

THE HISTORY  
OF THE ORDER OF  
ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM.

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BOOK I.  
CHAPTER I.

THE order of St. John of Jerusalem was created in 1099. That I undertake its history is neither quite my choice, nor quite superfluous; for it is a subject on which I *ought* to be well informed; and many discoveries have been made since its other historians in any language. Those early times were confused. In battles, retreats, conflagrations, papers and parchments were soon lost or burned. So to make up for them, writers employed their imaginations, with a sort of foundation in the chronicler William of Tyre, who was no contemporary of what he relates, but was himself one of those fabulists, and either from not knowing, or not

wishing to know the real state of the case, was misinformed and misinformed others. But of late several of those long-lost documents (or original duplicates) found in the Vatican and other dusty archives show things in a totally different light; and enable a modern to reveal many secrets and render clear what before had been so obscure that it appeared a kind of neutral ground where everybody might fearlessly erect their castles. But are there not too many books already? Yes, with exceptions; and this is one, for it makes what is remote, new; not by any process of fancy, but by relating the plain facts. This removes one considerable difficulty; for otherwise I should not like to be involved in clouds at such a distance behind. Not for the sake of what may be rancid; but truth—sacred truth which is of all times, and the best at all times.

Yet, as vantage ground, it is requisite to take a view of our part of the globe in ages immediately preceding those to be soon treated of; and, to do so intelligibly, it will be convenient to consider the public condition somewhat earlier also, in a few of the principal countries as a fair sample of the remainder; it appearing to me hard, in any other way, to account for the universal ferment which had kept on increasing little by little—a feeling of

disquietude preparing Christendom for some great change, it knew not what, nor perhaps cared; but everywhere was it held certain that some important event, some radical cure was coming. Therefore these two first chapters shall be confined to such preliminary matters—not to alter, but to refresh readers' minds; nor will notes be necessary, as repeating what is general; but very different forwards, beginning with the third chapter, where my authorities for each iota shall be distinctly cited, to be occasionally consulted or not.

And first, concerning that noble and high-minded nation who usually take the lead wherever there is anything of great or good to be undertaken. As far back as Charlemagne, he wept at observing some Norman vessels off the French coasts; for he foresaw what ruin they would one day bring on France. Danes or Normans are either precisely a single people; or, at most, varieties of one race in different places or periods; since some of that same fleet putting into an English harbour, were there called *Danes*.

At one time we are told of a Danish pirate who, conducting his armada up the Seine, and plundering both its banks, took Paris for awhile and sacked it; and of another who, after being repulsed from England by Alfred, assailed France, and

settled a Danish colony as masters of the city and territory of Chartres—thus consenting to become vassals of the French king; but, notwithstanding, several parties of marauders kept continually harassing the sea-side, to the perpetual terror, and often serious injury, of the inhabitants; and certainly those sea kings had for many years been in the habit of devastating that fertile region of the Continent, before they established themselves there in 900, and changed the name of the province (which until then had preserved its ancient Roman one, Neustria) into Normandy; that is, land of the Northmen or Normans. Indeed, they had likewise turned Christians—retaining, however, much of the contempt of danger and death, and a relish for travels, and that generosity of freedom of their old faith in Odin; which sentiments, and romantic, perhaps virtuous, love, as well as religion, led them to pilgrimages to Palestine; and they nearly all went by Magna Grecia, and had astonishing adventures.

Forty of them landing at Salerno or Amalfi, on their return from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, repulsed the Saracen freebooters, to the delight of the natives, who invited their allies to stay, or return with others of their countrymen; and that they might be sure of grateful hospitality;

and so they did, and formed a sort of military republic. Some years later the hardy veterans, religious but inaccessible to scruples, overthrew a large Papal army—or rather multitudinous rabble with the Pope at its head; but victors, they unhelmed and knelt down to the Pope himself on the same field, and craved his forgiveness and blessing; which, with or against his will, he gave, and erected whatever they had conquered, or should conquer in those parts, into a feudal patrimony under the protection of St. Peter. Thus constituting himself feudal lord over lands to which he had no right whatever; and gaining more by having lost, than he could have by having won a battle. Another Norman gentleman, who had twelve sons, sent them to seek their fortune in a like manner; and most of them rose to royal rank. The youngest, whose sole patrimony was one horse, worked up to be king of that rich island, which had been the granary of imperial Rome. What if he and his young bride had once travelled straddle legs on the same horse? He had no other. But the day was at hand when he was to be a potent and wealthy monarch; where he and queen might (so they liked) sit on their throne, as quietly as Sir John taking his ease in his inn. And when he wore a crown, he gave his historian special directions to

insert the circumstance of one horse in his annals.

The lapse of ages was to find what were styled the Gallican liberties concentrated in the King of France; but now in the tenth century, where were they to be concentrated? There was no King of France, but only nominally; rather an exceedingly loose federalism. It was only mere justice to the Popes to avow that it was oftener by assent than assumption that their undue power grew. If they occasionally arrogated, they more frequently did not refuse the wide jurisdiction offered them. That Christian mercy had possibly been their motive, may be believed; and if some wily Pontiffs took advantage of it, what is there implied of peculiar badness? A foreign mediator in those times of ruthless tyranny, might have been a necessary evil. The union of temporal and spiritual in the state can hardly co-exist, except at the very highest point of civilisation—where no country tarries long. But before and after? Alas! She that is conversant with what is divine, and whose aspirations are after a far better world than this, must then assume naturally the influence which stronger minds exercise over feebler; and, when implored, lends her limping sister a helping hand along their weary way through this vale of tears. With France that

unhappy infancy is supposed to comprehend the entire space from Charlemagne's death to that of Philip Augustus—or a still immenser stretch.

But the worst of that whole shocking period is precisely what we have now reached, the eleventh century. The list of the woes and grievances of the French is much too long to recite. The oppression of the people by the barons, that of these by the unworthy portion of the clergy, and of all three by the kings when they had an opportunity—all classes were deeply dissatisfied, and ripe for any extravagance. Gothic or feudal, both systems were unjust and odious. *Miles justitiæ* (miles meaning then, not so much soldier as knight), *Knight of Justice* was more illustrious than any rank or birth. But none but nobles could be knighted.

By an ancient law in France, no one could be imprisoned for debt, and it was lawful to rescue the debtor from any officer who had arrested him. So, how was it possible for a common person to get paid by a nobleman? Only the nobles could fish or fowl. Hunting and hawking were Norman pursuits during peace; in fact, through all France they were the chief occupations of gentlemen, and a knight rarely left his house, either on horseback or afoot without a falcon on his fist, and a grey-

hound following him. But such diversions were exclusively for the nobles. There was little or no trade, nor could the people, even the few who had scraped together a little cash through some chance, increase it by lending, though interest on money was at forty or sixty per cent., for usury was adjudged exclusively to the Jews, or Lombards. No glazed windows, no books, no paintings in even the houses of gentlemen; for although the abbey of St. Denis had windows, both glazed and painted, much earlier, yet glass is said not to have been employed in the best French mansions before the fourteenth century. So it may well be imagined that the cottages were wretched, and undoubtedly no domestic architecture in France was better than in England, where it was execrably bad. And I lay stress upon it the rather, that I am quite of their opinion who hold, that architecture, more than any other of the fine arts, characterises its age.

A grievous misfortune to the French was the feudal army. Better, when soldiers were hired; but these mercenary *solidarij* were later; at least the first instance I find in Hallam is in 1030, and then it was a small corps. That St. Germain's had the pointed arch in 1014, only shows that pilgrims were frequent from France to Palestine even then;



by one of whom it was probably brought by a rare exception. When that style became general an age or two later, whether it came through Spain or Italy, or round by the German woods, resembling the intersection of the top branches of trees in a Druidic avenue, or if it originated in the East at all, or in what part of it, are questions that remain as undetermined as ever. Why further painful details? The sense of severe depression is apparent. The humane spirit of Christianity, the religion of love and kindness, had indeed struggled long with the manners and maxims of the world; and as far back as the thick night of the sixth century, St. Gregory had told them that nature had made all men free; and that the yoke of servitude, introduced by what was called the law of nations, was utterly repugnant to the law of Christ.

But what the poor peasant beheld was in awful contradiction to such consoling doctrines; that breathed of pure republican liberty, or St. Simonism of the eighteenth century, or even Socialism, without the dangerous, sanguinary, most illogical consequences drawn from it by insanity, ignorance, or wickedness. A vague tradition—if it existed—of some past legislation, only increased discontent. So what conclude, but that the sole resource was to turn to the priest, and follow his advice blindly?

Driven from his hovel, despised and ill-treated by his landlord, and exposed to numberless distresses, between slavery, anarchy, and famine, what was left for the cultivator of the soil, but to indulge in the expectation of some great change at hand—ready at the crisis to take any direction his clergy prescribed. Classes which had any intimacy with those handsome domineering Normans, could not but have imbibed something of their gay independent spirit, and enthusiasm both in religion and love, and their uncontrollable desire of roving—they being the greatest pilgrims of their time; one of whom was the Count de Verdun, of the illustrious family that was soon to produce Godfrey de Bouillon. To consort with them was to get restless, particularly in private hardships—and what family then but had its private hardships? Uncertainty brooding everywhere, and gradually falling into permanent forlornness and the loss of any attachment to their homes; as eager to shift them as the Nomade Arabs, who carry their pots and pans about with them, and children and tents, and whatever they possess, and a furious contempt for stone walls. Thus all the French lay on their oars.

Doubtful as may be the origin of those enterprising parties that got together in Scandinavia, yet coming thence to Germany, ancient or modern

—before or since Tacitus — they deserve to be called Northmen; just as much on the Elbe or Rhine, as on the Seine or Thames. They were a fated and dangerous race; yet carried a sort of compensation with them—the seeds of freedom. And leaping over several centuries, the landwehr, or insurrection, brings us to the times of Charlemagne; for not only in deed, but name, too, that Militia dates so far back. Yet, if it be true that the Irish missionary sent to convert those of Wurzburg, was murdered there in the eighth century, is it not surprising that the capital of Franconia, whence so many emperors derived, should be so late of conversion? learned antiquaries informing us that also the French were from Franconia; as its very name implies, land of the French!

