures which were imposed by the sacrilegious hand of Julian. (Greg. 3, p. 59—61.) Such a partial earthquake, attested by many living spectators, would form one of the clearest miracles in ecclesiastical story.

* The *philosopher* (Fragment, p. 288) ridicules the iron chains, &c. of these solitary fanatics, (see Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.* tom. ix. p. 661, 662), who had forgotten that man is by nature a gentle and social animal, ἀνθρώπου φύσει πολιτικῶν ζώων καὶ ἡμέρων. The *Pagan* supposes, that because they had renounced the gods, they were possessed and tormented by evil demons.

† See Julian apud Cyril. l. 6, p. 206; l. 8, p. 253. 262. “You persecute (says he) those heretics who do not mourn the dead man precisely in the way which you approve.” He shews himself a tolerable theologian; but he maintains that the Christian Trinity is not derived from the doctrine of Paul, of Jesus, or of Moses. [Julian’s aversion to Christianity took a more decided form, when he saw the arrogance, ambition, and wealth-seeking cupidity of the hierarchy. A mind like his, already prepossessed against the religion itself, was naturally disgusted by these characteristics of a body that had emanated from it, and

the eastern bishops, the incessant alterations of their creeds, and the profane motives which appeared to actuate their conduct, insensibly strengthened the prejudice of Julian, that they neither understood nor believed the religion for which they so fiercely contended. Instead of listening to the proofs of Christianity with that favourable attention which adds weight to the most respectable evidence, he heard with suspicion, and disputed with obstinacy and acuteness, the doctrines for which he already entertained an invincible aversion. Whenever the young princes were directed to compose declamations on the subject of the prevailing controversies, Julian always declared himself the advocate of Paganism, under the specious excuse that, in the defence of the weaker cause, his learning and ingenuity might be more advantageously exercised and displayed.

As soon as Gallus was invested with the honours of the purple, Julian was permitted to breathe the air of freedom,

towered by the very side of the throne, offensively obtruding rival pretensions and asserting a divine right to the allegiance of submissive believers. The dark colouring which this threw over his view of Christianity has not escaped the observation of some, who have studied his motives. Foremost among them, according to Eckhel (viii, 130), were his "*ingestum odium episcoporum ejus ætatis,*" and "*aliquorum non ferenda ambitio.*" Neander, too (Hist. iii, 82), says, "Julian hated especially the bishops;" and (Emp. Jul. p. 132) marks the "especial distinction between Julian's conduct to the Christians in general and his behaviour to the bishops," admitting also that the latter "forgot the duties which they owed to the supreme magistrate." Even Warburton (Julian, p. 24) cannot deny, that "their turbulent and insolent manners deserved all the severity of his justice." Gibbon (c. 25) quotes from Ammianus (l. 27, c. 3) a description of their pomp and luxury, surpassing regal grandeur. To annihilate their power and humble their pride, was the chief object of Julian's proceedings. To weaken them, by affording more frequent opportunities for discord, he allowed those to return from banishment who had been expelled during the former predominance of an adverse sect; but he sent back into exile, Athanasius, who was ruling at Alexandria, with a sway more absolute than his own. Nor was it inconsistent with this, that in his epistle to the high-priest of the Galatians, he should recommend him and his colleagues, to "take a lesson from the Christian bishops and assert a dignity superior to all earthly rank." He saw daily before him the power acquired by a regularly organized priesthood, and his project was, to establish a countervailing influence, of which he, as Pontifex Maximus, would be the recognized and directing head. This confirmed his pre-conceived dislike of a church that could produce

of literature, and of Paganism.* The crowd of sophists, who were attracted by the taste and liberality of their royal pupil, had formed a strict alliance between the learning and the religion of Greece: and the poems of Homer, instead of being admired as the original productions of human genius, were seriously ascribed to the heavenly inspiration of Apollo and the muses. The deities of Olympus, as they are painted by the immortal bard, imprint themselves on the minds which are the least addicted to superstitious credulity. Our familiar knowledge of their names and characters, their forms and attributes, seems to bestow on those airy beings a real and substantial existence; and the pleasing enchantment produces an imperfect and momentary assent of the imagination to those fables, which are the most repugnant to our reason and experience. In the age of Julian, every circumstance contributed to prolong and fortify the illusion; the magnificent temples of Greece and Asia; the works of those artists who had expressed, in painting or in sculpture, the divine conceptions of the poet; the pomp of festivals and sacrifices; the successful arts of divination; the popular traditions of oracles and prodigies; and the ancient practice of two thousand years. The weakness of polytheism was, in some measure, excused by the moderation of its claims; and the devotion of the Pagans was not incompatible with the most licentious scepticism.† Instead of an indivisible and regular system, which occupies the whole extent of the believing mind, the mythology of the Greeks was composed of a thousand loose and flexible parts, and the servant of the gods was at liberty to define the degree and measure of his religious faith. The creed which Julian adopted for his own use was of the largest dimensions; and, by a strange contradiction, he disdained the salutary yoke of the gospel, whilst he made a voluntary offering of his reason on the altars of Jupiter and Apollo. One of the orations of Julian is consecrated to the honour

such chiefs, and aggravated in his eyes the folly of their verbal distinctions, the fury of their disputations strife, and the ferocity of their mutual persecutions.—ED.] * Libanius, *Orat. Parentalis*, c. 9, 10, p. 232, &c. Greg. Nazianzen, *Orat.* 3, p. 61. Eunap. *Vit. Sophist.* in Maximo, p. 68—70. edit. Commelin. † A modern philosopher has ingeniously compared the different operations of theism and polytheism, with regard to the doubt or conviction which they produce in

of Cybele, the mother of the gods, who required from her effeminate priests the bloody sacrifice so rashly performed by the madness of the Phrygian boy. The pious emperor condescends to relate, without a blush, and without a smile, the voyage of the goddess from the shores of Pergamus to the mouth of the Tiber; and the stupendous miracle, which convinced the senate and people of Rome that the lump of clay, which their ambassadors had transported over the seas, was endowed with life and sentiment and divine power.* For the truth of this prodigy, he appeals to the public monuments of the city; and censures, with some acrimony, the sickly and affected taste of those men who impertinently derided the sacred traditions of their ancestors.†

But the devout philosopher, who sincerely embraced, and warmly encouraged, the superstition of the people, reserved for himself the privilege of a liberal interpretation; and silently withdrew from the foot of the altars into the sanctuary of the temple. The extravagance of the Grecian mythology proclaimed with a clear and audible voice, that the pious inquirer, instead of being scandalized or satisfied with the literal sense, should diligently explore the occult wisdom, which had been disguised, by the prudence of antiquity, under the mask of folly and of fable.‡ The philosophers of the Platonic school,§ Plotinus, Porphyry, and the divine Iamblicus, were admired as the most skilful

the human mind. See Hume's Essays, vol. ii, p. 444—457, in Svo. edit. 1777.

* The Idaean mother landed in Italy about the end of the second Punic war. The miracle of Claudia, either virgin or matron, who cleared her fame by dis-gracing the graver modesty of the Roman ladies, is attested by a cloud of witnesses. Their evidence is collected by Drakenborch: (ad Silium Italicum, 17. 33.) but we may observe that Livy (29. 14) slides over the transaction with discreet ambiguity.

† I cannot refrain from transcribing the emphatical words of Julian. Ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ ταῖς πόλεσι πιστεύειν μᾶλλον τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἢ τουτοισὶ τοῖς κομψοῖς, ὧν τὸ ψυχάρτιον ἰσχυρὸν μὲν, ὑγιές δὲ οὐδὲ ἐν βλέπει. Orat. 5, p. 161. Julian likewise declares ὡς ἔρημ belief in the *ancilia*, the holy shields, which dropped from heaven on the Quirinal hill; and pities the strange blindness of the Christians who preferred the *cross* to these celestial trophies. Apud Cyril. l. 6, p. 194.

‡ See the principles of allegory, in Julian (Orat. 7, p. 216. 222). His reasoning is less absurd than that of some modern theologians, who assert that an extravagant or contradictory doctrine *must* be divine; since no man alive could have thought of inventing it. § Eunapius has made these sophists the subject of a partial and fanatical history; and the learned Brucker (Hist. Philosoph. tom. ii, p. 217—303) has em-

masters of this allegorical science, which laboured to soften and harmonize the deformed features of Paganism. Julian himself, who was directed in the mysterious pursuit by Ædesius, the venerable successor of Iamblicus, aspired to the possession of a treasure, which he esteemed, if we may credit his solemn asseverations, far above the empire of the world.* It was indeed a treasure, which derived its value only from opinion; and every artist, who flattered himself that he had extracted the precious ore from the surrounding dross, claimed an equal right of stamping the name and figure the most agreeable to his peculiar fancy. The fable of Atys and Cybele had been already explained by Porphyry; but his labours served only to animate the pious industry of Julian, who invented and published his own allegory of that ancient and mystic tale. This freedom of interpretation, which might gratify the pride of the Platonists, exposed the vanity of their art. Without a tedious detail, the modern reader could not form a just idea of the strange allusions, the forced etymologies, the solemn trifling, and the impenetrable obscurity of these sages, who professed to reveal the system of the universe. As the traditions of Pagan mythology were variously related, the sacred interpreters were at liberty to select the most convenient circumstances; and, as they translated an arbitrary cypher, they could extract from *any* fable *any* sense which was adapted to their favourite system of religion and philosophy. The lascivious form of a naked Venus was tortured into the discovery of some moral precept, or some physical truth; and the castration of Atys explained the revolution of the sun between the tropics, or the separation of the human soul from vice and error.†

The theological system of Julian appears to have contained the sublime and important principles of natural religion. But as the faith, which is not founded on revela-

ployed much labour to illustrate their obscure lives and incomprehensible doctrines.

* Julian, Orat. 7, p. 222. He swears with the most fervent and enthusiastic devotion; and trembles lest he should betray too much of these holy mysteries, which the profane might deride with an impious Sardonic laugh.

† See the fifth oration of Julian. But all the allegories which ever issued from the Platonic school are not worth the short poem of Catullus on the same extraordinary subject. The transition of Atys, from the wildest enthusiasm to sober pathetic complaint, for his irretrievable loss, must inspire

tion, must remain destitute of any firm assurance, the disciple of Plato imprudently relapsed into the habits of vulgar superstition: and the popular and philosophic notion of the Deity seems to have been confounded in the practice, the writings, and even in the mind of Julian.* The pious emperor acknowledged and adored the Eternal Cause of the universe, to whom he ascribed all the perfections of an infinite nature, invisible to the eyes, and inaccessible to the understanding, of feeble mortals. The supreme God had created, or, rather, in the Platonic language, had generated, the gradual succession of dependent spirits, of gods, of demons, of heroes, and of men; and every being which derived its existence immediately from the First Cause, received the inherent gift of immortality. That so precious an advantage might not be lavished upon unworthy objects, the Creator had intrusted to the skill and power of the inferior gods, the office of forming the human body, and of arranging the beautiful harmony of the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral kingdoms. To the conduct of these divine ministers he delegated the temporal government of this lower world; but their imperfect administration is not exempt from discord or error. The earth and its inhabitants are divided among them, and the characters of Mars or Minerva, of Mercury or Venus, may be distinctly traced in the laws and manners of their peculiar votaries. As long as our immortal souls are confined in a mortal prison, it is our interest, as well as our duty, to solicit the favour, and to deprecate the wrath, of the powers of heaven: whose pride is gratified by the devotion of mankind; and whose grosser parts may be supposed to derive some nourishment from the fumes of sacrifice.† The inferior gods might sometimes condescend to animate the statues, and to inhabit the temples, which were dedicated to their honour. They might occasionally visit the earth, but the heavens

a man with pity, a eunuch with despair.

* The true religion of Julian may be deduced from the *Cæsars*, p. 305, with Spanheim's notes and illustrations; from the fragments in *Cyril*. l. 2, p. 57. 58, and especially from the theological oration in *Solem Regem*. p. 130—158, addressed, in the confidence of friendship, to the prefect Sallust.

† Julian adopts this gross conception, by ascribing it to his favourite Marcus Antoninus. (*Cæsares*, p. 333.) The Stoics and Platonists hesitated between the analogy of bodies and the purity of spirits; yet the gravest philosophers inclined to the whimsical fancy of Aristophanes

were the proper throne and symbol of their glory. The invariable order of the sun, moon, and stars, was hastily admitted by Julian, as a proof of their *eternal* duration; and their eternity was a sufficient evidence that they were the workmanship, not of an inferior deity, but of the omnipotent King. In the system of the Platonists, the visible was a type of the invisible world. The celestial bodies, as they were informed by a divine spirit, might be considered as the objects the most worthy of religious worship. The SUN, whose genial influence pervades and sustains the universe, justly claimed the adoration of mankind, as the bright representative of the LOGOS, the lively, the rational, the beneficent image of the intellectual Father.*

and Lucian, that an unbelieving age might starve the immortal gods. See Observations de Spanheim, p. 284. 444, &c. * "Ἡλιον λέγω, τὸ ζῶν ἄγαλμα καὶ ἔμψυχον, καὶ ἔννοον, καὶ ἀγαθοεργὸν τοῦ νοητοῦ πατρὸς. Julian, Epist. 51. In another place (apud Cyril. l. 2. p. 69,) he calls the sun God, and the throne of God. Julian believed the Platonic Trinity; and only blames the Christians for preferring a mortal to an immortal *Logos*. [The assistance given by philosophy to early Christianity, is not contradicted by its opposite influence in the case of Julian. Rightly apprehended, the two facts are perfectly consistent with each other. First, the essential character of Christianity itself was altogether changed. Instead of a religion, supplying the two great wants of the age, a spiritual worship and a settled conviction of the immortality of the soul, it had merged into a politico-hierarchical, temporal empire over the fears, the thoughts, the resources and the treasures of subjugated crowds. It had almost discarded the philosophy, which had been its ally, and used only its vaguest words as war-cries in the struggles of factions, contending for profitable power. This picture is copied from that drawn by Neander, in his Emp. Jul. p. 118 and 134, and in his Hist. p. 49 and 140. The following passage brings the whole into one point of view. "Worldly-minded bishops, who by their proceedings caused the name of the Lord to be blasphemed among the Gentiles, raged against Paganism and stood ready to reward, with everything which their powerful influence at court enabled them to procure, especially the favour of the prince and titles and stations of honour, the hypocrisy of those, who accounted earthly things of more value than divine." Then the same writer describes the encouragement, which such corruptions gave, for an attempted reaction of Paganism to recover from its depression. The various habits and passions, that are averse to change, had kept many from deserting the religion of their fathers; and these, seeing how philosophy had aided the introduction and progress of a rival faith, conceived, as has been before observed, the idea of employing the same means for the renovation of their own. The revived Platonism of Ammonius Saccas was not designed for this purpose; but some of its

In every age, the absence of genuine inspiration is supplied by the strong illusions of enthusiasm and the mimic arts of imposture. If, in the time of Julian, these arts had been practised only by the Pagan priests, for the support of an expiring cause, some indulgence might perhaps be allowed to the interest and habits of the sacerdotal character. But it may appear a subject of surprise and scandal, that the philosophers themselves should have contributed to abuse the superstitious credulity of mankind;* and that the Grecian mysteries should have been supported by the magic or theurgy of the modern Platonists. They arrogantly pretended to control the order of nature, to explore the secrets of futurity, to command the service of the inferior demons, to enjoy the view and conversation of the superior gods, and, by disengaging the soul from her material bands, to reunite that immortal particle with the Infinite and Divine Spirit.

