

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES:

EXTENDING FROM THE OVERTHROW OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE OF THE ROMANS
A. D. 476, TO THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA, A. D. 1492 = 1016 YEARS.

SECTION I.

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1. The "Middle Ages," to which it is impossible to fix accurate
limits, may be considered as embracing that dark and gloomy period of about a thousand years, extending from the fall of the Western empire of the Romans nearly to the close of the fifteenth century, at which point we detect the dawn of modern civilization, and enter upon the clearly-marked outlines of modern history.^a

2. The history of Europe during several centuries after the over-
throw of the Western Roman empire offers little real instruction to
repay the labor of wading through the intricate and bloody annals
of a barbarous age. The fall of the Roman empire had carried
away with it ancient civilization; and during many generations, the
elements of society which had been disrupted by the surges of
barbarian power, continued to be widely agitated, like the waves of
the ocean, long after the fury of the storm has passed. It is only
when the victors and the vanquished, inhabitants of the same country,
had become fused into one people, and a new order of things, new
bounds of society, and new institutions began to be developed, that
the useful history of the Middle Ages begins.

3. We must bear in mind that it was not Italy alone that was

^a "The ten centuries, from the fifth to the fifteenth, seem, in a general point of view, to constitute the period of the Middle Ages."—Hallam.

affected by the tide of barbarian conquest; but that the storm spread likewise over Gaul, Spain, Britain, and Northern Africa; while the feeble empire which had Constantinople for its centre, alone escaped the general ruin. Here the majesty of Rome was still faintly represented by the imaginary successors of Augustus, who continued until the time of the crusades to exercise a partial sovereignty over the East, from the Danube to the Nile and the Tigris. The remainder of the Roman world exhibited one scene of general ruin for wherever the barbarians marched in successive hordes, their route was marked with blood: cities and villages were repeatedly plundered, and often destroyed; fertile and populous provinces were converted into deserts; and pestilence and famine, following in the train of war, completed the desolation.

4. When at length, toward the close of the sixth century, the frenzy of conquest was over, and a partial calm was restored, the Saxons, from the shores of the Baltic, were found to be in possession of the southern and more fertile provinces of Britain: the Franks or Freemen, a confederation of Germanic tribes, were masters of Gaul: the Huns, from the borders of the Caspian Sea, occupied Pannónia; the Goths and the Lombards, the former originally from northern Asia, and the latter of Scandinavian origin, had established themselves in Italy and the adjacent provinces; and the Gothic tribes, after driving the Van'dals from Spain, had succeeded to the sovereignty of the peninsula. A total change had come over the state of Europe: scarcely any vestiges of Roman civilization remained; but new nations, new manners, new languages, and new names of countries were everywhere introduced; and new forms of government, new institutions, and new laws began to spring up out of the chaos occasioned by the general wreck of the nations of the Roman world. In the present chapter we shall pass rapidly over the history of the Middle Ages; aiming only to present the reader such a general outline, or framework, of its annals, as will aid in the search we shall subsequently make for the seeds of order, and the first rudiments of policy, laws, and civilization, of Modern Europe.

5. After Odoácer, the chief of the tribe of the Her'uli, had conquered Italy, he divided one third of the ample estates of the nobles among his followers; but although he retained the government in his own hands, he allowed the ancient forms of administration to remain; the senate continued to sit, as usual; and after seven years the consulship was restored; while

II. THE MON-
ARCHY OF
THE HER'ULLI

none of the municipal or provincial authorities were changed. Odoácer made some attempts to restore agriculture in the provinces; but still Italy presented a sad prospect of misery and desolation. After a duration of fourteen years, the feeble monarchy of the Her'uli was overthrown by the Os'trogoth king, Theod'oric, who disregarding his plighted faith, caused his royal captive, Odoácer, to be assassinated at the close of a conciliatory banquet. (A. D. 493.)

6. Theod'oric, the first of the Os'trogoth kings of Italy, had been brought up as a hostage at the court of Constantinople. At times the friend, the ally, and the enemy of the imbecile monarchs of the Eastern empire, he restored peace to Italy, and a degree of prosperity unusual under the sway of the barbarian conquerors. Like Odoácer, he indulged his Roman subjects in the retention of their ancient laws language, and magistrates; and employed them chiefly in the administration of government; while to his rude Gothic followers he confided the defence of the State; and by giving them lands which they were to hold on the tenure of military service, he endeavored to unite in them the domestic habits of the cultivator, with the exercises and discipline of the soldier.

