CRIMES

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

BY

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AND

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PREFACE.

AN Irish orator was once protesting his immaculate honesty before a suspicious audience of his countrymen. "Gintlemin," he exclaimed, displaying his dexter palm, "thur's a hond that niver tuk a broibe." Whereupon a smart auditor cried, "How about the one behoind yer back?"

Our purpose is to show the hand behind the back. The task is by no means a pleasant one, but we sacrifice our feelings on the altar of liberty and progress.

Christianity is plausible and fair-spoken to-day, although it occasionally emits a fierce flash of its devilish old spirit. Its advocates are no longer able to crush opposition; they are obliged to answer its arguments, or at least to make a show of defending their own doctrines. They scruple at damning heretics, and blandly expect a reciprocation of the courtesy. Feeling that the tendency of modern thought is against them, and afraid to resist it, they bend before it rather than break. Their only object is to weather the storm at any cost, even by sacrificing large quantities of their freightage.

We do not believe that Christianity will weather the storm; in our opinion it is unrepealably doomed. Nevertheless, as earnest Freethinkers, we feel incumbent on us the duty of assisting in its destruction. We are anxious that, as religions die of being found out, Christianity shall be seen in its true light. We desire that it shall not be judged by its present promises, but by it past performance. We wish to show the people

what it was in the evil days of its supremacy, when opportunity matched inclination, and it acted according to the laws of its nature, unchecked by science, free-thought and humanity.

Adversity tries a man, says the proverb. True, but not like prosperity. No man is really known until he possesses power, and the same may be said of religions. They should be tested, not by what they pretend in their weakness, but by what they do in their strength.

American statesmen are expected to show a good "record;" the citizens judge them by their past. We want the same test applied to Christianity, and we publish the following treatise as a sample of its "record."

Eloquence is less our aim than truth. What we wish to be heard is, not our own voice, but the voice of history. We therefore let the historian speak whenever possible, and we always appeal to the best authorities, so that our little work may be a kind of text-book, trustworthy from title to imprint, and a guide to the student as well as instructive to the common reader. Eloquence is good in its way, but there is little need of it here, for Christianity is damned by facts; facts that are hard as adamant and unshakeable as an Alp.

G. W. FOOTE.

May, 1885. J. M. WHEELER.

CHRIST TO CONSTANTINE.

WHEN Jesus Christ had disappeared from this world, in what manner it is beside our purpose to discuss, the Jewish sect he had founded continued to assemble at Jerusalem. They were not then called Christians, but we will anticipate history by giving them that designation. The infant Church was under the leadership of Simon Peter, and it observed the communistic maxims which Jesus had enjoined. Every member sold his property and paid the proceeds into the common exchequer.

One married couple, however, named Ananias and Sapphira, retained a portion of the price of their estate for their private use. This having come to the knowledge of Peter, he taxed them in succession with their offence, and each fell down dead in his presence. Their corpses were immediately buried by the godly young men who were waiting in the chamber of execution. No investigation into the affair appears to have been made by the authorities, but if such a thing had occurred in an age of coroner's inquests, it is possible that Peter would have met another fate than leaving the world with his head downwards.

Paul's treatment of dissentients was very similar. He smote Elymas with blindness as "a child of the devil," and charitably "delivered" Hymenæus and Alexander "unto Satan," perhaps with the opinion that only the Grand Inquisitor of the Universe could adequately punish them for blasphemy and backsliding.

The other apostles were imbued with the same amiable spirit. Even in the lifetime of their master they continually disputed who should be greatest, and were only pacified by his informing them that they should all occupy twelve equal thrones of judgment over Israel.

After his death their differences grew more acrimonious. John, in his Revelation, scowls at Paul and his Gentile following, who "say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan." He denounces the doctrines of Nicolas, one of the seven first deacons of the Church, as hateful; and he expresses his detestation of the Laodiceans by saying that the Almighty would spue them out of his mouth. Paul returns the compliment by "withstanding" Peter, and sneering at James and John as "seeming to be pillars," the former of whom retorts that Paul is a "vain man." Paul vehemently tells the Galatians: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Even "the beloved disciple," in his second Epistle, manifests the same persecuting spirit:

"If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

In the very first century Christianity was split into many petty sects, each denouncing the other as teaching false doctrine. The early Nazarenes, who kept to the Jewish law, were called Ebionites, or contemptible people. The Ebionites denounced the Paulinists, and declared that Paul was an impostor who became a Christian because he was not allowed to marry a Jewish woman. In an epistle of Peter to James, prefixed to the Clementine Recognitions, and as genuine as any other portion of the writings ascribed to Peter, Paul is alluded to as "the enemy," and the author of lawless and foolish teachings. Of the Recognitions itself, a work ascribed to Clement, and undoubtedly belonging to the first era of Christian history, the author of "Supernatural Religion" says:

"There cannot be a doubt that the apostle Paul is attacked in it as the great enemy of the true faith, under the hated name of Simon, the magician, whom Peter followed everywhere for the purpose of unmasking and confuting him. He is robbed of the title of 'Apostle of the Gentiles,' which, together with the honor of founding the Churches of Antioch, of Laodicea, and of Rome, is ascribed to Peter. All that opposition to Paul which is implied in the Epistle to the Galatians and elsewhere (1 Cor. i., 11, 12; 2 Cor. xi., 13—20; Philip. i., 15, 16) is here realised and

exaggerated. and the personal difference with Peter to which Paul refers is widened into the most bitter animosity."*

Irenæus, in the second century, in his work against Heretics, stigmatises them with the most abusive epithets, and accuses them of the most abominable crimes. He calls them "thieves and robbers," "slippery serpents," "miserable little foxes," and so forth, and declares that they practise lewdness in their assemblies.

Tertullian, in the third century, displays a full measure of bigotry, with an added sense of exultation over the sufferings in reserve for his pagan opponents.

"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!" †

The pious Father continues at some length in the same strain.

Jerome, in the next century, exhibits a still more execrable spirit than Tertullian, exhorting the Christians to direct their bigotry against their dearest relations:

"If thy father lies down across thy threshold, if thy mother uncovers to thine eyes the bosom which suckled thee, trample on thy father's lifeless body, trample on thy mother's bosom, and, with eyes unmoistened and dry, fly to the Lord, who calleth thee."

This detestable advice, unfortunately, did not flow from Jerome's natural moroseness; it was the logical result of his Savior's command to the disciples to leave all and follow him.‡

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* Vol. II., p. 34.

† Gibbon, chap. xv. See Tertullian's "De Spectaculis," chap. xxx.

‡ "If any man come unto me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv., 26).

The scope of our work does not permit a larger array of illustrations. We have, however, given enough to show that the hateful spirit of bigotry and persecution animated the Christian Church from the beginning. It gathered strength with the progress of time, and it was sufficiently developed, when Constantine and Theodosius sought the destruction of Paganism, to assist and applaud them in executing their design.

Our contention in this respect is powerfully supported by the following passage from Lecky :

"All that fierce hatred which, during the Arian and Donatist controversies, convulsed the Empire, and which in later times has deluged the world with blood, may be traced in the Church long before the conversion of Constantine. Already, in the second century, it was the rule that the orthodox Christian should hold no conversation, should interchange none of the ordinary courtesies of life, with the excommunicated or the heretic."*

Long before Constantine, the Christian Church had employed all its resources against heretics. It possessed no power of punishing them by fines, torture or death, but it threatened them with hell in the next world and excommunicated them in this. "Heretics," says Dr. Gieseler,† "were universally hated as men wholly corrupt and lost," and the Church pronounced against them her sharpest penalties. These were indeed merely spiritual, but they were transformed into temporal punishments as soon as Christianity was able to effect the change. We shall have to treat this subject more fully when we deal with the rise of the Papacy.

Before exhibiting to our readers the first capital crime of Christianity, in establishing itself by the unscrupulous use of force on the ruins of Paganism, we think it necessary to refer to the Agapæ or Love-feasts, which appear to have disgraced the early Church. Even in the time of Paul the celebration of the Eucharist was the occasion of some scandal.‡ We learn from Justin Martyr, Minutius Felix and others, that the Pagans accused the Christians of indulging in orgies of

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* "History of European Morals," vol. i., p. 451.
† Gieseler's "Ecclesiastical History," sec. 74.
‡ 1 Cor. v., 1 ; xi., 21; Jude 12.

gross licentiousness in their secret festivals, which were held at night. Justin Martyr, while repudiating the charge on behalf of the orthodox, was careful to add of the heretics: "Whether or not these people commit those shameful and fabulous acts—the putting out the lights, indulging in promiscuous intercourse, and eating human flesh—I know not."* Theodoret, in his work on "Heretic Fables," charges them all with lewdness, "such that even stage-players were too modest to describe it, or to hear it described," and he asserts that they had exceeded and eclipsed the greatest proficients in wickedness. Eusebius says of the Carpocratians, that they gave occasion of reproach to the gospel, and that it was chiefly owing to them that Christians were charged with promiscuous lewdness and other crimes in their assemblies. Origen also puts the crimes with which Christians were charged to the account of the Ophites and Cainites. Yet the evidence of Justin Martyr proves that such charges were brought against the Christians before these sects existed. The accusations were made by those who had been Christians themselves, in places as far apart as Lyons, Rome, and Asia Minor. Trials took place before competent tribunals, and the Christians were punished. When we know that the Agapæ were prohibited by several Councils on account of the scandals to which they gave rise, it is difficult to exonerate the early Christians from these grave charges. Much of the persecution to which they are alleged to have been subject perhaps arose from these secret midnight meetings.

The sensuality of the early Christians sometimes mocked their ascetic doctrines. Gibbon remarks:

"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 greater 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

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* Justin Martyr, Apology i., 26.

learned Origen,* judged it 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 of 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."†

Following Gibbon, Mr. Lecky pens this delectable passage, which may be commended to the attention of the "unco guid":

"In the time of St. Cyprian, before the outbreak of the Decian persecution, it had been common to find clergy professing celibacy, but keeping, under various pretexts, their mistresses in their houses; and after Constantine, the complaints on this subject became loud and general. Evagrius describes with much admiration how certain monks of Palestine, by 'a life wholly excellent and divine, had so overcome their passions that they were accustomed to bathe with women.' Virgins and monks often lived together in the same house, and, with a curious audacity of hypocrisy, which is very frequently noticed, they professed to have so overcome the passions of their nature that they shared in chastity the same bed."‡

Dr. Todd, in his learned life of St. Patrick, quotes from the "Lives of the Irish Saints" the legend of a curious contest of chastity between St. Scathinus and St. Brendan, in which the former eventually triumphed. Jortin tells us of one Robert D'Arbrisselles, a wild enthusiast and field preacher of the twelfth century, who "drew after him a crowd of female saints with whom he used to lie in bed, but never touch them, by way of self-denial and mortification."§ The learned and sagacious Jortin remarks that "austerities of this kind seem to suit the fanatical taste." Modern history furnishes us with many examples. During the Reformation, for instance, the Anabaptists emulated the primitive costume of Adam and Eve.

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* Origen, although fond of allegorising Scripture, followed literally the hint in Matthew xix., 12, and castrated himself to become a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

† "Decline and Fall," chap. xv.

‡ Vol II., p. 159.

§ Jortin, "Remarks on Ecclesiastical History," vol. iii., p 218.

While Christianity was slowly propagating itself among the Gentiles, after the fall of Jerusalem, the Pagan world did not exhibit any striking need of its salutary influence. Under a succession of wise rulers the Roman Empire flourished in peace and splendor. Gibbon justly remarks that :

> "If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus."*

Now Domitian died A.D. 96 and Commodus succeeded to the purple in A.D. 180. It was during this very period that Christianity produced its Scriptures, and made its first conquests. How utterly false and absurd, then, is the orthodox plea that Christianity, with all its faults, came to redeem mankind from intellectual darkness and moral depravity !

Lecky observes that "from the death of Marcus Aurelius [A.D 180], about which time Christianity assumed an important influence in the Roman world, the decadence of the Empire was rapid and almost uninterrupted." We should like to know how this fact can be accounted for except on the theory that Christianity helped to destroy the existing civilisation. Metaphorically, if not literally, it made men eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven ; and the energy which should have been devoted to repelling barbarism and defending the Empire was wasted on frivolous theological disputes or expended in the pursuit of priestly ambition. Even at the time of Julian, vigorous and systematic efforts might have still saved the Empire from dissolution ; but the great "Apostate's" glorious career came to an untimely end, and the Persian spear which drew his life-blood, ensured the triumph of the pale Galilean and the ruin of Rome.

We now approach the most critical period of the history of Christianity, when through the patronage of Constantine it obtained the means of forcing itself upon mankind. Christianity took three centuries to convert a twentieth of the inhabitants of the Roman

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* Chap. iii.

Empire by the arts of persuasion; but it converted the other nineteen-twentieths in less than a century by the unscrupulous use of bribery, imprisonment, torture and massacre.

Hobbes summarises this change quaintly but concisely in a few pregnant lines:

"When Constantine the Great, made so by the assistance and valor of the Christian soldiers, had attained to be the only Roman Emperor, he also himself became a Christian, and caused the temples of the heathen gods to be demolished, and authorised Christian religion only to be public."*

Cardinal Newman expresses the Catholic view of this momentous change with equal clearness and brevity. "Constantine's submission of his power to the Church," he says, "has been a pattern for all Christian monarchs since, and the commencement of her state establishment to this day."†

Let the reader now follow us in investigating the character of Constantine, his conversion to Christianity, and the forcible imposition of his adopted creed upon his Pagan subjects.

The real founder of Christianity has been the subject of eulogy and reprobation, the former bestowed by the Christians whom he protected and favored, and the latter by the Pagans whom he deserted and oppressed. Our object will be to relate the truth, without extenuating his crimes or setting down aught in malice.

Before appealing to Gibbon, Mosheim, Jortin, Schlegel and other authorities, we may perhaps venture to give a rapid summary of Constantine's worst characteristics by the master-hand of Voltaire:

"He had a father-in-law, whom he impelled to hang himself; he had a brother-in-law, whom he ordered to be strangled; he had a nephew twelve or thirteen years old, whose throat he ordered to be cut; he had an eldest son, whom he beheaded; he had a wife, whom he ordered to be suffocated in a bath. An old Gallic author said that 'he loved to make a clear house.'"‡

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* Works, vol. iv., p. 391.
† J. H. Newman, "Two Essays on Miracles," p. 273.
‡ Voltaire, "Philosophical Dictionary," article *Constantine.*

These atrocious crimes, which cannot be disputed, were perpetrated after Constantine became a Christian, or at least after he extended his patronage to the Church. Before he embraced or patronised Christianity, his character was less sullied, and he appeared incapable of such enormities. The following is Gibbon's description of Constantine at this period :

"The person, as well as the mind, of Constantine, had been 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 vigor 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. . . . In the despatch of business his diligence was indefatigable. . . . In the field he infused his own intrepid spirit into the troops, whom he conducted with the talents of a consummate general."*

Let us now behold Gibbon's picture of the hero in his decline, after he had presided at Church councils and worshipped the divinity of Christ :

"In the life of Augustus we behold the tyrant of the republic coverted 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 splendor rather than of real prosperity; and the old age of Constantine was disgraced by the opposite yet reconcileable 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 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 favorites, enriched by the boundless liberality of their master, usurped with impunity

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* Chap. xviii.

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 his 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 colors, 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 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." *

There can be no doubt that the character of Constantine deteriorated rather than improved under the influence of Christianity. Our greatest master of grave and temperate irony says that

"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 vast 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 is Gibbon's way of saying that as Constantine became a better Christian he became a worse criminal.

The reader is probably anxious to be informed of

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* Chap. xviii. † Gibbon, chap. xx.

the details of these crimes. The father-in-law that Constantine strangled was the emperor Maximian, whom, in February, A.D. 310, he defeated and captured at Marseilles. The brother-in-law whom he punished with the same fate was his rival Licinius, who fell into his hands after the siege of Byzantium, in A.D. 324, and who was secretly executed after being publicly pardoned. The deaths of these relatives may be explained by the rules of statecraft, but no such excuse can be offered with respect to the other victims of Constantine's cruelty. In July, A.D. 325, he publicly disgraced and privately murdered his eldest son Crispus, for no other crime than his virtues and his reputation. The Cæsar Licinius, a nephew of Constantine, was involved in the ruin of Crispus and shared his fate, notwithstanding his youth and amiable manners, and the tears and entreaties of his mother. The first Christian emperor soon afterwards completed the list of his domestic murders by suffocating his wife Fausta in "the steam of a bath, which, for that purpose, had been heated to an extraordinary degree." This unfortunate lady was accused of adultery, and "her condemnation and punishment," says Gibbon, "were the instant consequences of the charge." After the commission of these atrocious crimes, it is no wonder that the people were discontented, and that satirical verses were affixed to Constantine's palace-gate comparing him with the bloody and ferocious Nero.

If we have mainly relied on Gibbon for our portrait of Constantine, it is only because that greatest of historians was an artist as well as a scholar. Instead of presenting a mass of confused details, he gives us a finished picture; and his accuracy, no less than his skill, is the wonder and admiration of succeeding writers. Although he was himself a disbeliever in Christianity, his treatment of Constantine is "remarkably just, and he is more generous to the first Christian emperor than Niebuhr or Neander."* A hasty glance at the cruel and sanguinary laws which he introduced

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* J C. Morison, "Gibbon" (English Men of Letters) p. 127.

into the Roman code will prove that, however zealous for religion, the first Christian emperor showed a scandalous contempt for humanity.

Constantine made a law against the gladiatorial shows, which however continued until Honorius suppressed them in A.D. 403. We may well suspect his sincerity in enacting this law when we remember that during his administration in Gaul, after a signal victory over the Franks, he exposed several of their princes to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre of Treves. He also abolished tbe cruel punishment of breaking the legs of criminals and branding their faces; and he prohibited crucifixions, probably out of deference to the sentiment of his Christian subjects. But he ordered delators' tongues to be cut out, and molten lead to be poured down the throats of those who connived at the abduction of virgins, the principal offenders being cast to the beasts or burnt alive. "He appointed this punishment," says Jortin, "for various offences. To burn men alive became thenceforward a very common punishment, to the disgrace of Christianity. At last it was thought too cruel for traitors, murderers, poisoners, parricides, etc., and only fit for *heretics*."*

Never before had this devilish punishment been inflicted judicially. Tradition or legend affirmed that Phalaris roasted men in a brazen bull, but this was the act of a ferocious tyrant, who tortured men for his sport. It was reserved for the first Christian emperor to deliberately insert this cruelty in the Roman code. The Church in subsequent ages took ample advantage of the opportunity which Constantine created, and remorselessly burnt heretics at the stake for the glory and honor of God.

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* Vol. II., p. 137.

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CONSTANTINE TO JOVIAN.

CONSTANTINE'S conversion to Christianity has been fixed at various dates. Cardinal Newman rashly asserts that he was converted by his vision of the luminous cross on his march to Rome to attack Maxentius in A.D. 312, and his subsequent victory over the emperor at the Milvian Bridge. But this famous "vision" is merely a myth. It is derived from a doubtful work of Eusebius. That inventive father, in his *de Vita Constantini*, alleges that the emperor, in a private conversation, related to him the following story of this wonderful apparition, which he confirmed with an oath :—

"About the middle hours of the day, as the sun began to verge towards its setting, he saw in the heavens, with his own eyes, the sun surmounted with the trophy of the cross, which was composed of light, and had a legend annexed, saying, *By this conquer*. And amazement seized him and the whole army at the sight, and the beholders wondered as they accompanied him in the march. And he said he was at a loss what to make of this spectre, and as he pondered and reflected upon it long, night came upon him by surprise. After this, as he slept, the Christ of God appeared to him, together with the sign before seen in the heavens, and bade him make a representation of the sign that appeared in the heavens, and to use that as a protection against the onsets of his enemies. And as soon as it was day, he arose, related the wonder to his friends; and then assembling the workers in gold and precious stones, he seated himself in the midst of them, and describing the appearance of the sign, he bade them imitate it in gold and precious stones. This we were once so fortunate as to set our eyes upon."*

Eusebius then gives a full description of this sacred standard, called the Labarum. The shaft was a long spear, surmounted by a crown of gold, bearing "the mysterious monogram, at once expressive of the figure

* Murdoch, footnote to Mosheim, Vol. I., p. 289-290.

of the cross and the initial letters of the name of Christ ;" and the silken veil, depending from a transverse beam, "was curiously inwrought with the images of the reigning monarch and his children."

According to Voltaire, some authors pretend that Constantine saw this vision at Besançon, others at Cologne, some at Treves, and others at Troyes. Cardinal Newman is silent on the matter, but he allows that there were disputes among early Christian writers whether the apparition was that of the monogram without the cross, or the cross without the monogram.

But more serious difficulties remain. Constantine's "vision" is not mentioned by a single Father of the fourth and fifth centuries, none of whom appears to have been acquainted with the work in which Eusebius relates it. Eusebius himself says nothing about it in his Ecclesiastical History, written twelve years after the event. Why did Eusebius first hear of it in a private conversation with Constantine twenty-five years after it occurred, when it was seen by the whole army as well as by the emperor. And what necessity was there for Constantine to "confirm with an oath" a fact of such publicity ?

Gibbon justly remarks that "the nicest accuracy is required in tracing the slow and almost imperceptible gradations by which the monarch declared himself the protector, and at length the proselyte of the church." It is certain that Constantine continued in the practice of Paganism until his fortieth year. He celebrated his victory over Maxentius at Rome according to the ancient rites ; and later still, as Gibbon ironically observes, "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 Auruspices."

Constantine and Licinius, in their edict of Milan (A.D. 313), granted their subjects "the liberty of follow-

* It is remarkable that Constantine calls the Lord's Day *dies solis*. He evidently wished to patronise Christianity as a powerful religion, without offending the ears of his Pagan subjects, who, although less admirably organised, were still more numerous.

ing whatever religion they please." They expressly included the Christians, but this was probably owing to their having been so recently persecuted by Diocletian.

Relying on Eusebius's questionable Life of Constantine, Gibbon says that after the defeat of Licinius (A.D. 324) the conqueror "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."

Constantine's presiding at the Council of Nice (A.D. 325) does not prove that he was then a Christian. Zosimus relates that he asked the Pagan priests to absolve him from the guilt of murdering his son, his nephew and his wife, and that on their refusal he embraced the more accommodating creed of their rivals, and cleansed himself in the expiatory blood of Christ. Gibbon considers this an anachronism, but Schlegel says "there is, perhaps, some degree of truth in the story." It is certain that Constantine had curious notions of Christianity long after the Council of Nice, and in one of his discourses, as Gibbon remarks, "he dwells with peculiar complacency on the Sybilline verses and the fourth eclogue of Virgil." It is still more remarkable that the first Christian Emperor was not really a member of the Church until a few days before his death, when *for the first time* he received the sacrament of baptism. Constantine may have hesitated between Paganism and Christianity until then, or he may have deferred his baptism till he had no more occasion for sinning, in order to ensure a safe passage to heaven.

The motives which induced Constantine to protect the Christians, and afterwards to favor them, were such as usually animate the rulers of mankind. He first granted them toleration, as Schlegel remarks, "not from a sense of justice, or from magnaminity, and still less from any attachment to the Christian religion, but from principles of worldly prudence. He wished to attach the Christians to his party." The judicious Mosheim conjectures that "the emperor had discernment to see that Christianity possessed great efficacy, and idolatry none at all, to strengthen public authority

and to bind citizens to their duty."* Gibbon expresses the same opinion in his ironical manner. "The throne of the emperor," he says, "would be established on a fixed and permanent basis if all their subjects, embracing the Christian doctrine, should learn to suffer and to obey." Voltaire, in his most impious poem, charges Constantine with making the altars of the Church a convenient footstool to his throne. The Christians, it is true, "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."†

Voltaire's opinion is perhaps correct, that Constantine "put himself at the head of Christianity without being a Christian." He naturally patronised a religion which inculcated passive obedience to princes, and maintained his divine right to rule according to the principles of despotism. Paganism never lent itself in this manner to the ambition of tyrants ; its Olympus was a kind of Republic, and it was always favorable to popular liberty. The literature of Greece and Rome breathed an unquenchable spirit of freedom, which ill suited the policy of an absolute despot in an empire which had lost every vestige of its ancient freedom. Constantine had the sagacity to perceive that Christianity was more adapted to his purpose. He patronised it, therefore, not as a philosopher, but as an emperor ; and finding that it realised his most sanguine expectations, he eventually decided to impose it upon all his subjects and to extirpate every other faith.

It is a signal illustration of the persecuting spirit which is inherent in all theologies, that the Christian clergy, who had only a few years before bitterly complained of their proscription, joyously assisted Constantine in his suppression of Paganism. Their almost incredible arrogance is proved by the fact that Paganism was still the religion of the vast majority of their

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* Vol. I., p. 288. † Gibbon, chap. xx.

fellow-subjects. Gibbon's estimate of the number of Christians at this time, although nibbled at by Milman, has never been seriously impaired :

"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 favorable calculation, however, that can be deduced from the examples of Antioch and of Rome will not permit 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.*

What an edifying spectacle to the philosopher ! Behold the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose yoke was easy and his burden light, forced by its professors down the throats of their Pagan neighbors, who outnumbered them by nearly twenty to one !

Let us also reflect that Christianity introduced the systematic persecution of heresy and unbelief. Such a principle was entirely foreign to Paganism. The Roman law tolerated every form of religion and every system of philosophy. Its impartiality was so absolute that the Pantheon of the eternal city afforded niches to all the gods of the empire ; yet when Tiberius was asked to allow the prosecution of a Roman citizen for blaspheming the gods he replied : "No, let the gods defend their own honour." We do not deny that the Christians were persecuted, although we challenge their exaggerated account of their sufferings. But their partial and occasional persecutions were prompted by political motives. They were regarded as members of a secret society, at once offensive to their Pagan neighbors and dangerous to the State ; and although they were sometimes punished, their doctrines were never proscribed. The principle of persecution was first infused into the Roman law by Constantine. According to Rénan :

"We may search in vain the whole Roman la before Constantine for a single passage against freedom of thought, and the

* Chap. xv.

history of the imperial government furnishes no instance of a prosecution for entertaining an abstract doctrine." *

Christianity inaugurated a new era of mental slavery. By forcibly suppressing dissent and establishing an Inquisition for detecting heretics, she carried tyranny into the secret recesses of the mind. "She thus," as Draper says, "took a course which determined her whole future career, and she became a stumbling-block in the intellectual advancement of Europe for more than a thousand years."

Constantine's policy manufactured Christians wholesale, for the masses of such an age were easily seduced or driven. The discreet Mosheim, while not attributing "the extension of Christianity wholly to these causes," allows that "both the fear of punishment and the desire of pleasing the Roman emperors were cogent reasons, in the view of whole nations as well as of individuals, for embracing the Christian religion."† Jortin likewise remarks that "along with those who were sincere in their profession, there came a multitude of hypocrites and nominal Christians."‡ Gibbon tells us how the people were bribed :

"The hopes of wealth and honors, 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 signalised 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 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 baptised 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."§

Concurrently with these bribes, Constantine devoted much of his energy and wealth to increasing the power and splendor of the Church. "He gave to the clergy,"

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* "Les Apôtres," first edition, p. 315.
† Vol. I., p. 305 ‡ Vol. II., p. 25. § Chap. xx.

says Schlegel, "the former privileges of the Pagan priests, and allowed legacies to be left to the churches, which were everywhere erected and enlarged. He was gratified with seeing the bisdops assume great state; for he thought the more respect the bishops commanded, the more inclined the Pagans would be to embrace Christianity."* Jortin remarks that the Emperor was possessed with the *building spirit*, and spent immense sums on palaces and churches, which obliged him to burden his people with taxes.† Gibbon satirically says that "Constantine too easily believed that he should purchase the favor of Heaven if he maintained the idle at the expense of the industrious, and distributed among the saints the wealth of the republic."‡ He gave to the bishops the privilege of being tried by their peers, and their episcopal brethren were their judges, even when they were charged with a capital crime. He originated the notion that clerical impunity was better than a public scandal, and declared that if he surprised a bishop in the act of adultery, he should cast his imperial mantle over the holy sinner. Montesquieu alleges that Constantine even ordained that, in the legal courts the single testimony of a bishop should suffice, without hearing other witnesses.§

Constantine's penal laws in favor of Christianity were still more influential. He condemned those who should *should speak evil of Christ* to lose half their estate. His laws against various heresies may be seen in the Justinian code. So far did he advance in true godliness, under the inspiration of the bishops and clergy, that he issued a decree for the demolition of all heretical temples in the following elegant strain:

"Know ye, Moravians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulinians and Cataphrygians, that your doctrine is both vain and false. O ye enemies of truth, authors and counsellors of death, ye spread abroad lies, oppress the innocent, and hide from the faithful the light of truth. . . . That your pestilential errors may spread no further, we enact by this law that none of you dare hereafter to meet at your conventicles, nor keep any factious or superstitious meetings, either in public buildings or in private houses, or in

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* Mosheim, Vol. I., p. 291. † Vol. II., p. 69. ‡ Chap xx.
§ "L'Esprit des Lois," Book 29, chap. xvi.

secret places; but if any of you have a care for the true religion, let them return to the Catholic Church. . . . And that our careful providence for curing these errors may be effectual, we have commanded that all your superstitious places of meeting, your heretical temples (if I may so call them), shall be, without delay or contradiction, pulled down or confiscated to the Catholic Church."

Such is the language, and such are the acts, which made Constantine "a pattern to all succeeding monarchs."