The devout and fearless curiosity of Julian tempted the

tenets, carried out to an extravagant length, suited the attempt and were fanatically adapted or dishonestly perverted, to this end. "The religious symbolism, derived from the Neo-Platonic philosophy, was the most important means resorted to, for dressing out Paganism as a rival of Christianity, and for imparting an artificial life into that, which was already effete. Speculative ideas and mystical intuitions were to infuse into the old insipid institution a higher meaning. Theurgy and the low traffic in boastful mysteries contributed greatly also to attract and enchain, by their deceptive arts, many minds influenced more by a vain curiosity, which would penetrate into what lies beyond the province of the human mind, than by any true religious need." (Neander. Hist. vol. iii, p. 51.) There can be no stronger evidence of what had been the previous services of philosophy, than this desperate effort to misemploy them, for the support of a sinking and hopeless cause. Its total failure makes all comment unnecessary, except to point out its utter inefficiency, even in the hands of Julian, to reanimate so childish a superstition. An excitable mind, motived and educated like his, would afford a natural facility for the admission of such impressions. Yet neither his undoubted talent, his fervent enthusiasm, his imperial power, nor the vantage-ground, which his adversaries gave him by their dereliction of principle, enabled him to resuscitate, what the spirit of the age had extinguished.—Ed.]

* The sophists of Eunapius perform as many miracles as the saints of the desert; and the only circumstance in their favour is, that they are of a less gloomy complexion. Instead of devils with horns and tails, Iamblichus evoked the genii of love, Eros and Anteros, from two adjacent fountains. Two beautiful boys issued from the water, fondly embraced him as their father, and retired at his command. P. 26, 27.

philosophers with the hope of an easy conquest; which, from the situation of their young proselyte, might be productive of the most important consequences.* Julian imbibed the first rudiments of the Platonic doctrines from the mouth of Ædesius, who had fixed at Pergamus his wandering and persecuted school. But as the declining strength of that venerable sage was unequal to the ardour, the diligence, the rapid conception of his pupil, two of his most learned disciples, Chrysanthius and Eusebius, supplied, at his own desire, the place of their aged master. These philosophers seem to have prepared and distributed their respective parts; and they artfully contrived, by dark hints and affected disputes, to excite the impatient hopes of the *aspirant*, till they delivered him into the hands of their associate Maximus, the boldest and most skilful master of the theurgic science. By his hands, Julian was secretly initiated at Ephesus, in the twentieth year of his age. His residence at Athens confirmed this unnatural alliance of philosophy and superstition. He obtained the privilege of a solemn initiation into the mysteries of Eleusis, which, amidst the general decay of the Grecian worship, still retained some vestiges of their primæval sanctity: and such was the zeal of Julian, that he afterwards invited the Eleusinian pontiff to the court of Gaul, for the sole purpose of consummating, by mystic rites and sacrifices, the great work of his sanctification. As these ceremonies were performed in the depth of caverns, and in the silence of the night; and as the inviolable secret of the mysteries was preserved by the discretion of the initiated, I shall not presume to describe the horrid sounds, and fiery apparitions, which were presented to the senses, or the imagination, of the credulous aspirant, † till the visions of comfort and knowledge broke upon him in a blaze of celestial light. ‡

* The dexterous management of these sophists, who played their credulous pupil into each other's hands, is fairly told by Euanapius, (p. 69—76) with unsuspecting simplicity. The abbé de la Bleterie understands, and neatly describes the whole comedy. (Vie de Julien, p. 61—67.) † When Julian, in a momentary panic, made the sign of the cross, the demons instantly disappeared. (Gregory Naz. Orat. 3, p. 71.) Gregory supposes that they were frightened, but the priests declared that they were indignant. The reader, according to the measure of his faith, will determine this profound question. ‡ A dark and distant view of the terrors and joys of initiation is shewn by Dion

In the caverns of Ephesus and Eleusis, the mind of Julian was penetrated with sincere, deep, and unalterable enthusiasm; though he might sometimes exhibit the vicissitudes of pious fraud and hypocrisy, which may be observed, or at least suspected, in the characters of the most conscientious fanatics. From that moment he consecrated his life to the service of the gods; and while the occupations of war, of government, and of study, seemed to claim the whole measure of his time, a stated portion of the hours of the night was invariably reserved for the exercise of private devotion. The temperance which adorned the severe manners of the soldier and the philosopher, was connected with some strict and frivolous rules of religious abstinence; and it was in honour of Pan or Mercury, of Hecate or Isis, that Julian, on particular days, denied himself the use of some particular food, which might have been offensive to his tutelary deities. By these voluntary fasts, he prepared his senses and his understanding for the frequent and familiar visits with which he was honoured by the celestial powers. Notwithstanding the modest silence of Julian himself, we may learn from his faithful friend, the orator Libanius, that he lived in a perpetual intercourse with the gods and goddesses; that they descended upon earth to enjoy the conversation of their favourite hero; that they gently interrupted his slumbers by touching his hand or his hair; that they warned him of every impending danger, and conducted him by their infallible wisdom, in every action of his life; and that he had acquired such an intimate knowledge of his heavenly guests, as readily to distinguish the voice of Jupiter from that of Minerva, and the form of Apollo from the figure of Hercules.* These sleeping or waking visions, the ordinary effects of abstinence and fanaticism, would almost degrade the emperor to the level of an Egyptian monk. But the useless lives of Antony or Pachomius were consumed in these vain occupations. Julian could break

Chrysostom, Themistius, Proclus, and Stobæus. The learned author of the *Divine Legation* has exhibited their words. (vol. i, p. 239, 247, 248, 280, edit. 1765,) which he dexterously or forcibly applies to his own hypothesis. * Julian's modesty confined him to obscure and occasional hints; but Libanius expatiates with pleasure on the fasts and visions of the religious hero. (*Legat. ad Julian*, p. 157, and *Orat. Parental. c.* 83, p. 309, 310.)

from the dream of superstition to arm himself for battle; and after vanquishing in the field the enemies of Rome, he calmly retired into his tent, to dictate the wise and salutary laws of an empire, or to indulge his genius in the elegant pursuits of literature and philosophy.

The important secret of the apostacy of Julian was intrusted to the fidelity of the *initiated*, with whom he was united by the sacred ties of friendship and religion.* The pleasing rumour was cautiously circulated among the adherents of the ancient worship: and his future greatness became the object of the hopes, the prayers, and the predictions, of the Pagans in every province of the empire. From the zeal and virtues of their royal proselyte, they fondly expected the cure of every evil, and the restoration of every blessing; and, instead of disapproving the ardour of their pious wishes, Julian ingenuously confessed, that he was ambitious to attain a situation, in which he might be useful to his country and to his religion. But this religion was viewed with a hostile eye by the successor of Constantine, whose capricious passions alternately saved and threatened the life of Julian. The arts of magic and divination were strictly prohibited under a despotic government, which condescended to fear them; and if the Pagans were reluctantly indulged in the exercise of their superstition, the rank of Julian would have excepted him from the general toleration. The apostate soon became the presumptive heir of the monarchy, and his death could alone have appeased the just apprehensions of the Christians.† But the young prince, who aspired to the glory of a hero, rather than of a martyr, consulted his safety by dissembling his religion; and the easy temper of Polytheism permitted

* Libanius, Orat. Parent. c. 10, p. 233, 234. Gallus had some reason to suspect the secret apostacy of his brother; and in a letter, which may be received as genuine, he exhorts Julian to adhere to the religion of their *ancestors*; an argument which, as it should seem, was not yet perfectly ripe. See Julian, Op. p. 454, and Hist. de Jovien. tom. ii, p. 141. [Julian had confided his secret to Oribasius, the physician of Pergamus. Clin. F. R. i, 431.—ED.] † Gregory (3. p. 50), with inhuman zeal, censures Constantius for sparing the infant apostate (*κακῶς σῶθῆντα*). His French translator (p. 265,) cautiously observes that such expressions must not be prises à la lettre. [The most literal version of Gregory's homicidal expression, cannot, however, be conscientiously disavowed by his most devoted apologist, nor can it be consistently condemned by a tolerator of that unscrupulous

him to join in the public worship of a sect which he inwardly despised. Libanius has considered the hypocrisy of his friend as a subject, not of censure, but of praise. "As the statues of the gods," says that orator, "which have been defiled with filth, are again placed in a magnificent temple; so the beauty of truth was seated in the mind of Julian, after it had been purified from the errors and follies of his education. His sentiments were changed; but as it would have been dangerous to have avowed his sentiments, his conduct still continued the same. Very different from the ass in *Æsop*, who disguised himself with a lion's hide, our lion was obliged to conceal himself under the skin of an ass, and, while he embraced the dictates of reason, to obey the laws of prudence and necessity."* The dissimulation of Julian lasted above ten years, from his secret initiation at Ephesus to the beginning of the civil war, when he declared himself at once the implacable enemy of Christ and of Constantius. This state of constraint might contribute to strengthen his devotion; and as soon as he had satisfied the obligation of assisting, on solemn festivals, at the assemblies of the Christians, Julian returned with the impatience of a lover to burn his free and voluntary incense on the domestic chapels of Jupiter and Mercury. But as every act of dissimulation must be painful to an ingenuous spirit, the profession of Christianity increased the aversion of Julian for a religion, which oppressed the freedom of his mind, and compelled him to hold a conduct repugnant to the noblest attributes of human nature, sincerity, and courage.

The inclination of Julian might prefer the gods of Homer and of the Scipios, to the new faith which his uncle had established in the Roman empire, and in which he himself had been sanctified by the sacrament of baptism. But, as a philosopher, it was incumbent on him to justify his dissent from Christianity, which was supported by the number of its converts, by the chain of prophecy, the splendour of miracles and the weight of evidence. The elaborate work,†

pulous papal despotism which directed the swords of Alva and Tilly, and sanctioned the truculent barbarities of Saint Bartholomew's eve.—Ed.] * Libanius, *Orat. Parental.* c. 9, p. 233.

† Fabricius (*Biblioth. Græc.* lib. 5, c. 8, p. 88—90), and Lardner (*Heathen Testimonies*, vol. iv, p. 44—47), have accurately compiled all that can now be discovered of Julian's work against the Christians.

which he composed amidst the preparations of the Persian war, contained the substance of those arguments which he had long revolved in his mind. Some fragments have been transcribed and preserved by his adversary, the vehement Cyril of Alexandria;* and they exhibit a very singular mixture of wit and learning, of sophistry and fanaticism. The elegance of the style, and the rank of the author, recommended his writings to the public attention,† and in the impious list of the enemies of Christianity, the celebrated name of Porphyry was effaced by the superior merit or reputation of Julian. The minds of the faithful were either seduced, or scandalized, or alarmed; and the Pagans, who sometimes presumed to engage in the unequal dispute, derived from the popular work of their imperial missionary, an inexhaustible supply of fallacious objections. But in the assiduous prosecution of these theological studies, the emperor of the Romans imbibed the illiberal prejudices and passions of a polemic divine. He contracted an irrevocable obligation to maintain and propagate his religious opinions; and whilst he secretly applauded the strength and dexterity with which he wielded the weapons of controversy, he was tempted to distrust the sincerity, or to despise the understandings of his antagonists, who could obstinately resist the force of reason and eloquence.

The Christians, who beheld with horror and indignation the apostacy of Julian, had much more to fear from his power than from his arguments. The Pagans, who were conscious of his fervent zeal, expected, perhaps with impatience, that the flames of persecution should be immediately kindled against the enemies of the gods; and that the ingenious malice of Julian would invent some cruel refinements of death and torture, which had been unknown to the rude and inexperienced fury of his predecessors. But the hopes, as well as the fears of the religious factions

* About seventy years after the death of Julian, he executed a task which had been feebly attempted by Philip of Side, a prolix and contemptible writer. Even the work of Cyril has not entirely satisfied the most favourable judges; and the abbé de la Bleterie (Preface à l'Hist. de Jovien, p. 30—32,) wishes that some *théologien philosophe* (a strange centaur) would undertake the refutation of Julian. † Libanius (Orat. Parental. c. 87, p. 313), who has been suspected of assisting his friend, prefers this divine vindication (Orat. 9. in necem. Julian. p. 255, edit. Morel.), to the writings of Porphyry. His judgment may be

were apparently disappointed, by the prudent humanity of a prince,* who was careful of his own fame, of the public peace, and of the rights of mankind. Instructed by history and reflection, Julian was persuaded, that if the diseases of the body may sometimes be cured by salutary violence, neither steel nor fire can eradicate the erroneous opinions of the mind. The reluctant victim may be dragged to the foot of the altar; but the heart still abhors and disclaims the sacrilegious act of the hand. Religious obstinacy is hardened and exasperated by oppression; and as soon as the persecution subsides, those who have yielded are restored as penitents, and those who have resisted are

arraigned (Socrates, lib. 3, c. 23), but Libanius cannot be accused of flattery to a dead prince.

