

THOMAS ALLIES

THE HOLY SEE AND THE
WANDERING OF THE
NATIONS, FROM ST. LEO
I TO ST. GREGORY I

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Thomas W. (Thomas William) Allies

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THE LETTERS OF THE POPES AS SOURCES OF HISTORY

Cardinal Mai has left recorded his judgment that, "in matter of fact, the whole administration of the Church is learnt in the letters of the Popes".¹

I draw from this judgment the inference that of all sources for the truths of history none are so precious, instructive, and authoritative as these authentic letters contemporaneous with the persons to whom they are addressed. The first which has been preserved to us is that of Pope St. Clement, the contemporary of St. Peter and St. Paul. It is directed to the Church of Corinth for the purpose of extinguishing a schism which had there broken

¹ *Nova Patrum bibliotheca*, p. vi.: In Pontificum reapse epistolis tota ecclesiæ administratio cognoscitur.

out. In issuing his decision the Pope appeals to the Three Divine Persons to bear witness that the things which he has written "are written by us through the Holy Spirit," and claims obedience to them from those to whom he sends them as words "spoken by God through us".²

If the decisions of the succeeding Popes in the interval of nearly two hundred and fifty years between this letter of St. Clement, about the year 95, and the great letter of St. Julius to the Eusebianising bishops at Antioch in 342, had been preserved entire, the constitution of the Church in that interval would have shone before us in clear light. In fact, we only possess a few fragments of some of these decisions, for there was a great destruction of such documents in the persecution which occupied the first decade of the fourth century. But from the time of Pope Siricius, in the reign of the great Theodosius, a continuous, though not a perfect, series of these letters stretches through the succeeding ages. There is no other such series of documents existing in the world. They throw light upon all matters and persons of which they treat. This is a light proceeding from one who lives in the midst of what he describes, who is at the centre of the greatest system of doctrine and discipline, and legislation grounded upon both, which the world has ever seen. One, also, who speaks not only with a great knowledge, but with an unequalled authority, which, in every case, is like that of

² See p. 351 below; also *Church and State*, pp. 198-200, for the full statement of this passage.

no one else, but can even be *supreme*, when it is directed with such a purpose to the whole Church. Every Pope *can* speak, as St. Clement, the first of this series, speaks above, claiming obedience to his words as "words spoken by God through us".

In a former volume I made large use of the letters of Popes from Siricius to St. Leo. I have continued that use for the very important period from St. Leo to St. Gregory. Especially in treating of the Acacian schism I have gone to the letters of the Popes who had to deal with it – Simplicius, Felix III., Gelasius, Anastasius II., Symmachus, and Hormisdas. I have done the same for the important reign of Justinian; most of all for the grand pontificate of St. Gregory, which crowns the whole patristic period and sums up its discipline.

I am, therefore, indebted in this volume, first and chiefly, to the letters of the Popes and the letters addressed to them by emperors and bishops, stored up in Mansi's vast collection of Councils (1759, 31 volumes). I am also much indebted to Cardinal Hergenröther's work *Photius, sein Leben, und das griechische Schisma*, and to his *Handbuch der allgemeinen Kirchengeschichte*, as the number of quotations from him will show. Again, I may mention the two histories of the city of Rome, by Reumont and Gregorovius, as most valuable. I acknowledge many obligations to Riffel's *Geschichtliche Darstellung des Verhältnisses zwischen Kirche und Staat*, with regard to the legislation of Justinian. The edition of Justinian referred to by me is Heimbach's *Authenticum*, Leipsic, 1851.

I have consulted Hefele's *Conciliengeschichte* where need was. I have found Kurth's *Origines de la Civilisation moderne* instructive. I have used the carefully emended and supplemented German edition of Röhrbacher's history, by various writers – Rump and others. St. Gregory is quoted from the Benedictine edition.

As these works are indicated in the notes as they occur with the single name of the author, I have given here their full titles.

The present volume is the sixth of the *Formation of Christendom*, though it has a special title indicating the particular part of that general subject which it treats. I have, therefore, added to the numbering of the chapters in the Table of Contents the number which they hold in the whole work.

September 11, 1888.

CHAPTER I

THE HOLY SEE AND THE WANDERING OF THE NATIONS

"Rome's ending seemed the ending of a world.
If this our earth had in the vast sea sunk,
Save one black ridge whereon I sat alone,
Such wreck had seemed not greater. It was gone,
That empire last, sole heir of all the empires,
Their arms, their arts, their letters, and their laws.
The fountains of the nether deep are burst,
The second deluge comes. And let it come!
The God who sits above the waterspouts
Remains unshaken."

— A. de Vere, *Legends and Records*— "Death of St. Jerome".

I ended the last chapter by drawing out that series of events in the Church's internal constitution and of changes in the external world of action outside and independent of the Church which combined in one result the exhibition to all and the public acknowledgment by the Church of the Primacy given by our Lord to St. Peter, and continued to his successors in the See of Rome. I showed St. Leo as exercising this Primacy by annulling the acts of an Ecumenical Council, the second of Ephesus,

legitimately called and attended by his own legates, because it had denied a tenet of what St. Leo declared in a letter sent to the bishops and accepted by them to be the Christian faith upon the Incarnation itself. I showed him supported by the Church in that annulment, by the eastern episcopate, which attended the Council of Chalcedon, and by the eastern emperor, Marcian. Again, I showed him confirming the doctrinal decrees of the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, which followed the Council annulled by him, while he reversed and disallowed certain canons which had been irregularly passed. This he did because they were injurious to that constitution of the Church which had come down from the Apostles to his own time. And this act of his, also, I showed to be accepted by the bishop of Constantinople, who was specially affected, and by the eastern emperor, and by the episcopate: and also that the confirmation of doctrine on the one hand, and the rejection of canons on the other, were equally accepted. I also showed this great Council in its Synodical Letter to the Pope acknowledging spontaneously that very position of the Pope which the Popes had always set forth as the ground of all the authority which they claimed. The Council of Chalcedon addressed St. Leo "as entrusted by the Saviour with the guardianship of the Vine". But the Vine in the universal language of the Fathers betokened the whole Church of God. And the Council refers the confirmation of its acts to the Pope in the same document in which it asserts that the guardianship of the Vine was given to him by the Saviour Himself. This

expression, "by the Saviour Himself," means that it was not given to him by the decree of any Council representing the Church. It is a full acknowledgment that the promises made to Peter, and the Pastorship conferred upon him, descended to his successor in the See of Rome. It is a full acknowledgment; for how else was St. Leo entrusted by the Saviour with the guardianship of the Vine? Those who so addressed him were equally bishops with himself; they equally enjoyed the one indivisible episcopate, "of which a part is held by each without division of the whole".³ But this one, beside and beyond that, was charged with the whole – the Vine itself. This one point is that in which St. Peter went beyond his brethren, by the special gift and appointment of the Saviour Himself. The words, then, of the Council contain a special acknowledgment that the line of Popes after a succession of four hundred years sat in the person of Leo on the seat of St. Peter, with St. Peter's one sovereign prerogative.

It is requisite, I think, distinctly to point out that Christians, whoever they are, provided only that they admit, as confessing belief in any one of the three creeds, the Apostolic, the Nicene, or the Athanasian, they do admit, that there is one holy Catholic Church, commit a suicidal act in denying the Primacy as acknowledged by the Church at the Council of Chalcedon. For such a denial destroys the authority of the Church herself both in doctrine and discipline for all subsequent time. If the Church,

³ "Episcopatus unus est cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur." – S. Cyprian, *De Unitate Ecclesiae*.

in declaring St. Leo to be entrusted by our Lord with the guardianship of the Vine, erred; if she asserted a falsehood, or if she favoured an usurpation, how can she be trusted for any maintenance of doctrine, for any administration of sacraments, for any exercise of authority? This consideration does not touch those who believe in no Church at all. They are in the position of that individual whom the great Constantine recommended to take a ladder and mount to heaven by himself. But it touches all who profess to believe in an episcopate, in councils, in sacraments, in an organised Church, in authority deposited in that Church, and, finally, in history and in historical Christianity. To all such it may surely be said, as the simplest enunciation of reasoning, that they cannot profess belief in the Church which the Creed proclaims while they accept or reject its authority as they please. Or to localise a general expression: A man does not follow the doctrine of St. Augustine if he accepts his condemnation of Pelagius, but denies that unity of the Church in maintaining which St. Augustine spent his forty years of teaching. The action of all such persons in the eyes of the world without amounts to this, that by denying the Primacy they disprove the existence of the Church. Their negation goes to the profit of total unbelief. Asserters of the Church's division are pioneers of infidelity, for who can believe in what has fallen? or is the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ a kingdom divided against itself? They who maintain schism generate agnostics.

But I was prevented on a former occasion by want of space

from dwelling with due force upon some circumstances of St. Leo's life. These are such as to make his time an era. I was occupied during a whole volume with the attempt to set forth in some sort the action of St. Peter's See upon the Greek and Roman world from the day of Pentecost to the complete recognition of the Universal Pastorship of Peter as inherited by the Roman Pontiff in the person of St. Leo.

I approach now a further development of this subject. I go forward to treat of the Papacy, deprived of all temporal support from the fall of the western empire, taking up the secular capital into a new spiritual Rome, and creating a Christendom out of the northern tribes who had subverted the Roman empire.

There is, I think, no greater wonder in human history than the creation of a hierarchy out of the principle of headship and subordination contained in our Lord's charge to Peter. It has been pointed out that the constitution of the Nicene Council itself manifested this principle, and was the proof of its spontaneous action in the preceding centuries, while its overt recognition, as seated in the Roman Pontiff, is seen in the pontificate of St. Leo.

There is a second wonder in human history, on which it is the purpose of this volume to dwell. The Roman empire, in which the Pax Romana had provided a mould of widespread civilisation for the Church's growth, was at length broken up in the western half of it, by Teuton invaders occupying its provinces. These were all, at the time of their settlement, either pagan or Arian. There followed, in a certain lapse of time, the creation of a body of

States whose centre of union and belief was the See of Peter. That is the creation of Christendom proper. The wonder seen is that the northern tribes, impinging on the empire, and settling on its various provinces like vultures, became the matter into which the Holy See, guiding and unifying the episcopate, maintaining the original principle of celibacy, and planting it in the institute of the religious life through various countries depopulated or barbarous, infused into the whole mass one spirit, so that Arians became Catholics, Teuton raiders issued into Christian kings, savage tribes thrown upon captive provincials coalesced into nations, while all were raised together into, not a restored empire of Augustus, but an empire holy as well as Roman, whose chief was the Church's defender (*advocatus ecclesiæ*), whose creator was the Roman Peter.

It is not a little remarkable that this signal recognition by the Fourth General Council of the Roman Pontiff's authority coincided in time with the utter powerlessness to which Rome as a city was reduced. That city, on whose glory as queen of nations and civiliser of the earth her own bishop had dwelt with all the fondness of a Roman, when, year by year, on the least of St. Peter and St. Paul, he addressed the assembled episcopate of Italy, ran twice, in his own time, the most imminent danger of ceasing to exist. Italy was absolutely without an army to give her strongest cities a chance of resisting the desolation of Attila. Rome was without a force raised to save it from the pitiless robbery of Genseric. Without escort, and defended only by his

spiritual character, Leo went forth to appeal before Attila for mercy to a heathen Mongol. There is no record of what passed at that interview. Only the result is known. The conqueror, who had swept with remorseless cruelty the whole country from the Euxine to the Adriatic Sea, who was now bent upon the seizure of Italy itself, and in his course had just destroyed Aquileia, was at Mantua marching upon Rome. His intention was proclaimed to crown all his acts of destruction with that of Rome. This was the dowry which he proposed to take for the hand of the last great emperor's granddaughter, proffered to him by the hapless Honoria herself. At the word of Leo the Scourge of God gave up his prey: he turned back from Italy, and relinquished Rome, and Leo returned to his seat. In the course of the next three years he confirmed, at the eastern emperor's repeated request, the doctrinal decrees of the great Council; but he humbled likewise the arrogance of Anatolius, and not all the loyalty of Marcian, not all the devotion of the empress and saint Pulcheria, could induce him to exalt the bishop of the eastern capital at the expense of the Petrine hierarchy. But during those same three years he saw, in Rome itself, Honoria's brother, the grandson of Theodosius, destroy his own throne, and thereupon the murderer of an emperor compel his widow to accept him in her husband's place, in the first days of her sorrow. He saw, further, that daughter of Theodosius and Eudoxia, when she learnt that the usurper of her husband's throne was likewise his murderer, call in the Vandal from Carthage to avenge her double dishonour. This

was the Rome which awaited, trembling and undefended, the most profligate of armies, led by the most cruel of persecutors. Once more St. Leo, stripped of all human aid, went forth with his clergy on the road to the port by which Genseric was advancing, to plead before an Arian pirate for the preservation of the capital of the Catholic faith. He saved his people from massacre and his city from burning, but not the houses from plunder. For fourteen days Rome was subject to every spoliation which African avarice could inflict. Again, no record of that misery has been kept; but the hand of Genseric was heavier than that of Alaric, in proportion as the Vandal was cruel where the Ostrogoth was generous. Alaric would have fought for Rome as Stilicho fought, had he continued to be commanded by that Theodosius who made him a Roman general; but Genseric was the vilest in soul of all the Teuton invaders, and for fifty years, during the utter prostration of Roman power, he infested all the shores of the Mediterranean with the savagery afterwards shown by Saracen and Algerine.

