

History Of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire

(Volume XIII)

by Edward Gibbon, Esq.

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History Of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire (Vol (10)

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Part V.

In all his public declarations, the emperor Leo assumes the authority, and professes the affection, of a father, for his son Anthemius, with whom he had divided the administration of the universe. The situation, and perhaps the character, of Leo, dissuaded him from exposing his person to the toils and dangers of an African war. But the powers of the Eastern empire were strenuously exerted to deliver Italy and the Mediterranean from the Vandals; and Genseric, who had so long oppressed both the land and sea, was threatened from every side with a formidable invasion. The campaign was opened by a bold and successful enterprise of the praefect Heraclius. The troops of Egypt, Thebais, and Libya, were embarked, under his command; and the Arabs, with a train of horses and camels, opened the roads of the desert. Heraclius landed on the coast of Tripoli, surprised and subdued the cities of that province, and prepared, by a laborious march, which Cato

had formerly executed, to join the Imperial army under the walls of Carthage. The intelligence of this loss extorted from Genseric some insidious and ineffectual propositions of peace; but he was still more seriously alarmed by the reconciliation of Marcellinus with the two empires. The independent patrician had been persuaded to acknowledge the legitimate title of Anthemius, whom he accompanied in his journey to Rome; the Dalmatian fleet was received into the harbors of Italy; the active valor of Marcellinus expelled the Vandals from the Island of Sardinia; and the languid efforts of the West added some weight to the immense preparations of the Eastern Romans. The expense of the naval armament, which Leo sent against the Vandals, has been distinctly ascertained; and the curious and instructive account displays the wealth of the declining empire. The Royal demesnes, or private patrimony of the prince, supplied seventeen thousand pounds of gold; forty seven thousand pounds of gold, and seven hundred thousand of silver, were levied and paid into

the treasury by the Praetorian praefects. But the cities were reduced to extreme poverty; and the diligent calculation of fines and forfeitures, as a valuable object of the revenue, does not suggest the idea of a just or merciful administration. The whole expense, by whatsoever means it was defrayed, of the African campaign, amounted to the sum of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds of gold, about five millions two hundred thousand pounds sterling, at a time when the value of money appears, from the comparative price of corn, to have been somewhat higher than in the present age. The fleet that sailed from Constantinople to Carthage, consisted of eleven hundred and thirteen ships, and the number of soldiers and mariners exceeded one hundred thousand men. Basiliscus, the brother of the empress Vorina, was intrusted with this important command. His sister, the wife of Leo, had exaggerated the merit of his former exploits against the Scythians. But the discovery of his guilt, or incapacity, was reserved for the African war; and his friends could only

save his military reputation by asserting, that he had conspired with Aspar to spare Genseric, and to betray the last hope of the Western empire.

Experience has shown, that the success of an invader most commonly depends on the vigor and celerity of his operations. The strength and sharpness of the first impression are blunted by delay; the health and spirit of the troops insensibly languish in a distant climate; the naval and military force, a mighty effort which perhaps can never be repeated, is silently consumed; and every hour that is wasted in negotiation, accustoms the enemy to contemplate and examine those hostile terrors, which, on their first appearance, he deemed irresistible. The formidable navy of Basiliscus pursued its prosperous navigation from the Thracian Bosphorus to the coast of Africa. He landed his troops at Cape Bona, or the promontory of Mercury, about forty miles from Carthage. The army of Heraclius, and the fleet of Marcellinus, either joined or seconded the Imperial lieutenant; and the Vandals who opposed his progress by

sea or land, were successively vanquished. If Basiliscus had seized the moment of consternation, and boldly advanced to the capital, Carthage must have surrendered, and the kingdom of the Vandals was extinguished. Genseric beheld the danger with firmness, and eluded it with his veteran dexterity. He protested, in the most respectful language, that he was ready to submit his person, and his dominions, to the will of the emperor; but he requested a truce of five days to regulate the terms of his submission; and it was universally believed, that his secret liberality contributed to the success of this public negotiation. Instead of obstinately refusing whatever indulgence his enemy so earnestly solicited, the guilty, or the credulous, Basiliscus consented to the fatal truce; and his imprudent security seemed to proclaim, that he already considered himself as the conqueror of Africa. During this short interval, the wind became favorable to the designs of Genseric. He manned his largest ships of war with the bravest of the Moors and Vandals; and they towed after them many large barks, filled

with combustible materials. In the obscurity of the night, these destructive vessels were impelled against the unguarded and unsuspecting fleet of the Romans, who were awakened by the sense of their instant danger. Their close and crowded order assisted the progress of the fire, which was communicated with rapid and irresistible violence; and the noise of the wind, the crackling of the flames, the dissonant cries of the soldiers and mariners, who could neither command nor obey, increased the horror of the nocturnal tumult. Whilst they labored to extricate themselves from the fire ships, and to save at least a part of the navy, the galleys of Genseric assaulted them with temperate and disciplined valor; and many of the Romans, who escaped the fury of the flames, were destroyed or taken by the victorious Vandals. Among the events of that disastrous night, the heroic, or rather desperate, courage of John, one of the principal officers of Basiliscus, has rescued his name from oblivion. When the ship, which he had bravely defended, was almost consumed,

he threw himself in his armor into the sea, disdainfully rejected the esteem and pity of Genso, the son of Genseric, who pressed him to accept honorable quarter, and sunk under the waves; exclaiming, with his last breath, that he would never fall alive into the hands of those impious dogs. Actuated by a far different spirit, Basiliscus, whose station was the most remote from danger, disgracefully fled in the beginning of the engagement, returned to Constantinople with the loss of more than half of his fleet and army, and sheltered his guilty head in the sanctuary of St. Sophia, till his sister, by her tears and entreaties, could obtain his pardon from the indignant emperor. Heraclius effected his retreat through the desert; Marcellinus retired to Sicily, where he was assassinated, perhaps at the instigation of Ricimer, by one of his own captains; and the king of the Vandals expressed his surprise and satisfaction, that the Romans themselves should remove from the world his most formidable antagonists. After the failure of this great expedition, Genseric again became the

tyrant of the sea: the coasts of Italy, Greece, and Asia, were again exposed to his revenge and avarice; Tripoli and Sardinia returned to his obedience; he added Sicily to the number of his provinces; and before he died, in the fulness of years and of glory, he beheld the final extinction of the empire of the West.

During his long and active reign, the African monarch had studiously cultivated the friendship of the Barbarians of Europe, whose arms he might employ in a seasonable and effectual diversion against the two empires. After the death of Attila, he renewed his alliance with the Visigoths of Gaul; and the sons of the elder Theodoric, who successively reigned over that warlike nation, were easily persuaded, by the sense of interest, to forget the cruel affront which Genseric had inflicted on their sister. The death of the emperor Majorian delivered Theodoric the Second from the restraint of fear, and perhaps of honor; he violated his recent treaty with the Romans; and the ample territory of Narbonne, which he firmly united to his

dominions, became the immediate reward of his perfidy. The selfish policy of Ricimer encouraged him to invade the provinces which were in the possession of Aegidius, his rival; but the active count, by the defence of Arles, and the victory of Orleans, saved Gaul, and checked, during his lifetime, the progress of the Visigoths. Their ambition was soon rekindled; and the design of extinguishing the Roman empire in Spain and Gaul was conceived, and almost completed, in the reign of Euric, who assassinated his brother Theodoric, and displayed, with a more savage temper, superior abilities, both in peace and war. He passed the Pyrenees at the head of a numerous army, subdued the cities of Saragossa and Pampeluna, vanquished in battle the martial nobles of the Tarragonese province, carried his victorious arms into the heart of Lusitania, and permitted the Suevi to hold the kingdom of Gallicia under the Gothic monarchy of Spain. The efforts of Euric were not less vigorous, or less successful, in Gaul; and throughout the country that extends from the Pyrenees to the Rhone and

the Loire, Berry and Auvergne were the only cities, or dioceses, which refused to acknowledge him as their master. In the defence of Clermont, their principal town, the inhabitants of Auvergne sustained, with inflexible resolution, the miseries of war, pestilence, and famine; and the Visigoths, relinquishing the fruitless siege, suspended the hopes of that important conquest. The youth of the province were animated by the heroic, and almost incredible, valor of Ecdicius, the son of the emperor Avitus, who made a desperate sally with only eighteen horsemen, boldly attacked the Gothic army, and, after maintaining a flying skirmish, retired safe and victorious within the walls of Clermont. His charity was equal to his courage: in a time of extreme scarcity, four thousand poor were fed at his expense; and his private influence levied an army of Burgundians for the deliverance of Auvergne. From his virtues alone the faithful citizens of Gaul derived any hopes of safety or freedom; and even such virtues were insufficient to avert the impending ruin of their country,

since they were anxious to learn, from his authority and example, whether they should prefer the alternative of exile or servitude. The public confidence was lost; the resources of the state were exhausted; and the Gauls had too much reason to believe, that Anthemius, who reigned in Italy, was incapable of protecting his distressed subjects beyond the Alps. The feeble emperor could only procure for their defence the service of twelve thousand British auxiliaries. Riothamus, one of the independent kings, or chieftains, of the island, was persuaded to transport his troops to the continent of Gaul: he sailed up the Loire, and established his quarters in Berry, where the people complained of these oppressive allies, till they were destroyed or dispersed by the arms of the Visigoths.

One of the last acts of jurisdiction, which the Roman senate exercised over their subjects of Gaul, was the trial and condemnation of Arvandus, the Praetorian praefect. Sidonius, who rejoices that he lived under a reign in which he might pity and assist a state criminal, has expressed,

with tenderness and freedom, the faults of his indiscreet and unfortunate friend. From the perils which he had escaped, Arvandus imbibed confidence rather than wisdom; and such was the various, though uniform, imprudence of his behavior, that his prosperity must appear much more surprising than his downfall. The second praefecture, which he obtained within the term of five years, abolished the merit and popularity of his preceding administration. His easy temper was corrupted by flattery, and exasperated by opposition; he was forced to satisfy his importunate creditors with the spoils of the province; his capricious insolence offended the nobles of Gaul, and he sunk under the weight of the public hatred. The mandate of his disgrace summoned him to justify his conduct before the senate; and he passed the Sea of Tuscany with a favorable wind, the presage, as he vainly imagined, of his future fortunes. A decent respect was still observed for the Proefectorian rank; and on his arrival at Rome, Arvandus was committed to the hospitality, rather than to the custody, of Flavius Asellus,

the count of the sacred largesses, who resided in the Capitol. He was eagerly pursued by his accusers, the four deputies of Gaul, who were all distinguished by their birth, their dignities, or their eloquence. In the name of a great province, and according to the forms of Roman jurisprudence, they instituted a civil and criminal action, requiring such restitution as might compensate the losses of individuals, and such punishment as might satisfy the justice of the state. Their charges of corrupt oppression were numerous and weighty; but they placed their secret dependence on a letter which they had intercepted, and which they could prove, by the evidence of his secretary, to have been dictated by Arvandus himself. The author of this letter seemed to dissuade the king of the Goths from a peace with the Greek emperor: he suggested the attack of the Britons on the Loire; and he recommended a division of Gaul, according to the law of nations, between the Visigoths and the Burgundians. These pernicious schemes, which a friend could only palliate by the reproaches of

vanity and indiscretion, were susceptible of a treasonable interpretation; and the deputies had artfully resolved not to produce their most formidable weapons till the decisive moment of the contest. But their intentions were discovered by the zeal of Sidonius. He immediately apprised the unsuspecting criminal of his danger; and sincerely lamented, without any mixture of anger, the haughty presumption of Arvandus, who rejected, and even resented, the salutary advice of his friends. Ignorant of his real situation, Arvandus showed himself in the Capitol in the white robe of a candidate, accepted indiscriminate salutations and offers of service, examined the shops of the merchants, the silks and gems, sometimes with the indifference of a spectator, and sometimes with the attention of a purchaser; and complained of the times, of the senate, of the prince, and of the delays of justice. His complaints were soon removed. An early day was fixed for his trial; and Arvandus appeared, with his accusers, before a numerous assembly of the Roman senate. The mournful

garb which they affected, excited the compassion of the judges, who were scandalized by the gay and splendid dress of their adversary: and when the praefect Arvandus, with the first of the Gallic deputies, were directed to take their places on the senatorial benches, the same contrast of pride and modesty was observed in their behavior. In this memorable judgment, which presented a lively image of the old republic, the Gauls exposed, with force and freedom, the grievances of the province; and as soon as the minds of the audience were sufficiently inflamed, they recited the fatal epistle. The obstinacy of Arvandus was founded on the strange supposition, that a subject could not be convicted of treason, unless he had actually conspired to assume the purple. As the paper was read, he repeatedly, and with a loud voice, acknowledged it for his genuine composition; and his astonishment was equal to his dismay, when the unanimous voice of the senate declared him guilty of a capital offence. By their decree, he was degraded from the rank of a praefect to the obscure

condition of a plebeian, and ignominiously dragged by servile hands to the public prison. After a fortnight's adjournment, the senate was again convened to pronounce the sentence of his death; but while he expected, in the Island of Aesculapius, the expiration of the thirty days allowed by an ancient law to the vilest malefactors, his friends interposed, the emperor Anthemius relented, and the praefect of Gaul obtained the milder punishment of exile and confiscation. The faults of Arvandus might deserve compassion; but the impunity of Seronatus accused the justice of the republic, till he was condemned and executed, on the complaint of the people of Auvergne. That flagitious minister, the Catiline of his age and country, held a secret correspondence with the Visigoths, to betray the province which he oppressed: his industry was continually exercised in the discovery of new taxes and obsolete offences; and his extravagant vices would have inspired contempt, if they had not excited fear and abhorrence.

Such criminals were not beyond the reach of justice;

but whatever might be the guilt of Ricimer, that powerful Barbarian was able to contend or to negotiate with the prince, whose alliance he had condescended to accept. The peaceful and prosperous reign which Anthemius had promised to the West, was soon clouded by misfortune and discord. Ricimer, apprehensive, or impatient, of a superior, retired from Rome, and fixed his residence at Milan; an advantageous situation either to invite or to repel the warlike tribes that were seated between the Alps and the Danube. Italy was gradually divided into two independent and hostile kingdoms; and the nobles of Liguria, who trembled at the near approach of a civil war, fell prostrate at the feet of the patrician, and conjured him to spare their unhappy country. "For my own part," replied Ricimer, in a tone of insolent moderation, "I am still inclined to embrace the friendship of the Galatian; but who will undertake to appease his anger, or to mitigate the pride, which always rises in proportion to our submission?" They informed him, that Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, united the

wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove; and appeared confident, that the eloquence of such an ambassador must prevail against the strongest opposition, either of interest or passion. Their recommendation was approved; and Epiphanius, assuming the benevolent office of mediation, proceeded without delay to Rome, where he was received with the honors due to his merit and reputation. The oration of a bishop in favor of peace may be easily supposed; he argued, that, in all possible circumstances, the forgiveness of injuries must be an act of mercy, or magnanimity, or prudence; and he seriously admonished the emperor to avoid a contest with a fierce Barbarian, which might be fatal to himself, and must be ruinous to his dominions. Anthemius acknowledged the truth of his maxims; but he deeply felt, with grief and indignation, the behavior of Ricimer, and his passion gave eloquence and energy to his discourse. "What favors," he warmly exclaimed, "have we refused to this ungrateful man? What provocations have we not endured! Regardless of the

majesty of the purple, I gave my daughter to a Goth; I sacrificed my own blood to the safety of the republic. The liberality which ought to have secured the eternal attachment of Ricimer has exasperated him against his benefactor. What wars has he not excited against the empire! How often has he instigated and assisted the fury of hostile nations!

Shall I now accept his perfidious friendship? Can I hope that he will respect the engagements of a treaty, who has already violated the duties of a son?" But the anger of Anthemius evaporated in these passionate exclamations: he insensibly yielded to the proposals of Epiphanius; and the bishop returned to his diocese with the satisfaction of restoring the peace of Italy, by a reconciliation, of which the sincerity and continuance might be reasonably suspected. The clemency of the emperor was extorted from his weakness; and Ricimer suspended his ambitious designs till he had secretly prepared the engines with which he resolved to subvert the throne of Anthemius. The mask of

peace and moderation was then thrown aside. The army of Ricimer was fortified by a numerous reenforcement of Burgundians and Oriental Suevi: he disclaimed all allegiance to the Greek emperor, marched from Milan to the Gates of Rome, and fixing his camp on the banks of the Anio, impatiently expected the arrival of Olybrius, his Imperial candidate.

The senator Olybrius, of the Anician family, might esteem himself the lawful heir of the Western empire. He had married Placidia, the younger daughter of Valentinian, after she was restored by Genseric; who still detained her sister Eudoxia, as the wife, or rather as the captive, of his son. The king of the Vandals supported, by threats and solicitations, the fair pretensions of his Roman ally; and assigned, as one of the motives of the war, the refusal of the senate and people to acknowledge their lawful prince, and the unworthy preference which they had given to a stranger. The friendship of the public enemy might render Olybrius still more unpopular to the Italians; but when Ricimer

meditated the ruin of the emperor Anthemius, he tempted, with the offer of a diadem, the candidate who could justify his rebellion by an illustrious name and a royal alliance. The husband of Placidia, who, like most of his ancestors, had been invested with the consular dignity, might have continued to enjoy a secure and splendid fortune in the peaceful residence of Constantinople; nor does he appear to have been tormented by such a genius as cannot be amused or occupied, unless by the administration of an empire. Yet Olybrius yielded to the importunities of his friends, perhaps of his wife; rashly plunged into the dangers and calamities of a civil war; and, with the secret connivance of the emperor Leo, accepted the Italian purple, which was bestowed, and resumed, at the capricious will of a Barbarian. He landed without obstacle (for Genseric was master of the sea) either at Ravenna, or the port of Ostia, and immediately proceeded to the camp of Ricimer, where he was received as the sovereign of the Western world.

The patrician, who had extended his posts from the Anio to the Melvian bridge, already possessed two quarters of Rome, the Vatican and the Janiculum, which are separated by the Tyber from the rest of the city; and it may be conjectured, that an assembly of seceding senators imitated, in the choice of Olybrius, the forms of a legal election. But the body of the senate and people firmly adhered to the cause of Anthemius; and the more effectual support of a Gothic army enabled him to prolong his reign, and the public distress, by a resistance of three months, which produced the concomitant evils of famine and pestilence. At length Ricimer made a furious assault on the bridge of Hadrian, or St. Angelo; and the narrow pass was defended with equal valor by the Goths, till the death of Gilimer, their leader. The victorious troops, breaking down every barrier, rushed with irresistible violence into the heart of the city, and Rome (if we may use the language of a contemporary pope) was subverted by the civil fury of Anthemius and Ricimer. The unfortunate Anthemius was

dragged from his concealment, and inhumanly massacred by the command of his son in law; who thus added a third, or perhaps a fourth, emperor to the number of his victims. The soldiers, who united the rage of factious citizens with the savage manners of Barbarians, were indulged, without control, in the license of rapine and murder: the crowd of slaves and plebeians, who were unconcerned in the event, could only gain by the indiscriminate pillage; and the face of the city exhibited the strange contrast of stern cruelty and dissolute intemperance. Forty days after this calamitous event, the subject, not of glory, but of guilt, Italy was delivered, by a painful disease, from the tyrant Ricimer, who bequeathed the command of his army to his nephew Gundobald, one of the princes of the Burgundians. In the same year all the principal actors in this great revolution were removed from the stage; and the whole reign of Olybrius, whose death does not betray any symptoms of violence, is included within the term of seven months. He left one daughter, the offspring of his marriage with

Placidia; and the family of the great Theodosius, transplanted from Spain to Constantinople, was propagated in the female line as far as the eighth generation.

Part VI.

Whilst the vacant throne of Italy was abandoned to lawless Barbarians, the election of a new colleague was seriously agitated in the council of Leo. The empress Verina, studious to promote the greatness of her own family, had married one of her nieces to Julius Nepos, who succeeded his uncle Marcellinus in the sovereignty of Dalmatia, a more solid possession than the title which he was persuaded to accept, of Emperor of the West. But the measures of the Byzantine court were so languid and irresolute, that many months elapsed after the death of Anthemius, and even of Olybrius, before their destined successor could show himself, with a respectable force, to his Italian subjects. During that interval, Glycerius, an

obscure soldier, was invested with the purple by his patron Gundobald; but the Burgundian prince was unable, or unwilling, to support his nomination by a civil war: the pursuits of domestic ambition recalled him beyond the Alps, and his client was permitted to exchange the Roman sceptre for the bishopric of Salona. After extinguishing such a competitor, the emperor Nepos was acknowledged by the senate, by the Italians, and by the provincials of Gaul; his moral virtues, and military talents, were loudly celebrated; and those who derived any private benefit from his government, announced, in prophetic strains, the restoration of the public felicity. Their hopes (if such hopes had been entertained) were confounded within the term of a single year, and the treaty of peace, which ceded Auvergne to the Visigoths, is the only event of his short and inglorious reign. The most faithful subjects of Gaul were sacrificed, by the Italian emperor, to the hope of domestic security; but his repose was soon invaded by a furious sedition of the Barbarian confederates, who, under

the command of Orestes, their general, were in full march from Rome to Ravenna. Nepos trembled at their approach; and, instead of placing a just confidence in the strength of Ravenna, he hastily escaped to his ships, and retired to his Dalmatian principality, on the opposite coast of the Adriatic. By this shameful abdication, he protracted his life about five years, in a very ambiguous state, between an emperor and an exile, till he was assassinated at Salona by the ungrateful Glycerius, who was translated, perhaps as the reward of his crime, to the archbishopric of Milan.

The nations who had asserted their independence after the death of Attila, were established, by the right of possession or conquest, in the boundless countries to the north of the Danube; or in the Roman provinces between the river and the Alps. But the bravest of their youth enlisted in the army of confederates, who formed the defence and the terror of Italy; and in this promiscuous multitude, the names of the Heruli, the Scyrri, the Alani, the Turcilingi, and the Rugians, appear to have predominated.

The example of these warriors was imitated by Orestes, the son of Tatullus, and the father of the last Roman emperor of the West. Orestes, who has been already mentioned in this History, had never deserted his country. His birth and fortunes rendered him one of the most illustrious subjects of Pannonia. When that province was ceded to the Huns, he entered into the service of Attila, his lawful sovereign, obtained the office of his secretary, and was repeatedly sent ambassador to Constantinople, to represent the person, and signify the commands, of the imperious monarch. The death of that conqueror restored him to his freedom; and Orestes might honorably refuse either to follow the sons of Attila into the Scythian desert, or to obey the Ostrogoths, who had usurped the dominion of Pannonia. He preferred the service of the Italian princes, the successors of Valentinian; and as he possessed the qualifications of courage, industry, and experience, he advanced with rapid steps in the military profession, till he was elevated, by the favor of Nepos himself, to the dignities of patrician, and

master general of the troops. These troops had been long accustomed to reverence the character and authority of Orestes, who affected their manners, conversed with them in their own language, and was intimately connected with their national chieftains, by long habits of familiarity and friendship. At his solicitation they rose in arms against the obscure Greek, who presumed to claim their obedience; and when Orestes, from some secret motive, declined the purple, they consented, with the same facility, to acknowledge his son Augustulus as the emperor of the West. By the abdication of Nepos, Orestes had now attained the summit of his ambitious hopes; but he soon discovered, before the end of the first year, that the lessons of perjury and ingratitude, which a rebel must inculcate, will be resorted to against himself; and that the precarious sovereign of Italy was only permitted to choose, whether he would be the slave, or the victim, of his Barbarian mercenaries. The dangerous alliance of these strangers had oppressed and insulted the last remains of Roman freedom

and dignity. At each revolution, their pay and privileges were augmented; but their insolence increased in a still more extravagant degree; they envied the fortune of their brethren in Gaul, Spain, and Africa, whose victorious arms had acquired an independent and perpetual inheritance; and they insisted on their peremptory demand, that a third part of the lands of Italy should be immediately divided among them. Orestes, with a spirit, which, in another situation, might be entitled to our esteem, chose rather to encounter the rage of an armed multitude, than to subscribe the ruin of an innocent people. He rejected the audacious demand; and his refusal was favorable to the ambition of Odoacer; a bold Barbarian, who assured his fellow soldiers, that, if they dared to associate under his command, they might soon extort the justice which had been denied to their dutiful petitions. From all the camps and garrisons of Italy, the confederates, actuated by the same resentment and the same hopes, impatiently flocked to the standard of this popular leader; and the unfortunate

patrician, overwhelmed by the torrent, hastily retreated to the strong city of Pavia, the episcopal seat of the holy Epiphanites. Pavia was immediately besieged, the fortifications were stormed, the town was pillaged; and although the bishop might labor, with much zeal and some success, to save the property of the church, and the chastity of female captives, the tumult could only be appeased by the execution of Orestes. His brother Paul was slain in an action near Ravenna; and the helpless Augustulus, who could no longer command the respect, was reduced to implore the clemency, of Odoacer.