The emperor's reign was distracted by the famous Arian controversy. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, and his presbyter Arius, had a fierce and bitter dispute about the Trinity, the former contending that the Son was equal, and the latter that he was inferior, to the Father. According to Jortin

"Alexander wrote a circular letter to all bishops, in which he represented Arius and his partisans as heretics, apostates, blasphemers, enemies of God, full of impudence and impiety, forerunners of Antichrist, imitators of Judas, and men whom it was not lawful to salute, or bid God speed."*

This is merely the language of bigotry, for Sozomen acknowledges that these reprobates were learned, and to all appearance good men. As the quarrel grew inflamed, the soldiers and inhabitants joined in it, and much blood was shed in and about the city. Constantine wrote Alexander and Arius a long letter, bidding them be more peaceable. But as the controversy spread through the empire, he at length resolved (A.D. 325) to summon a Council of the Church at Nice in Bythinia to determine between them. After much wrangling, which Constantine peremptorily ended, the bishops and ecclesiastics discussed the subject of the Trinity. It was finally resolved by a majority that the Father and the Son were of the *same* substance, and not of *like* substance. The famous Nicene Creed was drawn up for subscription, with an addendum declaring that—

"The Holy Catholic and Apostlic Church anathematises those who say there was a time when the Son of God was not, and that before he was begotten he was not, and that he was made out of another substance or essence, and is created or changeable or alterable."†

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* Vol. II, p. 27. † Jortin, Vol. II, p. 66.

The Council of Nice only envenomed the dispute, for, as Gibbon observes, the emperor "extinguished the hope of peace and toleration from the moment that he assembled three hundred bishops within the walls of the same palace." Constantine ratified the Nicene Creed, and issued the following decree against the minority :

"Since Arius hath imitated wicked and ungodly men, it is just that he should undergo the same infamy with them. As, therefore, Porphyrius, an enemy of godliness, for his having composed wicked books against Christianity, hath found a fitting recompense in being infamous and having all his impious writings quite destroyed, so also it is now my pleasure that Arius and those of his sentiments shall be called Porphyrians, so that they may have the appellation of those whose manners they have imitated. Moreover, if any book composed by Arius shall be found, it shall be delivered to the fire, that not only his evil doctrine may be destroyed, but that there may not be the least remembrance of it left. This also I enjoin, that if anyone shall be found to have concealed any writing composed by Arius, and shall not immediately bring it and consume it in the fire, death shall be his punishment: for as soon as ever he is taken in this crime, he shall suffer capital punishment. God preserve you."

God preserve you! is a fine piece of irony, coming after a menace of death for reading an heretical book. Let it also be noticed that the first great Council of the Christian Church resulted in the first promulgation of the death penalty against heretics.

Ten years afterwards Constantine veered round and favored the Arians. He repeatedly commanded Athanasius, the Archbishop of Alexandria, to receive Arius into the Catholic communion, but that extraordinary man refused to comply with the emperor's will. At the Council of Tyre (A.D. 335) an Arian majority condemned Athanasius to degradation and exile for having, as they alleged, whipped or imprisoned six bishops, and murdered or mutilated a seventh ; and the great Archbishop found shelter for nearly two years in the court of Treves.

Meanwhile Arius came to an untimely end. Constantine ordered Alexander, the Athanasian bishop of the capital, to receive the heresiarch into communion

on the following Sunday. On the Saturday the bishop fasted and prayed, and in his church he besought God to avert the evil, even by taking Arius away.* The next day, as Arius was on his way to the church, he entered a house to attend to a call of nature, where, according to Athanasius, his bowels burst out. He was at any rate found dead, and the Athanasians saw a divine judgment in his sudden fate. "But when Alexander's party," says Draper, "proclaimed that his prayer had been answered, they forgot what that prayer must have been, and that the difference is little between praying for the death of a man and compassing it."†

Gibbon says that "those who press the literal narrative of the death of Arius must make their option between *poison* and *miracle*." He evidently inclines to the former choice, and he is followed in this by Draper. Cardinal Newman regards the death of Arius as a Church miracle. Jortin says, "surely it is not impossible that amongst his numerous enemies there might be one who would not scruple to give him a dose, and to send him out of the way."‡ The cautious Mosheim adopts the same view. "When I consider," he says, "all the circumstances of the case, I confess that to me it appears most probable, the unhappy man lost his life by the machinations of his enemies, being destroyed by poison. An indiscreet and blind zeal in religion has, in every age, led on to many crimes worse than this."§

Constantine himself died in the following year (May 22nd, A.D. 337) at Nicomedia. His body was laid in state for several days, and finally interred with gorgeous rites. According to Jortin, he had the honor of being the first Christian who was buried in a church. The true believers paid almost divine honor to his name, his tomb, and his statue, and called him a saint equal to the apostles. And as the clergy had bestowed upon him, during his life, the most fulsome praise

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* Newman, "Two Essays on Miracles," p. 328.
† Draper's "Intellectual Development of Europe," Vol. I., p. 279.
‡ Vol. II., p. 63. § Vol. I., p. 396.

even when he was committing the most flagitious crimes, so now, after his death, they had the effrontery to declare that God had endued his urn and statue with miraculous powers, and that whosoever touched them were healed of all diseases and infirmities.*

On the death of Constantine, Athanasius was restored to his primacy by Constantine the younger. He immediately, says Moshiem, began to expel the Arians and to restore the churches to the Catholic faith. Disturbances ensued, and Constantius (who, upon succeeding to the throne in the East, proceeded to walk in his father's footsteps by slaughtering his relations), being a semi-Arian, again expelled the primate of Alexandria. Constans, Emperor of the West, "who, in the indulgence of unlawful pleasures, still professed a lively regard for the orthodox faith,"† espoused his cause and threatened war upon his brother Constantius if Athanasius were not restored to his patriarchate. Constantius yielded, but on the death of his brother, two councils, at Arles (353) and Milan (355), confirmed the expulsion of Athanasius, all the bishops who refused to subscribe to the sentence being suspended from office and banished by the Emperor. Athanasius refused to abdicate, and his church was entered by the Duke of Egypt at the head of five thousand soldiers (February 9, 363).

"The doors of the sacred edifice yielded to the impetuosity of the atttack, 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 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

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* Jortin, Vol. II., p. 71. † Gibbon, chap. xxi.

resentment were gratified with impunity, and even with applause."*

Athanasius escaped, but many of his adherents were tortured and killed in the hope of finding him. Constantius offered a reward for Athanasius, dead or alive, denouncing him as "an impostor, a corruptor of men's souls, a disturber of the city, a pernicious fellow, one convicted of the worst crimes, not to be expiated by his suffering death ten times over." Athanasius retorted that the Emperor was an Arian idolator, a hangman, and one capable of all kinds of rapine, violence and murder.

Liberius, the Bishop of Rome, who had refused to sanction the exile of Athanasius, was himself banished, and Felix put in his place. The people, however, demanded the return of Liberius, and, upon making his submission to the Emperor, he was restored. Gibbon says:

"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."†

In the archbishopric of Alexandria was placed George of Cappadocia, the person who, after an infamous career, became the patron saint of England. Emerson thus describes him:

"George of Cappadocia, born at Epiphany, in Cicilia, was a low parasite, who got a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon. A rogue and informer, he got rich, and was forced to run from justice. He saved his money, embraced Arianism, collected a library, and got promoted by a faction to the episcopal throne of Alexandria. When Julian came, A.D. 361, George was dragged to prison; the prison was burst upon by the mob, and George was lynched, as he deserved. And this precious knave became, in good time, Saint George of England, patron of chivalry, emblem of victory and civility, and the pride of the best blood of the modern world."‡

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* Gibbon, chap. xxi. † Chap. xxi.
‡ Emerson's "English Traits," Works, vol. iv., p. 123.

Gibbon remarks :

"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."*

This worthy, not satisfied with violence against the clergy of the opposing faction, caused the widows of the Athanasian party to be scourged on the soles of their feet, the virgins to be stripped naked and then flogged with the prickly branches of palm-trees, or to be slowly scorched over fires till they abjured their creed.†

Although St. Athanasius had reason to complain of persecution, he evidently thought it an excellent thing for others. In a letter to Epictetus, Bishop of Corinth, he says : "I wonder your piety suffers these heresies, and that you did not immediately put those heretics under restraint and propose the true faith to them ; that if they would not forbear to contradict they might be declared heretics ; for it is not to be endured that these things should be either said or heard amongst Christians." And in another place he says "that they ought to be held in universal hatred for opposing the truth ;" and comforts himself that the emperor, upon due information would put a stop to their wickedness, and that they would not be long lived.

In Constantinople the triumph of Christianity ensured the same prevalence of fanaticism as at Rome and Alexandria. After the death of Alexander, the episcopal throne was disputed by Paul and Macedonius. In the space of fourteen years the former was five times driven from the throne. He was cast into prison, left six days without food, and eventually strangled.

The inauguration of Macedonius to the See of Constantinople was graced by the slaughter of about three thousand persons.‡ So great was his zeal that he not

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* Chap. xxi.

† St. Athanasius, "Historical Treatises," Pusey's Library of the Fathers, pp. 192—284.

‡ Milman's "History of Latin Christianity," vol. ii., p. 422

only compelled the reluctant to attend church but gagged their mouths and compelled them to receive the sacrament.* As the civil and military forces were at the command of his cruelty it was under no restraint. "The delicacy of virgins, guilty of no crime but nonconformity, was not allowed to shield them from violence; they suffered for their obstinacy by having their breasts squeezed between heavy and sharp pieces of wood, or scorched by the application of heated irons and roasted eggs."†

Socrates, the Church historian, tells us that "by the intestine war among the Christians, Constantinople was kept in a state of perpetual turbulence, and the most atrocious outrages were perpetrated whereby many lives were lost."‡

Africa was equally disturbed by the factions between the rival bishops Cæcilian and Donatus, whose followers afflicted its provinces above three hundred years, the feud being only extinguished when Christianity was overcome by Mohammedanism. Excommunicated by the Church of Rome, the Donatists boldly excommunicated all other churches than their own.

"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 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."§

Among the Donatists, the Circumcelliones for a time abstained, in obedience to the evangelical command,

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* Socrates, Ec. Hist. Book II., chap. xxx.

† Clarke, History of Intolerance, Vol. I., p. 303; 1820. Gibbon, chap xxi.

‡ Hist. Ecclest., ii., 12 § Gibbon, chap. xxi.

from the use of the sword, beating to death those who differed from their theological opinions with massive clubs, to which they gave the significant name of Israelites,* and the well-known sound of "Praise be to God," which they used as their war-cry, diffused consternation over the unarmed provinces of Africa. Many of these fanatics were possessed with the desire of martyrdom, which, in common with most of the early Christians, they deemed the sure passport to eternal bliss. They would rudely disturb the festivals and profane the temples of Paganism in order to excite revenge. Gibbon rightly observes :

"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 contrast between the reign of this emperor and that of his successor, the pagan Julian, forcibly suggests that Jesus indeed came to bring fire and sword. Julian decreed universal tolerance, nor did he visit a single Christian with punishment on account of his religion. The only means he used to combat the growing superstition was to write against it, and throughout his short but beneficent reign he afforded convincing proof of the superiority of his Paganism to the Christianity of his predecessors. No sooner however was the Christian Jovian on the throne than once more the spirit of bigotry burst into open violence. In Rome the rival bishops, Damasus and Ursinus, disputed by force of arms. Damasus, marching at the head of his own clergy and hired gladiators, prevailed, leaving one hundred and thirty-seven dead bodies in the church.‡ No wonder the famous Richard Baxter says of the bishops of this period :

"Their feuds and inhuman contentions were so many and so odious that it is a shame to read them Multitudes of cities had bishops set up against bishops, and some cities more than two or three, the people reviling and hating each other and sometimes

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* Tillemont, Memoires d'Hist. Eccles. Tome VI., pp. 88—98

† Gibbon, chap. xxi. ‡ Gibbon, chap. xxv.

fighting tumultously unto blood for their several prelates. The Christian world was made as a cock-pit and the Christian religion made a scorn by the contention of the bishops."*

Jovian made a disgraceful treaty with Persia, and retired to Antioch, where he indulged his disposition for pleasure. The contending leaders of various sects hastened to his court. Gibbon racily tells how

"The highways of the East were crowded with Homoousian, and Arian, and semi-Arian, and Eunomian bishops, who struggled to outstrip each other in the holy race; the apartments of the palace resounded with their clamors; and the ears of their prince were assaulted, and perhaps astonished, by the singular mixture of metaphysical argument and passionate invective.' †

The emperor declared for the orthodox doctrines established at the Council of Nice, and his decision carried with it the conversion of many Arian bishops. Although professing tolerance, he repealed the wise edicts of Julian which moderated the power of the clergy, and restored and enlarged their ecclesiastical immunities from the duties of citizenship. He re-established Athanasius on the archiepiscopal throne of Alexandria. In return he was promised by that prelate that his orthodox devotion would be rewarded with a long reign. The prophecy failed. Jovian died after reigning but seven months. Yet the success of Christianity was assured, and the emperors who succeeded him all continued, though with unequal zeal, the extirpation of Paganism. Gibbon tells us that already, in many cities, the temples were shut or deserted, and the philosophers who had taught in the reign of Julian "thought it prudent to shave their beards and disguise their profession." The triumph of Christianity meant the fall of philosophy, the decline of civic spirit, and the long succeeding night of the Dark Ages.

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* Treatise on Episcopacy, p. 24. † Chap. xxv.

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ATHANASIUS TO HYPATIA.

IN the reign of Valens, the Trinitarian party set up Evagrius as patriarch of Constantinople. The Arian party elected Demophilus. A contest ensued in which the Arians triumphed. Evagrius was driven out and his adherents were subjected to a variety of outrages. Eighty presbyters of the party went to carry a complaint to Valens, then in Nicomedia, but the ship they embarked in was purposely set on fire and deserted, and the whole company of ecclesiastics perished.*

About the same time, Gregory Nazianzen complained of being attacked by the Arians of Constantinople. Ancient women, he says, worse than Jezebels, young nuns, common beggars, and monks like old goats, issuing out of their monasteries, armed with clubs and stones, attacked him and his flock in their church, and did much mischief. He did not scruple to retaliate and advocate the persecution of the Arians. He also incited Nectarius to persecute the Apollinarists, which was done accordingly.†

Upon the ascension of Theodosius (379), the orthodox party again triumphed, Demophilus, the Arian patriarch of Constantinople, being then banished.

Theodosius convoked the Council of Constantinople, which admitted the Holy Ghost to all the honors of the Trinity, and anathematised all heretics, denouncing by name the Eunomians, the Anomians, the Arians, the Semi-Arians, the Eudoxians, the Marcellians, the Photinians, the Apollinarists, the Macedonians, the Sabbatians, the Novatians, the Montanists, the Quartodecimani, the Tetratites, and the Sabellians.

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* Socrates, Ec. Hist., Vol. IV., pp. 13—16; Milner's "History of th Church of Christ," Vol. I., p. 609.

† Jortin, Vol. II, pp. 317—319.

When the council was ended, the Emperor put forth two edicts against heretics, the first prohibiting their holding assemblies in public places or private houses, the second forbidding them to meet in fields or villages, and ordaining that the building or ground used for that purpose should be confiscated. Gibbon tells us :

"In the space of fifteen years, he promulgated at least fifteen severe edicts against the heretics, more especially against those who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity ; and to deprive them of every hope of escape, he sternly enacted that if any laws or rescripts should be alleged in their favor, the judges should consider them as the illegal productions either of fraud or forgery."*

The penal statutes were directed both against heretical ministers and their congregations ; the former were exposed to the heavy penalties of exile and confiscation if they presumed to preach the doctrines or to practise the rites of their "accursed" sects, the latter were disqualified from the possession of honorable or lucrative employments. "Their religious meetings, whether public or secret, by day or by night, in cities or in the country, were equally proscribed by the edicts of Theodosius ; and the building or ground which had been used for that illegal purpose was forfeited to the Imperial domain."†

All who did not agree with Damasus, the Bishop of Rome, and Peter the Bishop of Alexander, were ordered to be driven into exile and deprived of civil rights.

In Constantinople, where there were many Arians, especially among the Goths, who had been converted by the Arian Ulfilas,‡ Gaina, one of the officers, petitioned for a church for his co-religionists. Saint Chrysostom bitterly inveighed against the tolerance of heresy, and urged the laws of Theodosius. The saint carried his point, and the consequence was an insurrection of the Goths in the city of Constanti-

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* Chap. xxvii. † Gibbon, chap. xxvii.

‡ Ulfilas, surnamed by Constantius "the Moses of the Goths," made for them a translation of the Scriptures from which he had the prudence to exclude the books of Samuel and Kings, lest their warlike contents should be found to stimulate the ferocity of the barbarians.

nople, which nearly ended in the burning of the imperial palace and the murder of the emperor, and actually led to the cutting off of all the Gothic soldiers and the burning of their church with great numbers of persons in it who fled thither for safety and were locked in to prevent their escape.

Similarly, at Milan, the empress Justina, a patroness of Arianism, and a Jezebel, as St. Ambrose calls her, interceded with her son, Valentinian II., to permit the Arians to have one church for worship in that city. St. Ambrose flatly refused, declaring that all the churches belonged to the bishop ; and, as the Christian populace threatened insurrection, the haughty prelate prevailed.

St. Epiphanius boasted of having caused by his information seventy women, some of high rank, to be sent into exile for their Gnostic heresies, from which he had himself recanted. He saved himself from the fate of his co-religionists by turning evidence against them on the outbreak of the persecution. When the empress Eudoxia recommended to his prayers her son Theodosius the younger, who was dangerously ill, this fanatical saint sent her word that the child should recover if she would get the Origenists and the works of Origen condemned.* St. Epiphanius pursued even the orthodox Saint Chrysostom with his malice, and piously wished that he might die in banishment, as indeed he did. St. Chrysostom was not behind him in Christian courtesy. "I hope you will not live to return to your own city," he declared ; and the kindly wish was equally fulfilled.

Theodosius ordered that the heretics called Encratites, Saccophori and Hydroparastatæ, should be punished *summo supplicio et inexpiabili pœna.* And for the detection of such persons he appointed Inquisitors, who were thus instituted for the first time.†

The guilt of the Quartodecimani, who perpetrated the atrocious crime of celebrating Easter on the day of the Jewish Passover, and of the Manichæans and Audians,

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* Jortin, Vol. II., p. 326.

† Jortin, Vol. II., p. 320; Gibbon, chap. xxvii.

was esteemed of such magnitude that it could only be expiated by the death of the offender.

In the West, after the Council of Saragosa (381), had condemned the errors of Priscillian, Bishop of Avila, in Spain, he and his followers were prosecuted, chiefly at the instigation of Ithacius, Bishop of Sassuba, and charged with magic and numerous impieties. Priscillian and his friends went to Rome to justify themselves, but Damasus would not admit them even into his presence. They then repaired to Milan to beg the same favor of St. Ambrose. He also refused to give them a hearing. Ithacius, and other bishops of like mind, managed so well with the western usurper, Maximius, that he condemned Priscillian and his chief followers to be tortured and executed. Among these were Matronius (called Latronian by Sulpitius Severus and Gibbon), a poet who is said to have rivalled the fame of the ancients; Felicissimus, Julianius and a noble, learned lady, named Euchrotia. Others had their goods confiscated and were banished to the Scilly Islands.*

From this treatment of heretics we may infer the sentiments held towards Jews and Pagans. St. Ambrose, who by his zeal and inflexibility acquired supremacy over the mind of Theodosius, induced that monarch to abolish the altar of Victory which remained the symbol of Paganism in the hall of the Roman Senate.

Symmachus, the Pagan who opposed him, was disgraced and banished. Theodosius then proposed to the Senate, according to the forms of the republic, the important question whether the worship of Jupiter or that of Christ should be the religion of the Romans. Gibbon says—

"The liberty of suffrages, which he affected to allow, was destroyed by the hopes and fears that his presence inspired; and the arbitrary exile of Symmachus was a recent admonition that it might be dangerous to oppose the wishes of the monarch. On a regular division of the Senate, Jupiter was condemned and de-

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* Dupin, "Ecclesiastical Writers, Priscillian." Neander, Vol IV., p. 505

graded by the sense of a very large majority; and it is rather surprising that any members should be found bold enough to declare by their speeches and votes that they were still attached to the interest of an abdicated deity."*

The proof of the ascendancy of St. Ambrose over Theodosius was seen not only in his making him do penance for the wanton massacre of seven thousand persons at Thessalonica, but in a matter much less to the Father's credit. The Governor of the East reported to Theodosius that a synagogue of the Jews and a church of the Valentinians had been burnt by the Christian populace at the instigation of the bishop. Theodosius gave orders that the synagogue should be rebuilt at the bishop's charge. Thereupon St. Ambrose wrote to him a letter which is still extant,† declaring that the order was not consistent with the emperor's piety, defending the action of the bishop and those who burnt the synagogue and maintaining the unlawfulness of rebuilding it. He further declared that he would have done the same thing at Milan if God had not anticipated him by burning the Jewish synagogue himself, and even threatened to deprive the emperor of communion if he did not recall the order. The pious monarch complied with the will of the inflexible ecclesiastic and excused the incendiaries from making restitution.‡ The same saint, in advocating the plunder of the vestal virgins and the Pagan priests, maintained the doctrine that it is criminal for a Christian state to grant any endowment to the ministers of any but the orthodox religion,§ and he expressly praised and recommended the zeal of Josiah in the destruction of idolatry.

Dean Milman, in his "History of Latin Christianity," gives to St. Ambrose all the credit or discredit of extinguishing Paganism. He says:

"It was Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, who enforced the final sentence of condemnation against Paganism; asserted the sin, in

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* Chap. xxviii. † Epistle XL.

‡ Jortin, Vol. II., p. 226, and Dupin, "History of Ecclesiastica Writers: Ambrose."

§ Epistle XVIII.

a Christian Emperor, of assuming any Imperial title connected with Pagan worship; and of permitting any portion of the public revenue to be expended on the rites of idolatry. It was Ambrose who forbade the last marks of respect to the tutelar divinities of Rome in the public ceremonies."*

When Theodosius had become sole master of the Roman empire, after the death of Valentinian II., he proceeded with the utmost zeal to extirpate the Pagan religion. At first the inspection of the entrails of victims and magical rites had been made capital offences, but now (in A.D. 391) he issued an edict forbidding all sacrifices by the most severe punishment, and even prohibiting the entering into the Temple. In A.D. 392 all immolations were forbidden to any person of whatever rank, under pain of death, and all other acts of idolatry under forfeiture of the house or land in which the offence was committed. Even the use of harmless garlands, frankincense and libations of wine was condemned. To hang up a simple chaplet was to incur the forfeiture of an estate. Worse still, the Lares and Penates, the household gods, around which clustered the tender ancestral associations of Paganism, were included in these rigorous proscriptions, and those who failed to reveal offenders and bring them to punishment were threatened with penalties.† Jortin candidly remarks:

"One would think that the Emperor intended to turn all his Christian subjects into informers and pettifoggers, and to set them, like so many spies and eavesdroppers, to peep into the dwellings of the Pagans, and to see whether they paid any religious honors to their household gods."‡

If the French Freethinkers were not only to close the churches and proscribe the performance of mass as a penal offence, but were also to punish the private use of rosaries and relics, and the hanging up of religious pictures in the home, we should have a parallel to the high-handed proceedings of Christians

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* Vol. I., p. 101.

† Milman's "History of Christianity," Vol. III., 64. Gibbon, chap. xxviii.

‡ Vol. II., p. 339

towards their opponents as soon as ever they found themselves invested with power.

Christians universally deemed it their duty to suppress and destroy idolatry, and the sanguinary laws of the Jews, and the example of their dealing with idolators, were frequently held up as the models for Christian conduct. Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," observes that :

"A large portion of theological ethics was derived from writings in which religious massacres, on the whole the most ruthless and sanguinary upon record, were said to have been directly enjoined by the deity, in which the duty of suppressing idolatry by force was given a greater prominence than any article of the moral code, and in which the spirit of intolerance has found its most eloquent and most passionate expressions.* Besides this the destiny theologians represented as awaiting the misbeliever was so ghastly and so apalling as to render it almost childish to lay any stress upon the earthly suffering that might be inflicted in the extirpation of error."

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"The new religion, unlike that which was disappearing, claimed to dictate the opinions as well as the actions of men, and its teachers stigmatised as an atrocious crime the free expression of every opinion on religious matters diverging from them."†

In the reign of Valens laws had been published ostensibly against sorcery, but really directed against Pagan philosophy and learning. Dean Milman tells us :—

"So severe an inquisition was instituted into the possession of magical books, that, in order to justify their sanguinary proceedings, vast heaps of manuscripts relating to law and general literature were publicly burned, as if they contained unlawful matter. Many men of letters throughout the East, in their terror, destroyed their whole libraries, lest some innocent or unsuspected work should be seized by the ignorant or malicious informer, and bring them unknowingly within the relentless penalties of the law."‡

Theodosius also decreed that "all writings whatever which Porphyry or anyone else has written against

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* "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? yea, I hate them with a perfect hatred."

† Vol. I., pp 420, 454.

‡ "History of Christianity," Book III., Vol. III., chap. vii., p. 43.

the Christian religion, in the possession of whomsoever they shall be found, shall be committed to the fire." Thus were the evidences of Christianity effectually established, and the opposition of learned and philosophical Pagans overcome. Draper says of the ecclesiastics of that time :

"A burning zeal rather than the possession of profound learning animated them. But, eminent position once attained, none stood more in need of the appearance of wisdom. Under such circumstances, they were tempted to set up their own notions as final and unimpeachable truth, and to denounce as magic, or the sinful pursuit of vain trifling, all the learning that stood in the way. In this the hand of the civil power assisted. It was intended to cut off every philosopher. Every manuscript that could be seized was forthwith burned. Throughout the East, men in terror destroyed their libraries, for fear that some unfortunate sentence contained in any of the books should involve them and their families in destruction. The universal opinion was that it was right to compel men to believe what the majority of society had now accepted as the truth, and, if they refused, it was right to punish them. No one was heard in the dominating party to raise his voice on behalf of intellectual liberty."*

Draper also remarks : "Impartial history is obliged to impute the origin of these tyrannical and scandalous acts of the civil power to the influence of the clergy, and to hold them responsible for the crimes."

St. Augustine was the most renowned theologian of that age, and of him Mr. Lecky observes :

"For a time he shrank from, and even condemned, persecution ; but he soon perceived in it the necessary consequence of his principles. He recanted his condemnation ; he flung his whole genius into the cause ; he recurred to it again and again, and he became the framer and the representative of the theology of intolerance.

"The arguments by which Augustine supported persecution were, for the most part, those which I have already stated. Some of them were drawn from the doctrine of exclusive salvation, and others from the precedents of the Old Testament. It was merciful, he contended, to punish heretics, even by death, if this could save them or others from the eternal suffering that awaited the unconverted. Heresy was described in Scripture as a kind of adultery ; it was the worst species of murder, being the murder

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* Vol. I., pp. 301, 302

of souls; it was a form of blasphemy, and on all these grounds might justly be punished. If the New Testament contained no examples of the apostles employing force, this was simply because in their time no priest had embraced Christianity. But had not Elijah slaughtered with his own hand the prophets of Baal? Did not Hezekiah and Josiah, and the king of Nineveh, and Nebuchadnezzar, after his conversion, destroy by force idolatry within their dominions, and were they not expressly commended for this piety? St. Augustine also seems to have originated the application of the words 'Compel them to come in' to religious persecution."*

Of St. Jerome, Jortin remarks:

"If we should say that Jerome was a persecutor, we should do him no wrong; we have it under his own hand."†

With these views animating their ablest men, and with a bigoted and priest-led emperor upon the throne, the Christians felt themselves authorised to avenge on the Pagan edifices any infraction of the persecuting imperial edicts. Theodosius authorised Cynegius, Prefect of the East, to shut the temples, to seize or destroy the instruments of idolatry, to abolish the privileges of the priests, and to confiscate the consecrated property, for the benefit of the emperor, of the Church and of the army.‡ He further decreed that, if any of the Governors of Egypt so much as entered a temple, he should be fined fifteen pounds of gold. The Christians were not satisfied with this. As long as the temples remained, the Pagan fondly cherished the secret hope that an auspicious revolution, a second Julian, might again restore the altars of the gods; and the earnestness with which they addressed their unavailing prayers to the throne increased the zeal of Christians to extirpate without mercy the root of superstition. Moreover, as Dean Milman observes:

"The Christians believed in the existence of the heathen deities, with, perhaps, more undoubting faith than the heathens themselves. The dæmons who inhabited the temples were spirits of malignant and pernicious power, which it was no less the in-

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* "History of Rationalism in Europe," Vol. II., p. 23—25.

† Vol. II., p. 324.

‡ Gibbon, chap. xxviii.; Etienne Chastel, "Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme dans l'Empire du Orient. Ouvrage couronné par l'Academie," p. 190; Paris, 1856.

terest than the duty of the Christian to expel from their proud and attractive mansions."*

The canons of Gregory and Basil, as well as the severe edicts of Theodosius against apostacy, by which all who, having once become Christians, afterwards returned to Paganism, were made outlaws, show that Paganism was often secretly cherished by converts.†

Dean Milman proceeds to relate how,

"Soon after the accession of Theodosius, the Pagans, particularly in the East, saw the storm gathering in the horizon. The monks, with perfect impunity, traversed the rural districts, demolishing all the unprotected edifices. In vain did the Pagans appeal to the episcopal authority; the bishops declined to repress the over-active, perhaps, but pious zeal of their adherents."‡

In Gaul, the celebrated St. Martin of Tours went from place to place, with a band of faithful monks, burning temples and destroying the sacred places.§ Tillemont tells us "he was persuaded, as almost all the saints were, that the end of the world was at hand."‖ His life was speedily regarded as a model for the imitation of all devout Christians.¶ In Syria the divine and excellent Marcellus, as the Bishop of Apamea is styled by the church historian, Theodoret, resolved to level with the ground the Pagan temples within his diocese. He himself set fire to one temple, but, while his followers went to burn another, a band of rustics caught and burnt him.** Gibbon tells us that "the synod of the province pronounced, without hesitation, that the holy Marcellus had sacrificed his life in the cause of God." The stately temple at Edessa, one of the most magnificent edifices in the world, was seized by a troop of monks and soldiers and completely destroyed The Pagan orator, Libanius, who, as the minister of Julian

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* "History of Christianity," Book III., chap. viii., Vol. III., p. 62.