* Libanius (Orat. Parental. c. 58, p. 283, 284.) has eloquently explained the tolerating principles and conduct of his imperial friend. In a very remarkable epistle to the people of Bostra, Julian himself (Epist. 52.) professes his moderation and betrays his zeal: which is acknowledged by Ammianus, and exposed by Gregory (Orat. 3, p. 72). [This letter may have been covertly dictated by his zeal for Paganism; but it is an open manifestation of the hostile feelings which he entertained towards the Christian priesthood. Bostra has already been noticed as the birth-place of the emperor Philip. It was a Colony, situated in Arabia, on the confines of Judæa, and not far from Pella, the early seat of Jewish Christianity. The inhabitants appear to have caught or inherited, the contentious spirit of their Hebrew neighbours. As they were almost equally divided between the gospel and heathenism, their discord led to scenes of violence, which attracted official notice. Julian remonstrated with the bishop, Titus, and held him responsible for the public tranquillity. The prelate and his clergy replied by a memorial, asserting that the disorders of the people were restrained by their admonitions. On this the emperor addressed a letter to the citizens generally, of both parties, exhorting them to live in peace. But he adroitly took the opportunity of telling the Christian laity, that their priesthood accused them of being disposed to turbulence. He, however, acquitted them, and imputed all disturbance to the arts of the clergy, whom he described as irritated by their loss of power and immunities, and as therefore instigating the people to despise the authority of the state. These agitators he recommended them to expel from their city, so that concord might prevail among them, and all quietly practise that form of worship which he left them at perfect liberty to choose for themselves. Neander (Hist. vol. iii, p. 83.) censures Julian for his conduct to the bishop of Bostra. Yet we find it previously admitted by the same writer (Emp. Jul. p. 154), that the monarch thought he ought to be severe with the bishops, since "he looked upon them as disturbers of the public peace, who paid no regard to human authority; and in that spirit he wrote to the citizens of Bostra."—ED.]

honoured as saints and martyrs. If Julian adopted the unsuccessful cruelty of Diocletian and his colleagues, he was sensible that he should stain his memory with the name of a tyrant, and add new glories to the Catholic church, which had derived strength and increase from the severity of the Pagan magistrates. Actuated by these motives, and apprehensive of disturbing the repose of an unsettled reign, Julian surprised the world by an edict, which was not unworthy of a statesman or a philosopher. He extended to all the inhabitants of the Roman world, the benefits of a free and equal toleration; and the only hardship which he inflicted on the Christians, was to deprive them of the power of tormenting their fellow-subjects, whom they stigmatized with the odious titles of idolaters and heretics. The Pagans received a gracious permission, or rather an express order, to open ALL their temples;* and they were at once delivered from the oppressive laws and arbitrary vexations, which they had sustained under the reign of Constantine and of his sons. At the same time, the bishops and clergy, who had been banished by the Arian monarch, were recalled from exile and restored to their respective churches; the Donatists, the Novatians, the Macedonians, the Eunomians, and those who, with a more prosperous fortune, adhered to the doctrine of the council of Nice. Julian, who understood and derided their theological disputes, invited to the palace the leaders of the hostile sects, that he might enjoy the agreeable spectacle of their furious encounters. The clamour of controversy sometimes provoked the emperor to exclaim,—“Hear me! the Franks have heard me and the Allemanni;” but he soon discovered that he was now engaged with more obstinate and implacable enemies; and though he exerted the powers of oratory to persuade them to live in concord, or at least in peace, he

* In Greece the temples of Minerva were opened by his express command, before the death of Constantius (Liban. Orat. Parent. c. 55, p. 280); and Julian declares himself a Pagan in his public manifesto to the Athenians. This unquestionable evidence may correct the hasty assertion of Ammianus, who seems to suppose Constantinople to be the place where he discovered his attachment to the gods. [This was not till after he had been proclaimed Augustus, and while he was on his march to attack Constantius; it can have preceded only by a few days his entrance into the eastern metropolis. His opinions were never publicly avowed till he had lost all hope of maintaining amicable

was perfectly satisfied, before he dismissed them from his presence he had nothing to dread from the union of the Christians. The impartial Ammianus has ascribed this affected clemency to the desire of fomenting the intestine divisions of the church; and the insidious design of undermining the foundations of Christianity was inseparably connected with the zeal, which Julian professed, to restore the ancient religion of the empire.*

As soon as he ascended the throne, he assumed, according to the custom of his predecessors, the character of supreme pontiff; not only as the most honourable title of imperial greatness, but as a sacred and important office, the duties of which he was resolved to execute with pious diligence. As the business of the state prevented the emperor from joining every day in the public devotion of his subjects, he dedicated a domestic chapel to his tutelar deity the Sun; his gardens were filled with statues and altars of the gods; and each apartment of the palace displayed the appearance of a magnificent temple. Every morning he saluted the parent of light with a sacrifice; the blood of another victim was shed at the moment when the sun sank below the horizon; and the moon, the stars, and the genii of the night, received their respective and seasonable honours from the indefatigable devotion of Julian. On solemn festivals, he regularly visited the temple of the god or goddess to whom the day was peculiarly consecrated, and endeavoured to excite the religion of the magistrates and people by the example of his own zeal. Instead of maintaining the lofty state of a monarch, distinguished by the splendour of his purple, and encompassed by the golden shields of his guards, Julian solicited, with respectful eagerness, the meanest offices which contributed to the worship of the gods. Amidst the sacred but licentious crowd of priests, of inferior ministers, and of female dancers, who were dedicated to the service of the temple, it was the business of the emperor to

relations with his cousin. How carefully they were concealed, was proved by his conduct at the feast of the Epiphany that same year.—Ed.] * Ammianus, 22, 5. Sozomen, lib. 5, c. 5. *Bestia moritur, tranquillitas redit . . . omnes episcopi qui de propriis sedibus fuerant exterminati per indulgentiam novi principis ad ecclesias redeunt.* Jerom. *adversus Luciferianos*, tom. ii, p. 143. Optatus accuses the Donatists for owing their safety to an apostate (lib. 2, c. 16, p. 36, 37, edit. Dupin).

bring the wood, to blow the fire, to handle the knife, to slaughter the victim, and, thrusting his bloody hands into the bowels of the expiring animal, to draw forth the heart or liver, and to read, with the consummate skill of an haruspex, the imaginary signs of future events. The wisest of the Pagans censured this extravagant superstition, which affected to despise the restraints of prudence and decency. Under the reign of a prince, who practised the rigid maxims of economy, the expense of religious worship consumed a very large portion of the revenue; a constant supply of the scarcest and most beautiful birds was transported from distant climates, to bleed on the altars of the gods; a hundred oxen were frequently sacrificed by Julian on one and the same day; and it soon became a popular jest, that if he should return with conquest from the Persian war, the breed of horned cattle must infallibly be extinguished. Yet this expense may appear inconsiderable, when it is compared with the splendid presents which were offered, either by the hand or by order of the emperor, to all the celebrated places of devotion in the Roman world; and with the sums allotted to repair and decorate the ancient temples, which had suffered the silent decay of time, or the recent injuries of Christian rapine. Encouraged by the example, the exhortations, the liberality, of their pious sovereign, the cities and families resumed the practice of their neglected ceremonies. "Every part of the world," exclaims Libanius, with devout transport, "displayed the triumph of religion; and the grateful prospect of flaming altars, bleeding victims, the smoke of incense, and a solemn train of priests and prophets, without fear and without danger. The sound of prayer and of music was heard on the tops of the highest mountains; and the same ox afforded a sacrifice for the gods, and a supper for their joyous votaries."*

But the genius and power of Julian were unequal to the enterprise of restoring a religion which was destitute of theological principles, of moral precepts, and of ecclesiastical

* The restoration of the Pagan worship is described by Julian (*Misopogon*. p. 346); Libanius (*Orat. Parent.* c. 60, p. 286, 287, and *Orat. Consular. ad Julian.* p. 245, 246, edit. Morel.); Ammianus (22, 12); and Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* 4, p. 121). These writers agree in the essential, and even minute facts; but the different lights in which they view the extreme devotion of Julian, are expressive of the grada-

discipline; which rapidly hastened to decay and dissolution, and was not susceptible of any solid or consistent reformation. The jurisdiction of the supreme pontiff, more especially after that office had been united with the imperial dignity, comprehended the whole extent of the Roman empire. Julian named for his vicars, in the several provinces, the priests and philosophers, whom he esteemed the best qualified to co-operate in the execution of his great design; and his pastoral letters,* if we may use that name, still represent a very curious sketch of his wishes and intentions. He directs, that in every city the sacerdotal order should be composed, without any distinction of birth or fortune, of those persons who were the most conspicuous for the love of the gods and of men. "If they are guilty," continues he, "of any scandalous offence, they should be censured or degraded by the superior pontiff; but, as long as they retain their rank, they are entitled to the respect of the magistrates and people. Their humility may be shown in the plainness of their domestic garb; their dignity, in the pomp of holy vestments. When they are summoned in their turn to officiate before the altar, they ought not, during the appointed number of days, to depart from the precincts of the temple; nor should a single day be suffered to elapse, without the prayers and the sacrifice which they are obliged to offer for the prosperity of the state and of individuals. The exercise of their sacred functions requires an immaculate purity, both of mind and body; and even when they are dismissed from the temple to the occupations of common life, it is incumbent on them to excel in decency and virtue the rest of their fellow-citizens. The priest of the gods should never be seen in theatres or taverns. His conversation should be chaste, his diet temperate, his friends of honourable reputation; and if he sometimes visits the forum or the palace, he should appear only as the advocate of those who have vainly solicited either justice or mercy. His studies should be suited to the sanctity of his profession. Licentious tales, or comedies, or satires, must tions of self-applause, passionate admiration, mild reproof, and partial invective.

* See Julian. Epistol. 49. 62, 63, and a long and curious fragment, without beginning or end (p. 288—305). The supreme pontiff derides the Mosaic history and the Christian discipline, prefers the Greek poets to the Hebrew prophets, and palliates, with the skill of a Jesuit, the *relative* worship of images.

be banished from his library, which ought solely to consist of historical and philosophical writings; of history which is founded in truth, and of philosophy which is connected with religion. The impious opinions of the Epicureans and Sceptics deserve his abhorrence and contempt;* but he should diligently study the systems of Pythagoras, of Plato, and of the Stoics, which unanimously teach that there *are* gods; that the world is governed by their providence; that their goodness is the source of every temporal blessing; and that they have prepared for the human soul a future state of reward or punishment."† The imperial pontiff inculcates, in the most persuasive language, the duties of benevolence and hospitality; exhorts his inferior clergy to recommend the universal practice of those virtues; promises to assist their indigence from the public treasury; and declares his resolution of establishing hospitals in every city, where the poor should be received without any invidious distinction of country or religion. Julian beheld with envy the wise and humane regulations of the church; and he very frankly confesses his intention to deprive the Christians of the applause, as well as advantage, which they had acquired by the exclusive practice of charity and beneficence.‡ The same spirit of imitation might dispose the emperor to adopt several ecclesiastical institutions, the use and importance of which were approved by the success of his enemies. But

* The exultation of Julian (p. 301), that these impious sects, and even their writings, are extinguished, may be consistent enough with the sacerdotal character; but it is unworthy of a philosopher to wish that any opinions and arguments, the most repugnant to his own, should be concealed from the knowledge of mankind. † In these

letters, Julian gives the idea of a Paganism, very unlike the mythologies of Hesiod, Homer, Numa, and Ovid. His instructions to his priests are an amplifying commentary on those of Paul to Titus, in his choice of bishops. The most remarkable feature in these extraordinary productions is, that while as Pontifex Maximus he affects to restore idolatry, as emperor and philosopher he endeavours to provide what he clearly perceives to be most required for the satisfaction of his age, by giving it a more spiritual character to Pagan worship, and combining with it the belief of a future state. He even points out Platonism as the philosophy which had produced these impressions and created these wants.—ED.

‡ Yet he insinuates, that the Christians, under pretence of charity, inveigled children from their religion and parents, conveyed them on shipboard, and devoted those victims to a life of poverty or servitude in a remote country (p. 305). Had the charge been proved, it was his

if these imaginary plans of reformation had been realized, the forced and imperfect copy would have been less beneficial to Paganism, than honourable to Christianity.* The Gentiles, who peaceably followed the customs of their ancestors, were rather surprised than pleased with the introduction of foreign manners; and, in the short period of his reign, Julian had frequent occasions to complain of the want of fervour of his own party.†

The enthusiasm of Julian prompted him to embrace the friends of Jupiter as his personal friends and brethren; and though he partially overlooked the merit of Christian constancy, he admired and rewarded the noble perseverance of those Gentiles who had preferred the favour of the gods to that of the emperor.‡ If they cultivated the literature, as well as the religion, of the Greeks, they acquired an additional claim to the friendship of Julian, who ranked the muses in the number of his tutelar deities. In the religion which he had adopted, piety and learning were almost synonymous; § and a crowd of poets, of rhetoricians, and of philosophers, hastened to the imperial court, to occupy the vacant places of the bishops, who had seduced the credulity of Constantius. His successor esteemed the ties of common initiation as far more sacred than those of consanguinity; he chose his favourites among the sages, who were deeply skilled in the occult sciences of magic and divination, and every impostor, who pretended to reveal the secrets of futurity, was assured of enjoying the present hour in honour and affluence.¶ Among the philosophers, Maximus

duty not to complain, but to punish.

* Gregory Nazianzen is facetious, ingenious, and argumentative (Orat. 3, p. 101, 102, &c.) He ridicules the folly of such vain imitation, and amuses himself with inquiring, what lessons, moral or theological, could be extracted from the Grecian fables.

† He accuses one of his pontiffs of a secret confederacy with the Christian bishops and presbyters. (Epist. 62.)

‡ *Ὅρων ὄνν πολλὴν μὲν ὀλιγορίαν οὖσαν ἡμῖν πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς; and again, ἡμᾶς δὲ οὕτω ῥαθύμως, &c. (Epist. 63.)*

§ He praises the fidelity of Callixene, priestess of Ceres, who had been twice as constant as Penelope, and rewards her with the priesthood of the Phrygian goddess at Pessinus. (Julian. Epist. 21.) He applauds the firmness of Sopater of Hierapolis, who had been repeatedly pressed by Constantius and Gallus to *apostatize*. (Epist. 27, p. 401.)

¶ *Ὁ δὲ νομιζῶν ἀεὶ λῆρα λόγους τε καὶ θεῶν ἕρα.* Orat. Parent. c. 77, p. 302. The same sentiment is frequently inculcated by Julian, Libanius, and the rest of their party.

¶ The curiosity and

obtained the most eminent rank in the friendship of his royal disciple, who communicated with unreserved confidence, his actions, his sentiments, and his religious designs, during the anxious suspense of the civil war.* As soon as Julian had taken possession of the palace of Constantinople, he dispatched an honourable and pressing invitation to Maximus, who then resided at Sardis in Lydia, with Chrysanthius, the associate of his art and studies. The prudent and superstitious Chrysanthius refused to undertake a journey which showed itself, according to the rules of divination, with the most threatening and malignant aspect: but his companion, whose fanaticism was of a bolder cast, persisted in his interrogations, till he had extorted from the gods a seeming consent to his own wishes, and those of the emperor. The journey of Maximus through the cities of Asia displayed the triumph of philosophic vanity; and the magistrates vied with each other in the honourable reception which they prepared for the friend of their sovereign. Julian was pronouncing an oration before the senate, when he was informed of the arrival of Maximus. The emperor immediately interrupted his discourse, advanced to meet him, and, after a tender embrace, conducted him by the hand into the midst of the assembly, where he publicly acknowledged the benefits which he had derived from the instructions of the philosopher. Maximus,† who soon acquired the confidence, and influenced the councils, of Julian, was insensibly corrupted by the temptations of a court. His dress became more splendid, his demeanour more lofty, and he was exposed, under a succeeding reign, to a disgraceful inquiry into the means by which the disciple of Plato had accumulated, in the short duration of his favour, a very scandalous proportion of wealth. Of the other philosophers and sophists, who were invited to the imperial residence by the choice of Julian, or by the success of Maximus, few were able to preserve their innocence,

credulity of the emperor, who tried every mode of divination, are fairly exposed by Ammianus, 22, 12. * Julian. Epist. 38. Three

other epistles (15, 16, 39), in the same style of friendship and confidence, are addressed to the philosopher Maximus. † Eunapius

(in Maximo, p. 77—79, and in Chrysanthio, p. 147, 148,) has minutely related these anecdotes, which he conceives to be the most important events of the age. Yet he fairly confesses the frailty of Maximus. His reception at Constantinople is described by Libanius (Orat. Parent

or their reputation.* The liberal gifts of money, lands, and houses, were insufficient to satiate their rapacious avarice; and the indignation of the people was justly excited by the remembrance of their abject poverty and disinterested professions. The penetration of Julian could not always be deceived; but he was unwilling to despise the characters of those men whose talents deserved his esteem; he desired to escape the double reproach of imprudence and inconstancy; and he was apprehensive of degrading, in the eyes of the profane, the honour of letters and of religion.†

The favour of Julian was almost equally divided between the Pagans, who had firmly adhered to the worship of their ancestors, and the Christians who prudently embraced the religion of their sovereign. The acquisition of new proselytes‡ gratified the ruling passions of his soul, superstition and vanity; and he was heard to declare, with the enthusiasm of a missionary, that if he could render each individual richer than Midas, and every city greater than Babylon, he should not esteem himself the benefactor of mankind, unless, at the same time, he could reclaim his subjects from their impious revolt against the immortal gods.§ A prince who had studied human nature, and who possessed the treasures of the Roman empire, could adapt his arguments,

c. 86, p. 301), and Ammianus (22, 7.)