This second plundering of Rome was no isolated event. It was only the sign of that utter impotence into which Roman power in the West had fallen. The city of Rome was the trophy of Cæsarean government during five hundred years – from Julius, the most royal, to Valentinian, the most abject of emperors. And now its temporal greatness was lost for ever. It ceased to be the imperial city, but by the same stroke became from the secular

a spiritual capital. The Pope, freed from the western Cæsar,⁴ gave to the Cæsarean city its second and greater life: a life of another kind generating also an empire of another sort. The raid of Genseric in the year 455 is the first of three hundred years of warfare carried on from the time of the Vandal through the time of the Lombard, under the neglect and oppression of the Byzantine, until, in the year 755, Astolphus, the last, and perhaps the worst, of an evil brood, laid waste the campagna, and besieged the city. St. Leo, in his double embassy to Attila and Genseric, was an unconscious prophet of the time to come, a visible picture of three hundred years as singular in their conflict and their issue as those other three hundred which had their close in the Nicene Council. During all those ages the Pope is never secure in his own city. He sees the trophy of Cæsarean empire slowly perish away. The capital of the world ceases to be even the capital of a province. The eastern emperor, who still called himself emperor of the Romans, omitted for many generations even to visit the city which he had subjected to an impotent but malignant official, termed an Exarch, who guarded himself by the marshes of Ravenna, but left Rome to the inroads of the Lombards. The last emperor who deigned to visit the old capital of his empire came to it only to tear from it the last relic of imperial magnificence. But then Jerusalem had fallen into the

⁴ Gregorovius, i. 286. "Das Papstthum, vom Kaiser des Abendlandes befreit, erstand, und die Kirche Roms wuchs unter Trümmern mächtig empor. Sie trat an die Stelle des Reichs."

hands of the infidel, and Christian pilgrims, since they could no longer visit the sepulchre of Christ, flocked to the sepulchre of his Vicar the Fisherman. And thus Rome was become the place of pilgrimage for all the West. Saxon kings and queens laid down their crowns before St. Peter's threshold, invested themselves with the cowl, and died, healed and happy, under the shadow of the chief Apostle. When the three hundred years were ended, the arm of Pepin made the Pope a sovereign in his own newly-created Rome. During these three centuries, running from St. Leo meeting Genseric, the pilot of St. Peter's ship has been tossed without intermission on the waves of a heaving ocean, but he has saved his vessel and the freight which it bears – the Christian faith. And in doing this he has made the new-created city, which had become the place of pilgrimage, to be also the centre of a new world.

As Leo came back from the gate leading to the harbour and re-entered his Lateran palace, undefended Rome was taken possession of by the Vandal. Leo for fourteen days was condemned to hear the cries of his people, and the tale of unnumbered insults and iniquities committed in the palaces and houses of Rome. When the stipulated days were over, the plunderer bore away the captive empress and her daughters from the palace of the Cæsars, which he had so completely sacked that even the copper vessels were carried off. Genseric also assaulted the yet untouched temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, and not only carried away the still remaining statues in his fleet which

occupied the Tiber, but stripped off half the roof of the temple and its tiles of gilded bronze. He took away also the spoils of the temple at Jerusalem, which Vespasian had deposited in his temple of peace. Belisarius found them at Carthage eighty years later, and sent them as prizes to Constantinople.⁵

Many thousand Romans of every age and condition Genseric carried as slaves to Carthage, together with Eudocia and her daughters, the eldest of whom Genseric compelled to marry his son Hunnerich. After sixteen years of unwilling marriage Eudocia at last escaped, and through great perils reached Jerusalem, where she died and was buried beside her grandmother, that other Eudocia, the beautiful Athenais whom St. Pulcheria gave to her brother for bride, and whose romantic exaltation to the throne of the East ended in banishment at Jerusalem. But one of the great churches at Rome is connected with her memory: since the first Eudocia sent to the empress her daughter at Rome half of the chains which had bound St. Peter at his imprisonment by Agrippa. When Pope Leo held the relics, which had come from Jerusalem, to those other relics belonging to the Apostle's captivity at Rome on his martyrdom, they grew together and became one chain of thirty-eight links. Upon this the empress in the days of her happiness built the Church of St. Peter ad Vincula to receive so touching a memorial of the Apostle who escaped martyrdom at Jerusalem to find it at Rome. Upon his delivery by the angel "from all the expectation of the

⁵ Gregorovius, i. 200.

people of the Jews," he "went to another place". There, to use the words of his own personal friend and second successor at Antioch, he founded "the church presiding over charity in the place of the country of the Romans,"⁶ and there he was to find his own resting-place. The church was built to guard the emblems of the two captivities. The heathen festival of Augustus, which used to be kept on the 1st August at the spot where the church was founded, became for all Christendom the feast of St. Peter's Chains.⁷

In the life of St. Leo by Anastasius, we read that after the Vandal ruin he supplied the parish churches of Rome with silver plate from the six silver vessels, weighing each a hundred pounds, which Constantine had given to the basilicas of the Lateran, of St. Peter, and of St. Paul, two to each. These churches were spared the plundering to which every other building was subjected. But the buildings of Rome were not burnt, though even senatorian families were reduced to beggary, and the population was diminished through misery and flight, besides those who were carried off to slavery.

At this point of time the grandeur of Trajan's city⁸ began to pass into the silence and desolation which St. Gregory in

⁶ St. Ignatius, *Epistle to the Romans*.

⁷ "That Roman, that Judean bondUnited then dispart no more —Pierce through the veil; the rind beyondLies hid the legend's deeper lore. Therein the mystery lies expressedOf power transferred, yet ever one;Of Rome – the Salem of the West —Of Sion, built o'er Babylon." A. de Vere, *Legends and Records*, p. 204.

⁸ Gregorovius, i. 208.

after years mourned over in the words of Jeremias on ruined Jerusalem.

Let us go back with Leo to his patriarchal palace, and realise if we can the condition of things in which he dwelt at home, as well as the condition throughout all the West of the Church which his courage had saved from heresy.

The male line of Theodosius had ended with the murder of Valentinian in the Campus Martius, March 16, 455. Maximus seized his throne and his widow, and was murdered in the streets of Rome in June, 455, at the end of seventy-seven days. When Genseric had carried off his spoil, the throne of the western empire, no longer claimed by anyone of the imperial race, became a prey to ambitious generals. The first tenant of that throne was Avitus, a nobleman from Gaul, named by the influence of the Visigothic king, Theodorich of Toulouse. He assumed the purple at Arles, on the 10th July, 455. The Roman senate, which clung to its hereditary right to name the princes, accepted him, not being able to help itself, on the 1st January, 456; his son-in-law, Sidonius Apollinaris, delivered the customary panegyric, and was rewarded with a bronze statue in the forum of Trajan, which we thus know to have escaped injury from the raid of Genseric. But at the bidding of Ricimer, who had become the most powerful general, the senate deposed Avitus; he fled to his country Auvergne, and was killed on the way in September, 456.

All power now lay in the hands of Ricimer. He was by his

father a Sueve; by his mother, grandson of Wallia, the Visigothic king at Toulouse. With him began that domination of foreign soldiery which in twenty years destroyed the western empire. Through his favour the senator Majorian was named emperor in the spring of 457. The senate, the people, the army, and the eastern emperor, Leo I., were united in hailing his election. He is described as recalling by his many virtues the best Roman emperors. In his letter to the senate, which he drew up after his election in Ravenna, men thought they heard the voice of Trajan. An emperor who proposed to rule according to the laws and tradition of the old time filled Rome with joy. All his edicts compelled the people to admire his wisdom and goodness. One of these most strictly forbade the employment of the materials from older buildings, an unhappy custom which had already begun, for, says the special historian of the city, the time had already come when Rome, destroying itself, was made use of as a great chalk-pit and marble quarry;⁹ and for such it served the Romans themselves for more than a thousand years. They were the true barbarians who destroyed their city.

But Majorian was unable to prevent the ruin either of city or of state. He had made great exertions to punish Genseric by reconquering Africa. They were not successful; Ricimer compelled him to resign on the 2nd of August, 461, and five days afterwards he died by a death of which is only known that it was violent. A man, says Procopius, upright to his subjects, terrible to

⁹ Gregorovius, i. 215.

his enemies, who surpassed in every virtue all those who before him had reigned over the Romans.

Three months after Majorian, died Pope St. Leo. First of his line to bear the name of Great, who twice saved his city, and once, by the express avowal of a successor, the Church herself, Leo carried his crown of thorns one-and-twenty years, and has left no plaint to posterity of the calamities witnessed by him in that long pontificate. Majorian was the fourth sovereign whom in six years and a half he had seen to perish by violence. A man with so keen an intellectual vision, so wise a measure of men and things, must have fathomed to its full extent the depth of moral corruption in the midst of which the Church he presided over fought for existence. This among his own people. But who likewise can have felt, as he did, the overmastering flood of northern tribes —*vis consili experts*— which had descended on the empire in his own lifetime. As a boy he must have known the great Theodosius ruling by force of mind that warlike but savage host of Teuton mercenaries. In his one life, Visigoth and Ostrogoth, Vandal and Herule, Frank and Aleman, Burgundian and Sueve, instead of serving Rome as soldiers in the hand of one greater than themselves, had become masters of a perishing world's mistress; and the successor of Peter was no longer safe in the Roman palace which the first of Christian emperors had bestowed upon the Church's chief bishop. Instead of Constantine and Theodosius, Leo had witnessed Arcadius and Honorius; instead of emperors the ablest men of their day, who could be

twelve hours in the saddle at need, emperors who fed chickens or listened to the counsel of eunuchs in their palace. Even this was not enough. He had seen Stilicho and Aetius in turn support their feeble sovereigns, and in turn assassinated for that support; and the depth of all ignominy in a Valentinian closing the twelve hundred years of Rome with the crime of a dastard, followed by Genseric, who was again to be overtopped by Ricimer, while world and Church barely escape from Attila's uncouth savagery. But Leo in his letters written in the midst of such calamities, in his sermons spoken from St. Peter's chair, speaks as if he were addressing a prostrate world with the inward vision of a seer to whom the triumph of the heavenly Jerusalem is clearly revealed, while he proclaims the work of the City of God on earth with equal assurance.

Hilarus in that same November, 461, succeeded to the apostolic chair. Hilarus was that undaunted Roman deacon and legate who with difficulty saved his life at the Robber-Council of Ephesus, where St. Flavian, bishop of Constantinople, was beaten to death by the party of Dioscorus, and who carried to St. Leo a faithful report of that Council's acts. At the same time the Lucanian Libius Severus succeeded to the throne. All that is known of him is that he was an inglorious creature of Ricimer, and prolonged a government without record until the autumn of 465, when his maker got tired of him. He disappeared, and Ricimer ruled alone for nearly two years. Yet he did not venture to end the empire with a stroke of violence, or

change the title of Patricius, bestowed upon him by the eastern emperor, for that of king. In this death-struggle of the realm the senate showed courage. The Roman fathers in their corporate capacity served as a last bond of the State as it was falling to pieces; and Sidonius Apollinaris said of them that they might rank as princes with the bearer of the purple, only, he adds significantly, if we put out of question the armed force.¹⁰ The protection of the eastern emperor, Leo I., helped them in this resistance to Ricimer. The national party in Rome itself called on the Greek emperor for support. The utter dissolution of the western empire, when German tribes, Burgundians, Franks, Visigoths, and Vandals, had taken permanent possession of its provinces outside of Italy, while the violated dignity of Rome sank daily into greater impotence, now made Byzantium come forth as the true head of the empire. The better among the eastern Cæsars acknowledged the duty of maintaining it one and indivisible. They treated sinking Italy as one of their provinces, and prevented the Germans from asserting lordship over it.

At length, after more than a year's vacancy of the throne, Ricimer was obliged not only to let the senate treat with the Eastern emperor, Leo I., but to accept from Leo the choice of a Greek. Anthemius, one of the chief senators at Byzantium, who had married the late emperor Marcian's daughter, was sent with solemn pomp to Rome, and on the 12th April, 467, he accepted

¹⁰ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epist.*, i. 9. "Hi in amplissimo ordine, seposita prærogativa partis armatæ, facile post purpuratum principem principes erant."

the imperial dignity in the presence of senate, people, and army, three miles outside the gates. Ricimer also condescended to accept his daughter as his bride, and we have an account of the wedding from that same Sidonius Apollinaris who a few years before had delivered the panegyric upon the accession of his own father-in-law, Avitus, afterwards deposed and killed by Ricimer; moreover, he had in the same way welcomed the accession of the noble Majorian, destroyed by the same Ricimer. Now on this third occasion Sidonius describes the whole city as swimming in a sea of joy. Bridal songs with fescennine licence resounded in the theatres, market-places, courts, and gymnasia. All business was suspended. Even then Rome impressed the Gallic courtier-poet with the appearance of the world's capital. What is important is that we find this testimony of an eye-witness, given incidentally in his correspondence, that Rome in her buildings was still in all her splendour. And again in his long panegyric he makes Rome address the eastern emperor, beseeching him, in requital for all those eastern provinces which she has given to Byzantium – "Only grant me Anthemius;¹¹ reign long, O Leo, in your own parts, but grant me my desire to govern mine." Thus Sidonius shows in his verses what is but too apparent in the history of the elevation of Anthemius, that Nova Roma on the borders of Europe and Asia was the real

¹¹ "Sed si forte placet veteres sopire querelas Anthemium concede mihi; sit partibus istis Augustus longumque Leo; mea jura gubernet Quem petii." —*Carmen*, ii.

sovereign.¹² And we also learn that the whole internal order of government, the structure of Roman law, and the daily habit of life had remained unaltered by barbarian occupation. This is the last time that Rome appears in garments of joy. The last reflection of her hundred triumphs still shines upon her palaces, baths, and temples. The Roman people, diminished in number, but unaltered in character, still frequented the baths of Nero, of Agrippa, of Diocletian; and Sidonius recommends instead baths less splendid, but less seductive to the senses.¹³

But Anthemius lasted no longer than the noble Majorian or the ignoble Severus. East and West had united their strength in a great expedition to put down the incessant Vandal piracies, which made all the coasts of the Mediterranean insecure.¹⁴ It failed through the treachery of the eastern commander Basiliscus, to whose evil deeds we shall have hereafter to recur. This disaster shook the credit of Anthemius, and Ricimer also tired of his father-in-law. He went to Milan, and Rome was terrified with the report that he had made a compact with barbarians beyond the Alps. Ricimer marched upon Rome, to which he laid siege in 472. Here he was joined by Anicius Olybrius, who had married

¹² Reumont, i. 700.

¹³ He says at the end of 500 hendecasyllabics (jam te veniam loquacitati Quingenti hendecasyllabi precantur): "Hinc ad balnea non Neroniana, Nec quæ Agrippa dedit, vel ille cujus Bustum Dalmaticæ vident Salonæ, Ad thermas tamen ire sed libebat, Privato bene præbitas pudori".

¹⁴ For a well-told account of this expedition and its failure, see Thierry, *Derniers Temps de l'Empire d'Occident*, pp. 77-101.

