

military usurpers, and what is said of them? What of the luxury of Vitellius? Who was Vespasian? How did he acquire the sovereignty? What reforms did he introduce? What is said of his avarice? What of his successor? Describe the eruption of Vesuvius and the conduct of the two Plinys. What is said of Herculaneum? What of Domitian? Of the second persecution? What was the end of Domitian's reign? What were the Catacombs? Who was Domitian's successor? What is said of the character of Trajan? What of his conquests? What was the origin of the third persecution? What is said of St. Ignatius? What of Hadrian? Describe the revolt of the Jews. What is said of Hadrian's successor? What of the character of Marcus Aurelius? Of the war against the Parthians? What caused the fourth persecution? What is told of the Thundering Legion. What is said of Commodus? What of Pertinax? Of Didius? What Christian writers flourished in the second century? What is said of Latin literature after Augustus? What of Phædrus? Martial? Juvenal? Persius? Lucan? Statius? Petronius? Silius Italicus? What of Tacitus? Florus? Suetonius? Quintus Curtius? Quintilian? Pliny the Younger? Seneca? What is said of the reign of Septimius Severus? What was his character? What of his successor? Of Macrinus? Of Heliogabalus? Of Alexander Severus? How did he show his respect for virtue? What is said of his wars? What occurred after his death? What was the character of Maximin I.? What is said of the emperors immediately following him? Who was the author of the seventh persecution? What was the terrible fate of Valerian? What occurred during his successor's reign? What were the character and exploits of Claudius II.? What is said of Aurelian? Who was Zenobia? How was she defeated? What is said of the Emperor Tacitus? What of Probus and his victories? What of Carus? Of Numerian?

CHAPTER II.

THE MONARCHICAL (A.D. 284-312) AND
CHRISTIAN EMPIRE (A.D. 313-395).

THE empire was transformed into an absolute monarchy by Diocletian and Constantine. The latter secured the triumph of Christianity, but its political and religious unity was compromised under the successors of Constantine, and the final partition of the empire took place after the death of Theodosius the Great.

Sec. 1. DIOCLETIAN (A.D. 284-305); **CONSTANTINE** (A.D. 306-337); **EDICT OF MILAN** (A.D. 313); *New Imperial Constitution.*

POLICY OF DIOCLETIAN; THE TETRARCHY.—Diocletian, born at Salona, in Dalmatia, was both brave and skilful, and had risen from the lowest rank in the army to the supreme command. After he entered Rome he employed himself in strengthening his authority; the capricious influence of the senate was annulled, and the turbulent prætorian cohorts were replaced by Illyrian legions who were devoted to the new sovereign. But it was still necessary to defend the frontiers of his empire against the barbarians, and for this reason the emperor decided to associate with himself Maximian, likewise a soldier of fortune, and whose sole recom-



mentations were bravery and great experience in war (A.D. 286).

The two emperors by their victories sustained the majesty and dominion of the empire. Ardent and indefatigable, they passed from one frontier to the other so rapidly that history itself can hardly follow. But enemies continually multiplied. Diocletian, obliged to divide his forces, and faithful to the line of conduct he had prescribed for himself, placed at the head of his armies only such commanders as were personally interested in the prosperity of the state.

He next created two Cæsars, who were to be the lieutenants and heirs of the two emperors (A.D. 292). The first was Constantius Chlorus, a prince worthy by his valor, his justice, his mildness and other virtues of being the father of the great Constantine. The second was Galerius, son of a peasant, whose person belied neither his birth nor his education. Haughty and intractable, he knew no other law than his sword. The tone of his voice, his bearing, his look were ferocious and terrible. His residence was at Sirmium, that of Constantius at Treves; Maximian was established at Milan, and Diocletian at Nicomedia. The government of the empire by four princes is known in history under the name of the "Tetrarchy."

SUPREMACY OF DIOCLETIAN.—The empire, although divided into four portions, nevertheless



preserved its unity, because Diocletian was acknowledged by his colleagues as supreme ruler. He had taken the title of Jupiter, indicating that he reserved for himself the supremacy; and he gave to Maximian the title of Hercules, as he confided to him the execution of his orders. Diocletian brilliantly displayed his superiority during a war against the Persians. Galerius was entrusted with the war, but he at first met with ill success. Having imprudently risked a battle with a small number of troops near Carrhæ, he was defeated. Diocletian, who excelled in prudence, was indignant at this defeat, caused by rashness; and as a sign of his displeasure, he compelled Galerius, upon his return, to follow, on foot and clad in imperial purple, the car in which he himself rode. Afterwards Galerius effaced the disgrace of his defeat by brilliant successes; and, tired of acting in an inferior rank, endeavored to dethrone him to whom he owed all his power.