* Chrysanthius, who had refused to quit Lydia, was created high-priest of the province. His cautious and temperate use of power secured him after the revolution, and he lived in peace; while Maximus, Priscus, &c. were persecuted by the Christian ministers. See the adventures of those fanatic sophists, collected by Brucker, tom. ii, p. 281—293. [Chrysanthius attained the age of eighty years, and Oribasius was still living, A.D. 395. (Clinton, F. R. ii, 309, 311.)—ED.] † See Libanius (Orat. Parent. c. 101, 102, p. 324—326), and Eunapius. (Vit. Sophist. in Proeresio, p. 126.) Some students, whose expectations perhaps were groundless or extravagant, retired in disgust. (Greg. Naz. Orat. 4, p. 120.) It is strange that we should not be able to contradict the title of one of Tillemont's chapters (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, p. 960), "La Cour de Julien est pleine de philosophes et de gens perdus."

‡ Under the reign of Lewis XIV. his subjects of every rank aspired to the glorious title of *Convertisseur*, expressive of their zeal and success in making proselytes. The word and the idea are growing obsolete in France; may they never be introduced into England! [M. Schreiter, in his translation, renders the last word in this note by "*unserm Vaterlande*," so as to make the wish common to both England and Germany.—ED.]

§ See the strong expressions of Libanius, which were probably those of Julian himself. (Orat. Parent.

his promises, and his rewards, to every order of Christians;* and the merit of a seasonable conversion was allowed to supply the defects of a candidate, or even to expiate the guilt of a criminal. As the army is the most forcible engine of absolute power, Julian applied himself, with peculiar diligence, to corrupt the religion of his troops, without whose hearty concurrence every measure must be dangerous and unsuccessful; and the natural temper of soldiers made this conquest as easy as it was important. The legions of Gaul devoted themselves to the faith, as well as to the fortunes, of their victorious leader; and even before the death of Constantius, he had the satisfaction of announcing to his friends, that they assisted with fervent devotion, and voracious appetite, at the sacrifices, which were repeatedly offered in his camp, of whole hecatombs of fat oxen.† The armies of the east, which had been trained under the standard of the cross and of Constantius, required a more artful and expensive mode of persuasion. On the days of solemn and public festivals, the emperor received the homage, and rewarded the merit, of the troops. His throne of state was encircled with the military ensigns of Rome and the republic; the holy name of Christ was erased from the *Labarum*; and the symbols of war, of majesty, and of Pagan superstition, were so dexterously blended, that the faithful subject incurred the guilt of idolatry, when he respectfully saluted the person or image of his sovereign. The soldiers passed successively in review; and each of them, before he received from the hand of Julian a liberal donative, proportioned to his rank and services, was required to cast a few grains of incense into the flame which burnt upon the altar. Some Christian confessors might resist, and others might repent; but the far greater number, allured by the prospect of gold, and awed by the presence of the emperor, contracted the criminal engagement; and their future perseverance in the worship of the gods was enforced

c. 59, p. 285.) * When Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. 10, p. 167.) is desirous to magnify the Christian firmness of his brother Cæsarius, physician to the imperial court, he owns that Cæsarius disputed with a formidable adversary, πολλὸν ἐν ὀπλοῖς, καὶ μέγαν ἐν λόγων ἀειρότητι. In his invectives he scarcely allows any share of wit or courage to the apostate.

† Julian, Epist. 38. Ammianus, 22, 12. Adeo ut in jies pæne aavidulos milites carnis distentiore sagina victitantes incultius, potusque aviditate correpti, humeris impositi transeuntium per plateas,

by every consideration of duty and of interest. By the frequent repetition of these arts, and at the expense of sums which would have purchased the service of half the nations of Scythia, Julian gradually acquired for his troops the imaginary protection of the gods, and for himself the firm and effectual support of the Roman legions.* It is indeed more than probable, that the restoration and encouragement of Paganism revealed a multitude of pretended Christians, who, from motives of temporal advantage, had acquiesced in the religion of the former reign; and who afterwards returned, with the same flexibility of conscience, to the faith which was professed by the successors of Julian.

While the devout monarch incessantly laboured to restore and propagate the religion of his ancestors, he embraced the extraordinary design of rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem. In a public epistle † to the nation or community of the Jews, dispersed through the provinces, he pities their misfortunes, condemns their oppressors, praises their constancy, declares himself their gracious protector, and expresses a pious hope that, after his return from the Persian war, he may be permitted to pay his grateful vows to the Almighty in his holy city of Jerusalem. The blind superstition, and abject slavery, of those unfortunate exiles, must excite the contempt of a philosophic emperor, but they deserved the friendship of Julian by their implacable hatred of the Christian name. The barren synagogue abhorred and envied the fecundity of the rebellious church: the power of the Jews was not equal to their malice; but their gravest rabbis approved the private murder of an apostate, ‡ and their seditious clamours had often awakened the indo-

ex publicis ædibus . . . ad sua diversoria portarentur. The devout prince and the indignant historian describe the same scene; and in Illyricum or Antioch, similar causes must have produced similar effects.

* Gregory (Orat. 3, p. 74, 75. 83—86), and Libanius (Orat. Parent. c. 81, 82, p. 307, 308), *περι ταύτην τὴν σποῦδῆν, οὐκ ἀροῦμαι πλοῦτον ἀνηλώσθαι μέγα*. The sophist owns and justifies the expense of these military conversions.

† Julian's epistle (25) is addressed to the community of the Jews. Aldus (Venet. 1499) has branded it with an *ἐι γνήσιος*; but this stigma is justly removed by the subsequent editors, Petavius and Spanheim. This epistle is mentioned by Sozomen (lib. 5, c. 22), and the purport of it is confirmed by Gregory (Orat. 4, p. 111), and by Julian himself. (Fragment, p. 295.)

‡ The Misnah denounced death against those who abandoned the foundation. The judgment of zeal is explained by Marsham (Canon

lence of the Pagan magistrates. Under the reign of Constantine, the Jews became the subjects of their revolted children, nor was it long before they experienced the bitterness of domestic tyranny. The civil immunities which had been granted, or confirmed by Severus, were gradually repealed by the Christian princes; and a rash tumult excited by the Jews of Palestine,* seemed to justify the lucrative modes of oppression which were invented by the bishops and eunuchs of the court of Constantius. The Jewish patriarch, who was still permitted to exercise a precarious jurisdiction, held his residence at Tiberias;† and the neighbouring cities of Palestine were filled with the remains of a people who fondly adhered to the promised land. But the edict of Hadrian was renewed and enforced, and they viewed from afar the walls of the holy city, which were profaned in their eyes by the triumph of the cross, and the devotion of the Christians.‡

In the midst of a rocky and barren country, the walls of Jerusalem§ enclosed the two mountains of Sion and Acra, within an oval figure of about three English miles.¶ Towards the south, the upper town, and the fortress of David, were erected on the lofty ascent of mount Sion: on the north side, the buildings of the lower town covered the

Chron. p. 161, 162, edit. fol. London, 1672), and Basnage (Hist. des Juifs, tom. viii, p. 120). Constantine made a law to protect Christian converts from Judaism. Cod. Theod. lib. 16, tit. 8, leg. 1. Godefroy, tom. vi, p. 215. * Et interea (during the civil war of Magnentius)

Judæorum seditio, qui Patricium nefarie in regni speciem sustulerunt, oppressa. Aurelius Victor, in Constantio, c. 42. See Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, p. 379, in 4to. [Diocæsarea was the scene of this tumult, and its suppression was the only feat of arms performed by Julian's brother, Gallus, during his short reign as Cæsar. Socrat. H. E. 2, 33.—Ed.] † The city and synagogue of Tiberias are curiously described by Reland. Palestin. tom. ii, p. 1036—1042. ‡ Basnage has fully illustrated the state of the Jews under Constantine and his successors (tom. viii, c. 4, p. 111—153).

§ Reland (Palestin. lib. 1, p. 309. 390; lib. 3, p. 838,) describes with learning and perspicuity, Jerusalem, and the face of the adjacent country. ¶ I have consulted a rare and curious treatise of

M. D'Auville (sur l'Ancienne Jerusalem, Paris, 1747, p. 75). The circumference of the ancient city (Euseb. Preparat. Evangel. lib. 9, c. 36,) was twenty-seven stadia, or two thousand five hundred and fifty *toises*. A plan, taken on the spot, assigns no more than one thousand nine hundred and eighty for the modern town. The circuit is defined by natural land-marks, which cannot be mistaken or removed.

spacious summit of mount Acra; and a part of the hill, distinguished by the name of Moriah, and levelled by human industry, was crowned with the stately temple of the Jewish nation. After the final destruction of the temple by the arms of Titus and Hadrian, a ploughshare was drawn over the consecrated ground, as a sign of perpetual interdiction. Sion was deserted; and the vacant space of the lower city was filled with the public and private edifices of the Ælian colony, which spread themselves over the adjacent hill of Calvary. The holy places were polluted with monuments of idolatry; and either from design or accident, a chapel was dedicated to Venus, on the spot which had been sanctified by the death and resurrection of Christ.* Almost three hundred years after those stupendous events, the profane chapel of Venus was demolished by the order of Constantine; and the removal of the earth and stones revealed the holy sepulchre to the eyes of mankind. A magnificent church was erected on that mystic ground, by the first Christian emperor: and the effects of his pious munificence were extended to every spot which had been consecrated by the footsteps of patriarchs, of prophets, and of the Son of God.†

The passionate desire of contemplating the original monuments of their redemption, attracted to Jerusalem a successive crowd of pilgrims, from the shores of the Atlantic ocean, and the most distant countries of the east,‡ and their piety was authorized by the example of the empress Helena, who appears to have united the credulity of age with the warm feelings of a recent conversion. Sages and heroes, who have visited the memorable scenes of ancient wisdom or

* See two curious passages in Jerome (tom. i, p. 102; tom. vi, p. 315), and the ample details of Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. i, p. 569; tom. ii, p. 289, 294, 4to. edition). † Eusebius, in Vit. Constantin. lib. 3, c. 25—47. 51—53. The emperor likewise built churches at Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives, and the Oak of Mambre.

The holy sepulchre is described by Sandys (Travels, p. 125—133), and curiously delineated by Le Bruyn (Voyage au Levant, p. 288—296). [Dr. Clarke and his companion seem to be the only pilgrims who have beheld the true sepulchre. (See his Travels, vol. ii, p. 57, 59.) But prejudices, too inveterate and profitable, quashed the discovery.—ED.]

‡ The itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem was composed in the year 333, for the use of pilgrims; among whom Jerome (tom. i, p. 126.) mentions the Britons and the Indians. The causes of this superstitious fashion are discussed in the learned and judicious preface

glory, have confessed the inspiration of the genius of the place;* and the Christian, who knelt before the holy sepulchre, ascribed his lively faith, and his fervent devotion, to the more immediate influence of the divine Spirit. The zeal, perhaps the avarice, of the clergy of Jerusalem, cherished and multiplied these beneficial visits. They fixed, by unquestionable tradition, the scene of each memorable event. They exhibited the instruments which had been used in the passion of Christ; the nails and the lance that had pierced his hands, his feet, and his side; the crown of thorns that was planted on his head; the pillar at which he was scourged; and, above all, they showed the cross on which he suffered, and which was dug out of the earth in the reign of those princes who inserted the symbol of Christianity in the banners of the Roman legions.† Such miracles, as seemed necessary to account for its extraordinary preservation, and seasonable discovery, were gradually propagated without opposition. The custody of the *true cross*, which on Easter Sunday was solemnly exposed to the people, was intrusted to the bishop of Jerusalem: and he alone might gratify the curious devotion of the pilgrims, by the gift of small pieces, which they enchased in gold or gems, and carried away in triumph to their respective countries. But as this gainful branch of commerce must soon have been annihilated, it was found convenient to suppose that the marvellous wood possessed a secret power of vegetation; and that its substance, though continually diminished, still remained entire and unimpaired.‡ It might perhaps have been expected that the influence of the place, and the belief of a perpetual miracle, should have produced some salutary effects on the

of Wesseling. (Itinerar. p. 537—545.)

* Cicero (de Finibus, 5. 1.) has beautifully expressed the common sense of mankind. [Dr. Johnson, in his tour to the Hebrides, echoes the same sentiment amid the ruins of Iona.—ED.]

† Baronius (Annal. Eccles. A.D. 326, No. 42—50), and Tillemont (Mém. Eccles. tom. vii, p. 8—16), are the historians and champions of this miraculous *invention* of the cross, under the reign of Constantine. Their oldest witnesses are Paulinus, Sulpicius Severus, Rufinus, Ambrose, and perhaps Cyril of Jerusalem. The silence of Eusebius, and the Bordeaux pilgrim, which satisfies those who think, perplexes those who believe. See Jortin's sensible remarks, vol. ii, p. 238—248.

‡ This multiplication is asserted by Paulinus (Epist. 37. See Dupin. Bibliot. Eccles. tom. iii, p. 149), who seems to have improved a rhetorical flourish of Cyril into a real fact. The same supernatural

morals, as well as on the faith of the people. Yet the most respectable of the ecclesiastical writers have been obliged to confess, not only that the streets of Jerusalem were filled with the incessant tumult of business and pleasure,* but that every species of vice, adultery, theft, idolatry, poisoning, murder, was familiar to the inhabitants of the holy city.† The wealth and pre-eminence of the church of Jerusalem excited the ambition of Arian, as well as orthodox candidates; and the virtues of Cyril, who, since his death, has been honoured with the title of saint, were displayed in the exercise, rather than in the acquisition, of his episcopal dignity.‡

The vain and ambitious mind of Julian might aspire to restore the ancient glory of the temple of Jerusalem.§ As the Christians were firmly persuaded that a sentence of everlasting destruction had been pronounced against the whole fabric of the Mosaic law, the imperial sophist would have converted the success of his undertaking into a specious argument against the faith of prophecy, and the truth of revelation.¶ He was displeased with the spiritual worship

privilege must have been communicated to the Virgin's milk (Erasmii Opera, tom. i, p. 778, Lugd. Batav. 1703, in Colloq. de Peregrinat. Religionis ergo), saints' heads, &c. and other relics, which were repeated in so many different churches.

* Jerome (tom. i, p. 103), who resided in the neighbouring village of Bethlehem, describes the vices of Jerusalem from his personal experience. † Gregor. Nyssen, apud Wesseling, p. 539. The whole epistle, which condemns either the use or the abuse of religious pilgrimage, is painful to the Catholic divines, while it is dear and familiar to our Protestant polemics.