That successful Barbarian was the son of Edecon; who, in some remarkable transactions, particularly described in a preceding chapter, had been the colleague of Orestes himself. The honor of an ambassador should be exempt from suspicion; and Edecon had listened to a conspiracy against the life of his sovereign. But this apparent guilt was expiated by his merit or repentance; his rank was eminent and conspicuous; he enjoyed the favor of Attila; and the

troops under his command, who guarded, in their turn, the royal village, consisted of a tribe of Scyrri, his immediate and hereditary subjects. In the revolt of the nations, they still adhered to the Huns; and more than twelve years afterwards, the name of Edecon is honorably mentioned, in their unequal contests with the Ostrogoths; which was terminated, after two bloody battles, by the defeat and dispersion of the Scyrri. Their gallant leader, who did not survive this national calamity, left two sons, Onulf and Odoacer, to struggle with adversity, and to maintain as they might, by rapine or service, the faithful followers of their exile. Onulf directed his steps towards Constantinople, where he sullied, by the assassination of a generous benefactor, the fame which he had acquired in arms. His brother Odoacer led a wandering life among the Barbarians of Noricum, with a mind and a fortune suited to the most desperate adventures; and when he had fixed his choice, he piously visited the cell of Severinus, the popular saint of the country, to solicit his approbation and blessing.

The lowness of the door would not admit the lofty stature of Odoacer: he was obliged to stoop; but in that humble attitude the saint could discern the symptoms of his future greatness; and addressing him in a prophetic tone, "Pursue" (said he) "your design; proceed to Italy; you will soon cast away this coarse garment of skins; and your wealth will be adequate to the liberality of your mind." The Barbarian, whose daring spirit accepted and ratified the prediction, was admitted into the service of the Western empire, and soon obtained an honorable rank in the guards. His manners were gradually polished, his military skill was improved, and the confederates of Italy would not have elected him for their general, unless the exploits of Odoacer had established a high opinion of his courage and capacity. Their military acclamations saluted him with the title of king; but he abstained, during his whole reign, from the use of the purple and diadem, lest he should offend those princes, whose subjects, by their accidental mixture, had formed the victorious army, which time and policy

might insensibly unite into a great nation.

Royalty was familiar to the Barbarians, and the submissive people of Italy was prepared to obey, without a murmur, the authority which he should condescend to exercise as the viceroy of the emperor of the West. But Odoacer had resolved to abolish that useless and expensive office; and such is the weight of antique prejudice, that it required some boldness and penetration to discover the extreme facility of the enterprise. The unfortunate Augustulus was made the instrument of his own disgrace: he signified his resignation to the senate; and that assembly, in their last act of obedience to a Roman prince, still affected the spirit of freedom, and the forms of the constitution. An epistle was addressed, by their unanimous decree, to the emperor Zeno, the son in law and successor of Leo; who had lately been restored, after a short rebellion, to the Byzantine throne. They solemnly "disclaim the necessity, or even the wish, of continuing any longer the Imperial succession in Italy; since, in their

opinion, the majesty of a sole monarch is sufficient to pervade and protect, at the same time, both the East and the West. In their own name, and in the name of the people, they consent that the seat of universal empire shall be transferred from Rome to Constantinople; and they basely renounce the right of choosing their master, the only vestige that yet remained of the authority which had given laws to the world. The republic (they repeat that name without a blush) might safely confide in the civil and military virtues of Odoacer; and they humbly request, that the emperor would invest him with the title of Patrician, and the administration of the diocese of Italy." The deputies of the senate were received at Constantinople with some marks of displeasure and indignation: and when they were admitted to the audience of Zeno, he sternly reproached them with their treatment of the two emperors, Anthemius and Nepos, whom the East had successively granted to the prayers of Italy. "The first" (continued he) "you have murdered; the second you have expelled; but the

second is still alive, and whilst he lives he is your lawful sovereign." But the prudent Zeno soon deserted the hopeless cause of his abdicated colleague. His vanity was gratified by the title of sole emperor, and by the statues erected to his honor in the several quarters of Rome; he entertained a friendly, though ambiguous, correspondence with the patrician Odoacer; and he gratefully accepted the Imperial ensigns, the sacred ornaments of the throne and palace, which the Barbarian was not unwilling to remove from the sight of the people.

In the space of twenty years since the death of Valentinian, nine emperors had successively disappeared; and the son of Orestes, a youth recommended only by his beauty, would be the least entitled to the notice of posterity, if his reign, which was marked by the extinction of the Roman empire in the West, did not leave a memorable era in the history of mankind. The patrician Orestes had married the daughter of Count Romulus, of Petovio in Noricum: the name of Augustus, notwithstanding

the jealousy of power, was known at Aquileia as a familiar surname; and the appellations of the two great founders, of the city and of the monarchy, were thus strangely united in the last of their successors. The son of Orestes assumed and disgraced the names of Romulus Augustus; but the first was corrupted into Momyllus, by the Greeks, and the second has been changed by the Latins into the contemptible diminutive Augustulus. The life of this inoffensive youth was spared by the generous clemency of Odoacer; who dismissed him, with his whole family, from the Imperial palace, fixed his annual allowance at six thousand pieces of gold, and assigned the castle of Lucullus, in Campania, for the place of his exile or retirement. As soon as the Romans breathed from the toils of the Punic war, they were attracted by the beauties and the pleasures of Campania; and the country house of the elder Scipio at Liternum exhibited a lasting model of their rustic simplicity. The delicious shores of the Bay of Naples were crowded with villas; and Sylla applauded the masterly skill of his rival,

who had seated himself on the lofty promontory of Misenum, that commands, on every side, the sea and land, as far as the boundaries of the horizon. The villa of Marius was purchased, within a few years, by Lucullus, and the price had increased from two thousand five hundred, to more than fourscore thousand, pounds sterling. It was adorned by the new proprietor with Grecian arts and Asiatic treasures; and the houses and gardens of Lucullus obtained a distinguished rank in the list of Imperial palaces. When the Vandals became formidable to the sea coast, the Lucullan villa, on the promontory of Misenum, gradually assumed the strength and appellation of a strong castle, the obscure retreat of the last emperor of the West. About twenty years after that great revolution, it was converted into a church and monastery, to receive the bones of St. Severinus. They securely reposed, amidst the broken trophies of Cimbric and Armenian victories, till the beginning of the tenth century; when the fortifications, which might afford a dangerous shelter to the Saracens,

were demolished by the people of Naples.

Odoacer was the first Barbarian who reigned in Italy, over a people who had once asserted their just superiority above the rest of mankind. The disgrace of the Romans still excites our respectful compassion, and we fondly sympathize with the imaginary grief and indignation of their degenerate posterity. But the calamities of Italy had gradually subdued the proud consciousness of freedom and glory. In the age of Roman virtue the provinces were subject to the arms, and the citizens to the laws, of the republic; till those laws were subverted by civil discord, and both the city and the province became the servile property of a tyrant. The forms of the constitution, which alleviated or disguised their abject slavery, were abolished by time and violence; the Italians alternately lamented the presence or the absence of the sovereign, whom they detested or despised; and the succession of five centuries inflicted the various evils of military license, capricious despotism, and elaborate oppression. During the

same period, the Barbarians had emerged from obscurity and contempt, and the warriors of Germany and Scythia were introduced into the provinces, as the servants, the allies, and at length the masters, of the Romans, whom they insulted or protected. The hatred of the people was suppressed by fear; they respected the spirit and splendor of the martial chiefs who were invested with the honors of the empire; and the fate of Rome had long depended on the sword of those formidable strangers. The stern Ricimer, who trampled on the ruins of Italy, had exercised the power, without assuming the title, of a king; and the patient Romans were insensibly prepared to acknowledge the royalty of Odoacer and his Barbaric successors. The king of Italy was not unworthy of the high station to which his valor and fortune had exalted him: his savage manners were polished by the habits of conversation; and he respected, though a conqueror and a Barbarian, the institutions, and even the prejudices, of his subjects. After an interval of seven years, Odoacer restored the consulship

of the West. For himself, he modestly, or proudly, declined an honor which was still accepted by the emperors of the East; but the curule chair was successively filled by eleven of the most illustrious senators; and the list is adorned by the respectable name of Basilius, whose virtues claimed the friendship and grateful applause of Sidonius, his client. The laws of the emperors were strictly enforced, and the civil administration of Italy was still exercised by the Praetorian praefect and his subordinate officers. Odoacer devolved on the Roman magistrates the odious and oppressive task of collecting the public revenue; but he reserved for himself the merit of seasonable and popular indulgence. Like the rest of the Barbarians, he had been instructed in the Arian heresy; but he revered the monastic and episcopal characters; and the silence of the Catholics attest the toleration which they enjoyed. The peace of the city required the interposition of his praefect Basilius in the choice of a Roman pontiff: the decree which restrained the clergy from alienating their lands was ultimately designed

for the benefit of the people, whose devotions would have been taxed to repair the dilapidations of the church. Italy was protected by the arms of its conqueror; and its frontiers were respected by the Barbarians of Gaul and Germany, who had so long insulted the feeble race of Theodosius. Odoacer passed the Adriatic, to chastise the assassins of the emperor Nepos, and to acquire the maritime province of Dalmatia. He passed the Alps, to rescue the remains of Noricum from Fava, or Feletheus, king of the Rugians, who held his residence beyond the Danube. The king was vanquished in battle, and led away prisoner; a numerous colony of captives and subjects was transplanted into Italy; and Rome, after a long period of defeat and disgrace, might claim the triumph of her Barbarian master.

Notwithstanding the prudence and success of Odoacer, his kingdom exhibited the sad prospect of misery and desolation. Since the age of Tiberius, the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy; and it was a just subject of complaint, that the life of the Roman people depended on

the accidents of the winds and waves. In the division and the decline of the empire, the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, famine, and pestilence. St. Ambrose has deplored the ruin of a populous district, which had been once adorned with the flourishing cities of Bologna, Modena, Regium, and Placentia. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer; and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that in Aemilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated. The plebeians of Rome, who were fed by the hand of their master, perished or disappeared, as soon as his liberality was suppressed; the decline of the arts reduced the industrious mechanic to idleness and want; and the senators, who might support with patience the ruin of their country, bewailed their private loss of wealth and luxury. One third of those ample estates, to which the ruin of Italy is originally imputed, was extorted for the use of

the conquerors. Injuries were aggravated by insults; the sense of actual sufferings was imbibed by the fear of more dreadful evils; and as new lands were allotted to the new swarms of Barbarians, each senator was apprehensive lest the arbitrary surveyors should approach his favorite villa, or his most profitable farm. The least unfortunate were those who submitted without a murmur to the power which it was impossible to resist. Since they desired to live, they owed some gratitude to the tyrant who had spared their lives; and since he was the absolute master of their fortunes, the portion which he left must be accepted as his pure and voluntary gift. The distress of Italy! was mitigated by the prudence and humanity of Odoacer, who had bound himself, as the price of his elevation, to satisfy the demands of a licentious and turbulent multitude. The kings of the Barbarians were frequently resisted, deposed, or murdered, by their native subjects, and the various bands of Italian mercenaries, who associated under the standard of an elective general, claimed a larger privilege of freedom and

rapine. A monarchy destitute of national union, and hereditary right, hastened to its dissolution. After a reign of fourteen years, Odoacer was oppressed by the superior genius of Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths; a hero alike excellent in the arts of war and of government, who restored an age of peace and prosperity, and whose name still excites and deserves the attention of mankind.

Chapter XXXVII: Conversion Of The Barbarians To Christianity.

Part I.

Origin Progress, And Effects Of The Monastic Life.
Conversion Of The Barbarians To Christianity And
Arianism. Persecution Of The Vandals In Africa. Extinction
Of Arianism Among The Barbarians.

The indissoluble connection of civil and ecclesiastical affairs has compelled, and encouraged, me to relate the progress, the persecutions, the establishment, the

divisions, the final triumph, and the gradual corruption, of Christianity. I have purposely delayed the consideration of two religious events, interesting in the study of human nature, and important in the decline and fall of the Roman empire. I. The institution of the monastic life; and, II. The conversion of the northern Barbarians.

I. Prosperity and peace introduced the distinction of the vulgar and the Ascetic Christians. The loose and imperfect practice of religion satisfied the conscience of the multitude. The prince or magistrate, the soldier or merchant, reconciled their fervent zeal, and implicit faith, with the exercise of their profession, the pursuit of their interest, and the indulgence of their passions: but the Ascetics, who obeyed and abused the rigid precepts of the gospel, were inspired by the savage enthusiasm which represents man as a criminal, and God as a tyrant. They seriously renounced the business, and the pleasures, of the age; abjured the use of wine, of flesh, and of marriage; chastised their body, mortified their affections, and embraced a life of misery, as

the price of eternal happiness. In the reign of Constantine, the Ascetics fled from a profane and degenerate world, to perpetual solitude, or religious society. Like the first Christians of Jerusalem, they resigned the use, or the property of their temporal possessions; established regular communities of the same sex, and a similar disposition; and assumed the names of Hermits, Monks, and Anachorets, expressive of their lonely retreat in a natural or artificial desert. They soon acquired the respect of the world, which they despised; and the loudest applause was bestowed on this Divine Philosophy, which surpassed, without the aid of science or reason, the laborious virtues of the Grecian schools. The monks might indeed contend with the Stoics, in the contempt of fortune, of pain, and of death: the Pythagorean silence and submission were revived in their servile discipline; and they disdained, as firmly as the Cynics themselves, all the forms and decencies of civil society. But the votaries of this Divine Philosophy aspired to imitate a purer and more perfect model. They trod in the

footsteps of the prophets, who had retired to the desert; and they restored the devout and contemplative life, which had been instituted by the Essenians, in Palestine and Egypt. The philosophic eye of Pliny had surveyed with astonishment a solitary people, who dwelt among the palm trees near the Dead Sea; who subsisted without money, who were propagated without women; and who derived from the disgust and repentance of mankind a perpetual supply of voluntary associates.

Egypt, the fruitful parent of superstition, afforded the first example of the monastic life. Antony, an illiterate youth of the lower parts of Thebais, distributed his patrimony, deserted his family and native home, and executed his monastic penance with original and intrepid fanaticism. After a long and painful novitiate, among the tombs, and in a ruined tower, he boldly advanced into the desert three days' journey to the eastward of the Nile; discovered a lonely spot, which possessed the advantages of shade and water, and fixed his last residence on Mount

Colzim, near the Red Sea; where an ancient monastery still preserves the name and memory of the saint. The curious devotion of the Christians pursued him to the desert; and when he was obliged to appear at Alexandria, in the face of mankind, he supported his fame with discretion and dignity. He enjoyed the friendship of Athanasius, whose doctrine he approved; and the Egyptian peasant respectfully declined a respectful invitation from the emperor Constantine. The venerable patriarch (for Antony attained the age of one hundred and five years) beheld the numerous progeny which had been formed by his example and his lessons. The prolific colonies of monks multiplied with rapid increase on the sands of Libya, upon the rocks of Thebais, and in the cities of the Nile. To the south of Alexandria, the mountain, and adjacent desert, of Nitria, were peopled by five thousand anachorets; and the traveller may still investigate the ruins of fifty monasteries, which were planted in that barren soil by the disciples of Antony. In the Upper Thebais, the vacant island of Tabenne, was

occupied by Pachomius and fourteen hundred of his brethren. That holy abbot successively founded nine monasteries of men, and one of women; and the festival of Easter sometimes collected fifty thousand religious persons, who followed his angelic rule of discipline. The stately and populous city of Oxyrinchus, the seat of Christian orthodoxy, had devoted the temples, the public edifices, and even the ramparts, to pious and charitable uses; and the bishop, who might preach in twelve churches, computed ten thousand females and twenty thousand males, of the monastic profession. The Egyptians, who gloried in this marvellous revolution, were disposed to hope, and to believe, that the number of the monks was equal to the remainder of the people; and posterity might repeat the saying, which had formerly been applied to the sacred animals of the same country, That in Egypt it was less difficult to find a god than a man.

Athanasius introduced into Rome the knowledge and practice of the monastic life; and a school of this new

philosophy was opened by the disciples of Antony, who accompanied their primate to the holy threshold of the Vatican. The strange and savage appearance of these Egyptians excited, at first, horror and contempt, and, at length, applause and zealous imitation. The senators, and more especially the matrons, transformed their palaces and villas into religious houses; and the narrow institution of six vestals was eclipsed by the frequent monasteries, which were seated on the ruins of ancient temples, and in the midst of the Roman forum. Inflamed by the example of Antony, a Syrian youth, whose name was Hilarion, fixed his dreary abode on a sandy beach, between the sea and a morass, about seven miles from Gaza. The austere penance, in which he persisted forty eight years, diffused a similar enthusiasm; and the holy man was followed by a train of two or three thousand anachorets, whenever he visited the innumerable monasteries of Palestine. The fame of Basil is immortal in the monastic history of the East. With a mind that had tasted the learning and eloquence of Athens; with

an ambition scarcely to be satisfied with the archbishopric of Caesarea, Basil retired to a savage solitude in Pontus; and deigned, for a while, to give laws to the spiritual colonies which he profusely scattered along the coast of the Black Sea. In the West, Martin of Tours, a soldier, a hermit, a bishop, and a saint, established the monasteries of Gaul; two thousand of his disciples followed him to the grave; and his eloquent historian challenges the deserts of Thebais to produce, in a more favorable climate, a champion of equal virtue. The progress of the monks was not less rapid, or universal, than that of Christianity itself. Every province, and, at last, every city, of the empire, was filled with their increasing multitudes; and the bleak and barren isles, from Lerins to Lipari, that arose out of the Tuscan Sea, were chosen by the anachorets for the place of their voluntary exile. An easy and perpetual intercourse by sea and land connected the provinces of the Roman world; and the life of Hilarion displays the facility with which an indigent hermit of Palestine might traverse Egypt, embark

for Sicily, escape to Epirus, and finally settle in the Island of Cyprus. The Latin Christians embraced the religious institutions of Rome. The pilgrims, who visited Jerusalem, eagerly copied, in the most distant climates of the earth, the faithful model of the monastic life. The disciples of Antony spread themselves beyond the tropic, over the Christian empire of Aethiopia. The monastery of Banchor, in Flintshire, which contained above two thousand brethren, dispersed a numerous colony among the Barbarians of Ireland; and Iona, one of the Hebrides, which was planted by the Irish monks, diffused over the northern regions a doubtful ray of science and superstition.

These unhappy exiles from social life were impelled by the dark and implacable genius of superstition. Their mutual resolution was supported by the example of millions, of either sex, of every age, and of every rank; and each proselyte who entered the gates of a monastery, was persuaded that he trod the steep and thorny path of eternal happiness. But the operation of these religious motives was

variously determined by the temper and situation of mankind. Reason might subdue, or passion might suspend, their influence: but they acted most forcibly on the infirm minds of children and females; they were strengthened by secret remorse, or accidental misfortune; and they might derive some aid from the temporal considerations of vanity or interest. It was naturally supposed, that the pious and humble monks, who had renounced the world to accomplish the work of their salvation, were the best qualified for the spiritual government of the Christians. The reluctant hermit was torn from his cell, and seated, amidst the acclamations of the people, on the episcopal throne: the monasteries of Egypt, of Gaul, and of the East, supplied a regular succession of saints and bishops; and ambition soon discovered the secret road which led to the possession of wealth and honors. The popular monks, whose reputation was connected with the fame and success of the order, assiduously labored to multiply the number of their fellow captives. They insinuated themselves into

noble and opulent families; and the specious arts of flattery and seduction were employed to secure those proselytes who might bestow wealth or dignity on the monastic profession. The indignant father bewailed the loss, perhaps, of an only son; the credulous maid was betrayed by vanity to violate the laws of nature; and the matron aspired to imaginary perfection, by renouncing the virtues of domestic life. Paula yielded to the persuasive eloquence of Jerom; and the profane title of mother in law of God tempted that illustrious widow to consecrate the virginity of her daughter Eustochium. By the advice, and in the company, of her spiritual guide, Paula abandoned Rome and her infant son; retired to the holy village of Bethlem; founded a hospital and four monasteries; and acquired, by her alms and penance, an eminent and conspicuous station in the Catholic church. Such rare and illustrious penitents were celebrated as the glory and example of their age; but the monasteries were filled by a crowd of obscure and abject plebeians, who gained in the cloister much more than they

had sacrificed in the world. Peasants, slaves, and mechanics, might escape from poverty and contempt to a safe and honorable profession; whose apparent hardships are mitigated by custom, by popular applause, and by the secret relaxation of discipline. The subjects of Rome, whose persons and fortunes were made responsible for unequal and exorbitant tributes, retired from the oppression of the Imperial government; and the pusillanimous youth preferred the penance of a monastic, to the dangers of a military, life. The affrighted provincials of every rank, who fled before the Barbarians, found shelter and subsistence: whole legions were buried in these religious sanctuaries; and the same cause, which relieved the distress of individuals, impaired the strength and fortitude of the empire.

The monastic profession of the ancients was an act of voluntary devotion. The inconstant fanatic was threatened with the eternal vengeance of the God whom he deserted; but the doors of the monastery were still open for

repentance. Those monks, whose conscience was fortified by reason or passion, were at liberty to resume the character of men and citizens; and even the spouses of Christ might accept the legal embraces of an earthly lover. The examples of scandal, and the progress of superstition, suggested the propriety of more forcible restraints. After a sufficient trial, the fidelity of the novice was secured by a solemn and perpetual vow; and his irrevocable engagement was ratified by the laws of the church and state. A guilty fugitive was pursued, arrested, and restored to his perpetual prison; and the interposition of the magistrate oppressed the freedom and the merit, which had alleviated, in some degree, the abject slavery of the monastic discipline. The actions of a monk, his words, and even his thoughts, were determined by an inflexible rule, or a capricious superior: the slightest offences were corrected by disgrace or confinement, extraordinary fasts, or bloody flagellation; and disobedience, murmur, or delay, were ranked in the catalogue of the most heinous sins. A blind submission to

the commands of the abbot, however absurd, or even criminal, they might seem, was the ruling principle, the first virtue of the Egyptian monks; and their patience was frequently exercised by the most extravagant trials. They were directed to remove an enormous rock; assiduously to water a barren staff, that was planted in the ground, till, at the end of three years, it should vegetate and blossom like a tree; to walk into a fiery furnace; or to cast their infant into a deep pond: and several saints, or madmen, have been immortalized in monastic story, by their thoughtless and fearless obedience. The freedom of the mind, the source of every generous and rational sentiment, was destroyed by the habits of credulity and submission; and the monk, contracting the vices of a slave, devoutly followed the faith and passions of his ecclesiastical tyrant. The peace of the Eastern church was invaded by a swarm of fanatics, incapable of fear, or reason, or humanity; and the Imperial troops acknowledged, without shame, that they were much less apprehensive of an encounter with the fiercest

Barbarians.

Superstition has often framed and consecrated the fantastic garments of the monks: but their apparent singularity sometimes proceeds from their uniform attachment to a simple and primitive model, which the revolutions of fashion have made ridiculous in the eyes of mankind. The father of the Benedictines expressly disclaims all idea of choice of merit; and soberly exhorts his disciples to adopt the coarse and convenient dress of the countries which they may inhabit. The monastic habits of the ancients varied with the climate, and their mode of life; and they assumed, with the same indifference, the sheep skin of the Egyptian peasants, or the cloak of the Grecian philosophers. They allowed themselves the use of linen in Egypt, where it was a cheap and domestic manufacture; but in the West they rejected such an expensive article of foreign luxury. It was the practice of the monks either to cut or shave their hair; they wrapped their heads in a cowl to escape the sight of profane objects;

their legs and feet were naked, except in the extreme cold of winter; and their slow and feeble steps were supported by a long staff. The aspect of a genuine anachoret was horrid and disgusting: every sensation that is offensive to man was thought acceptable to God; and the angelic rule of Tabenne condemned the salutary custom of bathing the limbs in water, and of anointing them with oil. The austere monks slept on the ground, on a hard mat, or a rough blanket; and the same bundle of palm leaves served them as a seat in the day, and a pillow in the night. Their original cells were low, narrow huts, built of the slightest materials; which formed, by the regular distribution of the streets, a large and populous village, enclosing, within the common wall, a church, a hospital, perhaps a library, some necessary offices, a garden, and a fountain or reservoir of fresh water. Thirty or forty brethren composed a family of separate discipline and diet; and the great monasteries of Egypt consisted of thirty or forty families.

Part II.