TENTH PERSECUTION (A.D. 303); ABDICATION OF DIOCLETIAN (A.D. 305).—The restless ambition of Galerius led him to disturb the peace of the state. A bitter enemy to the Christian religion, he left nothing undone to persuade Diocletian to publish an edict of persecution. The emperor, naturally moderate, refused. Galerius twice set fire to the palace at Nicomedia, where Diocletian then was. He charged the

Christians with the odious deed, and fled in apparent fright, to avoid, he said, being burned alive by those hostile to the gods and to the emperor. Diocletian, thus wrought upon, signed the edict for the most violent and bloody persecution that the Church ever suffered (A.D. 303); it was called the "Era of Martyrs."

Diocletian, tortured by remorse, declined in health of mind and body. Galerius, profiting by his weakness, persuaded him to name two new Cæsars, Maximin and Severus, who were his creatures; then he forced Diocletian, as well as Maximian, to make a solemn abdication of the throne. Diocletian passed the nine remaining years of his life at Padua. He deemed himself happy in being deprived of power and having nothing to do but to cultivate his garden. One day, when he was urged to regain the throne, he replied: "Oh! if you saw the lettuce that I raise with my own hands you would never speak to me of the throne."

CONSTANTINE (A.D. 306).—Galerius, whose vices formed a strong contrast with the virtues of his colleague, Constantius Chlorus, used his power solely to gratify his avarice and cruelty. As he was jealous of Constantine, son of Constantius, who had been reared at the court of Diocletian, Galerius tried every stratagem to keep him near himself and to destroy him. But the young prince escaped and joined his father, Con-

stantius, who died shortly after, leaving to his successor that portion of the empire which he had governed.

Constantine, having ascended the throne, appeared worthy to rule the world. Providence, which had destined him to become the first Christian prince, had endowed him with qualities befitting his high destiny: a magnanimous soul, an active, penetrating mind, a noble and martial physiognomy tempered with grace and sweetness. His morals were chaste, and his youth, wholly occupied with great and noble projects, was exempt from the weaknesses of the age.

ANARCHY.—Constantine at first ruled only those provinces which his father had governed—that is, Britain, Gaul, and Spain. The residue of the empire was a prey to the cupidity of Galerius and his two Cæsars, who oppressed the people by their odious exactions. Maxentius, son of Maximian, profited by this to make himself master of Italy. He deprived Severus of the purple and his life, and chose his own father as his colleague. Galerius, feeling himself powerless against this new rival, named his friend Licinius to succeed Severus.

There were now six hostile and jealous emperors in the empire. Maximian, whose ambition seemed to grow with his age, endeavored in vain to murder his son, Maxentius, and his son-in-law, Constantine, and at last committed suicide



(A.D. 310). While Constantine was rendering himself popular by his beneficence, the other emperors engaged in plundering their people and persecuting the Christians. These princes all perished miserably.

DEATH OF GALERIUS (A.D. 311).—Galerius was attacked with a frightful disease. His body became a mass of corruption. The invectives that he constantly poured forth, the stench that his body exhaled, and the sight of his living corpse inspired all with horror. Rendered more furious by the agony of his sufferings, he caused his physicians to be murdered. One of them told him that his distemper was a punishment for the cruel war which he had waged against the true God, and that God alone could cure him. These words penetrated the heart of Galerius, but did not convert him. In place of confessing the God whom he had outraged, he regarded him as a powerful and terrible enemy. When his pains were most acute he would sometimes blaspheme, at others promise to rebuild the churches and satisfy the God of the Christians. With sentiments of repentance mingled with despair he expired at Sardica after a chastisement of eighteen months (A.D. 311).

WAR OF CONSTANTINE AGAINST MAXENTIUS; THE LABARUM.—Constantine, called by the people of Rome, and moreover indignant at Maxentius, who had overthrown and trampled



his statues in the mire, prepared to punish the excesses of this usurper. He therefore marched into Italy. At the same time he contemplated a more important action—that of embracing the Christian religion. Convinced of its truth, but still hesitating, he invoked the God of the Christians and fervently besought him to unveil his eyes.