Placidia, the younger daughter of Valentinian and Eudoxia, through whom he claimed the throne, as representative of the Theodosian line. Ricimer, after a fierce contest with Anthemius, burst into the Aurelian gate at the head of troops all of German blood and Arian belief, massacring and plundering all but two of the fourteen regions. But the city escaped burning.

Then Anicius Olybrius entered Rome, consumed at once by famine, pestilence, and the sword. With the consent of Leo, and at the request of Genseric, he had been already named emperor. He took possession of the imperial palace, and made the senate acknowledge him. Anthemius had been cut in pieces, but forty days after his death Ricimer died of the plague, and thus had not been able to put to death more than four Roman emperors, of whom his father-in-law, Anthemius, was the last. The Arian Condottiere, who had inflicted on Rome a third plundering, said to be worse than that of Genseric, was buried in the Church of St. Agatha in Suburra,¹⁵ which had been ceded to the Arians, and which he had adorned.

Olybrius made the Burgundian prince Gundebald commander of the forces, but died himself in October of that same year, 472, and left the throne to be the gift of barbarian adventurers. Three more shadows of emperors passed. Gundebald gave that dignity at Ravenna, in March, 473, to Glycerius, a man of unknown antecedents. In 474, Glycerius was deposed by Nepos,

¹⁵ There is a strange occurrence recorded by St. Gregory in his *Dialogues* as having taken place in this church, which would seem to point at Ricimer's burial in it.

a Dalmatian, whom the empress Verina, widow of Leo I., had sent with an army from Byzantium to Ravenna. Nepos compelled his predecessor to abdicate, and to become bishop of Salona. He himself was proclaimed emperor at Rome on the 24th June, 474, after which he returned to Ravenna. While he was here treating with Euric, the Visigoth king, at Toulouse, Orestes, whom he had made Patricius and commander of the barbaric troops for Gaul, rose against him. Nepos fled by sea from Ravenna in August, 475, and betook himself to Salona, whither he had banished Glycerius.

Orestes was a Pannonian; had been Attila's secretary; then commander of German troops in service of the emperors. Thus he came to lead the troops which had been under Ricimer. This heap of Germans and Sarmatians without a country were in wild excitement, demanding a cession of Italian lands, instead of a march into Gaul. They offered their general the crown of Italy. Orestes thought it better to invest therewith his young son, and so, on the 31st October, 475, the boy Romulus Augustus, by the supremest mockery of what is called fortune, sat for a moment on the seat of the first king and the first emperor of Rome.

Italy could no longer produce an army, and the foreign soldiery who had served under various leaders naturally desired the partition of its lands. Odoacer was now their leader, who, when a penniless youth, had visited St. Severinus in Noricum, and received from him the prophecy: "Go into Italy, clad now in poor skins: thou wilt speedily be able to clothe many richly".

Odoacer, after an adventurous life of heroic courage, made the homeless warriors whom he now commanded understand that it was better to settle on the fair lands of Italy than wander about in the service of phantom emperors. They acclaimed him as their king, and after beheading Orestes and getting possession of Romulus Augustus, he compelled him to abdicate before the senate, and the senate to declare that the western empire was extinct. This happened in the third year of the emperor Zeno the Isaurian, the ninth of Pope Simplicius, A.D. 476. The senate sent deputies to Zeno at Byzantium to declare that Rome no longer required an independent emperor; that one emperor was sufficient for East and for West; that they had chosen for the protector of Italy Odoacer, a man skilled in the arts of peace as well as war, and besought Zeno to entrust him with the dignity of Patricius and the government of Italy. The deposed Nepos also sent a petition to Zeno to restore him. Zeno replied to the senate that of the two emperors whom he had sent to them, they had deposed Nepos and killed Anthemius. But he received the diadem and the imperial jewels of the western empire, and kept them in his palace. He endured the usurper who had taken possession of Italy until he was able to put him down, and so, in his letters to Odoacer, invested him with the title of "Patricius of the Romans," leaving the government of Italy to a German commander under his imperial authority. So the division into East and West was cancelled: Italy as a province belonged still to the one emperor, who was seated at Byzantium. In theory,

the unity of Constantine's time was restored; in fact, Rome and the West were surrendered to Teuton invaders.¹⁶ This was the last stroke: the mighty members of the great mother – Gaul, and Spain, and Britain, and Africa, and Illyricum – had been severed from her. Now, the head, discrowned and impotent, submitted to the rule of Odoacer the Herule. The Byzantine supremacy remained in keeping for future use. It had been acknowledged from the death of Honorius in 423, when Galla Placidia had become empress and her son emperor by the gift and the army of Theodosius II.

The agony of imperial Rome lasted twenty-one years. Valentinian III. was reigning in 455: in the March of that year he was murdered, and succeeded by Maximus, who was murdered in June; then by Avitus in July, who was murdered in October, 456. Majorianus followed in 457, and reigned till August, 461: he was followed by Libius Severus in November, who lasted four years, till November, 465. After an interregnum of eighteen months, in which Ricimer practically ruled, Anthemius was brought from Byzantium in April, 467, and continued till July, 472; but Anicius Olybrius again was brought from Byzantium, reigned for a few months in 472, and died of the plague in October. In 473, Glycerius was put up for emperor; in 474, he gave place to Nepos, the third brought from Byzantium. In 475, Romulus Augustus appears, to disappear in 476, and end his life in retirement at the Villa of Lucullus by Naples, once the seat of

¹⁶ This account has been shortened from that of Gregorovius, i. 231-5.

Rome's most luxurious senator.

Eighty years had now passed since the death of Theodosius. In the course of these years the realm which he had saved from dissolution after the defeat and death of Valens near Adrianople, and had preserved during fifteen years by wisdom in council and valour in war, and still more by his piety, when once his protecting hand and ruling mind were withdrawn, fell to pieces in the West, and was scarcely saved in the East. Let us take the last five years of St. Leo, which follow on the raid of Genseric, in order to complete the sketch just given of Rome's political state, by showing the condition of the great provinces which belonged to Leo's special patriarchate. I have before noticed how it was in the interval between the retirement of Attila from Rome at the prayer of St. Leo and the seizure of Rome by Genseric at the solicitation of the miserable empress Eudoxia, when St. Leo could save only the lives of his people, that he confirmed the Fourth Ecumenical Council. Not only was he entreated to do this by the emperor Marcian: the Council itself solicited the confirmation of its acts, which for that purpose were laid before him, while it made the most specific confession of his authority as the one person on earth entrusted by the Lord with His vineyard. From the particular time and the circumstances under which these events took place, one may infer a special intention of the Divine Providence. This was that the whole Roman empire, while it still subsisted, the two emperors, one of whom was on the point of disappearing, and the whole

episcopate, in the most solemn form, should attest the Roman bishop's universal pastorship. For a great period was ending, the period of the Græco-Roman civilisation, from which, after three centuries of persecution, the Church had obtained recognition. And a great period was beginning, when the wandering of the nations had prepared for the Church another task. The first had been to obtain the conversion of nations linked by the bond of one temporal rule, enjoying the highest degree of culture and knowledge then existing, but deeply tainted by the corruption of effete refinement. The second was to exalt rough, sturdy, barbarian natures, whose bride was the sword and human life their prey, first to the virtues of the civil state, and next to the higher life of Christian charity, and thus to link them, who had known only violent repulsion and perpetual warfare among themselves, in not a temporal but a spiritual bond. The majestic figure of St. Leo expressed the completion of the first task. It also symbolises the beneficent power which in the course of ages will accomplish the second.

The wandering of the nations, says a great historian, was of decisive effect for the Church, and he quotes another historian's summary description of it: "It was not the migration of individual nomad hordes, or masses of adventurous warriors in continuous motion, which produced changes so mighty. But great, long-settled peoples, with wives and children, with goods and chattels, deserted their old seats, and sought for themselves in the far distance a new home. By this the position of individuals, of

communities, of whole peoples, was of necessity completely altered. The old conditions of possession were dissolved. The existing bonds of society loosened. The old frontiers of states and lands passed away. As a whole city is turned into a ruinous heap by an earthquake, so the whole political system of previous times was overthrown by this massive transmigration. A new order of things had to be formed corresponding to the wholly altered circumstances of the nation."¹⁷

I draw from the same historian¹⁸ an outline of the movement, running through several centuries, which had this final result. Great troops of Celts had, before the time of Christ, sought to settle themselves in Rhætia and Upper Italy, even as far as Rome. Cimbrians and Teutons, with as little success, had betaken themselves southwards, while under the empire the pressure of peoples had more and more increased, and Trajan could hardly maintain the northern frontier on the Danube. In the third century, Alemans and Sueves advanced to the Upper Rhine, and the Goths, from dwelling between the Don and Theiss, came to the Danube and the Black Sea. Decius fell in battle with them. Aurelian gave them up the province of Dacia. Constantine the Great conquered them, and had Gothic troops in his army. Often they broke into the Roman territory, and carried off prisoners with them. Some of these were Christians and introduced the Goths to the knowledge of Christianity.

¹⁷ Giesebrecht, quoted by Hergenröther, *K.G.*, i. 449.

¹⁸ Hergenröther, i. 449-453.

Theophilus, a Gothic bishop, was at the Nicene Council in 325. They had clergy, monks, and nuns, with numerous believers. Under Athanarich, king of the Visigoths, Christians already suffered, with credit, a bloody persecution. On the occasion of the Huns, a Scythian people, compelling the Alans on the Don to join them, then conquering the Ostrogoths and oppressing the Visigoths, the latter prevailed on the emperor Valens to admit them into the empire. Valens gave them dwellings in Thrace on the condition that they should serve in his army and accept Arian Christianity. So the larger number of Visigoths under Fridiger in 375 became Arians. They soon, however, broke into conflict with the empire through their ill-treatment by the imperial commanders. In 378, Valens was defeated near Adrianople; his army was utterly crushed; he met himself with a miserable death. After this the Visigoths in general continued to be Arians, though many, especially through the exertions of St. Chrysostom, were converted to Catholicism. Most of them, however, seem to have been only half Arians, like their famous bishop Ulphilas. He was by birth a Goth – some say a Cappadocian – was consecrated between 341 and 348, in Constantinople. He gave the Goths an alphabet of their own, formed after the Greek, and made for them a translation of the Bible, of great value as a record of ancient German. He died in Constantinople before 388 – probably in 381.

Under Theodosius I., about 382, the Visigoths accepted the Roman supremacy, and the engagement to supply 40,000 men

for the service of the empire, upon the terms of occupying, as allies free of tribute, the provinces assigned to them of Dacia, Lower Moesia, and Thrace. After this, discontented at the holding back their pay, and irritated by Rufinus, who was then at the head of the government of the emperor Arcadius, they laid waste the Illyrian provinces down to the Peloponnesus, and made repeated irruptions into Italy, in 400 and 402, under their valiant leader Alarich. In 408 he besieged Rome, and exacted considerable sums from it. He renewed the siege in 409, and made the wretched prefect Attalus emperor, whom he afterwards deposed, and recognised Honorius again. At last he took Rome by storm on the 24th August, 410. The city was completely plundered, but the lives of the people spared. He withdrew to Lower Italy and soon died. His brother-in-law and successor, Ataulf, was first minded entirely to destroy the Roman empire, but afterwards to restore it by Gothic aid. In the end he went to Gaul, conquered Narbonne, Toulouse, and Bordeaux, and afterwards Barcelona. His half-brother Wallia, after reducing the Alans and driving back the Sueves and Vandals, planted his seat in Toulouse, which became, in 415, the capital of his Aquitanian kingdom, Gothia or Septimania. Gaul, in which several Roman commanders assumed the imperial title, was overrun in the years from 406 to 416 by various peoples, whom the two opposing sides called in: by Burgundians, Franks, Alemans, Vandals, Quades, Alans, Gepids, Herules. The Alans, Sueves, Vandals, and Visigoths, at the same time, went to Spain. Their leaders endeavoured to set

up kingdoms of their own all over Gaul and Spain.

Arianism came from the Visigoths not only to the Ostrogoths but also to the Gepids, Sueves, Alans, Burgundians, and Vandals. But these peoples, with the exception of the Vandals and of some Visigoth kings, treated the Catholic religion, which was that of their Roman subjects, with consideration and esteem. Only here and there Catholics were compelled to embrace Arianism. Their chief enemy in Gaul was the Visigoth king Eurich. Wallia, dying in 419, had been succeeded by Theodorich I. and Theodorich II., both of whom had extended the kingdom, which Eurich still more increased. He died in 483. Under him many Catholic churches were laid waste, and the Catholics suffered a bloody persecution. He was rather the head of a sect than the ruler of subjects. This, however, led to the dissolution of his kingdom, which, from 507, was more and more merged in that of the Franks.

The Burgundians, who had pressed onwards from the Oder and the Vistula to the Rhine, were in 417 already Christian. They afterwards founded a kingdom, with Lyons for capital, between the Rhone and the Saone. Their king Gundobald was Arian. But Arianism was not universal; and Patiens, bishop of Lyons, who died in 491, maintained the Catholic doctrine. A conference between Catholics and Arians in 499 converted few. But Avitus, bishop of Vienne, gained influence with Gundobald, so that he inclined to the Catholic Church, which his son Sigismund, in 517, openly professed. The Burgundian kingdom was united with the

Frankish from 534.

The Sueves had founded a kingdom in Spain under their king Rechila, still a heathen. He died in 448. His successor, Rechiar, was Catholic. When king Rimismund married the daughter of the Visigoth king Theodorich, an Arian, he tried to introduce Arianism, and persecuted the Catholics, who had many martyrs – Pancratian of Braga, Patanius, and others. It was only between 550 and 560 that the Gallician kingdom of the Sueves, under king Charrarich, became Catholic, when his son Ariamir or Theodemir was healed by the intercession of St. Martin of Tours, and converted by Martin, bishop of Duma. In 563 a synod was held by the metropolitan of Braga, which established the Catholic faith. But in 585, Leovigild, the Arian king of the larger Visigoth kingdom, incorporated with his territory the smaller kingdom of the Sueves. Catholicism was still more threatened when Leovigild executed his own son Hermenegild, who had married the Frankish princess Jugundis, for becoming a Catholic. But the martyr's brother, Rechared, was converted by St. Leander, archbishop of Seville, and in 589 publicly professed himself a Catholic. This faith now prevailed through all Spain.