But neither Militia nor Christianity seem to have remedied the reigning evils much; for open robbery was more in vogue in Germany than anywhere else, since the strongholds of those they called nobles spread terror over the whole country; they making it a practice not only to plunder the travellers they seized, but likewise to sell them into slavery, when promised no sufficient ransom. Bondage within their own castles, or to somewhere in the vicinity, was their sale at first; but when there came to be Saracens, they were sold to the

Saracens — traffic of which Venice set the example. Even at a much later period the German nobles were mostly robbers; the burghers of the town no better, for they used to give the liberties of them to every stranger that offered, without the least discrimination, vagabonds for the greater part, who terrified the honest, by committing every kind of crime with perfect impunity; so that between pillage and piracy, both by sea and land, it is a wonder that in Germany any had the courage to become merchants at all. The sacred appetite for gold must have been very cogent. In Saxony, Poland, and Lithuania, the remains of Paganism were trod out with a savage eagerness to compensate for lingering rather late.

As to the Jews, they were fair game throughout the entire of Christendom; the unfortunates had to endure sackage, gross insults, and murder in every land. It was a question of more or less atrocity and injustice the vilest; but of justice or mercy never. Shame on the nefarious abusers of the religion of peace and charity! After the Fowler, and the Saxon Othos, and Franconian Henries, although the surnames of Guelph and Ghibelline had not been as yet invented; nevertheless the wicked enormity itself was—the sanguinary rivalry between the dynasties of southern and

northern Germany—feud that degenerated to that degree that it embraced nearly every individual, and added new distractions to the whole region from Swabia to beyond the Vistula and Alps, and down the Adriatic. Still these amazing outrages bore with them the promise of healing, and seemed too violent to last long. And in proportion as nations became fervent Christians, they looked eastwards.

Hope was in the East, and the world desirous of hope. Many devout or repentant Germans, tired of such turbulent scenes, set out to make what they perhaps did not know St. Jerome and St. Austin had made several centuries earlier—a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Founder of their Divine creed; and though some of those scolloped travellers had died on the road to or at Jerusalem, and some of them on their way back, yet some of them also returned home, and lived to enliven it with spirit-stirring stories of adventure or holy unction. One of those pilgrims, who never reached Palestine, but died in Asia Minor, had been the very first sovereign in Europe who made a law against fiefs being given to the clergy without their lay superior's permission; so that it is not quite just to suppose all the religious palmers were foolishly servile to the monks or priests. Knights were

then called *brothers*, *fratres*, and their guests *Christ's poor*, or the *poor*, without any consideration of their poverty or wealth; for it was the name given to the most opulent and even royal or imperial personages. And I observe it, lest any one hunting out my authorities, should be misled by finding the emperor I allude to amongst *Christ's poor*, and with *fra* before his name, not as the first syllable of *frate*, friar, but knight. All liberty came from the north (according to Sismondi) in its oral descent from their most remote ancestors, and was carried by who bore the misnomer of barbarians, over the whole of Europe, where that beneficent principle was gradually extinguished, with one single exception; but if not soonest, most fiercely in Germany, through reiterated persecutions. Conversion to Christianity only heightened the warmth of that ancestral dogma by giving it a celestial foundation.

The doctrine of Christ was sympathetic with the free. The currents of liberty flowed into it readily, rejoicing towards the immortal ocean. So love was added to liberty, and the rude converts proclaimed both divine; comprehensive, indefinite, intuitive, undying, incalculable, superhuman. Love is liberty and liberty is love, may appear a lax redundancy, and even ridiculous jargon to many

minds; but to others it will associate with something dear, as a struggle to express what cannot be expressed by mortal, or scarcely; that sacred, forbidden and undiscovered word, which may possibly be felt, but if it could be pronounced would enamour, or peradventure instantly destroy, the whole creation.

This German-like anticipation of future grandeur (within the limits of our present world) is curiously exemplified by an individual of the Imperial race, who, though himself generally a vagrant, and never safe even in his bed, yet was so persuaded of the high destinies of his family, that he always wrote in his books the famous Austrian device, A E I O U, initials of *Austriæ est imperare Orbi Universo*. This somewhat wild state of the imagination, productive of a voluntary death for freedom or religion, is not without an analogy to that ascetic exaltation which has spirited away myriads to the wilderness; for whom fanatics were too harsh a name. Heavens preserve us! Any how such were not idly standing with their arms a-kimbo; but in deep thought, preparatory to something out of the common run.

But the land of the free—or of humbug, pretension, and clatter, as some have presumed to call her—land of amazing contrasts and contradictions, fair and noble England, neither was she an

exception. Also she had her freedom from the north. Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Normans, all such new-comers were clearly varieties of one stock. The Anglo-Saxons appear to have had very mild laws, if mildness be few or no capital punishments. The native aboriginal Britons, who had become Christians long before in the night of ages, had been all extinguished, or driven away, or reduced to slavery; but those who replaced them followed the European stream, and assumed the profession of Christianity as soon as they fixed their residence in Southern Europe. Though Alfred had saved the Anglo-Saxons, he never rooted out the Danes, a name peculiar to England for those earlier Normans; but in France and every other country they are all called Normans. So both members of the Heph-tarchy thought it best to recur to their common origin, and quietly unite, which was an easy fusion, and a Dane shortly became king, and had a regular standing army, as preferable for discipline and separation from the people. The pay was in all such cases enormous, incredibly beyond what is paid at present. What we should call Colonels got ninety-six shillings a-day, and common troopers fourteen shillings, and a foot soldier one shilling and four-pence. To be sure they had to furnish themselves with arms, equipments, and horses; the cavalry at



which instance of Canute is, I believe, the earliest known of hired soldiery in England. Sometimes a lance signified six men, sometimes three; so it is hard to specify their numbers. Lances were long and heavy; horses big, and of a cart-like breed. Banner, coat of arms, and war-cry were common to all knights; in some of which particulars, if it be rather too soon to ascribe them to Canute, this is above controversy, that it is an error to imagine that coats of arms were not in use before the first crusade.

Inside the towns, though civilisation might have existed in some degree, yet we owe agriculture entirely to the monks; with the exception of their secluded spots, which they had received a wilderness, and reclaimed, all the rest of the land lay, from the fifth to the eleventh century, in barbarous disorder. Small or no encouragement, whole domains waste, until some monastery got a grant of them, the only chance after the ravage of a marauder; for thus they got under the protection of the Church, not always, but generally valid. Domesday Book is more than a proof of what had preceded it, and in what lamentable plight it found the shires.

Still, how easily the lower classes are contented, is conspicuous from their often calling for the laws

of Edward the Confessor in subsequent times. When discontent alarms the husbandman, we must look to some awful catastrophe. Reach that sturdy order, and some violent change is infallibly at hand! Individuals of any wealth put off the evil day in their case by frequent pilgrimages; and even one to Jerusalem was no considerable undertaking, as long as the Abassides reigned. Pilgrimages are said to have been what may be termed a fashionable recreation then, and even up to the ninth or tenth century, pilgrims were received well everywhere; for they without fail brought each a letter from his prince or bishop, pilgrims being then to the Christians, what Haggies are this day to the Mahometans, privileged persons. Some danger or distress made them only the more revered. It is well known that the Mahometans respect pilgrims still more than the Christians do, and the natural consequence was tolerance in all things, even towards those of a different creed; pious makers of a hazardous pilgrimage from the distant West. The gates of the city of God were often opened to let in two parties nearly equal; one, disciples of the Koran, directed to Omar's mosque, the other, Christians for the Holy Sepulchre. Hitherto the Mussulmen had committed no atrocities, in what was a seat of holiness to them

also; as the site of the Temple, the dwellings of David and Solomon, the Almighty's chosen place, illustrious for prophets, saints, and miracles. Therefore it was that Omar left them a sort of religious liberty, though the Christians had to hide their crosses, ring no more bells, nor retain any exterior sign of being dominant; but allow of building that extensive mosque, that in some sort stands still where the Temple once stood. The Christians could not be pleased; but Omar's moderation mitigated the fanaticism of his co-religionists.

After his death, his children imitated him; nor is it improbable the caliph might have thought it politic to keep on good terms with the western emperors, and thus prevent the Franks from siding with Constantinople against him. So Bagdad became the peaceful resort of the arts and sciences, and held that the progress of reason showed the elect of God. The manners of the chiefs of Islam becoming gentler from that enlightening of their minds, and Haroun el Rascid, and caliphs of his noble stamp, were finally rendered far more tolerant than Omar himself. Jerusalem enjoyed quiet, while Rome was plundered by the Saracens, at which period it is on record that the capital of Palestine could vaunt of twelve hostelries, and as many libraries belonging to the Latin *hospitium*

within it; and Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Amalphi, sent their merchandise regularly to that mart.

But such a happy state ceased with the hauling down of the black flag of the Abassides; and a failure of the Greeks to resist the Fatimites only brought persecution on the Palestine Christians. Under the triumphant Fatimite caliphs, Christian blood flowed in torrents. All Christians began to be looked on as enemies to all Moslems. Mahometan fanaticism had its swing. The Holy Sepulchre pulled down, churches, if not saved by being turned into mosques, degraded, many of them into stables; Christians of every description expelled from Jerusalem, were left to wander about wild; the story on which Tasso founded his *Olinda* is said to have occurred then.

By little and little the Greek Christians, as subjects, were permitted to return, not so the Latins; who were nevermore allowed to have permanent quarters there. But thirty-seven years after the demolishing of the Holy Sepulchre, it rose again under the Caliph Daber in 1044, at the expense of the Greek Emperor, by leave from the Moslems, that they might profit by a toll which they set on pilgrims. No dwelling there for the Latins, except the few days required by pilgrims; who, as such, flocked thither and paid well.

Henceforward pilgrimage was attended with some real danger and considerable cost. A service of risk and insult rather than certain death; disguise often necessary, and contumely and privations always sure. Remarkable courage or very warm devotion cannot but be predicated of a lady who under those circumstances visited Jerusalem; but what will not a new convert? She had come from Sweden, then still in idolatry, into England, where she got converted; and thence set out for the Holy Sepulchre.