One day, impressed with these sentiments, he was marching with his troops in the afternoon when he saw in the sky, just over the sun, the figure of a luminous cross with this inscription: "In hoc signo vinces" (By this sign thou shalt conquer). His army also beheld this prodigy. The following night he saw in a dream the Son of God, who, holding in his hand the cross, bade him take a similar sign for his standard in battle. Constantine did as he was commanded. The cross bore on its top the monogram of Christ, surmounted by a crown of gold. It was called "Labarum," and was from that time the principal standard of the Roman armies. Constantine hastened to be instructed, and the religion of Christ, triumphing after three centuries of persecution, was seated with him on the throne of the Cæsars.

DEFEAT AND DEATH OF MAXENTIUS (A.D. 312).—Maxentius gave battle to Constantine near the gates of Rome; but despite the oracles, which had promised him the victory, saw his troops

routed and pursued to the Melvian bridge, which he held, on the Tiber. As the bridge was unable to sustain the fugitives it gave way, and Maxentius and a number of his troops were drowned. Constantine entered Rome in triumph, amidst the acclamations of all orders of the state, who saw in their conqueror the saviour and the support of the empire (A.D. 312).

DEATH OF MAXIMIN (A.D. 313).—About the same time God delivered the empire from a third tyrant. The cruel Maximin, blinded by his ambition, endeavored to murder Licinius, but he was conquered and besieged in Tarsus. Fearful of falling into the hands of his enemy, he gorged himself with wine and meats and then took poison. But the latter, not taking immediate effect, caused him the most exquisite tortures. In his agony he rolled on the ground, biting the earth. He dashed his head with such force against the walls that his eyes started from their sockets. He believed that the God of the Christians was about to judge him, and cried out like a criminal condemned to torture, confessing his crimes and imploring the mercy of Jesus Christ. Thus he died more miserably even than Galerius, whom he surpassed in impiety and barbarity (A.D. 313).

DEFEAT AND DEATH OF LICINIUS.—Of the four tyrants who had oppressed and persecuted the followers of Jesus Christ, Licinius alone re-

mained. Filled with jealousy and ambition, he quarrelled with Constantine and attacked him near Adrianople. His army was composed entirely of pagans, as he deemed all Christians favorable to the enemy. Before the battle he offered victims in sacrifice to the gods, and vowed, if they would render him victorious, to exterminate Christianity.

Constantine, however, prepared for the combat by fasting and prayer; he caused the standard of the cross—the Labarum—to be borne at the head of his troops and gave for the rallying cry: “God our Saviour.” His victory was complete. Licinius surrendered all his provinces to Constantine on condition that his life should be spared; but some time after, having intrigued to renew the war, he was put to death, and in him perished the last of those persecutors who, during twenty years, had made so many martyrs (A.D. 324).

TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY.—Constantine, conqueror of all his rivals and sole master of the empire, occupied himself in healing its wounds and encouraging Christianity. In the year 313 he published the celebrated Edict of Milan, which put an end to persecution and accorded the free exercise of the Christian religion. This secured the triumph of truth. Idolatry rapidly fell, not by force but by its inherent weakness. It was under the protection of Constantine that the

first œcumenical council convened, at Nice (A.D. 325), to condemn the heresiarch Arius, who denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. It is true that, seduced by hypocrites, the emperor unfortunately favored Arius and his followers, but he remained none the less attached to the faith of the Catholic Church.

FOUNDATION OF CONSTANTINOPLE (A.D. 330).—Constantine, deceived by the perfidy of his wife, condemned to death two of his children, whose innocence he soon after discovered. Pursued by remorse for this crime, committed while in Rome, and wishing moreover to reside in a place entirely purged of idolatry, he decided to give the empire a second capital. With this view he chose the site of the ancient Byzantium, on the strait that separates Asia from Europe. Having marked out wide boundaries, he built on the spot a magnificent city, called from his name Constantinople—that is, the city of Constantine. It was also called New Rome, because, like the parent city, it was built on seven hills and had the same privileges and the same institutions as the latter.

Although more than sixty years old, Constantine marched against Sapor II., King of Persia, who menaced Mesopotamia, and the terror inspired by his name alone caused that barbarian king to retire. Shortly after the emperor received baptism, and died full of glory and virtues.