† Fleury, "Histoire du Christianisme," Book XIX., chap. xxxiii.; Chastel, p. 184.

‡ "History of Christianity," Vol. III., p. 65.

§ Gibbon, chap. xxviii.; Count A. A. Beugnot, "Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme en Occident, Vol. I., p. 299.

‖ Chap. x., p. 340. ¶ Beugnot, p 363

** Et. Chastel, p. 200; Gibbon, chap. xxviii

had exhibited a spirit of tolerance even more remarkable than that of his master, in a letter to the emperor, pleaded the peasants' cause with courage, dignity and pathos.* He recalled the illustrious origin and association of the temples which were, he said, to the peasants the symbol and manifestation of religion—the solace of their troubles, the most sacred of their joys. To destroy their temples was to annihilate their dearest associations ; the tie that linked them to the dead would be severed ; the poetry of life, the consolation of labor, the source of faith, would be destroyed. Conversions, as the result of such persecution, were but acts of hypocrisy. Libanius even condescended to appeal to motives of taste to save the gorgeous and artistic monuments of antiquity, and he suggested that, if alienated from religious uses and let for profane purposes, they might be a productive source of revenue. But the eloquence and arguments of the Pagan orator were wasted on unheeding ears. Although the emperor at first did not direct the destruction of the temples, the monks were permitted to take the law in their own hands with impunity.

Gibbon tells us :

"In almost every province of the Roman world an army of fanatics, without authority and without discipline, invaded the peaceful inhabitants ; and the ruin of the fairest structures of antiquity still displays the ravages of *those* barbarians, who alone had time and inclination to execute such laborious destruction."

The Christian barbarians went to work in a spirit of ferocity, regardless of all that had made Pagan civilisation valuable. They denied not only liberty of worship, but what they had been allowed to the full by Paganism—liberty of thought and expression. They have ever since denied it, and not even yet is the freedom that was lost by the triumph of Christianity fully recovered. To the true believer objects of art and culture were but vanities, seducing from the claims of another world. Eunapius informs us that the monks led the Goths through Thermopylæ into Greece, and

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* Libanius pro Templis. (See Lecky, "History of Rationalism in Europe," ii., 20)

rejoiced in their devastation of the classic monuments of Greek art.*

"After the edicts of Theodosius," says Gibbon, "had severely prohibited the sacrifices of the Pagans, they were still tolerated in the city and temple of Serapis." The ruins of this noble edifice may still be distinguished at Alexandria. It "rivalled the pride and magnificence of the Capitol," and "its stately halls and exquisite statues displayed the triumph of the arts." The great Museum within its precincts became the favored seat of science and learning, to which philosophers flocked from all parts of the world. Botanical gardens, zoological menageries, anatomical and astronomical schools, and chemical laboratories, afforded ample provision for study. There were also two splendid libraries, containing over seven hundred thousand volumes, which had been collected at immense labour and expense. The Alexandrine school produced some of the most distinguished men in the history of science; such as Enclid the geometer, Archimedes the mechanist, Eratosthenes the astronomer, Apollonius who is said to have invented the first clock, Hero who seems to have invented the first steam-engine, and Hippocrates the father of medicine. But this great scientific school had expired before the age of Theodosius, although Alexandria still sheltered the relics of Greek philosophy, and the Serapion preserved the learning of antiquity upon its shelves.

The Archbishop of Alexandria at this period was Theophilus, who is described by Gibbon as "the perpetual enemy of peace and virtue; a bold, bad man, whose hands were alternately polluted with gold and with blood."† Jortin says that "he was a man of parts, and a consummate knave." "Socrates, Palladius, and other writers," he adds, "agree in describing Theophilus as a prelate guilty of perjury, calumny, violence, persecution, lying, cheating, robbing, bearing false witness."‡ Jortin elsewhere describes him as a "covetous and violent prelate," who "employed the basest

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* Chastel, p. 215. † Chap. xxviii.

‡ Vol. III., pp. 48, 67

ingenuity and the most scandalous tricks to revenge himself" on those who "could not approve his vile behavior;" and, indeed, "there was nothing of which he was not capable." As a persecutor, he was exceedingly active and unscrupulous. He assembled a council at Alexandria in A.D. 399, and procured the condemnation of the works of Origen. He then ordered the excommunication of all who approved them, and with an armed force drove the monks from the mountains of Nitria.* His malice was also directed against Chrysostom. By the private invitation of the empress Eudoxia, whom the great preacher had reviled as Jezebel, "Theophilus landed at Constantinople, with a stout body of Egyptian mariners, to encounter the populace; and a train of dependent bishops, to secure, by their voices, the majority of a synod."† Chrysostom was summoned to the Council of Chalcedon, but he "refused to trust either his person, or his reputation, in the hands of his implacable enemies." He was therefore condemned as contumacious and deposed from his archbishopric. His arrest and banishment were the result of this sentence. But he was soon recalled and avenged. "The first astonishment of his faithful people," says Gibbon, "had been mute and passive: they suddenly rose with unanimous and irresistible fury. Theophilu escaped; but the promiscuous crowd of monks and Egyptian mariners were slaughtered without pity in the streets of Constantinople."‡

It was reserved for this fighting prelate to destroy the Alexandrine library in the name of Christ. After a bloody dispute between the Christians and the Pagans, in which the latter defended their temple with desperate courage, an imperial rescript of Theodosius ordered the immediate destruction of the idols of Alexandria. Headed by their archbishop, the Chris-

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* Jortin Vol, III., p. 84; Mosheim, Vol. I., p. 368. The decision of Theophilus was supported by the Catholic Church, and the writings of Origen are still of disputed authority. According to Bayle, many Romish divines believe this Father is in hell, while others maintain that he is in heaven.

† Gibbon, chap. xxxii. ‡ Chap. xxxii

tians began the holy enterprise. The great temple of Serapis was reduced to a heap of rubbish, and the battle-axe of a Christian soldier shattered the huge idol, whose limbs were ignominiously dragged through the streets.* Not content with this ravage, the archbishop turned his attention to the library, which "was pillaged or destroyed; and nearly twenty years afterwards the appearance of the empty shelves excited the regret and indignation of every spectator whose mind was not totally darkened by religious prejudice."†

Dr. Smith seeks to exonerate Theophilus and his pious rabble from this crime. "It would appear," he says, "that it was only the *sanctuary* of the god that was levelled with the ground, and that the library, the halls, and other buildings in the consecrated ground, remained standing long afterwards." He "concludes" that the library "existed down to A.D. 638," when, according to Amrou, it was burnt by the order of the caliph Omar.‡ But Gibbon easily disposes of this fabulous story. The destruction of books is repugnant to the spirit and the precepts of Mohammedanism, and the early historians of the Saracenic capture of Alexandria do not allude to such an incident.

Theophilus was succeeded in the see of Alexandria by his nephew Cyril, who flourished from A.D. 412 to A.D. 444. His first exploit was characteristic of his family and his profession. "He immediately," says Socrates, "shut up all the Novatian churches in Alexandria, took away all their plate and furniture, and all the goods and chattels of their bishop, Theopemptus."§

He next attacked the Jews, who numbered forty thousand.

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* Gibbon cites from Pliny a story which is too good to be missed. "Is it true" (said Augustus to a veteran of Italy. at whose house he supped) "that the man who gave the first blow to the golden statue of Anaitis was instantly deprived of his eyes and his life?" "I was that man" (replied the clear-sighted veteran), "and you now sup on one of the legs of the goddess."

† Gibbon, chap. xxviii.

‡ Milman's "Gibbon," Dr. Smith's edition: Editor's notes, Vol. III p. 419, and Vol. VI., pp. 337—338.

§ Book VII., chap. vii.

"Without any legal sentence, without any royal mandate, the patriarch, at the dawn of day, led a seditious multitude to the attack of the synagogues. Unarmed and unprepared, the Jews were incapable of resistance; their houses of prayer were levelled with the ground, and the episcopal warrior, after rewarding his troops with the plunder of their goods, expelled from the city the remnant of the unbelieving nation."*

Jortin alleges that the Jews began the quarrel, but he censures, no less severely than Gibbon, the "insolent behavior" of this soldier of the cross.

Orestes, the Roman governor, who protested against Cyril's usurpation of the secular power, was assaulted in the streets by "wild beasts of the desert" in the form of Christian monks. His face was wounded by a stone, but the monk who cast it was seized and executed. Cyril buried him with great honor, preached his funeral sermon, changed his name from Ammonius to Thaumasius, the *wonderful*, and elevated a rebel and an assassin into a martyr and a saint.

Cyril was by no means a man of genius. He held that "Christians ought to believe without inquiring too curiously, and that a man must be a Jew to insist upon reasons and to ask *how* on mysterious subjects, and that the same *how* would bring him to the gallows."† According to Jortin, "his writings overflow with trash," and "his sermons are flat and tiresome to the last degree."‡ Yet a comely person and a musical voice acquired for him the fame of a popular preacher; and his reputation was heightened by a "band of parasites, who used to praise him and clap him when he preached."§ His pride was incensed, however, by the fame of a Pagan rival, whom he removed by the method of assassination.

"Hypatia, the daughter of Theon the mathematician, was initiated in her father's studies; her learned comments have elucidated the geometry of Apollonius and Diophantus, and she publicly taught, both at Athens and Alexandria, the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. In the bloom of beauty, and in the

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* Gibbon, chap. xlvii.
† Bibliothèque Universelle," vii., 54.
‡ Vol. III., p. 107.
§ Jortin, Vol. III., p. 107; Gibbon, chap. xlvii

maturity of wisdom, the modest maid refused her lovers and instructed her disciples; the persons most illustrious for their rank or merit were impatient to visit the female philosopher; and Cyril beheld, with jealous eye, the gorgeous train of horses and slaves who crowded the door of her academy. A rumour was spread among the Christians, that the daughter of Theon was the only obstacle to the reconciliation of the prefect and the archbishop; and that obstacle was speedily removed. On a fatal day, in the holy season of Lent, Hypatia was torn from her chariot, stripped naked, dragged to the church, and inhumanly butchered by the hands of Peter the reader, and a troop of savage and merciless fanatics: her flesh was scraped from her bones with sharp oyster-shells, and her quivering limbs were delivered to the flames. The just progress of inquiry and punishment was stopped by seasonable gifts; but the murder of Hypatia has imprinted an indelible stain on the character and religion of Cyril of Alexandria.*

Dr. Smith accuses Gibbon of exaggeration, and says that "her throat was probably cut with an oyster-shell," as though the supposition diminished the heinousness of her murder. Jortin says that "Cyril was strongly suspected of being an instigator of this iniquity," and that "neither Socrates nor Valesius has dropped one word in his vindication," while Damascius openly accuses him of the crime.†

So perished this young and beautiful woman, a victim to the envy and bigotry of a Christian priest, who was unworthy to touch the hem of her garment. She typified in her own sweet person the witchery and the magic of Greece. With Hypatia philosophy itself expired in the intellectual metropolis of the world. There was henceforth no shelter for the lovers of wisdom; the world was prostrate at the feet of the Church; and the Dark Ages, swiftly approaching, buried almost every memory of what was once noble and lovely in the antiquity of thought.

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* Gibbon, chap. xlvii. † Vol. III., p. 106, 107.

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MONKERY.

THE Abbé Migné, in his great Theological Dictionary, boldly declares that Jesus Christ was the first monk, and in support of this position, his living in the wilderness, his maxims of selling all, quitting father and mother, taking no thought for the morrow, and making oneself an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake, may be appealed to. There is, however, abundant evidence that monkery existed in India long anterior to the Christian era. Mr. H. C. Lea, in his fine history of "Sacerdotal Celibacy," says: "In this, as in some other forms of asceticism, we must look to Buddhism for the model on which the Church fashioned her institutions."* Dr. Oldenberg rightly tells us that the community established by Buddha was "a church of monks and nuns." There is proof from Philo, Josephus and Pliny, that vegetarian, celibate and contemplative communities, which in many respects strikingly remind us of the Buddhists, were in existence in Egypt and near the Red Sea (indeed Philo says they abounded both among the Greeks and barbarians) under the names of Essenes and Therapeuts. So similar were these communities to the early Christians, that Eusebius devotes a chapter of his ecclesiastical history to proving that they *were* Christians.† Certainly monasticism flourished much earlier than Protestants usually allow. In the Acts of the Apostles we find the faithful living in common, and having deacons or stewards to manage the common affairs; and in the Epistle to Timothy are directions about a distinct order of widows, and in regard to exercises. The apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla was certainly

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* P. 94, Boston, 1884. The Rev. Spence Hardy's work on "Eastern Monachism" gives full particulars of Buddhist monkery.

† Book II., chap. xvii.

in existence in the second century, for it is referred to by Tertullian as being comparatively old. In this work we find Paul represented as preaching: "Blessed are they who keep their flesh undefiled, for they shall be the temple of God. Blessed are they who abandon their secular employments, for they shall be accepted of God. Blessed are they who have wives as though they had them not, for they shall be made angels of God."* Thecla, listening to this preaching, leaves her home and the young man to whom she was engaged, and, in the words of the book, "lived a monastic life," being tempted by devils and attended by a number of miracles. James, the brother of the Lord, according to Hegesippus, a writer of the second century, was never known to drink wine or fermented beverages, and ate no flesh. He never permitted his hair to be cut or used a bath. From kneeling so often and for so long a time his knees had become horny like those of a camel.†

It was in Egypt, the motherland of superstition, as Shaftesbury terms it, that Christian monasticism first took its rise, and it was there that it obtained its most austere developments. Here were the colonies of Essenes and Therapeuts, and possibly it was Alexandria, the great emporium of the east, that was meant in the reference to "Alassada, the capital of the Yona country," in the Buddhist chronicles which relate that a colony of Buddhists was settled there.‡ The priests of Serapis were in reality monks, and in demolishing the Serapion the Christians were destroying the principal edifice of a rival monastic system. Dr. Weingarten, the author of the article, "Monasticism," in Dr. Schaff's "Religious Encyclopædia," says:

"Just as the Christian stylite saints of the fifth century were a mere imitation of the stylite saints of the Syrian Astarte, so the Christian monks of the fourth century were a simple imitation of the Egyptian monks of Serapis."

—Origen, as it is well known, made himself a eunuch

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* Chap. i., p. 13, 15, 16.
† Eusebius, Eccles. Hist., Vol II., p. 23.
‡ Mahawanso, chap. xxx., p. 171, Turnour's translation.

for the kingdom of heaven's sake. All the disciples of his contemporary, Valens of Barathis, made themselves eunuchs and held that none else could live a life of purity. Entertaining this notion, they not only dismembered those of their own persuasion, but all others on whom they could lay their hands.*

St. Antony is usually termed the first of the fathers of the desert. He owes this distinction rather to his life having been written by St. Athanasius for the emulation of the monks of the West than to any other circumstance. He was an Egyptian (born A.D. 251). In youth he refused to learn his letters, despising the vanity of secular learning. Before leaving the world, he put his sister in a nunnery and sold all his goods, giving the proceeds to the poor. He then retired into a lonely part of the country, devoting himself to prayer and self-mortification. Here he had a great many severe contests with the Devil, whom he overcame by prayer and fasting. By day the Devil would seek to inspire him with love of money, or beset him in the shape of animals, and by night would make him blush by tickling his flesh and assuming the shape and actions of a female. These temptations have been frequently made the subject of art, and by means both of literature and painting the miraculous trials of St. Antony were better known to the Christians of the middle ages than were those of Abraham himself. "He ate once a day, after the setting of the sun, and sometimes only once in two days, often even in four. His food was bread with salt, his drink nothing but water."† This sufficiently explains his visions. He wore next his body a hair shirt and upon this the skin of an animal. These he never changed; his body he never washed —not even his feet would he allow to touch water. He predicted future events, cast out devils, and performed a great number of miracles. On one occasion, Saint Jerome tells us, he visited Saint Paul of Thebes, then a very old man, who had been fed daily for sixty years on half a loaf of bread brought by a raven. On this

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* "Christian Antiquities," Vol. I., p. 77.

† Rev. C. Kingsley, "The Hermits," p. 39.

occasion the bird brought double allowance. Paul then died, and was buried by two lions, who had for some time been his friends and companions. Saint Jerome, in his "Life of Paul of Thebes," declares that he had seen a monk who for thirty years had lived exclusively on a little barley bread and muddy water; another when a beautiful female by her blandishments endeavored to make him violate his chastity while his hands were tied with a cord, bit off his tongue and spat it into his fair tempter's face, in order that the pain resulting from the act might mortify his rebellious nature.

St. Hilarion, hearing of the fame of Antony, went to visit him when but fifteen years old, and determined to copy him in the Holy Land. Here he built a little cell four feet wide and five feet high, in which he could neither sit nor lie. He cut his hair only once a year, on Easter day, and never washed the sack in which he was clothed, saying it was superfluous to seek for cleanliness in hair cloth. Nor did he change his linen tunic till it fell to pieces. Another of the Egyptian fathers, Arsenius, cried himself blind. He would never look upon the face of a woman. A noble lady, whom he had probably known, came all the way from Rome to see him, but he repulsed her with the words: "Remember you! it shall be the prayer of my life to forget you." An Egyptian, named Ammon, in the time of Antony, as Socrates tells us, the moment after he was married, represented to his virgin bride the glories of a life of chastity and self-mortification, and both there and then agreed to become hermits and live as if unmarried, which they did till death, practising the most severe mortifications.

St. Pachomius, also of Egypt, and a disciple of Antony, was famous as a reformer of the Egyptian monasteries. We are told that when Pachomius was meditating in a cave, an angel appeared and delivered to him, inscribed on a metal plate, a code of laws by which the monks he had under him were to be governed. According to these, the monks were to be three in a cell, to eat their food in perfect silence with covered

face, to be clad in sackcloth, to sleep in a half-standing position, to undergo three years' severe probation before being fully initiated, and to be in strict obedience to the abbots.* Gibbon remarks :

"A blind submission to the commands of the abbot, however absurd, or even criminal they might seem, was the ruling principle, the first virtue of the Egyptian monks ; and their patience was frequently exercised by the most extravagant trials. They were directed to remove an enormous rock ; assiduously to water a barren staff that was planted in the ground, till at the end of three years, it should vegetate and blossom like a tree ; to walk into a fiery furnace ; or to cast their infant into a deep pond ; and several saints, or madmen, have been immortalised in monastic story, by their thoughtless and fearless obedience."†

Gibbon says that "The progress of the monks was not less rapid or universal than that of Christianity itself."‡ According to Jortin there were, on a moderate computation, no less than seventy thousand monks and twenty-one thousand nuns in Egypt in the fourth century.§ The number may have been immensely greater, for St. Jerome says that fifty thousand monks and nuns assembled at the Easter festival. Rufinus states that in Egypt the number of the monks equalled the remainder of the people ; "and posterity might repeat the saying, which had formerly been applied to the sacred animals of the same country, that, in Egypt, it was less difficult to find a god than a man."‖

In many cases the monks were driven to the worst forms of madness. It is related in the Life of St. Pachomius that one day as that saint and St. Palæmon were conversing together in the desert, a young monk rushed into their presence and, in a distracted voice, told them how he had been pursued by a woman who had endeavored to seduce him by her artifices. Then, with a shriek, the monk broke away from his saintly listeners. Impelled, as they imagined, by an evil spirit, he rushed across the desert to the nearest village, where, leaping into an open furnace, he perished in

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* Sozomen, Book III , chap. xiv. Fleury's "History of Christianity," chap. iii., p. 18.

† Chap. xxxvii.

‡ Chap. xxxvii.

§ Vol. III., p. 70.

‖ Gibbon, chap. xxxvii.

the flames. Gregory Nazianzen tells us that some monks killed themselves to be released from the wicked world. St. Pachomius enjoined confession on the monks lest, by concealing their sins, they should commit suicide in despair; for he assured them that many had flung themselves from the rocks, cut open their bellies, and killed themselves in various other ways.* St. Macarius of Alexandria carried about with him eighty pounds of iron chain. He is said to have never lain down during an entire week. His disciple, St. Eusebius, carried one hundred and fifty pounds of iron, and lived for three years in a dried-up well. St. Besarion spent forty days and nights in the midst of thorn-bushes, to subdue the flesh, and for forty years never lay down when he slept, which last penance was also during fifteen years practised by St. Pachomius.† Baradatus, a Syrian monk, lived crouching in a wooden box on the top of a mountain, and afterwards in a skin sack, with a single hole to breathe through. His contemporary James, celebrated for his sanctity and his miracles, wore iron chains round his neck, waist and arms, and remained for three days and nights prostrate in the snow. Theodorus lived alternately in two cages, one of iron for the summer and one of wood for the winter, both without a top. He also wore a coat of mail and iron shoes and gloves. The English Saint Godric of Finchale wore a hair shirt and iron waistcoat. He sat, by night, in midwinter, in the River Wear, and afterwards in a barrel sunk in the ground. He ate wheat mingled with ashes and never tasted his food till it was rotten.‡ Some anchorites immured themselves in cells, usually attached to a church, with a hole on one side through which they could hear the service and a hole on the other through which they heard the neighboring scandal. As the faithful brought them offerings, they were naturally encouraged by the churches. Many unhappy monks and nuns were relieved from their sufferings by madness or death,

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* Jortin, Vol. II., pp. 167-8.

† See a long list of these penances in Tillemont's "Memoires pour servir à l'Hist. Eccles.," Tome VIII.

‡ Kingsley, p. 310, 311.

and, according to Gibbon, a hospital was founded at Jerusalem in the sixth century to shelter monastic maniacs.*

The words of Christ, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv., 26) were adopted as the rule of monkery. St. Ambrose exhorted girls to enter the nunneries though against the wish of their parents.† Milman says, "It is the highest praise of St. Fulgentius that he overcame his mother's tenderness by religious cruelty."‡ St. Jerome, when exhorting Heliodorus to desert his family and become a hermit, expatiated with fond minuteness on every form of natural affection he desired him to violate.§ An inhabitant of Thebes once came to the abbot Sisoes, and asked to be made a monk. The abbot asked him if he had anyone belonging to him. He answered "A son." "Take your son," rejoined the old man, "and throw him into the river, and then you may become a monk." The father hastened to fulfil the command, and the deed was almost consummated when a messenger sent by Sisoes revoked the order.‖ The mother of St. Theodorus came armed with letters from the bishops permitting her to see her son, but he implored his abbot, St. Pachomius, to permit him to decline the interview; and, finding all her efforts in vain, she retired into a convent, together with her daughters, who had made a similar expedition with the same result.¶ The mother of St. Marcus persuaded his abbot to command the saint to go out to her. Placed in a dilemma between the sin of disobedience and the perils of seeing his mother, St. Marcus extricated himself by the ingenious device of disguising his face and shutting his eyes. The mother did not recognise her son; the son did not see his mother.**

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* Chap. xxxvii. † Jortin, Vol. II., p. 176.
‡ "History of Latin Christianity," Vol. II., p. 82.
§ Epist. XIV. (ad Heliodorium). See the passage quoted p. 7.
‖ Bollandists, July VI.
¶ "Life of St. Pachomius," 31 "Words of the Elders."
** Bolland's "Words of the Elders," XIV.

One of the most famous of these fathers of the desert was St. Simeon Stylites, whose mingled piety and spiritual pride are so well depicted by Tennyson. St. Simeon, in adopting the hermit life, refused to see his dying mother. At first he dwelt in a deserted tank, but, as his thoughts aspired, he ascended a pillar which was successively raised from the height of nine to that of sixty feet from the ground. He commanded a wall to be made round him, and he fastened a long chain, one end to a great stone, the other to his right foot, so that he could not, if he wished, leave those bounds. Here he would extend his arms in the form of a cross, or bend his meagre skeleton from the forehead to the feet. He would often fast for forty days together, and for a whole year we are told this heavenly saint roosted on one leg, the other being covered with hideous ulcers, while his biographer was commissioned to stand by his side to pick up the worms that fell from his body, and replace them in the sores, the saint saying to the worm, "Eat what God has given you." The whole proceedings of this renowned Christian saint forcibly remind us of the self-torture of the worst school of Hindu yogis. Simeon, whose fame made his opinions of consequence even to the Emperor Theodosius, wrote to him upon the same occasion as St. Ambrose (see p. 37), reprimanding him for ordering restoration to be made to the Jews when Christians burnt down their synagogue.*

Such were the examples held up for imitation to all the Christian world. Lecky declares :

"A hideous, sordid and emaciated maniac, without knowledge, without patriotism, without natural affection; passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing before the ghastly phantoms of his delirious brain, had become the ideal of the nations which had known the writings of Plato and Cicero and the lives of Socrates and Cato."

Such solitary ascetics as Simeon, however, were harmless compared with the bands of fierce and bigoted monks who prowled round the country or swarmed in the great cities of the empire, often filling their streets with violence and bloodshed. Lecky observes :

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* Jortin, Vol. II. p. 336.

"The effect of the mortification of the domestic affections upon the general character was probably very pernicious. The family circle is the appointed sphere, not only for the performance of manifest duties, but also for the cultivation of the affections; and the extreme ferocity which so often characterised the ascetic was the natural consequence of the discipline he imposed upon himself. Severed from all other ties, the monks clung with desperate tenacity to their opinions and to their Church, and hated those who dissented from them with all the intensity of men whose whole lives were concentrated on a single subject, whose ignorance and bigotry prevented them from conceiving the possibility of any good thing in opposition to themselves, and who had made it a main object of their discipline to eradicate all natural sympathies and affections. We may reasonably attribute to the fierce biographer the words of burning hatred of all heretics, which St. Athanasius puts in the mouth of the dying patriarch of the hermits. ('Life of Antony.' See, too, the sentiments of St. Pachomius, Vit. cap. xxvii.). But ecclesiastical history, and especially the writings of the later Pagans, abundantly prove that the sentiment was a general one."*

The Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), at the instigation of the Emperor Marcian, forbade the monks to abandon the holy life under pain of anathema. But this had little effect in deterring them from entering into religious broils. Dean Milman tells us:

"The Council of Chalcedon had commanded, had defined the orthodox creed in vain. Everywhere its decrees were received or rejected, according to the dominant party in each city, and the opinions of the reigning emperor. On all the metropolitan thrones there were rival bishops, anathematising each other, and each supported either by the civil power, or by a part of the populace, or by the monks, more fierce and unruly than the unruly populace. For everywhere monks were at the head of the religious revolution which threw off the yoke of the Council of Chalcedon. In Jerusalem Theodosius, a monk, expelled the rightful prelate, Juvenalis; was consecrated by his party, and maintained himself by acts of violence, pillage and murder, more like the lawless bandits of the country than a Christian bishop. The very scenes of the Savior's mercies ran with bloodshed in his name by his ferocious self-called disciples."†

The monks of Nitria, near Alexandria, were always

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* "History of European Morals," Vol. II., p. 137; 1877.

† "History of Latin Christianity," Book III., chap. i., Vol. I., p. 289; 1864.

ready to rush down armed into the city to interfere in behalf of a favorite doctrine or a popular prelate.* Milman, speaking of the fifth century, says :

"The monks, in fact exercise the most complete tyranny, not merely over the laity, but over bishops and patriarchs, whose rule, though nominally subject to it, they throw off whenever it suits their purpose. . . . Monks in Alexandria, monks in Antioch, monks in Jerusalem, monks in Constantinople, decide peremptorily on orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The bishops themselves cower before them. Macedonius in Constantinople, Flavianus in Antioch, Elias in Jerusalem condemn themselves and abdicate or are driven from their sees. Persecution is universal; persecution by every means of violence and cruelty. The only question is in whose hands is the power to persecute. In Antioch, Xenaias justifies his insurrection by the persecutions which he has endured; Flavianus bitterly, and justly, complains of the perecutions of Xenaias. Bloodshed, murder, treachery, assassination, even during the public worship of God. These are the frightful means by which each party strives to maintain its opinion, and to defeat its adversary."†

Cleanliness is next to godliness, but the monks never stepped from their favorite virtue. They were always remarkable for dirt. Their usual mode of life is thus described by Gibbon :

"It was the practice of the monks either to cut or shave their hair; they wrapped their heads in a cowl, to escape the sight of profane objects; their legs and feet were naked, except in the extreme cold of winter; and their slow and feeble steps were supported by a long staff. The aspect of a genuine Anachoret was horrid and disgusting: every sensation that is offensive to man was thought acceptable to God, and the angelic rule of Tabenne condemned the salutary custom of bathing the limbs in water and of anointing them with oil."‡

Athanasius boasts of Antony's holy horror of clean water, with which he never contaminated his feet except in the direst necessity. St. Euphraxia joined a convent of one hundred and thirty nuns who never washed their feet, and who shuddered at the mention of a bath.§ St. Ammon had never seen himself naked. On one occasion, coming to a river, he was too squeam-

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* Milman, "History of Christianity," Vol. III., p. 211.
† History of Latin Christianity," Vol. I., pp. 317, 318.
‡ Gibbon, chap. xxxvii.
§ Lecky's "European Morals," Vol. II., p. 110.

ish to undress, and on praying, an angel transported him to the other side. No wonder Jortin remarks of a miraculous monk, whose corpse was said to have emitted a heavenly perfume, that it was not surprising that he should smell like a civet-cat when dead who had smelt like a pole-cat when living. For six months St. Macarius slept in a marsh, and exposed his naked body to the stings of venomous flies. Another saint anointed himself with honey to attract the bees. Others went about stark naked, covered only with their matted hair. "Some of them," says Jortin, "out of mortification, would not catch or kill the vermin that devoured them, in which they far surpassed the Jews, who only spared them upon the Sabbath day."* In Mesopotamia and Palestine the *Boskoi* wandered on all fours, grazing like cattle. St. Mark, of Athens, lived in this way till his body was covered with hair like a wild beast's. St. Mary, of Egypt, also, during her penance, lived on grass, after the manner of Nebuchadnezzar. The great St. Ephrem, according to Tillemont, composed a panegyric on these pious cattle.