It was about the date of Alfred's birth. A few years later (868) the Anglo-Saxons (who in the worst cases preferred a durable punishment, such as mutilation, death too instantaneous to be a salutary example) having condemned in their way an execrable murderer of his uncle, the convict escaped from his native place in Essex across the sea into Brittany, where he repeated the same atrocity on his own brother, and there (with notable courtesy to a foreigner) was simply doomed to undergo his former sentence; as well he as his servants, who had been his accomplices in both crimes; to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, frequently kneeling, and always with a mark on his forehead, and in irons and enduring various other severities, and what must have been dreadful indignities to a Baron

unarmed and defenceless master and underlings; so that their surviving to return was highly problematical. Yet return he did. Was it not a better sermon than hanging, or solitary confinement, or transportation when he came back a changed man, on the best evidence, those who knew him intimately afterwards during a prolonged old age, and who declare he died regretted as a holy person? Not that it would be the proper legislation now, or perhaps at any time; but only that in his instance it succeeded. Neither should I like averring that Frotmond's case is no lesson.

But what were Fatimites to their merciless successors, who it is said hesitated awhile between Christianity and Mahometanism, but decided for the Koran at last? Reckless savages by whom customs, treaties, lucre, were unregarded. It became hard for even the richest pilgrim to purchase an entry into the Holy Sepulchre. Still neither difficulties nor dangers put a stop to pilgrimages; but rather these went on increasing, as those increased. Perhaps the whole truth was not yet quite known to Europe.

Among the pilgrims of the beginning of the eleventh century, was the Count of Anjou. A bunch of broom the device of his family, *Plant the Broom* became its war-cry; just as with the Vene-

tians *Plant the Lion*, St. Mark's winged lion. Not then noun, but verb, not *de* genet, but *le* genet. To the same epoch is affixed the pilgrimage of Robert Duke of Normandy, the Conqueror's father. Some narrate it was to this Robert the school of Salerno directed their verses; if so, he was called king as father to a king. *Francorum* meaning of the Franks suits any Latin. Indeed we have the high authority of Gibbon for the word *French* not being given to any people during the second and third crusades by either Greeks or Orientals, and the Salernitans of that time were wholly or in great part Greeks. *Frank* then meant what it does to-day, any nation of Western Europe. The chiefs being always a little less uncivilised than their soldiery, it does not surprise, that even then we read of a Mahometan governor saying to those who proposed stopping a group of pilgrims, "I have often seen such, and they only follow a vow to their idol; let them go, they are very harmless!" And when in 1064 a body of seven thousand pilgrims, after traversing safely the whole of Asia Minor and Syria, was attacked by Bedouin robbers near Jerusalem, they owe to the Turkish governor that they were not cut to pieces, but got unhurt within the gates. That sordid Bascia might have thought

the toll of so great a number not to be despised; so he sent the rescue.

Let people say what they will, yet was England in a very confused condition in those good old Anglo-Saxon and Danish times. Canute was succeeded, not by his legitimate, but illegitimate son. Even the return into the Anglo-Saxon line, on the earliest opportunity that offered, was somewhat irregular; and if pestilence and famine were characteristic of even Edward the Confessor's virtuous and holy reign, what could be worse after the Conquest? Is it not said William's domination was from the first, devastating carnage; its progress, a regular system of confiscation and oppression—its close, *famine and pestilence*? Probably this climax of evils was true of both epochs, of the comparatively good and bad; for they are the necessary consequences of bad agriculture—though in other respects the government may have been more or less abominable; since the bad agriculture lasted many ages, and did not improve much before the Tudors. Had Harold any real right to the English throne, he might have called out the Anglo-Saxon militia, or *trinoda necessitas*—the German *landwehr*; but he did not dare to do so, conscious of his having no title whatever; which is a cogent argument of his not being what he pre-



tended, the choice of the people; so can any one say that. Ferocious William said it, too, at his coronation, pleading, vain-gloriously, that he had been chosen by the people of all England, and promising Edward the Confessor's laws; though he broke that promise so flagrantly a moment after. Canute, so long before him, had said the same; and whether or not by birth a Christian, pleased his subjects by becoming a fervent one, and a tolerable monarch; for the Anglo-Saxon oath of allegiance was like that of Arragon, conditional—"if not, no!" Canute, while King of England, compiled and published in Denmark the Danish civil and military code; also, in the Court of England, towards that time, was brought up the first Norwegian legislator. The Anglo-Saxons had become Christians in the seventh, and the Danes about the eighth century; and as to the native Britons, it is not worth counting how long previously; for what remained of them were reduced to slavery in a country where it is boasted that slavery had never existed by law, nor ended by law, but naturally and silently went out of itself. As to the Normans, they were Christians when they left Normandy.

But although Harold had none at all, William had at least a show of right, not only as adopted

by Edward, but from his own father's having been the legitimate child of a Queen of England ; and if he was himself illegitimate, yet we are assured by Sismondi that in (what the Normans were so intimate with) Italy, an illegitimate succeeded in the great nobility, just like a legitimate son. Much the same in all Europe. And William signing his name *Bastardus*, seems even to have taken pride in the distinction. His mother, a nobleman's daughter, had had Robert for her first love, and was true to him till his death ; so that their union was in truth what is called a left-handed marriage—*Morganatic*, an ancient German custom. Their only son was moreover legitimized by the kings and barons of France. At nineteen William was so fine a youth that the famous Duke of Flanders, Baldwin, gave him his daughter in wedlock ; and at Hastings, he was one of the bravest knights and most enterprising monarchs in Europe. He had fifty thousand horse that day ; and how many infantry, I do not know. They were all paid troops ; not surprising that a single battle decided. That one loss, of not a very numerous army either, and the whole cause was lost. Another proof that Harold's party knew they had not the majority of the nation with them.

The Varangian guards at Constantinople, and

those other gallant refugees in Syria testify it was not courage or fidelity the Saxons wanted at Hastings. The disastrous consequence of that field was that almost all England was reduced to slavery--every one but Normans. Feudalism on the most extensive and exclusive scale, without any one of the influences that tempered it in other countries, embraced Anglo-Saxons, Danes, and every reminiscence of the Heptarchy, levelling them all to the Britons, and branding them indiscriminately as slaves and English ; for that every Norman was a gentleman, and every Englishman a slave.

Besides the Britons and their wives and families, and some of the free-born Saxons themselves, who, from debts or crimes had lost their liberty, or even from want had voluntarily sold themselves, it was calculated before the Conquest, that slaves formed two-thirds of the population of England. But now the Conquest prostrated to the same vile station those who had before been masters. Frightful retribution ! The proud, war-like, and comparatively polished Norman despised and abused the conquered. William was ferocious on principle. His victims submitted to the yoke in sullen despair ; one unhappy Saxon of royal descent went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem ; and coming home, died of a broken

heart in 1086. His royalty secured him notice, but many of less illustrious and private rank ended similarly. Nobility, chief clergy, all foreigners—like their king. Females violated; and men sent to prison at the beck of the lowest Norman.

Nearly every inch of land in England became Norman property. Posterity could not believe it. The king had one thousand four hundred and thirty-two manors, and an income of nearly six thousand pounds a-day. Nor legally could any earldom be otherwise than Norman. Troubles were too severe to permit of considering it any compensation that a few Anglo-Saxon ladies, who had escaped into France, were admired there for their wonderful beauty, even at that early period, so full of stern calamity. With such punctual harshness was the feudal system practised at once, that in less than two years from Hastings, we hear no more of the king's hired troops, but sixty thousand feudal cavalry; and if *lances* be meant, as likely, then we must multiply by six, and have the huge body that is most probably the truth.

The Northmen, who had never known anything feudal in Scandinavia, acquired it so well in France, that William's first care in England was to establish feudalism there in all its rigour. The Anglo-Saxon ordeal was changed by the Normans

into the wager of battle, which, if it led to the trial by jury, it is a curious and serpentine path; but in truth, the trial by jury came not circuitously, but directly from Scandinavia and the Goths, and was their own unwritten law, and no distinct profession, but was brought into England by the Anglo-Saxons as a whole people; and though they became Christians, they continued to content themselves with that primitive institution, and one court for both laymen and ecclesiastics. That the Goths were acquainted with writing, not only before they came to Scandinavia, but even previous to their leaving the Euxine, is no proof that they did not explain their laws orally. Their common law and its chief institutes were both written and oral. Neither canon law, nor pandects had penetrated into Scandinavia; but William, who had learned the continental fashion, introduced two courts, one for church, and one for laity; Justinian for these, and decretals for those. Was it not a carnal error? What before had been *heriot*, became Norman *relief*. If the former was a grievance, this other was ten times worse. Later even, the English gentry led a sorry existence; no foreign luxuries, few or no male servants, save a clown for the wretched farm, ugly horses, and no carriages with four wheels, springs not to be thought of, little wine,

even their hospitality very limited; an income of ten or twenty pounds a competent estate for a gentleman, and, if we multiply by twenty-four, we have the present value of that sum.

But in the eleventh century, of which I speak, things were beyond comparison worse, though chivalry was then at its full, and had been growing for above three hundred years. Still, though nobly based in honour, it could effect little, as not applying to all classes and both sexes. This religion does, or may do; but neither liberty, nor honour, fine things as these be, for they admit of several distinctions and inequalities, moral and physical, but religion not one! Why leave out what, more than gallantry or chivalry, or the refinements of society, placed woman in her proper place of a companion to man, not his slave as among the Greeks and Romans, and the very best of Paganism, but his tender friend and equal? It was indeed the Christian religion that emancipated the female, and raised her destiny to the height of our own! Yet even religion might for awhile seem too feeble to control the ferocity of that age. Rather for the savage feeling it indicates, than for the value of the thing in itself, is recorded that the Conqueror meditated extirpating its language from the island.