NEW IMPERIAL CONSTITUTION.—The monarchical government established by Diocletian and completed by Constantine effaced the last traces of republican institutions. The emperor, invested with absolute and undivided power, became in reality the only master and lord of the empire. His person was sacred, and his will was regarded as law. All authority emanated from him, and he was the head of a hierarchy forming the mightiest system of centralization that ever existed. At his court were seven ministers charged with the administration, and placed in the first rank of a new order of nobility created by the emperor. In each prefecture were civil and military officers having their respective functions, but all responsible to the ministers, as they in turn were to the emperor. This hierarchy uniformly extended over all the subdivisions of each prefecture—that is, over the dioceses, provinces, and cities.

Sec. 2. THE THREE SONS OF CONSTANTINE; *Julian the Apostate* (A.D. 361–363); *the Valentinian Family*; *Theodosius the Great* (A.D. 378–395); *the Church until the Fourth Century.*

CONSTANTIUS (A.D. 337–361), CONSTANS (A.D. 337–350), AND CONSTANTINE II. (A.D. 337–340).—Constantine the Great, surnamed “Flavius” and head of the second Flavian



family, had divided his dominions among two of his nephews and his three sons, Constantius, Constans, and Constantine; but the people and the soldiers, not content with this division, massacred all the nephews of the emperor except Julian and Gallus, who escaped their fury.

It is but just to say that Constantine, by an ill-advised policy, had sacrificed the unity of the empire to the interests of his family. This policy, imitated by many of his successors, weakened the empire by dividing its forces, and became one of the causes of its fall.

Constantine II., not content with having Spain, Gaul, and Britain as his share, declared war against his brother Constans, and perished in an ambuscade near Aquileia (A.D. 340). His provinces were added to those of the conqueror.

Constantius, master of the East, took no share in the quarrels of his brothers. Weak, suspicious, and jealous, he busied himself with persecuting the Church in favor of the Arians, obstinately pursuing St. Athanasius and other defenders of the Nicene faith.

SAPOR AND ST. JAMES OF NISIBIS.—Sapor, deeming the time favorable for his designs of conquest, landed in Mesopotamia with an immense army and laid siege to Nisibis, which was in that quarter the bulwark of the empire. But the besieged had a defender more powerful than Sapor. It was St. James, Bishop of Nisibis.



The inhabitants besought him to curse the barbarians. He ascended a tower, and, seeing the multitude, begged God to send gnats among this formidable army and so confound the new Pharaoh.

Soon a cloud of insects, spreading over the camp, penetrated the trunks of the elephants and the ears of the horses, and made these animals so furious that Sapor, not being able to arrest the confusion and disorder, was obliged to raise the siege. This impious prince, when retreating, cast a defiant look toward heaven and let fly an arrow in the air, as if to challenge God, who had declared himself his enemy. He wreaked his vengeance on the Christians of his dominions, whom he persecuted with a barbarity hardly equalled by the Roman emperors.

DEFEAT OF MAGNENTIUS.—While St. James of Nisibis saved the Eastern empire, Constantius was called to the West by a new war. Magnentius, an officer of the army of Constans, deprived that prince of both empire and life (A.D. 350). Emboldened by the success of his crime, he premeditated the same fate for Constantine. But the bloody day at Mursa, in Pannonia, put an end to his career. His army, after a long and furious combat, was either completely cut to pieces or drowned in the Drave. The tyrant fled to Lyons, where, seeing himself betrayed by his own followers, he put his



family to the sword, and then killed himself (A.D. 353).

JULIAN AMONG THE GAULS (A.D. 355-361).—Constantius thus became master of the whole empire. Rightly regarding the burden as too heavy, he gave the title of Cæsar to Julian, nephew of the great Constantine, and sent him to defend Gaul, which had been long a prey to barbarian hordes (A.D. 355). The young prince, afterwards known by the surname of "Apostate," at first displayed great qualities. He re-established order in the provinces and discipline in the armies, and proceeded to drive from Gaul the Franks and Germans who desolated it. Having routed these barbarians near Strasbourg, he pursued them beyond the Rhine and conquered them after many battles. He then diminished the taxes, established justice, and chose for his residence the Gallic city of Lutetia, where he built a palace, whose ruins still exist.