The Vandals, rudest of all the German peoples, had been invited by Count Boniface, in 429, to pass over from Spain under their king Genseric to the Roman province of North Africa. They quickly conquered it entirely. Genseric, a fanatical Arian, persecuted the Catholics in every way, took from them their churches, banished their bishops, tortured and put to death

many. Some bishops he made slaves. He exposed Quodvultdeus, bishop of Carthage, with a number of clergy, to the mercy of the waves on a wretched raft. Yet they reached Naples. The Arian clergy encouraged the king in all his cruelties. It was only in private houses or in suburbs that the Catholics could celebrate their worship. The violence of his tyranny, which led many to doubt even the providence of God, brought the Catholic Church in North Africa into the deepest distress. Genseric's son and successor, Hunnerich, who reigned from 477 to 484, was at first milder. He had married Eudoxia, elder daughter of Valentinian III. The emperor Zeno had specially recommended to him the African Catholics. He allowed them to meet again, and, after the see of Carthage had been vacant twenty-four years, to have a new bishop. So the brave confessor Eugenius was chosen in 479. But this favour was followed by a much severer persecution. Eugenius, accused by the bitter Arian bishop Cyrila, was severely ill-treated, shut up with 4976 of the faithful, banished into the barest desert, wherein many died of exhaustion. Hunnerich stripped the Catholics of their goods, and banished them chiefly to Sardinia and Corsica. Consecrated virgins were tortured to extort from them admission that their own clergy had committed sin with them. A conference held at Carthage in 484 between Catholic and Arian bishops was made a pretext for fresh acts of violence, which the emperor Zeno, moved by Pope Felix III. to intercede, was unable to prevent. 348 bishops were banished. Many died of ill usage. Arian baptism was forced

upon not a few, and very many lost limbs. This persecution produced countless martyrs. The greatest wonders of divine grace were shown in it. Christians at Tipasa, whose tongues had been cut out at the root, kept the free use of their speech, and sang songs of praise to Christ, whose godhead was mocked by the Arians. Many of these came to Constantinople, where the imperial court was witness of the miracle. The successor of this tyrant Hunnerich, king Guntamund, who reigned from 485 to 496, treated the Catholics more fairly, and, though the persecution did not entirely cease, allowed, in 494, the banished bishops to return. A Roman Council, in 487 or 488, made the requisite regulations with regard to those who had suffered iteration of baptism, and those who had lapsed. King Trasamund, from 496 to 523, wished again to make Arianism dominant, and tried to gain individual Catholics by distinctions. When that did not succeed, he went on to oppression and banishment, took away the churches, and forbade the consecration of new bishops. As still they did not diminish, he banished 120 to Sardinia, among them a great defender of the Catholic faith, St. Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspe. King Hilderich, who reigned from 523 to 530, a gentle prince and friend of the emperor Justinian, stopped the persecution and recalled the banished. Fulgentius was received back with great joy, and in February, 525, Archbishop Bonifacius held at Carthage a Council once more, at which sixty bishops were present. Africa had still able theologians. Hilderich was murdered by his cousin Gelimer:

a new persecution was preparing. But the Vandal kingdom in Africa was overthrown in 533 by the eastern general Belisarius, and northern Africa united with Justinian's empire. However, the African Church never flourished again with its former lustre.

But Gaul and Italy had been in the greatest danger of suffering a desolation in comparison with which even the Vandal persecution in Africa would have been light. St. Leo was nearly all his life contemporaneous with the terrible irruptions of the Huns. These warriors, depicted as the ugliest and most hateful of the human race, in the years from 434 to 441, having already advanced, under Attila, from the depths of Asia to the Wolga, the Don, and the Danube, pressing the Teuton tribes before them, made incursions as far as Scandinavia. In the last years of the emperor Theodosius II. they filled with horrible misery the whole range of country from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. In the spring of 451 Attila broke out from Pannonia with 700,000 men, absorbed the Alemans and other peoples in his host, wasted and plundered populous cities such as Treves, Mainz, Worms, Spires, Strasburg, and Metz. The skill of Aetius succeeded in opposing him on the plains by Chalons with the Roman army, the Visigoths, and their allies. The issue of this battle of the nations was that Attila, after suffering and inflicting fearful slaughter, retired to Pannonia. The next year he came down upon Italy, destroyed Aquileia, and the fright of his coming caused Venice to be founded on uninhabited islands, which the Scythian had no vessels to reach. He advanced over Vicenza, Padua, Verona,

Milan. Rome was before him, where the successor of St. Peter stopped him. He withdrew from Italy, made one more expedition against the Visigoths in Gaul, but died shortly after. With his death his kingdom collapsed. His sons fought over its division, the Huns disappeared, and what was afterwards to be Europe became possible.

The invasions of the Hun shook to its centre the western empire. Aetius, who had saved it at Chalons in 451, received in 454 his death-blow as a reward from the hand of Valentinian III., and so we are brought to the nine phantom emperors who follow the race of the great Theodosius, when it had been terminated by the vice of its worst descendant.

One Teuton race, the most celebrated of all, I have reserved for future mention. The Franks in St. Leo's time, and for thirty-five years after his death, were still pagan. The Salian branch occupied the north of Gaul, and the Ripuarians were spread along the Rhine, about Cologne. Their paganism had prevented them from being touched by the infection of the Arian heresy, common to all the other tribes, so that the Arian religion was the mark of the Teutonic settler throughout the West, and the Catholic that of the Roman provincials.

Thus when, in the year 476, the Roman senate, at Odoacer's bidding, exercised for the last time its still legal prerogative of naming the emperor, by declaring that no emperor of the West was needed, and by sending back the insignia of empire to the eastern emperor Zeno, all the provinces of the West had

fallen, as to government, into the hands of the Teuton invaders, and all of these, with the single exception of the Franks, were Arians. They alone were still pagans. Odoacer, also an Arian, became the ruler of Rome and Italy, nominally by commission from the emperor Zeno, really in virtue of the armed force, consisting of adventurers belonging to various northern tribes which he commanded. To the Romans he was Patricius,¹⁹ a title of honour lasting for life, which from Constantine's time, without being connected with any particular office, surpassed all other dignities. To his own people he was king of the Ruges, Herules, and Turcilings, or king of the nations. He ruled Italy, and Sicily, except a small strip of coast, and Dalmatia, and these lands he was able to protect from outward attack and inward disturbance. He made Ravenna his seat of government. He did not assume the title of king at Rome. He maintained the old order of the State in appearance. The senate held its usual sittings. The Roman aristocracy occupied high posts. The consuls from the year 482 were again annually named. The Arian ruler left theological matters alone. But the eyes of Rome were turned towards Byzantium. The Roman empire continued legally to exist, and especially in the eye of the Church. The Pope maintained relations with the imperial power.

In the meantime, Theodorich the Ostrogoth, son of Theodemir, chief of the Amal family, had been sent as a hostage for the maintenance of the treaty made by the emperor Leo I.

¹⁹ Reumont, ii. 6.

with his father, and had spent ten years, from his seventh to his seventeenth year, at Constantinople. Though he scorned to receive an education in Greek or Roman literature, he studied during these years, with unusual acuteness, the political and military circumstances of the empire. Of strong but slender figure, his beautiful features, blue eyes with dark brows, and abundant locks of long, fair hair, added to the nobility of his race, pointed him out for a future ruler.²⁰

In 475, Theodorich succeeded his father as king of the Ostrogoths in their provinces of Pannonia and Mœsia, which had been ceded by the empire. He it was who was destined to lead his people to glory and greatness, but also to their fall, in Italy. Zeno had striven to make him a personal friend – had made him general, given him pay and rank. Theodorich had not a little helped Zeno in his struggle for the empire. The Ostrogoth, in 484, became Roman consul; but he also appeared suddenly in a time of peace before the gates of Constantinople, in 487, to impress his demands upon Zeno. Theodorich and his people occupied towards Zeno the same position which Alaric and his Visigoths had held towards Honorius. Their provinces were exhausted, and they wanted expansion. Whether it was that Zeno deemed the Ostrogothic king might be an instrument to terminate the actual independence of Italy from his empire, or that the neighbourhood of the Goths, under so powerful a ruler, seemed to him dangerous, or that Theodorich himself had cast

²⁰ Reumont, ii. 9.

longing eyes upon Italy, Zeno gave a hesitating approval to the advance of the last great Gothic host to the southwest. The first had taken this direction under Alaric eighty-eight years before. Now a sovereign sanction from the senate of Constantinople, called a Pragmatic sanction, assigned Italy to the Gothic king and his people.

From Novæ, Theodorich's capital on the Danube, not far from the present Bulgarian Nikopolis, this world of wanderers, numbered by a contemporary as at least 350,000, streamed forth with its endless train of waggons. At the Isonzo, Italy's frontier, Odoacer, on the 28th August, 489, encountered the flood, and was worsted, as again at the Adige. Then he took refuge in Ravenna. The end of a three years' conflict, in which the Gothic host was encamped in the pine-forest of Ravenna, and where the "Battle of the Ravens" is commemorated in the old German hero-saga, was that, in the winter of 493, the last refuge of Odoacer opened its gates. Odoacer was promised his life, but the compact was broken soon. His people proclaimed Theodorich their king. Theodorich had sent a Roman senator to Zeno to ask his confirmation of what he had done. Zeno had been succeeded by Anastasius in 491. How much Anastasius granted cannot be told. Rome, during this conflict, had remained in a sort of neutrality. At first Theodorich deprived of their freedom as Roman citizens all Italians who had stood in arms against him. Afterwards, he set himself to that work of equal government for Italians and Goths which has given a lustre to his reign, though

the fair hopes which it raised foundered at last in an opposition which admitted of no reconciliation.

Theodorich²¹ reigned from 493 to 526. He extended by successful wars the frontiers of the Gothic kingdom beyond the mainland of Italy and its islands. Narbonensian Gaul, Southern Austria, Bosnia, and Servia belonged to it at its greatest extension. The Theiss and the Danube, the Garonne and the Rhone, flowed beside his realm. The forms of the new government, as well as the laws, remained the same substantially as in Constantine's time. The Roman realm continued, only there stood at its head a foreign military chief, surrounded by his own people in the form of an army. Roman life lived on in manner of life, in customs, in dress. The Romans were judged according to their own laws. Gothic judges determined matters which concerned the Goths; in cases common to both they sat intermixed with Roman judges. Theodorich's principle was with firm and impartial hand to deal evenly between the two. But the military service was reserved to the Goths alone. Natives were forbidden even to carry knives. The Goths were to maintain public security: the Romans to multiply in the arts of peace. But even Theodorich could not fuse these nations together. The Goths remained foreigners in Italy, and possessed as *hospites* the lands assigned to them, which would seem to have been a third. This noblest of barbarian princes, and most generous

²¹ Reumont (ii. 29-42) gives an admirable sketch of the government of Theodorich, by which I have profited in what follows.

of Arians, had to play two parts. In Ravenna and Verona he headed the advance of his own people, and was king of the Goths: in Rome the Patricius sought to protect and maintain. When, in 500, he visited Rome, he was received before its gates by the senate, the clergy, the people, and welcomed like an emperor of the olden time. Arian as he was, he prayed in St. Peter's, like the orthodox emperors of the line of Theodosius, at the Apostle's tomb. Before the senate-house, in the forum, Boethius greeted him with a speech. The German king admired the forum of Trajan, as the son of Constantine, 143 years before, had admired it. Statues in the interval had not ceased to adorn it. Romans and Franks, heathens and Christians, alike were there: Merobaudes, the Gallic general; Claudian, the poet from Egypt, the worshipper of Stilicho, in verses almost worthy of Virgil; Sidonius Apollinaris, the future bishop of Clermont, who panegyrised three emperors successively deposed and murdered. The theatre of Pompey and the amphitheatre of Titus still rose in their beauty; and as the Gothic king inhabited the vast and deserted halls of the Cæsarean palace, he looked down upon the games of the Circus Maximus, where the diminished but unchanged populace of Rome still justified St. Leo's complaint, that the heathen games drew more people than the shrines of the martyrs whose intercession had saved Rome from Attila. In fine, St. Fulgentius could still say, If earthly Rome was so stately, what must the heavenly Jerusalem be!

The bearing of the Arian king to the Catholic Church and

the Roman Pontificate was just and fair almost to the end of his reign. He protected Pope Symmachus at a difficult juncture. His minister Cassiodorus supported and helped the election of Pope Hormisdas. The letters of Cassiodorus, as his private secretary, counsellor, and intimate friend, remain to attest, with the force of an eye-witness, a noble Roman and a devoted Christian, who was also Patricius and Prætorian Prefect – the nature of the government, as well as the state of Italian society at that time. We hardly possess such another source of knowledge for this century. But under Pope John I. this happy state of things broke down. A dark shadow has been thrown upon the last years of an otherwise glorious government. The noble Boethius, after being leader of the Roman senate and highly-prized minister of the Gothic king, died under hideous torture, inflicted at the command of a suspicious and irritated master. Again, he had forced upon Pope John I. an embassy to Constantinople, and required of him to obtain from the eastern emperor churches for Arians in his dominions. The Pope returned, after being honoured at the eastern court as the first bishop of the world, laden with gifts for the churches at Rome, but without the required consent of the emperor to give churches to the Arians. He perished in prison at Ravenna by the same despotic command. This was in May, 526, and in August the king himself died almost suddenly, fancying, it was said, that he saw on a fish which was brought to his table the head of a third victim, the illustrious Symmachus. What Catholics thought of

his end is shown by St. Gregory seventy years afterwards, who records in his Dialogues a vision seen at Lipari on the day of the king's death, in which the Pope and Symmachus were carrying him between them with his hands tied, to plunge him in the crater of the volcano.