Pleasure and guilt are synonymous terms in the language of the monks, and they discovered, by experience, that rigid fasts, and abstemious diet, are the most effectual preservatives against the impure desires of the flesh. The rules of abstinence which they imposed, or practised, were not uniform or perpetual: the cheerful festival of the Pentecost was balanced by the extraordinary mortification of Lent; the fervor of new monasteries was insensibly relaxed; and the voracious appetite of the Gauls could not imitate the patient and temperate virtue of the Egyptians. The disciples of Antony and Pachomius were satisfied with their daily pittance, of twelve ounces of bread, or rather biscuit, which they divided into two frugal repasts, of the afternoon and of the evening. It was esteemed a merit, and almost a duty, to abstain from the boiled vegetables which were provided for the refectory; but the extraordinary bounty of the abbot sometimes indulged them

with the luxury of cheese, fruit, salad, and the small dried fish of the Nile. A more ample latitude of sea and river fish was gradually allowed or assumed; but the use of flesh was long confined to the sick or travellers; and when it gradually prevailed in the less rigid monasteries of Europe, a singular distinction was introduced; as if birds, whether wild or domestic, had been less profane than the grosser animals of the field. Water was the pure and innocent beverage of the primitive monks; and the founder of the Benedictines regrets the daily portion of half a pint of wine, which had been extorted from him by the intemperance of the age. Such an allowance might be easily supplied by the vineyards of Italy; and his victorious disciples, who passed the Alps, the Rhine, and the Baltic, required, in the place of wine, an adequate compensation of strong beer or cider.

The candidate who aspired to the virtue of evangelical poverty, abjured, at his first entrance into a regular community, the idea, and even the name, of all

separate or exclusive possessions. The brethren were supported by their manual labor; and the duty of labor was strenuously recommended as a penance, as an exercise, and as the most laudable means of securing their daily subsistence. The garden and fields, which the industry of the monks had often rescued from the forest or the morass, were diligently cultivated by their hands. They performed, without reluctance, the menial offices of slaves and domestics; and the several trades that were necessary to provide their habits, their utensils, and their lodging, were exercised within the precincts of the great monasteries. The monastic studies have tended, for the most part, to darken, rather than to dispel, the cloud of superstition. Yet the curiosity or zeal of some learned solitaries has cultivated the ecclesiastical, and even the profane, sciences; and posterity must gratefully acknowledge, that the monuments of Greek and Roman literature have been preserved and multiplied by their indefatigable pens. But the more humble industry of the monks, especially in Egypt, was contented

with the silent, sedentary occupation of making wooden sandals, or of twisting the leaves of the palm tree into mats and baskets. The superfluous stock, which was not consumed in domestic use, supplied, by trade, the wants of the community: the boats of Tabenne, and the other monasteries of Thebais, descended the Nile as far as Alexandria; and, in a Christian market, the sanctity of the workmen might enhance the intrinsic value of the work.

But the necessity of manual labor was insensibly superseded.

The novice was tempted to bestow his fortune on the saints, in whose society he was resolved to spend the remainder of his life; and the pernicious indulgence of the laws permitted him to receive, for their use, any future accessions of legacy or inheritance. Melania contributed her plate, three hundred pounds weight of silver; and Paula contracted an immense debt, for the relief of their favorite monks; who kindly imparted the merits of their prayers and penance to a rich and liberal sinner. Time continually

increased, and accidents could seldom diminish, the estates of the popular monasteries, which spread over the adjacent country and cities: and, in the first century of their institution, the infidel Zosimus has maliciously observed, that, for the benefit of the poor, the Christian monks had reduced a great part of mankind to a state of beggary. As long as they maintained their original fervor, they approved themselves, however, the faithful and benevolent stewards of the charity, which was entrusted to their care. But their discipline was corrupted by prosperity: they gradually assumed the pride of wealth, and at last indulged the luxury of expense. Their public luxury might be excused by the magnificence of religious worship, and the decent motive of erecting durable habitations for an immortal society. But every age of the church has accused the licentiousness of the degenerate monks; who no longer remembered the object of their institution, embraced the vain and sensual pleasures of the world, which they had renounced, and scandalously abused the

riches which had been acquired by the austere virtues of their founders. Their natural descent, from such painful and dangerous virtue, to the common vices of humanity, will not, perhaps, excite much grief or indignation in the mind of a philosopher.

The lives of the primitive monks were consumed in penance and solitude; undisturbed by the various occupations which fill the time, and exercise the faculties, of reasonable, active, and social beings. Whenever they were permitted to step beyond the precincts of the monastery, two jealous companions were the mutual guards and spies of each other's actions; and, after their return, they were condemned to forget, or, at least, to suppress, whatever they had seen or heard in the world. Strangers, who professed the orthodox faith, were hospitably entertained in a separate apartment; but their dangerous conversation was restricted to some chosen elders of approved discretion and fidelity. Except in their presence, the monastic slave might not receive the visits of

his friends or kindred; and it was deemed highly meritorious, if he afflicted a tender sister, or an aged parent, by the obstinate refusal of a word or look. The monks themselves passed their lives, without personal attachments, among a crowd which had been formed by accident, and was detained, in the same prison, by force or prejudice. Recluse fanatics have few ideas or sentiments to communicate: a special license of the abbot regulated the time and duration of their familiar visits; and, at their silent meals, they were enveloped in their cowls, inaccessible, and almost invisible, to each other. Study is the resource of solitude: but education had not prepared and qualified for any liberal studies the mechanics and peasants who filled the monastic communities. They might work: but the vanity of spiritual perfection was tempted to disdain the exercise of manual labor; and the industry must be faint and languid, which is not excited by the sense of personal interest.

According to their faith and zeal, they might employ the day, which they passed in their cells, either in vocal or

mental prayer: they assembled in the evening, and they were awakened in the night, for the public worship of the monastery. The precise moment was determined by the stars, which are seldom clouded in the serene sky of Egypt; and a rustic horn, or trumpet, the signal of devotion, twice interrupted the vast silence of the desert. Even sleep, the last refuge of the unhappy, was rigorously measured: the vacant hours of the monk heavily rolled along, without business or pleasure; and, before the close of each day, he had repeatedly accused the tedious progress of the sun. In this comfortless state, superstition still pursued and tormented her wretched votaries. The repose which they had sought in the cloister was disturbed by a tardy repentance, profane doubts, and guilty desires; and, while they considered each natural impulse as an unpardonable sin, they perpetually trembled on the edge of a flaming and bottomless abyss. From the painful struggles of disease and despair, these unhappy victims were sometimes relieved by madness or death; and, in the sixth century, a hospital was

founded at Jerusalem for a small portion of the austere penitents, who were deprived of their senses. Their visions, before they attained this extreme and acknowledged term of frenzy, have afforded ample materials of supernatural history. It was their firm persuasion, that the air, which they breathed, was peopled with invisible enemies; with innumerable demons, who watched every occasion, and assumed every form, to terrify, and above all to tempt, their unguarded virtue. The imagination, and even the senses, were deceived by the illusions of distempered fanaticism; and the hermit, whose midnight prayer was oppressed by involuntary slumber, might easily confound the phantoms of horror or delight, which had occupied his sleeping and his waking dreams.

The monks were divided into two classes: the Coenobites, who lived under a common and regular discipline; and the Anachorets, who indulged their unsocial, independent fanaticism. The most devout, or the most ambitious, of the spiritual brethren, renounced the convent,

as they had renounced the world. The fervent monasteries of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, were surrounded by a Laura, a distant circle of solitary cells; and the extravagant penance of Hermits was stimulated by applause and emulation. They sunk under the painful weight of crosses and chains; and their emaciated limbs were confined by collars, bracelets, gauntlets, and greaves of massy and rigid iron. All superfluous encumbrance of dress they contemptuously cast away; and some savage saints of both sexes have been admired, whose naked bodies were only covered by their long hair. They aspired to reduce themselves to the rude and miserable state in which the human brute is scarcely distinguishable above his kindred animals; and the numerous sect of Anachorets derived their name from their humble practice of grazing in the fields of Mesopotamia with the common herd. They often usurped the den of some wild beast whom they affected to resemble; they buried themselves in some gloomy cavern, which art or nature had scooped out of the

rock; and the marble quarries of Thebais are still inscribed with the monuments of their penance. The most perfect Hermits are supposed to have passed many days without food, many nights without sleep, and many years without speaking; and glorious was the man (I abuse that name) who contrived any cell, or seat, of a peculiar construction, which might expose him, in the most inconvenient posture, to the inclemency of the seasons.

Among these heroes of the monastic life, the name and genius of Simeon Stylites have been immortalized by the singular invention of an aerial penance. At the age of thirteen, the young Syrian deserted the profession of a shepherd, and threw himself into an austere monastery. After a long and painful novitiate, in which Simeon was repeatedly saved from pious suicide, he established his residence on a mountain, about thirty or forty miles to the east of Antioch. Within the space of a mandra, or circle of stones, to which he had attached himself by a ponderous chain, he ascended a column, which was

successively raised from the height of nine, to that of sixty, feet from the ground. In this last and lofty station, the Syrian Anachoret resisted the heat of thirty summers, and the cold of as many winters. Habit and exercise instructed him to maintain his dangerous situation without fear or giddiness, and successively to assume the different postures of devotion. He sometimes prayed in an erect attitude, with his outstretched arms in the figure of a cross, but his most familiar practice was that of bending his meagre skeleton from the forehead to the feet; and a curious spectator, after numbering twelve hundred and forty four repetitions, at length desisted from the endless account. The progress of an ulcer in his thigh might shorten, but it could not disturb, this celestial life; and the patient Hermit expired, without descending from his column. A prince, who should capriciously inflict such tortures, would be deemed a tyrant; but it would surpass the power of a tyrant to impose a long and miserable existence on the reluctant victims of his cruelty. This voluntary martyrdom must have

gradually destroyed the sensibility both of the mind and body; nor can it be presumed that the fanatics, who torment themselves, are susceptible of any lively affection for the rest of mankind. A cruel, unfeeling temper has distinguished the monks of every age and country: their stern indifference, which is seldom mollified by personal friendship, is inflamed by religious hatred; and their merciless zeal has strenuously administered the holy office of the Inquisition.

The monastic saints, who excite only the contempt and pity of a philosopher, were respected, and almost adored, by the prince and people. Successive crowds of pilgrims from Gaul and India saluted the divine pillar of Simeon: the tribes of Saracens disputed in arms the honor of his benediction; the queens of Arabia and Persia gratefully confessed his supernatural virtue; and the angelic Hermit was consulted by the younger Theodosius, in the most important concerns of the church and state. His remains were transported from the mountain of Telenissa, by

a solemn procession of the patriarch, the master general of the East, six bishops, twenty one counts or tribunes, and six thousand soldiers; and Antioch revered his bones, as her glorious ornament and impregnable defence. The fame of the apostles and martyrs was gradually eclipsed by these recent and popular Anachorets; the Christian world fell prostrate before their shrines; and the miracles ascribed to their relics exceeded, at least in number and duration, the spiritual exploits of their lives. But the golden legend of their lives was embellished by the artful credulity of their interested brethren; and a believing age was easily persuaded, that the slightest caprice of an Egyptian or a Syrian monk had been sufficient to interrupt the eternal laws of the universe. The favorites of Heaven were accustomed to cure inveterate diseases with a touch, a word, or a distant message; and to expel the most obstinate demons from the souls or bodies which they possessed. They familiarly accosted, or imperiously commanded, the lions and serpents of the desert; infused vegetation into a

sapless trunk; suspended iron on the surface of the water; passed the Nile on the back of a crocodile, and refreshed themselves in a fiery furnace. These extravagant tales, which display the fiction without the genius, of poetry, have seriously affected the reason, the faith, and the morals, of the Christians. Their credulity debased and vitiated the faculties of the mind: they corrupted the evidence of history; and superstition gradually extinguished the hostile light of philosophy and science. Every mode of religious worship which had been practised by the saints, every mysterious doctrine which they believed, was fortified by the sanction of divine revelation, and all the manly virtues were oppressed by the servile and pusillanimous reign of the monks. If it be possible to measure the interval between the philosophic writings of Cicero and the sacred legend of Theodoret, between the character of Cato and that of Simeon, we may appreciate the memorable revolution which was accomplished in the Roman empire within a period of five hundred years.

II. The progress of Christianity has been marked by two glorious and decisive victories: over the learned and luxurious citizens of the Roman empire; and over the warlike Barbarians of Scythia and Germany, who subverted the empire, and embraced the religion, of the Romans. The Goths were the foremost of these savage proselytes; and the nation was indebted for its conversion to a countryman, or, at least, to a subject, worthy to be ranked among the inventors of useful arts, who have deserved the remembrance and gratitude of posterity. A great number of Roman provincials had been led away into captivity by the Gothic bands, who ravaged Asia in the time of Gallienus; and of these captives, many were Christians, and several belonged to the ecclesiastical order. Those involuntary missionaries, dispersed as slaves in the villages of Dacia, successively labored for the salvation of their masters. The seeds which they planted, of the evangelic doctrine, were gradually propagated; and before the end of a century, the pious work was achieved by the

labors of Ulphilas, whose ancestors had been transported beyond the Danube from a small town of Cappadocia.

Ulphilas, the bishop and apostle of the Goths, acquired their love and reverence by his blameless life and indefatigable zeal; and they received, with implicit confidence, the doctrines of truth and virtue which he preached and practised. He executed the arduous task of translating the Scriptures into their native tongue, a dialect of the German or Teutonic language; but he prudently suppressed the four books of Kings, as they might tend to irritate the fierce and sanguinary spirit of the Barbarians. The rude, imperfect idiom of soldiers and shepherds, so ill qualified to communicate any spiritual ideas, was improved and modulated by his genius: and Ulphilas, before he could frame his version, was obliged to compose a new alphabet of twenty four letters; four of which he invented, to express the peculiar sounds that were unknown to the Greek and Latin pronunciation. But the prosperous state of the Gothic church was soon afflicted by

war and intestine discord, and the chieftains were divided by religion as well as by interest. Fritigern, the friend of the Romans, became the proselyte of Ulphilas; while the haughty soul of Athanaric disdained the yoke of the empire and of the gospel. The faith of the new converts was tried by the persecution which he excited. A wagon, bearing aloft the shapeless image of Thor, perhaps, or of Woden, was conducted in solemn procession through the streets of the camp; and the rebels, who refused to worship the god of their fathers, were immediately burnt, with their tents and families. The character of Ulphilas recommended him to the esteem of the Eastern court, where he twice appeared as the minister of peace; he pleaded the cause of the distressed Goths, who implored the protection of Valens; and the name of Moses was applied to this spiritual guide, who conducted his people through the deep waters of the Danube to the Land of Promise. The devout shepherds, who were attached to his person, and tractable to his voice, acquiesced in their settlement, at the foot of the Maesian

mountains, in a country of woodlands and pastures, which supported their flocks and herds, and enabled them to purchase the corn and wine of the more plentiful provinces. These harmless Barbarians multiplied in obscure peace and the profession of Christianity.

Their fiercer brethren, the formidable Visigoths, universally adopted the religion of the Romans, with whom they maintained a perpetual intercourse, of war, of friendship, or of conquest. In their long and victorious march from the Danube to the Atlantic Ocean, they converted their allies; they educated the rising generation; and the devotion which reigned in the camp of Alaric, or the court of Thoulouse, might edify or disgrace the palaces of Rome and Constantinople. During the same period, Christianity was embraced by almost all the Barbarians, who established their kingdoms on the ruins of the Western empire; the Burgundians in Gaul, the Suevi in Spain, the Vandals in Africa, the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and the various bands of mercenaries, that raised Odoacer

to the throne of Italy. The Franks and the Saxons still persevered in the errors of Paganism; but the Franks obtained the monarchy of Gaul by their submission to the example of Clovis; and the Saxon conquerors of Britain were reclaimed from their savage superstition by the missionaries of Rome. These Barbarian proselytes displayed an ardent and successful zeal in the propagation of the faith. The Merovingian kings, and their successors, Charlemagne and the Othos, extended, by their laws and victories, the dominion of the cross. England produced the apostle of Germany; and the evangelic light was gradually diffused from the neighborhood of the Rhine, to the nations of the Elbe, the Vistula, and the Baltic.

Part III.

The different motives which influenced the reason, or the passions, of the Barbarian converts, cannot easily be ascertained. They were often capricious and accidental; a dream, an omen, the report of a miracle, the example of some priest, or hero, the charms of a believing wife, and, above all, the fortunate event of a prayer, or vow, which, in a moment of danger, they had addressed to the God of the Christians. The early prejudices of education were insensibly erased by the habits of frequent and familiar society, the moral precepts of the gospel were protected by the extravagant virtues of the monks; and a spiritual theology was supported by the visible power of relics, and the pomp of religious worship. But the rational and ingenious mode of persuasion, which a Saxon bishop suggested to a popular saint, might sometimes be employed by the missionaries, who labored for the conversion of infidels. "Admit," says the sagacious disputant, "whatever

they are pleased to assert of the fabulous, and carnal, genealogy of their gods and goddesses, who are propagated from each other. From this principle deduce their imperfect nature, and human infirmities, the assurance they were born, and the probability that they will die. At what time, by what means, from what cause, were the eldest of the gods or goddesses produced? Do they still continue, or have they ceased, to propagate? If they have ceased, summon your antagonists to declare the reason of this strange alteration. If they still continue, the number of the gods must become infinite; and shall we not risk, by the indiscreet worship of some impotent deity, to excite the resentment of his jealous superior? The visible heavens and earth, the whole system of the universe, which may be conceived by the mind, is it created or eternal? If created, how, or where, could the gods themselves exist before creation? If eternal, how could they assume the empire of an independent and preexisting world? Urge these arguments with temper and moderation; insinuate, at seasonable intervals, the truth and beauty of

the Christian revelation; and endeavor to make the unbelievers ashamed, without making them angry." This metaphysical reasoning, too refined, perhaps, for the Barbarians of Germany, was fortified by the grosser weight of authority and popular consent. The advantage of temporal prosperity had deserted the Pagan cause, and passed over to the service of Christianity. The Romans themselves, the most powerful and enlightened nation of the globe, had renounced their ancient superstition; and, if the ruin of their empire seemed to accuse the efficacy of the new faith, the disgrace was already retrieved by the conversion of the victorious Goths. The valiant and fortunate Barbarians, who subdued the provinces of the West, successively received, and reflected, the same edifying example. Before the age of Charlemagne, the Christian nations of Europe might exult in the exclusive possession of the temperate climates, of the fertile lands, which produced corn, wine, and oil; while the savage idolaters, and their helpless idols, were confined to the

extremities of the earth, the dark and frozen regions of the North.

Christianity, which opened the gates of Heaven to the Barbarians, introduced an important change in their moral and political condition. They received, at the same time, the use of letters, so essential to a religion whose doctrines are contained in a sacred book; and while they studied the divine truth, their minds were insensibly enlarged by the distant view of history, of nature, of the arts, and of society. The version of the Scriptures into their native tongue, which had facilitated their conversion, must excite among their clergy some curiosity to read the original text, to understand the sacred liturgy of the church, and to examine, in the writings of the fathers, the chain of ecclesiastical tradition. These spiritual gifts were preserved in the Greek and Latin languages, which concealed the inestimable monuments of ancient learning. The immortal productions of Virgil, Cicero, and Livy, which were accessible to the Christian Barbarians, maintained a

silent intercourse between the reign of Augustus and the times of Clovis and Charlemagne. The emulation of mankind was encouraged by the remembrance of a more perfect state; and the flame of science was secretly kept alive, to warm and enlighten the mature age of the Western world.

In the most corrupt state of Christianity, the Barbarians might learn justice from the law, and mercy from the gospel; and if the knowledge of their duty was insufficient to guide their actions, or to regulate their passions, they were sometimes restrained by conscience, and frequently punished by remorse. But the direct authority of religion was less effectual than the holy communion, which united them with their Christian brethren in spiritual friendship. The influence of these sentiments contributed to secure their fidelity in the service, or the alliance, of the Romans, to alleviate the horrors of war, to moderate the insolence of conquest, and to preserve, in the downfall of the empire, a permanent respect for the

name and institutions of Rome. In the days of Paganism, the priests of Gaul and Germany reigned over the people, and controlled the jurisdiction of the magistrates; and the zealous proselytes transferred an equal, or more ample, measure of devout obedience, to the pontiffs of the Christian faith. The sacred character of the bishops was supported by their temporal possessions; they obtained an honorable seat in the legislative assemblies of soldiers and freemen; and it was their interest, as well as their duty, to mollify, by peaceful counsels, the fierce spirit of the Barbarians. The perpetual correspondence of the Latin clergy, the frequent pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem, and the growing authority of the popes, cemented the union of the Christian republic, and gradually produced the similar manners, and common jurisprudence, which have distinguished, from the rest of mankind, the independent, and even hostile, nations of modern Europe.

But the operation of these causes was checked and retarded by the unfortunate accident, which infused a

deadly poison into the cup of Salvation. Whatever might be the early sentiments of Ulphilas, his connections with the empire and the church were formed during the reign of Arianism. The apostle of the Goths subscribed the creed of Rimini; professed with freedom, and perhaps with sincerity, that the Son was not equal, or consubstantial to the Father; communicated these errors to the clergy and people; and infected the Barbaric world with a heresy, which the great Theodosius proscribed and extinguished among the Romans. The temper and understanding of the new proselytes were not adapted to metaphysical subtilties; but they strenuously maintained, what they had piously received, as the pure and genuine doctrines of Christianity. The advantage of preaching and expounding the Scriptures in the Teutonic language promoted the apostolic labors of Ulphilas and his successors; and they ordained a competent number of bishops and presbyters for the instruction of the kindred tribes. The Ostrogoths, the Burgundians, the Suevi, and the Vandals, who had listened to the eloquence of the

Latin clergy, preferred the more intelligible lessons of their domestic teachers; and Arianism was adopted as the national faith of the warlike converts, who were seated on the ruins of the Western empire. This irreconcilable difference of religion was a perpetual source of jealousy and hatred; and the reproach of Barbarian was imbibed by the more odious epithet of Heretic. The heroes of the North, who had submitted, with some reluctance, to believe that all their ancestors were in hell, were astonished and exasperated to learn, that they themselves had only changed the mode of their eternal condemnation. Instead of the smooth applause, which Christian kings are accustomed to expect from their royal prelates, the orthodox bishops and their clergy were in a state of opposition to the Arian courts; and their indiscreet opposition frequently became criminal, and might sometimes be dangerous. The pulpit, that safe and sacred organ of sedition, resounded with the names of Pharaoh and Holofernes; the public discontent was inflamed by the hope or promise of a glorious

deliverance; and the seditious saints were tempted to promote the accomplishment of their own predictions. Notwithstanding these provocations, the Catholics of Gaul, Spain, and Italy, enjoyed, under the reign of the Arians, the free and peaceful exercise of their religion. Their haughty masters respected the zeal of a numerous people, resolved to die at the foot of their altars; and the example of their devout constancy was admired and imitated by the Barbarians themselves. The conquerors evaded, however, the disgraceful reproach, or confession, of fear, by attributing their toleration to the liberal motives of reason and humanity; and while they affected the language, they imperceptibly imbibed the spirit, of genuine Christianity.

The peace of the church was sometimes interrupted. The Catholics were indiscreet, the Barbarians were impatient; and the partial acts of severity or injustice, which had been recommended by the Arian clergy, were exaggerated by the orthodox writers. The guilt of

persecution may be imputed to Euric, king of the Visigoths; who suspended the exercise of ecclesiastical, or, at least, of episcopal functions; and punished the popular bishops of Aquitaine with imprisonment, exile, and confiscation. But the cruel and absurd enterprise of subduing the minds of a whole people was undertaken by the Vandals alone. Genseric himself, in his early youth, had renounced the orthodox communion; and the apostate could neither grant, nor expect, a sincere forgiveness. He was exasperated to find that the Africans, who had fled before him in the field, still presumed to dispute his will in synods and churches; and his ferocious mind was incapable of fear or of compassion. His Catholic subjects were oppressed by intolerant laws and arbitrary punishments. The language of Genseric was furious and formidable; the knowledge of his intentions might justify the most unfavorable interpretation of his actions; and the Arians were reproached with the frequent executions which stained the palace and the dominions of the tyrant. Arms and ambition were, however,

the ruling passions of the monarch of the sea. But Hunneric, his inglorious son, who seemed to inherit only his vices, tormented the Catholics with the same unrelenting fury which had been fatal to his brother, his nephews, and the friends and favorites of his father; and even to the Arian patriarch, who was inhumanly burnt alive in the midst of Carthage. The religious war was preceded and prepared by an insidious truce; persecution was made the serious and important business of the Vandal court; and the loathsome disease which hastened the death of Hunneric, revenged the injuries, without contributing to the deliverance, of the church. The throne of Africa was successively filled by the two nephews of Hunneric; by Gundamund, who reigned about twelve, and by Thrasimund, who governed the nation about twenty seven, years. Their administration was hostile and oppressive to the orthodox party. Gundamund appeared to emulate, or even to surpass, the cruelty of his uncle; and, if at length he relented, if he recalled the bishops, and restored the

freedom of Athanasian worship, a premature death intercepted the benefits of his tardy clemency. His brother, Thrasimund, was the greatest and most accomplished of the Vandal kings, whom he excelled in beauty, prudence, and magnanimity of soul. But this magnanimous character was degraded by his intolerant zeal and deceitful clemency. Instead of threats and tortures, he employed the gentle, but efficacious, powers of seduction. Wealth, dignity, and the royal favor, were the liberal rewards of apostasy; the Catholics, who had violated the laws, might purchase their pardon by the renunciation of their faith; and whenever Thrasimund meditated any rigorous measure, he patiently waited till the indiscretion of his adversaries furnished him with a specious opportunity. Bigotry was his last sentiment in the hour of death; and he exacted from his successor a solemn oath, that he would never tolerate the sectaries of Athanasius. But his successor, Hilderic, the gentle son of the savage Hunneric, preferred the duties of humanity and justice to the vain obligation of an impious oath; and

his accession was gloriously marked by the restoration of peace and universal freedom. The throne of that virtuous, though feeble monarch, was usurped by his cousin Gelimer, a zealous Arian: but the Vandal kingdom, before he could enjoy or abuse his power, was subverted by the arms of Belisarius; and the orthodox party retaliated the injuries which they had endured.