7. Theod'oric encouraged improvements in agriculture, revived the spirit of commerce and manufactures, and greatly increased the population of his kingdom, which, at the close of his reign, embraced nearly a million of the barbarians, many of whom, however, were soldiers of fortune and adventurers who had flocked from all the surrounding barbarous nations to share the riches and glory which Theod'oric had won. Theod'oric reigned thirty-three years; and at the time of his death his kingdom occupied not only Sicily and Italy, but also Lower Gaul, and the old Roman provinces between the head of the Adriatic and the Danube. If he had had a son to whom he might have transmitted his dominions, his Gothic successors would probably have had the honor of restoring the empire of the West; but on his death, (A. D. 526) the two nations of the Os'trogoths and the Vis'igoths were again divided; and the reign of the Great Theod'oric passed like a brilliant meteor, leaving no permanent impression of its glory.

8. Seven Os'trogoth kings succeeded Theod'oric on the throne of Italy during a period of twenty-seven years. Nearly all met with a violent death, and were constantly engaged in a war with Justin'ian, emperor of the East, who finally succeeded in reducing

III. MON-
ARCHY OF
THE OS'TRO-
GOTHS.

Italy under his dominion. The reign of that monarch is the most brilliant period in the history of the Eastern empire; and as it follows immediately after the career of Theod'oric in the West, and embraces all that is interesting in the history of the period which it occupies, we pass here to a brief survey of its annals.

9. The year after the death of Theod'oric, Justin'ian succeeded his uncle Justin on the throne of the Eastern empire.

IV. THE
ERA OF
JUSTIN'IAN.

His reign is often alluded to in history as the "Era of Jus'tinian." On his accession he found the kingdom torn by domestic factions; hordes of barbarians menaced the frontiers, and often advanced from the Danube three hundred miles into the country; and during the first five years of his reign he waged an expensive and unprofitable war with the Persians. The conclusion of this war, by the purchase of a peace at a costly price, enabled Justin'ian, who was extremely ambitious of military fame, to turn his arms to the conquest of distant provinces.

10. Justin'ian never led his armies in person; and his troops consisted chiefly of barbarian mercenaries—Scythians, Persians, Her'uli, Van'dals, and Goths, and a small number of Thracians: the citizens of the empire had long been forbidden, under preceding emperors, to carry arms,—a short-sighted policy which Justin'ian's timidity and jealousy led him to adopt: and so little of military spirit remained among the people, that they were not only incapable of fighting in the open field, but formed a very inadequate defence for the ramparts of their cities. Under these circumstances, with but a small body of regular troops, and without an active militia from which to recruit his armies, the military successes of Justin'ian are among the difficult problems of the age.

11. Africa, still ruled by the Van'dals, first attracted the military ambition of Justin'ian, although his designs of conquest were concealed under the pretence of restoring to the Van'dal throne its legitimate successor, of the race of the renowned Gen'seric. The first expedition, under the command of Belis'arius, the greatest general of his age, numbering only ten thousand foot soldiers and five thousand horsemen, landed, in September 533, about five days' journey to the south of Carthage. The Africans, who were still called Romans, long oppressed by their Van'dal conquerors, hailed Belis'arius as a deliverer; and Gel'imer, the Van'dal king, who ruled over eight or nine millions of subjects, and who could muster eighty thou-

sand warriors' of his own nation, found himself suddenly alone with his Van'dals in the midst of a hostile population. Twice Gel'imer was routed in battle; and before the end of November Africa was conquered, and the kingdom of the Van'dals destroyed. Gel'imer himself, having capitulated, was removed to Gal'atia, where ample possessions were given him, and where he was allowed to grow old in peace, surrounded by his friends and kindred, and a few faithful followers. The bravest of the Van'dals enlisted in the armies of Justin'ian; and ere long the remainder of the Van'dal nation in Africa, being involved in the convulsions that followed, entirely disappeared.