Out of the Saxon branch of the great Teutonic stock, arose what had been spoken in England until long after the Norman, which, whatever was his impotent wish, only somewhat impeded its progress, since the nobility for the most part went on speaking French, even after Normandy had become part of France; and as for legal documents, they were invariably in law Latin, and several of the best chronicles of England likewise; nor was it till the fourteenth century that Chaucer gave England its Dante. Till then, English was an irregular jargon made up of bad French and worse Celtic, and various dialects of old German. Whether Oxford had or not thirty thousand scholars under the Plantagenets, it seems a decided fact that it existed as a university in the time of Edward the Confessor, and many affirm it was founded by Alfred.

That gunpowder ever was discovered there, may be fiction, or how much earlier, in what corner of the East, perhaps China. But happily, in mercy or not, the Saracens kept it to themselves; nor as late as Creci, do the English seem to have had firearms there, notwithstanding all that has been advanced; for France was nearer Spain and the Moors, to get their inventions first; and so curious a particular could scarcely fail of registry by the cotemporaneous writers who described that battle *ex pro-*

*fesso*, and one of them an eye-witness of it, and a Frenchman. Their silence is the most eloquent of denials. As for Villani, he was far off, and only wrote what he heard. Gunpowder appeared a great thing then, and a reasonable cause for that defeat, as well as a salve for much offended vanity. But now opinions have come about, and nearly all military men prefer lances for cavalry, and some of the best judges for infantry too; and that the Greek and Roman way of good swords and lances, or any description of cold iron, even this most unwieldy weapon, the bayonet—so far as it represents a lance—is better and surer than musketry, whether for attack or defence; that artillery, both heavy and light, is a splendid treasure to be coaxed and perfected to the utmost; but that regiments of the line, horse and foot, would act more wisely to throw away firelocks, pistols, and hand-grenades altogether, as quite too cumbrous and uncertain, and to learn to be capital lancers and swordsmen, whether as infantry, to scale walls or resist a charge of cavalry, not with bayonets, but long heavy lances, requiring three men to each lance, and keeping the horses far off, which is an old English fashion—such being to depend on, and quite inimitable, and easily modified to suit cuirassiers, hussars, or Polish lancers. But now whatever would liberate men for awhile



from slavery to the soil, would be a great benefit, and a bold step towards regaining what they had lost—freedom. Truly (as Mr. Hallam says) the socmen are the root of a noble plant, the free peasantry of England. But what were they in the eleventh century? How fallen must they have been, when their only hope was in the Pope! Though not the Papal only, but ecclesiastical encroachments in general, are what the laity should keep a wary and perhaps suspicious eye on. Yet some of the Popes took the popular side on most questions; and even where religious ceremonies were used, as in ordeals and wagers of battle, demurring against both as unwarrantable appeals to the Almighty, did they not therein appear the advocates of liberty and reason?

It is not perhaps possible to congregate a greater accumulation of miseries than then pressed on the English. Robbers, and plunderers, and ravishers, imitated those lawless invaders and their sanguinary mercenaries. These often, instead of pay from the needy or miserly barons whom they served, got leave to plunder indiscriminately. These from tyranny, those impoverished natives from a sort of necessity, were equally the horror and scourge of whatever was left of honesty or innocence in any class. So lawless the mercenaries (who, not con-

tent with sacking it, sometimes set fire to a town—burning it down, inhabitants and all), that a later monarch had to expel them in a body, under pain of death, without further evidence than that they were known to be hired soldiers. Not but intermarriages with the Normans effected union in the end, and all their progeny, after some generations, became free, and every inhabitant in the land a freeman ; but, for an age, it did little more than evil, by generalising it. Yet the poor English were quick learners ; and mastered the French so well, that it soon was hard to distinguish by speech between the English and the Normans.

That the laws of these different species of Northmen were all from one genus—the Gothic—is proved likewise by this, that a striking affinity was between many of their institutions ; and that William, treading in the very footsteps of Alfred, had every hide of land in the kingdom surveyed by commissioners, who were to impanel a jury in each hundred ; and the offspring was what exists in the Exchequer to this day, Domesday Book. William's eldest son, another Robert, appears to have inherited something of his grandfather's piety, combined with the gigantic form and sabring qualities of his father. He soon went to Palestine, not with staff and shell, but rapier and buckler.

Then, from Robert on the highest steps of the throne, down to the lowest serf in England, all ranks were uneasy, and without one sedentary wish. No English father could give his own daughter away in marriage without his Norman lord's consent; and the latter could make her marry any man he liked, the moment she was fourteen; and heiresses were constantly sold by their lords to the highest bidder. An auction of fillies. Horrors beyond the force of any tongue, tortures the most infernal and illegal were practised by every petty owner of a crow's nest, with perfect impunity; once within his foul walls, and your case was as hopeless as in hell.

Durham Cathedral might be in the best Norman style; and several other cathedrals might afterwards display pointed arches, and rich decorations, and fantastic tracery and arabesques—built perhaps by companies of incipient freemasons; yet not only the castles of the most potent noblemen were dark, cold, unsightly erections, but also the gentry were miserably lodged; and as for the people's dwellings, they did not merit the name of houses at all, but styes or dog kennels—or something fouler and meaner still. The barons, in their keeps, were wild beasts in horrid dens. Every baron was a pitiless despot. But what results from all these

observations, if not that England was no exception, but as ready as any other state in Europe for an explosion, or any radical change? and that, burning with impatience for the signal, if given from any part of Christendom, the white cliffs would be just as determined as whatsoever country to echo it and march?

In Spain the people are better bred than any in Europe, says a well-informed writer even of late; and another has ably affirmed that the fierce Spaniard never forgets he has Gothic blood in him. Now both observations are not only true at present, but also from the middle ages down; and the first from the ancient Romans. The lower classes in Spain still spoke the same Latin dialect that they had spoken in the time of Augustus probably; when the Visigoths, before the fifth century, invaded and fixed in it. The Visigoths were to Spain, what the Anglo-Saxons were to England. Their capital, Toledo; until the Moors in 712. From that disastrous downfall, Pelayo retreating with his few, planted the cross in the mountains of Asturias, where it remained for a couple of centuries. But in 914 it removed to Leon; and the Moor driven back step by step, the Christians became masters of their former metropolis, Toledo, in the eleventh century; and to know what sort of

government they established there, it is necessary to have known what was that of the Visigoths ; for what was then re-set, was in substance what had been plucked out. Meagre as are the chronicles regarding each, yet by joining those of both periods, we learn indubitably at least that it was a system of rational constitutional monarchy.

It is not without feelings of deep reverence that a lover of freedom turns to Spain. Not Latins or Moors, but on its Gothic kingdom and Pelayo are his thoughts—and on the early Spanish liberties. The Cid is only a splendid instance of the heroism that has scarcely ever ceased to distinguish Spain. The Visigoths being, like all the other Northmen, a branch of the Goths, did not treat the Romans with that haughty contempt which the rest of the barbarians showed, but gave a legal sanction to intermarriages between Goths and Spaniards, much more early than in Italy or elsewhere. So Goths and Spaniards soon amalgamated, and the law declared them equal *in dignity and lineage*. Nevertheless, we know little of the manners of the Visigoths before the Moors—perhaps less than of the primitive Hungarians ; for except battles, miracles, and murders, there is little in the chronicles, who seem to love throwing a dark and barbarous stain on all they relate most concisely and jejune-ly.

Cruel and vindictive acts brought their own ruin, and the Moorish invasion. Goth and Spaniard had already so intimately coalesced, that the barrier of language disappeared, and the *Romance* tongue spoken and written universally ; so that scarcely a Visigoth word remained. And for one of Gothic origin in Spanish, there are ten in Italian, and a hundred in French.

The law Latin is far purer in Spain than in France or Italy; for in these countries the barbarians would by no means give up their old Gothic words, when they thought they expressed the thing in question as well or better than the Latin, but laughed at Roman lawyers, and scorned them ; but the Spanish Goths, with no such harsh pride, were pleased with translating the law of the Goths into good Latin.

Money, or slavery, or mutilation, for murder, and nearly all crimes, was preferred to the punishment of death—in the Anglo-Saxon fashion. But the trial by jury had a far greater latitude of application in Spain than in England. When the throne became vacant in Scandinavia, the provinces used to choose each a jury of twelve men, and these chose a new king; which example, indeed, it is not quite clear that the earliest Spaniards rigorously followed; but their crown was elective, and the

jury was used in the army and navy as well as nearly all civil and criminal cases. The ordeal was still more reprehended in Spain by the Papacy than in the Heptarchy. Not only Pope Honorius forbade it, but also the Council of Leon. No clergyman could officiate at ordeals. Still the tribunals and popular charters continued them; "although these ordeals are prohibited by Rome" (says the law book), "yet they may go on; and if no priest, nor even clerk, be allowed to give the blessing, the magistrates may give it—which will be nearly as well."

That the jury is common to all the Northmen is a proof that it was the invention of none of them, but had been inherited from their common parent, the Goth. If the juries in Spain were not so equal as in England (for a Spanish peasant had all his jury superior, while eleven of the Anglo-Saxon jurymen were of the rank of the accused, and only one a king's thane), yet this has a compensation in the fact that in Spain a woman had a jury of women.

In some Spanish towns, when there was a quarrel between man and wife, the cause was tried by a female jury, and no appeal; and as this is a great exception from Gothic rules (by which oaths of men alone were taken in cases of accused females), we may attribute it to the usual Spanish

gallantry, which chivalrous respect for females, whether mediately or immediately, is the only question; and who deny that the heroic Goth had any participation, or the soul-stirring warmth of Moorish imagination either, they must refer it wholly to Christianity; and indeed, any medium of Goths or Moors were superfluous; nor could any splendour of poetry speak half as forcibly to the tender enthusiastic heart of the Spanish mother, as the simple, unclassical lines which, when fresh in the seventh century, were as popular in Spain, as lately with us when set by Rossini to his sweet music; and it is to be doubted if so complete a picture was ever drawn in a few plain words:—

“Stabat mater dolorosa,  
Juxta crucem lacrimosa,  
Dunc pendebat filius.”