"A cruel and unfeeling temper," says Gibbon, "has distinguished the monks of every age and country."† The Roman soldiers, against whom they protected Chrysostom in his banishment, dreaded them "worse than the wild beasts of the desert." Theophilus, of Alexandria, kept a body-guard of them, who fought his battles; his successor, Cyril, called in five hundred monks from the desert to assist him in his quarrel with the Roman governor; and it was a mob of these black dragoons that outraged and murdered Hypatia.

In the destruction of the Pagan temples the monks signalised their zeal for Christ. When Theophilus obtained leave to demolish those of Alexandria, he "sent for the monks to assist him with their prayers," according to Fleury: or more properly, as Jortin says, "with their fists." When Chrysostom instigated the demolition of the temples of Phœnicia, "many of the monks were wounded and slain; for they were the dragoons generally employed on these occasions."‡

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* Vol. II., p. 170. † Chap. xxxvii. ‡ Jortin, Vol. III. p. 61.

Theodosius was obliged to restrain them and drive them back to their deserts. His edict, says Jortin,

"Seems principally to have concerned the monks of Egypt and Syria, who, under pretence of zeal, used to frequent the cities, and importune the magistrates and judges, soliciting them to forgive and discharge criminals, and even exciting tumults and seditions, and who also waged open war with the Pagans, destroying their idols, and demolishing their temples."*

But in less than two years the law was repealed, and these barbarians resumed the destruction of edifices they had not the genius to build nor the taste to admire.

Humble, nay abject, as they were, the monks in general, and the hermits in particular, prided themselves on their chastity. Some were so vain of their continence and superiority to temptation that they frequented the baths continually, and washed with the women.† We have already (page 10) related how the monks and nuns shared the same bed to show their power of resisting temptation. Sometimes, however, the flesh was too strong for the spirit, and they succumbed. Gibbon tells a capital anecdote of a Benedictine abbot who confessed, "My vow of poverty has given me a hundred thousand crowns a year; my vow of obedience has raised me to the rank of a sovereign prince." The historian sarcastically adds, "I forget the consequence of his vow of chastity."‡

Physical and mental disorders were the result of a strict fulfilment of the vow of chastity, for insulted nature will have her revenge. Dr. Gieseler says that

"In many cases these measures had only the contrary effect, and temptations increased; many monks were driven to despair by a sense of the hopelessness of their efforts; in the case of others complete madness was superinduced by that excessive asceticism, and by the pride associated with it, under the influence of a burning climate."§

It should be noticed that the Devil generally appeared to these unnatural recluses in a female form, tempting them to unchastity; and sometimes, when the mind

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* Vol. III., p. 54. † Jortin, Vol. II., p. 168. ‡ Chap. xxxvii.
§ "Ecclesiastical History," Vol. I., p. 399.

was depraved by long excitement, in the form of a lecherous old goat. St. Antony's temptation is known to everyone. Rufinus, in his "History of Monasticism," tells of a young monk who admitted a fainting woman into his cell. Passions long slumbering awoke and he sought to clasp the woman to his heart, but she vanished from his sight and a chorus of demons with peals of laughter exulted over his fall. The maddened monk, though knowing the fair form to be a deception luring him to destruction, was still dominated by her. He fled the desert, plunged anew into the pleasures of the world, following the light of that ideal beauty even into the jaws of hell.

Following Jesus and Paul, the monks cried up virginity as the supreme virtue. St. Ambrose declaimed in its favor and drove many young women into nunneries. "But of all the the praisers of virginity," says Jortin, "Jerome seems to have performed his part the best, who calls Eustochium, the nun, *His Lady*, because she was the *spouse* of his *Lord*, and reminds the mother of this lady that she has the honor to be *God's mother-in-law*." *

But the monks were not all as chaste as they pretended. St. Athanasius said that many of the bishops kept themselves even from matrimony, while monks were the fathers of children. As they grew richer, and dispensed with manual labor, they naturally became more licentious, and in time they "led lawless and scandalous lives, and indulged themselves in all sorts of vices without control." Mosheim describes the monks of the west as "most ignorant and profligate wretches."† Hallam says that "their extreme licentiousness was sometimes hardly concealed by the cowl of sanctity." ‡ St. Theodore Studita, in the ninth century, was obliged to prohibit the entrance of *female animals* into the monasteries. §

During the Middle Ages the licentiousness of monks and nuns was proverbial. We have only to open the

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* Vol. II. p. 172. † Jortin, Vol. III., p. 244.
‡ "Middle Ages," chap. ix., Part I.
§ Lea's "Sacerdotal Celibacy," p. 199.

works of popular authors to see how these professors of chastity were esteemed by the multitude. Chaucer and Skelton in England; Boccaccio in Italy; Rabelais, Des Periers, and Marguerite of Navarre, in France; all furnish us with racy pictures of monastic vice. The great glutton, the great drunkard, the great lecher, is sure to be a monk; and the nunneries are represented as nests of intrigue, where the spouses of Christ exhibited far more love for man than God.

The monks mingled with their fanaticism a considerable share of cunning and knavery. They were hated at Rome "as beggarly impostors and hungry Greeks who seduced ladies of fortune and quality."* Noble and wealthy women frequently made pilgrimages to the haunt of a famous saint, and always "used to carry alms and oblations with them, to be distributed as the directors of their conscience should advise."† Theodosius found it necessary "to make a law against pious donations to the clergy and to the monks, who preyed upon stupid bigots and devoured widows' houses."‡ The popular monks, says Gibbon, "insinuated themselves into noble and opulent families; and the specious arts of flattery and seduction were employed to secure those proselytes who might bestow wealth or dignity on the monastic profession."§ They "kindly imparted the merits of their prayers and penance to a rich and liberal sinner," and the estates of the monasteries so increased that "in the first century of their institution, the infidel Zosimus has maliciously observed that, for the benefit of the poor, the Christian monks had reduced a great part of mankind to a state of beggary."‖ Fleury tells us that the monks of Clugni, who were very rich as a community, "had, like all the monks for several ages, not only lands and cattle, but *slaves* and vassals."¶

St. Augustine, writing in the fifth century on "The Business of Monks," gives the following picture of the

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* Jortin, Vol. II., p. 174, 175.
† Jortin, Vol. II., p. 174, 175.
‡ Jortin, Vol. III., p. 22.
§ Chap. xxxvii.
‖ Gibbon, chap. xxxvii.
¶ Jortin, Vol. III., p. 286.

"hypocrites" in monastic habits, with whom the Devil had overspread the world:

"They travel from province to province without any mission; they have no fixed habitation, and abide in no place; they continually alter their station. Some carry relics about, if relics they are, and make an advantage of them. . . They all beg, and take it ill if you give them not, either to supply the wants of such a poverty as enriches them, or to recompense a seeming and counterfeit honesty."*

Jortin says they were a collection of "beggars, fugitives, vagabonds, slaves, day laborers, peasants, mechanics of the lowest sort, thieves and highwaymen," who found that "by becoming monks, they became gentlemen, and a sort of saints."† These fellows were the relic-mongers of early and mediæval Christianity, and turned many a dishonest penny by selling the trumpery of superstition.

The favorite topic in apologies for the monks has always been their service to the cause of letters. This deserves a little examination. The first monks were not only illiterate themselves, but they condemned learning altogether, on the ground that God has no need of man's wisdom. In time some, as a relief from the tediousness of absolute inaction, betook themselves to study and speculation, from which the world profited little, for they usually took some old parchment, perhaps the history or poetry of some pagan, which they erased or wrote over with their own prayers, hymns, or lives of the saints. The extreme scarcity of books in the Middle Ages is incompatible with the alleged literary activity of the monks. Berington, in his "Literary History of the Middle Ages," page 191, tells us, "In the most wealthy convents where libraries were chiefly formed, a short catalogue was sufficient to comprise the number of their books: and the price, to those who were disposed to purchase, was exorbitant."

"The study of the Latin classics was for the most part positively discouraged. The writers, it was believed, were burning

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* Dupin, "History of Ecclesiastical Writers," Vol. III., pp 183, 184.
† Vol. II., p. 174.

in hell. The monks were too inflated with their imaginary knowledge to regard with any respect a Pagan writer, and periodical panics about the approaching termination of the world continually checked any desire for secular learning. It was the custom among some monks, when they were under the discipline of silence, and desired to ask for Virgil, Horace or any other Gentile work, to indicate their wish by scratching their ears like a dog, to which animal it was thought the Pagans might reasonably be compared. The monasteries contained, it is said, during some time, the only libraries in Europe, and were therefore the sole receptacles of the Pagan manuscripts; but we cannot infer from this that, if monasteries had not existed, similar libraries would not have been called into being in their place. To the occasional industry of the monks in copying the works of antiquity, we must oppose the industry they displayed, though chiefly at a somewhat later period, in scraping the ancient parchments, in order that, having obliterated the writings of the Pagans, they might cover them with their own legends."*

Monastic institutions have been defended on the ground that they afforded a shelter to those who were weary of the world; but when that sentiment leads to a neglect of secular duties it is only a subtle form of self-love. During the Middle Ages, it is alleged that many fine spirits of both sexes, who were unfit to cope with the violence of the period, found a haven of rest in abbeys and convents. But how much better it would have been for the world if they had become fathers and mothers, and by transmitting their finer qualities of patience and temperance, leavened mankind with the virtues it most needed. Evolution, no less than common sense and humanity, condemns monasticism as a crime against civilisation.

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* Lecky, "European Morals," Vol. II., p. 202.

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PIOUS FRAUDS.

ALTHOUGH the Bible says that "God is love," Christianity has shed more blood and perpetrated more cruelty than any other religion in the world; and despite the text that "all liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire," it has been guilty of more deliberate frauds than any of the creeds it is accustomed to regard as the offspring of the Devil. In every age it has traded on the fear and faith of mankind; for the former it has borrowed or devised the most horrid punishments in this life and in the next, while for the latter it has practised every art of deception that could impose on ignorance and credulity.

During many centuries, indeed for more than a thousand years, the Christian Church lied for the glory of God without shame or compunction. Whatever promoted its reputation and power was deemed both necessary and honorable. Frauds were praiseworthy if they were pious; and, in the words of Mosheim, those who wished to shine forth most eminently as true Christians "deemed it a pious act to employ deeeption and fraud in support of piety."*

This species of falsehood might, without difficulty, be justified or countenanced by an appeal to the New Testament. Jesus is represented in the Gospels† as using obscure expressions in order to mislead his hearers. Paul became "all things to all men,"‡ and he boldly asks "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"§ By reference to the Old Testament also, it might be seen that the Lord himself sent an angel from heaven to be a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets to lure Ahab to Ramoth-gilead.‖

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* "Ecclesiastical History," Vol. I., p. 247.

† Mark iv., 10—12.

‡ 1 Corinthians ix., 22.

§ Romans iii., 7.

‖ 1 Kings xxii., 19—22.

A colossal fraud lies at the very basis of Christianity. Its Gospels are palmed off as the work of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, four of Christ's disciples. Yet scholars are perfectly aware "there is no evidence that either the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, or the other writings, as we have them, existed within a hundred and twenty years after the Crucifixion."* The canonical books of the New Testament came into existence at the same time as the host of "apocryphal" ones, an incomplete list of which, comprising over seventy documents, occupies no less than twelve pages of Dr. Giles's learned work. Our four Gospels were selected by the Church, which pronounced them the true Word of God. The Church guarantees the books, but who will guarantee the Church?

To say nothing of the hundred and fifty thousand various readings of the New Testament, it is an undisputed fact that passages have been knowingly interpolated in the canonical Gospels. The famous Trinitarian text in the first Epistle of John (v. 7) has been almost universally recognised as a forgery since the days of Porson; and the public is now informed in the margin of our Revised Bible that the second half of the last chapter of Mark, from the ninth to the twentieth verses, does not exist in the oldest manuscripts, while some manuscripts give a different ending altogether. Other instances might be given, but these will suffice to elucidate the complaint of Celsus, in the second century, that the Christians were perpetually correcting and altering their Gospels.

Before proceeding to give some of the most flagrant forgeries of the early Christians, beyond the limits of the canonical scriptures, we deem it prudent to adduce from critics and historians of the highest repute, a few direct and explicit admissions of the fradulent character of the patristic writers.

The solid and judicious Mosheim states that:

"A pernicious maxim which was current in the schools, not only of the Egyptians, the Platonists, and the Pythagoreans, but

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* Rev. Dr. Giles, "Hebrew and Christian Records," Vol. II., p. 9.

also of the Jews, was very early recognised by the Christians, and soon found among them numerous patrons—namely, that those who made it their business to deceive with a view of promoting the cause of truth, were deserving rather of commendation than of censure." *

The "greatest and most pious teachers" of the fourth century, says Mosheim, were "nearly all of them infected with this leprosy" of fraud; and even Ambrose, Hilary, Jerome, Gregory Nazianzen and Augustine, cannot be excepted.† In his account of the fifth century, he alludes to the

"Base audacity of those who did not blush to palm their own spurious productions on the great men of former times, and even on *Christ* himself and his apostles, so that they might be able, in the councils and in their books, to oppose names against names and authorities against authorities. The whole Christian Church was, in this century, overwhelmed with these disgraceful fictions."‡

Jortin remarks that the policy of fraud was not only extensively practised in the fourth century, but "had found reception in the foregoing centuries in some measure."§ *Some measure* is a very mild expression, as we shall see presently. It was acutely observed by Conyers Middleton that the bold defiance of the truth and honesty displayed by the Fathers of the fourth century, "could not have been acquired, or become general at once, but must have been carried gradually to that height, by custom and the example of former times, and a long experience of what the credulity and superstition of the multitude would bear."‖ Accordingly, he finds on examination that the "earlier ages" were by no means remarkable for integrity. On the contrary, he says:

"There never was any period of time in all ecclesiastical history in which so many rank heresies were publicly professed,

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* "Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before the time of Constantine the Great." R. S. Vidal's translation, 1813. Pp. 44, 45.

† Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I., pp. 358, 359.

‡ Vol. I., p. 464.

§ Remarks, Vol. III., p. 9.

‖ Middleton's "Free Inquiry," Ed. 1749. Introductory Discourse, p. lxxxiv.

nor in which so many *spurious books* were forged and published by the Christians, under the names of Christ and the Apostles, and the Apostolic writers, as in those *primitive ages:* several of which forged books are frequently cited and applied to the defence of Christianity by the most eminent Fathers of the same ages as true and genuine pieces, and of equal authority with the Scriptures themselves."*

This view is supported by a recent writer, the author of "Supernatural Religion." In stigmatising the "singularly credulous and uncritical character of the Fathers," he says that :

"No fable could be too gross, no invention too transparent, for their unsuspicious acceptance, if it assumed a pious form or tended to edification. No period in the history of the world ever produced so many spurious works as the first two or three centuries of our era. The name of every apostle or Christian teacher, not excepting that of the great Master himself, was freely attached to every description of religious forgery."†

Dr. Giles writes in a similar strain, and it should be borne in mind that the period to which he refers was that in which the four Gospels, as well as the apocryphal scriptures, crept into the world.

"But a graver accusation than that of inaccuracy or deficient authority lies against the writings which have come down to us from the second century. There can be no doubt that great numbers of books were then written with no other view than to deceive the simple-minded multitude who at that time formed the great bulk of the Christian community."‡

These works were not all allowed to pass without question. The authority of some was disputed, and controversies were maintained even as to the age and authorship of the books of the New Testament. If the question was set at rest, it was done, as Dr. Giles remarks, "not by a deliberate sentence of the judge, but by burning all the evidence on which one side of the controversy was supported."§

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* "Introductory Discourse p. lxxxvii. Conyers Middleton was a Church of England clergyman and a doctor of divinity.

† "Supernatural Religion," Vol. I., pp. 460, 461.

‡ Giles, "Hebrew and Christian Records," Vol. II., p. 19

§ Vol. II., p. 110.

Dr. Gieseler, the latest ecclesiastical historian in Germany, whose splendid and valuable work we have had more than one occasion to cite, refers to the *spurious literature* of the Jews and Christians as of "great importance" in the "advancement of Christian interests." The Jews were grave sinners in this respect, but they were eclipsed by the Christians, who

"quieted their consciences respecting the forgery with the idea of their good intentions, for the purpose of giving greater impressiveness to their doctrines and admonitions by the reputation of respectable names, of animating their suffering brethren to steadfastness, and of gaining over their opponents to Christianity."*

Orthodox witnesses are better for our purpose than heretical ones, and we have pleasure in citing the testimony of Bishop Ellicott.

"But credulity is not the only charge which those early ages have to sustain. They certainly cannot be pronounced free from the influence of pious frauds. . . . It was an age of literary frauds. Deceit, if it had a good intention, frequently passed unchallenged. . . . However unwilling we may be to admit it, history forces upon us the recognition of pious fraud as a principle which was by no means inoperative in the earliest ages of Christianity."†

The following grave and weighty passage from Lecky must close our brief list, which might be indefinitely prolonged, of Christian testimonies against Christianity:

"The very large part that must be assigned to deliberate forgeries in the early apologetic literature of the Church we have already seen; and no impartial reader can, I think, investigate the innumerable grotesque and lying legends that, during the whole course of the Middle Ages, were deliberately palmed upon mankind as undoubted facts, can follow the history of the false decretals, and the discussions that were connected with them, or can observe the complete and absolute incapacity most Catholic historians have displayed, of conceiving any good thing in the ranks of their opponents, or of stating with common fairness any consideration that can tell against their cause, without acknowledging how serious and how inveterate has been the evil. It is this which makes it so unspeakably repulsive to all independent and impartial thinkers, and has led a great German historian

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* Gieseler, "Ecclesiastical History," Vol. I., p. 158.

† "Cambridge Essays" for 1856, pp. 175-176.

(Herder) to declare, with much bitterness, that the phrase 'Christian veracity' deserves to rank with the phrase 'Punic faith.'"*

A forgery comparatively late in point of time, though referring to an early period in the ministry of Jesus, is a pretended letter from Publius Lentulus, the supposed predecessor of Pontius Pilate, to the Roman senate. It was the custom for the provincial authorities to transmit to the imperial city an account of all important events which occurred in their respective localities; and, according to this bastard epistle, which is prefixed to some parchment manuscripts of the Gospels, written about three hundred and seventy years ago, and still preserved in the library at Jena, the Prefect of Jerusalem informed the senate that "there had appeared a man endued with great powers, whose name is Jesus Christ." The very name betrays the fraudulent origin of the document, for the epistle is couched in *Latin*, and Jesus is the *Greek* form of the Hebrew Jeshua. Nor would the Jews give Jesus the surname of *Christ*, which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Messiah*. The rest of the epistle is devoted to a eulogy of the personal appearance of the Savior.† His hair is represented as of the color of wine, which is not very explicit, and as being parted in the middle, "after the fashion of the Nazarenes,"‡ and dropping in graceful curls over his shoulders; his beard as thick and bifurcated; his person as tall and graceful; his countenance as beautiful, and his eyes as blue—a singular color for a gentleman of the Hebrew persuasion.

Although Jesus, according to Jerome, was unable to write, the early Christians manufactured for him a letter to ~~Abargus~~, Prince of Edessa. Eusebius professes to have translated the epistle, or had it translated, from the archives of that city. Jortin says that,

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* "European Morals," Vol. II., p. 212.

† Taylor's "Diegesis," p. 360.

‡ This is perfect nonsense. Nazarenes were simply the inhabitants of Nazareth, and were not marked by any particular fashion of hair-dressing. There was a sect of Nazarites, but they were teetotallers, who objected to shaving

"there is no room to suspect him of forging it, but there is abundant reason to account it a forgery, and a foolish one too."* Many have received and defended it, from Ephraim Syrus down to Cave. Addison was perhaps the last eminent writer who accepted it. Since Lardner's refutation of its claims to authenticity, it has been universally and quietly abandoned.

Whether or not Eusebius forged the correspondence between Christ and Abargus, we know on other grounds that he was not incapable of such a feat. Dean Milman is obliged to regret that the history of the Martyrs "rests so much on the loose, and, it must be admitted, by no means scrupulous, authority of of Eusebius."† Criticising his tricky attempt to confuse the taxing under Herod with that several years later, in order to reconcile Josephus and Luke, Lardner says: "I must confess I ascribe that not to ignorance, but to something a great deal worse."‡ Gibbon says of him that "he 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."§ As Eusebius, according to Gibbon, is the gravest of the ecclesiastical historians, the reader will be able to form some idea of the sobriety and veracity of the rest of the tribe.

The early Christians had the audacity to forge an account of the Resurrection by Pontius Pilate himself, which may be read in the "Apocryphal New Testament." Century after century, until the advent of rational criticism, the Christians were taught to believe that Pilate informed Tiberius of the unjust sentence of death he had pronounced on an innocent, and as it appeared, a divine person; that Tiberius endeavored to place Christ among the gods of Rome; that his servile senate ventured to thwart his design; that Tiberius then protected the Christians against the fury of the laws; and that the account of this extraordinary

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* Vol. II., p. 33.
† Milman's "Gibbon," Vol. II., p. 285, note.
‡ Lardner's Works, Vol. I., p. 344.
§ "Decline and Fall," chap. xvi.

transaction was preserved in the public records. But the disproofs of this legend are overwhelming. No historian of Greece or Rome ever saw these documents in the imperial archives, or even heard of their existence. They were only visible to the eyes of Tertullian, who composed his Apology one hundred and sixty years after the death of Tiberius. The legend itself is first mentioned by Justin Martyr, who is described by Jortin as "of a warm and credulous temper," by Mosheim as "wholly undeserving of credit in much of what he relates," and by Middleton as the author of many "silly writings." It is to this garrulous wiseacre that we owe the story of the seventy translators of the Septuagint version, who were shut up by Ptolemy in seventy separate cells, and who were found, on the completion of their labors, not only to have given the same meaning, but to have employed the very same words. In proof of this fable, he says that he actually saw the remains of the cells—about four hundred years after the event! Justin's story of Pontius Pilate passed through the hands of Tertullian, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Orosius, Gregory of Tours, and the authors of the various editions of the Acts of Pilate, acquiring successive improvements as it went along.* But it has melted away like a legendary snowball before the sun of rationalism. How could Tiberius protect the Christians from the fury of the laws when there were no Christians and before there were any laws against them? Why did Pilate connive at the stoning of Stephen, and the persecution of the disciples by Saul, if he knew that Jesus was a divine person, and that his followers were protected by the emperor? How came Tiberius, who "avowed his contempt for all religion,"† and who was "little disposed to increase the number of the gods and the burden of Atlas" ‡ to propose the apotheosis of Christ? This question becomes still more difficult to answer when we reflect that "about the time of Christ's crucifixion," Tiberius "destroyed an illustrious family, for this among other

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* Gibbon, chap. xvi., footnote.

† Gibbon, chap. xv. ‡ Jortin, Vol. I., p. 194.

reasons, that divine honors had been paid to one Theophanes, an ancestor of theirs."*

We have devoted what would otherwise be a very disproportionate space to this ridiculous story, in order to show how credulous and unscrupulous the Fathers were in regard to the "evidences" of their faith.

There is also an epistle of Tiberianus, governor of part of Palestine, to the Emperor Trajan, in which he speaks of the invincible obstinacy of the Galileans, or Christians, under his jurisdiction, and says that he is tired of punishing and destroying them. Pearson and Middleton treat this epistle as genuine, but Dodwell gives good reasons for thinking it spurious. It depends on the authority of Suidas and Malela, "two sorry vouchers" says Jortin, and it was unknown to Eusebius. Le Clerc rejects it as suppositious. It is also fairly given up by Basnage and Tillemont, the latter of whom informs us that Valesius accounted it the work of a blockhead and an impostor.† We may presume that it was concocted to support the extravagant records of the sufferings and fortitude of the Christian martyrs.

Of a similar character is the "silly story of the Thundering Legion" as Jortin calls it. When Marcus Aurelius was at war with the Quadi, in A.D. 174, and in the utmost distress and danger, he was relieved by a sudden storm, which drenched his army and allayed their thirst, while it discharged fire and hail on their enemies. The Romans gained a great victory, and it was subsequently asserted by the followers of Jesus, who ordered people to turn one cheek when the other was smitten, that this seasonable tempest resulted from the prayers of the Christian contingent of the imperial army, who were thenceforth called the Thundering Legion. Eusebius quotes Tertullian's Apology to the Roman Senate in confirmation of the story that Marcus Aurelius wrote a letter to the Senate, acknowledging his indebtedness to the Christians, directing that the persecution of that body should cease, and ordering that whoever accused them should be burnt alive. This letter is in Greek, and is generally printed after Justin's

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* Jortin, Vol. I., p. 194. † Jortin, Vol. II., p. 39.

first Apology; but as Long observes, it "is one of the most stupid forgeries of the many that exist."* The same writer, and there is no better judge, says that the "monstrous addition" about roasting the informer was "made by a man inconceivably ignorant." It also appears that the Thundering Legion existed in the time of Augustus, when, according to Dion, it was stationed in Cappadocia. But the final reply to this pious legend of the Roman army being victorious through the prayers of the Christian soldiers is furnished by the fact that "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."†

There was an obvious need on the part of the early apologists of Christianity to find in the Pagan historians some corroboration of the transcendent wonders which marked the death of their Redeemer. How could a celebrated province of the Roman empire, or, as the Fathers seem to assert, the whole earth, be covered with darkness for the space of three hours, without attracting universal attention? It happened in the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, each of whom, "in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of Nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets and eclipses, which his indefatigable curiosity could collect."‡ Yet neither of them alludes to the miraculous eclipse at the Crucifixion, although Pliny, as well as Virgil, Tibullus, Ovid and Lucan, celebrates the pallid light which followed the death of Cæsar. To meet this difficulty the Christians, after an extraordinary interval, *discovered* a passage in Phlegon, to the following effect:

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* George Long, "The Thoughts of the Emperor M. Aurelius Antonius." Introduction, p. 11.—We may venture to recommend to our readers this admirable translation of perhaps the noblest book of antiquity, by an Englishman whose modest and manly spirit was akin to that of the great emperor.

† Gibbon, chap. xvi. ‡ Gibbon, chap. xv.

"In the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad, there was an eclipse of the sun greater than any ever known before; and it was night at the sixth hour of the day, so that even the stars appeared, and there was a great earthquake in Bythinia, that overthrew several houses in Nice."*

Dr. Adam Clarke relied on this passage in his "Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion," but when Gibbon wrote, he was able to say it "is now wisely abandoned."† Writing in the third century, Tertullian assures the Pagans that the mention of the preternatural darkness of the Passion is found in Arcanis. It is worthy of a remark that neither Dean Milman nor Dr. Smith, who are both Christians as well as editors of Gibbon, ventures to defend the passage of Phlegon against his biting sarcasm. The former is wisely silent, and the latter judiciously confines himself to showing that Arcanis might more properly be written Archivis.

Another Christian forgery is the famous passage in Josephus.

"About that time appeared Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be right to speak of him as a man, for he was a performer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew after him many of the Jews, as well as of the Gentiles. This same was the Christ. And though Pilate, by the judgment of the chief rulers among us, delivered him to be crucified, those who from the first had loved him fell not from him, for to them at least he showed himself alive on the third day: this, and ten thousand other wonderful things being what the holy prophets had foretold concerning him; so that the Christian people who derive their name from him, have not yet ceased to exist."

Gibbon says that this passage "was inserted into the text of Josephus between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius," and "may furnish an example of no vulgar forgery."‡ Dean Milman can only suggest that "this passage is not *altogether a forgery*, but interpolated with many additional clauses."§ But Lardner's‖

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* Taylor's "Diegesis," p. 357, 358.
† Chap. xv. ‡ Chap. xvi., footnote.
§ Milman's "Gibbon," Vol. II., p. 235.
‖ Lardner's works, Vol. VII., p. 120.

arguments effectually dispose of this suggestion, and completely support the view of Gibbon. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Origen, never cited this passage in their controversies, although they were well acquainted with the writings of Josephus, and could not have overlooked such a favorable testimony to Jesus. Origen, indeed, distinctly says that Josephus "did not believe Jesus to be the Christ."* The inventive genius of Eusebius first lighted on the passage, in the fourth century. He quotes it with an air of triumph, and says that those who doubt the Christian story of Jesus henceforth "stand convicted of downright impudence." Tanaquil Faber maintained that Eusebius forged the passage himself. A little more care in the composition might have added to its plausibility. It is so foreign to the context, that Tillemont was obliged to resort to the supposition that Josephus inserted it after he had finished his work! As a zealous and orthodox Jew, Josephus could not speak of Jesus as the Christ, nor doubt whether it was lawful to call him a man, for the Jews did not believe the Messiah to be God; and the statement that Jesus drew after him many Jews and *Gentiles* is inconsistent with the Gospels. The passage is now universally abandoned. Bishop Warburton called it "a rank forgery, and a very stupid one too."† Dr. Giles also condemns it as "a forgery interpolated in the text during the third century by some pious Christian, who was scandalised that so famous a writer as Josephus should have taken no notice of the Gospels or of Christ, their subject."‡ And De Quincey, in his essay on the Essenes, emphatically says that "this passage has long been given up as a forgery by all men not lunatic."§

The Sibylline verses were another forgery of the early Christians, and they were "triumphantly quoted by the Fathers, from Justin Martyr to Lactantius," although "when they had fulfilled their appointed

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* Cont. Celsus, lib. I., ch. xlvii., p. 35.
† "Divine Legation of Moses," Bk. II., sec. vi.
‡ "Hebrew and Christian Records," Vol. II., p. 62.
§ De Quincey's works, Vol. ix.

task, they, like the system of the millenium, were quietly laid aside."* They were pretended prophecies by Pagan oracles of the wonderful careeer of Jesus Christ. The collections varied much, says Jortin, and it is clear that "every librarian thrust in what he thought proper, and what he had picked up here and there from any dunghill."† They were "from first to last, and without any one exception, mere impostures." There is a collection of them in eight books "which abound with phrases, words, facts, and passages taken from the Seventy and the New Testament, and are a remarkable specimen of astonishing impudence and miserable poetry."‡ Gibbon observes that they foretell the darkness at the Crucifixion exactly in the words of the Gospel. "There is no man," said Cave, "who does see that they were forged for the advancement of the Christian faith"§ Some impute the fraud to Hermas, some to Papias, and others to Justin. Murdock says that "the Pagans were indignant at this forgery,"‖ and Celsus openly accused the Christians of the crime. Lecky says :

"The prophecies forged by the Christians, and attributed by them to the heathen Sibyls, were accepted as genuine by the entire Church, and were continually appealed to as among the most powerful evidences of the faith. Clement of Alexandria preserved the tradition that St. Paul had urged the brethren to study them. Celsus designated the Christians Sibyllists, on account of the pertinacity with which they insisted on them. Constantine the Great adduced them in a solemn speech before the Council of Nice. . . . It was in 1649 that a French Protestant named Blondel ventured for the first time in the Christian Church to denounce these writings as deliberate and clumsy forgeries, and after much angry controversy his sentiment has acquired an almost undisputed ascendancy in criticism."¶

There can be no better comment on the history of the Sibylline verses than that of Middleton ; "Thus a most gross and palpable forgery was imposed upon the

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* Gibbon, chap. xv., footnote.
† Vol. I., p. 322. ‡ Jortin, Vol. I., pp. 318, 319.
§ Middleton's "Free Inquiry," p. 37.
‖ Note on Mosheim, Vol. I. p., 169.
¶ "European Morals," Vol I., pp. 376, 377.