12. Justin'ian next projected the conquest of the Gothic empire of Italy, and its dependencies; and in the year 535 Belis'arius landed in Sicily at the head of a small army of seven thousand five hundred men. In the first campaign he subdued that island: in the second year he advanced into southern Italy, where the old Roman population welcomed him with joy, and the Goths found themselves as unfavorably situated as the Van'dals had been in Africa; but, deposing their weak prince, they raised Vit'iges to the throne, who was a great general and a worthy rival of Belis'arius. The latter gained possession of Rome, (Dec. 536,) where for more than a year he was besieged by the Goths; and although he made good his defence, almost the entire population of the city in the meantime perished by famine.

13. Vit'iges himself was next besieged in Raven'na, and was finally forced to surrender the place, and yield himself prisoner. (Dec. 539.) He was deeply indebted to the generosity of Justin'ian, who allowed him to pass his days in affluence in Constantinople. The jealousy of Justin'ian, however, having recalled Belis'arius from Italy, in a few years the Goths recovered their sway; but it was over a country almost deserted of its inhabitants. At length, in the year 552, Justin'ian formed in Italy an army of thirty thousand men, which he placed under the command of the eunuch Nar'ses, who unexpectedly proved to be an able general. In the following year the last of the Os'trogoth kings was slain in battle, and the empire of Justin'ian was extended over the deserted wastes of the once fertile and populous Italy. (A. D. 554.)

14. In the East, Justin'ian was involved in a second war with Chosroes, or Nashirvan, the most celebrated Persian monarch of the

1. Gibbon, iii. 63, says one hundred and sixty thousand; and Sismondi, Fall of the Roman Empire, i. 221, has the same number. See the correction in Milman's Notes to Gibbon.

Sassanid dynasty. Hostilities were carried on during sixteen years (A. D. 540—556) with unrelenting obstinacy on both sides; but after a prodigious waste of human life, the frontiers of the two empires remained nearly the same as they were before the war. When Justinian was nearly eighty years of age he was again obliged to have recourse to the services of his old general Belisarius, not less aged than himself, to repel an invasion of the barbarians who had advanced to the very gates of Constantinople. At the head of a small band of veterans, who in happier years had shared his toils, he drove back the enemy; but the applauses of the people again excited the jealousy and fears of the ungrateful monarch, who, charging his faithful servant with aspiring to the empire, caused his eyes to be torn out, and his whole fortune to be confiscated; and it is said that the general who had conquered two kingdoms, was to be seen blind, and led by a child, going about with a wooden cup in his hand to solicit charity. Justinian died at the age of eighty-three, after a reign of more than thirty-eight years. (Nov. 565.) The character of Justinian was a compound of good and bad qualities; for although personally inclined to justice, he often overlooked, through weakness, the injustice of others, and was in a great measure ruled during the first half of his reign by his wife Theodora, an unprincipled woman, under whose orders many acts of oppression and cruelty were committed.

15. The reign of Justinian forms a memorable epoch in the history of the world. He was the last Byzantine emperor who, by his dominion over the whole of Italy, reunited in some measure the two principal portions of the empire of the Cæsars. But his extensive conquests were not his chief glory: the brightest ornament of his reign, which has immortalized his memory, is his famous compilation of the Roman laws, known as the "Pandects and Code of Justinian." "The vain titles of the victories of Justinian," says Gibbon, "are crumbled into dust: but the name of the legislator is inscribed on a fair and everlasting monument." To a commission of ten eminent lawyers, at the head of which was Tribonian, Justinian assigned the task of reducing into a uniform and consistent code, the vast mass of the laws of the Roman empire; and after this had been completed, to another commission of seventeen, at the head of which also was Tribonian, was assigned the more difficult work of searching out the scattered monuments of ancient jurisprudence,—of collecting and putting in order whatever was useful in

the books of former juriconsults, and of extracting the true spirit of the laws from questions, disputes, conjectures, and judicial decisions of the Roman civilians. This celebrated work, containing the immense store of the wisdom of antiquity, after being lost during several centuries of the Dark Ages, was accidentally brought to light in the middle of the twelfth century, when it contributed greatly to the revival of civilization; and the digest which Gibbon has made of it is now received as the text book on civil Law in some of the universities of Europe.^a

16. The history of the Eastern or Greek empire, during several centuries after Justinian, is so extremely complicated, and its annals so obscure and devoid of interest, that we pass them by, for subjects of greater importance. Three years after the death of Justinian, Italy underwent another revolution. In the year 568, the whole Lombard nation, comprising the fiercest and bravest of the Germanic tribes, led by their king Alboin, and aided by twenty thousand Saxons, descended from the eastern Alps, and at once took possession of northern Italy, which, from them, is called Lombardy. The Lombard monarchy, thus established, lasted, under twenty-one kings, during a period of little more than two centuries.