No! that spiritualised creation, that brightest, most blessed sovereign Lady, she that never sinned, nor ever was otherwise than immaculate, she whose robe was the sun; whose footstool, the moon; whose crown, the stars; she far more than goddess; that dear, mysterious, ineffable union of maternal and virginal celestial love, sorrow, beauty; she may well be an object of reverence to both men and angels; and what but an inferior representative of her was all that is sacred or beautiful in the whole



female race? Spanish men knew what their women personified, and Spanish women, too, were conscious of their dignity, as became them. From Molina (chief town of the Laras), the completest municipal record in Spain in 1152, we learn that unanimity in a jury was required; and in cases of extremity, a juror was withdrawn, and the accused was at liberty to name another—once practised in England likewise.

In one respect the Visigoth monarchy was happily modified in the Asturias from what it had been before the Moor. At first altogether elective—worst of governments—generally force and artifice, not the public will, elected their kings; so, they being often murdered to make room for a new king (asking the Church's assent afterwards, which was never refused); from this radical defect sprang rapacity and extortion, till lost were independence, religion, and all, to the Moorish invaders.

The Visigoth monarchs had become cruel despots, yet perhaps they have the excuse of the memory of dynasties of kings in Spain previous to their own coming, when we should refer all their liberties to their own race; and all their slavery and vice to those prior kings, who may have had much of the imperial absolutism of Constantinople, a polluted

source, to whom bad doctrines are more imputable than to the Papal clergy of those times, who usually sided with what was free and honest. The odious Inquisition was long posterior, as is almost needless to remark. The Moors that overwhelmed Spain at once, would also France, had it not been for Charles Martel; but it was very gradually indeed that they lost their fine empire.

Under Ferdinand, in about the middle of the eleventh century, began the splendid course of the Cid, which, continuing under his sons, D. Sancho, who was killed at Zamora in 1072, and Alphonso VI., for whom he retook Toledo and Madrid a few years afterwards, shows delightfully with what a chivalrous spirit were carried on those wars against the Moors; inasmuch as in the very midst of them the above-named king (Alphonso VI.) married the daughter of the king of the Moors at Seville; no exception, but a fair sample of those heroic ages. The worst of elective monarchies had worn out during the day of calamity, and that long abeyance in the Asturias had reformed things so far, as that the election had become hereditary in one house, which remedied the radical defect of an elective form. The Cid's times were then worthy of him.

Whether the Spaniards learnt from the Moors—

as is pretended—or, what is more likely, that the Moors had acquired some of the generosity that characterises the Goths when not provoked, but on the contrary, met with something of the high feelings which they possessed themselves, and of that chivalry which certainly was the bud when Christianity came to blow on a northern stem; however that be, the sure incident is, that while the civil wars between Christians were less bloody and cruel than in other countries, those with the Moors were with the generous courtesy scarcely found elsewhere, except perhaps a slight tinge in England's continental expeditions of Froissart's time; and that the Cid's feats of heroism shed a wild and most romantic colouring on all Spain, until his name itself became a personification of whatever can be imagined of noblest and most brilliant, not from any other sentiment than the uncalculating valour that disdains any other reward than glory; such a magnificent, ineffable blaze, that it endures not a little from that day to this. If the Spanish sun be set, the horizon is still glowing, and flings a faint orange, as it were, of the chivalrous on everything and creature of Spanish birth, habituating us to look upon all from that region with a favouring eye, as naturally expecting more than ordinary merit. Even the sneerer who smiles to the sight,

assents within; and though the Castillian grandeur be ridiculed as misplaced or vain, and may be laughable haughtiness, half admires it.

That the Cid was a chastened incarnation of Homer's Achilles, is a fact beyond controversy, and that his country merited that glorious distinction. That the poem of the Cid (of the age following his death, and said to be the finest of Spanish poems) is at least better than any in modern Europe before Dante, has been decided by unanswerable authority. The Cid, that brightest of warriors, appeared in Spain's brightest period. Ah! me! to be brief! for another Alphonso was to appear, Alphonso—called the Wise, for his astronomy, but most unwise for his policy, since his code of the Siete Partidas was to produce to him unhappiness and a turbulent reign, and to his country a civil war of fifty years, and eventually the overthrow of her ancient legislature and all her freedom.

Though the great mosque at Cordova was built in the eighth century, and is of far greater beauty and magnificence than any cathedral of that time, in France, England, or anywhere in Europe, still the architecture suitable for churches and palaces was not so for private houses—even of the prime grandees. Nor were the habitations of the Spanish nobles otherwise than very rude; and what then

of the people? There is an Arabic writing in the Escorial that could make great disclosures on that head.

If the Moorish armies brought gunpowder, and measles, and small-pox into Europe, they also brought chemistry, Aristotle, and perhaps Plato; and Mahometans were to bring inoculation as well. Who but is willing to believe that when Goths and Visigoths had become an almost forgotten name—as it soon did—and merged in that of “pure Spaniard,” or “old Christian”—their Gothic genealogy being locked up with their hidden treasures, to be drawn out on occasion, and displayed with pride—they did not as horribly ill treat the Jews as other lands? For the Spanish Jews denied most indignantly that they descended from the murderers of Christ, but from Hebrews that had emigrated into Spain centuries before his Divine birth; and on the contrary proved that when their forefathers heard of his being persecuted in Jerusalem, they sent ambassadors thither to dissuade those of Palestine from harming him; and the document asserting this was kept with considerable reverence at Toledo.

When it is conjectured that the Visigoths came into Spain before they had written laws, is not this an evident mistake, and in contradiction with the

general belief, that the Goths had letters previous to leaving the Euxine? How could then their sons the Visigoths not? Is it not falling into the error of thinking oral opposed to written? But may not the common law be written as to the text, and oral as to the custumal, or comment of the recorder? or modified by the judge or jury? St. Isidore may only have meant the change of characters, no longer Runic, but Roman. This was the *new writing*. Traditional, or what is oral, has not only as much permanence as written, but much more. It is to inscribe not on parchment, but on men's minds; on no evanescent matter, but on what is immortal. Are not national songs and ballads older than any writing? This may get lost, or destroyed, or forgotten, like the Egyptian hieroglyphics, but the oral will be transmitted from generation to generation; but once reduced to writing, and it is liable to slip from memory, which recoils away as from a burden, and feels again vacant and free.

The Druids confided their laws to memory alone, says Cæsar. A short jingle suffices for a heap of desultory deductions. A rhyming or alliterative law is hard to obliterate from memory, nor likely to be innovated. What scroll of secretary is to be depended on like that of the memory of an illiterate warrior or wild huntsman?

When the Visigoth code was written in 466, the immediate consequence was that no former law was remembered, and so we are ignorant of the custom of the Goths, as far as Spanish information. But from that code we see that the Visigoth kings were then obliged to have the popular consent, without which no laws could be made. The Theodosian, or some other Roman authority, may have been admitted into that Gothic collection; but the Visigoths, with a pardonable pride, corrected those foreign interpolations first. And in the fourth Council of Toledo, the whole was joined in one body, and called the *Fuero jusgo*, and was amended in another council there, in 653. Various MSS. of the *Fuero jusgo* (some clandestine) went before printing; so it is hard to discover the exact truth, save that Spain anciently had a free or constitutional monarchy, as free as that of England ever was; although, since Ferdinand and Isabella, or Charles V., the Kings of Spain have been absolute.

From the dawn of the eleventh century, town after town became Christian; the cross bore all before it—Saragossa, Valencia, and the Balearic Islands, and Murcia and Cordova and entire Andalusia, were annexed to Christianity and Castille; yet even so, and allowing that the arts and sciences of Cordova, and the sedentary habits they produce,

might have rendered the Moors less hardy, these were nevertheless, to reign for two and a half centuries longer in part of Spain.

As high as twenty-five per cent, or twenty, was still to be the interest of money; and if it was only at ten at Barcelona in 1433, that was when there were insurance laws, which do not exist before regular commerce; and Spain was not of the commercial log at that period. Also in Spain Charlemagne's *caballary* were landowners and knights. There, as elsewhere, the *milites* of the middle ages were knights. "Sive *miles*, sive *alius*," that is, *knight* or not. "Statuimus (says one of those ancient Spanish kings) ut nullus faciat *militem*, nisi filium *militis*"—"none but who is qualified by being a gentleman," as it has very properly been translated.

Although Visigoths, Danes, Lombards, Vandales, may have differed as to pride, do not various examples prove that all the Gothic tribes were no way niggard of verbal changes, but offhanded as to taking or giving of language? Was it not characteristic of the entire stock? When they found it difficult for the Southern to acquire Gothic, they left their own and took his tongue. If this occurred in most countries, it is above all remarkable in Spain.

Willingly they gave their language and freedom,



and had in return religion and wealth. However sounding their titles, the Visigoth kings, no more than the Anglo-Saxon, were absolute; but popular will and responsible agents were mixed up with every act of the monarch. His laws were no laws until they had the national assent in a full meeting, or council, or Cortes, *universali consensu*; nor could any individual be punished without a fair trial. Alphonso I. was chosen "by the whole Gothic nation." Alphonso II., "by the whole kingdom."

In 930 Alphonso VI. abdicated "with consent of the Cortes;" but, though the monarchy continued elective, it was in one particular family; "and in 966, notions of hereditary right had made such progress" that a child of only five years old, son of the late king, was elected to the throne by the people. When in 1064 Ferdinand divided his states between his children, he first called a meeting of his subjects and obtained their consent. Alphonso in 832 gives a charter to his clergy, both by the consent of his nobility and of his people—*scriptura quam in concilio edimus*. Ramiro in 930 calls a general council to advise whether he shall attack the Saracens. In 985, Vermudo pronounces with the consent of the *council*.

The earliest Cortes of which the acts have been preserved, in 1020, was to *assist* Alphonso V. In

1046 under another monarch, we have a Cortes consulting about the operations of a war against the Moors. In the Cortes of 1089, Alphonso VI., with its consent, appoints an Archbishop of Santiago. The same Cortes oblige that king's daughter to marry the King of Arragon, and as soon as she has a son, elect him to be their king and to succeed her father, instead of her. In 1135 a Cortes held at Leon under Alphonso VII., is convened "to deliberate on all the affairs of the Spanish monarchy." Ferdinand convenes a Cortes at Salamanca in 1178, with a similar mandate. There were no distinctions on such occasions between civil and ecclesiastical. The Cortes were the virtual representatives of the whole kingdom in 1188, and not the deputies of any particular class or community. The Cortes, like the ancient Parliaments in England, drove away the minions of one debauched monarch, and interposed to baffle the bigotry of another, who, in league with an unworthy party of the clergy, wished to oppress and expel his Moorish subjects. *Procuradores* were later, and, as from the different cities, formed a distinct part of Cortes. Matters went on thus even until the author of the *Siete Partidas* died in 1285, which began the funeral of Spanish liberty.