Several writers²² have termed Theodorich a premature Charlemagne. It seems to me that, as Genseric was the worst and most ignoble of the Teutonic Arian princes, Theodorich was the best. The one showed how cruel and remorseless an Arian persecutor was, the other how fair a ruler and generous a protector the nature of things would allow an Arian monarch to be. But in his case the end showed that the Gothic dominion in Italy rested only on the personal ability of the king, and, further, that no stable union could take place until these German-Arian races had been incorporated by the Catholic Church into her own body.²³

This truth is yet more illustrated by a double contrast between Theodorich and Clovis. In personal character the former was far superior to the latter. Clovis was converted at the age of thirty, and died at forty-five. Yet the effect of the fifteen years of his reign after he became a Catholic was permanent. From that moment the Franks became a power. In that short time Clovis

²² Montalembert, Gregorovius, Kurth. Philips (vol. iii., p. 51, sec. 119), remarks: "Wäre Theodorich der Grosse nicht Arianer gewesen, so würde, wenn er es sonst gewollt, ihm wohl nichts weiter im Wege gestanden haben, als sich zum Römischen kaiser im Abendlande ausrufen lassen".

²³ Gregorovius, i. 312, 315.

obtained possession of a very great part of France, and that possession went on and was confirmed to his line and people. The thirty-three years of Theodorich secured to Italy a time of peace, even of glory, which did not fall to its lot for ages afterwards. Yet the effect of his government passed with him; his daughter and heiress, the noble princess Amalasuntha, in whose praise Cassiodorus exhausts himself, was murdered; his kingdom was broken up, and Cassiodorus himself, retiring from public life, confessed in his monastic life, continued for a generation, how vain had been the attempt of the Arian king to overcome the antagonistic forces of race and religion by justice, valour, and forbearance.

It was fitting that the attempt should be made by the noblest of Teutonic races, under the noblest chief it ever produced. Nor is it unfitting here to recur to the opinion of another great Goth, not indeed the equal of Theodorich, yet of the same race and the nearest approach to him, one of those conquerors who showed a high consideration for the Roman empire. Orosius records "that he heard a Gallic officer, high in rank under the great Theodosius, tell St. Jerome at Bethlehem how he had been in the confidence of Ataulph, who succeeded Alaric, and married Galla Placidia. How he had heard Ataulph declare that, in the vigour and inexperience of youth, he had ardently desired to obliterate the Roman name, and put the Gothic in its stead – that instead of Romania the empire should be Gothia, and Ataulph be what Augustus had been. But a long experience had taught him two

things – the one, that the Goths were too barbarous to obey laws; the other, that those laws could not be abolished, without which the commonwealth would cease to be a commonwealth. And so he came to content himself with the glory of restoring the Roman name by Gothic power, that posterity might regard him as the saviour of what he could not change for the better."²⁴

It seems that the observation of Ataulph at the beginning of the fifth century was justified by the experience of Theodorich at the beginning of the sixth. And, further, we may take the conduct of these two great men as expressing on the whole the result of the Teutonic migration in the western provinces. After unspeakable misery produced in the cities and countries of the West at the time of their first descent, we may note three things. The imperial lands, rights, and prerogatives fell to the invading rulers. The lands in general partly remained to the provincials (the former proprietors), partly were distributed to the conquerors. But for the rest, the fabric of Roman law, customs, and institutions remained standing, at least for the natives, while the invaders were ruled severally according to their inherited customs. Even Genseric was only a pirate, not a Mongol, and after a hundred years the Vandal reign was overthrown and North Africa reunited to the empire. In the other cases it may be said that the children of the North, when they succeeded, after the struggle of three hundred years, in making good their descent on the South, seized indeed the

²⁴ Orosius, *Hist.*, vii. 43.

conqueror's portion of houses and land, but they were not so savage as to disregard, in Ataulph's words, those laws of the commonwealth, without which a commonwealth cannot exist. The Franks, in their original condition one of the most savage northern tribes, in the end most completely accepted Roman law, the offspring of a wisdom and equity far beyond their power to equal or to imitate. And because they saw this, and acted on it most thoroughly, they became a great nation. The Catholic faith made them. Thus, when the boy Romulus Augustus was deposed at Rome, and power fell into the hands of the Herule Odoacer, Pope Simplicius, directing his gaze over Africa, Spain, France, Illyricum, and Britain, would see a number of new-born governments, ruled by northern invaders, who from the beginning of the century had been in constant collision with each other, perpetually changing their frontiers. Wherever the invaders settled a fresh partition of the land had to be made, by which the old proprietors would be in part reduced to poverty, and all the native population which in any way depended on them would suffer greatly. It may be doubted whether any civilised countries have passed through greater calamities than fell upon Gaul, Spain, Eastern and Western Illyricum, Africa, and Britain in the first half of the fifth century. Moreover, while one of these governments was pagan, all the rest, save Eastern Illyricum, were Arian. That of the Vandals, which had occupied, since 429, Rome's most flourishing province, also her granary, had been consistently and bitterly hostile to its Catholic inhabitants. That

of Toulouse, under Euric, was then persecuting them. Britain had been severed from the empire, and seemed no less lost to the Church, under the occupation of Saxon invaders at least as savage as the Frank or the Vandal. In these broad lands, which Rome had humanised during four hundred years, and of which the Church had been in full possession, Pope Simplicius could now find only the old provincial nobility and the common people still Catholic. The bishops in these several provinces were exposed everywhere to an Arian succession of antagonists, who used against them all the influence of an Arian government.

When he looked to the eastern emperor, now become in the eyes of the Church the legitimate sovereign of Rome, by whose commission Odoacer professed to rule, instead of a Marcian, the not unworthy husband of St. Pulcheria, instead of Leo I., who was at least orthodox, and had been succeeded by his grandson the young child Leo II., he found upon the now sole imperial throne that child's father Zeno. He was husband of the princess Ariadne, daughter of Leo I.,²⁵ a man of whom the Byzantine historians give us a most frightful picture. Without tact and understanding, vicious, moreover, and tyrannical, he oppressed during the two years from 474 to 476 his people, sorely tried by the incursions of barbarous hordes. He also favoured, all but openly, the Monophysites, specially Peter Fullo, the heretical patriarch of Antioch. After two years a revolution deprived him of the throne, and exalted to it the equally vicious Basiliscus – the

²⁵ Photius, i. 111.

man whose treachery as an eastern general had ruined the success of the great expedition against Genseric, in which East and West had joined under Anthemius. Basiliscus still more openly favoured heresy. He lasted, however, but a short time; Zeno was able to return, and occupied the throne again during fourteen years, from 477 to 491. These two men, Zeno and Basiliscus, criminal in their private lives, in their public lives adventurers, who gained the throne by the worst Byzantine arts, opened the line of the theologising emperors. Basiliscus, during the short time he occupied the eastern throne, issued, at the prompting of a heretic whom he had pushed into the see of St. Athanasius – and it is the first example known in history – a formal decree upon faith, the so-called Encyclikon, in which only the Nicene, Constantinopolitan, and Ephesine Councils were accepted, but the fourth, that of Chalcedon, condemned. So low was the eastern Church already fallen that not the Eutycheans only, but five hundred Catholic bishops subscribed this Encyclikon, and a Council at Ephesus praised it as divine and apostolical.

Basiliscus, termed by Pope Gelasius the tyrant and heretic, was swept away. But his example was followed in 482 by Zeno, who issued his Henotikon, drawn up it was supposed by Acacius of Constantinople,²⁶ addressed to the clergy and people of Alexandria. Many of the eastern bishops, through fear of Zeno and his bishop Acacius, submitted to this imperial decree; many contended for the truth even to death against it. These two deeds,

²⁶ Photius, i. 120.

the Encyclikon of Basiliscus and the Henotikon of Zeno, are to be marked for ever as the first instances of the temporal sovereign infringing the independence of the Church in spiritual matters, which to that time even the emperors in Constantine's city had respected.

Simplicius sat in the Roman chair fifteen years, from 468 to 483; and such was the outlook presented to him in the East and West – an outlook of ruin, calamity, and suffering in those vast provinces which make our present Europe – an outlook of anxiety with a prospect of ever-increasing evil in the yet surviving eastern empire. There was not then a single ruler holding the Catholic faith. Basiliscus and Zeno were not only heretical themselves, but they were assuming in their own persons the right of the secular power to dictate to the Church her own belief. And the Pope had become their subject while he was locally subject to the dominion of a northern commander of mercenaries, himself a Herule and an Arian. In his own Rome the Pope lived and breathed on sufferance. Under Zeno he saw the East torn to pieces with dissension; prelates put into the sees of Alexandria and Antioch by the arm of power; that arm itself directed by the ambitious spirit of a Byzantine bishop, who not only named the holders of the second and third seats of the Church, but reduced them to do his bidding, and wait upon his upstart throne. Gaul was in the hand of princes, mostly Arian, one pagan. Spain was dominated by Sueves and Visigoths, both Arian. In Africa Simplicius during forty years had been witness

of the piracies of Genseric, making the Mediterranean insecure, and the cities on every coast liable to be sacked and burnt by his flying freebooters, while the great church of Africa, from the death of St. Augustine, had been suffering a persecution so severe that no heathen emperor had reached the standard of Arian cruelty. In Britain, civilisation and faith had been alike trampled out by the northern pirates Hengist and Horsa, and successive broods of their like. The Franks, still pagan, had advanced from the north of Gaul to its centre, destroyers as yet of the faith which they were afterwards to embrace. What did the Pope still possess in these populations? The common people, a portion of the local proprietors, and the Catholic bishops who had in him their common centre, as he in them men regarded with veneration by the still remaining Catholic population.

In all this there is one fact so remarkable as to claim special mention. How had it happened that the Catholic faith was considered throughout the West the mark of the Roman subject; and the Arian misbelief the mark of the Teuton invader and governor? Theodosius had put an end to the official Arianism of the East, which had so troubled the empire, and so attacked the Primacy in the period between Constantine and himself. During all that time the Arian heresy had no root in the West. But the emperor Valens, when chosen as a colleague by his brother Valentinian I., in 364, was counted a Catholic. A few years later he fell under the influence of Eudoxius, who had got by his favour the see of Byzantium. This man, one of the worst leaders of

the Arians, taught and baptised Valens, and filled him with his own spirit; and Valens, when he settled the Goths in the northern provinces by the Danube, stipulated that they should receive the Arian doctrine. Their bishop and great instructor Ulphilas had been deceived, it is said, into believing that it was the doctrine of the Church. This fatal gift of a spurious doctrine the Goth received in all the energy of an uninstructed but vigorous will. As the leader of the northern races he communicated it to them. A Byzantine bishop had poisoned the wells of the Christian faith from which the great new race of the future was to drink, and when Byzantium succeeded in throwing Alaric upon the West, all the races which followed his lead brought with them the doctrine which Ulphilas had been deceived into propagating as the faith of Christ. So it happened that if the terrible overthrow of Valens in 378 by the nation which he had deceived brought his persecution with his reign to an end in the East, yet through his act Arianism came into possession, a century later, of all but one of the newly set up thrones in the West.

In truth, at the time the western empire fell the Catholic Church was threatened with the loss of everything which, down to the time of St. Leo, she had gained. For the triumph which Constantine's conversion had announced, for the unity of faith which her own Councils had maintained from Nicæa to Chalcedon, she seemed to have before her subjection to a terrible despotism in the East, extinction by one dominant heresy in the West. For here it was not a crowd of heresies which

surrounded her, but the secular power at Rome, at Carthage, at Toulouse and Bordeaux, at Seville and Barcelona, spoke Arian. Who was to recover the Goth, the Vandal, the Burgundian, the Sueve, the Aleman, the Ruge, from that fatal error? Moreover, her bounds had receded. Saxon and Frank had largely swept away the Christian faith in their respective conquests. Who was to restore it to them? The Rome which had planted her colonies through these vast lands as so many fortresses, first of culture and afterwards of faith, was now reduced to a mere *municipium* herself. The very senate, with whose name empire had been connected for five hundred years, at the bidding of a barbarous leader of mercenaries serving for plunder, sent back the symbols of sovereignty to the adventurer, whoever he might be, who sat by corruption or intrigue on the seat of Constantine in Nova Roma.

This thought leads me to endeavour more accurately to point out the light thrown upon the Papal power by the various relations in which it stood at different times to the temporal governments with which it had to deal.

The practical division of the Roman empire in the fourth century, ensuing upon the act of Constantine in forming a new capital of that empire in the East, made the Church no longer subject to one temporal government. The same act tested the spiritual Primacy of the Church. It called it forth to a larger and more complicated action. I have in a former volume followed at considerable length the series of events the issue of which was, after Arian heretics had played upon eastern jealousy and

tyrannical emperors during fifty years, to strengthen the action of the Primacy. But assuredly had that Primacy been artificial, or made by man, the division of interests ensuing upon the political disjunction of the East and West would have destroyed it. Julius and Liberius and Damasus would not have stood against Constantius and Valens if the heart of the Church had not throbbed in the Roman Primacy. Still more apparent does this become in the next fifty years, wherein the overthrow of the western empire begins. Then the sons of Theodosius, instead of joining hand with hand and heart with heart against the forces of barbarism, which their father had controlled and wielded, were seduced by their ministers into antagonism with each other. Byzantium worked woe to the elder sister of whom she was jealous. Under the infamous treasons of Rufinus and Eutropius, the words might have been uttered with even fuller truth than in their original application —

"Suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit"

Thus Alaric first took Rome. But he did not take the Primacy. Pope Innocent lost no particle of his dignity or influence by the violation of Rome's secular dignity. It was only seven years after that event when St. Augustine and the two great African Councils acknowledged his Principate in the amplest terms. The heresy of Pelagius and the schism of Donatus were stronger than the sword of Alaric. And only a few years later, when a most fearful heresy,

broached by the Byzantine bishop, led to the assembly in which then for the first time the Church met in general Council since Nicæa, the most emphatic acknowledgment of the Primacy as seated in the Roman bishop by descent from Peter was given by bishops, the subjects of an emperor very jealous of the West, to a Pope who could not live securely in Rome itself.

In all these hundred years it is seen how the division of the empire enlarged and strengthened the action of the Primacy. But this it did because the Primacy was divine. The events just referred to, but described elsewhere at length, would have destroyed it had it not been divine.