17. As the Lombards advanced into the country, the inhabitants shut themselves up in the walled cities, many of which, after enduring sieges, and experiencing the most dreadful calamities, were compelled to surrender; but the Lombard dominion never embraced the whole peninsula. The islands in the upper end of the Adriatic, embracing the Venetian League, the country immediately surrounding Ravena, together with Rome, Naples, and a few other cities, remained under the jurisdiction of the Eastern or Greek emperors, or were at times independent of foreign rule. The Lombards were ruder and fiercer than the Goths who preceded them; and they at first proved to the Italians far harder task-masters than any of the previous invaders; but the change from a wandering life exerted an influence favorable to their civilization; and their laws, considered as those of a barbarous people, exhibited a considerable degree of wisdom and equality.

18. The period at which we have now arrived, towards the close of the sixth century, exhibits the first interval of partial repose that had fallen upon Western Europe since the downfall of the Roman empire. Some degree of quiet was now settling upon Italy under

a. Notes to Gibbon, III. 151.

the rule of the Lombard kings: the Goths were consolidating their power in Spain: a stable monarchy was gradually rising in France, from the union of the Gallic tribes; and the Saxons had firmly established themselves in the south of Britain. The only events in the East that attract our notice consist of a series of wars between the Greek emperors and the Persians, during which period, if we are to rely upon doubtful narratives which wear the air of fables, at one time all the Asiatic provinces of the Eastern empire were conquered by the Persians; and subsequently, the whole of Persia, to the frontiers of India, was conquered by the monarchs of the Eastern empire. Eventually the two empires appear to have become equally exhausted; and when peace was restored (A. D. 628) the ancient boundaries were recognized by both parties.

19. But while a degree of comparative repose was settling upon Europe, a night of darkness, owing to the absence of all reliable documents, rests upon its history, down to the time of Charlemagne. "A century and a half passed away," says Sismondi, "during which we possess nothing concerning the whole empire of the West, except dates and conjectures."^a This obscurity lasts until a new and unexpected light breaks in from Arabia; when a nation of shepherds and robbers appears as the depository of letters which had been allowed to escape from the guardianship of every civilized people.

20. Turning from the darkness which shrouds European history in the seventh century, we next proceed to trace the remarkable rise and establishment of the power of the Saracens. In the parched, sandy, and, in great part, desert Arabia, a country nearly four times the extent of France, the hardy Arab, of an original and unmixed race, had dwelt from time immemorial, in a constant struggle with nature, and enjoying all the wild freedom of the rudest patriarchal state. The descendants of Ishmael—the "wild man of the desert"—have always been free, and such they will ever remain; an effect, at once, of their local position and, as many believe, the fulfilment of prophecy; and although a few of the frontier cities of Arabia have been at times temporarily subjected by the surrounding nations, Arabia, as a country, is the only land in all antiquity that never bowed to the yoke of a foreign conqueror.

21. The ancient religion of the Arabs was Sabaism, or star-worship, which assumed a great variety of forms, and was corrupted by adoration of a vast number of images, which were supposed to have some

a. Sismondi, Fall of the Roman Empire, i. 258.

mysterious affinity to the heavenly bodies. The Arabs had seven temples dedicated to the seven planets: some tribes exclusively revered the moon, others the dog star: Judaism^a was embraced by a few tribes, Christianity by some, and the Mágian idolatry¹ of Persia by others. So completely free was Arabia, each sect or tribe being independent, that absolute toleration necessarily existed; and numerous refugee sects that fled from the persecution of the Roman emperors, found in the wild wastes of that country a quiet asylum.

22. About the beginning of the seventh century, Mahom'et or Moham' med, an Arabian impostor,² descended from the Sabæan priests of Mecca, where was the chief temple of the Sabæan idolatry, began to preach a new religion to his countrymen. He represented to them the incoherence and grossness of their religious rites, and called upon them to abandon their frail idols, and to acknowledge and adore the One true God,—the invisible, all good, and all-powerful ruler of the universe. Acknowledging the authenticity both of the Jewish scriptures and the Christian revelation, he professed to restore the true and primitive faith, as it had been in the days of the patriarchs and the prophets, from Adam to the Messiah.