The passionate declamations of the Catholics, the sole historians of this persecution, cannot afford any distinct series of causes and events; any impartial view of the characters, or counsels; but the most remarkable circumstances that deserve either credit or notice, may be referred to the following heads; I. In the original law, which is still extant, Hunneric expressly declares, (and the declaration appears to be correct,) that he had faithfully transcribed the regulations and penalties of the Imperial edicts, against the heretical congregations, the clergy, and the people, who dissented from the established religion. If the rights of conscience had been understood, the Catholics

must have condemned their past conduct or acquiesced in their actual suffering. But they still persisted to refuse the indulgence which they claimed. While they trembled under the lash of persecution, they praised the laudable severity of Hunneric himself, who burnt or banished great numbers of Manichaeans; and they rejected, with horror, the ignominious compromise, that the disciples of Arius and of Athanasius should enjoy a reciprocal and similar toleration in the territories of the Romans, and in those of the Vandals. II. The practice of a conference, which the Catholics had so frequently used to insult and punish their obstinate antagonists, was retorted against themselves. At the command of Hunneric, four hundred and sixty six orthodox bishops assembled at Carthage; but when they were admitted into the hall of audience, they had the mortification of beholding the Arian Cyrila exalted on the patriarchal throne. The disputants were separated, after the mutual and ordinary reproaches of noise and silence, of delay and precipitation, of military force and of popular

clamor. One martyr and one confessor were selected among the Catholic bishops; twenty eight escaped by flight, and eighty eight by conformity; forty six were sent into Corsica to cut timber for the royal navy; and three hundred and two were banished to the different parts of Africa, exposed to the insults of their enemies, and carefully deprived of all the temporal and spiritual comforts of life. The hardships of ten years' exile must have reduced their numbers; and if they had complied with the law of Thrasimund, which prohibited any episcopal consecrations, the orthodox church of Africa must have expired with the lives of its actual members. They disobeyed, and their disobedience was punished by a second exile of two hundred and twenty bishops into Sardinia; where they languished fifteen years, till the accession of the gracious Hilderic. The two islands were judiciously chosen by the malice of their Arian tyrants. Seneca, from his own experience, has deplored and exaggerated the miserable state of Corsica, and the plenty of Sardinia was overbalanced by the unwholesome quality

of the air. III. The zeal of Generic and his successors, for the conversion of the Catholics, must have rendered them still more jealous to guard the purity of the Vandal faith. Before the churches were finally shut, it was a crime to appear in a Barbarian dress; and those who presumed to neglect the royal mandate were rudely dragged backwards by their long hair. The palatine officers, who refused to profess the religion of their prince, were ignominiously stripped of their honors and employments; banished to Sardinia and Sicily; or condemned to the servile labors of slaves and peasants in the fields of Utica. In the districts which had been peculiarly allotted to the Vandals, the exercise of the Catholic worship was more strictly prohibited; and severe penalties were denounced against the guilt both of the missionary and the proselyte. By these arts, the faith of the Barbarians was preserved, and their zeal was inflamed: they discharged, with devout fury, the office of spies, informers, or executioners; and whenever their cavalry took the field, it

was the favorite amusement of the march to defile the churches, and to insult the clergy of the adverse faction. IV. The citizens who had been educated in the luxury of the Roman province, were delivered, with exquisite cruelty, to the Moors of the desert. A venerable train of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, with a faithful crowd of four thousand and ninety six persons, whose guilt is not precisely ascertained, were torn from their native homes, by the command of Hunneric. During the night they were confined, like a herd of cattle, amidst their own ordure: during the day they pursued their march over the burning sands; and if they fainted under the heat and fatigue, they were goaded, or dragged along, till they expired in the hands of their tormentors. These unhappy exiles, when they reached the Moorish huts, might excite the compassion of a people, whose native humanity was neither improved by reason, nor corrupted by fanaticism: but if they escaped the dangers, they were condemned to share the distress of a savage life. V. It is incumbent on the authors of

persecution previously to reflect, whether they are determined to support it in the last extreme. They excite the flame which they strive to extinguish; and it soon becomes necessary to chastise the contumacy, as well as the crime, of the offender. The fine, which he is unable or unwilling to discharge, exposes his person to the severity of the law; and his contempt of lighter penalties suggests the use and propriety of capital punishment. Through the veil of fiction and declamation we may clearly perceive, that the Catholics more especially under the reign of Hunneric, endured the most cruel and ignominious treatment. Respectable citizens, noble matrons, and consecrated virgins, were stripped naked, and raised in the air by pulleys, with a weight suspended at their feet. In this painful attitude their naked bodies were torn with scourges, or burnt in the most tender parts with red hot plates of iron. The amputation of the ears the nose, the tongue, and the right hand, was inflicted by the Arians; and although the precise number cannot be defined, it is evident that many

persons, among whom a bishop and a proconsul may be named, were entitled to the crown of martyrdom. The same honor has been ascribed to the memory of Count Sebastian, who professed the Nicene creed with unshaken constancy; and Genseric might detest, as a heretic, the brave and ambitious fugitive whom he dreaded as a rival. VI. A new mode of conversion, which might subdue the feeble, and alarm the timorous, was employed by the Arian ministers. They imposed, by fraud or violence, the rites of baptism; and punished the apostasy of the Catholics, if they disclaimed this odious and profane ceremony, which scandalously violated the freedom of the will, and the unity of the sacrament. The hostile sects had formerly allowed the validity of each other's baptism; and the innovation, so fiercely maintained by the Vandals, can be imputed only to the example and advice of the Donatists. VII. The Arian clergy surpassed in religious cruelty the king and his Vandals; but they were incapable of cultivating the spiritual vineyard, which they were so desirous to

possess. A patriarch might seat himself on the throne of Carthage; some bishops, in the principal cities, might usurp the place of their rivals; but the smallness of their numbers, and their ignorance of the Latin language, disqualified the Barbarians for the ecclesiastical ministry of a great church; and the Africans, after the loss of their orthodox pastors, were deprived of the public exercise of Christianity. VIII. The emperors were the natural protectors of the Homoousian doctrine; and the faithful people of Africa, both as Romans and as Catholics, preferred their lawful sovereignty to the usurpation of the Barbarous heretics. During an interval of peace and friendship, Hunneric restored the cathedral of Carthage; at the intercession of Zeno, who reigned in the East, and of Placidia, the daughter and relict of emperors, and the sister of the queen of the Vandals. But this decent regard was of short duration; and the haughty tyrant displayed his contempt for the religion of the empire, by studiously arranging the bloody images of persecution, in all the principal streets through which the

Roman ambassador must pass in his way to the palace. An oath was required from the bishops, who were assembled at Carthage, that they would support the succession of his son Hilderic, and that they would renounce all foreign or transmarine correspondence. This engagement, consistent, as it should seem, with their moral and religious duties, was refused by the more sagacious members of the assembly. Their refusal, faintly colored by the pretence that it is unlawful for a Christian to swear, must provoke the suspicions of a jealous tyrant.

Part IV.

The Catholics, oppressed by royal and military force, were far superior to their adversaries in numbers and learning. With the same weapons which the Greek and Latin fathers had already provided for the Arian controversy, they repeatedly silenced, or vanquished, the fierce and illiterate successors of Ulphilas. The consciousness of their own superiority might have raised

them above the arts and passions of religious warfare. Yet, instead of assuming such honorable pride, the orthodox theologians were tempted, by the assurance of impunity, to compose fictions, which must be stigmatized with the epithets of fraud and forgery. They ascribed their own polemical works to the most venerable names of Christian antiquity; the characters of Athanasius and Augustin were awkwardly personated by Vigilius and his disciples; and the famous creed, which so clearly expounds the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation, is deduced, with strong probability, from this African school. Even the Scriptures themselves were profaned by their rash and sacrilegious hands. The memorable text, which asserts the unity of the three who bear witness in heaven, is condemned by the universal silence of the orthodox fathers, ancient versions, and authentic manuscripts. It was first alleged by the Catholic bishops whom Hunneric summoned to the conference of Carthage. An allegorical interpretation, in the form, perhaps, of a marginal note, invaded the text of

the Latin Bibles, which were renewed and corrected in a dark period of ten centuries. After the invention of printing, the editors of the Greek Testament yielded to their own prejudices, or those of the times; and the pious fraud, which was embraced with equal zeal at Rome and at Geneva, has been infinitely multiplied in every country and every language of modern Europe.

The example of fraud must excite suspicion: and the specious miracles by which the African Catholics have defended the truth and justice of their cause, may be ascribed, with more reason, to their own industry, than to the visible protection of Heaven. Yet the historian, who views this religious conflict with an impartial eye, may condescend to mention one preternatural event, which will edify the devout, and surprise the incredulous. Tipasa, a maritime colony of Mauritania, sixteen miles to the east of Caesarea, had been distinguished, in every age, by the orthodox zeal of its inhabitants. They had braved the fury of the Donatists; they resisted, or eluded, the tyranny of

the Arians. The town was deserted on the approach of an heretical bishop: most of the inhabitants who could procure ships passed over to the coast of Spain; and the unhappy remnant, refusing all communion with the usurper, still presumed to hold their pious, but illegal, assemblies. Their disobedience exasperated the cruelty of Hunneric. A military count was despatched from Carthage to Tipasa: he collected the Catholics in the Forum, and, in the presence of the whole province, deprived the guilty of their right hands and their tongues. But the holy confessors continued to speak without tongues; and this miracle is attested by Victor, an African bishop, who published a history of the persecution within two years after the event. "If any one," says Victor, "should doubt of the truth, let him repair to Constantinople, and listen to the clear and perfect language of Restitutus, the sub deacon, one of these glorious sufferers, who is now lodged in the palace of the emperor Zeno, and is respected by the devout empress." At Constantinople we are astonished to find a cool, a learned,

and unexceptionable witness, without interest, and without passion. Aeneas of Gaza, a Platonic philosopher, has accurately described his own observations on these African sufferers. "I saw them myself: I heard them speak: I diligently inquired by what means such an articulate voice could be formed without any organ of speech: I used my eyes to examine the report of my ears; I opened their mouth, and saw that the whole tongue had been completely torn away by the roots; an operation which the physicians generally suppose to be mortal." The testimony of Aeneas of Gaza might be confirmed by the superfluous evidence of the emperor Justinian, in a perpetual edict; of Count Marcellinus, in his Chronicle of the times; and of Pope Gregory the First, who had resided at Constantinople, as the minister of the Roman pontiff. They all lived within the compass of a century; and they all appeal to their personal knowledge, or the public notoriety, for the truth of a miracle, which was repeated in several instances, displayed on the greatest theatre of the world, and

submitted, during a series of years, to the calm examination of the senses. This supernatural gift of the African confessors, who spoke without tongues, will command the assent of those, and of those only, who already believe, that their language was pure and orthodox. But the stubborn mind of an infidel, is guarded by secret, incurable suspicion; and the Arian, or Socinian, who has seriously rejected the doctrine of a Trinity, will not be shaken by the most plausible evidence of an Athanasian miracle.

The Vandals and the Ostrogoths persevered in the profession of Arianism till the final ruin of the kingdoms which they had founded in Africa and Italy. The Barbarians of Gaul submitted to the orthodox dominion of the Franks; and Spain was restored to the Catholic church by the voluntary conversion of the Visigoths.

This salutary revolution was hastened by the example of a royal martyr, whom our calmer reason may style an ungrateful rebel. Leovigild, the Gothic monarch of Spain, deserved the respect of his enemies, and the love of his

subjects; the Catholics enjoyed a free toleration, and his Arian synods attempted, without much success, to reconcile their scruples by abolishing the unpopular rite of a second baptism. His eldest son Hermenegild, who was invested by his father with the royal diadem, and the fair principality of Boetica, contracted an honorable and orthodox alliance with a Merovingian princess, the daughter of Sigebert, king of Austrasia, and of the famous Brunchild. The beautiful Ingundis, who was no more than thirteen years of age, was received, beloved, and persecuted, in the Arian court of Toledo; and her religious constancy was alternately assaulted with blandishments and violence by Goisvintha, the Gothic queen, who abused the double claim of maternal authority. Incensed by her resistance, Goisvintha seized the Catholic princess by her long hair, inhumanly dashed her against the ground, kicked her till she was covered with blood, and at last gave orders that she should be stripped, and thrown into a basin, or fish pond. Love and honor might excite Hermenegild to resent this injurious

treatment of his bride; and he was gradually persuaded that Ingundis suffered for the cause of divine truth. Her tender complaints, and the weighty arguments of Leander, archbishop of Seville, accomplished his conversion and the heir of the Gothic monarchy was initiated in the Nicene faith by the solemn rites of confirmation. The rash youth, inflamed by zeal, and perhaps by ambition, was tempted to violate the duties of a son and a subject; and the Catholics of Spain, although they could not complain of persecution, applauded his pious rebellion against an heretical father. The civil war was protracted by the long and obstinate sieges of Merida, Cordova, and Seville, which had strenuously espoused the party of Hermenegild. He invited the orthodox Barbarians, the Seuvi, and the Franks, to the destruction of his native land; he solicited the dangerous aid of the Romans, who possessed Africa, and a part of the Spanish coast; and his holy ambassador, the archbishop Leander, effectually negotiated in person with the Byzantine court. But the hopes of the Catholics were

crushed by the active diligence of the monarch who commanded the troops and treasures of Spain; and the guilty Hermenegild, after his vain attempts to resist or to escape, was compelled to surrender himself into the hands of an incensed father. Leovigild was still mindful of that sacred character; and the rebel, despoiled of the regal ornaments, was still permitted, in a decent exile, to profess the Catholic religion. His repeated and unsuccessful treasons at length provoked the indignation of the Gothic king; and the sentence of death, which he pronounced with apparent reluctance, was privately executed in the tower of Seville. The inflexible constancy with which he refused to accept the Arian communion, as the price of his safety, may excuse the honors that have been paid to the memory of St. Hermenegild. His wife and infant son were detained by the Romans in ignominious captivity; and this domestic misfortune tarnished the glories of Leovigild, and imbittered the last moments of his life.

His son and successor, Recared, the first Catholic

king of Spain, had imbibed the faith of his unfortunate brother, which he supported with more prudence and success. Instead of revolting against his father, Recared patiently expected the hour of his death. Instead of condemning his memory, he piously supposed, that the dying monarch had abjured the errors of Arianism, and recommended to his son the conversion of the Gothic nation. To accomplish that salutary end, Recared convened an assembly of the Arian clergy and nobles, declared himself a Catholic, and exhorted them to imitate the example of their prince. The laborious interpretation of doubtful texts, or the curious pursuit of metaphysical arguments, would have excited an endless controversy; and the monarch discreetly proposed to his illiterate audience two substantial and visible arguments, the testimony of Earth, and of Heaven. The Earth had submitted to the Nicene synod: the Romans, the Barbarians, and the inhabitants of Spain, unanimously professed the same orthodox creed; and the Visigoths resisted, almost alone,

the consent of the Christian world. A superstitious age was prepared to reverence, as the testimony of Heaven, the preternatural cures, which were performed by the skill or virtue of the Catholic clergy; the baptismal fonts of Osset in Boetica, which were spontaneously replenished every year, on the vigil of Easter; and the miraculous shrine of St. Martin of Tours, which had already converted the Suevic prince and people of Gallicia. The Catholic king encountered some difficulties on this important change of the national religion. A conspiracy, secretly fomented by the queen dowager, was formed against his life; and two counts excited a dangerous revolt in the Narbonnese Gaul. But Recared disarmed the conspirators, defeated the rebels, and executed severe justice; which the Arians, in their turn, might brand with the reproach of persecution. Eight bishops, whose names betray their Barbaric origin, abjured their errors; and all the books of Arian theology were reduced to ashes, with the house in which they had been purposely collected. The whole body of the Visigoths and

Suevi were allured or driven into the pale of the Catholic communion; the faith, at least of the rising generation, was fervent and sincere: and the devout liberality of the Barbarians enriched the churches and monasteries of Spain. Seventy bishops, assembled in the council of Toledo, received the submission of their conquerors; and the zeal of the Spaniards improved the Nicene creed, by declaring the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, as well as from the Father; a weighty point of doctrine, which produced, long afterwards, the schism of the Greek and Latin churches. The royal proselyte immediately saluted and consulted Pope Gregory, surnamed the Great, a learned and holy prelate, whose reign was distinguished by the conversion of heretics and infidels. The ambassadors of Recared respectfully offered on the threshold of the Vatican his rich presents of gold and gems; they accepted, as a lucrative exchange, the hairs of St. John the Baptist; a cross, which enclosed a small piece of the true wood; and a key, that contained some particles of iron which had been

scraped from the chains of St. Peter.

The same Gregory, the spiritual conqueror of Britain, encouraged the pious Theodelinda, queen of the Lombards, to propagate the Nicene faith among the victorious savages, whose recent Christianity was polluted by the Arian heresy. Her devout labors still left room for the industry and success of future missionaries; and many cities of Italy were still disputed by hostile bishops. But the cause of Arianism was gradually suppressed by the weight of truth, of interest, and of example; and the controversy, which Egypt had derived from the Platonic school, was terminated, after a war of three hundred years, by the final conversion of the Lombards of Italy.

The first missionaries who preached the gospel to the Barbarians, appealed to the evidence of reason, and claimed the benefit of toleration. But no sooner had they established their spiritual dominion, than they exhorted the Christian kings to extirpate, without mercy, the remains of Roman or Barbaric superstition. The successors of Clovis

inflicted one hundred lashes on the peasants who refused to destroy their idols; the crime of sacrificing to the demons was punished by the Anglo Saxon laws with the heavier penalties of imprisonment and confiscation; and even the wise Alfred adopted, as an indispensable duty, the extreme rigor of the Mosaic institutions. But the punishment and the crime were gradually abolished among a Christian people; the theological disputes of the schools were suspended by propitious ignorance; and the intolerant spirit which could find neither idolaters nor heretics, was reduced to the persecution of the Jews. That exiled nation had founded some synagogues in the cities of Gaul; but Spain, since the time of Hadrian, was filled with their numerous colonies. The wealth which they accumulated by trade, and the management of the finances, invited the pious avarice of their masters; and they might be oppressed without danger, as they had lost the use, and even the remembrance, of arms. Sisebut, a Gothic king, who reigned in the beginning of the seventh century, proceeded at once to the last

extremes of persecution. Ninety thousand Jews were compelled to receive the sacrament of baptism; the fortunes of the obstinate infidels were confiscated, their bodies were tortured; and it seems doubtful whether they were permitted to abandon their native country. The excessive zeal of the Catholic king was moderated, even by the clergy of Spain, who solemnly pronounced an inconsistent sentence: that the sacraments should not be forcibly imposed; but that the Jews who had been baptized should be constrained, for the honor of the church, to persevere in the external practice of a religion which they disbelieved and detested. Their frequent relapses provoked one of the successors of Sisebut to banish the whole nation from his dominions; and a council of Toledo published a decree, that every Gothic king should swear to maintain this salutary edict. But the tyrants were unwilling to dismiss the victims, whom they delighted to torture, or to deprive themselves of the industrious slaves, over whom they might exercise a lucrative oppression. The Jews still continued in

Spain, under the weight of the civil and ecclesiastical laws, which in the same country have been faithfully transcribed in the Code of the Inquisition. The Gothic kings and bishops at length discovered, that injuries will produce hatred, and that hatred will find the opportunity of revenge. A nation, the secret or professed enemies of Christianity, still multiplied in servitude and distress; and the intrigues of the Jews promoted the rapid success of the Arabian conquerors.

As soon as the Barbarians withdrew their powerful support, the unpopular heresy of Arius sunk into contempt and oblivion. But the Greeks still retained their subtle and loquacious disposition: the establishment of an obscure doctrine suggested new questions, and new disputes; and it was always in the power of an ambitious prelate, or a fanatic monk, to violate the peace of the church, and, perhaps, of the empire. The historian of the empire may overlook those disputes which were confined to the obscurity of schools and synods. The Manichaeans,

who labored to reconcile the religions of Christ and of Zoroaster, had secretly introduced themselves into the provinces: but these foreign sectaries were involved in the common disgrace of the Gnostics, and the Imperial laws were executed by the public hatred. The rational opinions of the Pelagians were propagated from Britain to Rome, Africa, and Palestine, and silently expired in a superstitious age. But the East was distracted by the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies; which attempted to explain the mystery of the incarnation, and hastened the ruin of Christianity in her native land. These controversies were first agitated under the reign of the younger Theodosius: but their important consequences extend far beyond the limits of the present volume. The metaphysical chain of argument, the contests of ecclesiastical ambition, and their political influence on the decline of the Byzantine empire, may afford an interesting and instructive series of history, from the general councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, to the conquest of the East by the successors of Mahomet.

Chapter XXXVIII: Reign Of Clovis.

Part I.

Reign And Conversion Of Clovis. His Victories Over The Alemanni, Burgundians, And Visigoths. Establishment Of The French Monarchy In Gaul. Laws Of The Barbarians. State Of The Romans. The Visigoths Of Spain. Conquest Of Britain By The Saxons.

The Gauls, who impatiently supported the Roman yoke, received a memorable lesson from one of the lieutenants of Vespasian, whose weighty sense has been refined and expressed by the genius of Tacitus. "The protection of the republic has delivered Gaul from internal discord and foreign invasions. By the loss of national independence, you have acquired the name and privileges of Roman citizens. You enjoy, in common with yourselves, the permanent benefits of civil government; and your remote situation is less exposed to the accidental mischiefs of tyranny. Instead of exercising the rights of

conquest, we have been contented to impose such tributes as are requisite for your own preservation. Peace cannot be secured without armies; and armies must be supported at the expense of the people. It is for your sake, not for our own, that we guard the barrier of the Rhine against the ferocious Germans, who have so often attempted, and who will always desire, to exchange the solitude of their woods and morasses for the wealth and fertility of Gaul. The fall of Rome would be fatal to the provinces; and you would be buried in the ruins of that mighty fabric, which has been raised by the valor and wisdom of eight hundred years. Your imaginary freedom would be insulted and oppressed by a savage master; and the expulsion of the Romans would be succeeded by the eternal hostilities of the Barbarian conquerors." This salutary advice was accepted, and this strange prediction was accomplished. In the space of four hundred years, the hardy Gauls, who had encountered the arms of Caesar, were imperceptibly melted into the general mass of citizens and subjects: the Western empire

was dissolved; and the Germans, who had passed the Rhine, fiercely contended for the possession of Gaul, and excited the contempt, or abhorrence, of its peaceful and polished inhabitants. With that conscious pride which the preeminence of knowledge and luxury seldom fails to inspire, they derided the hairy and gigantic savages of the North; their rustic manners, dissonant joy, voracious appetite, and their horrid appearance, equally disgusting to the sight and to the smell. The liberal studies were still cultivated in the schools of Autun and Bordeaux; and the language of Cicero and Virgil was familiar to the Gallic youth. Their ears were astonished by the harsh and unknown sounds of the Germanic dialect, and they ingeniously lamented that the trembling muses fled from the harmony of a Burgundian lyre. The Gauls were endowed with all the advantages of art and nature; but as they wanted courage to defend them, they were justly condemned to obey, and even to flatter, the victorious Barbarians, by whose clemency they held their

precarious fortunes and their lives.