But this course of things, which is seen in action from the Nicene to the Chalcedonic Council, comes out with yet stronger force from the moment when Rome loses all temporal independence. We may place this moment at the date of its capture by Genseric. But it continues from that time. The events which took place at Rome in the twenty-one following years, the nine sovereigns put up and deposed, the subjection to barbarous leaders of hireling free-lances, the worse plundering of Ricimer seventeen years after that of Genseric – these were events grieving to the heart St. Leo and his successors; but yet not events at Rome alone – the whole condition of things in East and West which Pope Simplicius had to look upon outside of his own city, despotic emperors in the East, with bishops bending to their will, allowing the apostolic hierarchy to be displaced, and the apostolic doctrine determined by secular masters; Teuton

settlements in the West ruled by the heresy most inimical to the Church; the Catholic population reduced in numbers and lowered in social position; whole countries seized by pagans, and forced at once into barbarism and infidelity – in the midst of all these the Pope stood: his generals were the several bishops of captured cities, whose places were assaulted by heretical rivals, supported by their kings. Gaul, Spain, Britain, Africa, Illyricum, Italy itself, no longer parts of one government, but ruled by enemies, any or all of these would have rejected the Roman Primacy if it had not come to them with the strongest warrant both of the Church's past history and her present consciousness.

Such was the new world in which the Pope stood from the year 455; and he stood in it for three hundred years. The testimony which such times bear is a proof superadded to the words of Fathers and the decrees of Councils.

But there is one other point in the political situation on which a word must be said.

From the time named, the Roman Primacy is the one sole fixed point in the West. All else is fluctuating and transitional. To the Pope the bishops, subject in each city to barbarian insolence, cling as their one unfailing support. Without him they would be Gothic, or Vandal, or Burgundian, or Sueve, or Aleman, or Turciling, – with him and in him they are Catholic. Let me express, in the words of another, what is contained in this fact. The Church, says Guizot, "at the commencement of the fifth century, had its government, a body of clergy,

a hierarchy, which apportioned the different functions of the clergy, revenues, independent means of action, rallying points which suit a great society, councils provincial, national, general, the habit of arranging in common the society's affairs. In a word, at this epoch Christianity was not only a religion but a Church. If it had not been a Church, I do not know what would have become of it in the midst of the Roman empire's fall. I confine myself to purely human considerations: I put aside every element foreign to the natural consequences of natural facts. If Christianity had only been a belief, a feeling, an individual conviction, we may suppose that it would have broken down at the dissolution of the empire and the barbarian invasion. It did break down later in Asia and in all north Africa beneath an invasion of the same kind – that of barbarous Mussulmans. It broke down then though it was an institution, a constituted Church. Much more might the same fact have happened at the moment of the Roman empire's fall. There were then none of those means by which in the present day moral influences are established or support themselves independent of institutions: no means by which a naked truth, a naked idea, acquires a great power over minds, rules actions, and determines events. Nothing of the kind existed in the fourth century to invest ideas and personal feelings with such an authority. It is clear that a strongly organised, a strongly governed, society was needed to struggle against so great a disaster, to overcome such a hurricane. I think I do not go too far in affirming that, at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, it is

the Christian Church which saved Christianity. It is the Church, with its institutions, its magistrates, and its power, which offered a vigorous defence to the internal dissolution of the empire, to barbarism; which conquered the barbarians; which became the bond, the means, the principle of civilisation to the Roman and the barbarian world."²⁷

In this passage, Guizot speaks of the Church as a government, as a unity. At the very moment of which he speaks, St. Augustine was addressing the Pope as the fountainhead of that unity; and in the midst of the dissolution an emperor was recommending him to the Gallic bishops "as the chief of the episcopal coronet"²⁸ encircling the earth. The whole structure which lasted through this earthquake of nations had its cohesion in him – a fact seen even more clearly in the time of the third Valentinian than in that of the conquering Constantine.

But looking to that East, which dates from the Encyclikon of a Basiliscus and the Henotikon of a Zeno, here the Pope appears as the sole check to a despotic power. He alone could speak to the emperor on an equal and even a superior footing. Would such a power not have repudiated his interference, had it not been convinced of an authority beyond its reach to deny? The first generation following the utter impotence of Rome as reduced to a *municipium* under Arian rulers will answer this question, as we shall see hereafter, with fullest effect.

²⁷ Guizot, *Sur la Civilisation en Europe*, deuxième leçon.

²⁸ Edict of Valentinian III., in 447.

I have adduced above three political situations. The first is when the Primacy passes from dealing with one government to deal with more than one; the second when the Primacy has to deal with an unsettled world of many governments; the third when it is the sole fixed point in the face of a hurricane on one side and a despotism on the other. I observe that the testimony of all three concurs to bring out its action and establish its divine character. As an epilogue to all that has been said, I will suppose a case.

Three men, great with the natural greatness of intellect, greater still in the acquired greatness of character, greatest of all in the supernatural grace of saintliness, witnessed this fifth century from its beginning: one of them, during two decades of years; the second, during three; the last, during six decades. They saw in their own persons, or they heard in authentic narratives, all its doings – the cities plundered and overthrown; the countries wasted; all natural ties disregarded; neither age, nor sex, nor dignity, respected by hordes of savages, incapable themselves of learning, strangers to science, without perception of art; the sum being that the richest civilisation which the world had borne was crushed down by brute force. They saw, and mourned, and bore with unfailing personal courage their portion of sorrow, mayhap turning themselves in their inmost mind from a world perishing before their eyes, to contemplate the joy promised in a world which should not perish. But neither to St. Jerome, nor to St. Augustine, nor to St. Leo, did the thought occur that this barbarian mass could be controlled into producing a civilisation

richer than that which its own incursion destroyed. That, instead of perpetual strife and mutual repulsion, it could receive the one law of Christ; be moulded into a senate of nations, with like institutions and identical principles; that, instead of one empire taking an external impress of the Christian faith, but rebelling against it with a deep-seated corruption and an unyielding paganism, and so perishing in the midst of abundance, it should grow into peoples, the corner-stone of whose government and the parent of their political constitution should be the one faith of Christ, and their acknowledged judge the Roman Pastor; and that the Rome which all the three saw once plundered, and the third twice subjected to that penalty, should lose all its power as a secular capital, while it became the shrine whence a divine law went forth; and that these hordes, who laid it waste before their eyes, should become its children and its most valiant defenders.

Had such a vision been vouchsafed to either of these great saints, with what words of thankfulness would he have described it. This is the subject which this narrative opens; and we, the long-descended offspring of these hordes, have seen this sight and witnessed this exertion of power carried on through centuries; and degenerate and ungrateful children as we are, we are living still upon the deeds which God wrought in that conversion of the nations by the pastoral staff of St. Peter, leading them into a land flowing with oil and wine.

CHAPTER II

CÆSAR FELL DOWN

When St. Leo refused his assent to the Canons in favour of the see of Constantinople, which, at the end of the Council of Chalcedon, the Court, the clergy, and above all Anatolius, the bishop of the imperial city, desired to be passed, and with that intent overbore the resistance of the Papal legates, the race of Theodosius was still reigning both at Old and at New Rome. The eastern sovereigns, Marcian and Pulcheria, by becoming whose husband Marcian had ascended the throne, had acted with conspicuous loyalty towards the Pope. The mistakes of Theodosius II. were repaired, and the cabals of his courtiers ceased to affect the stronger minds and faithful hearts of his successors. In the West, Galla Placidia, during all the reign, since the death, in 423, of her brother Honorius, with which her nephew Theodosius II. had invested her, was also faithful to St. Peter's See; the same spirit directed her son Valentinian, and his empress-cousin, the daughter of the eastern emperor. The letters of all exist, in which they strove to set right their father, or nephew, Theodosius II., in the matter of Eutyches. All had supported St. Leo in the annulling that unhappy Council which compromised the faith of the Church so long as it was allowed to count as a Council. But not for any merit on the part of Pulcheria

and Marcian would St. Leo allow the mere grandeur of a royal city, because it was the seat of empire, to dethrone from their original rank, held since the beginning of the Christian hierarchy, the two other Sees of St. Peter – the one of his disciple St. Mark, sent from his side at Rome; the other, in which he had first sat himself. St. Leo could not the least foresee that the course of things in less than a generation would justify by the plainest evidence of facts his maintenance of tradition and his prescience of future dangers. He had charged Anatolius with seeking unduly to exalt himself at the expense of his brethren. The exaltation consisted in making himself the second bishop of the Church. His see, a hundred and twenty years before, had, if it existed at all – for it is all but lost in insignificance – been merely a suffragan of the archbishop of Heraclea. Leo saw that Anatolius, under cover of the emperor's permanent residence in Nova Roma, sought to make its bishop the lever by which the whole episcopate of the East should be moved. We are now to witness the attempt to carry into effect all which St. Leo feared by a bishop who was next successor but one to Anatolius in his see.

The changes, indeed, wrought in a few years were immense. St. Leo himself outlived both Pulcheria and Marcian; and on the death of the latter saw the imperial succession, which had been in some sense hereditary since the election of Valentinian I., in 364, pass to a new man. As this is the first occasion on which the succession to the Byzantine throne comes into our review, it may be well to consider what sort of thing it was. I suppose the

Cæsarean succession even from the first is a hard thing to bring under any definition. Since Claudius was discovered quaking for fear behind a curtain, and dragged out to sit upon the throne which his nephew Caius had hastily vacated, after having been welcomed to it four years before with universal acclamation, it would be difficult to say what made a man emperor of the Romans. So much I seem to see in that terrible line, that the descent from father to son was hardly ever blessed, and that those who were adopted by an emperor no way related to them succeeded the best. The children of the very greatest emperors – of a Marcus Aurelius, a Constantine, a Theodosius – have only brought shame on their parents and ruin on their empire. Again, if the youth of a Nero or a Caracalla ended in utter ignominy, the youth of an Alexander Severus produced the fairest of reigns, while it ended in his murder by an usurper. But strange and anomalous as the Cæsarean succession appears, that of the Byzantine sovereigns, from the disappearance of the Theodosian race to the last Constantine who dies on the ramparts of the city made by the first, shows a great deterioration.²⁹ There was no acknowledged principle of succession. Arbitrary force determined it. One robber followed another upon the throne; so that the eastern despot seemed to imitate that ghastly rule, in the wood by Nemi, "of the priest who slew the slayer and shall himself be slain". If the army named one man to the throne, the fleet named another. If intrigue and shameless deceit gained

²⁹ See Philips, *Kirchenrecht*, vol. iii., sec. 119.

it in one case, murder succeeded in another. Relationship or connection by marriage with the last possessor helped but rarely. This frequent and irregular change, and the personal badness of most sovereigns, caused endless confusion to the realm. This is the staple of the thousand years in which the election of the emperor Leo I., in 457, stands at the head. On the death of Marcian, following that of Pulcheria, in whose person a woman first became empress regnant, Leo was a Thracian officer, a colonel of the service, and director of the general Aspar's household. Aspar was an Arian Goth, commander of the troops, who had influence enough to make another man emperor, but not to cancel the double blot of barbarian and heretic in his own person. He made Leo, with the intention to be his master. And Leo ruled for seventeen years with some credit; and presently put Aspar and his son to death, in a treacherous manner, but not without reason. He bore a good personal character, was Catholic in his faith, and St. Leo lived on good terms with him during the four years following his election. St. Leo, dying in 461, was succeeded by Pope Hilarus, the deacon and legate who brought back a faithful report to Rome of the violent Council at Ephesus, in 449, from which he had escaped. Pope Hilarus was succeeded in 468 by Simplicius, and in 474 the emperor Leo died, leaving the throne to an infant grandson of the same name, the son of his daughter Ariadne, by an Isaurian officer Zeno, who reigned at first as the guardian of his son, and a few months afterwards came by that son's death to sole power as emperor. The worst

character is given to Zeno by the national historians. His conduct was so vile, and his government so discredited by irruptions of the Huns on the Danube, and of Saracens in Mesopotamia, that his wife's stepmother Verina, the widow of Leo I., conspired against him, and was able to set her brother Basiliscus on the throne. Zeno took flight; Basiliscus was proclaimed emperor. He declared himself openly against the Catholic faith in favour of the Eutycheans. But Basiliscus was, if possible, viler than Zeno, and after twenty months Zeno was brought back. The usurper's short rule lasted from October, 475, to June, 477; exactly, therefore, at the time when Odoacer put an end to the western empire. It was upon Zeno's recovery of the throne that he received back from the Roman senate the sovereign insignia, and conferred the title of Roman Patricius on Odoacer. In the following years Zeno had much to do with Theodorich. He gave up to him part of Dacia and Mœsia, and finally he made, in 484, the king of the Ostrogoths Roman consul, as a reward for the services to the Roman emperor. But, afterwards, Theodorich ravaged Zeno's empire up to the walls of Constantinople, and was bought off by a commission to march into Italy and to dethrone Odoacer. Zeno continued an inglorious and unhappy reign, full of murders, deceits, and crimes of every sort, for fourteen years after his restoration, and died in 491.

Let us now pass to the ecclesiastical policy of Zeno's reign.

The succession to the see of Constantinople requires to be considered in apposition with that of the see of Rome. The

attempt of Anatolius had been broken by St. Leo, who also outlived him by three years, for Anatolius died in 458, a year after the emperor Leo had succeeded Marcian; and his crowning of Leo is recorded as the first instance of that ceremony being exercised. At his death Gennadius was appointed, who sat to the year 471. He is commended by all writers for his admirable conduct. St. Leo³⁰ had sent bishops to Constantinople to ask the emperor that he would bring to punishment Timotheus the Cat, who, being schismatical, excommunicated, and Eutychean, had nevertheless got possession of the see of Alexandria. He was endeavouring, after the death of the legitimate bishop, Proterius, who had succeeded the deposed Dioscorus, to ruin the Catholic faith throughout Egypt. All the bishops of the East, whom the emperor consulted, pronounced against this Timotheus. But he was supported by Aspar, who had given Leo the empire. Nevertheless, Gennadius joined his efforts with those of the Pope, and Timotheus Ailouros was banished from Alexandria to Gangra. Another Timotheus Solofaciolus, approved by Pope Leo, was made bishop of Alexandria.

At the end of 471, Acacius succeeded Gennadius in the see of the capital. At the time he was well known, having been for many years superior of the orphans' hospital, where he had gained the affection of everyone. He is said to have been made bishop by the influence of Zeno, who was then the emperor's son-in-law. He immediately rose high in the opinion of Leo, who consulted him

³⁰ Tillemont, xvi. 68.

on private and public affairs before anyone else. He placed him in the senate, the first time that the bishop had sat there. Acacius is said to have used his influence with Leo to soften a severe temper, to restore many persons to his favour, to obtain the recall of many from banishment. He took special care of the churches, and of the clergy serving them, and they in return put his portrait everywhere. Acacius was considered an excellent bishop when Basiliscus rose against Zeno.