Constantius, jealous of the glory of Julian, and again attacked by the Persians, ordered the young Cæsar to send him a part of his best troops. But, arriving at Lutetia Parisiorum (Paris), they revolted and proclaimed Julian emperor (A.D. 360). With real or feigned reluctance he accepted the title offered him by the soldiers, assumed the purple, and, not being able to settle his differences with Constantius in a peaceful manner, advanced as far as Sirmium to



attack that prince, who had been his benefactor as well as sovereign. The death of Constantius, however, saved the empire from the horrors of civil war, though that event gave to Christianity one of its most violent persecutors.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE (A.D. 361-363).—Julian proceeded to Constantinople, where, as in all other parts of the empire, his authority was recognized. It was then that he ceased to conceal his inclination toward idolatry. He made an open profession of it, and signalized his hatred of Christianity by the most violent measures. He regarded its destruction as the chief end of his reign, and so powerful were the means he employed that his purpose would certainly have been effected if God had not by a premature death cut him off. To falsify the prophecy of Jesus Christ concerning the Temple of Jerusalem, Julian undertook to rebuild it, but his impious purpose was miraculously frustrated. The miracle is well attested, and is thus related by Ammianus: "When Alypius was plying the work vigorously, and the governor of the province was lending his aid, fearful globes of fire, repeatedly bursting forth from the earth close to the foundations, scorched the workmen, and rendered the place, after frequent trials on their part, quite inaccessible."

WAR AGAINST THE PERSIANS.—Sapor, in the latter years of Constantius' reign, had ravaged



Mesopotamia and destroyed the important city of Amida. Julian, to avenge these injuries to the empire, and ever thirsting for glory, contemplated nothing less than the subjugation of all Persia, and then, like another Alexander, to extend his conquests to the Indus. With this design he crossed the Euphrates and advanced towards Carrhæ, famous for the defeat of Crassus. Thence he proceeded along the river, capturing and burning those places that made any resistance. The fleet, laden with provisions, followed him.

Arriving opposite Ctesiphon, Julian found an ancient canal which connected the Euphrates and the Tigris. He caused it to be repaired, so that his fleet might pass without difficulty from one river to the other. A pretended Persian deserter persuaded him that the fleet would be unable to overcome the rapidity of the current, and that it would be better to burn it and march into the hostile country. Julian imprudently acted upon this perfidious advice, and took the route that was pointed out. But soon his provisions failed, the Persians having destroyed all; and the Romans, in place of a rich and fertile country, found only a burning and arid desert. Sapor, however, was completely defeated when he ventured to attack them.

DEATH OF JULIAN (A. D. 363).—Meanwhile the victorious Romans were dying of famine. To



complete their misfortunes, they lost the man who alone could have rescued them from the perilous situation into which his own temerity had led them. Julian, in a battle where he fought without a cuirass, received a mortal wound in his side from a javelin. He was carried back to his tent, and died the following night. According to some, the last moments of Julian were those of a philosopher and a sophist; but others relate that when he felt himself mortally wounded, he threw a handful of his blood towards heaven, uttering these blasphemous words against Christ: "Thou hast conquered; take thy fill, O Galilean!" and that he likewise upbraided his own gods, charging them with having abandoned him.

Thus perished, after a reign of three years, this infamous prince, the puzzle of his age and of posterity. At first sight his brilliant qualities dazzle the eyes; but if we consider his motive, which was none other than the desire to elevate himself, admiration ceases. His conduct on the occasion of the mutiny of his army causes him to be suspected; the open war which he undertook against his emperor and benefactor unveils his ambition and his infidelity; that which he declared against Christianity shows a studied malice amounting to cruelty; lastly, the expedition against the Persians, while leaving to



him the glory of courage, deprives him entirely of the merit of prudence.

JOVIAN (A.D. 363-364).—Jovian, chosen emperor by the Roman army, was obliged, in order to save it, to sign a disgraceful treaty by which Armenia and a part of Mesopotamia were lost. This prince endeavored to repair the injury done to religion by the late emperor, and his excellent qualities promised a prosperous reign, when he was found dead in his bed, having inhaled the fumes of charcoal.

VALENTINIAN I. (A.D. 364-375) AND VALENS (A.D. 364-378).—After the death of Jovian the army elected Valentinian. His noble person and features gave him a warlike and majestic appearance. To these exterior graces he joined valor and an ardent love of justice. His morals were pure; he spoke little, but always with great judgment and eloquence. A zealous Christian, he did not fear to brave the anger of Julian. One day that apostate prince entered a temple of idols preceded by Valentinian, then captain of his guards. The officiating priest having sprinkled lustral water on the emperor and his attendants, some drops fell on the robe of Valentinian; the latter, filled with indignation, tore off the wet piece and, in presence of the emperor, struck the celebrant. This action, prompted by an ardent but excessive zeal, caused his exile. Valentinian would have been an accom-



plished prince if his severity had not often degenerated into cruelty, and if he had known how to control his violent temper.