As soon as Odoacer had extinguished the Western empire, he sought the friendship of the most powerful of the Barbarians. The new sovereign of Italy resigned to Euric, king of the Visigoths, all the Roman conquests beyond the Alps, as far as the Rhine and the Ocean: and the senate might confirm this liberal gift with some ostentation of power, and without any real loss of revenue and dominion. The lawful pretensions of Euric were justified by ambition and success; and the Gothic nation might aspire, under his command, to the monarchy of Spain and Gaul. Arles and Marseilles surrendered to his arms: he oppressed the freedom of Auvergne; and the bishop condescended to purchase his recall from exile by a tribute of just, but reluctant praise. Sidonius waited before the gates of the palace among a crowd of ambassadors and suppliants; and their various business at the court of Bordeaux attested the power, and the renown, of the king of the Visigoths. The Heruli of the distant ocean, who

painted their naked bodies with its coerulean color, implored his protection; and the Saxons respected the maritime provinces of a prince, who was destitute of any naval force. The tall Burgundians submitted to his authority; nor did he restore the captive Franks, till he had imposed on that fierce nation the terms of an unequal peace. The Vandals of Africa cultivated his useful friendship; and the Ostrogoths of Pannonia were supported by his powerful aid against the oppression of the neighboring Huns. The North (such are the lofty strains of the poet) was agitated or appeased by the nod of Euric; the great king of Persia consulted the oracle of the West; and the aged god of the Tyber was protected by the swelling genius of the Garonne. The fortune of nations has often depended on accidents; and France may ascribe her greatness to the premature death of the Gothic king, at a time when his son Alaric was a helpless infant, and his adversary Clovis an ambitious and valiant youth.

While Childeric, the father of Clovis, lived an exile

in Germany, he was hospitably entertained by the queen, as well as by the king, of the Thuringians. After his restoration, Basina escaped from her husband's bed to the arms of her lover; freely declaring, that if she had known a man wiser, stronger, or more beautiful, than Childeric, that man should have been the object of her preference. Clovis was the offspring of this voluntary union; and, when he was no more than fifteen years of age, he succeeded, by his father's death, to the command of the Salian tribe. The narrow limits of his kingdom were confined to the island of the Batavians, with the ancient dioceses of Tournay and Arras; and at the baptism of Clovis the number of his warriors could not exceed five thousand. The kindred tribes of the Franks, who had seated themselves along the Belgic rivers, the Scheld, the Meuse, the Moselle, and the Rhine, were governed by their independent kings, of the Merovingian race; the equals, the allies, and sometimes the enemies of the Salic prince. But the Germans, who obeyed, in peace, the hereditary jurisdiction of their chiefs, were

free to follow the standard of a popular and victorious general; and the superior merit of Clovis attracted the respect and allegiance of the national confederacy. When he first took the field, he had neither gold and silver in his coffers, nor wine and corn in his magazine; but he imitated the example of Caesar, who, in the same country, had acquired wealth by the sword, and purchased soldiers with the fruits of conquest. After each successful battle or expedition, the spoils were accumulated in one common mass; every warrior received his proportionable share; and the royal prerogative submitted to the equal regulations of military law. The untamed spirit of the Barbarians was taught to acknowledge the advantages of regular discipline. At the annual review of the month of March, their arms were diligently inspected; and when they traversed a peaceful territory, they were prohibited from touching a blade of grass. The justice of Clovis was inexorable; and his careless or disobedient soldiers were punished with instant death. It would be superfluous to praise the valor of

a Frank; but the valor of Clovis was directed by cool and consummate prudence. In all his transactions with mankind, he calculated the weight of interest, of passion, and of opinion; and his measures were sometimes adapted to the sanguinary manners of the Germans, and sometimes moderated by the milder genius of Rome, and Christianity. He was intercepted in the career of victory, since he died in the forty fifth year of his age: but he had already accomplished, in a reign of thirty years, the establishment of the French monarchy in Gaul.

The first exploit of Clovis was the defeat of Syagrius, the son of Aegidius; and the public quarrel might, on this occasion, be inflamed by private resentment. The glory of the father still insulted the Merovingian race; the power of the son might excite the jealous ambition of the king of the Franks. Syagrius inherited, as a patrimonial estate, the city and diocese of Soissons: the desolate remnant of the second Belgic, Rheims and Troyes, Beauvais and Amiens, would

naturally submit to the count or patrician: and after the dissolution of the Western empire, he might reign with the title, or at least with the authority, of king of the Romans. As a Roman, he had been educated in the liberal studies of rhetoric and jurisprudence; but he was engaged by accident and policy in the familiar use of the Germanic idiom. The independent Barbarians resorted to the tribunal of a stranger, who possessed the singular talent of explaining, in their native tongue, the dictates of reason and equity. The diligence and affability of their judge rendered him popular, the impartial wisdom of his decrees obtained their voluntary obedience, and the reign of Syagrius over the Franks and Burgundians seemed to revive the original institution of civil society. In the midst of these peaceful occupations, Syagrius received, and boldly accepted, the hostile defiance of Clovis; who challenged his rival in the spirit, and almost in the language, of chivalry, to appoint the day and the field of battle. In the time of Caesar Soissons would have poured forth a body of fifty thousand

horse and such an army might have been plentifully supplied with shields, cuirasses, and military engines, from the three arsenals or manufactures of the city. But the courage and numbers of the Gallic youth were long since exhausted; and the loose bands of volunteers, or mercenaries, who marched under the standard of Syagrius, were incapable of contending with the national valor of the Franks. It would be ungenerous without some more accurate knowledge of his strength and resources, to condemn the rapid flight of Syagrius, who escaped, after the loss of a battle, to the distant court of Thoulouse. The feeble minority of Alaric could not assist or protect an unfortunate fugitive; the pusillanimous Goths were intimidated by the menaces of Clovis; and the Roman king, after a short confinement, was delivered into the hands of the executioner. The Belgic cities surrendered to the king of the Franks; and his dominions were enlarged towards the East by the ample diocese of Tongres which Clovis subdued in the tenth year of his reign.

The name of the Alemanni has been absurdly derived from their imaginary settlement on the banks of the Leman Lake. That fortunate district, from the lake to the Avenche, and Mount Jura, was occupied by the Burgundians. The northern parts of Helvetia had indeed been subdued by the ferocious Alemanni, who destroyed with their own hands the fruits of their conquest. A province, improved and adorned by the arts of Rome, was again reduced to a savage wilderness; and some vestige of the stately Vindonissa may still be discovered in the fertile and populous valley of the Aar. From the source of the Rhine to its conflux with the Mein and the Moselle, the formidable swarms of the Alemanni commanded either side of the river, by the right of ancient possession, or recent victory. They had spread themselves into Gaul, over the modern provinces of Alsace and Lorraine; and their bold invasion of the kingdom of Cologne summoned the Salic prince to the defence of his Ripuarian allies.

Clovis encountered the invaders of Gaul in the plain of

Tolbiac, about twenty four miles from Cologne; and the two fiercest nations of Germany were mutually animated by the memory of past exploits, and the prospect of future greatness. The Franks, after an obstinate struggle, gave way; and the Alemanni, raising a shout of victory, impetuously pressed their retreat. But the battle was restored by the valor, and the conduct, and perhaps by the piety, of Clovis; and the event of the bloody day decided forever the alternative of empire or servitude. The last king of the Alemanni was slain in the field, and his people were slaughtered or pursued, till they threw down their arms, and yielded to the mercy of the conqueror. Without discipline it was impossible for them to rally: they had contemptuously demolished the walls and fortifications which might have protected their distress; and they were followed into the heart of their forests by an enemy not less active, or intrepid, than themselves. The great Theodoric congratulated the victory of Clovis, whose sister Albofleda the king of Italy had lately married; but he

mildly interceded with his brother in favor of the suppliants and fugitives, who had implored his protection. The Gallic territories, which were possessed by the Alemanni, became the prize of their conqueror; and the haughty nation, invincible, or rebellious, to the arms of Rome, acknowledged the sovereignty of the Merovingian kings, who graciously permitted them to enjoy their peculiar manners and institutions, under the government of official, and, at length, of hereditary, dukes. After the conquest of the Western provinces, the Franks alone maintained their ancient habitations beyond the Rhine. They gradually subdued, and civilized, the exhausted countries, as far as the Elbe, and the mountains of Bohemia; and the peace of Europe was secured by the obedience of Germany.

Till the thirtieth year of his age, Clovis continued to worship the gods of his ancestors. His disbelief, or rather disregard, of Christianity, might encourage him to pillage with less remorse the churches of a hostile territory: but his subjects of Gaul enjoyed the free exercise of

religious worship; and the bishops entertained a more favorable hope of the idolater, than of the heretics. The Merovingian prince had contracted a fortunate alliance with the fair Clotilda, the niece of the king of Burgundy, who, in the midst of an Arian court, was educated in the profession of the Catholic faith. It was her interest, as well as her duty, to achieve the conversion of a Pagan husband; and Clovis insensibly listened to the voice of love and religion. He consented (perhaps such terms had been previously stipulated) to the baptism of his eldest son; and though the sudden death of the infant excited some superstitious fears, he was persuaded, a second time, to repeat the dangerous experiment. In the distress of the battle of Tolbiac, Clovis loudly invoked the God of Clotilda and the Christians; and victory disposed him to hear, with respectful gratitude, the eloquent Remigius, bishop of Rheims, who forcibly displayed the temporal and spiritual advantages of his conversion. The king declared himself satisfied of the truth of the Catholic faith; and the political

reasons which might have suspended his public profession, were removed by the devout or loyal acclamations of the Franks, who showed themselves alike prepared to follow their heroic leader to the field of battle, or to the baptismal font. The important ceremony was performed in the cathedral of Rheims, with every circumstance of magnificence and solemnity that could impress an awful sense of religion on the minds of its rude proselytes. The new Constantine was immediately baptized, with three thousand of his warlike subjects; and their example was imitated by the remainder of the gentle Barbarians, who, in obedience to the victorious prelate, adored the cross which they had burnt, and burnt the idols which they had formerly adored. The mind of Clovis was susceptible of transient fervor: he was exasperated by the pathetic tale of the passion and death of Christ; and, instead of weighing the salutary consequences of that mysterious sacrifice, he exclaimed, with indiscreet fury, "Had I been present at the head of my valiant Franks, I would have revenged his

injuries." But the savage conqueror of Gaul was incapable of examining the proofs of a religion, which depends on the laborious investigation of historic evidence and speculative theology. He was still more incapable of feeling the mild influence of the gospel, which persuades and purifies the heart of a genuine convert. His ambitious reign was a perpetual violation of moral and Christian duties: his hands were stained with blood in peace as well as in war; and, as soon as Clovis had dismissed a synod of the Gallican church, he calmly assassinated all the princes of the Merovingian race. Yet the king of the Franks might sincerely worship the Christian God, as a Being more excellent and powerful than his national deities; and the signal deliverance and victory of Tolbiac encouraged Clovis to confide in the future protection of the Lord of Hosts. Martin, the most popular of the saints, had filled the Western world with the fame of those miracles which were incessantly performed at his holy sepulchre of Tours. His visible or invisible aid promoted the cause of a liberal

and orthodox prince; and the profane remark of Clovis himself, that St. Martin was an expensive friend, need not be interpreted as the symptom of any permanent or rational scepticism. But earth, as well as heaven, rejoiced in the conversion of the Franks. On the memorable day when Clovis ascended from the baptismal font, he alone, in the Christian world, deserved the name and prerogatives of a Catholic king. The emperor Anastasius entertained some dangerous errors concerning the nature of the divine incarnation; and the Barbarians of Italy, Africa, Spain, and Gaul, were involved in the Arian heresy. The eldest, or rather the only, son of the church, was acknowledged by the clergy as their lawful sovereign, or glorious deliverer; and the armies of Clovis were strenuously supported by the zeal and fervor of the Catholic faction.

Under the Roman empire, the wealth and jurisdiction of the bishops, their sacred character, and perpetual office, their numerous dependants, popular eloquence, and provincial assemblies, had rendered them always

respectable, and sometimes dangerous. Their influence was augmented with the progress of superstition; and the establishment of the French monarchy may, in some degree, be ascribed to the firm alliance of a hundred prelates, who reigned in the discontented, or independent, cities of Gaul. The slight foundations of the Armorican republic had been repeatedly shaken, or overthrown; but the same people still guarded their domestic freedom; asserted the dignity of the Roman name; and bravely resisted the predatory inroads, and regular attacks, of Clovis, who labored to extend his conquests from the Seine to the Loire. Their successful opposition introduced an equal and honorable union. The Franks esteemed the valor of the Armoricans and the Armoricans were reconciled by the religion of the Franks. The military force which had been stationed for the defence of Gaul, consisted of one hundred different bands of cavalry or infantry; and these troops, while they assumed the title and privileges of Roman soldiers, were renewed by an incessant supply of the Barbarian youth. The

extreme fortifications, and scattered fragments of the empire, were still defended by their hopeless courage. But their retreat was intercepted, and their communication was impracticable: they were abandoned by the Greek princes of Constantinople, and they piously disclaimed all connection with the Arian usurpers of Gaul. They accepted, without shame or reluctance, the generous capitulation, which was proposed by a Catholic hero; and this spurious, or legitimate, progeny of the Roman legions, was distinguished in the succeeding age by their arms, their ensigns, and their peculiar dress and institutions. But the national strength was increased by these powerful and voluntary accessions; and the neighboring kingdoms dreaded the numbers, as well as the spirit, of the Franks. The reduction of the Northern provinces of Gaul, instead of being decided by the chance of a single battle, appears to have been slowly effected by the gradual operation of war and treaty and Clovis acquired each object of his ambition, by such efforts, or such concessions, as were adequate to its

real value. His savage character, and the virtues of Henry IV., suggest the most opposite ideas of human nature; yet some resemblance may be found in the situation of two princes, who conquered France by their valor, their policy, and the merits of a seasonable conversion.

The kingdom of the Burgundians, which was defined by the course of two Gallic rivers, the Saone and the Rhone, extended from the forest of Vosges to the Alps and the sea of Marscilles. The sceptre was in the hands of Gundobald. That valiant and ambitious prince had reduced the number of royal candidates by the death of two brothers, one of whom was the father of Clotilda; but his imperfect prudence still permitted Godegesil, the youngest of his brothers, to possess the dependent principality of Geneva. The Arian monarch was justly alarmed by the satisfaction, and the hopes, which seemed to animate his clergy and people after the conversion of Clovis; and Gundobald convened at Lyons an assembly of his bishops, to reconcile, if it were possible, their religious and political

discontents. A vain conference was agitated between the two factions. The Arians upbraided the Catholics with the worship of three Gods: the Catholics defended their cause by theological distinctions; and the usual arguments, objections, and replies were reverberated with obstinate clamor; till the king revealed his secret apprehensions, by an abrupt but decisive question, which he addressed to the orthodox bishops. "If you truly profess the Christian religion, why do you not restrain the king of the Franks? He has declared war against me, and forms alliances with my enemies for my destruction. A sanguinary and covetous mind is not the symptom of a sincere conversion: let him show his faith by his works." The answer of Avitus, bishop of Vienna, who spoke in the name of his brethren, was delivered with the voice and countenance of an angel. "We are ignorant of the motives and intentions of the king of the Franks: but we are taught by Scripture, that the kingdoms which abandon the divine law are frequently subverted; and that enemies will arise on every side against those who

have made God their enemy. Return, with thy people, to the law of God, and he will give peace and security to thy dominions." The king of Burgundy, who was not prepared to accept the condition which the Catholics considered as essential to the treaty, delayed and dismissed the ecclesiastical conference; after reproaching his bishops, that Clovis, their friend and proselyte, had privately tempted the allegiance of his brother.

Part II.

The allegiance of his brother was already seduced; and the obedience of Godegesil, who joined the royal standard with the troops of Geneva, more effectually promoted the success of the conspiracy. While the Franks and Burgundians contended with equal valor, his seasonable desertion decided the event of the battle; and as Gundobald was faintly supported by the disaffected Gauls, he yielded to the arms of Clovis, and hastily retreated from the field, which appears to have been situate between Langres and

Dijon. He distrusted the strength of Dijon, a quadrangular fortress, encompassed by two rivers, and by a wall thirty feet high, and fifteen thick, with four gates, and thirty three towers: he abandoned to the pursuit of Clovis the important cities of Lyons and Vienna; and Gundobald still fled with precipitation, till he had reached Avignon, at the distance of two hundred and fifty miles from the field of battle.

A long siege and an artful negotiation, admonished the king of the Franks of the danger and difficulty of his enterprise. He imposed a tribute on the Burgundian prince, compelled him to pardon and reward his brother's treachery, and proudly returned to his own dominions, with the spoils and captives of the southern provinces. This splendid triumph was soon clouded by the intelligence, that Gundobald had violated his recent obligations, and that the unfortunate Godegesil, who was left at Vienna with a garrison of five thousand Franks, had been besieged, surprised, and massacred by his inhuman brother. Such an outrage might have exasperated the patience of the

most peaceful sovereign; yet the conqueror of Gaul dissembled the injury, released the tribute, and accepted the alliance, and military service, of the king of Burgundy. Clovis no longer possessed those advantages which had assured the success of the preceding war; and his rival, instructed by adversity, had found new resources in the affections of his people. The Gauls or Romans applauded the mild and impartial laws of Gundobald, which almost raised them to the same level with their conquerors. The bishops were reconciled, and flattered, by the hopes, which he artfully suggested, of his approaching conversion; and though he eluded their accomplishment to the last moment of his life, his moderation secured the peace, and suspended the ruin, of the kingdom of Burgundy.

I am impatient to pursue the final ruin of that kingdom, which was accomplished under the reign of Sigismond, the son of Gundobald. The Catholic Sigismond has acquired the honors of a saint and martyr; but the hands of the royal saint were stained with the blood of his

innocent son, whom he inhumanly sacrificed to the pride and resentment of a step mother. He soon discovered his error, and bewailed the irreparable loss. While Sigismond embraced the corpse of the unfortunate youth, he received a severe admonition from one of his attendants: "It is not his situation, O king! it is thine which deserves pity and lamentation." The reproaches of a guilty conscience were alleviated, however, by his liberal donations to the monastery of Agaunum, or St. Maurice, in Vallais; which he himself had founded in honor of the imaginary martyrs of the Thebaean legion. A full chorus of perpetual psalmody was instituted by the pious king; he assiduously practised the austere devotion of the monks; and it was his humble prayer, that Heaven would inflict in this world the punishment of his sins. His prayer was heard: the avengers were at hand: and the provinces of Burgundy were overwhelmed by an army of victorious Franks. After the event of an unsuccessful battle, Sigismond, who wished to protract his life that he might prolong his penance,

concealed himself in the desert in a religious habit, till he was discovered and betrayed by his subjects, who solicited the favor of their new masters. The captive monarch, with his wife and two children, was transported to Orleans, and buried alive in a deep well, by the stern command of the sons of Clovis; whose cruelty might derive some excuse from the maxims and examples of their barbarous age. Their ambition, which urged them to achieve the conquest of Burgundy, was inflamed, or disguised, by filial piety: and Clotilda, whose sanctity did not consist in the forgiveness of injuries, pressed them to revenge her father's death on the family of his assassin. The rebellious Burgundians (for they attempted to break their chains) were still permitted to enjoy their national laws under the obligation of tribute and military service; and the Merovingian princes peaceably reigned over a kingdom, whose glory and greatness had been first overthrown by the arms of Clovis.

The first victory of Clovis had insulted the honor of

the Goths. They viewed his rapid progress with jealousy and terror; and the youthful fame of Alaric was oppressed by the more potent genius of his rival. Some disputes inevitably arose on the edge of their contiguous dominions; and after the delays of fruitless negotiation, a personal interview of the two kings was proposed and accepted. The conference of Clovis and Alaric was held in a small island of the Loire, near Amboise. They embraced, familiarly conversed, and feasted together; and separated with the warmest professions of peace and brotherly love. But their apparent confidence concealed a dark suspicion of hostile and treacherous designs; and their mutual complaints solicited, eluded, and disclaimed, a final arbitration. At Paris, which he already considered as his royal seat, Clovis declared to an assembly of the princes and warriors, the pretence, and the motive, of a Gothic war. "It grieves me to see that the Arians still possess the fairest portion of Gaul. Let us march against them with the aid of God; and, having vanquished the heretics, we will possess

and divide their fertile provinces." The Franks, who were inspired by hereditary valor and recent zeal, applauded the generous design of their monarch; expressed their resolution to conquer or die, since death and conquest would be equally profitable; and solemnly protested that they would never shave their beards till victory should absolve them from that inconvenient vow. The enterprise was promoted by the public or private exhortations of Clotilda. She reminded her husband how effectually some pious foundation would propitiate the Deity, and his servants: and the Christian hero, darting his battle axe with a skilful and nervous band, "There, (said he,) on that spot where my Francisca, shall fall, will I erect a church in honor of the holy apostles." This ostentatious piety confirmed and justified the attachment of the Catholics, with whom he secretly corresponded; and their devout wishes were gradually ripened into a formidable conspiracy. The people of Aquitain were alarmed by the indiscreet reproaches of their Gothic tyrants, who justly accused them

of preferring the dominion of the Franks: and their zealous adherent Quintianus, bishop of Rodez, preached more forcibly in his exile than in his diocese. To resist these foreign and domestic enemies, who were fortified by the alliance of the Burgundians, Alaric collected his troops, far more numerous than the military powers of Clovis. The Visigoths resumed the exercise of arms, which they had neglected in a long and luxurious peace; a select band of valiant and robust slaves attended their masters to the field; and the cities of Gaul were compelled to furnish their doubtful and reluctant aid. Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, who reigned in Italy, had labored to maintain the tranquillity of Gaul; and he assumed, or affected, for that purpose, the impartial character of a mediator. But the sagacious monarch dreaded the rising empire of Clovis, and he was firmly engaged to support the national and religious cause of the Goths.

The accidental, or artificial, prodigies which adorned the expedition of Clovis, were accepted by a superstitious

age, as the manifest declaration of the divine favor. He marched from Paris; and as he proceeded with decent reverence through the holy diocese of Tours, his anxiety tempted him to consult the shrine of St. Martin, the sanctuary and the oracle of Gaul. His messengers were instructed to remark the words of the Psalm which should happen to be chanted at the precise moment when they entered the church. Those words most fortunately expressed the valor and victory of the champions of Heaven, and the application was easily transferred to the new Joshua, the new Gideon, who went forth to battle against the enemies of the Lord. Orleans secured to the Franks a bridge on the Loire; but, at the distance of forty miles from Poitiers, their progress was intercepted by an extraordinary swell of the River Vienne or Vienne; and the opposite banks were covered by the encampment of the Visigoths. Delay must be always dangerous to Barbarians, who consume the country through which they march; and had Clovis possessed leisure and materials, it might have

been impracticable to construct a bridge, or to force a passage, in the face of a superior enemy. But the affectionate peasants who were impatient to welcome their deliverer, could easily betray some unknown or unguarded ford: the merit of the discovery was enhanced by the useful interposition of fraud or fiction; and a white hart, of singular size and beauty, appeared to guide and animate the march of the Catholic army. The counsels of the Visigoths were irresolute and distracted. A crowd of impatient warriors, presumptuous in their strength, and disdaining to fly before the robbers of Germany, excited Alaric to assert in arms the name and blood of the conquerors of Rome. The advice of the graver chieftains pressed him to elude the first ardor of the Franks; and to expect, in the southern provinces of Gaul, the veteran and victorious Ostrogoths, whom the king of Italy had already sent to his assistance. The decisive moments were wasted in idle deliberation the Goths too hastily abandoned, perhaps, an advantageous post; and the opportunity of a

secure retreat was lost by their slow and disorderly motions. After Clovis had passed the ford, as it is still named, of the Hart, he advanced with bold and hasty steps to prevent the escape of the enemy. His nocturnal march was directed by a flaming meteor, suspended in the air above the cathedral of Poitiers; and this signal, which might be previously concerted with the orthodox successor of St. Hilary, was compared to the column of fire that guided the Israelites in the desert. At the third hour of the day, about ten miles beyond Poitiers, Clovis overtook, and instantly attacked, the Gothic army; whose defeat was already prepared by terror and confusion. Yet they rallied in their extreme distress, and the martial youths, who had clamorously demanded the battle, refused to survive the ignominy of flight. The two kings encountered each other in single combat. Alaric fell by the hand of his rival; and the victorious Frank was saved by the goodness of his cuirass, and the vigor of his horse, from the spears of two desperate Goths, who furiously rode against him to revenge the death

of their sovereign. The vague expression of a mountain of the slain, serves to indicate a cruel though indefinite slaughter; but Gregory has carefully observed, that his valiant countryman Apollinaris, the son of Sidonius, lost his life at the head of the nobles of Auvergne. Perhaps these suspected Catholics had been maliciously exposed to the blind assault of the enemy; and perhaps the influence of religion was superseded by personal attachment or military honor.