‡ He renounced his orthodox ordination, officiated as a deacon, and was re-ordained by the hands of the Arians. But Cyril afterwards changed with the times, and prudently conformed to the Nicene faith. Tillemont, (Mém. Eccles. tom. viii,) who treats his memory with tenderness and respect, has thrown his virtues into the text, and his faults into the notes, in decent obscurity, at the end of the volume. [Cyril's changes are recorded by Jerome. (Chron. anno 2364.) He was first elected A.D. 348 (then an Arian), under Constantius; thrice deposed, and as often restored. The date of his last re-installation is 381, the third year of Theodosius, the orthodox; from which time he retained his position till his death in 388. The last dates are Clinton's. (F. R. 2, 536.) Ed.] § Imperii sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare. Ammian. 23, 1. The temple of Jerusalem had been famous even among the Gentiles. They had many temples in each city (at Sichem five, at Gaza eight, at Rome four hundred and twenty-four); but the wealth and religion of the Jewish nation were centred in one spot.

¶ The secret intentions of Julian are revealed by the late bishop of Gloucester, the learned and dogmatic Warburton; who, with the

of the synagogue; but he approved the institutions of Moses, who had not disdained to adopt many of the rites and ceremonies of Egypt.* The local and national deity of the Jews was sincerely adored by a Polytheist, who desired only to multiply the number of the gods:† and such was the appetite of Julian for bloody sacrifice, that his emulation might be excited by the piety of Solomon, who had offered, at the feast of the dedication, twenty-two thousand oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep.‡ These considerations might influence his designs; but the prospect of an immediate and important advantage would not suffer the impatient monarch to expect the remote and uncertain event of the Persian war. He resolved to erect, without delay, on the commanding eminence of Moriah, a stately temple, which might eclipse the splendour of the church of the Resurrection on the adjacent hill of Calvary; to establish an order of priests, whose interested zeal would detect the arts, and resist the ambition, of their Christian rivals; and to invite a numerous colony of Jews, whose stern fanaticism would be always prepared to second, and even to anticipate, the hostile measures of the Pagan government. Among the friends of the emperor (if the names of emperor and of friend are not incompatible), the first place was assigned by Julian himself, to the virtuous and learned Alypius.§ The humanity of Alypius was tempered by severe justice, and manly fortitude; and while he exercised his abilities in the civil administration of Britain, he imitated, in his poetical compositions, the harmony and softness of the odes of Sappho. This minister, to whom

authority of a theologian, prescribes the motives and conduct of the Supreme Being. The discourse entitled *Julian* (2d edit. London, 1751,) is strongly marked with all the peculiarities which are imputed to the Warburtonian school. * I shelter myself behind Maimonides, Marsham, Spencer, Le Clerc, Warburton, &c. who have fairly derided the fears, the folly, and the falsehood, of some superstitious divines. See *Divine Legation*, vol. iv, p. 25, &c. † Julian (Fragment, p. 295,) respectfully styles him *μέγας θεός*, and mentions him elsewhere (epist. 63) with still higher reverence. He doubly condemns the Christians; for believing and for renouncing the religion of the Jews. Their Deity was a *true*, but not the *only* God. Apud Cyril. l. 9, p. 305, 306.

‡ 1 Kings, viii. 63. 2 Chronicles, vii. 5. Josephi *Antiquitat. Judaic.* l. 8, c. 4, p. 431, edit. Havercamp. As the blood and smoke of so many hecatombs might be inconvenient, Lightfoot, the Christian rabbi, removes them by a miracle. Le Clerc (ad loca) is bold enough to suspect the fidelity of the numbers. § Julian, Epist. 29, 30. La Bletterie

Julian communicated, without reserve, his most careless levities, and his most serious counsels, received an extraordinary commission to restore, in its pristine beauty, the temple of Jerusalem; and the diligence of Alypius required and obtained the strenuous support of the governor of Palestine. At the call of their great deliverer, the Jews, from all the provinces of the empire, assembled on the holy mountain of their fathers; and their insolent triumph alarmed and exasperated the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem. The desire of rebuilding the temple, has, in every age, been the ruling passion of the children of Israel. In this propitious moment the men forgot their avarice, and the women their delicacy; spades and pickaxes of silver were provided by the vanity of the rich, and the rubbish was transported in mantles of silk and purple. Every purse was opened in liberal contributions, every hand claimed a share in the pious labour; and the commands of a great monarch were executed by the enthusiasm of a whole people.*

Yet, on this occasion, the joint efforts of power and enthusiasm were unsuccessful; and the ground of the Jewish temple, which is now covered by a Mahometan mosque,† still continued to exhibit the same edifying spectacle of ruin and desolation. Perhaps the absence and death of the emperor, and the new maxims of a Christian reign, might explain the interruption of an arduous work, which was attempted only in the last six months of the life of Julian.‡ But the Christians entertained a natural and pious expectation, that, in this memorable contest, the honour of religion would be vindicated by some signal miracle. An earthquake, a whirlwind, and a fiery irruption, which overturned and scattered the new foundations of the temple, are attested, with some variations, by contemporary

has neglected to translate the second of these epistles * See the zeal and impatience of the Jews in Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. 4, p. 111,) and Theodoret (l. 3, c. 20).

† Built by Omar, the second caliph, who died A.D. 644. This great mosque covers the whole consecrated ground of the Jewish temple, and constitutes almost a square of seven hundred and sixty *toises*, or one Roman mile in circumference. See D'Anville Jerusalem, p. 45. ‡ Ammianus records the consults of the year 363, before he proceeds to mention the *thoughts* of Julian. *Templum . . . instaurare sumptibus cogitabat immodicis.* Warburton has a secret wish to anticipate the design: but he must have understood from former examples, that the execution of such a work would have

and respectable evidence.* This public event is described by Ambrose,† bishop of Milan, in an epistle to the emperor Theodosius, which must provoke the severe animadversion of the Jews; by the eloquent Chrysostom,‡ who might appeal to the memory of the elder part of his congregation at Antioch; and by Gregory Nazianzen,§ who published his account of the miracle before the expiration of the same year. The last of these writers has boldly declared, that this preternatural event was not disputed by the infidels; and his assertion, strange as it may seem, is confirmed by the unexceptionable testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus.¶

demanding many years. * The subsequent witnesses, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Philostorgius, &c. add contradictions, rather than authority. Compare the objections of Basnage (Hist. des Juifs, tom. viii, p. 157—168,) with Warburton's answers. (Julian, p. 174—258.) The bishop has ingeniously explained the miraculous crosses which appeared on the garments of the spectators by a similar instance, and the natural effects of lightning. † Ambros. tom. ii, epist. 40, p. 946, edit. Benedictin. He composed this fanatic epistle (A.D. 388,) to justify a bishop, who had been condemned by the civil magistrates for burning a synagogue.

‡ Chrysostom, tom. i, p. 580, advers. Judæos et Gentes. tom. ii. p. 574. de St^o Babylâ. edit. Montfaucon. I have followed the common and natural supposition; but the learned Benedictine, who dates the composition of these sermons in the year 383, is confident they were never pronounced from the pulpit.

§ Greg. Nazianzen, Orat. 4, p. 110—113. Τὸ δὲ οὖν περιβόητον πᾶσι θαῦμα, καὶ οὐδὲ τοῖς ἀθέοις αὐτοῖς ἀπιστοῦμενον λέξων ἐροῦμαι.

¶ Ammian. 23, 1. Cum itaque rei fortiter instaret Alypius, juvenetque provinciæ rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum; hocque modo elemento destinatus repellente, cessavit inceptum. Warburton labours (p. 60—90) to extort a confession of the miracle from the mouths of Julian and Libanius, and to employ the evidence of a rabbi, who lived in the fifteenth century. Such witnesses can only be received by a very favourable judge. [Michaelis has furnished a clever, and at the same time probable, explanation of an event, which, however strange, can scarcely be doubted, after the positive testimony given to it by Ammianus, a contemporary and a Pagan. It is founded on a passage in Tacitus, where Jerusalem is thus described: "Its elevated situation was strengthened by works, which would have fortified a plain. Two very lofty hills were inclosed by a wall, the inward curvatures of which left external projections, that commanded the flanks of assailing besiegers. The temple itself was rendered a citadel by its own walls, constructed with still greater labour and skill, and the very portico, which surrounded it, was a strong bulwark. It had within it a spring of ever flowing water, and deep excavations under the mountains with tanks and reservoirs, to collect and preserve that, which was supplied by rain." These subterranean vaults and cisterns must have been of great extent. During

The philosophic soldier, who loved the virtues, without adopting the prejudices, of his master, has recorded, in his judicious and candid history of his own times, the extraordinary obstacles which interrupted the restoration of the

the whole siege of Jerusalem, from April to August, a season in which no rain falls in that country, they supplied water for its eleven hundred thousand inhabitants, to whose wants the fountain of Siloah was an inadequate stream. Even before the Babylonian captivity, as well as after the return of the Jews, these excavations served not only for their magazines of oil, wine and corn, but also as safe receptacles for the treasures of the temple. Many incidents, related by Josephus, prove their extent. When it was evident that Jerusalem could no longer hold out against Titus, the rebel chieftains placed their last hope on these subterranean retreats (*ὑπονόμους, ὑπογαῖα, κρύφους*) and resolved to conceal themselves there, till the departure of the Romans, after the destruction of the city. The greater part of them had not time to execute their scheme; but one among them, Simon, the son of Gioras, taking with him a supply of provisions and tools for mining the rock, found a refuge in that asylum for himself and some of his comrades. He continued there, till Titus had returned to Rome. Then, compelled by hunger, he suddenly came forth, on the spot, where the temple had stood and in the midst of the Roman guards. He was seized and conveyed to Rome in triumph. From his having made his appearance, it was suspected, that there were others in the same place of concealment, and on exploring its depths many more were discovered. (Josephus De Bell. Jud. l. 7, c. 2.) It is probable, that most of these excavations were made in the time of Solomon, when such underground workings were common; any other date can scarcely be assigned to them. When the Jews returned from exile they were too poor to engage in such undertakings; and though Herod, when he rebuilt the temple, ordered some, it is impossible that they could all be dug out in the short time allowed for completing the operation. (Josephus Ant. Jud. 15. 2. 7.) Some were sewers and drains; in others were concealed the immense treasures, which Crassus plundered 120 years before the Jewish war, and which were, no doubt, afterwards replaced. The temple was destroyed in the year 70 of our æra. Julian's attempt to restore it, and the fact recorded by Ammianus, occurred in 363. Nearly three hundred years had intervened, during which these vaults, closed up by rubbish, must have been filled with inflammable air. It is now a well known fact, that, when any subterranean cavities which have been long shut up are re-opened, either the torches taken into them are extinguished and the bearers at first are seized with fainting fits and then soon expire; or, if the air be inflammable, first a small blaze flickers round the lamp, then it spreads and increases, till it fills the whole space and an explosion follows, fatal to all within its reach. As the workmen, employed by Julian, cleared away the ruins, they disclosed these passages beneath the fallen temple. Endeavouring to penetrate into them by torch-light, sudden flames drove them back, explosions were heard and at every renewed attempt to enter, the phenomena were repeated. Another nearly similar event is related by Josephus, which corroborates this

temple of Jerusalem. "Whilst Alypius, assisted by the governor of the province, urged, with vigour and diligence, the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place from time to time, inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element continuing in this manner obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned." Such authority should satisfy a believing, and must astonish an incredulous, mind. Yet a philosopher may still require the original evidence of impartial and intelligent spectators. At this important crisis, any singular accident of nature would assume the appearance, and produce the effects, of a real prodigy. This glorious deliverance would be speedily improved and magnified by the pious art of the clergy of Jerusalem, and the active credulity of the Christian world; and, at the distance of twenty years, a Roman historian, careless of theological disputes, might adorn his work with the specious and splendid miracle.*

solution of the mystery. King Herod, having heard, that a great treasure was buried in the tomb of David, went down into it, one night, with a few attendants, in whom he could confide. In the outer vault he found some jewels and robes; but when he attempted to penetrate into an inner chamber, which for a long time had been unopened, they were repelled by flames, which killed two of those who were with him. (Ant. Jud. 16. 7. 1.) As no miracle can be alleged here, this fact may be considered to prove the truth of what is narrated by Ammianus Marcellinus and other contemporary writers.—GUIZOT.] [In his translation of this note, Dean Milman condemns M. Guizot's "extraordinary translation of *muri introrsus sinuati* by *enfoucemens*." The reverend editor seems however to have misunderstood his predecessor, who did not then use the French word, in the sense of *hollowings* or *excavations*, but in that of *inward bendings* or *indentations*; and it must be taken in conjunction with its companion "*saillies*;" then "walls full of salient points and inward bendings," is perhaps the best translation of the Latin phrase, which the French language could afford. M. Guizot has done good service, by bringing to bear, on a strange and misunderstood event, information, not possessed in Gibbon's time. It should teach us, in all such cases, a double lesson of tolerant forbearance, as well for the sceptical who deny, as for the credulous who mistake. Bishop Warburton, too devoutly believed that no future age could be better informed than his own; and piously denounced every one as "an unbeliever," who did not admit, that when the nature and causes of an occurrence are unknown to them, "it is absurd and a wretched evasion, to suppose it a natural event." (Warburton's Julian, pp. 277. 284.)—ED.]

* Dr. Lardner, perhaps alone of the Christian critics, presumes to

The restoration of the Jewish temple was secretly connected with the ruin of the Christian church. Julian still continued to maintain the freedom of religious worship, without distinguishing, whether this universal toleration proceeded from his justice or his clemency. He affected to pity the unhappy Christians, who were mistaken in the most important object of their lives; but his pity was degraded by contempt, his contempt was imbittered by hatred; and the sentiments of Julian were expressed in a style of sarcastic wit, which inflicts a deep and deadly wound, whenever it issues from the mouth of a sovereign. As he was sensible that the Christians gloried in the name of their Redeemer, he countenanced, and perhaps enjoined, the use of the less honourable appellation of GALILEANS.* He declared, that by the folly of the Galileans, whom he describes as a sect of fanatics, contemptible to men, and odious to the gods, the empire had been reduced to the brink of destruction; and he insinuates in a public edict, that a frantic patient might sometimes be cured by salutary violence.† An ungenerous distinction was admitted into the mind and counsels of Julian, that, according to the difference of their religious sentiments, one part of his subjects deserved his favour and friendship, while the other was entitled only to the common benefits that his justice could not refuse to an obedient people.‡ According to a principle, pregnant with mischief and oppression, the emperor transferred, to the pontiffs of his own religion, the management of the liberal allowances from the public

doubt the truth of this famous miracle. (Jewish and heathen Testimonies, vol. iv, p. 47—71.) The silence of Jerome would lead to a suspicion, that the same story which was celebrated at a distance, might be despised on the spot. * Greg. Naz. Orat. 3, p. 81. And this law was confirmed by the invariable practice of Julian himself. Warburton has justly observed, (p. 35) that the Platonists believed in the mysterious virtue of words; and Julian's dislike for the name of Christ might proceed from superstition, as well as from contempt.