Spaniards, then, in the eleventh century, were

certainly far from as unhappy as other Europeans; yet was Spain unsettled. It had lately had great changes, and was in expectation of greater. Nor had Spaniards to look far off; their foe was in their own homes. Nor did they dream of quitting their beloved Spain; but of rendering themselves masters of it—their cherished native land! They had more patriotism a great deal, than any other people in Europe. This splendid virtue, sometimes mistaken for hatred to foreigners, has often led to benefit; as when the “erudite party” proposed classical plays, which was put down by the people, always characteristically hostile to foreign interference. So, instead of imitation, Spain has got the most national, original, independent, perhaps finest theatre in the world. Not to emigrate, but most ripe were the Spaniards to applaud loudly any project that fell in with their own heated feelings, and dislike—not to say contempt—of every description of foreigners; and glowed as always, with an ultra-devotion, an inexpressible fervour, both in religion and war; in the former a metaphysical magnificence, and in the latter not design of havoc, or to plunder the odious strangers, but love of country, sublimed to an unheard-of degree, and exceedingly lucid honour and romantic valour.

Not for having received the gospel, and to prepare mankind for that Divine gift, was the precise mission on which Socrates and Plato were sent, according to some of the Fathers, but for her having received it so badly, thinking men account by the very low ebb of morals in ancient Rome; and that, not during her decline, but the most glorious and flourishing days of her republic. In Jugurtha's times, that famous metropolis was a sink of iniquities, most enormous, most sanguinary deeds; murder being sold openly in her shops, like any other commodity; poison or dagger at your option—the highest or lowest—in reference each to his station; but every man's life had its price, none extravagantly dear. No matter what part of the civilised world he was in; though it would cost less and be more convenient to get him nearer the Romulean centre, by lure, or force, nevertheless the business could be cheapened quietly, and without the smallest embarrassment, as regularly as we now purchase cloth at a clothier's; and Tacitus avows that, when he wrote, the Germans were ignorant of even the existence of many of the crimes that were quite habitual in the Eternal City. So, though she embraced Christianity at last, yet when six centuries later the barbarians descended into Italy, they found a people they soon learned to despise.

Those first Northmen, or Ostrogoths, when they settled south of the Alps, chose a king, from some idea that it was no denial of the imperial dignity, which they had left behind them on the Danube, and which was afterwards acknowledged in the person of Charlemagne; and Italy came to be considered in all subsequent ages as a province of the great western empire established in Germany. Yet however unfavourable had been their early impression, shortly did the Ostrogoths hurry into an intimate union with the Italians, who depraved them; the balance being that, while these were in some degree regenerated, those had their native hardihood enervated; and the very name of Ostrogoth dying away, the two races merged in a single one, and were denominated Italians.

Whether the Ostrogoths had been converted previously to the Alpine barrier, admits of dispute; but they were certainly Christians when they passed the Po; and for awhile, seeing no emperor come from towards the Danube, they put up with him of Constantinople, and obeyed his delegates; so natural and necessary they found it, to be under some imperial master; nor liked to be as babes in the wood. Which craving after dependence came more from the southern than the Oltremontana moiety of their blood; for it has been remarked that the

Italians have ever loved something they could depend on, and only felt free when in numbers within walls; while Northmen felt free everywhere, but most so when in the forest or single and independent in wide space. And truly until the Ostrogoths had joined them, these others had no idea at all of the native loftiness of human nature, or patriotism, or man's inborn love of freedom.

Their emperors distant (east or west), the Popes became the only objects of great reverence that remained in Rome; particularly as there was no other chance of withstanding anarchy and baronial usurpation. And to that sacred scope, it is but justice to own, the Papacy dedicated its labours incessantly. The circumstances of that awful period, a bishop's duties, and the choice of a suffering people, form, to some apprehensions a more honourable and, as it were, superhuman title, than any the most vigorously substantiated donation of Constantine, Pepin, or Charlemagne.

Never did the Holy See cease from trying to keep the Romans faithful to the Greek Emperor, until it was forced by the popular cry to refuse equally edict and tribute, and appeal to Paris; for an old policy of the Italians is to have two masters, play off one against the other, and be false to both; and this, far more than Grecian iconoclasm,

made the mob of the Tiber roar for French protection. But scarce had the Ostrogoths vanished, without leaving even a name to state they had ever been, when, as if to vindicate their great misfortune, advanced the energetic ire of the wisest, bravest, most powerful of all the races of Northmen, the Lombards.

Nor is it certain whether they were not invited by the archtraitor Narsetes, recalled to Constantinople by as perfidious a master. It was diamond cut diamond. Slowly winding down the Alps, the Lombards ruminated sad on the woful example of the Ostrogoth; but resolved to avoid the same mishap. Even supposing them to have embraced Christianity, it nothing diminished of their severe intentions; since built upon no spirit of vengeance, but on what seemed to them the most prudential concerns. They knew that, like themselves and all the progeny of the Goth, their predecessors likewise had their Witenagemot, Cortes, or Parliament, as in Spain, France, or England; that national meeting which chose or deposed kings; that oath of allegiance qualified with the preservation of their ancient liberties; and, that those holy institutions, the same they bore with them, and planted where they settled, to think they had been already refused and made little of, filled them with fierce

disdain. "We Lombards," cried one of their chiefs, "like the Visigoths, Burgundians, and others of our countrymen, so completely despise the very name of Roman, that, when in a passion with our enemies, we know of nothing more injurious than calling them Romans; for in that single term is included all that is imaginable of most ignoble, most slavish, most miserly, most corrupt, most lying—and in one word, every vice!"

So the valiant Lombard, having bought with the dearest price, his blood, the whole valley of the Po (or, as Dante calls it, "the valley between the seas"), he fixed his government within that sacred pale, and thence, as from a home, scattered about his outposts, from the Alps to Calabria, with the sternest resolution to profit by the warning, and not vitiate his own vital stream by mingling it with that of a degenerate breed; and for years did that reluctance continue; and the Lombards went on increasing, and the Romans diminishing, until nearly or quite extinct about the Milanese, or with slender exceptions, slaves; not a single native proprietor there, but, if he survived, expatriated; every acre of that whole tract of country became exclusively Lombard property. Yet, even these proudest, most intrepid of Northmen, little by little, lost some part of their attachment to those



constitutional liberties which they had brought with them from Scandinavia, common heirloom from the illustrious Goth, whose legal freedom was the product of his own virtuous, unbiassed will.

It might be chiefly from having had no wars but with Greeks and Italians; and still worse during peace, the effeminate habits of pampered Italy had full opportunity to eat into and corrode their souls. Thus, the coming of Charlemagne, at another plaintive invitation, from mildness that too easily deigned acceding to his people's wishes (they, not the Pontiff, being the real abject petitioners), put an end to the first (and perhaps only purely) Lombard kingdom. Scarcely more survived of it than its iron crown, and the name of Lombardy—name that in itself is a perpetual triumphal gate, proclaiming to all ages that there the Northman has a patrimonial right for ever. How, but through him, and him alone, can be proved a judicial title to any particle of that land?

Italians may consider the advent of Charlemagne to be a new barbaric irruption, if they will, but they had asked for it! and moreover they had already rejected freedom, which had been brought into their country twice (both by Ostrogoths and Lombards); so proved themselves unworthy of better than despotism. For the most part cut to

pieces, but whatever remained of the Lombards, even in that extremity, had only taken one of his sons for king ; but a vile populace at Rome, quite voluntarily, and without Charlemagne's requiring it, saluted him Emperor; so above all kings. What could the Lombards, but assent, and rejoice that the lot had fallen at least upon a truly great man?

The worthless electors, far from appreciating his merits, would have huzzaed for a Nero just the same. But Charlemagne was in advance of his age. If a thicker darkness than ever, came over Europe after his death, that is no fault of his, nor of his family, that reigned for about seventy-three years after him, so that his dynasty closed in A.D. 888. The Italians have no one to accuse but themselves, if they profaned the sun of Christianity, and by their wickedness contrived to turn its good into evil; or neglected freedom, then abused, and at length suffocated. Universal influence, as both legislator and warrior, was Charlemagne's during his whole long reign; nor thus alone, but for nearly a century it decorated and kept life and sovereign power in his line after him, in spite of their inferiority of talent; and surely that is more than can be said of other noted conquerors.

Italy has always been a divided country, save a

few uncertain years when a crumb of the Roman Empire ; and this is so true, that it is apparent from its geographical form, *à priori*, by a look on the mere map, without opening a page of its annals ; for a long narrow slip of land, cut by mountains and rivers, cannot but comprehend various climates and national distinctions, in which neither language nor religion could be a nationality, since difference in dialect is more observable than any uniformity of written formula ; and did creed suffice, then Spain, Italy, France, Portugal, and others, would be one nation.

But truth is, neither language nor religion ever formed a nationality—nor ever will ; they may be characteristics of a nation ; which however can change both, without for that ceasing to be a nation. And all the experience of history leads to the same conclusion. The oldest accounts of Italy (from those faint earliest glimpses where historic authenticity begins) find five distinct people there, speaking various distinct languages, which with the numerous dialects of the aborigines (none know who those aborigines were), and a large majority of words of Æolic (forefathers of Greek), winnowed by the Etruscans, formed that exquisite *olla podrida*, Latin.

As late as Julius Cæsar the Italian province went

no further than Rimini. All immediately north of it was called, not Italia, but Gallia. The more split into independencies, the more free in her case; of which lasting truth the Italian Republics were only dazzling instances. The exception would be while under one harsh yoke of transient servitude—which might include other nations equally well. Therefore the lower Lombards (as we say lower empire) did nothing but follow the usages of the country, when, after waiting twenty years, and no sovereign appearing with the authority of any proper election, they divided themselves into thirty independent duchies all through Italy—one at Spoleto, another at Benevento—crown and name in Lombardy might shadow forth the defunct Lombard kingdom; but in conformity with existing things, they too assumed feudalism.