Such is the empire of Fortune, (if we may still disguise our ignorance under that popular name,) that it is almost equally difficult to foresee the events of war, or to explain their various consequences. A bloody and complete victory has sometimes yielded no more than the possession of the field and the loss of ten thousand men has sometimes been sufficient to destroy, in a single day, the work of ages. The decisive battle of Poitiers was followed by the conquest of Aquitain. Alaric had left behind him an infant son, a bastard competitor, factious nobles, and a disloyal people; and the

remaining forces of the Goths were oppressed by the general consternation, or opposed to each other in civil discord. The victorious king of the Franks proceeded without delay to the siege of Angouleme. At the sound of his trumpets the walls of the city imitated the example of Jericho, and instantly fell to the ground; a splendid miracle, which may be reduced to the supposition, that some clerical engineers had secretly undermined the foundations of the rampart. At Bordeaux, which had submitted without resistance, Clovis established his winter quarters; and his prudent economy transported from Thoulouse the royal treasures, which were deposited in the capital of the monarchy. The conqueror penetrated as far as the confines of Spain; restored the honors of the Catholic church; fixed in Aquitain a colony of Franks; and delegated to his lieutenants the easy task of subduing, or extirpating, the nation of the Visigoths. But the Visigoths were protected by the wise and powerful monarch of Italy. While the balance was still equal, Theodoric had perhaps delayed

the march of the Ostrogoths; but their strenuous efforts successfully resisted the ambition of Clovis; and the army of the Franks, and their Burgundian allies, was compelled to raise the siege of Arles, with the loss, as it is said, of thirty thousand men. These vicissitudes inclined the fierce spirit of Clovis to acquiesce in an advantageous treaty of peace. The Visigoths were suffered to retain the possession of Septimania, a narrow tract of sea coast, from the Rhone to the Pyrenees; but the ample province of Aquitain, from those mountains to the Loire, was indissolubly united to the kingdom of France.

After the success of the Gothic war, Clovis accepted the honors of the Roman consulship. The emperor Anastasius ambitiously bestowed on the most powerful rival of Theodoric the title and ensigns of that eminent dignity; yet, from some unknown cause, the name of Clovis has not been inscribed in the Fasti either of the East or West. On the solemn day, the monarch of Gaul, placing a diadem on his head, was invested, in the church of St. Martin, with

a purple tunic and mantle. From thence he proceeded on horseback to the cathedral of Tours; and, as he passed through the streets, profusely scattered, with his own hand, a donative of gold and silver to the joyful multitude, who incessantly repeated their acclamations of Consul and Augustus. The actual or legal authority of Clovis could not receive any new accessions from the consular dignity. It was a name, a shadow, an empty pageant; and if the conqueror had been instructed to claim the ancient prerogatives of that high office, they must have expired with the period of its annual duration. But the Romans were disposed to revere, in the person of their master, that antique title which the emperors condescended to assume: the Barbarian himself seemed to contract a sacred obligation to respect the majesty of the republic; and the successors of Theodosius, by soliciting his friendship, tacitly forgave, and almost ratified, the usurpation of Gaul.

Twenty five years after the death of Clovis this important concession was more formally declared, in a

treaty between his sons and the emperor Justinian. The Ostrogoths of Italy, unable to defend their distant acquisitions, had resigned to the Franks the cities of Arles and Marseilles; of Arles, still adorned with the seat of a Praetorian praefect, and of Marseilles, enriched by the advantages of trade and navigation. This transaction was confirmed by the Imperial authority; and Justinian, generously yielding to the Franks the sovereignty of the countries beyond the Alps, which they already possessed, absolved the provincials from their allegiance; and established on a more lawful, though not more solid, foundation, the throne of the Merovingians. From that era they enjoyed the right of celebrating at Arles the games of the circus; and by a singular privilege, which was denied even to the Persian monarch, the gold coin, impressed with their name and image, obtained a legal currency in the empire. A Greek historian of that age has praised the private and public virtues of the Franks, with a partial enthusiasm, which cannot be sufficiently justified by their

domestic annals. He celebrates their politeness and urbanity, their regular government, and orthodox religion; and boldly asserts, that these Barbarians could be distinguished only by their dress and language from the subjects of Rome. Perhaps the Franks already displayed the social disposition, and lively graces, which, in every age, have disguised their vices, and sometimes concealed their intrinsic merit. Perhaps Agathias, and the Greeks, were dazzled by the rapid progress of their arms, and the splendor of their empire. Since the conquest of Burgundy, Gaul, except the Gothic province of Septimania, was subject, in its whole extent, to the sons of Clovis. They had extinguished the German kingdom of Thuringia, and their vague dominion penetrated beyond the Rhine, into the heart of their native forests. The Alemanni, and Bavarians, who had occupied the Roman provinces of Rhaetia and Noricum, to the south of the Danube, confessed themselves the humble vassals of the Franks; and the feeble barrier of the Alps was incapable of resisting their ambition. When the last survivor

of the sons of Clovis united the inheritance and conquests of the Merovingians, his kingdom extended far beyond the limits of modern France. Yet modern France, such has been the progress of arts and policy, far surpasses, in wealth, populousness, and power, the spacious but savage realms of Clotaire or Dagobert.

The Franks, or French, are the only people of Europe who can deduce a perpetual succession from the conquerors of the Western empire. But their conquest of Gaul was followed by ten centuries of anarchy and ignorance. On the revival of learning, the students, who had been formed in the schools of Athens and Rome, disdained their Barbarian ancestors; and a long period elapsed before patient labor could provide the requisite materials to satisfy, or rather to excite, the curiosity of more enlightened times. At length the eye of criticism and philosophy was

directed to the antiquities of France; but even philosophers have been tainted by the contagion of prejudice and passion. The most extreme and exclusive

systems, of the personal servitude of the Gauls, or of their voluntary and equal alliance with the Franks, have been rashly conceived, and obstinately defended; and the intemperate disputants have accused each other of conspiring against the prerogative of the crown, the dignity of the nobles, or the freedom of the people. Yet the sharp conflict has usefully exercised the adverse powers of learning and genius; and each antagonist, alternately vanquished and victorious has extirpated some ancient errors, and established some interesting truths. An impartial stranger, instructed by their discoveries, their disputes, and even their faults, may describe, from the same original materials, the state of the Roman provincials, after Gaul had submitted to the arms and laws of the Merovingian kings. thirty years this interesting subject has been agitated by the free spirit of the count de Boulainvilliers, the learned ingenuity of the Abbe Dubos, the comprehensive genius of the president de Montesquieu, and the good sense and diligence of the Abbe de Mably,

The rudest, or the most servile, condition of human society, is regulated, however, by some fixed and general rules. When Tacitus surveyed the primitive simplicity of the Germans, he discovered some permanent maxims, or customs, of public and private life, which were preserved by faithful tradition till the introduction of the art of writing, and of the Latin tongue. Before the election of the Merovingian kings, the most powerful tribe, or nation, of the Franks, appointed four venerable chieftains to compose the Salic laws; and their labors were examined and approved in three successive assemblies of the people. After the baptism of Clovis, he reformed several articles that appeared incompatible with Christianity: the Salic law was again amended by his sons; and at length, under the reign of Dagobert, the code was revised and promulgated in its actual form, one hundred years after the establishment of the French monarchy. Within the same period, the customs of the Ripuarians were transcribed and published; and Charlemagne himself, the legislator of his age and country,

had accurately studied the two national laws, which still prevailed among the Franks. The same care was extended to their vassals; and the rude institutions of the Alemanni and Bavarians were diligently compiled and ratified by the supreme authority of the Merovingian kings. The Visigoths and Burgundians, whose conquests in Gaul preceded those of the Franks, showed less impatience to attain one of the principal benefits of civilized society. Euric was the first of the Gothic princes who expressed, in writing, the manners and customs of his people; and the composition of the Burgundian laws was a measure of policy rather than of justice; to alleviate the yoke, and regain the affections, of their Gallic subjects. Thus, by a singular coincidence, the Germans framed their artless institutions, at a time when the elaborate system of Roman jurisprudence was finally consummated. In the Salic laws, and the Pandects of Justinian, we may compare the first rudiments, and the full maturity, of civil wisdom; and whatever prejudices may be suggested in favor of Barbarism, our calmer reflections will

ascribe to the Romans the superior advantages, not only of science and reason, but of humanity and justice. Yet the laws of the Barbarians were adapted to their wants and desires, their occupations and their capacity; and they all contributed to preserve the peace, and promote the improvement, of the society for whose use they were originally established. The Merovingians, instead of imposing a uniform rule of conduct on their various subjects, permitted each people, and each family, of their empire, freely to enjoy their domestic institutions; nor were the Romans excluded from the common benefits of this legal toleration. The children embraced the law of their parents, the wife that of her husband, the freedman that of his patron; and in all causes where the parties were of different nations, the plaintiff or accuser was obliged to follow the tribunal of the defendant, who may always plead a judicial presumption of right, or innocence. A more ample latitude was allowed, if every citizen, in the presence of the judge, might declare the law under which he desired to live,

and the national society to which he chose to belong. Such an indulgence would abolish the partial distinctions of victory: and the Roman provincials might patiently acquiesce in the hardships of their condition; since it depended on themselves to assume the privilege, if they dared to assert the character, of free and warlike Barbarians.

Part III.

When justice inexorably requires the death of a murderer, each private citizen is fortified by the assurance, that the laws, the magistrate, and the whole community, are the guardians of his personal safety. But in the loose society of the Germans, revenge was always honorable, and often meritorious: the independent warrior chastised, or vindicated, with his own hand, the injuries which he had offered or received; and he had only to dread the resentment of the sons and kinsmen of the enemy, whom he had sacrificed to his selfish or angry passions.

The magistrate, conscious of his weakness, interposed, not to punish, but to reconcile; and he was satisfied if he could persuade or compel the contending parties to pay and to accept the moderate fine which had been ascertained as the price of blood. The fierce spirit of the Franks would have opposed a more rigorous sentence; the same fierceness despised these ineffectual restraints; and, when their simple manners had been corrupted by the wealth of Gaul, the public peace was continually violated by acts of hasty or deliberate guilt. In every just government the same penalty is inflicted, or at least is imposed, for the murder of a peasant or a prince. But the national inequality established by the Franks, in their criminal proceedings, was the last insult and abuse of conquest. In the calm moments of legislation, they solemnly pronounced, that the life of a Roman was of smaller value than that of a Barbarian. The Antrustion, a name expressive of the most illustrious birth or dignity among the Franks, was appreciated at the sum of six hundred pieces of gold; while

the noble provincial, who was admitted to the king's table, might be legally murdered at the expense of three hundred pieces.

Two hundred were deemed sufficient for a Frank of ordinary condition; but the meaner Romans were exposed to disgrace and danger by a trifling compensation of one hundred, or even fifty, pieces of gold. Had these laws been regulated by any principle of equity or reason, the public protection should have supplied, in just proportion, the want of personal strength. But the legislator had weighed in the scale, not of justice, but of policy, the loss of a soldier against that of a slave: the head of an insolent and rapacious Barbarian was guarded by a heavy fine; and the slightest aid was afforded to the most defenceless subjects. Time insensibly abated the pride of the conquerors and the patience of the vanquished; and the boldest citizen was taught, by experience, that he might suffer more injuries than he could inflict. As the manners of the Franks became less ferocious, their laws were rendered more

severe; and the Merovingian kings attempted to imitate the impartial rigor of the Visigoths and Burgundians. Under the empire of Charlemagne, murder was universally punished with death; and the use of capital punishments has been liberally multiplied in the jurisprudence of modern Europe.

The civil and military professions, which had been separated by Constantine, were again united by the Barbarians. The harsh sound of the Teutonic appellations was mollified into the Latin titles of Duke, of Count, or of Praefect; and the same officer assumed, within his district, the command of the troops, and the administration of justice. But the fierce and illiterate chieftain was seldom qualified to discharge the duties of a judge, which required all the faculties of a philosophic mind, laboriously cultivated by experience and study; and his rude ignorance was compelled to embrace some simple, and visible, methods of ascertaining the cause of justice. In every religion, the Deity has been invoked to confirm the truth, or to punish the falsehood of human testimony; but

this powerful instrument was misapplied and abused by the simplicity of the German legislators. The party accused might justify his innocence, by producing before their tribunal a number of friendly witnesses, who solemnly declared their belief, or assurance, that he was not guilty. According to the weight of the charge, this legal number of compurgators was multiplied; seventy two voices were required to absolve an incendiary or assassin: and when the chastity of a queen of France was suspected, three hundred gallant nobles swore, without hesitation, that the infant prince had been actually begotten by her deceased husband. The sin and scandal of manifest and frequent perjuries engaged the magistrates to remove these dangerous temptations; and to supply the defects of human testimony by the famous experiments of fire and water. These extraordinary trials were so capriciously contrived, that, in some cases, guilt, and innocence in others, could not be proved without the interposition of a miracle. Such miracles were really provided by fraud and credulity;

the most intricate causes were determined by this easy and infallible method, and the turbulent Barbarians, who might have disdained the sentence of the magistrate, submissively acquiesced in the judgment of God.

But the trials by single combat gradually obtained superior credit and authority, among a warlike people, who could not believe that a brave man deserved to suffer, or that a coward deserved to live. Both in civil and criminal proceedings, the plaintiff, or accuser, the defendant, or even the witness, were exposed to mortal challenge from the antagonist who was destitute of legal proofs; and it was incumbent on them either to desert their cause, or publicly to maintain their honor, in the lists of battle. They fought either on foot, or on horseback, according to the custom of their nation; and the decision of the sword, or lance, was ratified by the sanction of Heaven, of the judge, and of the people. This sanguinary law was introduced into Gaul by the Burgundians; and their legislator Gundobald condescended to answer the complaints and objections of

his subject Avitus. "Is it not true," said the king of Burgundy to the bishop, "that the event of national wars, and private combats, is directed by the judgment of God; and that his providence awards the victory to the juster cause?" By such prevailing arguments, the absurd and cruel practice of judicial duels, which had been peculiar to some tribes of Germany, was propagated and established in all the monarchies of Europe, from Sicily to the Baltic. At the end of ten centuries, the reign of legal violence was not totally extinguished; and the ineffectual censures of saints, of popes, and of synods, may seem to prove, that the influence of superstition is weakened by its unnatural alliance with reason and humanity. The tribunals were stained with the blood, perhaps, of innocent and respectable citizens; the law, which now favors the rich, then yielded to the strong; and the old, the feeble, and the infirm, were condemned, either to renounce their fairest claims and possessions, to sustain the dangers of an unequal conflict, or to trust the doubtful aid of a mercenary champion. This

oppressive jurisprudence was imposed on the provincials of Gaul, who complained of any injuries in their persons and property. Whatever might be the strength, or courage, of individuals, the victorious Barbarians excelled in the love and exercise of arms; and the vanquished Roman was unjustly summoned to repeat, in his own person, the bloody contest which had been already decided against his country.

A devouring host of one hundred and twenty thousand Germans had formerly passed the Rhine under the command of Ariovistus. One third part of the fertile lands of the Sequani was appropriated to their use; and the conqueror soon repeated his oppressive demand of another third, for the accommodation of a new colony of twenty four thousand Barbarians, whom he had invited to share the rich harvest of Gaul. At the distance of five hundred years, the Visigoths and Burgundians, who revenged the defeat of Ariovistus, usurped the same unequal proportion of two thirds of the subject lands. But this distribution, instead of

spreading over the province, may be reasonably confined to the peculiar districts where the victorious people had been planted by their own choice, or by the policy of their leader. In these districts, each Barbarian was connected by the ties of hospitality with some Roman provincial. To this unwelcome guest, the proprietor was compelled to abandon two thirds of his patrimony, but the German, a shepherd and a hunter, might sometimes content himself with a spacious range of wood and pasture, and resign the smallest, though most valuable, portion, to the toil of the industrious husbandman. The silence of ancient and authentic testimony has encouraged an opinion, that the rapine of the Franks was not moderated, or disguised, by the forms of a legal division; that they dispersed themselves over the provinces of Gaul, without order or control; and that each victorious robber, according to his wants, his avarice, and his strength, measured with his sword the extent of his new inheritance. At a distance from their sovereign, the Barbarians might indeed be tempted to exercise such

arbitrary depredation; but the firm and artful policy of Clovis must curb a licentious spirit, which would aggravate the misery of the vanquished, whilst it corrupted the union and discipline of the conquerors. The memorable vase of Soissons is a monument and a pledge of the regular distribution of the Gallic spoils. It was the duty and the interest of Clovis to provide rewards for a successful army, settlements for a numerous people; without inflicting any wanton or superfluous injuries on the loyal Catholics of Gaul. The ample fund, which he might lawfully acquire, of the Imperial patrimony, vacant lands, and Gothic usurpations, would diminish the cruel necessity of seizure and confiscation, and the humble provincials would more patiently acquiesce in the equal and regular distribution of their loss.

The wealth of the Merovingian princes consisted in their extensive domain. After the conquest of Gaul, they still delighted in the rustic simplicity of their ancestors; the cities were abandoned to solitude and decay; and their

coins, their charters, and their synods, are still inscribed with the names of the villas, or rural palaces, in which they successively resided.

One hundred and sixty of these palaces, a title which need not excite any unseasonable ideas of art or luxury, were scattered through the provinces of their kingdom; and if some might claim the honors of a fortress, the far greater part could be esteemed only in the light of profitable farms. The mansion of the long haired kings was surrounded with convenient yards and stables, for the cattle and the poultry; the garden was planted with useful vegetables; the various trades, the labors of agriculture, and even the arts of hunting and fishing, were exercised by servile hands for the emolument of the sovereign; his magazines were filled with corn and wine, either for sale or consumption; and the whole administration was conducted by the strictest maxims of private economy. This ample patrimony was appropriated to supply the hospitable plenty of Clovis and his successors; and to reward the fidelity of their brave

companions who, both in peace and war, were devoted to their persona service. Instead of a horse, or a suit of armor, each companion, according to his rank, or merit, or favor, was invested with a benefice, the primitive name, and most simple form, of the feudal possessions. These gifts might be resumed at the pleasure of the sovereign; and his feeble prerogative derived some support from the influence of his liberality. But this dependent tenure was gradually abolished by the independent and rapacious nobles of France, who established the perpetual property, and hereditary succession, of their benefices; a revolution salutary to the earth, which had been injured, or neglected, by its precarious masters. Besides these royal and beneficiary estates, a large proportion had been assigned, in the division of Gaul, of allodial and Salic lands: they were exempt from tribute, and the Salic lands were equally shared among the male descendants of the Franks.

In the bloody discord and silent decay of the Merovingian line, a new order of tyrants arose in the

provinces, who, under the appellation of Seniors, or Lords, usurped a right to govern, and a license to oppress, the subjects of their peculiar territory. Their ambition might be checked by the hostile resistance of an equal: but the laws were extinguished; and the sacrilegious Barbarians, who dared to provoke the vengeance of a saint or bishop, would seldom respect the landmarks of a profane and defenceless neighbor. The common or public rights of nature, such as they had always been deemed by the Roman jurisprudence, were severely restrained by the German conquerors, whose amusement, or rather passion, was the exercise of hunting. The vague dominion which Man has assumed over the wild inhabitants of the earth, the air, and the waters, was confined to some fortunate individuals of the human species. Gaul was again overspread with woods; and the animals, who were reserved for the use or pleasure of the lord, might ravage with impunity the fields of his industrious vassals. The chase was the sacred privilege of the nobles and their domestic servants. Plebeian

transgressors were legally chastised with stripes and imprisonment; but in an age which admitted a slight composition for the life of a citizen, it was a capital crime to destroy a stag or a wild bull within the precincts of the royal forests.

According to the maxims of ancient war, the conqueror became the lawful master of the enemy whom he had subdued and spared: and the fruitful cause of personal slavery, which had been almost suppressed by the peaceful sovereignty of Rome, was again revived and multiplied by the perpetual hostilities of the independent Barbarians. The Goth, the Burgundian, or the Frank, who returned from a successful expedition, dragged after him a long train of sheep, of oxen, and of human captives, whom he treated with the same brutal contempt. The youths of an elegant form and an ingenuous aspect were set apart for the domestic service; a doubtful situation, which alternately exposed them to the favorable or cruel impulse of passion. The useful mechanics and servants (smiths, carpenters,

tailors, shoemakers, cooks, gardeners, dyers, and workmen in gold and silver, &c.) employed their skill for the use, or profit, of their master. But the Roman captives, who were destitute of art, but capable of labor, were condemned, without regard to their former rank, to tend the cattle and cultivate the lands of the Barbarians. The number of the hereditary bondsmen, who were attached to the Gallic estates, was continually increased by new supplies; and the servile people, according to the situation and temper of their lords, was sometimes raised by precarious indulgence, and more frequently depressed by capricious despotism. An absolute power of life and death was exercised by these lords; and when they married their daughters, a train of useful servants, chained on the wagons to prevent their escape, was sent as a nuptial present into a distant country. The majesty of the Roman laws protected the liberty of each citizen, against the rash effects of his own distress or despair. But the subjects of the Merovingian kings might alienate their personal freedom; and this act of legal suicide,

which was familiarly practised, is expressed in terms most disgraceful and afflicting to the dignity of human nature. The example of the poor, who purchased life by the sacrifice of all that can render life desirable, was gradually imitated by the feeble and the devout, who, in times of public disorder, pusillanimously crowded to shelter themselves under the battlements of a powerful chief, and around the shrine of a popular saint. Their submission was accepted by these temporal or spiritual patrons; and the hasty transaction irrecoverably fixed their own condition, and that of their latest posterity. From the reign of Clovis, during five successive centuries, the laws and manners of Gaul uniformly tended to promote the increase, and to confirm the duration, of personal servitude. Time and violence almost obliterated the intermediate ranks of society; and left an obscure and narrow interval between the noble and the slave. This arbitrary and recent division has been transformed by pride and prejudice into a national distinction, universally established by the arms and

the laws of the Merovingians. The nobles, who claimed their genuine or fabulous descent from the independent and victorious Franks, have asserted and abused the indefeasible right of conquest over a prostrate crowd of slaves and plebeians, to whom they imputed the imaginary disgrace of Gallic or Roman extraction.

The general state and revolutions of France, a name which was imposed by the conquerors, may be illustrated by the particular example of a province, a diocese, or a senatorial family. Auvergne had formerly maintained a just preeminence among the independent states and cities of Gaul. The brave and numerous inhabitants displayed a singular trophy; the sword of Caesar himself, which he had lost when he was repulsed before the walls of Gergovia. As the common offspring of Troy, they claimed a fraternal alliance with the Romans; and if each province had imitated the courage and loyalty of Auvergne, the fall of the Western empire might have been prevented or delayed.

They firmly maintained the fidelity which they had

reluctantly sworn to the Visigoths, out when their bravest nobles had fallen in the battle of Poitiers, they accepted, without resistance, a victorious and Catholic sovereign. This easy and valuable conquest was achieved and possessed by Theodoric, the eldest son of Clovis: but the remote province was separated from his Austrasian dominions, by the intermediate kingdoms of Soissons, Paris, and Orleans, which formed, after their father's death, the inheritance of his three brothers. The king of Paris, Childebert, was tempted by the neighborhood and beauty of Auvergne. The Upper country, which rises towards the south into the mountains of the Cevennes, presented a rich and various prospect of woods and pastures; the sides of the hills were clothed with vines; and each eminence was crowned with a villa or castle. In the Lower Auvergne, the River Allier flows through the fair and spacious plain of Limagne; and the inexhaustible fertility of the soil supplied, and still supplies, without any interval of repose, the constant repetition of the same harvests. On the

false report, that their lawful sovereign had been slain in Germany, the city and diocese of Auvergne were betrayed by the grandson of Sidonius Apollinaris. Childebert enjoyed this clandestine victory; and the free subjects of Theodoric threatened to desert his standard, if he indulged his private resentment, while the nation was engaged in the Burgundian war. But the Franks of Austrasia soon yielded to the persuasive eloquence of their king. "Follow me," said Theodoric, "into Auvergne; I will lead you into a province, where you may acquire gold, silver, slaves, cattle, and precious apparel, to the full extent of your wishes. I repeat my promise; I give you the people and their wealth as your prey; and you may transport them at pleasure into your own country." By the execution of this promise, Theodoric justly forfeited the allegiance of a people whom he devoted to destruction. His troops, reenforced by the fiercest Barbarians of Germany, spread desolation over the fruitful face of Auvergne; and two places only, a strong castle and a holy shrine, were saved or redeemed from their

licentious fury. The castle of Merolias was seated on a lofty rock, which rose a hundred feet above the surface of the plain; and a large reservoir of fresh water was enclosed, with some arable lands, within the circle of its fortifications. The Franks beheld with envy and despair this impregnable fortress; but they surprised a party of fifty stragglers; and, as they were oppressed by the number of their captives, they fixed, at a trifling ransom, the alternative of life or death for these wretched victims, whom the cruel Baroarians were prepared to massacre on the refusal of the garrison. Another detachment penetrated as far as Brivas, or Brioude, where the inhabitants, with their valuable effects, had taken refuge in the sanctuary of St. Julian. The doors of the church resisted the assault; but a daring soldier entered through a window of the choir, and opened a passage to his companions. The clergy and people, the sacred and the profane spoils, were rudely torn from the altar; and the sacrilegious division was made at a small distance from the town of Brioude. But this act of impiety

was severely chastised by the devout son of Clovis. He punished with death the most atrocious offenders; left their secret accomplices to the vengeance of St. Julian; released the captives; restored the plunder; and extended the rights of sanctuary five miles round the sepulchre of the holy martyr.