A few days after his arrival at Constantinople Valentinian associated with himself his brother, Valens, in the government of the empire. Before making so important a choice he consulted his chief officers. All remained silent except one, who was candid enough to say: "Prince, if you love your family, you will choose your brother; if you love the state, select the most worthy man." This advice impressed Valentinian, but he persisted in his design and declared Valens emperor of the East. Valens was a prince of good morals and steadfast in friendship, but being indolent and without genius or experience, he often suffered his ministers to make a tyrannical use of his authority. He showed no energy except in favoring the Arians, whom he sustained with all his power and to whom he sacrificed the peace, glory, and safety of the empire.

SUCCESS AND DEATH OF VALENTINIAN.—Valentinian governed the West with justice and vigor. Making his residence sometimes in Milan, sometimes in Treves, he was always ready to defend his frontiers, and to repel the attacks of the barbarians from beyond the Rhine and the Danube. He kept in constant awe the restless tribes of Germany, and triumphed over them in every battle.

But whilst his bravery and military abilities struck terror into the minds of the barbarians, his irascible temper was almost equally dreaded by his own subjects, and in the end it proved fatal to himself. The Quadi, a poor and timid nation, having incurred his displeasure, sent ambassadors to appease his anger. Valentinian was offended at their mean appearance, and exclaimed that it was a disgrace to the empire that he had to treat with such ill-looking people. He spoke with such warmth and passion that he broke a blood-vessel, fell senseless to the ground, and died a few hours after (A.D. 375).

BEGINNING OF THE INVASIONS; DEFEAT OF VALENS (A.D. 378).—The Huns, a barbarous people, displanting the Goths, drove them to the shores of the Danube. The Goths requested permission of Valens to cross the Danube and settle in Mœsia as subjects of the empire. Valens acceded to their request, but soon withdrew his permission. Exasperated, they revolted, and, excited by distress and the desire of revenge, began to overrun the country with fire and sword. Valens, more busied in shedding the blood of Christians than that of his enemies, was obliged to take the field, and received from the Goths the punishment of his cruelties. His army was completely routed near Adrianople. He was carried wounded to a hut, which was set

on fire by the Goths, and this unhappy prince perished in the flames (A.D. 378).

GRATIAN (A.D. 375–383) AND THEODOSIUS THE GREAT (A.D. 378–395).—Gratian had succeeded Valentinian, his father. The death of Valens left him sole master of the empire. He was prudent enough to take a colleague, and wise enough to choose the ablest man of the empire—the great Theodosius, with whose name is associated every civil, religious, and military virtue. Contemporary writers compare him to Trajan, the idol of the Romans, and declare that he had all the great qualities of that prince, without any of his defects.

The Goths, emboldened by the defeat of Valens, were the first to experience the effects of the indignation and bravery of the new emperor. He totally defeated them, and obliged the greater number to become subjects of the empire; the rest he pursued beyond the Rhine, which they never again presumed to cross.

The other barbarians, intimidated, ceased their incursions; the Persians also sued for peace, and the rule of Theodosius was universally respected. This Christian hero availed himself of the return of peace to complete the destruction of Arianism and idolatry. With no other weapon than mildness he gave them mortal blows, and his active zeal was not satisfied until the public worship of idols was entirely abolished throughout the empire.



THE USURPER MAXIMUS (A.D. 383-388) AND VALENTINIAN II. (A.D. 375-392).—The example of Theodosius was in most respects faithfully imitated by Gratian, emperor of the West, and he would perhaps have equalled the former but for a single defect, which led to his ruin. Being excessively fond of hunting, he paid little attention to affairs of state. Maximus, one of his generals, profiting by this negligence of Gratian, revolted and put him to death (A.D. 383).

Valentinian II., brother and colleague of Gratian, would have met the same fate if he had not fled to Thessalonica. Theodosius received the young prince with tenderness; he led him to abjure Arianism, and the following year accompanied him to the West at the head of an army. The army of the usurper was destroyed on the Save; Maximus himself was taken prisoner at Aquileia and brought to Theodosius, whom he endeavored to move. This good prince was about to pardon him, but the soldiers, less compassionate, led him away and beheaded him.