† Fragment. Julian. p. 288. He derides the *μορία Γαλιλαίων*, (epist. 7,) and so far loses sight of the principles of toleration, as to wish, (epist. 42.) *ἄκοντας ἰᾶσθαι*.

‡ *Ὁὐ γάρ μοι θέμις ἐστὶ κομιζέμεν ἢ ἐλεαίρειν
Ἄνερα, οἳ κε θεοῖσιν ἀπέχθωντ' ἀθανάτοισιν.*

These two lines, which Julian has changed and perverted in the true spirit of a bigot, (epist. 49,) are taken from the speech of Æolus, when he refuses to grant Ulysses a fresh supply of winds. (Odyss. 10. 73.) Libanius (Orat. Parent. c. 59, p. 286,) attempts to justify this partial

revenue, which had been granted to the church by the piety of Constantine and his sons. The proud system of clerical honours and immunities, which had been constructed with so much art and labour, was levelled to the ground; the hopes of testamentary donations were intercepted by the rigour of the laws; and the priests of the Christian sect were confounded with the last and most ignominious class of the people. Such of these regulations as appeared necessary to check the ambition and avarice of the ecclesiastics, were soon afterwards imitated by the wisdom of an orthodox prince. The peculiar distinctions which policy has bestowed, or superstition has lavished, on the sacerdotal order, *must* be confined to those priests who profess the religion of the state. But the will of the legislator was not exempt from prejudice and passion; and it was the object of the insidious policy of Julian, to deprive the Christians of all the temporal honours and advantages which rendered them respectable in the eyes of the world.*

A just and severe censure has been inflicted on the law which prohibited the Christians from teaching the arts of grammar and rhetoric.† The motives alleged by the emperor to justify this partial and oppressive measure might command, during his lifetime, the silence of slaves and the applause of flatterers. Julian abuses the ambiguous meaning of a word which might be indifferently applied to the language and the religion of the GREEKS: he contemptuously observes, that the men who exalt the merit of implicit faith are unfit to claim or to enjoy the advantages of science; and he vainly contends, that if they refuse to adore the gods of Homer and Demosthenes, they ought to content themselves with expounding Luke and Matthew in the churches of the Galileans.‡ In all the cities of the Roman world, the education of the youth was intrusted to masters of

behaviour, by an apology, in which persecution peeps through the mask of candour. * These laws, which affected the clergy, may be found in the slight hints of Julian himself, (epist 52) in the vague declamations of Gregory, (Orat. 3, p. 86, 7,) and in the positive assertions of Sozomen (l. 5, c. 5). † In clemens . . . perenni obruendum silentio. Ammian. 22, 10. 25, 5. ‡ The edict itself, which is still extant among the epistles of Julian, (42) may be compared with the loose invectives of Gregory. (Orat. 3, p. 96.) Tillemont (Mém. Eccles. tom. vii, p. 1291—1294,) has collected the seeming differences of ancients and moderns. They may be easily reconciled. The Christians were

grammar and rhetoric; who were elected by the magistrates, maintained at the public expense, and distinguished by many lucrative and honourable privileges. The edict of Julian appears to have included the physicians, and professors of all the liberal arts; and the emperor, who reserved to himself the approbation of the candidates, was authorized by the laws to corrupt, or to punish, the religious constancy of the most learned of the Christians.* As soon as the resignation of the more obstinate† teachers had established the unrivalled dominion of the Pagan sophists, Julian invited the rising generation to resort with freedom to the public schools, in a just confidence, that their tender minds would receive the impressions of literature and idolatry. If the greatest part of the Christian youth should be deterred by their own scruples, or by those of their parents, from accepting this dangerous mode of instruction, they must, at the same time, relinquish the benefits of a liberal education. Julian had reason to expect that, in the space of a few years, the church would relapse into its primæval simplicity, and that the theologians, who possessed an adequate share of the learning and eloquence of the age, would be succeeded by a generation of blind and ignorant fanatics, incapable of defending the truth of their own principles, or of exposing the various follies of Polytheism.‡

directly forbidden to teach, they were *indirectly* forbidden to learn; since they would not frequent the schools of the Pagans. * Cod. Theod. l. 13, tit. 3, de medicis et professoribus, leg. 5. (published the 17th of June, received at Spoleto in Italy, the 29th of July, A.D. 363,) with Godefroy's Illustrations, tom. v,— p. 31. † Orosius celebrates their disinterested resolution, Sicut a majoribus nostris compertum habemus omnes ubique propemodum . . . officium quam fidem deserere maluerunt, 7. 30. Proeresius, a Christian sophist, refused to accept the partial favour of the emperor. Hieronym. in Chron. p. 185. edit. Scaliger. Eunapius in Proeresio, p. 126. ‡ They had recourse to the expedient of composing books for their own schools. Within a few months Apollinaris produced his Christian Imitations of Homer (a sacred history in twenty-four books), Pindar, Euripides, and Menander; and Sozomen is satisfied, that they equalled or excelled the originals. [It is now a useless question to argue, but it is a fair, and might be a pleasing subject to speculate upon, what would have been the effect of Julian's measures on Christianity, had his life been prolonged? By depressing the hierarchy, which was his first object, he would have raised the laity. The usurped power and insolent dictation of the former would have been overthrown; but the latter would have been emancipated from the stern control, beneath which their energies were sinking into torpor and decay. The revival of

It was undoubtedly the wish and the design of Julian to deprive the Christians of the advantages of wealth, of knowledge, and of power; but the injustice of excluding them from all offices of trust and profit seems to have been the result of his general policy, rather than the immediate consequence of any positive law.* Superior merit might deserve, and obtain, some extraordinary exceptions; but the greater part of the Christian officers were gradually removed from their employments in the state, the army, and the provinces. The hopes of future candidates were extinguished by the declared partiality of a prince, who maliciously reminded them that it was unlawful for a Christian to use the sword, either of justice, or of war; and who studiously guarded the camp and the tribunals with the ensigns of idolatry. The powers of government were intrusted to the Pagans, who professed an ardent zeal for the religion of their ancestors; and as the choice of the emperor was often directed by the rules of divination, the favourites whom he preferred as the most agreeable to the gods, did not always obtain the approbation of mankind.† Under the administration of their enemies, the Christians had much to suffer, and more to apprehend. The temper of Julian was averse to cruelty; and the care of his reputation, which was exposed to the eyes of the universe, restrained the philosophic monarch from violating the laws of justice and toleration, which he himself had so recently established. But the provincial ministers of his authority were placed in a less conspicuous station. In the exercise of arbitrary power, they consulted the wishes rather than the commands of their sovereign;

Paganism was hopeless and impossible. Its "various follies" had been exposed, not by the learned theologians and fierce polemics of that age, but by the growing intelligence, which after seven centuries of free discussion, was then intimidated by the worst tyranny to which man has ever been subjected. Had Julian dethroned this, and had Christianity "relapsed into its primeval simplicity," we should probably, instead of "a generation of blind and ignorant fanatics," as anticipated by Gibbon, have witnessed a more rational religion; and its milder teachers might have prevented the barbarism and ignorance of succeeding centuries.—ED.] * It was the instruction of Julian to his magistrates (epist. 7,) *προτιμᾶσθαι μίλλον τοὺς θεοσεβεῖς καὶ πάνυ φημι εἶναι*. Sozomen (l. 5, c. 18,) and Socrates (l. 3, c. 13,) must be reduced to the standard of Gregory, (Orat. 3, p. 95) not less prone to exaggeration, but more restrained by the actual knowledge of his contemporary readers. † *Ψηφῶν θεῶν καὶ δίδουσι καὶ μὴ εἰδούσι*. Libanius Orat. Parent. c. 88 p. 314.

and ventured to exercise a secret and vexatious tyranny against the sectaries, on whom they were not permitted to confer the honours of martyrdom. The emperor, who dissembled, as long as possible his knowledge of the injustice that was exercised in his name, expressed his real sense of the conduct of his officers, by gentle reproofs and substantial rewards.*

The most effectual instrument of oppression, with which they were armed, was the law that obliged the Christians to make full and ample satisfaction for the temples which they had destroyed under the preceding reign. The zeal of the triumphant church had not always expected the sanction of the public authority; and the bishops, who were secure of impunity, had often marched, at the head of their congregations, to attack and demolish the fortresses of the prince of darkness. The consecrated lands, which had increased the patrimony of the sovereign or of the clergy, were clearly defined and easily restored. But on these lands, and on the ruins of Pagan superstition, the Christians had frequently erected their own religious edifices; and as it was necessary to remove the church before the temple could be rebuilt, the justice and piety of the emperor were applauded by one party, while the other deplored and execrated his sacrilegious violence.† After the ground was cleared, the restitution of those stately structures, which had been levelled with the dust; and of the precious ornaments, which had been converted to Christian uses; swelled into a very large account of damages and debt. The authors of the injury had neither the ability nor the inclination to discharge this accumulated demand; and the impartial wisdom of a legislator would have been displayed in balancing the adverse claims and complaints, by an equitable and temperate arbitration. But the whole empire, and particularly the east, was thrown into confusion by the rash edicts of Julian; and the Pagan magistrates, inflamed by zeal and revenge, abused the rigorous privilege of the Roman law, which substitutes in the place of his inadequate

* Greg. Naz. Orat. 3, p. 74. 91, 92. Socrates, l. 3, c. 14. Theodoret. l. 3, c. 6. Some drawback may, however, be allowed for the violence of *their* zeal, not less partial than the zeal of Julian, † If we compare the gentle language of Libanius (Orat. Parent. c. 60, p. 286.) with the passionate exclamations of Gregory, (Orat. 3, p. 86, 87,) we may find

property, the person of the insolvent debtor. Under the preceding reign, Mark, bishop of Arethusa,* had laboured in the conversion of his people with arms more effectual than those of persuasion.† The magistrates required the full value of a temple which had been destroyed by his intolerant zeal; but as they were satisfied of his poverty, they desired only to bend his inflexible spirit to the promise of the slightest compensation. They apprehended the aged prelate, they inhumanly scourged him, they tore his beard; and his naked body, anointed with honey, was suspended, in a net, between heaven and earth, and exposed to the stings of the insects and the rays of a Syrian sun.‡ From this lofty station, Mark still persisted to glory in his crime, and to insult the impotent rage of his persecutors. He was at length rescued from their hands, and dismissed to enjoy the honour of his divine triumph. The Arians celebrated the virtue of their pious confessor; the Catholics ambitiously claimed his alliance;§ and the Pagans, who might be susceptible of shame or remorse, were deterred from the repetition of such unavailing cruelty.¶ Julian spared his life; but if the bishop of Arethusa had saved the infancy of

it difficult to persuade ourselves that the two orators are really describing the same events.

* Restan, or Arethusa, at the equal distance of sixteen miles between Emesa (*Hems*) and Epiphania (*Hamath*), was founded, or at least named, by Seleucus Nicator. Its peculiar era dates from the year of Rome 685, according to the medals of the city. In the decline of the Seleucides, Emesa and Arethusa were usurped by the Arab Sampsiceramus, whose posterity, the vassals of Rome, were not extinguished in the reign of Vespasian. See D'Anville's Maps and *Geographie Ancienne*, tom. ii, p. 134. Wesseling, *Itinerarium*, p. 188, and *Noris*. Epoch. Syro-Macedon. p. 80. 481, 482. † Sozomen, l. 5, c. 10. It is surprising, that Gregory and Theodoret should suppress a circumstance which, in their eyes, must have enhanced the religious merit of the confessor.

‡ The sufferings and constancy of Mark, which Gregory has so tragically painted, (*Orat.* 3. p. 88—91,) are confirmed by the unexceptionable and reluctant evidence of Libanius. *Μάρκος ἐκεῖνος κρεμάνμενος, καὶ μαστιγούμενος, καὶ τοῦ πώγωνος αὐτῷ τιλλομένου, πάντα ἐνεγκῶν ἀνδρείως νῦν ἰσόθεος ἔστι ταῖς τιμαῖς, κἀν φανῇ σου, περιμάχητος εὐθὺς.* *Epist.* 730, p. 350, 351, edit. Wolf. Amstel. 1738.

§ *Περιμάχητος*, certatim eum sibi (Christiani) vindicant. It is thus that La Croze and Wolfius (ad loc.) have explained a Greek word, whose true signification had been mistaken by former interpreters, and even by Le Clerc (*Bibliothèque Ancienne et Moderne*, tom. iii, p. 371.) Yet Tillemont is strangely puzzled to understand (*Mém. Eccles.* tom. vii, p. 1309,) how Gregory and Theodoret could mistake a Semi-Arian bishop for a saint.

¶ See the probable advice

Julian,* posterity will condemn the ingratitude, instead of praising the clemency, of the emperor.

At the distance of five miles from Antioch, the Macedonian kings of Syria had consecrated to Apollo one of the most elegant places of devotion in the Pagan world.† A magnificent temple rose in honour of the god of light; and his colossal figure‡ almost filled the capacious sanctuary, which was enriched with gold and gems, and adorned by the skill of the Grecian artists. The deity was represented in a bending attitude, with a golden cup in his hand, pouring out a libation on the earth; as if he supplicated the venerable mother to give to his arms the cold and beautiful DAPHNE: for the spot was ennobled by fiction; and the fancy of the Syrian poets had transported the amorous tale from the banks of the Peneus to those of the Orontes. The ancient rites of Greece were imitated by the royal colony of Antioch. A stream of prophecy, which rivalled the truth and reputation of the Delphic oracle, flowed from the *Castalian* fountain of Daphne.§ In the adjacent fields a stadium was built by a special privilege,¶ which had been purchased

of Sallust. (Greg. Nazianzen, Orat. 3. 90, 91.) Libanius intercedes for a similar offender, lest they should find many *Marks*; yet he allows, that if Orion had secreted the consecrated wealth, he deserved to suffer the punishment of Marsyas; to be flayed alive. (Epist. 730. p. 349—351. * Gregory (Orat. 3, p. 90,) is satisfied that, by saving the apostate, Mark had deserved still more than he had suffered.