23. Like Numa of old, Mahom'et sought to give to the doctrines which he taught the sanction of inspired origin and miraculous approval; and as the nymph Egéria was the ministering goddess of the former, so the angel Gabriel was the declared medium of divine communication with the latter. During a period of twenty-three

1. The Mágian idolatry consisted of the religious belief and worship presided over by the Mágia priesthood, who comprised, originally, one of the six tribes into which the nation of the Medes was divided. The *Mági*, or "wise men," had not only religion, but the higher branches of all learning also, in their charge; and they practised different sorts of divination, astrology, and enchantment, for the purpose of disclosing the future, influencing the present, and calling the past to their aid. So famous were they that their name has been applied to all orders of magicians and enchanters. Zoroaster, who is supposed to have lived about the seventh century before Christ, reformed the Mágian religion, and remodelled the priesthood; and by some he is considered the founder of the order.

The Mágian priests taught that the gods are the spiritual essences of fire, earth, and water,—that there are two antagonistic powers in nature, the one accomplishing good designs, the other evil;—that each of these shall subdue and be subdued by turns, for six thousand years, but that, at last, through the intervention of the still higher and Supreme Being, the evil principle shall perish, and men shall live in happiness, neither needing food, nor yielding a shadow.

The great influence of the Magi is well illustrated in the book of Daniel, where Nebuchadnezzar invoked the aid of the different classes of their order—magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. In the time of the Saviour, the Mágian system was not extinct, as we have evidence of in the allusion made to Simon Magus, who boasted himself to be "some great one." (Acts, viii. 9—xiii. 6 &c.)

a. By the term *Judaism* I meant the religious rites and doctrines of the Jews, as enjoined in the law of Moses.

Another
exhibition
of Christian
Charity!!
Why should
we call
a infidel?

years occasional revelations, as circumstances required, are said to have been made to the Prophet, who was consequently never at a loss for authority to justify his conduct to his followers, or for authoritative counsel in any emergency. These revelations, carefully treasured up in the memories of the faithful, or committed to writing by amanuenses, (for the Moslems boast that the founder of their religion could neither read nor write,) were collected together two years after the death of the Prophet, and published as the *Koran*, or Moham'-medan Bible. *Precisely as were the New Testament annals.*

24. The materials of the Koran are borrowed chiefly from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and from the legends, traditions, and fables of Arabian and Persian mythology. The two great points of Moslem faith are embraced in the declaration—"There is but one God, and Mahom'et is his prophet." The other prominent points of the Moslem creed are the belief in absolute predestination,—the existence and purity of angels,—the resurrection of the body,—a general judgment, and the final salvation of all the disciples of the Prophet, whatever be their sins. Wicked Moslems are to expiate their crimes during different periods of suffering, not to exceed seven thousand years; but infidel contemners of the Koran are to be doomed to an eternity of woe. A minute and appalling description is given of the place and mode of torment,—a vast receptacle, full of smoke and darkness, dragged forward with roaring noise and fury by seventy thousand angels, through the opposite extremes of heat and cold, while the unhappy objects of wrath are tormented by the hissing of numerous reptiles, and the scourges of hideous demons, whose pastime is cruelty and pain. The Moslem paradise is all that an Arab imagination can paint of sensual felicity;—groves, rivulets, flowers, perfumes, and fruits of every variety to charm the senses; while, to every other conceivable delight, seventy-two damsels of immortal youth and dazzling beauty are assigned to minister to the enjoyment of the humblest of the faithful. The promise to every faithful follower of the Prophet, of an unlimited indulgence of the corporeal propensities, constitutes a fundamental principle of the Moham'-medan religion. The predestinarian doctrine of Mahom'et led his followers towards fatalism, and exercised a marked influence upon their lives, and especially upon their warlike character; for as it taught them that the hour of death is determined beforehand, it inspired them with an indifference to danger, and gave a permanent security to their bravery. Mahom'et promised to those

X How does this compare with the "lake of fire and brimstone" of the Christian?