Part IV.

Before the Austrasian army retreated from Auvergne, Theodoric exacted some pledges of the future loyalty of a people, whose just hatred could be restrained only by their fear. A select band of noble youths, the sons of the principal senators, was delivered to the conqueror, as the hostages of the faith of Childebert, and of their countrymen. On the first rumor of war, or conspiracy, these guiltless youths were reduced to a state of servitude; and one of them, Attalus, whose adventures are more particularly related, kept his master's horses in the diocese of Treves. After a painful search, he was discovered, in this

unworthy occupation, by the emissaries of his grandfather, Gregory bishop of Langres; but his offers of ransom were sternly rejected by the avarice of the Barbarian, who required an exorbitant sum of ten pounds of gold for the freedom of his noble captive. His deliverance was effected by the hardy stratagem of Leo, an item belonging to the kitchens of the bishop of Langres. An unknown agent easily introduced him into the same family. The Barbarian purchased Leo for the price of twelve pieces of gold; and was pleased to learn that he was deeply skilled in the luxury of an episcopal table: "Next Sunday," said the Frank, "I shall invite my neighbors and kinsmen. Exert thy art, and force them to confess, that they have never seen, or tasted, such an entertainment, even in the king's house." Leo assured him, that if he would provide a sufficient quantity of poultry, his wishes should be satisfied. The master who already aspired to the merit of elegant hospitality, assumed, as his own, the praise which the voracious guests unanimously bestowed on his cook;

and the dexterous Leo insensibly acquired the trust and management of his household. After the patient expectation of a whole year, he cautiously whispered his design to Attalus, and exhorted him to prepare for flight in the ensuing night. At the hour of midnight, the intemperate guests retired from the table; and the Frank's son in law, whom Leo attended to his apartment with a nocturnal potation, condescended to jest on the facility with which he might betray his trust. The intrepid slave, after sustaining this dangerous raillery, entered his master's bedchamber; removed his spear and shield; silently drew the fleetest horses from the stable; unbarred the ponderous gates; and excited Attalus to save his life and liberty by incessant diligence. Their apprehensions urged them to leave their horses on the banks of the Meuse; they swam the river, wandered three days in the adjacent forest, and subsisted only by the accidental discovery of a wild plum tree. As they lay concealed in a dark thicket, they heard the noise of horses; they were terrified by the angry

countenance of their master, and they anxiously listened to his declaration, that, if he could seize the guilty fugitives, one of them he would cut in pieces with his sword, and would expose the other on a gibbet. At length, Attalus and his faithful Leo reached the friendly habitation of a presbyter of Rheims, who recruited their fainting strength with bread and wine, concealed them from the search of their enemy, and safely conducted them beyond the limits of the Austrasian kingdom, to the episcopal palace of Langres. Gregory embraced his grandson with tears of joy, gratefully delivered Leo, with his whole family, from the yoke of servitude, and bestowed on him the property of a farm, where he might end his days in happiness and freedom. Perhaps this singular adventure, which is marked with so many circumstances of truth and nature, was related by Attalus himself, to his cousin or nephew, the first historian of the Franks. Gregory of Tours was born about sixty years after the death of Sidonius Apollinaris; and their situation was almost similar, since each of them

was a native of Auvergne, a senator, and a bishop. The difference of their style and sentiments may, therefore, express the decay of Gaul; and clearly ascertain how much, in so short a space, the human mind had lost of its energy and refinement.

We are now qualified to despise the opposite, and, perhaps, artful, misrepresentations, which have softened, or exaggerated, the oppression of the Romans of Gaul under the reign of the Merovingians. The conquerors never promulgated any universal edict of servitude, or confiscation; but a degenerate people, who excused their weakness by the specious names of politeness and peace, was exposed to the arms and laws of the ferocious Barbarians, who contemptuously insulted their possessions, their freedom, and their safety. Their personal injuries were partial and irregular; but the great body of the Romans survived the revolution, and still preserved the property, and privileges, of citizens. A large portion of their lands was exacted for the use of the Franks: but they

enjoyed the remainder, exempt from tribute; and the same irresistible violence which swept away the arts and manufactures of Gaul, destroyed the elaborate and expensive system of Imperial despotism. The Provincials must frequently deplore the savage jurisprudence of the Salic or Ripuarian laws; but their private life, in the important concerns of marriage, testaments, or inheritance, was still regulated by the Theodosian Code; and a discontented Roman might freely aspire, or descend, to the title and character of a Barbarian. The honors of the state were accessible to his ambition: the education and temper of the Romans more peculiarly qualified them for the offices of civil government; and, as soon as emulation had rekindled their military ardor, they were permitted to march in the ranks, or even at the head, of the victorious Germans. I shall not attempt to enumerate the generals and magistrates, whose names attest the liberal policy of the Merovingians. The supreme command of Burgundy, with the title of Patrician,

was successively intrusted to three Romans; and the last, and most powerful, Mummolus, who alternately saved and disturbed the monarchy, had supplanted his father in the station of count of Autun, and left a treasury of thirty talents of gold, and two hundred and fifty talents of silver. The fierce and illiterate Barbarians were excluded, during several generations, from the dignities, and even from the orders, of the church. The clergy of Gaul consisted almost entirely of native provincials; the haughty Franks fell at the feet of their subjects, who were dignified with the episcopal character: and the power and riches which had been lost in war, were insensibly recovered by superstition. In all temporal affairs, the Theodosian Code was the universal law of the clergy; but the Barbaric jurisprudence had liberally provided for their personal safety; a sub deacon was equivalent to two Franks; the antrustion, and priest, were held in similar estimation: and the life of a bishop was appreciated far above the common standard, at the price of nine hundred pieces of gold. The Romans communicated

to their conquerors the use of the Christian religion and Latin language; but their language and their religion had alike degenerated from the simple purity of the Augustan, and Apostolic age. The progress of superstition and Barbarism was rapid and universal: the worship of the saints concealed from vulgar eyes the God of the Christians; and the rustic dialect of peasants and soldiers was corrupted by a Teutonic idiom and pronunciation. Yet such intercourse of sacred and social communion eradicated the distinctions of birth and victory; and the nations of Gaul were gradually confounded under the name and government of the Franks.

The Franks, after they mingled with their Gallic subjects, might have imparted the most valuable of human gifts, a spirit and system of constitutional liberty. Under a king, hereditary, but limited, the chiefs and counsellors might have debated at Paris, in the palace of the Caesars: the adjacent field, where the emperors reviewed their mercenary legions. would have admitted the legislative

assembly of freemen and warriors; and the rude model, which had been sketched in the woods of Germany, might have been polished and improved by the civil wisdom of the Romans. But the careless Barbarians, secure of their personal independence, disdained the labor of government: the annual assemblies of the month of March were silently abolished; and the nation was separated, and almost dissolved, by the conquest of Gaul. The monarchy was left without any regular establishment of justice, of arms, or of revenue. The successors of Clovis wanted resolution to assume, or strength to exercise, the legislative and executive powers, which the people had abdicated: the royal prerogative was distinguished only by a more ample privilege of rapine and murder; and the love of freedom, so often invigorated and disgraced by private ambition, was reduced, among the licentious Franks, to the contempt of order, and the desire of impunity. Seventy five years after the death of Clovis, his grandson, Gontran, king of Burgundy, sent an army to invade the Gothic possessions of

Septimania, or Languedoc. The troops of Burgundy, Berry, Auvergne, and the adjacent territories, were excited by the hopes of spoil. They marched, without discipline, under the banners of German, or Gallic, counts: their attack was feeble and unsuccessful; but the friendly and hostile provinces were desolated with indiscriminate rage. The cornfields, the villages, the churches themselves, were consumed by fire: the inhabitants were massacred, or dragged into captivity; and, in the disorderly retreat, five thousand of these inhuman savages were destroyed by hunger or intestine discord. When the pious Gontran reproached the guilt or neglect of their leaders, and threatened to inflict, not a legal sentence, but instant and arbitrary execution, they accused the universal and incurable corruption of the people. "No one," they said, "any longer fears or respects his king, his duke, or his count. Each man loves to do evil, and freely indulges his criminal inclinations. The most gentle correction provokes an immediate tumult, and the rash magistrate, who presumes

to censure or restrain his seditious subjects, seldom escapes alive from their revenge." It has been reserved for the same nation to expose, by their intemperate vices, the most odious abuse of freedom; and to supply its loss by the spirit of honor and humanity, which now alleviates and dignifies their obedience to an absolute sovereign.

The Visigoths had resigned to Clovis the greatest part of their Gallic possessions; but their loss was amply compensated by the easy conquest, and secure enjoyment, of the provinces of Spain. From the monarchy of the Goths, which soon involved the Suevic kingdom of Galicia, the modern Spaniards still derive some national vanity; but the historian of the Roman empire is neither invited, nor compelled, to pursue the obscure and barren series of their annals. The Goths of Spain were separated from the rest of mankind by the lofty ridge of the Pyrenaean mountains: their manners and institutions, as far as they were common to the Germanic tribes, have been already explained. I have anticipated, in the preceding chapter, the most important

of their ecclesiastical events, the fall of Arianism, and the persecution of the Jews; and it only remains to observe some interesting circumstances which relate to the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the Spanish kingdom. After their conversion from idolatry or heresy, the Frank and the Visigoths were disposed to embrace, with equal submission, the inherent evils and the accidental benefits, of superstition. But the prelates of France, long before the extinction of the Merovingian race, had degenerated into fighting and hunting Barbarians. They disdained the use of synods; forgot the laws of temperance and chastity; and preferred the indulgence of private ambition and luxury to the general interest of the sacerdotal profession. The bishops of Spain respected themselves, and were respected by the public: their indissoluble union disguised their vices, and confirmed their authority; and the regular discipline of the church introduced peace, order, and stability, into the government of the state. From the reign of Recared, the first Catholic king, to that of Witiza,

the immediate predecessor of the unfortunate Roderic, sixteen national councils were successively convened. The six metropolitans, Toledo, Seville, Merida, Braga, Tarragona, and Narbonne, presided according to their respective seniority; the assembly was composed of their suffragan bishops, who appeared in person, or by their proxies; and a place was assigned to the most holy, or opulent, of the Spanish abbots. During the first three days of the convocation, as long as they agitated the ecclesiastical question of doctrine and discipline, the profane laity was excluded from their debates; which were conducted, however, with decent solemnity. But, on the morning of the fourth day, the doors were thrown open for the entrance of the great officers of the palace, the dukes and counts of the provinces, the judges of the cities, and the Gothic nobles, and the decrees of Heaven were ratified by the consent of the people.

The same rules were observed in the provincial assemblies, the annual synods, which were empowered to

hear complaints, and to redress grievances; and a legal government was supported by the prevailing influence of the Spanish clergy. The bishops, who, in each revolution, were prepared to flatter the victorious, and to insult the prostrate labored, with diligence and success, to kindle the flames of persecution, and to exalt the mitre above the crown. Yet the national councils of Toledo, in which the free spirit of the Barbarians was tempered and guided by episcopal policy, have established some prudent laws for the common benefit of the king and people. The vacancy of the throne was supplied by the choice of the bishops and palatines; and after the failure of the line of Alaric, the regal dignity was still limited to the pure and noble blood of the Goths. The clergy, who anointed their lawful prince, always recommended, and sometimes practised, the duty of allegiance; and the spiritual censures were denounced on the heads of the impious subjects, who should resist his authority, conspire against his life, or violate, by an indecent union, the chastity even of his widow. But the

monarch himself, when he ascended the throne, was bound by a reciprocal oath to God and his people, that he would faithfully execute this important trust. The real or imaginary faults of his administration were subject to the control of a powerful aristocracy; and the bishops and palatines were guarded by a fundamental privilege, that they should not be degraded, imprisoned, tortured, nor punished with death, exile, or confiscation, unless by the free and public judgment of their peers.

One of these legislative councils of Toledo examined and ratified the code of laws which had been compiled by a succession of Gothic kings, from the fierce Euric, to the devout Egica. As long as the Visigoths themselves were satisfied with the rude customs of their ancestors, they indulged their subjects of Aquitaine and Spain in the enjoyment of the Roman law. Their gradual improvement in arts, in policy, and at length in religion, encouraged them to imitate, and to supersede, these foreign institutions; and to compose a code of civil and criminal jurisprudence, for

the use of a great and united people. The same obligations, and the same privileges, were communicated to the nations of the Spanish monarchy; and the conquerors, insensibly renouncing the Teutonic idiom, submitted to the restraints of equity, and exalted the Romans to the participation of freedom. The merit of this impartial policy was enhanced by the situation of Spain under the reign of the Visigoths. The provincials were long separated from their Arian masters by the irreconcilable difference of religion. After the conversion of Recared had removed the prejudices of the Catholics, the coasts, both of the Ocean and Mediterranean, were still possessed by the Eastern emperors; who secretly excited a discontented people to reject the yoke of the Barbarians, and to assert the name and dignity of Roman citizens. The allegiance of doubtful subjects is indeed most effectually secured by their own persuasion, that they hazard more in a revolt, than they can hope to obtain by a revolution; but it has appeared so natural to oppress those whom we hate and fear, that the

contrary system well deserves the praise of wisdom and moderation.

While the kingdom of the Franks and Visigoths were established in Gaul and Spain, the Saxons achieved the conquest of Britain, the third great diocese of the Praefecture of the West. Since Britain was already separated from the Roman empire, I might, without reproach, decline a story familiar to the most illiterate, and obscure to the most learned, of my readers. The Saxons, who excelled in the use of the oar, or the battle axe, were ignorant of the art which could alone perpetuate the fame of their exploits; the Provincials, relapsing into barbarism, neglected to describe the ruin of their country; and the doubtful tradition was almost extinguished, before the missionaries of Rome restored the light of science and Christianity. The declamations of Gildas, the fragments, or fables, of Nennius, the obscure hints of the Saxon laws and chronicles, and the ecclesiastical tales of the venerable Bede, have been illustrated by the diligence, and sometimes

embellished by the fancy, of succeeding writers, whose works I am not ambitious either to censure or to transcribe. Yet the historian of the empire may be tempted to pursue the revolutions of a Roman province, till it vanishes from his sight; and an Englishman may curiously trace the establishment of the Barbarians, from whom he derives his name, his laws, and perhaps his origin.

About forty years after the dissolution of the Roman government, Vortigern appears to have obtained the supreme, though precarious command of the princes and cities of Britain. That unfortunate monarch has been almost unanimously condemned for the weak and mischievous policy of inviting a formidable stranger, to repel the vexatious inroads of a domestic foe. His ambassadors are despatched, by the gravest historians, to the coast of Germany: they address a pathetic oration to the general assembly of the Saxons, and those warlike Barbarians resolve to assist with a fleet and army the suppliants of a distant and unknown island. If Britain had

indeed been unknown to the Saxons, the measure of its calamities would have been less complete. But the strength of the Roman government could not always guard the maritime province against the pirates of Germany; the independent and divided states were exposed to their attacks; and the Saxons might sometimes join the Scots and the Picts, in a tacit, or express, confederacy of rapine and destruction. Vortigern could only balance the various perils, which assaulted on every side his throne and his people; and his policy may deserve either praise or excuse, if he preferred the alliance of those Barbarians, whose naval power rendered them the most dangerous enemies and the most serviceable allies. Hengist and Horsa, as they ranged along the Eastern coast with three ships, were engaged, by the promise of an ample stipend, to embrace the defence of Britain; and their intrepid valor soon delivered the country from the Caledonian invaders. The Isle of Thanet, a secure and fertile district, was allotted for the residence of these German auxiliaries, and they

were supplied, according to the treaty, with a plentiful allowance of clothing and provisions. This favorable reception encouraged five thousand warriors to embark with their families in seventeen vessels, and the infant power of Hengist was fortified by this strong and seasonable reenforcement. The crafty Barbarian suggested to Vortigern the obvious advantage of fixing, in the neighborhood of the Picts, a colony of faithful allies: a third fleet of forty ships, under the command of his son and nephew, sailed from Germany, ravaged the Orkneys, and disembarked a new army on the coast of Northumberland, or Lothian, at the opposite extremity of the devoted land. It was easy to foresee, but it was impossible to prevent, the impending evils. The two nations were soon divided and exasperated by mutual jealousies. The Saxons magnified all that they had done and suffered in the cause of an ungrateful people; while the Britons regretted the liberal rewards which could not satisfy the avarice of those haughty mercenaries. The causes of fear and hatred were

inflamed into an irreconcilable quarrel. The Saxons flew to arms; and if they perpetrated a treacherous massacre during the security of a feast, they destroyed the reciprocal confidence which sustains the intercourse of peace and war.

Hengist, who boldly aspired to the conquest of Britain, exhorted his countrymen to embrace the glorious opportunity: he painted in lively colors the fertility of the soil, the wealth of the cities, the pusillanimous temper of the natives, and the convenient situation of a spacious solitary island, accessible on all sides to the Saxon fleets. The successive colonies which issued, in the period of a century, from the mouths of the Elbe, the Weser, and the Rhine, were principally composed of three valiant tribes or nations of Germany; the Jutes, the old Saxons, and the Angles. The Jutes, who fought under the peculiar banner of Hengist, assumed the merit of leading their countrymen in the paths of glory, and of erecting, in Kent, the first independent kingdom. The fame of the enterprise was attributed to the primitive Saxons; and the common laws

and language of the conquerors are described by the national appellation of a people, which, at the end of four hundred years, produced the first monarchs of South Britain. The Angles were distinguished by their numbers and their success; and they claimed the honor of fixing a perpetual name on the country, of which they occupied the most ample portion. The Barbarians, who followed the hopes of rapine either on the land or sea, were insensibly blended with this triple confederacy; the Frisians, who had been tempted by their vicinity to the British shores, might balance, during a short space, the strength and reputation of the native Saxons; the Danes, the Prussians, the Rugians, are faintly described; and some adventurous Huns, who had wandered as far as the Baltic, might embark on board the German vessels, for the conquest of a new world. But this arduous achievement was not prepared or executed by the union of national powers. Each intrepid chieftain, according to the measure of his fame and fortunes, assembled his followers; equipped a fleet of three,

or perhaps of sixty, vessels; chose the place of the attack; and conducted his subsequent operations according to the events of the war, and the dictates of his private interest. In the invasion of Britain many heroes vanquished and fell; but only seven victorious leaders assumed, or at least maintained, the title of kings. Seven independent thrones, the Saxon Heptarchy, were founded by the conquerors, and seven families, one of which has been continued, by female succession, to our present sovereign, derived their equal and sacred lineage from Woden, the god of war. It has been pretended, that this republic of kings was moderated by a general council and a supreme magistrate. But such an artificial scheme of policy is repugnant to the rude and turbulent spirit of the Saxons: their laws are silent; and their imperfect annals afford only a dark and bloody prospect of intestine discord.

A monk, who, in the profound ignorance of human life, has presumed to exercise the office of historian, strangely disfigures the state of Britain at the time of its

separation from the Western empire. Gildas describes in florid language the improvements of agriculture, the foreign trade which flowed with every tide into the Thames and the Severn the solid and lofty construction of public and private edifices; he accuses the sinful luxury of the British people; of a people, according to the same writer, ignorant of the most simple arts, and incapable, without the aid of the Romans, of providing walls of stone, or weapons of iron, for the defence of their native land. Under the long dominion of the emperors, Britain had been insensibly moulded into the elegant and servile form of a Roman province, whose safety was intrusted to a foreign power. The subjects of Honorius contemplated their new freedom with surprise and terror; they were left destitute of any civil or military constitution; and their uncertain rulers wanted either skill, or courage, or authority, to direct the public force against the common enemy. The introduction of the Saxons betrayed their internal weakness, and degraded the character both of the prince and people. Their

consternation magnified the danger; the want of union diminished their resources; and the madness of civil factions was more solicitous to accuse, than to remedy, the evils, which they imputed to the misconduct of their adversaries.

Yet the Britons were not ignorant, they could not be ignorant, of the manufacture or the use of arms; the successive and disorderly attacks of the Saxons allowed them to recover from their amazement, and the prosperous or adverse events of the war added discipline and experience to their native valor.

While the continent of Europe and Africa yielded, without resistance, to the Barbarians, the British island, alone and unaided, maintained a long, a vigorous, though an unsuccessful, struggle, against the formidable pirates, who, almost at the same instant, assaulted the Northern, the Eastern, and the Southern coasts. The cities which had been fortified with skill, were defended with resolution; the advantages of ground, hills, forests, and morasses, were

diligently improved by the inhabitants; the conquest of each district was purchased with blood; and the defeats of the Saxons are strongly attested by the discreet silence of their annalist. Hengist might hope to achieve the conquest of Britain; but his ambition, in an active reign of thirty five years, was confined to the possession of Kent; and the numerous colony which he had planted in the North, was extirpated by the sword of the Britons. The monarchy of the West Saxons was laboriously founded by the persevering efforts of three martial generations. The life of Cerdic, one of the bravest of the children of Woden, was consumed in the conquest of Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight; and the loss which he sustained in the battle of Mount Badon, reduced him to a state of inglorious repose. Kenric, his valiant son, advanced into Wiltshire; besieged Salisbury, at that time seated on a commanding eminence; and vanquished an army which advanced to the relief of the city. In the subsequent battle of Marlborough, his British enemies displayed their military science. Their troops were

formed in three lines; each line consisted of three distinct bodies, and the cavalry, the archers, and the pikemen, were distributed according to the principles of Roman tactics. The Saxons charged in one weighty column, boldly encountered with their shord swords the long lances of the Britons, and maintained an equal conflict till the approach of night. Two decisive victories, the death of three British kings, and the reduction of Cirencester, Bath, and Gloucester, established the fame and power of Ceaulin, the grandson of Cerdic, who carried his victorious arms to the banks of the Severn. After a war of a hundred years, the independent Britons still occupied the whole extent of the Western coast, from the wall of Antoninus to the extreme promontory of Cornwall; and the principal cities of the inland country still opposed the arms of the Barbarians. Resistance became more languid, as the number and boldness of the assailants continually increased. Winning their way by slow and painful efforts, the Saxons, the Angles, and their various confederates, advanced from

the North, from the East, and from the South, till their victorious banners were united in the centre of the island. Beyond the Severn the Britons still asserted their national freedom, which survived the heptarchy, and even the monarchy, of the Saxons. The bravest warriors, who preferred exile to slavery, found a secure refuge in the mountains of Wales: the reluctant submission of Cornwall was delayed for some ages; and a band of fugitives acquired a settlement in Gaul, by their own valor, or the liberality of the Merovingian kings. The Western angle of Armorica acquired the new appellations of Cornwall, and the Lesser Britain; and the vacant lands of the Osismii were filled by a strange people, who, under the authority of their counts and bishops, preserved the laws and language of their ancestors. To the feeble descendants of Clovis and Charlemagne, the Britons of Armorica refused the customary tribute, subdued the neighboring dioceses of Vannes, Rennes, and Nantes, and formed a powerful, though vassal, state, which has been

united to the crown of France.

Part V.

In a century of perpetual, or at least implacable, war, much courage, and some skill, must have been exerted for the defence of Britain. Yet if the memory of its champions is almost buried in oblivion, we need not repine; since every age, however destitute of science or virtue, sufficiently abounds with acts of blood and military renown. The tomb of Vortimer, the son of Vortigern, was erected on the margin of the sea shore, as a landmark formidable to the Saxons, whom he had thrice vanquished in the fields of Kent. Ambrosius Aurelianus was descended from a noble family of Romans; his modesty was equal to his valor, and his valor, till the last fatal action, was crowned with splendid success. But every British name is effaced by the illustrious name of Arthur, the hereditary prince of the Silures, in South Wales, and the elective king or general of the nation. According to the most rational account, he

defeated, in twelve successive battles, the Angles of the North, and the Saxons of the West; but the declining age of the hero was embittered by popular ingratitude and domestic misfortunes. The events of his life are less interesting than the singular revolutions of his fame. During a period of five hundred years the tradition of his exploits was preserved, and rudely embellished, by the obscure bards of Wales and Armorica, who were odious to the Saxons, and unknown to the rest of mankind. The pride and curiosity of the Norman conquerors prompted them to inquire into the ancient history of Britain: they listened with fond credulity to the tale of Arthur, and eagerly applauded the merit of a prince who had triumphed over the Saxons, their common enemies. His romance, transcribed in the Latin of Jeffrey of Monmouth, and afterwards translated into the fashionable idiom of the times, was enriched with the various, though incoherent, ornaments which were familiar to the experience, the learning, or the fancy, of the twelfth century. The progress of a

Phrygian colony, from the Tyber to the Thames, was easily ingrafted on the fable of the Aeneid; and the royal ancestors of Arthur derived their origin from Troy, and claimed their alliance with the Caesars. His trophies were decorated with captive provinces and Imperial titles; and his Danish victories avenged the recent injuries of his country. The gallantry and superstition of the British hero, his feasts and tournaments, and the memorable institution of his Knights of the Round Table, were faithfully copied from the reigning manners of chivalry; and the fabulous exploits of Uther's son appear less incredible than the adventures which were achieved by the enterprising valor of the Normans. Pilgrimage, and the holy wars, introduced into Europe the specious miracles of Arabian magic. Fairies and giants, flying dragons, and enchanted palaces, were blended with the more simple fictions of the West; and the fate of Britain depended on the art, or the predictions, of Merlin. Every nation embraced and adorned the popular romance of Arthur, and the Knights of the Round Table:

their names were celebrated in Greece and Italy; and the voluminous tales of Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristram were devoutly studied by the princes and nobles, who disregarded the genuine heroes and historians of antiquity. At length the light of science and reason was rekindled; the talisman was broken; the visionary fabric melted into air; and by a natural, though unjust, reverse of the public opinion, the severity of the present age is inclined to question the existence of Arthur.