† The grove and temple of Daphne are described by Strabo, (l. 16, p. 1089. 1090, edit. Amstel. 1707,) Libanius, (*Nænia*, p. 185—188. *Antiochic. Orat.* 11, p. 380, 381,) and Sozomen. (l. 5, c. 19.) Wesseling (*Itinerar.* p. 581,) and Casaubon (ad *Hist. August.* p. 64,) illustrate this curious subject. ‡ Simulacrum in eo Olympiaci Jovis imitamenti æquiparans magnitudinem. *Ammian.* 22. 13. The Olympic Jupiter was sixty feet high, and his bulk was consequently equal to that of a thousand men. See a curious *Mémoire* of the abbé Gedoyn. (*Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. ix, p. 198.) § Hadrian read the history of his future fortunes on a leaf dipped in the Castalian stream; a trick which, according to the physician Vandale, (*de Oraculis*, p. 281, 282,) might be easily performed by chemical preparations. The emperor stopped the source of such dangerous knowledge; which was again opened by the devout curiosity of Julian. • It was purchased, A.D. 44, in the year 92 of the era of Antioch, (*Noris. Epoch. Syro-Maced.* p. 139—174,) for the term of ninety Olympiads. But the Olympic games of Antioch were not regularly celebrated till the reign of Commodus. See the curious details in the *Chronicle of John Malala*, (tom. i, p. 293. 320. 372—381.) a writer whose merit and authority are confined within the limits of his native city. [These

from Elis; the Olympic games were celebrated at the expense of the city; and a revenue of thirty thousand pounds sterling was annually applied to the public pleasures.* The perpetual resort of pilgrims and spectators insensibly formed, in the neighbourhood of the temple, the stately and populous village of Daphne, which emulated the splendour, without acquiring the title, of a provincial city. The temple and the village were deeply bosomed in a thick grove of laurels and cypresses, which reached as far as a circumference of ten miles, and formed in the most sultry summers a cool and impenetrable shade. A thousand streams of the purest water, issuing from every hill, preserved the verdure of the earth, and the temperature of the air; the senses were gratified with harmonious sounds and aromatic odours; and the peaceful grove was consecrated to health and joy, to luxury and love. The vigorous youth pursued, like Apollo, the object of his desires; and the blushing maid was warned by the fate of Daphne, to shun the folly of unseasonable coyness. The soldier and the philosopher wisely avoided the temptation of this sensual paradise;† where pleasure assuming the character of religion, imperceptibly dissolved the firmness of manly virtue. But the groves of Daphne continued for many ages to enjoy the veneration of natives and strangers; the privileges of the holy ground were enlarged by the munificence of succeeding emperors; and every generation added new ornaments to the splendour of the temple.‡

When Julian, on the day of the annual festival, hastened to adore the Apollo of Daphne, his devotion was raised to the highest pitch of eagerness and impatience. His lively imagination anticipated the grateful pomp of victims, of libations, and of incense; a long procession of youths and

games were revived in the 260th year of the era of Antioch, or July and August, A.D. 212, which was in the third of Caracalla. Malalas, writing 300 years after that time, has used the name of Commodus incorrectly. *Clin. F. R. 1, 220.—Ed.* * Fifteen talents of gold bequeathed

by Sosibius, who died in the reign of Augustus. The theatrical merits of the Syrian cities, in the age of Constantine, are compared in the *Expositio totius Mundi*, p. 6. (Hudson, *Geograph. Minor. tom. iii.*)

† Avidio Cassio Syriacas legiones dedi luxuriâ diffluentes et *Daphnicis* moribus. These are the words of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, in an original letter preserved by his biographer in *Hist. August. p. 41.* Cassius dismissed or punished every soldier who was seen at Daphne.

‡ Aliquantum agrorum Daphnensibus dedit (*Pompey*), quo locus ibi spatiosior fieret: delectatus amœnitate loci et aquarum abundantia.

virgins, clothed in white robes, the symbol of their innocence; and the tumultuous concourse of an innumerable people. But the zeal of Antioch was diverted, since the reign of Christianity, into a different channel. Instead of hecatombs of fat oxen sacrificed by the tribes of a wealthy city to their tutelary deity, the emperor complains that he found only a single goose, provided at the expense of a priest, the pale and solitary inhabitant of this decayed temple.* The altar was deserted, the oracle had been reduced to silence, and the holy ground was profaned by the introduction of Christian and funereal rites. After Babylas† (a bishop of Antioch, who died in prison in the persecution of Decius) had rested near a century in his grave, his body, by the order of Cæsar Gallus, was transported into the midst of the grove of Daphne. A magnificent church was erected over his remains; a portion of the sacred lands was usurped for the maintenance of the clergy, and for the burial of the Christians of Antioch, who were ambitious of lying at the feet of their bishop; and the priests of Apollo retired, with their affrighted and indignant votaries. As soon as another revolution seemed to restore the fortunes of Paganism, the church of St. Babylas was demolished, and new buildings were added to the mouldering edifice which had been raised by the piety of Syrian kings. But the first and most serious care of Julian was to deliver his oppressed deity from the odious presence of the dead and living Christians, who had so effectually suppressed the voice of fraud or enthusiasm.‡ The scene of infection was purified, according to the forms of ancient rituals; the bodies were decently removed; and the ministers of the church were permitted to convey the remains of St. Babylas to their former habitation within the walls of Antioch. The modest behaviour which might have

Eutropius, 6. 14. Sextus Rufus, de Provinciis, c. 16. * Julian (Misopogon, p. 361, 362,) discovers his own character with that naïveté, that unconscious simplicity which always constitutes genuine humour.

† Babylas is named by Eusebius in the succession of the bishops of Antioch. (Hist. Eccles. lib. 6, c. 29. 39.) His triumph over two emperors (the first fabulous, the second historical,) is diffusely celebrated by Chrysostom. (tom. ii, p. 536—579, edit. Montfaucon), Tillemont (Mém. Eccles. tom. iii, part ii, p. 287—302. 459—465), becomes almost a sceptic.

‡ Ecclesiastical critics, particularly those who love relics, exult in the confession of Julian (Misopogon, p. 361,) and Libanius (Nænia, p. 185,) that Apollo was disturbed by the vicinity of

assuaged the jealousy of an hostile government, was neglected on this occasion by the zeal of the Christians. The lofty car, that transported the relics of Babylas, was followed, and accompanied, and received, by an innumerable multitude, who chanted, with thundering acclamations, the Psalms of David, the most expressive of their contempt for idols and idolaters. The return of the saint was a triumph; and the triumph was an insult on the religion of the emperor, who exerted his pride to dissemble his resentment. During the night which terminated this indiscreet procession, the temple of Daphne was in flames; the statue of Apollo was consumed; and the walls of the edifice were left a naked and awful monument of ruin. The Christians of Antioch asserted, with religious confidence, that the powerful intercession of St. Babylas had pointed the lightnings of heaven against the devoted roof; but as Julian was reduced to the alternative, of believing either a crime or a miracle, he chose, without hesitation, without evidence, but with some colour of probability, to impute the fire of Daphne to the revenge of the Galileans.* Their offence, had it been sufficiently proved, might have justified the retaliation which was immediately executed by the order of Julian, of shutting the doors, and confiscating the wealth, of the cathedral of Antioch. To discover the criminals who were guilty of the tumult, of the fire, or of secreting the riches of the church, several ecclesiastics were tortured;† and a presbyter of the name of Theodoret, was beheaded by the sentence of the count of the east. But this hasty act was blamed by the emperor; who lamented with real or affected concern, that the imprudent zeal of his ministers would tarnish his reign with the disgrace of persecution.‡

one dead man. Yet Ammianus (22, 12) clears and purifies the whole ground, according to the rites which the Athenians formerly practised in the isle of Delos.

* Julian (in Misopogon, p. 361,) rather insinuates than affirms their guilt. Ammianus (22, 13,) treats the imputation as *levissimus rumor*, and relates the story with extraordinary candour.

† Quo tam atroci casu repente consumpt, ad id usque imperatoris ira provexit, ut questiones agitare juberet solito acriores (yet Julian blames the lenity of the magistrates at Antioch), et majorem ecclesiam Antiochiæ claudi. This interdiction was performed with some circumstances of indignity and profanation; and the seasonable death of the principal actor, Julian's uncle, is related with much superstitious complacency by the abbé de la Bletterie. *Vie de Julien*, p. 362—369.

‡ Besides the ecclesiastical

The zeal of the ministers of Julian was instantly checked by the frown of their sovereign; but when the father of his country declares himself the leader of a faction, the license of popular fury cannot easily be restrained, nor consistently punished. Julian, in a public composition, applauds the devotion and loyalty of the holy cities of Syria, whose pious inhabitants had destroyed, at the first signal, the sepulchres of the Galileans; and faintly complains, that they had revenged the injuries of the gods with less moderation than he should have recommended.* This imperfect and reluctant confession may appear to confirm the ecclesiastical narratives; that in the cities of Gaza, Ascalon, Cæsarea, Heliopolis, &c. the Pagans abused, without prudence or remorse, the moment of their prosperity. That the unhappy objects of their cruelty were released from torture only by death; that as their mangled bodies were dragged through the streets, they were pierced (such was the universal rage) by the spits of cooks, and the distaffs of enraged women; and that the entrails of Christian priests and virgins, after they had been tasted by those bloody fanatics, were mixed with barley, and contemptuously thrown to the unclean animals of the city.† Such scenes of religious madness exhibit the most contemptible and odious picture of human nature; but the massacre of Alexandria attracts still more attention, from the certainty of the fact, the rank of the victims, and the splendour of the capital of Egypt.

George,‡ from his parents or his education, surnamed the Cappadocian, was born at Epiphania in Cilicia, in a

historians, who are more or less to be suspected, we may allege the passion of St. Theodore, in the *Acta Sincera* of Ruimart, p. 591. The complaint of Julian gives it an original and authentic air. * Julian. *Misopogon*, p. 361. † See Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* 3, p. 87), Sozomen (*lib.* 5, c. 9), may be considered as an original, though not impartial, witness. He was a native of Gaza, and had conversed with the confessor Zeno, who, as bishop of Maiuma, lived to the age of a hundred (*lib.* 7, c. 28). Philostorgius (*lib.* 7, c. 4, with Godefroy's *Dissertations*, p. 284,) adds some tragic circumstances of Christians, who were *literally* sacrificed at the altars of the gods, &c.

‡ The life and death of George of Cappadocia are described by Ammianus (22, 11), Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* 21, p. 382. 335. 389, 390), and Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 76). The invectives of the two saints might not deserve much credit, unless they were confirmed by the testimony of the cool and impartial infidel.

fuller's shop. From this obscure and servile origin he raised himself by the talents of a parasite; and the patrons, whom he assiduously flattered, procured for their worthless dependent a lucrative commission, or contract, to supply the army with bacon. His employment was mean; he rendered it infamous. He accumulated wealth by the basest arts of fraud and corruption; but his malversations were so notorious, that George was compelled to escape from the pursuits of justice. After this disgrace, in which he appears to have saved his fortune at the expense of his honour, he embraced, with real or affected zeal, the profession of Arianism. From the love, or the ostentation of learning, he collected a valuable library of history, rhetoric, philosophy, and theology;* and the choice of the prevailing faction promoted George of Cappadocia to the throne of Athanasius. The entrance of the new archbishop was that of a barbarian conqueror; and each moment of his reign was polluted by cruelty and avarice. The Catholics of Alexandria and Egypt were abandoned to a tyrant, qualified by nature and education, to exercise the office of persecution; but he oppressed with an impartial hand the various inhabitants of his extensive diocese. The primate of Egypt assumed the pomp and insolence of his lofty station; but he still betrayed the vices of his base and servile extraction. The merchants of Alexandria were impoverished by the unjust, and almost universal, monopoly which he acquired of nitre, salt, paper, funerals, &c. and the spiritual father of a great people condescended to practise the vile and pernicious arts of an informer. The Alexandrians could never forget, nor forgive, the tax which he suggested on all the houses of the city, under an obsolete claim, that the royal founder had conveyed to his successors, the Ptolemies and the Cæsars, the perpetual property of the soil. The Pagans, who had been flattered with the hopes of freedom and toleration, excited his devout

* After the massacre of George, the emperor Julian repeatedly sent orders to preserve the library for his own use, and to torture the slaves who might be suspected of secreting any books. He praises the merit of the collection, from whence he had borrowed and transcribed several manuscripts while he pursued his studies in Cappadocia. He could wish indeed that the works of the Galileans might perish; but he requires an exact account even of those theological volumes, lest

avarice; and the rich temples of Alexandria were either pillaged or insulted by the haughty prelate, who exclaimed, in a loud and threatening tone, "How long will these sepulchres be permitted to stand?" Under the reign of Constantius, he was expelled by the fury, or rather by the justice of the people; and it was not without a violent struggle that the civil and military powers of the state could restore his authority, and gratify his revenge. The messenger who proclaimed at Alexandria the accession of Julian, announced the downfall of the archbishop. George, with two of his obsequious ministers, count Diodorus, and Dracontius, master of the mint, were ignominiously dragged in chains to the public prison. At the end of twenty-four days, the prison was forced open by the rage of a superstitious multitude, impatient of the tedious forms of judicial proceedings. The enemies of gods and men expired under their cruel insults; the lifeless bodies of the archbishop and his associates were carried in triumph through the streets on the back of a camel; and the inactivity of the Athanasian party* was esteemed a shining example of evangelical patience. The remains of these guilty wretches were thrown into the sea: and the popular leaders of the tumult declared their resolution to disappoint the devotion of the Christians, and to intercept the future honours of these *martyrs*, who had been punished, like their predecessors, by the enemies of their religion.† The fears of the Pagans were just, and their precautions ineffectual. The meritorious death of the archbishop obliterated the memory of his life. The rival of Athanasius was dear and sacred to the Arians, and the seeming conversion of those sectaries introduced his worship into the bosom of the Catholic church.‡ The odious stranger, disguising every circum-

other treatises more valuable should be confounded in their loss. Julian. Epist. 9. 36.

* Philostorgius, with cautious malice, insinuates their guilt, *καὶ τὴν Ἀθανασίου γνώμην στρατηγῆσαι τῆς πράξεως*, lib. 7, c. 2. Godefroy, p. 267.

† Cineres project in mare, id metuens ut clamabat, ne, collectis supremis, ædes illis extruerent; ut reliquis, qui deviare a religione compulsi, pertulere cruciabiles pœnas, adusque gloriosam mortem intemeratâ fide progressi, et nunc MARTYRES appellantur. Ammian. 22, 11. Epiphanius proves to the Arians, that George was not a martyr.

‡ Some Donatists (Optatus Milev. p. 60. 303, edit. Dupin, and Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles. tom. vi, p. 713, in 4to*), and Priscillianists, (Tillemont, *Mém. Eccles.*

stance of time and place, assumed the mask of a martyr, a saint, and a Christian hero;* and the infamous George of Cappadocia has been transformed † into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and of the garter.‡

About the same time that Julian was informed of the tumult of Alexandria, he received intelligence from Edessa, that the proud and wealthy faction of the Arians had insulted the weakness of the Valentinians, and committed such disorders as ought not to be suffered with impunity in a well-regulated state. Without expecting the slow forms of justice, the exasperated prince directed his mandate to the magistrates of Edessa,§ by which he confiscated the whole property of the church: the money was distributed among the soldiers; the lands were added to the domain; and this act of oppression was aggravated by the most ungenerous irony,—“I shew myself,” says Julian, “the true friend of the Galileans. Their admirable law has promised the kingdom of heaven to the poor; and they will advance with more diligence in the paths of virtue and salvation, when they are relieved by my assistance from the load of temporal possessions. Take care,” pursued the monarch, in a more serious tone, “take care how you provoke my patience and humanity. If these disorders continue, I will revenge on the magistrates the crimes of the people; and you will have reason to dread, not only

tom. viii, p. 517, in 4to.,) have, in like manner, usurped the honours of the Catholic saints and martyrs.