of his followers who fell in battle an immediate admission to the joys of paradise. The practical part of the new religion consisted of prayer five times a day, and frequent ablutions of the whole body, alms, fastings and the pilgrimage to Mecca.¹ Tradition asserts that Mahom'et confirmed by miracles the truth of his religion; and a mysterious hint in the Koran has been converted, by the traditionists, into a circumstantial legend of a nocturnal journey through the seven heavens, in which Mahom'et conversed familiarly with Adam, Moses, and the prophets, and even with Deity himself. *St. Paul has something very similar*

25. It was in the year 609, when Mahom'et was already forty years old, that he began to preach his new doctrine at Mecca. His first proselytes were made in his own family; but by the people his pretensions were long treated with ridicule; and at the end of thirteen years he was obliged to flee from Mecca to save his life. (A. D. 622.) This celebrated flight, called the Hegira, is the grand era of the Moham'-medan religion.

26. Repairing to Yatreb, the name of which he changed to Medina,² (or Medinet el Nebbi, the city of the Prophet,) he was there received by a large band of converts with every demonstration of joy; and soon the whole city acknowledged him as its leader and prophet. Mahomet now declared that the empire of his religion was to be established by the sword: every day added to the number of his proselytes, who, formed into warlike and predatory bands, scoured the desert in quest of plunder; and after experiencing many successes and several defeats, Mahom'et, in the seventh year of the Hegira, with scarcely a shadow of opposition, made himself master of Mecca, whose inhabitants swore allegiance to him as their temporal and spiritual prince. The conquest or voluntary submission of the rest of Arabia soon followed, and at the period of Mahom'et's last pilgrimage to Mecca, in the tenth year of the Hegira, and the year of his death, a hundred and fourteen thousand Mussulmen³ marched under his banner. (A. D. 632.)

1. Mecca, the birth-place of Mahom'et, and the great centre of attraction to all pilgrims of the Moham'-medan faith, is in western Arabia, about forty miles east from the Red Sea. Formerly the concourse of pilgrims to the "holy city" was immense; but the taste for pilgrimages is now rapidly declining throughout the Moham'-medan world.

2. Medina is situated in western Arabia, one hundred miles north-east from its port of Yembo on the Red Sea, and two hundred and sixty miles north from Mecca. It is surrounded by a wall about forty feet high, flanked by thirty towers. It is now chiefly important as being in possession of the tomb containing the remains of the prophet.

3. The word *Mussulman*, which is used to designate a follower of Mahom'et, signifies, in Turkish language, "a true believer."

27. Mahom'et died without having formed any organized government for the empire which he had so speedily established; and although religious enthusiasm supplied, to his immediate followers, the place of legislation, the Arabs of the desert soon began to relapse into their ancient idolatries. The union of the military chiefs of the Prophet alone saved the tottering fabric of Moslem faith from dissolution. Abubekr, the first believer in Mahom'et's mission, was declared lieutenant or caliph; and the victories of his general Khaled, surnamed "the sword of God, over the apostate tribes, in a few months restored religious unity to Arabia.

28. But the spirit of the Saracens' needed employment; and preparations were made to invade the Byzantine and Persian empires, both of which, from the long and desolating wars that had raged between them, had sunk into the most deplorable weakness. Khaled advanced into Persia and conquered several cities near the ruins of Babylon, when he was recalled, and sent to join Abu Obeidah, who had marched upon Syria. Palmyra submitted: the governor of Bozrah² turned both traitor and Mussulman, and opened the gates of the city to the invaders; Damascus was attacked, besieged, and finally one part of the city was carried by storm at the moment that another portion had capitulated. (Aug. 3d, 634.) Abubekr died the very day the city was taken, and Omar succeeded to the Caliphate.

29. The fall of Emes'sa,³ and Baalbec⁴ or Heliop'olis, soon fol-

1. The word *Saracen*, from *sara*, "a desert," means an Arabian.

2. *Bozrah*, was fifty miles south from Damascus, and eighty miles north-east from Jerusalem. Though now almost deserted, the whole town and its environs are covered with pillars and other ruins of the finest workmanship. It is frequently mentioned in Scripture. In Jeremiah, xlix. 13, we read, "For I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse." (*Map No. VI.*)

3. *Emes'sa*, now *Hems*, a city of Syria, was on the eastern bank of the Orontes, now the *Asy*, eighty-five miles north-east from Damascus. It was the birth-place of the Roman emperor Elagabalus. (*Map No. VI.*)