Christian world from the very midst of those best and purest ages; which, though rejected and derided from the beginning by all men of sense among the Heathens, yet obtained full credit in the Church, through all all ages, without any other ground to support it but the utility of the deceit, and the authority of those venerable Fathers, who contrived and attested it."*

The last documentary forgeries we shall refer to are the Decretal Epistles and the Donation of Constantine, which are the foundation of the spiritual supremacy and the temporal power of the Popes.

The Decretal Epistles pretended to emanate from the pontiffs of the first century. They declared it unlawful to hold a Council without the order, or at least the permission, of the Pope; and they invested him with the sole power of judging and translating bishops, and establishing new sees. According to Mosheim, "they were produced by the ingenuity of an obscure man, who falsely assumed the name of *Isidore* a Spanish bishop, in the eighth century."† The same historian asserts that the forgery was procured by the pontiffs themselves; and as in that age "frauds for the benefit of the Church and of God were deemed lawful," it is not strange that the Popes should approve "the fabrication of such papers as would be a rampart and bulwark to the see of St. Peter's."‡

There is a good story of the forger of these Decretals. He passes under the name of Isidorus Mercator, which was derived in the following manner. He assumed the name of Isidore, a distinguished Spanish bishop of the sixth century, in order to make the world believe that the Epistles were the work of that prelate. The bishops were accustomed, as a sign of humility, to add the word Peccator (sinner) to their names; and therefore the author of these forgeries signed himself Isidore Peccator. But some of the transcribers, who were ignorant of the ancient customs, changed Peccator into Mercator (merchant). "His merchandise," says Gibbon,

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* "Free Inquiry," pp. 37, footnote.
† Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 199, 200—foot note.
‡ Vol. II., p. 200.

"was indeed profitable, and a few sheets of paper were sold for much wealth and power."

Among the mass of forgeries palmed off by the false Isidore, or some other agent of the papacy, were the decrees of a Council held at Rome in A.D. 324, under the presidency of Sylvester. They were admirably calculated to enrich and exalt the Roman pontiff; but as no one ever heard of this Council until the ninth century, the best authorities agree in pronouncing it a fiction. Some slight opposition was offered to it even in that age, but it was quickly silenced; and "as all science and learning, in the following period, retired from the Roman world, there scarcely remained anyone capable, or even disposed, to move controversy respecting these pious frauds."*

Mosheim's account of the Donation of Constantine is accurate and succinct,† but his interesting elucidations are thrown into a discursive footnote. Gibbon's account is longer and more entertaining:

"This memorable donation was introduced to the world by an epistle of Hadrian I., who exhorts Charlemagne to imitate the liberality and revive the name of the great Constantine. According to the legend, the first of the Christian emperors was healed of the leprosy, and purified in the waters of baptism, by St. Silvester, the Roman bishop; and never was physician more gloriously recompensed. His royal proselyte withdrew from the seat and patrimony of St. Peter; declared his resolution of founding a new capital in the east; and resigned to the popes the free and perpetual sovereignty of Rome, Italy, and the provinces of the West. This fiction was productive of the most beneficial effects. The Greek princes were convicted of the guilt of usurpation, and the revolt of Gregory was the claim of his lawful inheritance. The popes were delivered from their debt of gratitude; and the nominal gifts of the Carlovingians were no more than the just and irrevocable restitution of a scanty portion of the ecclesiastical state. The sovereignty of Rome no longer depended on the choice of a fickle people; and the successors of St. Peter and Constantine were invested with the purple and prerogatives of the Cæsars. So deep was the ignorance and credulity of the times that the most absurd of fables was received with equal reverence in Greece and France, and is still enrolled among the decrees of the canon law. The

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* Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 201. † Vol. II., p. 141.

emperors and the Romans were incapable of discerning a forgery that subverted their rights and freedom, and the only opposition proceeded from a Sabine monastery which, in the beginning of the twelfth century, disputed the truth and validity of the donation of Constantine. In the revival of letters and liberty this fictitious deed was transpierced by the pen of Laurentius Valla, the pen of an eloquent critic and a Roman patriot. His contemporaries of the fifteenth century were astonished at his sacrilegious boldness; yet such is the silent and irresistible progress of reason, that before the end of the next age the fable was rejected by the contempt of historians and poets, and the tacit or modest censure of the advocates of the Roman church. The popes themselves have indulged a smile at the credulity of the vulgar, but a false and obsolete title still sanctifies their reign; and, by the same fortune which has attended the decretals and the Sibylline oracles, the edifice has subsisted after the foundations have been undermined."

Such were the False Decretals and the Donation of Constantine, "the two most celebrated monuments of human imposture and credulity."* They are a worthy crown to the great edifice of Christian forgery. From the first century to the ninth, or a space of nearly eight hundred years, we have seen the Church of Christ constantly disgraced by pious frauds. The forgery of documents appears to have been a recognised part of the ecclesiastical profession. It was not obscure laymen who composed these manuscripts for the amusement of their leisure, but the recognised leaders of Christianity, who held that the end sanctioned the means, and prostituted Truth in the temples of Religion.

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* Rev. George Waddington, "History of the Church," p. 223.

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PIOUS FRAUDS.

CHRISTIANITY is responsible, not only for the forgery of serviceable documents, but for a multitude of fraudulent miracles, lying legends, and profitable fables; and in carrying on its wretched trade in these things it did not scruple to resort to the crudest forms of fetish worship. An African mystery-man, dispensing amulets, need not fear a comparison with the Christian priests and monks who trafficked in relics of dead saints and other items of the stock-in-trade of pious imposture.

It is possible that the earliest preachers of Christianity were more credulous than designing, and propagated marvellous stories which they had themselves swallowed in a spirit of faith. Yet it was probably not long before the principle of lying for the glory of God and the advancement of religion induced the practice of thaumaturgic arts. Protestants are now satisfied with very ancient miracles, but the more superstitious Catholics credit the continued existence of miraculous powers in the Church. We need not wonder, therefore, that the still more superstitious Christians of the early ages should expect miracles to be wrought before their own eyes. Traditional wonders did not suffice to nourish their enthusiastic credulity, which demanded a fresh provision in every generation. The leaders of Christianity were accordingly obliged to supply their wants, and this could not be done without knavery; for while no more than an easy credulity was needed for the dissemination, as well as for the acceptance, of apocryphal stories, the manufacture of fresh miracles necessitated the practice of conscious fraud.

How far the first and second centuries were infected with this dishonesty it is difficult to determine, but we

may assume that the forgers of documents, whose nefarious practices we have already seen, would not hesitate at further deception; and, if we may judge from the taunts of Celsus and the satire of Lucian, the Christians of their age were far advanced in all the arts of imposture.* In the third century pious frauds abounded; they were promoted by the Church with shameless audacity; and, from the conversion of Constantine until the Reformation, they were a splendid source of power and profit to the ministers of Christ.

We have already examined the story of the miraculous cross which is said to have appeared in the sky at the most critical period of the life of the first Christian emperor, which presaged his victory in battle, and which decided his conversion. We have also seen that the Christians, who profited so greatly by this event, ascribed miraculous powers to the tomb of Constantine. The emperor himself was an ardent lover of monks and relics, his temperament being as credulous as the most exacting ecclesiastics could desire. Few of his immediate successors excelled him in this virtue, unless it were the younger Theodosius, whose fondness for sanctified articles was so great, that he begged the old coat of a dying Bishop, and afterwards wore it in the hope of deriving some virtue; as if, says Jortin, "piety, like the itch, could be catched by wearing another man's clothes."

Constantine's favor stimulated the worship of relics, and from that time it became a regular part of Christian devotion. An exaggerated respect had long been paid to the martyrs of the faith who had suffered

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* "*Lucian* tells us that whenever any crafty juggler, expert in his trade, and who knew how to make a right use of things, went over to the Christians, he was sure to grow rich immediately, by making a prey of their simplicity. And *Celsus* represents all the Christian wonder-workers as mere vagabonds and common cheats 'who rambled about to play their tricks at fairs and markets; not in the circles of the wiser and better sort, for among such they never ventured to appear; but whenever they observed a set of raw young fellows, slaves or fools; there they took care to intrude themselves and to display their arts.' . . . The same charge was constantly urged against them by all the other enemies of the Christian faith, *Julian*, *Porphyry* etc."—Middleton's "Free Inquiry," p. 23.

death under the various persecutions, but this sentiment now assumed a grotesque form. Not only the clothes they wore, and the objects they used, were exhibited and sold, but their very bodies were dug up and made profitable. These holy corpses were usually reburied under the altar of a church, which naturally enjoyed a reputation for sanctity, and attracted the custom of numerous worshippers. Theodosius was obliged to pass a law forbidding the people to dig up the bones of martyrs or traffic in their remains.* But nothing could arrest the progress of the mania. St. Ambrose even refused to consecrate a church that had no relics,† and the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 692) ordained that those altars should be demolished under which no relics were found.

The Pagans derided this abject superstition. Eunapius, who describes the monks as a race of filthy animals to whom he is tempted to refuse the name of men, charges them with being the authors of this new worship; and our readers may be pleased to hear a few sentences from this honest heathen. The Christians, says Eunapius, profess a system which—

> "In the place of those deities who are conceived by the understanding, has substituted the meanest and most contemptible slaves. The heads, salted and pickled, of these infamous malefactors, who for the multitude of their crimes have suffered a just and ignominious death; their bodies, still marked by the impression of the lash and the scars of those tortures which were inflicted by the sentence of the magistrate; such are the gods which the earth produces in our days; such are the martyrs, the supreme arbitrators of our prayers and petitions to the Deity, whose tombs are now consecrated as the objects of the veneration of the people."‡

Within the Church itself a few voices were raised against this superstition. "The presbyter Vigilantius," says Gibbon, "the Protestant of his age, firmly, though ineffectually, withstood the superstition of monks, relics, saints, fasts, etc., for which Jerome compares him to

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* McClintock and Strong's Cyclopædia, "Relics."
† Ep. 22 ad Marcell.
‡ Gibbon, chap. xxviii.

the Hydra, Cerberus, the Centaurs, etc., and considers him only as the organ of the Dæmon."*

The remains of martyrs were frequently discovered at a very opportune moment. A signal instance occurs in the life of St. Ambrose. He was banished from Milan by the empress Justina, but he refused to obey the order, and his faithful flock guarded his cathedral and palace against the imperial troops.

"While he maintained this arduous contest, he was instructed by a dream to open the earth in a place where the remains of two martyrs, Gervasius and Protasius, had been deposited above three hundred years. Immediately under the pavement of the church two perfect skeletons were found, with the heads separated from their bodies, and a plentiful effusion of blood. The holy relics were presented, in solemn pomp, to the veneration of the people, and every circumstance of this fortunate discovery was admirably adapted to promote the designs of Ambrose. The bones of the martyrs, their blood, their garments, were supposed to contain a healing power, and the preternatural influence was communicated to the most distant objects, without losing any part of its original virtue. The extraordinary cure of a blind man, and the reluctant confession of several dæmoniacs, appeared to justify the faith and sanctity of Ambrose; and the truth of these miracles is attested by Ambrose himself, by his secretary Paulinus, and by his proselyte, the celebrated Augustin, who, at that time, professed the art of rhetoric at Milan. The reason of the present age may possibly approve the incredulity of Justina and her Arian court, who derided the theatrical representations which were exhibited by the contrivance and at the expense of the archbishop. Their effect, however, on the minds of the people was rapid and irresistible, and the feeble sovereign of Italy found himself unable to contend with the favorite of Heaven."†

It may be added that these skeletons were of an extraordinary size, so as to suit the popular notion that human beings were much taller in the earlier times.

Profit, even more than power, was gained by this superstition. Jortin well says that "they who related such false miracles had much to gain, and they had nothing to fear if their pious frauds were discovered. Such men were protected and caressed, for the honor of religion, and by way of recompense for their godly

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* Gibbon, chap. xxviii., footnote. See also Jortin, Vol. III., p. 90.

† Gibbon, chap. xxvii.

intentions. Indeed, it was dangerous to attack such frauds, on account of the power and interest of those who were concerned in them." He justly adds that "the ecclesiastics wanted to attract offerings and presents, and to increase the number of their tributaries."* Such an easy and fruitful source of revenue was, of course, well utilised.

"The satisfactory experience that the relics of saints were more valuable than gold or precious stones stimulated the clergy to multiply the treasures of the Church. Without much regard for truth or probability, they invented names for skeletons and actions for names. The fame of the apostles and of the holy men who had imitated their virtues was darkened by religious fiction. To the invincible band of genuine and primitive martyrs they added myriads of imaginary heroes, who had never existed except in the fancy of crafty or credulous legendaries."†

The buried martyrs were usually detected by their perfume, and the history of "the aromatic scent of the sacred bones" would fill a moderate folio. "By the help of this odor," says Jortin, "relics were discovered, and genuine bones distinguished from counterfeits; and it was very easy to find out a saint without borrowing the lantern of Diogenes."‡ When the coffin of St. Stephen was opened "an odor such as that of Paradise was smelt, which instantly cured the various diseases of seventy-three of the assistants."§ Jortin shrewdly remarks that this perfume is very suspicious, since of all miracles it is the easiest to be performed. The curing of diseases is a more difficult feat, but in this matter the Church only plagiarised from Paganism. All kinds of diseases were believed to be publicly cured in the temples of Æsculapius. Pausanius relates that, in the temple at Epidaurus, there were many columns inscribed with the names of men and women who had been cured by the god, with an account of their several cases; while a separate pillar was dedicated to the memory of Hippolytus, who had been raised from the dead. Similar miracles are recorded by Strabo, who says that the temples of Æsculapius were adorned with

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* Vol. III., p. 90.
† Gibbon, chap. xxviii.
‡ Vol. II., p. 53.
§ Gibbon, chap. xxviii.

votive tablets describing the various cures ; and there is a remarkable fragment of one of these tablets still extant, which gives an account of two blind men restored to sight in open view, amid the loud acclamations of the people.*

We shall now give a fuller account of these relics, and the traffic in them which was carried on by the monks and priests. The mass of materials is too great to be arranged in chronological order within the restricted space at our command. We must therefore begin with Jesus Christ himself, and proceed through the apostles, the martyrs and the saints to the end of the chapter.

Saint Helena, the mother of Constantine, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, discovered the holy sepulchre in which Christ was buried, the three crosses on which he was crucified with the two thieves, and the nails which had pierced his hands and feet. Eusebius, the church historian, who was then bishop of Cæsarea in the neighborhood, neglects nothing that could turn to the advantage of Christianity, but he says not a single word about the crosses, although he minutely describes the discovery of the sepulchre. This admirably shows how such stories grow under the fostering care of the clergy. There is nothing miraculous in the finding of a tomb, but it served as a centre around which imposture gathered, and credulity welcomed, a host of lucrative fables.

The cross of Christ still bore the title affixed by Pilate, but the clergy forgot to copy it and decide whether Matthew, Mark, Luke or John gives the proper inscription. They were not even satisfied which was the true cross, and to determine this difficult problem, Saint Macarius, the bishop of Jerusalem, proposed that the three should be carried to a sick lady and put to the test. Two produced no effect, but the third restored the patient to health. Sozomen entirely neglects this sick lady, and states that the cross was applied to a dead body, which instantly revived ; and he is sup-

* Middleton's "Free Inquiry," pp. 78, 79.

ported by St. Paulinus and St. Sulpitius Severus. The whole story rests principally upon the authority of Cyril of Jerusalem, who lived at the time, but who speaks of no miracles attending the discovery. "On the whole," says Jortin, "it seems most probable that the story was invented by the Christians of Jerusalem after the emperor and his mother were dead;" and he adds that "if Helena found a cross, it is impossible to know how the fraud was conducted, and who were the actors in this godly knavery."* One thing, however, is certain. Helena was then nearly eighty years old; she went to Palestine expressly in order to find the cross; and it would not be difficult for the priests to hoodwink and accommodate the doting pilgrim. Cardinal Newman argues that the supposition of imposture is "an imputation upon the Church of Jerusalem."† But there can be no imputation where there is no honor. Jerusalem was a sink of iniquity and debauchery, according to Gregory of Nyssa, who went there in the vain hope of appeasing the quarrels of its Christian inhabitants; and Jerome never spent more than a single day there lest he should despise the place.‡

Helena is said to have taken a part of the true cross to Constantine; the rest she enclosed in a silver box, and left in care of the bishop of Jerusalem, who exhibited it periodically to the faithful; and, as Jortin observes, "it must have brought in great revenues to the Church and to the bishop, if they only gave sixpence a piece to see the box in which the cross was locked up." The bishop alone, says Tillemont, "had the power to give little bits of it, which were considered as a singular favor and blessing."§ These little bits were not *given* but *sold*, and in a short space of time the sacred wood was "spread all over the earth." To account for this extraordinary distribution, Paulinus, and after him the Church, asserted that the wood of the true cross had a miraculous power of vegetation,

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* Vol. II., p. 223.
† "Two Essays on Miracles," p. 297.
‡ Gibbon, chap. xxiii.; Jortin, Vol. II., p. 29.
§ "Histoire Ecclésiastique," Bk. VII., ch. 5.

and repaired itself whenever a piece was cut off.* This miracle was grimly derided by John Calvin, who said that a mere enumeration of the fragments of the cross

> "Would certainly fill a goodly volume. There is no abbey so poor as not to have a specimen. In some places larger fragments exist, as at Paris, in the Holy Chapel, at Poictiers, and at Rome, where a crucifix of tolerable size is said to have been entirely made out of it. In fine, if all the pieces which could be found were collected into a heap, they would form a good ship-load, though the gospel testifies that a single individual was able to carry it."†

Not satisfied with this profitable commerce, the clergy of Jerusalem multiplied their store of relics; and before long they exhibited also the crown of thorns, the pillar at which Christ was scourged, and the nails and the lance that pierced his hands, his feet, and his side.‡

Helena herself was sainted after her death; and her body appears to have contracted some of the miraculous virtue of the true cross, for it was preserved in an abbey in France, and also in a church at Rome.§

At the holy sepulchre an annual miracle was wrought. A *holy fire* used to descend into it on the Saturday before Easter. Gregory the Ninth, in A.D. 1238, forbade the Greeks to exhibit it any longer, but the practice was continued. Of a piece with this was the supernatural fire annually visible at the pillar of St. Simeon Stylites after his death. "What tricks," says Jortin, "would not these monks have played if they had possessed the secret of electricity!" Queen Helena is also said to have built a church on the spot whence Christ ascended to heaven; a sandy place was kept on the floor, and the clergy gave out that it could not be paved, as the print of Christ's feet was visible there, and could not be covered or erased. ‖

Calvin remarks of the crown of thorns, that "it would seem that its twigs had been planted that they might

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* Dupin, "Bibliothèque Ecclésiastique," Vol. III., p. 149.
† Calvin's Tracts, Vol. I., p. 301.
‡ Gibbon, chap. xxiii.
§ Jortin, Vol. II., p. 224. ‖ Jortin, Vol. III., pp. 87, 88.

grow again."* At any rate, the imperial chapel at Constantinople boasted of the original article in the thirteenth century, and the barons of Roumania pawned it for thirteen thousand pieces of gold. Being unredeemed, it was carried to Venice, and finally purchased by Saint Louis, king of France. The whole court advanced to meet it at Troyes, and it was borne in triumph through Paris by the king himself, barefoot, and in his shirt. A further expenditure of gold enabled his most Christian majesty to secure from Constantinople another supply of relics, including "a large and authentic portion of the true cross, the baby-linen of the Son of God, the lance, the sponge, and the chain of his Passion, the rod of Moses, and part of the skull of St. John the Baptist."† As late as the seventeenth century the medicinal virtues of the crown of thorns was attested in Paris, one of its holy prickles being employed on March 14, 1656, to cure the niece of Pascal of an inveterate ulcer.

The water-pots used by Jesus in the miracle of Cana were preserved, and, according to Calvin, some of the liquor was to be found at Orleans.‡ Centuries before, Epiphanius related that many fountains and rivers were annually turned into wine on the same day, and at the same hour, when Christ wrought his miracle at Cana in Galilee ; and that he himself had drunk out of a fountain at Cibyra, in Caria, where the wonder continued.§

Christ's manger was shown in the church of the elder Mary at Rome ; his baby-linen was exhibited at another church in the same city, as well as in Spain, and at Aix-la-Chapelle ; while at the church of St. James, at Rome, was displayed the altar on which the Savior was placed on being presented in the temple.‖ The blood of Christ was exhibited in more than a hundred places, and the monks of Charroux boasted the possession of his hair and teeth, although at least one of the set was treasured by the monks of St.

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* Tracts, Vol. I., p. 304.
† Gibbon, chap. lxi.
‡ Tracts, Vol. I., p. 298.
§ Jortin, Vol. II. p. 45.
‖ Calvin's Tracts, Vol. I., pp. 296, 297.

Medard.* The sponge presented to him with vinegar and gall is preserved at Santa Croce.† At the Lateran at Rome is shown a cedar table on which Jesus took his last supper, although a marble table with the same legend is treasured in Galilee.‡ The Genoese possess, as a present from Baldwin, the second King of Jerusalem, the dish from which Christ and the disciples ate the paschal lamb together.§ One of the crusaders sent home from Jerusalem a bottle of the milk on which Christ was suckled, together with a nail of the Holy Ghost. Edessa claimed to possess a picture of Christ, the perfect impression of his face on linen, which he graciously sent to Abgarus. Christ's handkerchief, which St. Veronica lent him to wipe off his bloody sweat, and on which his features were miraculously printed, was shown in many places. But the most astonishing relic of the Redeemer was his foreskin, which was cut off at the circumcision and miraculously preserved. This precious article, according to Calvin,‖ was shown by the monks of Charroux, who, as a proof of its genuineness, declared that it yielded drops of blood. But the honor of its possession was disputed by many cities; by Akin, Antwerp, Heldesheim, Besançon, Calcata, and Rome.¶ Surely the Christians who venerated this obscene relic were far sunk in the slough of superstition, and it may be doubted whether the most ignorant Polytheists ever condescended to worship the prepuce of a god.

Calvin, who was much better employed in exposing Catholic superstitions than in elaborating the creed which dooms babies not a span long to crawl on the floor of hell, suggested that there should be an inventory of relics. Such a document would have saved us much trouble, and we sincerely deplore its absence,

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* Jortin, Vol. III., p. 306.

† McClintock and Strong's Cyclopædia, "Relics."

‡ Dr. Schaff's article on the Worship of Relics: *Methodist Quarterly Review*, October, 1866.

§ Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 314, footnote.

‖ Tracts, Vol. I, p. 296.

¶ H. Foulis, "History of Romish Treasons," p. 13.

for there are no doubt many interesting articles that have escaped our research, although we have still a long list to enumerate.

The Virgin Mary's girdle was carefully preserved, yet we are not informed whether it was the one unloosed by Gabriel or a later portion of her apparel. Her handkerchief, with which it was alleged that a blind boy's sight had been restored, was included in the 7,421 relics collected by Philip the Second of Spain, and preserved in 515 beautifully wrought shrines. The vouchers for the cure it operated were written in Spanish; and Aldrete, the antiquary, narrowly escaped being burnt for saying that the Spanish language did not exist in the first century.* In the Lateran at Rome are two pillars from Pilate's house, and the twenty-eight marble steps which led up to it. They were brought by Helena from Jerusalem, and no one is allowed to ascend them except on his knees. At Turin is shown the linen sheet in which Joseph of Arimathæa wrapt the body of Jesus. Sir John Maundeville, our English mediæval traveller, asserts that he saw at Bethlehem the charnel-house where lie the bones of the Innocents. John the Baptist's head, a portion of which we have encountered among the relics purchased by Louis the Ninth, was discovered, according to Sozomen,† in the year 391, but it was found again long afterwards in another place, and in the course of ages the skull of Christ's cousin was exhibited at Amiens, at Lyons, at Morienne, at Angely, at Rome, in Spain, in Germany, and in many other places. The keeper of the St. Amiens relic protested that his was the genuine head, and, in proof of his assertion, he bade the pilgrims to note the hole in the skull over the right eye, which was the very hole Herodias made with a knife when the head was brought to her in a charger.‡

The tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul were *distinguished*, as Gibbon ironically says, early in the third century, if we may trust the history of Eusebius.

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* *Cornhill Magazine* January, 1869.

† Eccles Hist., Bk. VII., §. 21. ‡ Jortin, Vol. III., p. 55.

After the conversion of Constantine, their bones were "deposited under the altars of Christ," and devoutly visited by "the emperors, the consuls and the generals of armies."* In the seventh century "their genuine or fictitious relics were adored as the Palladium of Christian Rome."

"The pilgrims of the East and West resorted to the holy threshold; but the shrines of the apostles were guarded by miracles and invisible terrors, and it was not without fear that the pious Catholic approached the object of his worship. It was fatal to touch, it was dangerous to behold, the bodies of the saints; and those who, from the purest motives, presumed to disturb the repose of the sanctuary, were affrighted by visions or punished with sudden death."†

But there were still more astonishing relics of these great apostles. A piece of the broiled fish which Peter offered his Master was preserved in the time of Calvin, who observed that "it must have been wondrous well salted, if it has kept for such a long series of ages."‡ Paul's chain was also long preserved, filings from it being dispensed by Gregory the Great; and, as Gibbon remarks, "the pontifical smith who handled the file must have understood the miracles which it was in his power to operate or withhold." This fabulous memento of Paul's captivity appears to have resembled the true cross in its power of reproduction, for "the particles of holy iron were inserted in keys or crosses of gold, and distributed in Britain, Gaul, Spain, Africa, Constantinople and Egypt."§

The remains of Timothy were brought from Ephesus, and those of St. Andrew and St. Luke from Achaia, to Constantinople in A.D. 356. After a repose of three hundred years they were transported, in solemn pomp, to the Church of the Apostles which was founded by Constantine; "and thus," says Jortin, "began the carrying of relics from place to place, and the invention of ten thousand lies concerning the wonders wrought by the dead; all which must have greatly scandalised the Pagans."‖

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* Gibbon, chap. xxviii.
† Gibbon, chap. xlv.
‡ Tracts, Vol I., p. 304.
§ Gibbon, chap. xlv., footnote.
‖ Vol. III., p. 5; Gibbon, chap. xxviii.

The discovery of St. Stephen's remains is called by Tillemont one of the principal events of the fifth century; and "take it altogether," says Jortin, "it is perhaps one of the most barefaced and impudent impostures that ever were obtruded upon the Christian world." The coffins of St. Stephen, Nicodemus, Gamaliel, and Abidas, were found together. The three minor corpses were left to their repose, but "the relics of the first martyr were transported, in solemn procession, to a church constructed in their honor on Mount Zion; and the minute particles of those relics, a drop of blood, or the scrapings of a bone, were acknowledged, in almost every province of the Roman world, to possess a divine and miraculous virtue."* St. Augustine enumerates above seventy miracles wrought by them in his own diocese within the space of two years, of which three were resurrections from the dead. "Whoever," says a Gallic or Spanish proverb, "pretends to have read all the miracles of St. Stephen, he lies." A phial of St. Stephen's blood used to liquefy annually at Naples on the third of August, but when Gregory the Thirteenth corrected the calendar, it did not liquefy until the thirteenth of August, on which the festival of the saint was fixed by the new regulation.† St. Stephen has since been superseded by St. Januarius, whose blood still liquefies every year like his predecessor's.

The body of St. Barnabas was found, by revelation, at Cyprus, with the gospel of St. Matthew in Greek upon his breast, transcribed with his own hand.‡ The grave of St. John, at Ephesus, was not rifled, being miraculous enough already, since it moved up and down to show that he was alive and breathing, in fulfilment of Christ's supposed prophecy that the beloved disciple should not die before the second advent.