Sismondi does not draw as marked a separation as desirable between the Gothic or constitutional system and the feudal. The former perished with the primitive Lombards, like the Visigothic Cortes. These limpid and fresh from the northern source, were too excellent for the vicious south. Such ask purer disciples.

The feudal system led directly to absolute monarchy in Spain and elsewhere, and in Italy to the death of freedom as well, in the end; though indi-

rectly, after that hysteric struggle, her Republics of the middle ages. Yes, feudalism was a modification unhappily made towards brute force.

From feudalism to despotism nothing but a stepping-stone were the Republics—half of whose citizens were generally in exile for years or life. Their substance confiscated, their houses sacked or demolished. Did not Florence deprive herself of her best and most distinguished individuals? Dante and Petrarch, where did they leave their bones? Dante was condemned to be burnt to death if caught; yet he had committed nothing deserving of any punishment. I mention it, because Italian historians leave it out.

Florence since she has had the grace to be ashamed of it, tries to hide it. So even late writers doubt or forget it. Yet it is a certain fact. The original sentence exists still. It is too atrocious for silence. All mankind are interested not to permit forgetting an example of to what crimes party can climb. But that way lies digression to lose ourselves. Back to the tenth century.

After the edict of Constantinople had been formally disobeyed by Rome, also Ravenna and its entire exarchate did the same, and nothing remained to the Greek in Italy except some towns in Magna Grecia. As early as 833 had the Popes fortified

Ostia against the African buccanneers who tried to profit by Charlemagne's death. It is an assured fact that the Popes became temporal powers immediately on the fall of the Roman Empire, and during the period of many ages took every opportunity of being useful to Italy.

Nor in a Pope's lifetime—he being dependent on the Emperor only—was Rome in a bad state ; but when conclaves occurred, then indeed were the Romans delivered over to the most unsparing slavery—that of their own oligarchs, which bitter irony chose to denominate freedom. Which circumstance contributed, with a variety of others, to render the Papacy popular. Whenever Popes and Emperors agreed (which was rarely), it was not at all against liberty, but against the lowest servitude, to which the barons reduced their townsmen as long as they could spin out the *sede vacante*, or some violent sedition. The Romans used thus to pass from fawning on some blaspheming patricians, hard or impossible to be pleased, to bend somewhat less to the priesthood ; for religious feelings might soften the Wolsey, but nothing the domineering outlaw.

Dante in his "Monarchia" endeavoured to distinguish the temporal from spiritual ; but if it was feasible in his time, it was not so in the three preceding centuries ; for then it was a universal

practice to jumble them together. Mahometan freebooters erected a sort of temporary colony at Naples, and besieged Gaeta in 846, but were driven off.

Amalphi declared its independence in 839; but unfortunately the discoveries for which it has been given immortal credit, are all three unfounded; for the mariner's compass was certainly discovered long before; some say was known to the Etruscans previous to the founding of Rome; others in the fourth century of our era; the Pandects, too, if in any event those laws merit the honour of having their discovery applauded or inquired into by a lover of freedom; and as for the sea code, Oleron and Sweden are tough antagonists.

In 924, on intelligence reaching the Emperor Berenger, then on a visit in Verona, that an Italian nobleman of this name was plotting against his life, he had the generosity to send for the accused, and in private audience at supper told, and pardoned him his enormous crime; and, taking up a golden goblet, handed it to him, and said, "Let this be an emblem between us of the sincerity both of my forgiveness and of your repentance; accept it, and remember that your emperor is your son's god-father." And the next morning, when secure from a numerous accompaniment, this same

count, meeting that emperor alone in the street, rushed at and stabbed him; and after the murder, walked off triumphing and surrounded by friends. The German, who related that to the succeeding emperor, generalised overmuch in adding, "Such were the Italians some years ago, and such are they likely to continue for a long time yet." After so shocking a lesson, it is not astonishing that Otho (deservedly called the Great) should be rather severe in his first excursion to Pavia, to be crowned with the iron crown; and on his return into Germany, before the diet, he saw a King of Italy, and son, present themselves as inferiors, to do him homage; and after doing so, they went back to reign there under his imperial protection; and Otho, again at Pavia, and re-crowned, proceeded thence to Rome, where he received the imperial diadem.

Let people then talk as they please, there are ancient precedents and long-established rights for such coronations. Moreover, it is to the emperors that the Italians owe all their subsequent liberties. This union of German and Italian destinies is what has saved both. Yet the Germans might perhaps have sufficed for themselves, but the Italians, assuredly not. Ideas imported from the north, were dear to even the latest accents of liberty in



Italy. But from feudalism, easy was the stride to despotism, which, within a few years, was to reign over the whole European continent.

Rude were the manners then; man and wife ate off the same trencher; a few wooden-handled knives, with blades of rugged iron, were a luxury for the great; candles unknown. A servant girl held a torch at supper; one, or at most, two mugs of coarse brown earthenware formed all the drinking apparatus in a house. Rich gentlemen wore clothes of unlined leather. Ordinary persons scarcely ever touched flesh meat. Noble mansions drank little or no wine in summer; a little corn seemed wealth. Women had trivial marriage portions; even ladies dressed extremely plain. The chief part of a family's expense was what the males spent in arms and horses, none of which however were either very good or very showy; and grandees had to lay out money on their lofty towers. In Dante's comparatively polished times, ladies began to paint their cheeks by way of finery, going to the theatre, and to use less assiduity in spinning and plying their distaff. What is only a symptom of prosperity in large, is the sure sign of ruin in small states. So in Florence he might very well deplore, what in London or Paris would be to praise, or cause a smile. Wretchedly indeed

plebeians hovelled ; and if noble castles were cold, dark, and dreary everywhere, they were infinitely worse in Italy, from the horrible modes of torture ; characteristic cruelty, too frightful to dwell on. Few of the infamous structures, built at the times treated of, stand at present. Yet their ruins disclose rueful corners. As to cathedrals, the age for them, though at hand, had scarcely come in the tenth or eleventh century ; and when it did, it was simultaneously in Italy, England, France, and Germany.

If algebra was known in Italy in the tenth century (which might easily be, from the Moors), it was kept secret there for three hundred years ; not intentionally, it is said, but simply because the Italians were not aware of what an important thing they had. The archives of all the towns of Italy, before Barbarossa, having perished, leaves many matters obscure, which probably (as is to be wished) little deserve being known. Even when the Italian cities, without being exactly independent, appeared so, was it not that the emperors were too busy at home to march across the Alps to prevent them ? For though often independent *in fact*, they always acknowledged *in theory* that the emperor was their sovereign. It was only worse, before the Popes and popular party took the name

of Guelph, and the Imperialists that of Ghibelline. Barbarossa's was a time of cruel civil dissensions; and the story of *non tibi sed Petro* is utterly and decidedly false, though still is shown with pride at Venice the spot on which it occurred; and not unforgiving traitors, but stout-hearted patriots are they who never pardoned Barbarossa's line, though they had sworn it; but, in spite of having made a reconciliation with the uncle, never let any opportunity escape of making war on his nephew.

The spirit of chivalry, which was called the glorious inheritance of feudalism, in other lands, was reduced by the Italians to its real philosophic value; and on their disbanding their own armies, and taking the habit of carrying on their wars by their neighbours, cunning was to succeed in esteem to courage; and if several men of talent were to signalize Guicciardini's period, yet these were to act rather from calculation, than heroism or passion; from self-interest, not sentiment. That the Venetians were Italians at all, is denied by the best authority, Dante; not in his poetry, but in his worn-out day of fullest wisdom, in plain, cogent, diplomatic prose, probably the last lines he ever wrote.

How different from the Visigoths! The Lombard Latin was found by Sismondi so barbarous as

frequently to be quite illegible. And it is true of the lower Lombard, that if he conferred unlimited independence on all his citizens, he denied any whatever to those he held unworthy of being admitted into his citizenship. Regarding the Normans, why not rather sympathize with their matchless valour, than with the paltry natives, who, to clear their home from robbers and pirates, were obliged to have recourse to a handful of strangers? Not satisfied with Puglia and Calabria, and the honour of having put two emperors (both the western and eastern) to flight, Guiscard undertook to become Emperor of Constantinople himself; and, on his way, died in Cephalaria in 1085. Beginning with him, and ending with the Vespers, is it not all over? Who cares any more for Magna Grecia or Sicily? The brilliant Norman phantasmagoria has nothing in common with the lands in which it passes. But to all similar, farewell! and to philosophy, Christianity, or any religion, or anything of humanity, farewell the whole of you! Here resounds the shriek of shrieks! Here comes the king of unutterable terrors—Attila.

Illiterate, direst of savages, as yet buried in all the grossness of idolatry, reckless of every human tie or obligation, or pain or pleasure, here are the Huns who through Hungary, Bulgaria, Sclavonia,

Croatia, or whatever other devastated regions, have left one long line to track their whole road from the Scythian wilderness. Nothing of the Goth, but the very reverse (though by a casualty in some degrees contemporaries in time, but not in the least countrymen), wild, ferocious monsters who delight in creating antipathy and horror; and therefore have no objection at all to learn they are not reputed human, but vulgarly a cross between a necromancer and a she-wolf, or to pass for Gog and Magog, precursors of the day of judgment. How convey even the remotest idea of the deadly dismay and despair they caused? Every unfortified town, from Switzerland to the most southern extremity of Italy, was sacked first—then the whole of its population butchered—finally the walls and houses were all gutted and pulled down; and, the entire of its work effectually done, onward moved the hurricane! Destruction appeared their only desire! Everywhere was their passage marked by the clearest evidence, fuming ruins, property of all kinds utterly destroyed and dilapidated, and corpses all naked, and lakes of blood. But if, like the plague, nothing could stop them anywhere, they settled nowhere. And soon returned into Croatia, or beyond it, as they had come.