* The saints of Cappadocia, Basil and the Gregories, were ignorant of their holy companion. Pope Gelasius (A.D. 494), the first Catholic who acknowledges St. George, places him among the martyrs—“Qui Deo magis quam hominibus noti sunt.” He rejects his acts as the composition of heretics. Some, perhaps not the oldest, of the spurious acts, are still extant; and through a cloud of fiction, we may yet distinguish the combat which St. George of Cappadocia sustained in the presence of queen *Alexandria*, against the *magician Athanasius*.

† This transformation is not given as absolutely certain, but as *extremely* probable. See the *Longperuana*, tom. i. p. 194.

‡ A curious history of the worship of St. George, from the sixth century (when he was already revered in Palestine, in Armenia, at Rome, and at Treves in Gaul,) might be extracted from Dr. Heylin (*History of St. George*, 2nd edition, London, 1633, in 4to. p. 429), and the Bollandists (*Act. SS. Mens. April. tom. iii, p. 100—163.*) His fame and popularity in Europe, and especially in England, proceeded from the Crusades.

§ *Julian. Epist. 43.*

confiscation and exile, but fire and the sword." The tumults of Alexandria were doubtless of a more bloody and dangerous nature; but a Christian bishop had fallen by the hands of the Pagans; and the public epistle of Julian affords a very lively proof of the partial spirit of his administration. His reproaches to the citizens of Alexandria are mingled with expressions of esteem and tenderness; and he laments, that on this occasion they should have departed from the gentle and generous manners which attested their Grecian extraction. He gravely censures the offence which they had committed against the laws of justice and humanity; but he recapitulates, with visible complacency, the intolerable provocations which they had so long endured from the impious tyranny of George of Cappadocia. Julian admits the principle, that a wise and vigorous government should chastise the insolence of the people; yet, in consideration of their founder, Alexander, and of Serapis, their tutelary deity, he grants a free and gracious pardon to the guilty city, for which he again feels the affection of a brother.*

After the tumult of Alexandria had subsided, Athanasius, amidst the public acclamations, seated himself on the throne from whence his unworthy competitor had been precipitated; and as the zeal of the archbishop was tempered with discretion, the exercise of his authority tended not to inflame, but to reconcile the minds of the people. His pastoral labours were not confined to the narrow limits of Egypt. The state of the Christian world was present to his active and capacious mind; and the age, the merit, the reputation of Athanasius enabled him to assume, in a moment of danger, the office of ecclesiastical dictator.† Three years were not yet elapsed since the majority of the bishops of the west had ignorantly, or reluctantly, subscribed the confession of Rimini. They repented, they believed, but they dreaded the unseasonable rigour of their orthodox brethren; and if their pride was stronger than their faith, they might throw themselves into the arms of the Arians, to escape the indignity of a public penance, which must degrade them to the condition of obscure lay-

* Julian. Epist. 10. He allowed his friends to assuage his anger. Ammian. 22, 11.

† See Athanas. ad Rufin. tom. ii, p. 40, 41, and Greg. Nazianzen, Orat. 3, p. 395, 396, who justly states the

men. At the same time, the domestic differences concerning the union and distinction of the divine persons, were agitated with some heat among the Catholic doctors; and the progress of this metaphysical controversy seemed to threaten a public and lasting division of the Greek and Latin churches. By the wisdom of a select synod, to which the name and presence of Athanasius gave the authority of a general council, the bishops who had unwarily deviated into error, were admitted to the communion of the church, on the easy condition of subscribing the Nicene creed, without any formal acknowledgment of their past fault, or any minute definition of their scholastic opinions. The advice of the primate of Egypt had already prepared the clergy of Gaul and Spain, of Italy and Greece, for the reception of this salutary measure; and notwithstanding the opposition of some ardent spirits,* the fear of the common enemy promoted the peace and harmony of the Christians.†

The skill and diligence of the primate of Egypt had improved the season of tranquillity, before it was interrupted by the hostile edicts of the emperor.‡ Julian, who despised the Christians, honoured Athanasius with his sincere and peculiar hatred. For his sake alone, he introduced an arbitrary distinction, repugnant at least to the spirit of his former declarations. He maintained, that the Galileans, whom he had recalled from exile, were not restored, by that general indulgence, to the possession of their respective churches: and he expressed his astonishment that a criminal, who had been repeatedly condemned

temperate zeal of the primate as much more meritorious than his prayers, his fasts, his persecutions, &c.

* I have not leisure to follow the blind obstinacy of Lucifer of Cagliari. See his adventures in Tillemont (*Mém. Eccles.* tom. vii, p. 900—926), and observe how the colour of the narrative insensibly changes, as the confessor becomes a schismatic.

† *Assensus est huic sententiæ Occidens, et, per tam necessarium concilium, Satanae faucibus mundus ereptus.* The lively and artful Dialogue of Jerome against the Luciferians (tom. ii, p. 135—155), exhibits an original picture of the ecclesiastical policy of the times.

‡ Tillemont, who supposes that George was massacred in August, crowds the actions of Athanasius into a narrow space. (*Mém. Eccles.* tom. viii, p. 360.) An original fragment, published by the Marquis Maffei, from the old chapter library of Verona (*Osservazioni Letterarie*, tom. iii, p. 60—92,) affords many important dates, which are authenticated by the computation of Egyptian months.

by the judgment of the emperors, should dare to insult the majesty of the laws, and insolently usurp the archiepiscopal throne of Alexandria without expecting the orders of his sovereign. As a punishment for the imaginary offence, he again banished Athanasius from the city; and he was pleased to suppose, that this act of justice would be highly agreeable to his pious subjects. The pressing solicitations of the people soon convinced him that the majority of the Alexandrians were Christians; and that the greatest part of the Christians were firmly attached to the cause of their oppressed primate. But the knowledge of their sentiments, instead of persuading him to recall his decree, provoked him to extend to all Egypt the term of the exile of Athanasius. The zeal of the multitude rendered Julian still more inexorable: he was alarmed by the danger of leaving at the head of a tumultuous city a daring and popular leader; and the language of his resentment discovers the opinion which he entertained of the courage and abilities of Athanasius. The execution of the sentence was still delayed, by the caution or negligence of Ecdicius, prefect of Egypt, who was at length awakened from his lethargy by a severe reprimand. "Though you neglect (says Julian) to write to me on any other subject, at least it is your duty to inform me of your conduct towards Athanasius, the enemy of the gods. My intentions have been long since communicated to you. I swear by the great Serapis, that unless, on the calends of December, Athanasius has departed from Alexandria, nay from Egypt, the officers of your government shall pay a fine of one hundred pounds of gold. You know my temper: I am slow to condemn, but I am still slower to forgive." This epistle was enforced by a short postscript, written with the emperor's own hand. "The contempt that is shewn for all the gods fills me with grief and indignation. There is nothing that I should see, nothing that I should hear, with more pleasure than the expulsion of Athanasius from all Egypt. The abominable wretch! Under my reign, the baptism of several Grecian ladies of the highest rank has been the effect of his persecutions."* The death of Athanasius was not *expressly*

* Τὸν μιὰρὸν, ὃς ἐτόλμησεν Ἑλληνίδας, ἐπ' ἐμοῦ, γυναῖκας τῶν ἐπισήμων βαπτίσει διώκεσθαι. I have preserved the ambiguous sense of the last word, the ambiguity of a tyrant who wished to find or to

commanded; but the prefect of Egypt understood, that it was safer for him to exceed, than to neglect the orders of an irritated master. The archbishop prudently retired to the monasteries of the Desert; eluded, with his usual dexterity, the snares of the enemy; and lived to triumph over the ashes of a prince, who, in words of formidable import, had declared his wish, that the whole venom of the Galilean school were contained in the single person of Athanasius.*

I have endeavoured faithfully to represent the artful system by which Julian proposed to obtain the effects, without incurring the guilt, or reproach, of persecution. But if the deadly spirit of fanaticism perverted the heart and understanding of a virtuous prince, it must, at the same time, be confessed, that the *real* sufferings of the Christians were inflamed and magnified by human passions and religious enthusiasm. The meekness and resignation which had distinguished the primitive disciples of the gospel, were the object of the applause, rather than of the imitation, of their successors. The Christians, who had now possessed above forty years the civil and ecclesiastical government of the empire, had contracted the insolent vices of prosperity,† and the habit of believing that the saints alone were entitled to reign over the earth. As soon as the enmity of Julian deprived the clergy of the privileges which had been conferred by the favour of Constantine, they complained of the most cruel oppression; and the free toleration of idolaters and heretics was a subject of grief and scandal to the orthodox party.‡ The acts of violence, which were no longer countenanced by the magistrates, were still committed by the zeal of the people. At Pessinus, the altar of Cybele was overturned almost in the presence of the emperor, and in the city of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, the temple of Fortune, the sole place of worship which had been left to the Pagans, was destroyed by the rage of a popular tumult. On these occasions, a prince, who felt for the honour of the gods, was

create guilt. * The three epistles of Julian, which explain his intentions and conduct with regard to Athanasius, should be disposed in the following chronological order, 26. 10. 6. See likewise Greg. Nazianzen, 21, p. 393. Sozomen, lib. 5, c. 15. Socrates, lib. 3, c. 14. Theodoret, lib. 3, c. 9, and Tillemont, Mém. Eccles. tom. viii, p. 361—368, who has used some materials prepared by the Bollandists.

† See the fair confession of Gregory (Orat. 3, p. 61, 62).

‡ Hear the furious and absurd complaint of Optatus (de Schismat.

not disposed to interrupt the course of justice; and his mind was still more deeply exasperated, when he found that the fanatics, who had deserved and suffered the punishment of incendiaries, were rewarded with the honours of martyrdom.* The Christian subjects of Julian were assured of the hostile designs of their sovereign; and, to their jealous apprehension, every circumstance of his government might afford some grounds of discontent and suspicion. In the ordinary administration of the laws, the Christians, who formed so large a part of the people, must frequently be condemned: but their indulgent brethren, without examining the merits of the cause, presumed their innocence, allowed their claims, and imputed the severity of their judge to the partial malice of religious persecution.† These present hardships, intolerable as they might appear, were represented as a slight prelude of the impending calamities. The Christians considered Julian as a cruel and crafty tyrant; who suspended the execution of his revenge, till he should return victorious from the Persian war. They expected that as soon as he had triumphed over the foreign enemies of Rome, he would lay aside the irksome mask of dissimulation; that the amphitheatres would stream with the blood of hermits and bishops; and that the Christians, who still persevered in the profession of the faith, would be deprived of the common benefits of nature and society.‡ Every calumny§ that could wound the reputation of the apostate, was credulously embraced by the fears and

Donatist. lib. 2, c. 16, 17).

* Greg. Nazianzen (Orat. 3, p. 91, 4; p. 133). He praises the rioters of Cæsarea, *τοῦτων ἐὲ τῶν μεγαλοφύων καὶ θεομῶν ἐς εὐσεβειαν*. See Sozomen, lib. 6. 4. 11. Tillemont (Mém. Eccles. tom. vii, p. 649, 650,) owns that their behaviour was not dans l'ordre commun; but he is perfectly satisfied, as the great St. Basil always celebrated the festival of these blessed martyrs.

† Julian determined a lawsuit against the new Christian city at Maiuma, the port of Gaza; and his sentence, though it might be imputed to bigotry, was never reversed by his successors. Sozomen, lib. 5, c. 3. Reland Palestin. tom. ii, 791.

‡ Gregory (Orat. 3, p. 93—95. Orat. 4, p. 114,) pretends to speak from the information of Julian's confidants, whom Orosius (7. 30,) could not have seen.

§ Gregory (Orat. 3, p. 91.) charges the apostate with secret sacrifices of boys and girls; and positively affirms, that the dead bodies were thrown into the Orontes. See Theodoret, lib. 3, c. 26, 27, and the equivocal candour of the abbé de la Bletterie, Vie de Julien, p. 351, 352. Yet *contemporaria* malice could not impute to Julian the troops of martyrs, more especially in the west, which Baronius so greedily swallows, and Tillemont so faintly rejects. (Mém. Eccles. tom. vii, p. 1295—1315.)

hatred of his adversaries; and their indiscreet clamours provoked the temper of a sovereign, whom it was their duty to respect and their interest to flatter. They still protested, that prayers and tears were their only weapons against the impious tyrant, whose head they devoted to the justice of offended heaven. But they insinuated with sullen resolution, that their submission was no longer the effect of weakness; and that, in the imperfect state of human virtue, the patience, which is founded on principle, may be exhausted by persecution. It is impossible to determine how far the zeal of Julian would have prevailed over his good sense and humanity; but if we seriously reflect on the strength and spirit of the church, we shall be convinced, that, before the emperor could have extinguished the religion of Christ, he must have involved his country in the horrors of a civil war.*

* The resignation of Gregory is truly edifying (Orat. 4, p. 123, 124); yet when an officer of Julian attempted to seize the church of Nazianzus, he would have lost his life if he had not yielded to the zeal of the bishop and people (Orat. 19, p. 308). See the reflections of Chrysostom, as they are alleged by Tillemont (*Mém. Eccles.* tom. vii, p. 575). [Evidently pleased with his subject, Gibbon has still delineated the opinions and conduct of Julian, with a fairness of which the impartial have expressed their admiration. Niebuhr says, "Julian's is an ever memorable name, which has sometimes been overrated beyond measure, and on the other hand, cried down in the most unworthy manner. Distinguished men, of most opposite minds, have during the last fifty years turned their attention to him; first of all, Gibbon, who was not, however, carried away by his anti-Christian feelings, but very readily acknowledged his weak points." (Lectures, vol. iii, p. 309.) Eckhel, too, gives a still more decided testimony to the same effect: "Optime, ut ego existimo, de Juliani philosophia, virtutibusque et vitiis, judicavit Eduardus Gibbon, Anglus." (*Num. Vet.* vol. viii, p. 132.) Sensitiveness to the acrimony with which his fifteenth and sixteenth chapters had been assailed, made Gibbon cautious here. So far did he carry this, that recent editors, who in republishing his History undertook to correct all that he had mis-stated respecting Christianity, have raised no objection to any part of the present chapter. If he has erred, it has been rather by sometimes doing injustice to the imperial mystic. There are instances of his having wrongly supposed Christians at large to have been the objects of vindictive feelings and coercive measures, which were directed only against the priesthood; and he has thence inferred an encouragement to clandestine or indirect persecution, which Julian was too sagacious, if not too generous, to have favoured. The restorer of Paganism would, of course, gladly have extinguished Christianity. But his harsh proceedings tended to this only so far as they took from the

hierarchy the tempting bribes by which they had allured time-serving proselytes. That he wished by gentle and more persuasive convictions to win the laity, and first the educated portion of them, is clearly evident from the fragments which we possess of what he wrote against their faith. The early fathers had made their most successful impressions by arguing that the Jewish Scriptures had divinely predicted in Christianity that dispensation which realised the favourite philosophy of the Greeks. Against this Mosaic foundation, Julian therefore directed his attacks. Those parts of it which are the most difficult to defend, he assailed by his most powerful arguments. His idea was, that, if he could detach the basis, the superstructure would be safely removed to the Pagan ground, which he had endeavoured to intellectualize for its reception. A sovereign who could thus reason with his subjects, was not likely to harbour those covert designs of forcible propagandism, which the fears or the hatred of Christian writers ascribed to him.

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