In the course of time Old Testament characters made their appearance. After lying in the grave about twelve hundred years, the prophet Zechariah was discovered in a fine state of preservation, with a golden crown, golden shoes, and a magnificent robe; alto-

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* Gibbon, chap. xxviii. † Bibliothéque Universelle, vi., 14.
‡ Jortin, Vol. III., p. 132.

gether, a far more gorgeous figure than any Jewish prophet ever was in his lifetime. The still more ancient remains of Samuel were found in A.D. 406, and removed from Judæa to Constantinople by Arcadius, who is highly commended for this pious action by Jerome.* Samuel appears to have been less entire than Zechariah, for his ashes were deposited in a golden vase, which was covered with a silken veil, and passed from the hands of one bishop to those of another. The highways from Palestine to Constantinople were crowded as the prophet's relics passed to their destination ; and the Emperor himself, with the most illustrious members of the clergy and the senate, advanced to meet his extraordinary guest.† After this we need not start at Sir John Maundeville's story of Adam's skull being found at Golgotha ; at Abel's tomb, on the road to Baalbec, being thirty yards long ; or at the tombs of Eve, Seth and Noah being respectively two hundred paces, sixty feet, and a hundred and twenty feet long.

Every species of relic was thought to be endowed with curative powers,‡ an idea which is countenanced by the story of the touching of the hem of Christ's garment by the woman with a bloody issue,§ and by the miracles of healing that were wrought by the clothes of St. Paul.‖ These texts, indeed, are expressly cited by St. Chrysostom to prove the virtue of relics. The Church always looked with a kind eye upon this superstition, and the Fourth Lateran Council (A.D. 1215) regulated, without repressing it, by forbidding relics to be sold or exposed outside their cases or shrines until their authenticity had been approved by the Pope. These regulations were renewed by the Council of Trent.

A famous monument of Christian fraud is the House of Loretto. The empress Helena, whose senile cre-

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* Ep. 53. † Jortin, Vol. III., p. 101 ; Gibbon, chap. xxviii.

‡ Mosheim says the Christians were so anxious to possess these preservatives of health and safeguards against danger, that those who could not beg, borrow or buy them, deemed it expedient to *steal* them ; for " whatever means were resorted to in such a cause as this were supposed to be pious and acceptable to God, provided they were successful."—Vol. III., p. 223.

§ Matt. ix., 20. ‖ Acts xix., 12.

dulity we have already experienced, having discovered the house of the Virgin Mary at Nazareth, built over it a magnificent church. This sacred edifice having been taken and destroyed by the Saracens, the house was transported by angels on May 10, A.D. 1291, to the coast of Dalmatia. But it was too precious a memorial of the true faith to be left there; and after a rest of three years, during which its angelic conveyancers were perhaps recovering from the fatigue of their first journey, it suddenly and miraculously appeared in the Papal state at Loretto, a few miles south of Ancona. There was no difficulty in recognising it, for a contemporary saint was warned by the Virgin of its arrival; and in A.D. 1518, Leo the Tenth pledged the Papal infallibility to the truth of the miracle, which was further authenticated in a bull of Pope Julius the Second. Pilgrimages to the House of Loretto were long fashionable in Europe, and the Church reaped a rich harvest from its credulous visitors.

Another tremendous fraud was perpetrated at the baptism of Clovis, the first king of the Franks, who embraced the religion of his Christian wife after the battle of Tolbiac, in which he believed that her god had given him the victory. The ceremony of his baptism was pompously performed in the cathedral of Rheims; but before it was completed, the church was filled with a bright light, and a voice was heard, saying, "Peace be with you: it is I: be not afraid: abide in my love." Then the place was filled with heavenly odor, and a dove descended, bearing in her bill a phial of chrism, with which his majesty was anointed.* The holy phial was preserved, and it was subsequently used until the Revolution at the coronation of the kings of France, the celestial oil being used and renewed on each occasion.†

Fleury hints and Schlegel urges that the truth of the story is doubtful, resting as it does on the authority of Archbishop Himcar, who wrote three hundred years after the event. But Mosheim says "I dare not call

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* Jortin, Vol. III., p. 134

† Gibbon, chap. xxxviii.; Middleton's "Free Inquiry," p. 227.

the fact in question," and the Church has always accepted it as an unquestionable miracle. Mosheim thinks it "a *deception* craftily contrived for the occasion,"* and every sensible reader, who admits the story, will probably share his opinion.

Two hundred and fifty years later, in A.D. 755, Pope Stephen, wanting the aid of Pepin, King of France, made use of a new trick, by sending him a letter from the hand of St. Peter, requiring him to assist the see of Rome, under pain of eternal damnation. Pepin of course obeyed the heavenly mandate.

The millenial craze furnishes another illustration of Christian credulity and priestly fraud. It was one of those "frivolous and senseless notions, which the priests industriously cherished for the sake of lucre."† At the end of the tenth century it was generally believed that the end of the world was approaching, the clergy having industriously prepared men's minds for the dreadful expectation.

> "Hence it came to pass that an innumerable multitude, leaving their possessions, and giving them to churches and monasteries, repaired to Palestine, where they thought that Christ would descend from heaven to judge the world. Others solemnly devoted themselves and all their goods to churches, to monasteries, and to the clergy, and entered into their service as bondslaves, performing a daily task. Their hope was that the supreme judge would be favorable to them if he found them thus occupied in the service of his servants."‡

"Thus do I ever make my fool my purse" quoth honest Iago. The priests set the pot boiling and skimmed it for themselves. From first to last they have traded upon the credulity of the multitude, whose ignorance they have always fostered in order to make them an easy prey.

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* Vol. I., p. 421. † Jortin, Vol. III., p. 227.
‡ Jortin, Vol. III. p. 228.

ERRATUM.—*Abgarus*, Prince of Edessa, was wrongly printed as *Abargus* on pp. 70 and 71.

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THE RISE OF THE PAPACY.

AN ecclesiastic, who paid heavily for his benefice at Rome (an offence known as Simony), was once asked if he believed in the story of Peter being the first bishop of that city. He candidly replied: "I do not think that Peter was ever there, but I am quite sure that Simon was."

While the evidence for the constant existence of Simon or Simony in Rome is abundant, the only evidence for Peter having ever been in that city is the alleged fact of his having written a letter from Babylon. Forgery and fraud, however, soon supported the tradition that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, a tale which was first put forward in what are called the "Clementine Recognitions," a theological romance fraudulently ascribed to Clement of Rome. The story is discountenanced by the evidence of Justin Martyr, who says that Simon Magus journeyed to Rome, but no more mentions Peter being there than does Paul or the Acts of the Apostles.

Naturally, as being at the opulent seat of the empire, the early Church of Rome assumed considerable dignity after the destruction of Jerusalem, the primitive Holy City of the faith. But for a long time it had no superior authority, and certainly no jurisdiction, over the churches at Alexandria and Antioch. In the second century, however, Victor, Bishop of Rome, took upon himself to excommunicate the Eastern churches for not conforming to the Roman practice in keeping Easter. But the fulmination neither frightened nor hurt. It was not until the removal of the capital by Constantine (A.D. 330) that the Church found the opportunity for asserting its supremacy. No longer kept in check by the presence of the civil rulers, the Bishop of Rome had less difficulty in securing political power. In the meantime, the

authority of the bishops had been built up, notably by the epistles of Ignatius and the Apostolical Canons and Constitutions, which are now generally acknowledged to be forgeries.

The constant struggle for precedence among the rival bishops, and the fierce feuds which raged at their synods, tended to show the necessity for a central head; but, although many cases were referred to Rome for arbitration, a long time elapsed before its supremacy was admitted. It was first asserted at the Council of Sardica (A.D. 343) when the oriental bishops protested and left the council. The decisions of this council were, however, at Rome, fraudulently ascribed to the first general council of Nice. Archbishop Usher, in his answer to a challenge made by a Jesuit, says:

> "Neither hath this corrupting humor stayed itself in forging of whole councils and entire treatises of ancient writers; but hath, like a canker, fretted away divers of their sound parts, and so altered their complexions that they appear not to be the same men they were."*

We have seen (p. 34) how, in the time of Theodosius, the patriarch of Alexandria and Damasus, bishop of Rome, were associated as joint authorities on orthodoxy. Damasus was the first bishop who took the Pagan title of pontiff. Already the centralisation of wealth at Rome had made the bishopric so desirable a benefice that when Damasus attempted to convert Prætextatus, the governor of the city, the Pagan answered with a sarcasm which is full of historical instruction: "Make me Bishop of Rome and I will turn Christian directly."†

Leo the First (A.D. 440—461), taking advantage of the disturbed state of the African Church, which was divided concerning the Donatian heresy, claimed jurisdiction over the bishops of Africa. He also assumed a tone of superiority in a letter to Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria. In A.D. 448 the Council of Constantinople, under Flavianus, deposed Eutyches, the friend of

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* Quoted in the "Delineation of Roman Catholicism," by the Rev. Charles Elliott, D.D., p. 77; 1851.

† Gibbon, chap. xxv.

Dioscorus; but in the following year the bishops at the Council of Ephesus, called by the Romish Church the Robber Synod, reinstalled him, extolled Dioscorus who had armed soldiers both outside and inside the church, and kicked Flavianus to death.* In A.D. 451 the bishops at the Council of Chalcedon vehemently shouted "Damn Dioscorus, Christ deposes Dioscorus." This council, however, gave Rome no predominant authority.

Pope Leo labored assiduously to increase the spiritual and temporal power of his see. The ignorance and corruption of the age favored his design. Introducing the practice of auricular confession, which gave the Church possession of domestic secrets, and placed the communicants and their relatives at the mercy of the priests, he greatly strengthened and extended the clerical power. Previously confession had been public as in Buddhism.†

While the Greek Churches were involved in metaphysical squabbles the practical Latin mind was taking advantage of their dissensions to establish its dominion. Mosheim speaks of the ambitious quarrels and the bitter animosities that arose among the patriarchs themselves, and which produced the most bloody wars and the most detestable and horrid crimes.‡

The break up of the Western empire (A.D. 476) contributed to Romish supremacy. The Papacy throve on the confusion of Italy. The decay of the imperial power gave freer scope to the bishops, and led the credulous people to look to them as their natural protectors. The memories of the ancient empire still hung round the walls of Rome, and even her barbarian conquerors bowed in awe before the glories of her mighty past. Hobbes has well observed that the Catholic Church is but the ghost of the dead Roman empire sitting throned and crowned on the grave hereof.

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* Gibbon, chap. xlvii. Milman, "Latin Christianity," Book II., chap. iv.

† Rev. G. Waddington, "History of the Church," chap. ix., p. 126.

‡ Vol. I., p. 34.

Leo excommunicated Dioscorus, who boldly retorted the excommunication; but his defeat broke the power of Alexandria, and left Rome and Constantinople face to face.* Rome took to appointing legates, otherwise spies and informers, at Constantinople.† The strife between these rivals was bitter and prolonged. Felix II. of Rome (483—493) went to the length of excommunicating the patriarch of Constantinople, and as this had come to imply not only expulsion from the Church, but eternal perdition, it was no light sentence. A complete schism took place, which lasted over thirty years. Gelasius I. (492—496) mockingly called the patriarch of Constantinople bishop of the parish of Heraclea. In a Council at Rome he asserted the primacy of the eternal city as founded on Christ's remark to Peter,‡ and proclaimed that the Pope's authority was higher than that of kings and emperors. When Pope Symmachus (503) was acquitted by a Council at Rome of adultery and other charges, the partisans of the Pope declared that the Council could not pass judgment on the successor of St. Peter; and one Eunodius (subsequently Bishop of Padua) vindicated this decision in a work, asserting that the Roman bishop was above every human tribunal, and responsible only to God.§

The learned Professor Heinrich Geffcken, in his great work on "Church and State," says:

"Parallel with these growing pretensions increased that system of denying or falsifying historical facts, which was to minister to the glorification of Rome and the power of her bishops. The decree of the first Council of Nicæa were interpolated. The story was fabricated of the conversion and baptism of Constantine, by Sylvester, and forged writings, like the 'Constitutum Sylvestri,' the 'Gesta Liberii,' and others, were circulated in order to prove the inviolable supremacy of the See of Rome."‖

One of the most potent factors in the fight for supremacy was the assumption of the power of excommuni-

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* H. C. Lea, "Studies in Church History," p. 283.

† Jortin, Vol. II., p. 429.

‡ Matt. xvi., 18, a passage which Dr. Pfleiderer unhesitatingly sets down as a forgery.

§ McClintock and Strong's Encyclopædia in article "Papacy."

‖ Chap. vii., p. 148, Vol. I. E. F. Taylor's translation, 1877.

cation, and afterwards of interdict. The conquest of the western nations, who had been used to the exercise of this power in Druidism*, facilitated the use of the weapon. When Christianity was predominant, there was no refuge for the person excommunicated, unless he could take shelter with Mohammedans or heathens. In time it became generally recognised in the jurisprudence of all Europe, that the civil power was bound to aid in enforcing ecclesiastical censures. Providence was always supposed to vindicate the anathemas of the Church; and if temporal visitations were insufficient, there was always the authority of saints, to whom the secrets of futurity were revealed, for asserting that the most terrible of all the fires of hell was reserved for those who died excommunicate. The Church took care to supplement this with earthly penalties and disabilities. The excommunicate could not marry, and was outlawed from all civil rights and social intercourse.

Mr. Lea, whose paper on Excommunication is one of the most valuable in his "Studies of Church History," says:

"The liability to share the punishment of an excommunicate, for the simplest office or greeting tendered to him, was universally admitted. No one was even to salute him, and the confessor was instructed, among the regular questions addressed to his penitents, to inquire whether they had exchanged a word or a greeting with anyone under the ban of the Church. Worse than a leper, he was to die like a dog, and all the promptings of humanity on his behalf were to be sternly repressed. . . The excommunicate thus shed around him a contagion, which cut him off from all human society, and left him to perish in misery and starvation. This was no mere theoretical infliction, but a law enforced with all the power of the Church, and applied so liberally that it became almost impossible for the innocent to escape its effects."†

The truth of this is illustrated by the fact that Popes granted, as a special privilege, the right not to be excommunicated without cause. A bull of this nature is extant, issued by Pope Celestin, in favor of a monastery, and another by Innocent III., for the protection of an archbishop.‡

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* Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 136 † Pp. 380, 381. ‡ Lea, p. 403.

An historian of the Papacy tells us that:

"When a crime had been committed against the Church, for which no satisfaction could be obtained on account of the power of some haughty offender, or for any other reason, then the bishop put the whole place in which the offender lived, or the whole district to which that place belonged, under an interdict —that is to say, he caused all offices of public worship to cease or be suspended. All the churches of that place were closed, and all relics which they contained were withdrawn from public view; all crucifixes and images of saints were shrouded; no bells were rung; no sacraments were administered; no corpse was buried in consecrated ground; and notice had been given that this state of things would be continued until the demands of the Church should have been fully satisfied, and the alleged injury repaired. By this means such a ferment was raised in a whole population, that even the most powerful were at length obliged to yield."*

The priestly pretensions were supported not only by the dread powers of excommunication, which was even held in terror over the dead,† but by the doctrine of the immunity of priests from the jurisdiction of secular tribunals. Thus a peculiar sanctity and personal inviolability were given them, which proved an enormous advantage in all contests with the civil power. According to Rufinus, Constantine, at the first Council of Nice, declared that priests could not be judged by men. "For you are gods, given us by God, and it is not fitting that man should pronounce judgment on gods."‡ It is not to be supposed that Constantine really said this, or that the civil power so readily acknowledged such a monstrous claim; yet it was continually put forward, and was soon asserted in the forged Decretals (see p. 78). Justinian conceded to the episcopal dignity the right to have episcopal judges. The overthrow of the empire facilitated the claim. The Frank, the Roman, the Goth and the Burgundian, however intermingled, had each a right to be tried by his own code, and it seemed natural that the ecclesiastic should have the benefit of the canon law, which could not be expounded

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* Rev. J. E. Riddle, "History of the Papacy," Vol. II., pp. 83, 84.

† That detestable scoundrel, Theophilus of Alexandria, excommunicated the learned Origen for heresy long after he was dead.

‡ Lea, "Studies in Church History," p. 170.

by the secular courts. As early as 538, the third Council of Orleans enacted that episcopal assent was necessary before a clerical could appear in a secular court, either as plaintiff or defendant, and numerous following church Councils anathematised judges who should try and condemn ecclesiastics.*

Gregory the First (A.D. 590—604) was, next to Leo the First, the greatest of the early Roman pontiffs. He stoutly repudiated the claim of the patriarch of Constantinople to be called universal bishop. This title, which in the next century was taken by his successors, he maintained to be blasphemous and diabolical, and he called himself "servant of the servants of God." None the less, he aimed at establishing the power of the Church, which he did much to promote by political intrigues as well as by the establishment of the doctrine of purgatory. Shortly before his death, the Emperor Maurice and his five sons were barbarously murdered by Phocas, who, heading a rebellion, usurped the throne of Constantinople. Gregory, rejoicing at the overthrow of an emperor who supported the pretensions of the rival primacy, no sooner heard the news than he had the statues of Phocas and his wife carried through Rome in triumph, and wrote to congratulate him on his success.† This Phocas was a monster of vice—lewd, drunken and sanguinary. Dean Milman says :

"It is astonishing that even common prudence did not temper the language of the triumphant pontiff, who launches out into a panegyric on the mercy and benignity of the usurper, calls on earth and heaven to rejoice at his accession, augurs peace and prosperity to the empire from his pious acts, and even seems to anticipate the return of the old republican freedom under the rule of the devout and gentle Phocas."‡

But the reward was to come. The patriarch of Constantinople having angered the devout and gentle Phocas by not delivering the murdered emperor's wife and daughters to his cruelty, he acceded to the

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* Lea, pp. 176—184.

† "The History of Romish Treasons," by H. Foulis, p. 114. Gibbon, chap. xlvi. Riddle's "History of the Papacy," Vol. I., p. 225.

‡ "Latin Christianity," Book III., chap. vii. Vol. II., p. 143.

request of Pope Boniface the Third and decreed (A.D. 606) the Romish See as head of all the Churches."*

The rise and rapid spread of Mohammedanism helped to increase the political consequence of the popes. The independent sees of Alexandria and Antioch were overrun, and in proportion as the Greek emperors were pressed by the Saracens they were forced to leave chiefly to the papacy the defence of their Italian possessions. The independence of Rome was soon shown in its refusal to obey the heretic Bardanes (A.D. 711—713).†

In converting the Pagans, Christianity became completely paganised, and it was only after the rise of a rival religion that any attempts at reform were made. These were by the bishops of Rome most strenuously resisted. When Leo, the Isaurian, who had associated much with the Mohammedans, published an edict prohibiting the worship of images (A.D. 726), Pope Gregory the Second absolved the people from their allegiance. This occasioned a civil war both in the East and in the West.

The Iconoclasts went about destroying images, and were violently opposed by the monks. Dean Milman remarks :

"Nor did this open resistance take place in Constantinople alone. A formidable insurrection broke out in Greece and in the Ægean Islands. A fleet was armed, a new emperor, one Cosmos, proclaimed, and Constantinople menaced by the rebels. The monks here, and throughout the empire, the champions of this, as of every other superstition, were the instigators to rebellion."‡

The opponents of image worship were termed arraigners of Christianity, and considered little better than Saracens. The dispute led to numerous battles by land and water. Constantine, nicknamed Copronymus, carried on the contest inaugurated by his father Leo, and rigorously quelled popular tumults in favor

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* Foulis, p. 115. † Gieseler, Vol. I., p. 547.

‡ "History of Latin Christianity," Book IV., chap. vii., p. 356, Vol. II.

of image worship. In A.D. 754 he convened a Council at Constantinople, which the Greeks call the Seventh General Council, and which anathematised at once all persons making images and all opponents of the religious veneration of Mary and other saints. The monks were violent in opposition to the first of these decrees, and were severely treated in consequence by the emperor. But they were countenanced by Gregory the Third, who excommunicated all who dared to attack the images. The Emperor Leo the Fourth (A.D. 775) also issued penal laws against image worshippers, but he was poisoned by his wife, Irene, with whom Pope Adrían the First made an alliance on condition of the restoration of image worship. It would require a volume to fully describe the bloodshed and crimes of this prolonged controversy, which distracted the Church for about a hundred and fifty years, when image worship finally prevailed.

As it emancipated itself from the Byzantine empire, the Papacy sought new alliances. Gregory III. offered to Charles Martel the sovereignty of Italy if he would drive out the detested Lombards. With the most barefaced defiance of political morality, Pope Zacharias (741—752) sanctioned the dethronement of the weak Merovingian dynasty, by the declaration that "whoever possessed the power should have also the name of king."* His successor, Stephen III. (752—757), anointed the usurper, Pepin the Short, as king of the Franks. In return for these services, Pepin came to the aid of Rome against the Lombards, and gave to the Pope, instead of the emperor, to whom they belonged, the conquered provinces. One inducement to Pepin to support Stephen was the forged letter from St. Peter, which we have already referred to, and which is well worth preserving :

"Pepin, the princes his sons, the Frankish nobility, and the Frankish nation; in the name of the Holy Virgin, the thrones, dominions and powers of heaven; in the name of the army of martyrs, of the cherubim and seraphim, of all the hosts gathered round the throne, and under threat of utter damnation, not to

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* McClintock and Strong's Cyclopædia, article "Papacy."

let his peculiar city, Rome, fall into the hands of the hell-brand Longobards."*

Charlemagne confirmed and enlarged the donation which his father had made, and on December 25, A.D. 800, laid the deed of the enlarged donation on the bogus tomb of St. Peter. Thus the popes became temporal princes; and though Charlemagne was not a prince to be trifled with, they soon conceived the plan of restoring the old-world empire of the Romans by the rule of the Papacy over the entire world. They availed themselves of the weakness and superstition of the successors of Charlemagne to emancipate themselves from their authority, and, in order to efface the recollection of the gift, forged the story that Constantine the Great had given Rome and Italy to Pope Sylvester, and that this was the reason why the seat of empire had been removed to Constantinople. The Papal claims were also supported by the forged Decretals already referred to, the whole purport of which were to make the Church independent of the State, and to give it a self-dependent centre of protection in the Romish see.

How little trouble it cost a mediæval pope to impose upon the pious barbarian of his day, may be seen by glancing at a few sentences of this useful forgery:

"'We ascribe,' Constantine is represented as saying, 'to the see of St. Peter all dignity, all glory, all imperial power. . . Besides, we give to Sylvester and his successor our palace of the Lateran, which is beyond question the most beautiful place on earth; we give him our crown, our mitre, our diadem and all our imperial vestments; we remit to him the imperial dignity. We give as a pure gift, to the holy pontiff, the city of Rome and all the western cities of Italy, as well as the western cities of the other countries [charmingly vague]. In order to give place to him, we yield our dominion over all these provinces by removing the seat of our empire to Byzantium, considering it not right that a terrestrial emperor should preserve the least power where God hath established the head of religion.'"

Considering that this same terrestrial emperor ruled the Church roundly, called Councils by his own authority, insisted that the orthodox should commune with

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* A O Legge, "The Temporal Power of the Papacy," p. 25, 1870.

the Arians, and set up Pagan images at pleasure, one marvels at the ignorance and impudence of the forger of his "donation." Yet "as late as 1478 Christians were burnt alive in Strasburg for doubting its authenticity."*

Even Dante seems to have believed the fable, and wrote in the bitterness of his noble heart :

> "Ah, Constantin, di quanto mal fu matre
> Non la tua conversion, ma quelle dote
> Che de te prese il primo ricco patre!"†

By every kind of trick the popes endeavored to evade acknowledgment of allegiance to the civil power. They were willing enough to crown monarchs but did not want monarchs to crown them. One after another slipped into the chair without waiting for the imperial warranty ; and then, in explanation of his irregularity, alleged pressure of circumstances over which he had no control. The experiment could be tried often, for the persons selected to wear the tiara were generally old men and the pontificates were naturally brief. To secure the supremacy of the throne, Lewis the Second caused Pope Nicholas the First to be chosen (A.D. 858) in his own presence. But the emperor committed the blunder of honoring him as never pope had then been honored by prince ; he served him as squire, went on foot before him, and led his horse by the bridle. He soon had his stirrup dashed in his face. How it came about deserves the telling, for it strikingly exhibits how much the establishment and propagation of Christianity had done for the world.

Lothaire, King of Lorraine, who was brother to the Emperor Louis, married in A.D. 856 Teutberga, sister of Hubert, Abbot of St. Maurice, who was accused of incest with her brother. Lothaire also took a mistress, one Waldrada, niece of Gunther, Archbishop of Cologne, who called a Council of bishops at Aix-la-Chapelle,

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* J. W. DeForest, "The Growth of Giant Pope," *Galaxy*, January, 1873.

† Ah! Constantine ; to how much ill gave birth,
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains
That the first wealthy Pope received of thee!

which declared Teutberga was not Lothaire's wife on account of the alleged incest. The queen successfully went through the ordeal of water—by proxy. Nevertheless, Lothaire insisted on her guilt and she was forced to confess. After the decision of the Council his nuptials with Waldrada were immediately celebrated, and Gunther received his reward in the elevation of his niece to the throne. Charles the Bald, of France, however, with whom Teutberga had taken refuge, appealed on her behalf to the supreme arbiter at Rome. Nicholas, who had first stamped with pontificial authority the forged decretals of the early popes, seized the occasion with joy. He had said nothing as to Lothaire's concubinage with Waldrada, but the marriage he pronounced void. He denounced the Synod of Aix as a brothel of adulterers, deposed the Archbishop of Cologne and Trèves, and brandished a sentence of excommunication over the heads of the rest. Mr. Lea remarks that :

"The comparison is instructive between his alacrity and the prudent reticence of Adrian in the previous century. A moralist would find it difficult to draw the line between the connubial irregularities of Charlemagne and those of Lothaire ; but Hermengarda found no puissant pope to force her inconstant husband into the paths of dissimulation, or to justify wrong by cruelty. When Charlemagne grew tired of a wife he simply put her aside, nor would Adrian or Leo have thanked the meddling fool who counselled interference."*

The Emperor Lewis, however, espoused the cause of his royal brother and the German bishops, but being backed up by Charles the Bald, the pope would not budge. To suppress his insubordination Lewis marched on Rome. The fasts and prayers of Nicholas availed little against the soldiery ; a massacre ensued, and the pope, escaping in a boat across the Tiber, lay hidden for two days in the Cathedral of St. Peter. Most opportunely a sudden fever seized the emperor, which was at once attributed to the sacrilege he had committed. Lewis therefore sent for Nicholas, made his peace and withdrew, commanding the archbishops to return home and consider themselves degraded.

* Lea, "Studies of Church History," p. 160.

Lothaire, Waldrada and Charles the Bald were threatened with excommunication and yielded. Before his triumph was complete Nicholas died, but Adrian the Second received the submission of Lothaire who was admitted to communion on the oath, which no one believed, that he had obeyed the commands of Nicholas, as though they had been those of heaven, and had abstained from all intercourse with Waldrada.* Such was the termination of this trial of strength between the mitre and the crown. The victory of the pope was as complete as the abasement of the king, and the supremacy of the papacy over domestic concerns was established.

The dissolution of the Frankish empire, and the invasion of the Norseman, brought confusion into Italy. The Popes were frequently under the thumb of an aristocratic faction, and sided now with this potentate and now with that, in order to gain their own ends. Legge says :

"During the first half of the tenth century the Papacy sank back into utter confusion and moral impotence. Three dissolute women, Theodora and her daughters Marozia and Theodora, contrived to bring the whole patrimony of St. Peter under their sway, and disposed of the tiara at their pleasure. Crimes too odious to narrate, and before which murder pales, were perpetrated to gratify their lusts. Laymen of infamously notorious character filled the chair of the apostles, which was bought and sold like a piece of merchandise. The Papal palace became a vast seraglio ; the very churches echoed to obscene songs and bacchanal festivities."†

Hallam also observes :

"This dreary interval is filled up in the annals of the Papacy by a series of revolutions and crimes. Six Popes were deposed, two murdered, one mutilated. Frequently two, or even three competitors, among whom it is not always possible by any genuine criticism to distinguish the true shepherd, drove each other alternately from the city."‡

Throughout the year 1045 Europe witnessed the spectacle of three popes, Silvester III., Benedict IX., and

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* Lea, "Studies of Church History," pp. 159—164.
† "Growth of the Temporal Power of the Papacy," p. 31.
‡ "Europe During the Middle Ages," Vol. II., p. 171.

Gregory VI., "disgracing the Papal chair, and rivalling each other in the most disgraceful acts of vice."*

A Council was called at Sutry (1046) which affirmed the right of the emperor to nominate to the "holy see," and which supported the claims of Gregory VI.:

"No sooner, however, had this sentence been passed, than the emperor, to Gregory's astonishment, demanded of him an account of the means by which he had procured his appointment; and Gregory, not being able to deny that he had bought the popedom from Benedict, was deposed. It now became manifest that the emperor had left Germany with the design of his predecessor, Otho III., to have a German Pope. He had even fixed upon the man—Suidger, Bishop of Bamberg, whom he caused to be elected by the council, and then conducted him into Rome under the title of Clement II."†

But a genius arose who was determined to establish sacredotal supremacy. This was Hildebrand (Gregory VII., A.D. 1073—85), the ablest of the popes. Under his leadership a party grew whose settled purpose was to raise the papacy above all secular control, and to make the pope supreme arbiter of the world. When Leo IX. was chosen as pope by the German emperor, Henry the Third, Hildebrand boldly declared the nomination invalid until confirmed by the superior clergy of Rome, and he induced the pontiff to seek their suffrages. During five pontificates Hildebrand served as prime minister and pope-maker. To strengthen the Church he was resolute that the clergy should have no family ties. At that time a large proportion of the clergy were married, and in Milan and elsewhere they set up an anti-pope, Cadalus, rather than resign their right of marriage.‡ After a long and bloody controversy the policy of Hildebrand was triumphant. Hildebrand also sought to abolish all simony, by which term he principally understood the bestowal of benefices by the civil power. At the same time he claimed the right of the papacy to dispose of kingdoms, and gave the crown of England to William of Normandy and that of Naples and Sicily to Robert Guiscard.

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* Rev. J. E. Riddle, "History of the Papacy," Vol. II., p. 63.
† *Ibid*, p. 65.
‡ Lea's "Sacredotal Celibacy."