Resistance, if it cannot avert, must increase the miseries of conquest; and conquest has never appeared more dreadful and destructive than in the hands of the Saxons; who hated the valor of their enemies, disdained the faith of treaties, and violated, without remorse, the most sacred objects of the Christian worship. The fields of battle might be traced, almost in every district, by monuments of bones; the fragments of falling towers were stained with blood; the last of the Britons, without distinction of age or sex, was massacred, in the ruins of Anderida; and the

repetition of such calamities was frequent and familiar under the Saxon heptarchy. The arts and religion, the laws and language, which the Romans had so carefully planted in Britain, were extirpated by their barbarous successors. After the destruction of the principal churches, the bishops, who had declined the crown of martyrdom, retired with the holy relics into Wales and Armorica; the remains of their flocks were left destitute of any spiritual food; the practice, and even the remembrance, of Christianity were abolished; and the British clergy might obtain some comfort from the damnation of the idolatrous strangers. The kings of France maintained the privileges of their Roman subjects; but the ferocious Saxons trampled on the laws of Rome, and of the emperors. The proceedings of civil and criminal jurisdiction, the titles of honor, the forms of office, the ranks of society, and even the domestic rights of marriage, testament, and inheritance, were finally suppressed; and the indiscriminate crowd of noble and plebeian slaves was governed by the traditionary

customs, which had been coarsely framed for the shepherds and pirates of Germany. The language of science, of business, and of conversation, which had been introduced by the Romans, was lost in the general desolation. A sufficient number of Latin or Celtic words might be assumed by the Germans, to express their new wants and ideas; but those illiterate Pagans preserved and established the use of their national dialect. Almost every name, conspicuous either in the church or state, reveals its Teutonic origin; and the geography of England was universally inscribed with foreign characters and appellations. The example of a revolution, so rapid and so complete, may not easily be found; but it will excite a probable suspicion, that the arts of Rome were less deeply rooted in Britain than in Gaul or Spain; and that the native rudeness of the country and its inhabitants was covered by a thin varnish of Italian manners.

This strange alteration has persuaded historians, and even philosophers, that the provincials of Britain were

totally exterminated; and that the vacant land was again peopled by the perpetual influx, and rapid increase, of the German colonies. Three hundred thousand Saxons are said to have obeyed the summons of Hengist; the entire emigration of the Angles was attested, in the age of Bede, by the solitude of their native country; and our experience has shown the free propagation of the human race, if they are cast on a fruitful wilderness, where their steps are unconfined, and their subsistence is plentiful. The Saxon kingdoms displayed the face of recent discovery and cultivation; the towns were small, the villages were distant; the husbandry was languid and unskilful; four sheep were equivalent to an acre of the best land; an ample space of wood and morass was resigned to the vague dominion of nature; and the modern bishopric of Durham, the whole territory from the Tyne to the Tees, had returned to its primitive state of a savage and solitary forest. Such imperfect population might have been supplied, in some generations, by the English colonies; but neither reason nor

facts can justify the unnatural supposition, that the Saxons of Britain remained alone in the desert which they had subdued. After the sanguinary Barbarians had secured their dominion, and gratified their revenge, it was their interest to preserve the peasants as well as the cattle, of the unresisting country. In each successive revolution, the patient herd becomes the property of its new masters; and the salutary compact of food and labor is silently ratified by their mutual necessities. Wilfrid, the apostle of Sussex, accepted from his royal convert the gift of the Vpeninsula of Selsey, near Chichester, with the persons and property of its inhabitants, who then amounted to eighty seven families. He released them at once from spiritual and temporal bondage; and two hundred and fifty slaves of both sexes were baptized by their indulgent master. The kingdom of Sussex, which spread from the sea to the Thames, contained seven thousand families; twelve hundred were ascribed to the Isle of Wight; and, if we multiply this vague computation, it may seem probable,

that England was cultivated by a million of servants, or villains, who were attached to the estates of their arbitrary landlords. The indigent Barbarians were often tempted to sell their children, or themselves into perpetual, and even foreign, bondage; yet the special exemptions which were granted to national slaves, sufficiently declare that they were much less numerous than the strangers and captives, who had lost their liberty, or changed their masters, by the accidents of war. When time and religion had mitigated the fierce spirit of the Anglo Saxons, the laws encouraged the frequent practice of manumission; and their subjects, of Welsh or Cambrian extraction, assumed the respectable station of inferior freemen, possessed of lands, and entitled to the rights of civil society. Such gentle treatment might secure the allegiance of a fierce people, who had been recently subdued on the confines of Wales and Cornwall. The sage Ina, the legislator of Wessex, united the two nations in the bands of domestic alliance; and four British lords of Somersetshire may be honorably

distinguished in the court of a Saxon monarch.

The independent Britons appear to have relapsed into the state of original barbarism, from whence they had been imperfectly reclaimed. Separated by their enemies from the rest of mankind, they soon became an object of scandal and abhorrence to the Catholic world. Christianity was still professed in the mountains of Wales; but the rude schismatics, in the form of the clerical tonsure, and in the day of the celebration of Easter, obstinately resisted the imperious mandates of the Roman pontiffs. The use of the Latin language was insensibly abolished, and the Britons were deprived of the art and learning which Italy communicated to her Saxon proselytes. In Wales and Armorica, the Celtic tongue, the native idiom of the West, was preserved and propagated; and the Bards, who had been the companions of the Druids, were still protected, in the sixteenth century, by the laws of Elizabeth. Their chief, a respectable officer of the courts of Pengwern, or Aberfraw, or Caermarthen, accompanied the king's servants to war:

the monarchy of the Britons, which he sung in the front of battle, excited their courage, and justified their depredations; and the songster claimed for his legitimate prize the fairest heifer of the spoil. His subordinate ministers, the masters and disciples of vocal and instrumental music, visited, in their respective circuits, the royal, the noble, and the plebeian houses; and the public poverty, almost exhausted by the clergy, was oppressed by the importunate demands of the bards. Their rank and merit were ascertained by solemn trials, and the strong belief of supernatural inspiration exalted the fancy of the poet, and of his audience. The last retreats of Celtic freedom, the extreme territories of Gaul and Britain, were less adapted to agriculture than to pasturage: the wealth of the Britons consisted in their flocks and herds; milk and flesh were their ordinary food; and bread was sometimes esteemed, or rejected, as a foreign luxury. Liberty had peopled the mountains of Wales and the morasses of Armorica; but their populousness has been maliciously ascribed to the

loose practice of polygamy; and the houses of these licentious barbarians have been supposed to contain ten wives, and perhaps fifty children. Their disposition was rash and choleric; they were bold in action and in speech; and as they were ignorant of the arts of peace, they alternately indulged their passions in foreign and domestic war. The cavalry of Armorica, the spearmen of Gwent, and the archers of Merioneth, were equally formidable; but their poverty could seldom procure either shields or helmets; and the inconvenient weight would have retarded the speed and agility of their desultory operations. One of the greatest of the English monarchs was requested to satisfy the curiosity of a Greek emperor concerning the state of Britain; and Henry II. could assert, from his personal experience, that Wales was inhabited by a race of naked warriors, who encountered, without fear, the defensive armor of their enemies.

By the revolution of Britain, the limits of science, as well as of empire, were contracted. The dark cloud, which

had been cleared by the Phoenician discoveries, and finally dispelled by the arms of Caesar, again settled on the shores of the Atlantic, and a Roman province was again lost among the fabulous Islands of the Ocean. One hundred and fifty years after the reign of Honorius, the gravest historian of the times describes the wonders of a remote isle, whose eastern and western parts are divided by an antique wall, the boundary of life and death, or, more properly, of truth and fiction. The east is a fair country, inhabited by a civilized people: the air is healthy, the waters are pure and plentiful, and the earth yields her regular and fruitful increase. In the west, beyond the wall, the air is infectious and mortal; the ground is covered with serpents; and this dreary solitude is the region of departed spirits, who are transported from the opposite shores in substantial boats, and by living rowers. Some families of fishermen, the subjects of the Franks, are excused from tribute, in consideration of the mysterious office which is performed by these Charons of the ocean. Each in his turn is

summoned, at the hour of midnight, to hear the voices, and even the names, of the ghosts: he is sensible of their weight, and he feels himself impelled by an unknown, but irresistible power. After this dream of fancy, we read with astonishment, that the name of this island is Brittia; that it lies in the ocean, against the mouth of the Rhine, and less than thirty miles from the continent; that it is possessed by three nations, the Frisians, the Angles, and the Britons; and that some Angles had appeared at Constantinople, in the train of the French ambassadors. From these ambassadors Procopius might be informed of a singular, though not improbable, adventure, which announces the spirit, rather than the delicacy, of an English heroine. She had been betrothed to Radiger, king of the Varni, a tribe of Germans who touched the ocean and the Rhine; but the perfidious lover was tempted, by motives of policy, to prefer his father's widow, the sister of Theodebert, king of the Franks. The forsaken princess of the Angles, instead of bewailing, revenged her disgrace. Her warlike subjects

are said to have been ignorant of the use, and even of the form, of a horse; but she boldly sailed from Britain to the mouth of the Rhine, with a fleet of four hundred ships, and an army of one hundred thousand men. After the loss of a battle, the captive Radiger implored the mercy of his victorious bride, who generously pardoned his offence, dismissed her rival, and compelled the king of the Varni to discharge with honor and fidelity the duties of a husband. This gallant exploit appears to be the last naval enterprise of the Anglo Saxons. The arts of navigation, by which they acquired the empire of Britain and of the sea, were soon neglected by the indolent Barbarians, who supinely renounced all the commercial advantages of their insular situation. Seven independent kingdoms were agitated by perpetual discord; and the British world was seldom connected, either in peace or war, with the nations of the Continent.

I have now accomplished the laborious narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, from the

fortunate age of Trajan and the Antonines, to its total extinction in the West, about five centuries after the Christian era. At that unhappy period, the Saxons fiercely struggled with the natives for the possession of Britain: Gaul and Spain were divided between the powerful monarchies of the Franks and Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Suevi and Burgundians: Africa was exposed to the cruel persecution of the Vandals, and the savage insults of the Moors: Rome and Italy, as far as the banks of the Danube, were afflicted by an army of Barbarian mercenaries, whose lawless tyranny was succeeded by the reign of Theodoric the Ostrogoth. All the subjects of the empire, who, by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved the name and privileges of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe. The majesty of Rome was faintly represented by the princes of

Constantinople, the feeble and imaginary successors of Augustus. Yet they continued to reign over the East, from the Danube to the Nile and Tigris; the Gothic and Vandal kingdoms of Italy and Africa were subverted by the arms of Justinian; and the history of the Greek emperors may still afford a long series of instructive lessons, and interesting revolutions.

Part VI.

General Observations On The Fall Of The Roman Empire In The West.

The Greeks, after their country had been reduced into a province, imputed the triumphs of Rome, not to the merit, but to the fortune, of the republic. The inconstant goddess, who so blindly distributes and resumes her favors, had now consented (such was the language of envious flattery) to resign her wings, to descend from her globe, and to fix her firm and immutable throne on the banks of the Tyber. A wiser Greek, who has composed, with a philosophic spirit,

the memorable history of his own times, deprived his countrymen of this vain and delusive comfort, by opening to their view the deep foundations of the greatness of Rome. The fidelity of the citizens to each other, and to the state, was confirmed by the habits of education, and the prejudices of religion. Honor, as well as virtue, was the principle of the republic; the ambitious citizens labored to deserve the solemn glories of a triumph; and the ardor of the Roman youth was kindled into active emulation, as often as they beheld the domestic images of their ancestors. The temperate struggles of the patricians and plebeians had finally established the firm and equal balance of the constitution; which united the freedom of popular assemblies, with the authority and wisdom of a senate, and the executive powers of a regal magistrate. When the consul displayed the standard of the republic, each citizen bound himself, by the obligation of an oath, to draw his sword in the cause of his country, till he had discharged the sacred duty by a military service of ten years. This wise

institution continually poured into the field the rising generations of freemen and soldiers; and their numbers were reenforced by the warlike and populous states of Italy, who, after a brave resistance, had yielded to the valor and embraced the alliance, of the Romans. The sage historian, who excited the virtue of the younger Scipio, and beheld the ruin of Carthage, has accurately described their military system; their levies, arms, exercises, subordination, marches, encampments; and the invincible legion, superior in active strength to the Macedonian phalanx of Philip and Alexander. From these institutions of peace and war Polybius has deduced the spirit and success of a people, incapable of fear, and impatient of repose. The ambitious design of conquest, which might have been defeated by the seasonable conspiracy of mankind, was attempted and achieved; and the perpetual violation of justice was maintained by the political virtues of prudence and courage. The arms of the republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the

Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the Ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome.

The rise of a city, which swelled into an empire, may deserve, as a singular prodigy, the reflection of a philosophic mind. But the decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight. The story of its ruin is simple and obvious; and instead of inquiring why the Roman empire was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it had subsisted so long. The victorious legions, who, in distant wars, acquired the vices of strangers and mercenaries, first oppressed the freedom of the republic, and afterwards violated the majesty of the purple. The emperors, anxious for their personal safety

and the public peace, were reduced to the base expedient of corrupting the discipline which rendered them alike formidable to their sovereign and to the enemy; the vigor of the military government was relaxed, and finally dissolved, by the partial institutions of Constantine; and the Roman world was overwhelmed by a deluge of Barbarians. The decay of Rome has been frequently ascribed to the translation of the seat of empire; but this History has already shown, that the powers of government were divided, rather than removed. The throne of Constantinople was erected in the East; while the West was still possessed by a series of emperors who held their residence in Italy, and claimed their equal inheritance of the legions and provinces. This dangerous novelty impaired the strength, and fomented the vices, of a double reign: the instruments of an oppressive and arbitrary system were multiplied; and a vain emulation of luxury, not of merit, was introduced and supported between the degenerate successors of Theodosius. Extreme distress, which unites the virtue of a free people,

imbitters the factions of a declining monarchy. The hostile favorites of Arcadius and Honorius betrayed the republic to its common enemies; and the Byzantine court beheld with indifference, perhaps with pleasure, the disgrace of Rome, the misfortunes of Italy, and the loss of the West. Under the succeeding reigns, the alliance of the two empires was restored; but the aid of the Oriental Romans was tardy, doubtful, and ineffectual; and the national schism of the Greeks and Latins was enlarged by the perpetual difference of language and manners, of interests, and even of religion. Yet the salutary event approved in some measure the judgment of Constantine. During a long period of decay, his impregnable city repelled the victorious armies of Barbarians, protected the wealth of Asia, and commanded, both in peace and war, the important straits which connect the Euxine and Mediterranean Seas. The foundation of Constantinople more essentially contributed to the preservation of the East, than to the ruin of the West.

As the happiness of a future life is the great object of religion, we may hear without surprise or scandal, that the introduction or at least the abuse, of Christianity had some influence on the decline and fall of the Roman empire. The clergy successfully preached the doctrines of patience and pusillanimity: the active virtues of society were discouraged; and the last remains of military spirit were buried in the cloister: a large portion of public and private wealth was consecrated to the specious demands of charity and devotion; and the soldiers' pay was lavished on the useless multitudes of both sexes, who could only plead the merits of abstinence and chastity. Faith, zeal, curiosity, and the more earthly passions of malice and ambition, kindled the flame of theological discord; the church, and even the state, were distracted by religious factions, whose conflicts were sometimes bloody, and always implacable; the attention of the emperors was diverted from camps to synods; the Roman world was oppressed by a new species of tyranny; and the persecuted sects became the

secret enemies of their country. Yet party spirit, however pernicious or absurd, is a principle of union as well as of dissension. The bishops, from eighteen hundred pulpits, inculcated the duty of passive obedience to a lawful and orthodox sovereign; their frequent assemblies, and perpetual correspondence, maintained the communion of distant churches; and the benevolent temper of the gospel was strengthened, though confined, by the spiritual alliance of the Catholics. The sacred indolence of the monks was devoutly embraced by a servile and effeminate age; but if superstition had not afforded a decent retreat, the same vices would have tempted the unworthy Romans to desert, from baser motives, the standard of the republic. Religious precepts are easily obeyed, which indulge and sanctify the natural inclinations of their votaries; but the pure and genuine influence of Christianity may be traced in its beneficial, though imperfect, effects on the Barbarian proselytes of the North. If the decline of the Roman empire was hastened by the conversion of Constantine, his

victorious religion broke the violence of the fall, and mollified the ferocious temper of the conquerors.

This awful revolution may be usefully applied to the instruction of the present age. It is the duty of a patriot to prefer and promote the exclusive interest and glory of his native country: but a philosopher may be permitted to enlarge his views, and to consider Europe as one great republic whose various inhabitants have obtained almost the same level of politeness and cultivation. The balance of power will continue to fluctuate, and the prosperity of our own, or the neighboring kingdoms, may be alternately exalted or depressed; but these partial events cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the system of arts, and laws, and manners, which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of mankind, the Europeans and their colonies. The savage nations of the globe are the common enemies of civilized society; and we may inquire, with anxious curiosity, whether Europe is still threatened with a repetition of those calamities, which

formerly oppressed the arms and institutions of Rome. Perhaps the same reflections will illustrate the fall of that mighty empire, and explain the probable causes of our actual security.

I. The Romans were ignorant of the extent of their danger, and the number of their enemies. Beyond the Rhine and Danube, the Northern countries of Europe and Asia were filled with innumerable tribes of hunters and shepherds, poor, voracious, and turbulent; bold in arms, and impatient to ravish the fruits of industry. The Barbarian world was agitated by the rapid impulse of war; and the peace of Gaul or Italy was shaken by the distant revolutions of China. The Huns, who fled before a victorious enemy, directed their march towards the West; and the torrent was swelled by the gradual accession of captives and allies. The flying tribes who yielded to the Huns assumed in their turn the spirit of conquest; the endless column of Barbarians pressed on the Roman empire with accumulated weight; and, if the foremost were destroyed, the vacant

space was instantly replenished by new assailants. Such formidable emigrations can no longer issue from the North; and the long repose, which has been imputed to the decrease of population, is the happy consequence of the progress of arts and agriculture. Instead of some rude villages, thinly scattered among its woods and morasses, Germany now produces a list of two thousand three hundred walled towns: the Christian kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Poland, have been successively established; and the Hanse merchants, with the Teutonic knights, have extended their colonies along the coast of the Baltic, as far as the Gulf of Finland. From the Gulf of Finland to the Eastern Ocean, Russia now assumes the form of a powerful and civilized empire. The plough, the loom, and the forge, are introduced on the banks of the Volga, the Oby, and the Lena; and the fiercest of the Tartar hordes have been taught to tremble and obey. The reign of independent Barbarism is now contracted to a narrow span; and the remnant of Calmucks or Uzbecks, whose forces may be

almost numbered, cannot seriously excite the apprehensions of the great republic of Europe. Yet this apparent security should not tempt us to forget, that new enemies, and unknown dangers, may possibly arise from some obscure people, scarcely visible in the map of the world, The Arabs or Saracens, who spread their conquests from India to Spain, had languished in poverty and contempt, till Mahomet breathed into those savage bodies the soul of enthusiasm.

II. The empire of Rome was firmly established by the singular and perfect coalition of its members. The subject nations, resigning the hope, and even the wish, of independence, embraced the character of Roman citizens; and the provinces of the West were reluctantly torn by the Barbarians from the bosom of their mother country. But this union was purchased by the loss of national freedom and military spirit; and the servile provinces, destitute of life and motion, expected their safety from the mercenary troops and governors, who were directed by the orders of a

distant court. The happiness of a hundred millions depended on the personal merit of one or two men, perhaps children, whose minds were corrupted by education, luxury, and despotic power. The deepest wounds were inflicted on the empire during the minorities of the sons and grandsons of Theodosius; and, after those incapable princes seemed to attain the age of manhood, they abandoned the church to the bishops, the state to the eunuchs, and the provinces to the Barbarians. Europe is now divided into twelve powerful, though unequal kingdoms, three respectable commonwealths, and a variety of smaller, though independent, states: the chances of royal and ministerial talents are multiplied, at least, with the number of its rulers; and a Julian, or Semiramis, may reign in the North, while Arcadius and Honorius again slumber on the thrones of the South. The abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame; republics have acquired order and stability; monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or, at

least, of moderation; and some sense of honor and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times. In peace, the progress of knowledge and industry is accelerated by the emulation of so many active rivals: in war, the European forces are exercised by temperate and undecisive contests. If a savage conqueror should issue from the deserts of Tartary, he must repeatedly vanquish the robust peasants of Russia, the numerous armies of Germany, the gallant nobles of France, and the intrepid freemen of Britain; who, perhaps, might confederate for their common defence. Should the victorious Barbarians carry slavery and desolation as far as the Atlantic Ocean, ten thousand vessels would transport beyond their pursuit the remains of civilized society; and Europe would revive and flourish in the American world, which is already filled with her colonies and institutions.

III. Cold, poverty, and a life of danger and fatigue, fortify the strength and courage of Barbarians. In every age they have oppressed the polite and peaceful

nations of China, India, and Persia, who neglected, and still neglect, to counterbalance these natural powers by the resources of military art. The warlike states of antiquity, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome, educated a race of soldiers; exercised their bodies, disciplined their courage, multiplied their forces by regular evolutions, and converted the iron, which they possessed, into strong and serviceable weapons. But this superiority insensibly declined with their laws and manners; and the feeble policy of Constantine and his successors armed and instructed, for the ruin of the empire, the rude valor of the Barbarian mercenaries. The military art has been changed by the invention of gunpowder; which enables man to command the two most powerful agents of nature, air and fire. Mathematics, chemistry, mechanics, architecture, have been applied to the service of war; and the adverse parties oppose to each other the most elaborate modes of attack and of defence. Historians may indignantly observe, that the preparations of a siege would found and maintain a flourishing colony; yet we cannot be

displeased, that the subversion of a city should be a work of cost and difficulty; or that an industrious people should be protected by those arts, which survive and supply the decay of military virtue. Cannon and fortifications now form an impregnable barrier against the Tartar horse; and Europe is secure from any future irruptions of Barbarians; since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous. Their gradual advances in the science of war would always be accompanied, as we may learn from the example of Russia, with a proportionable improvement in the arts of peace and civil policy; and they themselves must deserve a place among the polished nations whom they subdue.

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

perhaps the primitive and universal state of man, he has gradually arisen to command the animals, to fertilize the earth, to traverse the ocean and to measure the heavens. His progress in the improvement and exercise of his mental and corporeal faculties has been irregular and various; infinitely slow in the beginning, and increasing by degrees with redoubled velocity: ages of laborious ascent have been followed by a moment of rapid downfall; and the several climates of the globe have felt the vicissitudes of light and darkness. Yet the experience of four thousand years should enlarge our hopes, and diminish our apprehensions: we cannot determine to what height the human species may aspire in their advances towards perfection; but it may safely be presumed, that no people, unless the face of nature is changed, will relapse into their original barbarism. The improvements of society may be viewed under a threefold aspect.. The poet or philosopher illustrates his age and country by the efforts of a single mind; but those superior powers of reason or fancy

are rare and spontaneous productions; and the genius of Homer, or Cicero, or Newton, would excite less admiration, if they could be created by the will of a prince, or the lessons of a preceptor.. The benefits of law and policy, of trade and manufactures, of arts and sciences, are more solid and permanent: and many individuals may be qualified, by education and discipline, to promote, in their respective stations, the interest of the community. But this general order is the effect of skill and labor; and the complex machinery may be decayed by time, or injured by violence.

Fortunately for mankind, the more useful, or, at least, more necessary arts, can be performed without superior talents, or national subordination: without the powers of one, or the union of many. Each village, each family, each individual, must always possess both ability and inclination to perpetuate the use of fire and of metals; the propagation and service of domestic animals; the methods of hunting and fishing; the rudiments of navigation; the imperfect cultivation of corn, or other nutritive grain; and the simple

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

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

• The End of Volume III •