In all this contest Acacius took part against the attempt which Basiliscus made to overthrow the faith of the Church. He had issued a document termed the Encyclikon or Circular, in which for the first time in the history of the Church an emperor had assumed the right, as emperor, to lay down the terms of the faith. In this act there is not so much to be considered the mixture of truth and falsehood in the document issued as the authority which he claimed to set up a standard of doctrine. But he could not induce Acacius to put his signature to it. Five hundred Greek bishops, it is true, were found to do so, but Acacius was not one of them. Basiliscus fell, Zeno was restored, and Acacius came out of the struggles between them with increased renown.

Zeno's restoration was considered at the time a victory of the Catholic cause. Basiliscus in his short dominion of twenty months had formally recalled from exile the notorious heretic Timotheus Ailouros, and put him in the patriarchal see of Alexandria, as likewise Peter the Fuller in the see of Antioch. This Timotheus had moved Basiliscus to the strong

act of despotically overriding the faith by issuing an edict upon doctrine. Basiliscus had been obliged, by the opposition of the monks at Constantinople, and that of Acacius, and the fear of the returning Zeno, to withdraw this document. The usurper had to fly for refuge to sanctuary, but Acacius did not shield him as St. Chrysostom had shielded Eutropius. He came forth under solemn promise from Zeno that his blood should not be shed, and was carried with wife and children to Cappadocia, where all were starved to death.

In all this matter Acacius had gained great credit as defender of the Council of Chalcedon. He had himself referred for help to Simplicius in the Apostolic See. Zeno upon his return to power had entered into closer connection with the Roman chair. He had sent the Pope a blameless confession of faith, promising to maintain the Council of Chalcedon. Simplicius, on the 8th October, 477, had congratulated him on his return. In this letter he reminds Zeno of the acts of his predecessors, Marcian and Leo: that he owed gratitude to God for bringing him back. "He has restored their empire to you: do you show Him their service. And as the words which I lately addressed, under the instruction of the blessed Apostle Peter, were rejected by those who were about to fall (*i. e.*, Basiliscus), I pray that by God's favour they may profit those who shall stand (*i. e.*, Zeno). I receive the letters sent by your clemency, as an immense pledge of your devotion. I breathe again joyously, and do not doubt that you will do even more in religion than I desire. But mindful

of my office, I dwell the more on this matter, because out of regard alike for your empire and your salvation I ardently wish that you should abide in that cause on which alone depends the stability of present government and the gaining future glory. I beg above all things that you should deliver the Church of Alexandria from the heretical intruder, and restore it to the Catholic and legitimate bishop, and also restore the several ejected bishops to their sees, that as you have delivered your commonwealth from the domination of a tyrant, so you may save the Church of God everywhere from the robbery and contamination of heretics. Do not allow that to prevail which the iniquity of the times and a spirit as rebellious against God as against your empire has stirred up, but rather what so many great pontiffs, and with them the consent of the universal Church, has decreed. Give full legal vigour to the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, or those which my predecessor Leo, of blessed memory, has with apostolic learning laid down. That is, as you have found it, the Catholic faith, which has put down the mighty from their seat, and exalted the humble."³¹

To appreciate this letter, it must be borne in mind that it was written by Pope Simplicius a year after the western empire was extinguished; that the writer had seen nine western emperors deposed, and most of them murdered, in twenty-one years; that it was addressed to the eastern and now only Roman emperor; and that the writer was living under the absolute rule of the

³¹ Simplicii, *Ep.* viii.; Photius, i. 115.

condottiere chief who had succeeded Ricimer, and is called by Pope Gelasius a few years afterwards "Odoacer, barbarian and heretic".³²

The whole East was disturbed at this time by the condition of the great patriarchal sees of Alexandria and Antioch. The Eutychean party was perpetually trying for the mastery. At Alexandria, Proterius, who succeeded Dioscorus when he was deposed at the Council of Chalcedon, had been murdered in 458. The utmost efforts of Pope Leo and the emperor Leo were needed to maintain his legitimate successor Timotheus Solofaciolus, against whom a rival of the same name, Timotheus Ailouros, had been set up by the Eutychean party, which was far the most numerous. It was on the death of this patriarch, Timotheus Solofaciolus, in 482, that the clergy and many bishops had chosen John Talaia as his successor. John Talaia had announced his election to the Pope in order to be acknowledged by him; also, as was customary, to the patriarch of Antioch; but had sent his synodal letter by some indirect manner to Acacius, who thus received the notice by public report, rather than in the official way. But in the four years which had elapsed since the restoration of Zeno, Acacius had acquired great influence over him. Zeno had published a decree in which, "out of regard to our royal city," he assured to that "Church, the mother of our piety and the see of all orthodox Christians, the privileges and honours over the consecration of bishops which, before our

³² Pope Gelasius, 13th letter.

government, or during it, it is recognised to possess," in which he named Acacius, "the most blessed patriarch, father of our piety". Acacius had made his maintenance of the Council of Chalcedon go step by step with his claim to exercise patriarchal rights over the great see of Ephesus. This had led to fresh reclamations from the Pope. Acacius had gone ever forwards, and seemed, by the favour of Zeno, to be reaching complete subjection of the eastern patriarchates to the see of Constantinople. Incensed at what he considered the slight offered to him by John Talaia, he took up, with the utmost keenness against him, the cause of a rival, Peter the Stammerer, who had been elected by the Eutychean party. He worked upon the emperor's mind in favour of the Monophysite pretender. Peter the Stammerer himself came to Constantinople, and urged to Zeno that the utmost confusion and disorder might be feared in Egypt if the powerful and numerous opponents of the Council of Chalcedon had an unacceptable patriarch put upon them. At the same time, he proposed a compromise which would unite all parties and prevent the breaking up of the eastern Church. Acacius, a few years before, had denounced to Pope Simplicius himself this Peter the Stammerer as an adulterer, robber, and son of darkness. He now entirely embraced this plan, and not only won the emperor to Peter's side for the patriarchate, but induced Zeno to publish a doctrinal decree. This was to express what was common to all confessions of faith down to the Council of Chalcedon, to avoid the expressions used in controversy, and entirely to set aside the Council of Chalcedon.

In 482 appeared this Formulary of Union, or Henotikon, drawn up, it was supposed, by Acacius himself, addressed to the clergy and people of Alexandria. It was first subscribed by Acacius, as patriarch of Constantinople, then by Peter the Stammerer, acknowledged for this purpose as patriarch of Alexandria; then by Peter the Fuller, as patriarch of Antioch; by Martyrius of Jerusalem, and by other bishops, but by no means all. Zeno used the imperial power to expel those who would not sign it.

As Peter the Stammerer had gone to the emperor to get his election approved and supported by Zeno and Acacius, so John Talaia had solicited Pope Simplicius to confirm his election. This the Pope had been on the point of confirming, when he received a letter from the emperor accusing John Talaia, and urging the appointment of Peter the Stammerer. Acacius had not hesitated to absolve him, and admit him to his communion, and strove by every effort of deceit and force to induce the eastern bishops to accept him. The last letter we have of the Pope, dated November 6, 482, strongly censures Acacius for communicating nothing to him concerning the Church of Alexandria, and for not instructing the emperor in such a way that peace might be restored by him.

On March 2, 483, Pope Simplicius died, and was succeeded by Pope Felix. John Talaia had come in person to Rome to lay his accusation against Acacius. Also the orthodox monks at Constantinople, and eastern bishops expelled for not signing the Henotikon, begged for the Pope's assistance, and denounced Acacius as the author of all the trouble. Amongst these expelled

bishops who appealed to Rome were bishops of Chalcedon, Samosata, Mopsuestia, Constantina, Hemeria, Theodosiopolis.

The Pope called a council, in which he considered the complaint now brought before him by John Talaia, as a hundred and forty years before St. Athanasius had carried his complaint to Pope Julius. It was resolved to support the ejected bishops, to maintain the Council of Chalcedon, and to request from the emperor the expulsion of Peter the Stammerer, who was usurping the see of Alexandria. For this purpose the Pope commissioned two bishops, Vitalis and Misenus, to go as his legates to the emperor. They were to invite Acacius to attend a council at Rome, and to answer therein the complaint brought against him by the elected patriarch of Alexandria.

The legates carried a letter³³ from Pope Felix to the emperor, in which, according to custom, the Pope informed him of his election. He observed that, for a long time, the see of the blessed Apostle had been expecting an answer to the letters sent by his predecessor of blessed memory, "especially inasmuch as it had bound your majesty, with tremendous vows, not to allow the see of the evangelist St. Mark to be separated from the teaching or the communion of his master... Again, therefore, the reverend confession of the Apostle Peter, with a mother's voice, renews its instance. It ceases not with confidence to call upon you as its son. It cries: O Christian prince, why do you allow me to be interrupted in that course of charity which binds together

³³ Mansi, vii. 1032-6; Jaffé, 359.

the universal Church? Why, in my person, do you break up the consent of the whole world? I beseech you, my son, suffer not that tunic of the Lord woven from the top throughout, by which is signified, as the Holy Spirit rules the whole body, that the Church of Christ should be one and individual – suffer it not to be broken. They who crucified our Saviour left it untouched. Do not let it be rent in your times. My faith it is which the Lord Himself declared should alone be one, never to be conquered by any assault: He who promised that the gates of hell should never prevail over the Church founded on my confession. This Church it was which restored you to the imperial dignity, deprived its impugnors of their power, and opened to you the path of victory in defending it.³⁴

"Look at me, his successor, however humble, as if the Apostle were present. Look deeper into those ways which concern the reverence due to God and the condition of man; and be not ungrateful to the Author of your present prosperity. In you alone survives the name of emperor. Do not grudge us the saving you. Do not diminish our confidence in praying for you. Look back on your august predecessors Marcian and Leo, and the faith of so many princes, you, who are their lawful heir. Once more, look back on your own engagements, and the words which, on your return to power, you addressed to my predecessor. The defence of the Council of Chalcedon is expressed in the whole series." And he ends: "What I could not put in my letter I have entrusted

³⁴ Mansi, vii. 1028; Jaffé, 360.

my brethren and legates to explain. I beseech you to listen, as well for the preservation of Catholic truth as for the safety of your own empire."

To Acacius also the legates carried a letter of the Pope, which he opened by announcing that he had succeeded to the office of Pope Simplicius, and was forthwith involved in those many cares which the voice of the Supreme Pastor had imposed upon St. Peter, and which kept him watchfully occupied with a rule which extended over all the peoples of the earth. At that moment his greatest anxiety, as it had been that of his predecessor, was for the city of Alexandria, and for the faith of the whole East. And he went on to reproach Acacius for not duly informing him of what was passing, for not defending the Council of Chalcedon, and not using his influence with the emperor in its defence: "Brother, do not let us despair that the word of our Saviour will be true; He promised that He would never be wanting to His Church to the end of the world; that it should never be overcome by the gates of hell; that all which was bound on earth by sentence of apostolic doctrine should not be loosed in heaven. Nor let us think that either the judgment of Peter or the authority of the universal Church, by whatever dangers it be surrounded, will ever lose the weight of its force. The more it dreads being weakened by worldly prosperity, the more, divinely instructed, it grows under adversity. To let the perverse go on in their way, when you can stop them, is indeed to encourage them. He who, evidently, ceases to obstruct a wicked deed, does not escape the suspicion of

complicity. If, when you see hostility arising against the Council of Chalcedon, you do nothing, believe me, I know not how you can maintain that you belong to the whole Church."

As soon as the two legates arrived at the Dardanelles, they were arrested, by order of Zeno and Acacius, put in prison, their papers and letters taken from them. They were menaced with death if they did not accept the communion of Acacius and of Peter the Stammerer. Then they were seduced with presents, and deceived with false promises that Acacius would submit the whole affair to the Pope. They resisted at first, but yielded in the end, and, passing beyond their commission, gave judgment in favour of Peter the Stammerer. They had broken all the instructions of the Pope, and carried back letters from Zeno and Acacius to him, full of extravagant praises of Peter the Stammerer. His former deposition and condemnation were entirely put aside. On the other hand, the character of John Talaia was bitterly impugned. The emperor asserted that he had treated Church matters with the utmost moderation, and guided himself entirely by the advice of the patriarch Acacius.

In fact, Acacius was the spiritual superior of the whole eastern empire, and appeared not to trouble himself any more about the Roman See. He made no pretence to give any satisfaction for what he had done. Before he had been the champion of orthodoxy, now he had become in league with heretics. But he lost all remaining confidence among Catholics. The zealous monks of his own city withdrew from his communion, and sent

one of themselves, Symeon, to Rome to inform the Pope of all that had happened, and disclose the faithless behaviour of his legates.³⁵

In another letter the Pope had cited Acacius to appear at Rome to meet the accusation brought against him by John Talaia, the patriarch of Alexandria. Acacius took no notice of this citation, nor of the complaint brought against him.

Thereupon, the Pope, in a council of seventy-seven bishops, held at Rome the 28th July, 484, made inquiry into all this transaction. He annulled the judgment on Peter the Stammerer, passed without his authority by his legates, deprived them of their offices, and of communion. He renewed the condemnation of Peter the Stammerer, he had in the interval admonished Acacius again, without result. He now issued the decree of deposition upon him. It runs in the following words:

"You are³⁶ guilty of many transgressions; have often treated with insult the venerable Nicene Council; have unrightfully claimed jurisdiction over provinces not belonging to you. In the case of intruding heretics, ordained likewise by heretics, whom you had yourself condemned, and whose condemnation you had urged upon the Apostolic See, you not only received them to your communion, but even set them over other Churches, which was not, even in the case of Catholics, allowable; or have even given them higher rank undeservedly. John is an

³⁵ Photius, i. 123, translated.