When elevated to the papal chair Gregory issued a decree invalidating all sacraments performed by simoniacal or married priests, and involving in their guilt and anathema whoever received communion from them. This he followed up with another (1075), prohibiting civil sovereigns from granting churchly dignities, deposing every ecclesiastic who accepted a benefice from a layman, declaring such offenders idolators interdicted from communion, and placing under the same ban every potentate who should claim the right of investiture. These proceedings necessarily caused a collision with the emperor Henry IV. of Germany. The Saxons being in rebellion, Gregory took advantage of the time to admonish the king to abstain from the presentation of benefices. The German ecclesiastics revolted, and a synod of Metz renounced Gregory as pontiff. Another at Brixen pronounced his deposition and elected in his place Guibert, Archbishop of Ravenna, under the title of Clement III. Henry wrote commanding Gregory to vacate the chair. The pope retorted by excommunicating the emperor, his adherents, and the anti-pope. The pontiff's curse proved stronger than the prince's sword. The anti-pope died suddenly, and dread of excommunication seized Henry's followers. Political wavering and disintegration ensued, and Henry was forced to sue for mercy. For three winter days and nights the emperor was kept barefooted and without food or shelter in the courtyard of the castle where Gregory was staying before that pontiff would revoke the dread sentence of excommunication.

Henry's enemies caused Rudolf of Swabia to be elected emperor in his place. The pope's legates confirmed the choice. This was a breach of faith with Henry. Again he took to arms and was a second time excommunicated. Gregory even ventured a prophecy, and declared: "If he be not deposed or dead before the festival of St. Peter, may men cease to believe in me." But Gregory's god, however, was asleep or on a journey this time. Henry overcame his enemies and marched on Rome. Gregory had to send to Robert Guiscard for relief. He raised the siege

and kissed the pope's toes, while his followers took to pillaging the citizens and violating their wives and daughters. The Romans rose on the invaders, and Guiscard fired the city, sparing, at the intercession of Gregory, only the churches. Thus commenced the wars of the Investitures, which lasted over fifty years, "costing, without exaggeration, a hundred battles and the lives of two millions of human beings."* The wars of the Guelphs and Ghibbelines were essentially a prolongation of the same quarrel. In the second sentence of excommunication, which Gregory passed on Henry IV., are these words :

"Come now, I beseech you, O most holy and blessed fathers and princes, Peter and Paul, that all the world may understand and know that if ye are able to bind and loose in heaven, ye are likewise able on earth, according to the merits of each man, to give and to take away empires, kingdoms, princedoms, marquisades, duchies, countships, and the possessions of all men."†

Doctrines such as these struck equally at all civil government. Nor were the successors of Hildebrand slow to apply them. Pope Innocent III., who excommunicated our English John, absolved England and Ireland from allegiance to him, and even gave the kingdom of England and Ireland to Philip Augustus, King of France, declares, in his third sermon on consecration, that the vicar of Christ stands midway between God and man—less than God, but greater than man.‡ The doctrine perhaps found its culmination in the celebrated bull of Boniface (1302), which declared that "for every human creature it is a condition of salvation to submit to the Roman pontiff." The use which God's viceregents made of their wealth and power we shall see in an ensuing chapter.

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* J. W. de Forest. Gregory VII. *Galaxy*, November 1872.

† Prof. Jas. Bryce, "The Holy Roman Empire," chap. x., p. 161.

‡ "Minor Deo sed major homine." Migne. Patrologie, tom., 217, p. 658.

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CRIMES OF THE POPES.

WE intend in this chapter to give a rapid summary of the crimes and vices with which many of the popes disgraced the chair of St. Peter; and before we conclude, the reader will see that every villainy the imagination can conceive has been practised by the vicegerents of God. Peculation, theft, cruelty, murder, fornication, adultery and incest, not to mention still darker crimes, have all been notoriously committed by the supreme rulers of Christendom, who sat in the seat of infallibility, and claimed universal jurisdiction over the thoughts and consciences of mankind.

St. Damasus (366—81) was the first to assume the title of Pontiff. His election was opposed by Ursicinus, whose partisans accused Damasus of adultery.* The Rev. J. E. Riddle says :—

"After some deadly conflicts between the followers of the two rivals, Ursicinus was banished from the city; and a similar sentence was about to be carried into effect against seven presbyters of his party, when the people interfered, and lodged them for safety in one of the churches. But even here they found no shelter from the fury of their opponents. Armed with fire and sword, Damasus, with some of his adherents, both of the clergy and of the laity, proceeded to the place of refuge, and left no less than a hundred and sixty of their adversaries dead within the sacred precincts."†

That this was a massacre and not a faction fight is shown by the fact that on the side of Damasus not a single person was killed.‡ Ammianus Marcellinus, the contemporary historian of the event, says, speaking of the contention between Damasus and Ursicinus :—

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* Bale's "Pageant of Popes," folio 26.
† "History of the Papacy," Vol. I., p. 143.
‡ A. Bower, "History of the Popes," p. 84.

"I cannot deny when I consider the splendor of Rome, that the aspirants to this bishopric had good reason to arouse all the energy of their partisans in order to attain their object. When once they have secured this post their fortune is made; they ride in carriages, are gorgeously apparelled, and in the profuse luxury of their tables they surpass the banquets of royalty itself."*

Damasus gained the title of Auriscalpius Matronarum, ladies' ear-scratcher.† He died of fever, and the Romish Church still invokes the aid of this saintly vicar of God in fever cases.‡

Sixtus III. (432—40). This pope, according to both Baronius and Platina, was accused of debauching a virgin, but was acquitted by a council under the Emperor Valentina, who is said to have referred the pronouncing of the sentence to the pope himself, "because the judge of all ought to be judged by none." It was without doubt to establish this maxim that the "acts" of the council were forged.§

St. Leo the Great (440—61) Jortin calls "the insolent and persecuting Pope Leo, who applauded the massacre of the Priscillianists, and grossly misrepresented them."‖

Pope Symmachus (498—514). His election was violently opposed by the anti-pope Laurentius, and three councils were held to decide the schisms. Accusations of the most heinous crimes were laid against Symmachus. Bower says:

"This gave occasion to the re-kindling of the war between the two parties in Rome; and several priests, many clerks, and a great number of citizens, fell daily in the battles that were fought in the different parts of the city. No regard was shown by either party to rank or dignity; and not even the sacred virgins were spared by the enraged multitude in their fury."¶

Eunodius declared that the Pope was "judge in the place of the most high, pure from all sin, and exempt from all punishment. All who fell fighting in

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* Lib. 27, chap. iii.. § 4. † Jortin, Vol. II., p. 300.
‡ G. A. F. Wilks, "The Popes," p. 20.
§ Bower, Vol. II., p. 188.
‖ Vol. II., p. 425. ¶ Vol. I., p. 298.

his cause he declared enrolled on the register of heaven."*

St. Hormisdas (514—23) was a married man, and had a son, who was raised to the popedom. He was full of ambition, and insolent in his demands to the emperor, whom he exhorted to the persecution of heretics.

Boniface II. (530–32). His election was disputed by the anti-pope Dioscorus. Each accused the other of simony, but Dioscorus opportunely died. Boniface "began his pontificate with wreaking his vengeance on the memory of his deceased competitor, whom he solemnly excommunicated, as guilty of simony, when he could not clear himself from the charge, nor retort it on him, as perhaps he otherwise might."† This sentence was removed by Pope Agapetus.

Silverius (536—37) was accused of betraying the city of Rome to the Goths, and was in consequence expelled from his see.

Vigilus (537—55) was a deacon elected by bribery. He engaged himself to obey the Empress Theodora, who gave him money to gain the suffrages of the clergy. Anastasius tells us that he killed his own secretary in a transport of passion, and caused his own sister's son to be whipped to death. He is considered to have been accessory to the banishment and death of Silverius. When banished himself by the emperor, he speedily recanted, in order to save his seat.

Pelagius (555—60) was accused of poisoning his predecessor. This is uncertain; but it is certain that, like most of his predecessors and successors, he incited the civil powers to the persecution of heretics.

St. Gregory the Great (596—604). According to Gibbon, this pontiff was "a singular mixture of simplicity and cunning, of pride and humility, of sense and superstition."‡ Jortin's picture is still less flattering:

"Pope Gregory the Great was remarkable for many things—for exalting his own authority; for running down human learn-

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* Wilks, p. 32. † Bower, Vol. I., p. 331. ‡ Chap. xlv.

ing* and polite literature; for burning classic authors; for patronising ignorance and stupidity; for persecuting heretics; for flattering the most execrable princes; and for relating a multitude of absurd, monstrous and ridiculous lies, called miracles. He was an ambitous, insolent prelate, under the mask of humility."†

Gregory does not appear to have been fond of women and wine, like so many other popes; but he possessed the darker vices of bigotry and ambition. His congratulations on the usurpation of the cruel, drunken and lascivious Phocas, after a wholesale massacre of the emperor's family, simply because the successful villain favored the pretensions of Rome (p. 103), are a sufficient proof that Gregory would stick at nothing to advance the glory of his see.

Sabinian (605–7). Bower says he rendered himself so odious to the Roman people by his avarice and cruelty to the poor, that they could not forbear abusing him whenever he appeared. In a dreadful famine he raised the price of corn to exorbitant rates. He accused St. Gregory of simony; but according to Baronius, that departed saint having vainly reproved him in three different apparitions for his covetousness, gave him in a fourth apparition so dreadful a blow on the head, that he died soon after.‡

Boniface III. (601), by flattering Phocas as Gregory had done, induced him to take the title of universal bishop from the Bishop of Constantinople, and confer it upon himself and his successors.

Theodorus (642—49) commenced the custom of dipping his pen in consecrated wine when signing the condemnation of heretics,§ thus sanctifying murder with the blood of Christ. Of Adeodatus, Donus I., Agatho and Leo II., we only know that they carried on fierce contests with the archbishop of Ravenna for refusing to acknowledge their supremacy. Leo II.

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* So intense was Gregory's hatred of learning, that he angrily rebuked the Archbishop of Vienna for suffering grammar to be taught in his diocese, and contemplated burning all the writings in existence that were not devoted to the cause of Christianity.

† Vol. III., p. 169. ‡ Bower, Vol I., p. 425.

§ Jortin, Vol. III., p. 56.

anathematised his predecessor, Pope Honorius, for heresy.* Neither Benedict II., John V., nor Conon, lived a whole year after assuming the tiara.

St. Sergius I. (687—701) had to purchase his seat of exarch of Ravenna by pawning the very ornaments of the tomb of St. Peter. He was accused of adultery, but his innocence was strikingly proved; for, upon the child of whose parentage he was accused being baptised when but eight days old, he cried out, "The pontiff Sergius is not my father." F. Bruys, the French historian of the papacy, says, "What I find most marvellous in this story is, not that so young a child should speak, but that it should affirm with so much confidence that the pope was not its father."†

Constantine (708—15) is said to have excommunicated the Emperor, Philip Bardanes, for being of the same heresy as Pope Honorius. To oblige Constantine, Justinian cut out the tongue and blinded the eyes of the Archbishop of Ravenna, who refused to pay the obedience due to the apostolic see.‡

Gregory II. (715—31) was chiefly noted for his endowing monasteries with the goods of the poor, and for his opposition to the Emperor Leo's edict against image worship.§ Rather than obey the edict, he raised civil war both in Italy and elsewhere. He prayed that Christ might set the Devil on the emperor, and approved of the barbarous murder of the imperial officer.‖ Yet the priests place in the list of saints a pontiff who, to establish Christian idolatry, *i.e.*, image worship, filled Italy with carnage.

Stephen III. (768—72) when elected, found on the pontificial throne a lay pope, one Constantine, who, after a violent struggle, was dislodged and punished with the loss of his eyes,¶ many of his friends sharing the same fate.**

Adrian I. (772—95) made a league with Irene, the murderess of her son, to restore image worship, and presented to Charlemagne the pretended donation of

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* 682 A.D., Jortin, Vol. III., p. 62.
† Bruys, "Histoire des Papes," Vol. I., p. 499. Bower, Vol. I., p. 496
‡ Bower, Vol. II., p. 14. § See p. 104. ‖ Bower, Vol. II., 63, 65
¶ Wilks, p. 64. ** La Châtre, "Histoire des Papes," Vol. I., p. 350

Constantine.* Avarice was the vice of this able pontiff. He left large sums to his successors.

St. Pascal I. (817—24). At the Diet of Compeigne this pope was charged with being accessory to the mutilation and murder of two Roman priests. The pope denied the charge, but refused to deliver up the perpetrators of the crimes, alleging that they belonged "to the family of St. Peter."†

Eugenius II. (824—27) had the honor of inventing the barbarous practice of ordeal by cold water.

Nicholas (858—67) excommunicated Photius, the Greek patriarch, and the emperor Michael as his abettor, and threatened King Lothaire with the ecclesiastical sword if he suffered any bishop to be chosen without his consent.‡

Adrian II. (867—72) was a married priest. He congratulated Bazilius, the murderer of the emperor Michael, and entered into alliance with him.§

John VIII. (872—82). The meek and holy nature of this worthy successor of St. Peter may be judged by his ordering the bishop of Naples to bring him the chief men among the Saracens in that city, and cutting their throats in the presence of his legate.‖ Cardinal Baronius declares that this pontiff perjured himself, and that he rather deserved the name of a woman than that of a man.¶ The annals of the Abbey of Fulda relate that John VIII. was poisoned by the relations of a lady whom he had seduced from her husband.**

Formosus (891—96) had been repeatedly excommunicated by John VIII. He invited Arnulf, the German emperor, to invade Italy, which he did, committing great atrocities. Formosus, however, had a great character for piety. He is said to have been well versed in scripture and to have died a virgin in his eightieth year.

Boniface VI. was, even according to Baronius, a man of a most infamous character. He had been deposed, for

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* Wilks, p. 66. † Wilks, p. 69. ‡ *Ibid*, p. 74.
§ H. Foulis, p. 134. ‖ Bower Vol. II., p. 292.
¶ Bruys, Vol. II., p. 176. ** La Châtre, Vol. I., p. 463.

his scandalous life, first from the rank of sub-deacon and afterward from the priesthood.*

Stephen VI. (896) intruded into the see in the room of the intruder Boniface. Being of the opposite faction to Pope Formosus, he caused the body of that pontiff to be taken out of the tomb and to be placed, in the episcopal robes, on the pontificial chair. Stephen then addressed the dead body thus : "Why didst thou, being Bishop of Porto, prompted by thy ambition, usurp the universal see of Rome ?" After this mock trial Stephen, with the approbation and consent of a council of bishops, ordered the body to be stripped, three of the fingers (those used in blessing) to be cut off, and then to be cast in the Tiber. At the same council all the ordinations of Formosus were declared invalid.†

Then followed what the Rev. J. E. Riddle in his "History of the Papacy" calls "a rapid succession of infamous popes," of whom we may mention that Leo V. (903) was deposed and cast into prison by his chaplain, Christopher, who was in turn ejected and imprisoned by Sergius III. (904—11). This pontiff also had been excommunicated by John VIII. He was, says Baronius, "the slave of every vice and the most wicked of men."‡ The Rev. J. E. Riddle says :—

> "This Sergius III. was a monster of profligacy, cruelty and vice in their most shameless and disgusting forms. But it was this very character which made him useful to his party, the duration of whose influence at Rome could be insured only by a preponderance of physical power, and this again only by violence which should disdain all restraints of morality and religion. Sergius was the man for this purpose, who, while he lived in concubinage with Marozia, did not hesitate to yield all the treasures of the Roman Church as plunder to his party." §

To him succeeded other paramours of Marozia and of her mother the prostitute Theodora. John X. for instance (914—28) received his chair because he was the lover of Theodora, while Leo VI., and Stephen VIII.

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* Bower, Vol. II., p. 299.
† Bower, Vol. II., p. 300. Jortin, Vol. III., p. 105
‡ Bower, Vol. II., p. 306.
§ "History of the Papacy," Vol. II., p. 36.

(929—31) were creatures of Marozia. Adultery and assassination form the staple of the annals of their reigns.

John XI. (931—36), was the son of Pope Sergius III. by Marozia, and if possible he surpassed his parents in crime. Elected pope at the age of eighteen, Alberic, his half brother, expelled him from Rome and imprisoned their mother Marozia. Stephen VIII. (939—942) made himself so obnoxious to the Romans that they mutilated him.*

John XII. (956—64), the son of Alberic, was the first to change his name, which was originally Octavian. He nominated himself pope at the age of seventeen. Wilks says "His profaneness and debaucheries exceeded all bounds. He was publicly accused of concubinage, incest, and simony." The pope was so notorious for his licentiousness that female pilgrims dared not present themselves in Rome.† Bower says that he had changed the Lateran palace, once the abode of saints, into a brothel, and there cohabited with his father's concubine; that women were afraid to come from other countries to visit the tombs of the apostles at Rome; that he spared none, and had within these few days forced married women, widows, and virgins to comply with his impure desires. He was at length deposed by Otho, at the solicitation of a council of bishops and laymen on charges of sacrilege, simony, blasphemy, and cruel mutilation. He had deprived one deacon of his right hand and made him an eunuch. He put out the eyes of Benedict, his ghostly father, had cut off the nose of the keeper of the archives, and had scourged the Bishop of Spires.‡ On the deposition of John, Leo VIII. was put in his place. John fulminated anathemas against his opponents, and soon died, from a blow on the head while in bed with a married woman.§ Jortin remarks that, "Baronius says, from Luitprandus, that it was the Devil who gave John that blow; but it seems not probable that Satan

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* Bower, Vol. II., p. 313. † Wilks, p. 87.
‡ Wilks, p. 88; Bower, Vol. II., p. 317.
§ Bower, Vol. II., p. 320,

would have used his good friend in such a manner. It is more likely that it might be the husband of the adulteress."*

Mosheim says "that the history of the Roman pontiffs of this century [the tenth] is a history of monsters, a history of the most atrocious villanies and crimes is acknowledged by all writers of distinction, and even by the advocates of popery."†

Boniface VII. (974), whom the old authors call by derision Maliface, having had his predecessor Benedict murdered, plundered the Basilica and escaped with his spoils to Constantinople, whence he afterwards returned and murdered John XIV (984), then on the papal throne.

Gregory V. (996—99) being turned out of his see by Crescentius, who elected the anti-pope John. Upon Gregory's restoration he had this unfortunate creature deprived of sight, cut off his nose, and tore out his tongue. He then ordered him to be led through the streets in a tattered sacerdotal suit, and mounted upon an ass with his face to the tail, which he held in his hand.‡

Sergius IV. (1009—12). This pope was called Os Porci, or Swine's Mouth. Of his doings little is known, but he is asserted to have gravely declared "that the pope could not be damned, but that, do what he would, he must be saved."§

Benedict VIII. (1012—24) saved the city of Rome from a great storm, which it seems was caused by some Jews. Upon ordering the Jews to be immediately executed the storm ceased. ‖

John XIX. (1054—33), a lay brother of Benedict, was raised to the see. Wilks says :—

"It was by gold, and not by imperial power, that the Romans consented to this uncanonical election. The rapacity of this pope was so great that he offered to sell the title of 'Universal Bishop' to the see of Constantinople for a sum of money!"¶

By his exactions, debauchery and tyranny, he became

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* Vol. III., p. 109.
† Vol. II., p. 278.
‡ La Châtre, Vol. I., p. 570.
§ Wilks, p. 96.
‖ Bower, Vol. II., p. 336.
¶ P. 99.

so odious to the Romans that he had to flee for his life.

Benedict IX. (1033—45), nephew of the last two pontiffs. Some say he was raised to the papacy at the age of twelve—others, of eighteen. He "stained the sacred office with murder, adultery, and every other heinous crime."* Desiderius, afterwards pope under the name of Victor III., styles Benedict the successor of Simon the sorcerer, and not of Simon the apostle, and paints him as one abandoned to all manner of vice.† Being eager to possess the person and property of a female cousin, he sold the papacy to John Gratianus, "the most religious man of his time," for a sum of money, and consecrated him as Gregory VI. Benedict afterwards poisoned Pope Damasus II. The Romans, weary of his crime, expelled him from the city, but he was reinstated by Conrad. Jortin says: "But as he continued his scandalous course of life, and found himself despised and detested both by clergy and laity, he agreed to retire, and to abandon himself more freely to his pleasures. Stipulating therefore to receive a sum of money, he resigned his place to Gratianus, called Gregory VI., and went to live in his own territories."‡

Mosheim calls Benedict IX. "a most flagitious man and capable of every crime."§

We have already seen (p. 110) how Benedict, Sylvester and Gregory were alike declared unworthy of the pontificate and Clement placed in the see, and by what means Hildebrand contrived to extend the papal power. This great pontiff, Gregory VII. (1073—85), has been accused of poisoning his predecessors in order to obtain the popedom and also of committing adultery with Matilda, Countess of Tuscany, who bestowed all her possessions on the pope. But these accusations possibly arose from the spite of the many enemies aroused by Hildebrand's high-handed measures.

Pascal II. (1099—1118) was a disciple of Hildebrand,

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* Wilks, p. 100.
† Bower, Vol. II., p. 340.
‡ Vol. III., p. 124.
§ Vol. II., p. 328.

and inherited his ambition without his talents. He compelled Henry IV. to abdicate, but on his son Henry V. marching against him, after a sanguinary struggle, he gave up to the emperor the right of investiture. Afterwards he excommunicated all who should declare his own grant to be valid.*

Adrian IV. (1154—59), the only Englishman who ever became pope, caused Arnold of Brescia to be burnt at the stake (1154) for preaching against papal corruption. The Irish should remember that it was this pope who, in virtue of the pretended Donation of Constantine, made over to Henry II. of England the right to take and govern Ireland on condition of the pope receiving an annual tribute of one penny for each house.†

Alexander III. (1159—81). The Lateran Council (1179) declared war against all heretics, and a crusade against them was sanctioned by this pontiff.‡

Clement III. (1188—1191) published the third crusade (1189).

Innocent III. (1198—16) also preached a crusade. He claimed for his see universal empire and established the Inquisition to support the claim. He excommunicated Philip II. of France and put the whole nation under interdict. Afterwards he placed England under interdict, excommunicated John, bestowed the crown on Philip of France and published a crusade against England. He also instituted a crusade against the Albigenses, butchering them by tens of thousands with every circumstance of atrocity.§

Gregory IX. (1227—41) formally established the Inquisition; and, to support his ambition and the unbridled luxury of his court, raised taxes in France, England and Germany, excommunicated kings, incited nations to revolt, and caused himself to be driven from Rome. ‖

Innocent IV (1243—54) conspired against the life of the Emperor Frederic, through the agency of the Fran-

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* Wilks, p. 120.
† *Ibid*, pp. 127 and 286.
‡ Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 455.
§ Wilks, p. 231.
‖ La Châtre, Vol. II., p. 117. Also Mosheim, Vol. II, p. 548.

ciscan monks. To avoid confronting his accuser, he retired to France, summoned a council at Lyons (1244), and excommunicated and deposed the emperor, whom he coolly denominated his vassal. He also excommunicated the kings of Arragon and Portugal, giving the crown of the latter to the Count of Bologna. He persecuted the Ghibellines, and pretending to have the right of disposing of the crown of the two Sicilies, offered it to Richard, Earl of Cornwall, brother to Henry III. of England. Innocent made exorbitant claims to the bishoprics and benefices in England.*

Boniface VIII. (1294—1303) had his predecessor, Celestine, put in prison, where he died.† He openly styled himself "King of Kings," trafficked in indulgences, and declared all excluded from heaven who disputed his claim to universal dominion. He persecuted the Ghibellines, and ordered the city of Bragneste to be entirely destroyed. He was publicly accused of simony, assassination, usury, of living in concubinage with his two nieces and having children by them, and, finally, of using the money received for indulgences to pay the Saracens for invading Italy.‡

Clement V. (304—16) is noted for his cruel suppression of the order of Knights Templars, in order to appropriate their property. He summoned the grand master of the Templars under false pretexts to his court, and issued a bull against the order in which he brought against it the most unfounded and absurd charges, and finally pronounced its abolition, having the grand master and many leading members burnt alive.§ After sharing the spoils of the Templars with the king of France, Clement V. fixed his court at Avignon, and gave himself publicly to the most criminal debaucheries. He preached a new crusade against the Turks and gave each new crusader the right to release four souls from purgatory. Dante places him in hell.

John XXII. (1316—34), like his predecessors, perse-

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* Wilks, p. 137. † Bower, Vol. III., p. 45.

‡ Wilks, p. 145, and La Châtre.

§ McClintock and Strong's Encyclopædia, Clement V.; and La Châtre

cuted and burnt heretics. He anathematised the emperor of Germany and the king of France, and preached a new crusade. Money was raised in abundance by the sale of indulgences and misappropriated by the pope. He left enormous treasures. Villani, whose brother was one of the papal commission, states that this successor of the fisherman amassed altogether twenty-five million florins!*

Urban VI. (1378—89). In his time occurred what is known as "the great Western schism," which lasted from 1378 till the Council of Constance (1414). There were during that time two popes, one residing at Rome and the other at Avignon. But which of the popes was the true one and which the anti-pope has not yet been decided. Urban VI. was a ferocious despot. He ordered six cardinals, whom he suspected of opposing him, to be brutally tortured.† Nor was his competitor, Clement VII., behind him in violence and crime. For fifty years they and their successors excited bloody wars and excommunicated one another. The schism, which cost thousands of lives, was ended by the deposition of John XXIII., who was found guilty of murder and incest. He was accused before the council of having seduced 300 nuns. Theodoric de Niem informs us that he kept 200 mistresses in Bologna, and he is described by his own secretary as a monster of avarice, ambition, lewdness and cruelty.‡

The crimes of his successor, Martin V. (1417—31), were not of a kind to be censured by a council of bishops. He had John Huss and Jerome of Prague burnt alive, and to put down their heresies excited civil war in Bohemia. He wrote to the Duke of Lithuania: "Be assured thou sinnest mortally in keeping faith with heretics."

Eugenius IV. (1431—47). His first act was to put to torture the treasurer of his predecessor, Martin V. He seized that pontiff's treasures and sent to the scaffold two hundred Roman citizens, friends of the late pope.§ The Council of Basle was called and deposed the pope,

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* Wilks, p. 149. † Bower, Vol. III., p. 137.
‡ Wilks, p. 158. § Wilks, p. 161.

setting up an anti-pope, Felix V. Civil war and much cruelty of course followed.

Paul II. (1464—71). "He broke all the engagements he had made to the conclave prior to his election." He persecuted with the greatest cruelty and perfidy the Count of Anguillara. He strove to kindle a general war throughout Italy, and excommunicated the king of Bohemia for protecting the Hussites against his persecutions. He persecuted also the Fratricelli and men of letters in Rome, "some of whom were tortured to death in the presence of this savage pontiff." He died suddenly, leaving behind him an immense treasure in money and jewels, amassed by his avarice and extortion.*

Sixtus IV. (1471—84) strove to excel his predecessors in crime. The learned Ranke declares:

"He was restrained by no scruple from rendering his spiritual power subservient to his worldly views, or from debasing it by a mixture with those temporary intrigues in which his ambition had involved him. The Medici being peculiarly in his way, he took part in the Florentine troubles; and, as is notorious, brought upon himself the suspicion of being privy to the conspiracy of the Pazzi, and to the assassination which they perpetrated on the steps of the altar of the cathedral: the suspicion that he the father of the faithful, was an accomplice of such acts! When the Venetians ceased to favor the scheme of his nephew, as they had done for a considerable time, the pope was not satisfied with deserting them in a war into which he himself had driven them; he went so far as to excommunicate them for persisting in it. He acted with no less violence in Rome: he persecuted the Colonnas with great ferocity: he seized Marino from them; he caused the prothonotary Colonna to be attacked, arrested and executed in his own house. The mother of Colonna came to San Celso in Branchi, where the body lay—she lifted the severed head by the hair, and cried 'Behold the head of my son! Such is the faith of the pope. He promised that if we would give up Marino to him he would set my son at liberty; he has Marino: and my son is in our hands—but dead! Behold thus does the pope keep his word!'"†

Jortin says that "Sixtus IV. erected a famous bawdy-

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* Wilks, pp. 166, 167.

† "The Popes of Rome during the 16th and 17th centuries," by L. Ranke, Vol. I., p. 31; 1866

house at Rome, and the Roman prostitutes paid his holiness a weekly tax, which amounted sometimes to twenty thousand ducats a year."*

Innocent VIII., says Schlegel, in his notes to Mosheim, "had lived so shamefully before he mounted the Roman throne, that he had sixteen illegitimate children to make provision for. Yet, on the papal throne he played the zealot against the Germans, whom he accused of magic, and also against the Hussites, whom he well-nigh exterminated."† Wilks says: "He obtained the votes of the cardinals by bribery, and violated all his promises."‡ The practice of selling offices prevailed under him as well as under his predecessors. His vices cost him so much that he even pledged the papal tiara as a security for money.

Roderic Borgia, subsequently Alexander VI. (1492—1503), was one of the most depraved wretches that ever lived. His passions were so unbridled that, having conceived a passion for a widow and two daughters, he made them all subservient to his brutality. Wilks calls him "a man of most abandoned morals, deep duplicity, and unscrupulous ambition. Like his predecessors, he had but one object at heart, the temporal and hereditary aggrandisement of his family."§ Mosheim says: "So many and so great villainies, crimes and enormities are recorded of him, that it must be certain he was destitute not only of all religion, but also of decency and shame."‖ This pope, at a certain feast, had fifty courtesans dancing, who at a given signal threw off every vestige of clothing and—— we draw a veil over the scene!