REVOLT IN ANTIOCH (A.D. 388).—About the same time Theodosius gave to all future generations a most admirable example of clemency. A great sedition having broken out in Antioch, the people carried their insolence so far as to destroy the statues of the emperor and those of his family. Theodosius, justly irritated against an ungrateful city on which he had bestowed many



signal favors, sent two commissaries with orders to punish the leaders of the sedition, to deprive Antioch of her privileges, and to degrade that proud city of the East to the low rank of a simple borough. The arrival of the commissaries spread terror through the city. The most guilty of the inhabitants were arrested and placed in confinement. The repentant multitude, however, together with the clergy, begged that the punishment might be postponed.

CLEMENCY OF THEODOSIUS.—Flavian, Bishop of Antioch, departed for Constantinople. After having enlisted heaven in his favor by fervent prayer, he demanded an audience. When introduced, he remained at some distance with his eyes cast down, observing a mournful silence. Theodosius, deeply affected, approached the bishop and, with strong but tender reproaches, expatiated on the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens. Flavian acknowledged both the enormity of the crime and the justice of the punishment, but he so eloquently described and extolled the merit of the forgiveness of injuries that the emperor, unable to restrain his tears, cried out that he willingly pardoned Antioch, after the example of Christ, who had forgiven his very executioners. Flavian on his return was received as an angel of peace, amid the acclamations of the people, and all the churches resounded with thanksgivings.

THEODOSIUS AND ST. AMBROSE.—On another occasion Theodosius was so enraged against the city of Thessalonica, for a crime similar to that of Antioch, that he caused seven thousand of the inhabitants to be indiscriminately slain. But if the sin of the prince was great his repentance was sincere, and the public penance to which he submitted at the command of St. Ambrose gave him greater glory than had all his victories (A. D. 390).

ASSASSINATION OF VALENTINIAN II.; ARBOGASTES AND EUGENIUS.—Theodosius continued to reign peacefully in the East until a new revolution obliged him to make an expedition to the West. Valentinian II., although quite young, governed his subjects with much wisdom and gave great promise for his future, when he was basely assassinated by Arbogastes, the general of his armies (A. D. 392). This barbarian placed the sceptre in the hands of one of his associates named Eugenius. The latter was a Christian, Arbogastes was a pagan; but both worshipped no other god than ambition. Theodosius, having made his preparations, traversed Illyria and reached the Alps, where he forced a passage. Descending these mountains on foot, he met the army of the rebels, much more numerous than his own. One army displayed the image of Hercules, the other gloried in the standard of the cross.

BATTLE OF AQUILEIA (A. D. 392).—The battle took place near Aquileia. The troops of Theodosius were at first repulsed. The enemy believed themselves victors, and passed the following night in exultation and debauchery. Theodosius spent the night in prayer, and received in a vision an assurance of victory. At dawn of day, arming himself with shield and cuirass, beneath the standard of the cross he drew up his army. This was the moment Heaven had chosen to declare itself in his favor. On a sudden, frightful whirlwinds arose which broke the ranks of the rebels and forced the shields from their hands. Their arrows turned against themselves, while those of their opponents received additional force from the wind.

The soldiers of Eugenius, blinded by the dust and pierced with their own darts as well as those of the enemy, fell into confusion; they fled, and threw themselves into a neighboring river. Arbogastes, seeing all lost, in a fit of rage and despair stabbed himself. Eugenius was led by his own soldiers to Theodosius, who condemned him to be executed. The vanquished army hailed their defeat with cries of joy; they obtained pardon, and the two armies, uniting, recognized in Theodosius a prince favored by Heaven and whom prayer rendered invincible.

DEATH OF THEODOSIUS THE GREAT (A. D. 395).—Theodosius survived his victory but a few



months. He died at Milan in the arms of St. Ambrose (A.D. 395). Any one of his achievements would have sufficed to make illustrious a long reign. He conquered the Goths; kept the Persians in constant awe; overthrew two usurpers; crushed Arianism and idolatry without shedding one drop of blood; he was as celebrated for his penance as for his valor—in short, ecclesiastical writers, the fathers, and the councils have held him up to posterity as the model of a Christian prince.