³⁶ Mansi, vii. 1065; Baronius (anno 484), 17; Jaffé, 364.

instance of this. When he was not accepted by the Catholics at Apamea, and had been driven away from Antioch, you set him over the Tyrians. Humerius also, having been degraded from the diaconite and deprived of the Christian name, you advanced to the priesthood. And as if these seemed to you minor offences, in the boldness of your pride you assaulted the truth itself of apostolic doctrine. That Peter, whose condemnation by my predecessor of holy memory you had yourself recorded, as the subjoined proofs show, you suffered by your connivance again to invade the see of the blessed evangelist Mark, to drive out orthodox bishops and clergy, and ordain, no doubt, such as himself, to expel one who was there regularly established, and hold the Church captive. Nay, his person was so agreeable to you, and his ministers so acceptable, that you have been found to persecute a large number of orthodox bishops and clergy, who now come to Constantinople, and to encourage his legates. You put upon Misenus and Vitalis to find excuse for one who was anathematising the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, and violating the tomb of Timotheus of holy memory, as sure information has been given us. You have not ceased to praise and exalt him so as to boast that the very condemnation you had yourself recorded was untrue. You went even further in the defence of a perverse man. They who were late bishops, but are now deprived of their rank and of communion, Vitalis and Misenus, men whom we had specially sent for his expulsion, you suffered to be deprived of their papers and imprisoned;

you dragged them out thence to a procession which you were having with heretics, as they confessed; in contempt of their legatine quality, which even the law of nations would protect, you drew them on to the communion of heretics, and yourself; you corrupted them with bribes; and, with injury to the blessed Apostle Peter, from whose see they went forth, you caused them not only to return with labour lost, but with the overthrow of all their instructions. In deceiving them, your wickedness was shown. As to the memorial of my brother and fellow-bishop John (Talaia), who brought the heaviest charges against you, by not venturing to give an answer in the Apostolic See, according to the canons, you have established his allegations. Likewise, you considered unworthy of your sight our most faithful defender Felix, whom a necessity caused to come afterwards. You also showed by your letters that known heretics were communicating with you. For what else are they who, after the death of Timotheus of holy memory, go back to his church under Peter the Stammerer, or, having been Catholics, have given themselves up to this Peter, but such as Peter himself was judged to be by the whole Church, and by yourself? Therefore, by this present sentence have with those whom you willingly embrace your portion, which we send to you by the defender of your own church, being deprived of sacerdotal honour and Catholic communion, and severed from the number of the faithful. Know that the name and office of the sacerdotal ministry is taken from

you. You are condemned by the judgment of the Holy Ghost³⁷ and apostolic authority, and never to be released from the bonds of anathema.

"Cælius Felix, bishop of the holy Catholic Church of the city of Rome. On the 28th July, in the consulship of the most honourable Venantius."

This was a synodal letter,³⁸ signed by sixty-seven bishops, as well as the Pope. But the copy of the decree against Acacius sent to Constantinople was signed by the Pope alone, partly according to ancient custom, partly in order with greater security to transmit it to the eastern capital. Had this copy been signed by the bishops also, ruling practice would have required it to be carried over by at least two bishops, which then appeared very dangerous. A Roman synod of forty-three³⁹ bishops, in the following year, 485, wrote to the clergy of Constantinople: "If snares had not been set for the orthodox by land and sea, many of us might have come with the sentence of Acacius. But now, being assembled on the cause of the church of Antioch at St. Peter's, we make a point of declaring to you the custom which has always prevailed among us. As often as bishops⁴⁰ meet in Italy on ecclesiastical matters, especially when they touch the faith, the

³⁷ It is to be observed that the Pope calls his judgment the Judgment of the Holy Ghost, just as Pope Clement I. did in the first recorded judgment. See his letter, secs. 58, 59, 63, quoted in *Church and State*, 198-199.

³⁸ Photius, i. 124.

³⁹ Mansi, vii. 1139; Baronius (anno 484), 26, 27.

⁴⁰ Domini sacerdotes.

custom is maintained that the successor of those who preside in the Apostolic See, as representing all the bishops of the whole of Italy, according to the care of all churches which lies upon him, appoints all things, being the head of all, as the Lord said to Peter, 'Thou art Peter,' &c. The three hundred and eighteen holy fathers assembled at Nicæa acted in obedience to this word, and left the confirmation and authority of what they treated to the holy Roman Church; both of which things all successions to our own time by the grace of Christ maintain. What, therefore, the holy council assembled at St. Peter's decreed, and the most blessed Felix, our Head, Pope, and Archbishop, ratified, that is sent to you by Tutus, defensor of the Church."

Three days after the sentence on Acacius, Pope Felix wrote to the emperor Zeno.⁴¹ He reminded him that, in violation of reverence to God, an embassy to the Holy See had been taken captive, its papers taken away; it had been dragged out of prison to communicate with the officers of the very heretic against whom it had been sent. "Since even barbarous nations, who knew not God, allowed to embassies for the transaction of human affairs a sacred liberty, how much more should that liberty be preserved sacred, especially in divine things, by a Roman emperor and Christian prince? Putting aside the embassy, which even in the case of the Apostle Peter was disregarded, be assured at least by these letters that the see of the Apostle Peter has never granted communion, and will never grant it, to that

⁴¹ Jaffé, 365; Mansi, vii. 1065.

Alexandrian Peter long ago justly condemned, and again by synodal decree suppressed. But as you have not regarded the words of exhortation I addressed to you, I leave it to your choice to select which you will have, the communion of the blessed Apostle Peter or that of the Alexandrian Peter. You will know by the letters of this man's abettor, Acacius, to my predecessor of holy memory, copies of which I enclose, how even in your own judgment he was condemned. But this Acacius, who has committed many atrocities against the ancient rules, and has come to praise one whom he affirmed to be condemned, and whose condemnation he obtained from the Apostolic See, has been severed from apostolic communion. But I believe that your piety, which prefers to comply even with its own laws rather than to resist them, and which knows that the supreme rule of things human is given to you on condition of admitting that things divine are allotted to dispensers divinely assigned, I believe that it will be undoubtedly of service to you if you permit the Catholic Church in the time of your principate to use its own laws, nor allow anyone to stand in the way of its liberty, which has restored to you the imperial power. For it is certain that this will bring safety to your affairs, if in God's cause, and according to His appointment, you study to subdue the royal will and not to prefer it to the bishops of Christ, and rather to learn holy things by them than to teach them; to follow the form traced out by the Church, not after human fashion to impose rules on it, nor wish to dominate the commands of that power to whom it is God's will

that your clemency should devoutly submit, lest, if the measure of the divine disposition be overpast, it may end in the disgrace of the disponent. And from this time I absolve my conscience as to all these things, who have to plead my cause before Christ's tribunal. It will be well for you more and more to reflect that both in the present state of things we are under the divine examination, and that after this life's course we shall according to it come before the divine judgment."

St. Gregory the Great, writing his *Dialogues*⁴² about one hundred and ten years after this letter, informs us that the writer of it was his great-grandfather, and speaks of his appearing in a vision to his aunt Tarsilla and showing her the habitation of everlasting light. At the time of writing it, Pope Felix was living under the domination of the Arian Herule Odoacer. The great Church of Africa was suffering the most terrible of persecutions under the Arian Vandal Hunneric, the son of his father Genseric. Arian Visigoth rulers were in possession of Spain and France, of whom Euric, as we have seen, was described rather as the chief of a sect than the sovereign of a people. In all the West not a yard of territory was under rule of a Catholic sovereign. And he whom the Pope addressed, with the dignity of the Apostolic See in its reverence for the power which is a delegation of God, as Roman emperor and Christian prince, was in his private life scandalous, in all his public rule shifty and tyrannical, and in belief, if he had any, an Eutychean heretic. It may be added, as a fact of

⁴² iv. 16.

history, that the emperor went before the divine judgment sooner than the Pope; that during the seven years which intervened between the letter and his death he utterly disregarded all that the Pope had done and said. He suffered, or rather made the bishop of Constantinople to be the ruler of the eastern Church, he maintained heretics in the sees of Alexandria and Antioch. After this he died in 491, and the last fact recorded of him is that the empress Ariadne, the daughter of Leo I., who had brought him the empire with her hand, when he fell into an epileptic fit and was supposed to be dead, had him buried at once, and placed guards around his tomb, who were forbidden to allow any approach to it. When the imperial vault was afterwards entered, Zeno was found to have torn his arm with his teeth. The empress widow, forty days after the death of Zeno, conferred her hand, and with it the empire a second time, upon Anastasius, who had been up to that time a sort of gentleman usher⁴³ in the imperial service. Anastasius ruled the eastern empire twenty-seven years, from 491 to 518.

The Pope further sought by a letter⁴⁴ to the clergy and people of Constantinople to remove the scandal caused by the weakness of his legates, and to explain the grounds upon which he had deposed Acacius. "Though we know the zeal of your faith, yet we warn all who desire to share in the Catholic faith to abstain

⁴³ Silentiarius, in the Greek court, officers who kept silence in the emperor's presence.

⁴⁴ *Ep.* x.; Mansi, vii. 1067.

from communion with him, lest, which God forbid, they fall into like penalty."

Acacius did not receive the papal judgment against him, but sought to suppress it. A monk ventured to attach to his mantle as he went to Mass the sentence of excommunication. It cost him his life, and brought heavy persecutions on his brethren. Acacius met the Pope with open defiance, and removed his name from the diptychs.⁴⁵ He rested on the emperor Zeno's support, who did everything at his bidding. Every arm of deceit and of violence he used equally. The monks, called, from their never intermitted worship, the Sleepless, in close connection with Rome, suffered severely. So Acacius passed the remaining five years of his life, dying in the autumn of 489.

His excommunication by the Pope caused a schism between the East and West which lasted thirty-five years, from 484 to 519. He met that supreme act of authority by the counter act of removing the Pope's name from the diptychs. This invites us to consider the position which he assumed.

From the year 482 (that is, four years after Zeno had recovered the empire), Acacius appears in possession of full influence over the emperor. The position of the bishop at Constantinople was, in itself, one of immense dignity. He was undoubtedly the second person in the imperial city, surrounded

⁴⁵ "The recital of a name in the diptychs was a formal declaration of Church fellowship, or even a sort of canonisation and invocation. It was contrary to all Church principles to permit in them the name of anyone condemned by the Church." —*Life of Photius*, i. 133, by Card. Hergenröther.

with a pomp and deference only yielding to that accorded to the emperor, but in some respects superior to it. He was regarded as sacrosanct: all the respect which the Church received in the minds of the good was centred in his person. And as he had risen to all this dignity in virtue of Constantinople being the capital, there was a special connection between the capital and its bishop, which led it to sympathise with every accession of power which he received. There can be no doubt that the right acquired by that bishop over the great sees of Ephesus, Cæsarea in Pontus, and Heraclea in Thrace was extremely popular at Constantinople; and that when he proceeded further to show his hand over the patriarchate of Antioch – as, for instance, in nominating one of its archbishops at Tyre, as the Pope reproached him – the capital was still better pleased. Most of all when, breaking through all the regulations which the Nicene Council had consecrated by its approval, – which, however, it had not created, but found in immemorial subsistence, – he ventured to ordain at Constantinople a patriarch of Antioch. Thus Stephen II., patriarch of Antioch, had been murdered in 479 by the fanatical Monophysites, in the baptistry of the Barlaam Church, and his mangled body thrown into the Orontes. The incensed emperor punished the criminals, and charged his patriarch Acacius to consecrate a new bishop for Antioch. Acacius seized the favourable opportunity, after the example of Anatolius, to advance himself, and appointed Stephen III. Emperor and patriarch both applied to Pope Simplicius to

excuse this violation of the rights of the Syrian bishops, alleging the pressure of circumstances, and promising that the example should not occur again. Simplicius, so entreated, excused the fault, recognised the patriarch of Antioch – though he had been consecrated in Constantinople by its bishop – but insisted that such a violation of the canons should not be repeated. Presently Stephen III. died, upon which Acacius committed the same fault anew, and in 482 consecrated Calendion patriarch of Antioch. Calendion brought back from Macedonia the relics of his great and persecuted predecessor, St. Eustathius; but presently Zeno and Acacius displaced Calendion. Acacius was using the power which he possessed over the emperor to advance his own credit in the appointment of patriarchs, and to establish two notorious heretics – Peter the Fuller at Antioch, and Peter the Stammerer at Alexandria. All this meant that the bishop of Constantinople's hand was to be over the East, as the bishop of Rome's hand was over the West. Then, ever since the Council of Chalcedon, the two great eastern patriarchates had been torn to pieces by the conflicts of parties. The Eutychean heresy fought a desperate battle for mastery. As to Antioch, from the time that Eusebius of Nicomedia had brought about the deposition of St. Eustathius, preparatory to that of Athanasius in 330, the great patriarchate of the East had been declining from the unrivalled position which it had held. As to Alexandria, from the time that the 150 fathers at Constantinople, in 381, had attempted to make Constantinople the second see, because it was Nova Roma, the see of St. Mark

bore a grudge against the upstart which sought to degrade it. In spite of the unequalled renown of its two great patriarchs, St. Athanasius and St. Cyril, it was sinking. And now heresy, schism, and imperial favour seemed to have joined together to exhibit Acacius as not only the first patriarch of the East, but as exercising jurisdiction even within their bounds, and as nominating those who succeeded to their thrones. All which would only tend to increase the power and popularity of the bishop of Constantinople in his own see.

Acacius had now been eleven years bishop. He had gained at once the emperor Leo; he had appeared to defend the Council of Chalcedon when Basiliscus attacked it; he had further gained mastery over Zeno; but, more than all this, he had seen Rome sink into what to eastern eyes must have seemed an abyss. St. Leo had compelled Anatolius to give up the canons he so much prized; since then northern barbarians had twice sacked Rome, and Ricimer's most cruel host of adventurers had reaped whatever the Vandal Genseric had left. If there was a degradation yet to be endured it would be that a Herule soldier of fortune should compel a Roman senate to send back the robes of empire to Constantinople, and be content to live under a Patricius, sprung from one of the innumerable Teuton hordes, and sanctioned by the emperor of the East; and Acacius would not forget that in the councils of that emperor he was himself chief.

If New Rome held the second rank because the Fathers gave

the first rank to Old Rome, in that it was the capital, what was the position of New Rome and its bishop when Old Rome had ceased in fact to be a capital at all? At that moment – thirty years after St. Leo had confirmed the greatest of eastern councils and been greeted by it as the head of the Christian faith – the Rome in which he sat had been reduced to a mere municipal rank, and its bishop, with all its people, lived under what was simply a military government commanded by a foreign adventurer. Odoacer at Ravenna was master of the lives and liberties of the Romans, including the Pope.

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