In regard to his death we follow the careful Ranke:

"It was but too certain that he once meditated taking off one of the richest of the cardinals by poison. His intended victim, however, contrived, by means of presents, promises and prayers, to gain over his head cook, and the dish which had been prepared for the cardinal was placed before the pope. He died of the poison he had destined for another."¶

Julius II. (1503–13) who obtained the pontificate by

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* Vol. III., p. 384. † Vol. III., p. 31.
‡ P. 169. § P. 170 ‖ Vol. III., p. 31.
¶ Ranke, Vol. I., p. 35. See also Waddington, p. 655.

fraud and bribery,* boldly took the sword to extend his dominion.† Mosheim says :

"That this Julius II. possessed, besides other vices, very great ferocity, arrogance, vanity, and a mad passion for war, is proved by abundant testimony. In the first place, he formed an alliance with the Emperor and the King of France, and made war upon the Venetians. He next laid siege to Ferrara. And at last, drawing the Venetians, the Swiss and the Spaniards, to engage in the war with him, he made an attack on Lewis XII., the king of France. Nor, so long as he lived, did he cease from embroiling all Europe."‡

Paul III (1534–49) was as much a man of the world as any of his predecessors. He acknowledged an illegitimate son and daughter.§ The emperor once remonstrated with him on having promoted two of his grandsons to the cardinalate at too early an age. He replied that he would do as his predecessors had done—that there were examples of infants in the cradle being made cardinals.‖

We now close this horrid list of criminals. Since the Reformation the popes have been obliged to live more decently, or at least to conceal their vices instead of flaunting them before the world. Should the Protestants object that they are in no way responsible for the crimes of the Papacy, we shall cheerfully concede the plea ; but at the same time we beg to remind them that Catholics are also Christians, and that the historian must deal with the whole system through all the centuries. Besides, as Michelet observed, Protestantism is after all only an estuary, and Catholicism the great sea.

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* Mosheim, Vol. III., p. 84. † Ranke, Vol. I., pp. 36, 37.
‡ Vol. III., p. 84.
§ Ranke, Vol. I., p. 163. ‖ *Ibid*, p. 164.

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IGNORANCE, VICES, AND QUARRELS, OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

PAUL'S epistles show that some of the Christians were anything but moral, and that the spirit of faith was hostile to secular learning, which was rudely stigmatised as vain babbling and false science. As Christianity advanced these tendencies became more strongly pronounced. Immorality grew more prevalent, and learning was treated with increasing contempt, until at length it was difficult to decide whether the very clergy were more ignorant or profligate.

Gibbon observes that the primitive Christians were averse to the acquisition of knowledge or the exercise of reason and fancy, and that the severity of the fathers "despised all knowledge that was not useful to salvation."* In the second century some of the leaders of the Church studied "human wisdom" in order to reply to their pagan adversaries; but a great majority were opposed to this policy, their wish being "to banish all reasoning and philosophy out of the confines of the Church."† Yet these pious haters of learning were proud of their skill in the useless art of divinity, and it was the boast of Tertullian that "a Christian mechanic could readily answer questions that had perplexed the wisest of the Grecian sages."‡ The great rhetorician did not pause to reflect on the view which the Grecian sages might entertain of this ignorant presumption.

From the moment Constantine patronised Christianity, and relieved its priests from the necessity of answering their pagan opponents with any other arguments than fines, imprisonment and death, "the liberal arts and sciences, and polite literature, fell into a de-

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* Chap. xv. † Mosheim, Vol. I., p. 148. ‡ Gibbon, chap. xxi.

clining condition."* Less than a century after Constantine's conversion, the sixteenth canon of the Fourth Council of Carthage forbade the reading of Pagan books,† and, says Jortin, "the bishops soon began to relish this good advice, and not to trouble their heads with literature."‡ Mosheim also records that in the fourth century, although the emperors tried to cherish learning by forming libraries and encouraging literary men with emoluments and honors, their intentions were defeated by a numerous and powerful party in the Church, "who considered all learning, and especially philosophic learning, as injurious and even destructive to true piety and godliness."§ The great Church historian adds that "there were both bishops and presbyters entirely destitute of all science and learning."

The luxury of the clergy kept pace with their wealth and power and the decline of erudition. The bishops, says Mosheim, not only had shameful quarrels as to their sees and jurisdictions, but "vied with the civil governors of provinces in luxury, arrogance and voluptuousness," while "the pride and effeminacy of the deacons" were the subject of frequent complaints.‖

While the pastors were thus sunk in pride, avarice and debauchery, it is not to be supposed that their flocks were conspicuous for virtue. There was, indeed, a general depravation of manners, which had been steadily growing since the Christians began to bask in the imperial smiles.

"If we look at the lives and morals of Christians, we shall find, as heretofore, that good men were commingled with bad; yet the number of the bad began gradually to increase, so that the truly pious and godly appeared more rare. When there was no more fear from enemies without; when the character of most bishops was tarnished with arrogance, luxury, effeminacy, animosity, resentments, and other defects; when the lower clergy neglected their proper duties, and were more attentive to idle controversies than to the promotion of piety and the

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* Jortin, Vol. II., p. 212.

† "Episcopus Gentilium libros non legat, hæreticorum autem pro necessitate."

‡ Vol. III., p. 69. § Vol. I., p. 310. ‖ Vol. I., p. 319

instruction of the people; when vast numbers were induced, not indeed by a rational conviction, but by the fear of punishment and the hope of wordly advantage, to enrol themselves as Christians; how can it surprise us that on all sides the vicious appeared a host, and the pious a little band almost overpowered by them?"*

In the fifth century the clergy lost all relish for knowledge, and at its close, according to Mosheim, "learning was almost extinct; only a faint shadow of it remained."† Evil weeds naturally flourished in the neglected garden of the mind; and "Of the vices of the whole clerical order, their luxury, their arrogance, their avarice, their voluptuous lives, we have as many witnesses as we have writers of integrity and gravity in this age, whose works have come down to us."‡ Indeed, the vices of the clergy were so flagitious that the people would have revolted if they had not been sunk in ignorance and superstition, and trained to regard their priests with a superhuman veneration.

Gradually yet surely Europe sank in the slough of ignorance and vice. In proportion as Christianity gained the ascendant it proved itself the sworn enemy of civilisation. In the sixth century, says Hallam,

> "A cloud of ignorance overspread the whole face of the Church, hardly broken by a few glimmering lights, who owe much of their distinction to the surrounding darkness. . . . The best writers in Latin were scarcely read; and perhaps from the middle of this age to the eleventh there was in a general view of literature, little difference to be discerned."§

The clergy were blind leaders of the blind. Greek literature was everywhere neglected, and the Latin only used for grammatical puzzles; the very "teachers were ignorant and incompetent," and "some of the bishops, of set purpose, cultivated ignorance and barbarism." Philosophy was wholly excluded from the schools, all of these being under the direction of the Church; for "nearly all supposed that religious persons could do very well without it, or rather ought never to meddle

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* Mosheim, Vol. I., p. 359.
† Vol. I., p. 430.
‡ Mosheim, Vol. I., p. 439.
§ "Middle Ages," Vol. III., p. 287.

with it."* Science was utterly forgotten. Instead of the astronomy and geography which were taught at Alexandria before Christianity defiled and despoiled it, the faithful were taught that the earth was the centre of the universe; that it was not round, but flat; that the sun moved round it, and that the sky actually rested on the tops of the hills.

The ignorant yet powerful clergy no longer showed any respect for the decencies of life. Some of the prelates fought as soldiers.† A child of five was made archbishop of Rheims, and the see of Narbonne was purchased for another at the age of ten.‡ Hallam records that:

"In every country the secular or parochial clergy kept women in their houses, upon more or less acknowledged terms of intercourse, by a connivance of their ecclesiastical superiors, which almost amounted to a positive toleration. The sons of priests were capable of inheriting by the law of France and also of Castile."§

Wealthier than ever, through the gifts of superstition, the clergy were unspeakably corrupt. So great was the reverence for their office, "that their most atrocious offences were visited with the gentlest chastisements, and this emboldened them to perpetrate any iniquity." The Council of Agde enacted laws against clerical drunkenness, fortune-telling, simony, concubinage, perjury and usury. Harduin's *Concilia* mentions a crowd of nuns, headed by princesses Chrotildis and Basine, who broke out of the nunnery at Poictiers, and committed the most shameful actions.‖ Horrid impurities were committed by the clergy, but there was no longer a secular ruler to punish them, like the two bishops, Esaias of Rhodes and Alexander of Diospolis, who were castrated for sodomy in the reign of Justinian.¶ Jortin also throws a singular light on the humanity of the clergy when he tells us that the Coun-

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* Mosheim, Vol. II., p.
† Hallam's "Middle Ages," Vol. I., p. 194.
‡ *Ibid*, Vol. II., p. 172. § "Middle Ages," Vol. II., p. 173.
‖ Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 20.
¶ Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 19.—Schlegel's note.

cil of Maçon (A.D. 590) ordered bishops not to keep mastiffs to worry beggars.*

Gregory the Great's pontificate ended the sixth century and commenced the seventh. We have already referred to him (p. 116) as a hater of learning. He wrote bad Latin on purpose, unlike Cardinal Bembo, of the Italian renaissance, who would never read Paul's epistles lest they should spoil his Greek style. Gregory was second in erudition to none of his contemporaries, and from this fact "the most abject ideas must be entertained of their taste and learning."† In censuring the Archbishop of Vienna for allowing grammar to be taught in his diocese, the pontiff hoped it was not also true that he "studied vanities and secular literature." Gregory mutilated the Greek sculptures remaining in Rome, and he is accused of burning the Palatine library. Gibbon thinks "the evidence of his destructive rage is doubtful and recent."‡ "Yet," says Schlegel, "it would not be improbable, in a man of such flaming zeal against the Pagan writers."§

Mosheim declares that "the profound ignorance and barbarism" of the seventh century "will hardly appear credible to those who have not themselves inspected the productions it has transmitted to us," the best of which are nothing but scraps from St. Argustine and Gregory the Great. The bishops suffered the schools to languish and become extinct, and "it was very rare to find among them such as could compose their own public discourses."‖ Philosophy was dead, and

> "To the glory that was Greece,
> And the grandeur that was Rome"

had succeeded the ignorant fanaticism of Galilee, which trampled alike on the wheat-fields of science and the flower-beds of art. Well does Shelley make the Spirit of Liberty groan,

> "When from its sea of death to kill and burn,
> The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
> And made thy world an undistinguishable heap."

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* Vol. III., p. 168. † Gibbon, chap. xlv. ‡ Chap, xlv.
§ Note to Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 14. ‖ Mosheim, Vol. II., pp. 79-81.

This seventh century, says Lecky, forms with the eighth "the darkest period of the Dark Ages." Yet he adds that it was eminently religious. All literature had become sacred; heresy of every kind was rapidly expiring; and the age produced more saints than any other except that of the martyrs.*

Vice as usual kept pace with ignorance and piety.

"That the bishops of inferior rank, and all who were intrusted with sacred offices, as well those in the monasteries, as those without, lived in the practice of many enormities, is expressly admitted by every writer of any note in this century. Everywhere simony, avarice, pious frauds, intolerable pride, insolence to the people at large, and even vices worse than these might be seen reigning in the places consecrated to holiness and virtue."†

Jortin says that the Council of Prague censured bishops who whipped their presbyters, abbots, and deacons, like slaves or dogs, or who compelled the deacons to carry them on their backs. He states also that "The Council of Toledo was obliged to make canons, to restrain in some measure the holy bishops of those times, who were openly guilty of robberies, murders, assassinations, fornications, adulteries, and such sort of *bagatelles*."‡ Being *openly guilty* was evidently the real crime; so long as no scandal was occasioned the clergy might be as dissolute as they pleased. A good illustration of this was furnished by Joannes Cremensis, the pope's legate in England in the twelfth century, who published a law in a synod at London against the clergy that kept concubines, and was himself on the same night, after the celebration of the mass, found in bed with a prostitute.§

Lecky's account of the clergy in the seventh century is equally damning.

"The worst sovereigns found flatterers or agents in ecclesiastics. Fredigonde deputed two clerks to murder Childebert, and another clerk to murder Brunehaut; she caused a bishop of Rouen to be assassinated at the altar, a bishop and an arch-

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* "European Morals," Vol. II., p. 252, 253.
† Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 84. ‡ Jortin, Vol. III., p. 180.
§ Cave, cited by Jortin, Vol. III., p. 307.

deacon being her accomplices; and she found in another bishop, named Ægidius, one of her most devoted instruments and friends. The pope St. Gregory the Great was an ardent flatterer of Brunehaut. Gundebald having murdered his three brothers, was consoled by St. Avitus, the bishop of Vienne, who, without intimating the slightest disapprobation of the fact, assured him that by removing his rivals he had been a providential agent in preserving the happiness of his people. The bishoprics were filled by men of notorious debauchery, or by grasping misers. The priests sometimes celebrated the sacred mysteries 'gorged with food and dull with wine.' They had already begun to carry arms, and Gregory tells of two bishops of the fifth century who had killed many enemies with their own hands."*

The ignorance of the Latin Christians in the eighth century was surprising. Learning was confined to the clergy, and it began to be rare even among them. According to Schlegel, they "understood little or nothing of human science, or of languages; and the popes confirmed them in this state; for they required nothing more of them, at their ordination, than to be able to read, to sing, and to repeat the Lord's Prayer, the creed, the psalter, and to ascertain the feast days."† Charlemagne, who, with all his faults, was superior to his age, endeavoured to stimulate learning; but when his influence was withdrawn the clergy sank back into slothful ignorance.

Mosheim says that "those who in this age had the care of the church, both in the East and in the West, were of very corrupt morals." The Eastern clergy shed each other's blood in religious quarrels, and the Western clergy "gave themselves up wholly to various kinds of profligacy, to gluttony, to hunting, to lust, to sensuality and to war."‡ Charlemagne tried in vain to suppress their vices. Laws were passed against clerical fighting, drunkenness, magic, bribery, tavern-haunting, profane swearing and concubinage. Clergymen had to be restrained from lending money at twelve per cent. interest, and "very severe laws were enacted against the whoredom of the clergy, monks and nuns."§

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* "European Morals," Vol. II., p. 252.
† Note to Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 129.
‡ Vol. II., p. 132. § Murdock, note to Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 132.

So great was the mental darkness of the ninth century that in many districts few of the clergy could read and write; and hence "whenever a letter was to be penned, or anything of importance was to be committed to writing, recourse was generally had to some one individual, who was supposed to excel common men by possessing some dexterity in such matters."* Meanwhile the despised Mohammedans were cultivating science and art, literature and philosophy; founding celebrated schools, establishing ample libraries, and translating the best literature of Greece into Arabic. Mosheim justly observes that the Saracens may be regarded as the restorers of learning in Europe, for "all the knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, medicine and philosophy, propagated in Europe from the tenth century onward, was derived principally from the schools and books of the Arabians in Italy and Spain."†

The Eastern clergy as usual spent their time in controversies and quarrels; while in the West "the bishops hung around the courts of princes, and indulged themselves in every species of voluptuousness."‡ The clergy and the monks were grossly sensual, corrupting the people they pretended to teach. The Council of Pavia (850) censures the bishops for having superfluous trains of horses and mules, hawks, hunting hounds, and gaudy dresses; complains that the inferior clergy keep women in their houses, and that the presbyters turn bailiffs, frequent taverns, practise usury, behave shamefully and lewdly in the houses they visit, and indulge in revelry and drunkenness. Of the nunneries the Council says that "in some places they seem to be rather brothels than monasteries." The Council of Mayence (A.D. 888) complains that "some priests, cohabiting with their own sisters, have had children by them."§

According to Mosheim, it is universally admitted

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* Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 194. † Vol. II., p. 189.
‡ Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 193.
§ Murdock, note to Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 194

that the ignorance of the tenth century was extreme, and that learning was entirely neglected, while

"Nothing is more incontrovertible, than that the clergy, both in the east and in the west, were composed principally of men who were illiterate, stupid . . . libidinous, superstitious and flagitious. Nor can any one doubt that those who wished to be regarded as the fathers and guardians of the universal Church were the principal cause of these evils. Nothing certainly can be conceived of so filthy, or so criminal and wicked, that these supreme bishops of the Church would deem incompatible with their characters; nor was any government ever so loaded with vices of every kind, as was that which bore the appellation of the most holy."*

Baronius laments that it was the *iron age*, on account of its barbarism and barrenness; the *leaden age*, on account of its abounding wickedness; and the *dark age*, on account of its scarcity of writers.† The Italian annalist, Muratori, bewails that unheard-of monsters filled the chairs of bishops and abbots, and even the see of St. Peter; that the profligacy of the clergy and monks was universal; and that some rulers of the Church were rather wolves than pastors.‡ Jortin's summary of the tenth century is no less true than striking—"The prelates and the clergy were in general as ignorant and profligate as can well be conceived; and the popes were not men, but devils."§

The eleventh century was marked by continued ignorance, and while the bishops lived in splendor, the "inferior clergy, few of whom exhibited any degree of virtue and integrity, gave themselves up, without shame, to frauds, debaucheries, and crimes of various descriptions."‖ Hildebrand made a desperate effort to reform their lives, but only in a way to swell the power of the papacy. Despite intense opposition, he abolished clerical marriages, and made the priests dismiss their concubines. He was, however, too wise to think they would refrain from carnal pleasures. The clergy were not to be attached to the world by domestic ties; all their devotion was to be given to the Church.

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* Vol. II., pp. 269, 277. † *Annales.*
‡ Cited by Schlegel, note to Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 277.
§ Vol. III, p. 226. ‖ Mosheim, Vol. II., p. 326.

They might gratify their passions, but not legally or publicly. "It was expected of them," as Jortin says, "that they should content themselves with *venere vulgivagâ*, with fornication, adultery, etc."* Hildebrand's reform strengthened the papacy, but it thrust the vices of the clergy into private channels, made them the corruptors of virgins and matrons, and indirectly led to the moral revolt of the Reformation.

So much for the ignorance and vices of the early clergy. Let us now turn to their quarrels.

Many good catholic Christians believe that before the time of the Reformation all was unity and simplicity in the Church. The evidence of history proves the very reverse. From the time when Paul withstood Peter to his face, and the writer of the Apocalypse denounced the Nicolitaines, bitter contentions and feuds follow the entire course of ecclesiastical history.

St. Augustine (354—430) reckoned eighty-eight sects as existing in his time who hated each other with an intensity that excited the wonder and ridicule of the Pagans.† Ammianus Marcellinus, the historian and friend of Julian, records the common saying, that no wild beasts were so hostile to men as Christian sects to one another.‡ The persecution of the Donatists filled Africa during nearly two centuries with war and desolation, and contributed largely to its final ruin. Yet, says Waddington, "The Donatists have never been charged, with the slightest show of truth, with any error of doctrine, or any defect in Church government or discipline, or any depravity of moral practice."§ The childish, and almost unintelligible, disputes between the Homoousians and the Homoiousians, ‖ filled the Christian world with riot and hatred.

In the time of St. Augustine, Pelagius raised a controversy on original sin, free-will and predestination,

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* Vol. III., p. 236.

† Lecky, "European Morals," Vol. II., p. 207.

‡ Amminianus, xxii, 5. § P. 169.

‖ See p. 24. The difference between these terms is the difference between *same* and *similar*. The Christian world was thus divided on a diphthong.

which has lasted to our time. Pope Zozimus at first sanctioned Pelagianism, but when the zeal of St. Augustine was arrayed against it, an imperial edict banished Pelagius from Rome, and menaced, with perpetual exile and confiscation of estates, all who should maintain his doctrines.*

In the fifth century and onwards the Church was distracted by the Nestorian heresy. Nestorius was patriarch of Constantinople, and distinguished for his austerity. Preaching before the devout emperor, Theodosius the younger, he exclaimed : "Give me, O Cæsar ! give me the earth purged of heretics, and I will give you in exchange the kingdom of heaven. Exterminate with me the heretics ; and with you, I will exterminate the Persians." Gibbon continues :

"On the fifth day, as if the treaty had been already signed, the patriarch of Constantinople discovered, surprised and attacked, a secret conventicle of the Arians. They preferred death to submission. The flames that were kindled by their despair soon spread to the neighboring houses, and the triumph of Nestorius was clouded by the name of *incendiary*. On either side of the Hellespont his episcopal vigor imposed a rigid formulary of faith and discipline ; a chronological error concerning the festival of Easter was punished as an offence against the Church and State. Lydia and Caria, Sardes and Miletus, were purified with the blood of the obstinate Quartodecimans ; and the edict of the emperor, or rather of the patriarch, enumerated three and twenty degrees and denominations in the guilt and punishment of heresy."†

The sword of persecution which Nestorius so furiously wielded was soon turned against himself. By refusing to apply the term "Mother of God" to the Virgin Mary, he incurred the resentment of the no less intolerant St. Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria. A council, called in Church annals the Third General Council, was called (431) at Ephesus, where the mother of God was said to have been buried. Before the Bishop of Antioch and others friendly to Nestorius could arrive the council deposed him, declaring

"Anathema to him who does not anathematize Nestorius ; the orthodox faith damns him, the holy council damns him. We all

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* Waddington, p. 178. † Chap. xlvii.

anathematize the heretic Nestorius; we anathematize all who communicate with him and his impious belief. All the earth anathematizes the unholy religion of Nestorius. Anathema to him who does not anathematize Nestorius."*

In Ephesus, during this council, the cathedral itself was the scene of a fierce and bloody conflict.† Nestorius was condemned to perpetual banishment in the Great Oasis in Upper Egypt, and even there his declining years were embittered by many acts of harsh and cruel persecution.

To the heresy of Nestorius succeeded that of Eutyches, who held that Christ had but one nature, that of the incarnate word. A Council was called to settle this momentous question. Waddington says:

"The tumults which had disgraced the Church in 431 were repeated with some additional brutalities in 449; the Egyptians again were triumphant; and the assembly at length dispersed, after having sanctioned the doctrine of Eutyches, and acquired the title by which it has been stigmatised in every age of the Church, as 'The Assembly of Robbers.'"

Another Council followed at Chalcedon, which damned its predecessor. So furious was the controversy that it became unsafe to travel from place to place.

After the Council of Chalcedon, Jerusalem and Alexandria were again convulsed, and the bishop of the latter city was murdered in his baptistery.‡ Later, when the Monophysite [one nature] controversy was at its height, the palace of the emperor at Constantinople was blockaded, the churches were besieged and the streets commanded by furious bands of contending monks.§ Repressed for a time, the riots broke out two years after with increased ferocity, and almost every leading city of the East was filled by the monks with riot and bloodshed.‖ Gibbon says: "Jerusalem was occupied by an army of monks; in the name of the one incarnate nature, they pillaged, they burnt, they murdered; the sepulchre of Christ was defiled with blood; and the

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* Fleury, Book XXV., § 39. Waddington, p. 182.
† Milman, "History Latin Christianity," Vol. I., pp. 214, 215.
‡ Milman, Latin Christianity, vol. I., p. 290—291.
§ *Ibid*, vol. I., p. 310—311. ‖ *Ibid*, Vol. I., p. 314—315.

gates of the city were guarded in tumultous rebellion against the troops of the emperor."* Orthodoxy, or the doctrine which triumphed, having sagely settled that Christ was one person with two natures, the question arose, Was he actuated by a single or a double will? This Monothelite controversy, as it is called, again distracted the Church till the Sixth General Council of Constantinople (680) damned all who refused to believe Christ had *two* wills,† and even damned heretics who were dead. Under Pope Hormisdas, and some of his successors, there was another fierce strife as to whether one should say "*One* of the Trinity suffered in the flesh," or "One *person* of the Trinity suffered in the flesh." Then followed a controversy on the real presence, which lasted for many centuries. The learned Erigena was denounced as a heretic for having embraced the doctrine of the Stercorists, who derived their name from the fact that they asserted that a part of the consecrated elements was voided with the excretions, a doctrine bitterly opposed by the priests, who declared they could "make God," and that the eucharist was not liable to digestion.‡ Whilst Christian churches were fighting over these lofty problems the Mohammedans had converted Arabia and conquered Egypt, Persia, Syria and Palestine, despoiling Christendom of the three most ancient patriarchal thrones of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria.

The spread of Mohammedanism led to the reforming Iconoclasts and the image-worship controversy. Six emperors attempted to reform the idolatry of Christendom, but their efforts were met by fulminations from Rome and the rebellion of their subjects, incited by the priests (see p. 104).

After prolonged faction fights and civil war, the council at Constantinople, which damned all makers

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* Chap. xlvii.

† As both the Latin and Greek churches acknowledge the authority of the first six General Councils, it follows that this dogma is still a part of the true faith, although, as Gibbon says, "the most pious Christians of the present day are ignorant or careless of their own belief concerning the mystery of the incarnation."

‡ Draper, chap. ii., p. 9.

of images, was in turn damned by a succeeding council, which stigmatised its predecessors as an assembly of "fools and atheists,"* and declared, "Damnation against the council that roared against venerable images; the Holy Trinity hath deposed them." The last public act of the united Greek and Latin Churches was the establishment of gross idolatry. They afterwards separated never to re-unite, the main occasion of dispute being whether that mysterious person, the Holy Ghost, proceeded from the Father or from the Father and the Son.

The increase in the power of the clergy and their councils, the spread of fanaticism by Christian monkery, and the accepted doctrine that salvation lay only in the Church, while eternal torments were the doom of heretics and unbelievers, heightened the severity of persecution. Excommunication became more serious; exile and confiscation were deemed insufficient punishments for those who misinterpreted God's word or refused to obey the Church. We have seen (p. 36) how, in the time of Damasus (384), Priscillian and his followers were visited with capital punishment. This also was the sentence passed by the laws, both of Valentinian III. and of Justinian, against the Manicheans. Pope Leo the Great instituted a rigid system of inquiry to ferret them out,† and defended his action by the example of the Priscillianists. In dominions under the power of Rome, the Manicheans were universally put to death. In Africa, King Hunneric, incited by Pope Gregory the Great, resolved to extirpate them. Some he burned at the stake, and others he exiled.‡ Yet this perverse sect lingered in nooks and corners till the time of the Reformation. Their persecutors urged against them, as against other heretics, all manner of abominations, from pederasty to magic, charges which the learned Beausobre has triumphantly refuted. Perhaps the real crime of the Manicheans, as of the Gnostics, was that they sought to dilute Christian superstition with an infusion of Oriental

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* Draper, Vol. I., p. 408.
† Neander, Vol. IV., p. 498. ‡ *Ibid*, p. 499.

philosophy. At any rate, the persecution of these execrated and maligned heretics was so severe, that we hear little of them after the time of Gregory, until the heresy broke out again in the eleventh century. Gibbon says: "The reign of Justinian (527—65) was an uniform, yet various scene of persecution; and he appears to have surpassed his indolent predecessors both in the contrivance of his laws and the rigor of their execution."* Large numbers of heretics were visited by capital punishment, and it is worthy of note that, in the reign of this pious Christian emperor, who suppressed the schools of Athens and extirpated Paganism, the population of the empire was decreased by war, persecution and pestilence, it is said, to the almost incredible extent of a hundred million persons.†

Another sect severely persecuted by the orthodox was the Paulicians, to whom Gibbon devotes a chapter.

With the exception of Nicephorus (802—11) all the Christian emperors of the East may be said to have persecuted the Paulicians with more or less severity.‡ In the seventh century under an able leader, one Sylvanus, they greatly increased in numbers, spreading rapidly in Asia Minor. Gibbon says:

"After a mission of twenty-seven years, Sylvanus, who had retired from the tolerating government of the Arabs, fell a sacrifice to Roman persecution. The laws of the pious emperors, which seldom touched the lives of less odious heretics, prescribed, without mercy or disguise, the tenets, the books and the persons of the Montanists and Manichæans; the books were delivered to the flames; and all who should presume to secrete such writings, or to profess such opinions, were devoted to an ignominious death. A Greek minister, armed with legal and military powers, appeared at Colonia, to strike the shepherd, and to reclaim, if possible, the lost sheep. By a refinement of cruelty, Simeon placed the unfortunate Sylvanus before a line of his disciples, who were commanded, as the price of their pardon and the proof of their repentance, to massacre their spiritual father."

From the blood and ashes of the first victims new teachers and congregations arose. The native cruelty of Justinian II. was stimulated by a pious cause; and he vainly hoped to extinguish in a single conflagration

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* Chap. xlvii. † Draper, Vol. I., p. 317.

‡ McClintock and Strong's Cyclopædia; art., Paulicians.

the name and memory of the Paulicians. Even the emperors, who opposed image worship, persecuted those who might have been their allies. Under Leo the Armenian two ecclesiastics were appointed inquisitors over the Paulicians. Such of them as manifested repentance were to be delivered to the bishops for instruction, and the rest were to be punished by the sword. The fury of the ecclesiastics provoked a conspiracy among the Paulicians against their barbarous persecutors, whom they eventually murdered, and then fled to the Saracens, who received them kindly. Those who were left only received worst treatment, and their leader Sergius was murdered by one Tzanio, "a fierce zealot for the doctrines of the Church."*

The pious empress Theodora sent the military to Armenia to extirpate the Paulicians. Multitudes were hung, burnt, drowned, or slain by the sword. The number of victims is reckoned at not less than a hundred thousand.†

This persecution led to a furious and desperate rebellion. The Paulicians, led by the valiant Carbeas—an earlier Zisca—whose father had been impaled by the Catholic inquisitors, removed their allegiance to Rome, preferring the alliance of the Mohammedans. During more than thirty years Asia was afflicted with a fierce religious war. The edicts of persecution were answered by the pillage of the cities of Asia Minor, and even the cathedral of Ephesus was turned into a stable. At length the emperor Basil led his army into the territory of the heretics, which he wasted with fire and sword.‡ The number of lives lost in these bloody feuds is hard to estimate, but certainly appalling.

Among other heretics who were persecuted may be mentioned the Euchites, Messalians and Bogomiles. The founder of the latter sect, one Basil, a monk, was burnt alive before the church of St. Sophia, Constantinople, by order of Alexius Commenus.§

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* Neander, chap. v., p. 331.
† Neander, Vol. VI., p. 422; Gibbon, chap. liv.
‡ Gibbon, chap. liv. § *Ibid.*

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