The first irruption of Huns was in 900; but

there were many during the two next centuries. When will there be another? And those who put that usual question shuddered, no one but shuddered. Until then, several Italian gentlemen and all the peasantry lived in the country; and the small towns were mostly unwalled. But from that hour every town was strongly walled, and every human creature slept within a town. The peasant went to work in the fields by day, but at sunset he had to seek refuge with his family within some town. Agriculture in such cases must go to ruin. *Patience! Jesu Maria!* from the sword of the Huns—*libera nos, Domine!* what a frightful litany, from Como to Otranto! And the bells never stopped ringing, as long as there were any; when the toll ceased, it was sure the Huns were there at work, and that the poor steeple would lie on the ground in a few minutes. Nor was it enough, but there were various other spoilers, all worthy of each other! Nor idolators only, but the Saracen heathens!

These last ravaging, not Naples alone, or Sicily, but likewise Piedmont, where a party of twenty of them drove all the Piedmontese before them; such terror breathed from the victors, so panic stricken the vanquished! not a captain in all Italy had the boldness to face either Huns or Saracens! And these both had the same way of making war.

Nothing but light cavalry, in small squadrons, without trying to make conquests. Not wishing to fight, but plunder and murder, they did what was consistent with those deeds of massacre to avoid their foe.

Though Huns and Saracens in their inroads often met, they never fought with each other. But seemed friends, and soon found out they were relations; for both Huns and Turks were Scythians, and once one people, they said; right proud of their mutual ugliness, and that they passed for looking more like wild beasts than the hideous negroes, or any kind of men. Now what deduce, but that Italy would rejoice for any change and think it an escape? What not preferable to such actual nudity and wretchedness—fear for the future that is close and impending—and horror at the past? If the Pope joins the cry, well; and his popularity, which is already great, will increase. He who has been always ready to assist her in her distress, will he hesitate now? Will the Papacy be but for the first time blind to such an extraordinary crisis, nor listen to the public voice? Merciful evermore, and just, and politic, will she not, at present also, side with the people—her own woe-begone people?

Who had repelled two dreadful attacks of the Arabs, and kept off all the believers in Mahomet

during their three first centuries (sternness of the Damascan Omyades, munificence of the Abassides) Constantinople had now a harder task. The author of the Koran himself, when weak, had recommended patience to his disciples; when stronger, to defend themselves if assailed; when powerful, the Koran or the sword. Yet such trying periods had passed away; and even the cruelty of the Fatimites ceased to be dangerous, and had been reduced to a remote sound. The last of the Caliphs at Bagdad died in 940 A.D.

But about a hundred years later appeared a far more ferocious race than the Prophet had ever dreamt of, the Turks vomited forth from the Scythian wilderness! These who, during their idolatry, had been the worst enemies of Islamism, finished by becoming Mussulmen, and, as such, overran India, Persia, all Syria, Mesopotamia, part of Africa, and the whole of Asia Minor; and were now only stopped by the sea facing the Greek metropolis, which when it ceases to be the bulwark, must become the road to Europe. A sound of reverential was in the Roman name, even to Turkish ears, as vaguely designating something superior to Constantinople; for when their sultan settled in Iconium, he called his kingdom Roum, as well as when he removed his capital to Nice, as nearer the prey on which he



gloated. A very brief though glorious struggle had been made by Eastern Christians; but in 1071 unfortunate Byzantium had its frightful assailants within sight, howling horribly along its suburban Asiatic coast—protected from them by that narrow slip of water alone.

But why not a few glimpses back into that long period? When St. Gregory, early in 600 A.D., objected to the Constantinopolitan Patriarch's being styled the universal bishop, as an antichristian title; was it not that he considered it misapplied, not as bad in itself—as applicable solely to the Pope *de jure*, though not then perhaps strong enough to wear it *de facto*; but not to the Patriarch under any circumstances? Was not this St. Gregory's tacit meaning, whether others think it an unfair pretension or not? Not to any Greek Emperor, but to Charlemagne, Haroun el Rascid sent the keys of the Holy Sepulchre, showing that, in the Moslem's opinion, the Emperor of the West, or France, is the natural protector of Palestine, and not the Greek; and however it has been since, so it was in that olden time. And thus all the nations of Christian Europe were comprised in the term *Franks*; although certainly the chief part of the population of both Constantinople and Jerusalem, were at that time Greeks, nearly as they are at present.

France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Prussia, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, formed the vast empire of the West; and like it was the Mahometan of many nations, from the Nile to the Indus. Nor was religion an impediment; for Charlemagne crossed the Pyrenees to assist an Islamite Emir who had asked for his protection; nor Haroun el Rascid was without Christian subjects in numbers, Nestorians, Jacobites, Greeks, and Roman Catholics, and others; whence a liberal toleration was quite as necessary to him as to Charlemagne, as they no doubt both felt.

As soon as the forty-sixth year of Mahometanism, the Arabs had besieged Constantinople; and in 718 the same, without success, principally from the Greek fire, the destructive discovery of a Syrian or Egyptian, who deserted to the Greeks, bringing his secret with him; since which, these crafty Christians kept hidden the way of making it. It was a matter of conscience, a revelation from Heaven. Prince and subject, each religiously bound not to divulge the saving mystery. Grand in the extreme was the Grecian Court—its Varangian guards, famous for their splendid costume, and lofty size, and undaunted fidelity, were all Danes, Norwegians, or English. Its Emperor was the first slave of the ceremonial he so rigidly ordained; his every

word and gesture regulated both in his palace and country house. This worse than monkish severity of life, and that few of his rank ever died a natural death, but that murders and conspiracies were of nightly occurrence within the imperial residence, endears the more the lot of a private citizen.

Strange, too, the destiny that forces its historian to avow that, in spite of its multitudes of law-doctors and libraries, and all its scientific and literary establishments, not one discovery was ever made at Constantinople, during a period of a thousand years, in favour of the dignity or happiness of man, "nor a single idea added to the speculations of antiquity." Even then ran the prophecy that *in the last days* barbarians should take Constantinople, which Mr. Gibbon calls "an unambiguous and unquestionable date," and which, it appears, has not been supposed executed by Mahomet (though I thought so, or might have), but stands good still with most persevering superstition.

The Magna Grecia of Pythagoras, which had been rich and full of free cities, and great artists and philosophers, had dwindled into poverty and its usual concomitants, ignorance and superstitious habits, when the Normans lifted it for a short time in the ninth century; but now in the eleventh, it had returned again into terror and obscurity.

What could oppose the torrent rushing forward? Not Arabs are they, or any of the milder and more civilized Moslem; but the Turks, Turcomans, or Seljukides, as some call them, from one of their chiefs of the name of Seljuk, the wildest of the savages of Turkestan, that region of Scythia which stretches northward from the Caspian in one frightful waste, that only terminates with the Polar Sea. Nor will they recede; but as they already had mastered India and Persia, and the Caliphs, they at present pouring destruction on Asia Minor, are to do the same with Constantinople at last, and all Greece.

In Hindostan it was a Turk that surpassed the conquests of Alexander, and the title of Sultan was invented about 1000 A.D. for him; whom a wilder tribe of his own countrymen soon vanquished. He had invited them with suspicion, but was not suspicious enough. Nor after that could the Tigris, or Euphrates, or Nile stay them; nor the Persian mountains, nor Taurus. Had they not passed the snowy Caucasus and the eternal Imäus? A Togrul from the throne of Darius sent a messenger to the Emperor of Constantinople, to require tribute and obedience. To Togrul succeeded his nephew, Alp-Arslan, who found some resistance from the unfortunate but heroic Romanus; not unworthy of the Empire of the East—nor of his French allies,

and Norman and Scotch. Some brave hearts, deserving to be called Grecians, were to be found to the last, in the city of Constantine—not only its final Christian Emperor, who expired as became him—but likewise the captive, Romanus. “What treatment do you expect?” asked Alp-Arslan. “If cruel, you will torture me to death,” replied the dauntless sovereign. “If proud, you will drag me at your horse’s heels. If avaricious, you will put a price on my liberty!” “And what would you have done with me?” subjoined the victorious Scythian. “Ah! I would have got you scourged finely,” outburst the fearless and indignant Emperor. On which the Turk smiled; and muttering about the Christian law prescribing mercy, ordained that the champion of the Cross should that instant be set free, and peace established, on the promise that an immense sum should be paid for his ransom and a large annual tribute, with an intermarriage between the Turkish and Imperial houses, and freedom for every Mahometan in the hands of the Greeks.

This agreement, hard as it was, the mournful prisoner had to sign; and disheartening it is to be obliged to add that his subjects refused to pay his ransom, but left him to pine an exile, and as such deposed, and—as far as was in them—dishonoured

him. And though upon these tidings, his liberator did not withdraw the boon he had already given, but pitied him and pardoned the ransom, Romanus died almost immediately, and the generous savage was assassinated in Transoxiana some months later in the same year, 1072. After him came his son, and then his grandson, Malek-Sha; of whose three younger brothers, one had the Persian province of Kerman; another, Syria; and the third, Asia Minor, which quickly slipped from him; and, to avoid a civil war, he was obliged to cede it to his cousin Solyman, whose kingdom of Roum extended from the Euphrates to the Bosphorus. In this manner, Solyman and his heir apparent, Kislig-Arslan, were the tremendous lords of the inhuman hordes that, towards the close of the eleventh century, crowded all along the Asiatic edge of the cerulean tide that bathes the walls of Constantinople.

A voice of woful entreaty had been directed to the West. But conscious of their having never been friendly but in times of trouble, of their own frequent ingratitude, and former exaggerations, the Greeks asked themselves whether it would be heard now? Or even so, would it not be too late? This very evening one of the Turks could be seen putting down his foot towards the waves; but he

drew it back scowling towards us, as if between dread and desire; fortunately they are without a single boat—but who knows what curious contrivance they may discover? Who at sunset can tell but long before sunrise they will have got across the straits somewhere? And then we have no resource, but are lost, utterly lost and undone! Murmuring and conspiring, the unhappy, but garrulous and dissolute Greeks, pushed to it by the extremity of their despair, supplicated whom they deeply hated.