THE DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH IN THE FOURTH CENTURY.—The church, delivered by Constantine from fear of persecution, still combated heresies which disturbed her unity, and imperial mandates that menaced her liberty. God raised up in her defence men as celebrated for their learning as for the steadfastness of their character and the splendor of their virtues. The first of these great men was St. Athanasius, who first appeared at the Council of Nice (A.D. 325). Appointed the following year bishop of Alexandria, this glorious athlete of the truth incurred the hatred of the Arians, who caused him to be exiled several times. Sometimes at Treves, and again in the deserts of the Thebaid, he braved the anger of emperors as well as that of heretics, and died in peace at Alexandria after an episcopate of forty-seven years (A.D. 326–373). St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, who had taken part



in the same struggle and the same trials, shone with equal splendor in the Latin Church.

The Greek Church also claims St. Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea, and his friend St. Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzen. The latter was remarkable for the purity of his doctrine, which won him the surname of “Theologian”; the former was equally celebrated for the perfection of his writings and his heroic constancy in defending the rights of his episcopate. To a prefect accustomed to treat with the Arians, who expressed his surprise on hearing such intrepid language, St. Basil replied: “It is because you have never met a bishop.” We have seen in St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, an equal firmness. This saint died two years after Theodosius the Great, having had the happiness of converting St. Augustine, who, with St. Jerome, combated the heresies of the West, while St. John Chrysostom irradiated the Eastern Church with new splendor.

INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH IN THE EMPIRE.

—In the face of paganism, the church had proved in the fourth century, by the eloquence and sanctity of her doctors, that she alone possessed the truth and was the source of all virtues. She gave the world a no less important lesson by the great number of the faithful who fled from the corruption of cities to give themselves up to the practice of the evangelical counsels in solitude. The monastic life, already flourishing in the



East, through the example of St. Paul the Hermit and St. Antony, was introduced into the West by St. Martin, at Ligugé near Poitiers (A.D. 370). This was the first of those monasteries destined to become for that country a centre of unity and a school of labor.

The church, who anticipated the invasion of the barbarians, applied herself to their conversion and to temper their ferocity. At the same time she endeavored to remedy the evils of the empire by succoring the poor, by offering to the weak an inviolable refuge in her sanctuaries, and by obtaining for slaves either liberty or treatment more compatible with their dignity as Christians. Her influence was not less felt in the family. She declared marriage a holy and indissoluble tie; restrained within just limits the authority of the father, taught him to respect and love his wife and children, and forbade him to kill, to expose, or to sell them as slaves.

The church, unable to change the vicious administration of the empire, endeavored to remedy it by a hierarchy as regular, but more powerful and dear to the people. In the country, monks and missionaries became the protectors of the inhabitants oppressed by the agents of the imperial exchequer; in the cities, the bishops, chosen as patrons, caused the rights of humanity and justice to prevail; while at Rome



the power of the head of the church was increased by the division and weakness of the imperial authority, and the time had come when the emperor could no longer reside in the same city with the pope, for it was designed by Providence that the ancient capital of the empire should become the capital of the Christian world.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

What is said of Diocletian and his measures after entering Rome? What was the "tetrarchy"? How was it formed? How did the tenth persecution occur? What led to the abdication of Diocletian? What was the behavior of Galerius towards Constantine? What is said of the character of Constantine at his accession? What was the condition of the empire at that time? What was the origin of the *Labarum*? What is said of the battle with Maxentius? What of the death of Maximian? Of Licinius? What of the Edict of Milan? What is said of the foundation of Constantinople? What of the death of Constantine? How was the imperial power divided at his death? What is said of the siege of Nisibis? What of Magnentius? What of the rise of Julian? What of him and Constantius? What was Julian's conduct upon coming into power? Describe his campaign against Sapor. Relate the circumstances attending his death. What was his character? Who succeeded him? Who followed Jovian? What was the character of Valentinian? Give a characteristic anecdote. How did he choose an associate in the empire? What is said of his administration? Of his death? What of the Huns? Who ruled the empire after the death of Valens? How did Theodosius rise to power? How did he put down Arianism? How were matters at this time in the Western Empire? What insurrection broke out against Theodosius? How did he treat the insurgents? What took place between him and St. Ambrose? What usurpation occurred about this time in the West? Describe the battle of Aquileia. What is said of the death of Theodosius and his achievements? What of St. Athanasius? Of St. Hilary? Of St. Basil? St. Gregory Nazianzen? What of the beginnings of the monastic life? What of the influence and policy of the church?