4. *Baalbec*, or Heliop'olis,—the former a Syrian and the latter a Greek word—both mean the "city of the sun," was a large and splendid city of Syria, forty miles north-west from Damascus, and about thirty-five miles from the Mediterranean. The remains of ancient architectural grandeur in Baalbec are more extensive than in any other city of Syria, Palmyra excepted. It is believed that Baal-Ath, built by Solomon in Lebanon, (2 Chron. viii. 6,) was identical with Baal-Bec. While under the Roman power it was famed for its wealth and splendor; and the terms of its surrender to the Saracens sufficiently attest its great resources at that period:—two thousand ounces of gold, four thousand ounces of silver, two thousand silken vests, and one thousand swords, besides those of the garrison, being the price demanded and paid to preserve it from plunder. Although repeatedly sacked and dismantled, yet the changes that have taken place in the channels of commerce are the principal causes of its decay; and, judging from its decline during the last century,—from five thousand inhabitants to less than two hundred,—probably the day is not far distant when, like many other Eastern cities, it will cease to be inhabited. (*Map No. VI.*)

lowed that of Damascus. Herac'lius, the Byzantine emperor, made one great effort to save Syria, but on the banks of the Yermouk¹ his best generals were defeated by Khaled with a loss of seventy thousand soldiers, who were left dead on the field. (Nov. 636.) Jerusalem, after a siege of four months, capitulated to Omar, who caused the ground on which had stood the temple of Solomon to be cleared of its rubbish, and prepared for the foundation of a mosque, which still bears the name of the Caliph. The reduction of Aleppo² and Antioch, six years after the first Saracen invasion, completed the conquest of Syria. (A. D. 638.)

30. In the meantime the conquest of Persia had been followed up by other Saracen generals. In the same year that witnessed the battle of Yermouk, the Persians and Saracens fought on the plains of Cadésiah³ one of the bloodiest battles on record. Seven thousand five hundred Saracens and one hundred thousand Persians are said to have fallen. The fate of Persia was determined, although the Persian monarch kept together some time longer the wrecks of his empire, but he was finally slain in the year 651, and with him expired the second Persian dynasty, that of the Sassan'idæ.⁴

31. Soon after the battle of Cadésiah, Omar intrusted to his lieu-

1. The *Yermouk*, the Hieromax of the Greeks, is a river that empties into the Jordan from the east, seventy-five miles south-west from Damascus. (*Map No. VI.*)

2. *Aleppo*, in northern Syria, is one hundred and ninety-six miles north-east from Damascus, and fifty-five miles east from Antioch. It is surrounded by massive walls thirty-feet high and twenty broad. It was once a place of considerable trade, communicating with Persia and India by way of Bagdad, and with Arabia and Egypt by way of Damascus; but the discovery of a passage to India by way of the Cape of Good Hope struck a deadly blow at its greatness, and it is now little more than a shadow of its former self.

3. *Cadésiah* was on the borders of the Syrian desert, south-west from Babylon.

4. The overthrow of the last of the great Persian dynasties is an appropriate point for a brief review of Persian history.

It has been stated that, after the overthrow of the Persian monarchy by Alexander the Great, Asia continued to be a theatre of wars waged by his ambitious successors, until Seleucus, about the year 307 before our era, established himself securely in possession of the countries between the Euphrates, the Indus, and the Oxus, and thus founded the empire of the *Seleucida*. This empire continued undisturbed until the year 250 B. C., when the Parthians, under *Arsaces*, revolted, and established the Parthian empire of the *Arsacida*. The Parthian empire attained its highest grandeur in the reign of its sixth monarch, Mithridates I., who carried his arms even farther than Alexander himself. The descendants of *Arsaces* ruled until A. D. 226, a period of 480 years, when the last prince of that family was defeated and taken prisoner by Ar'deshir Bab'igan, a revolted Persian noble of the family of Sassan, who thus became the founder of the dynasty of the *Sassan'idæ*. The period of nearly five centuries between the death of Alexander the Great and the reign of Ar'deshir, is nearly a blank in Eastern history; and what little is known of it is obtained from the pages of Roman writers. No connected authentic account of this period can be given. The dynasty of the *Sassan'idæ* continued until the overthrow of the Persian hosts on the plains of Cadésiah, when the religion of Zoroaster gave place to the triumph of the Mussulman faith.