

For the religious conditions: HATCH, *The Influence of Greek Thought upon the Christian Church*; RENAN, *The Influence of Rome on the Development of the Catholic Church*; FARRAR, *Seekers after God*, for the teachings of Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius; BURY, Book I, Chapters I-II, "Christianity and Paganism" and "The Influence of Christianity on Society"; LECKY, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, Vol. II, Chapter IV (opening); TAYLOR, *Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages*, Chapter II, gives an admirable account of the passing of the antique man into the mediæval man.

For the general intellectual and moral transition, see, above all, TAYLOR, Chapters III-V, "Phases of Pagan Decadence," "The Antique Culture," and "Pagan Elements Christianized in Transmission." The bibliographical notes at the end of Taylor's volume are very full and useful in this field. See also GLOVER, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, Cambridge, England, 1901.

C. Materials
for advanced
study.

A remarkable account of the general conditions, especially in Gaul, immediately preceding the barbarian invasions may be found in FUSTEL DE COULANGES, *Histoire des institutions de l'ancienne France* (Paris, 1891), Vol. II, "L'invasion germanique," pp. 1-244. *Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la Révolution*, edited by LAVISSE, Vol. I, Part II, also describes Gaul under the Roman Empire. A shorter account is given in LAVISSE ET RAMBAUD, *Histoire Générale*, Vol. I, Chapter I, "Le Monde romain." For the religious situation: BOISSIER, *La Fin du paganisme*, 2 vols., Paris, 1891, and MARTHA, *Les Moralists sous l'empire romain*, Paris, 1894.

A clear and most excellent analysis of the literary works in the West from the third century to the time of Charlemagne may be found in Vol. I of EBERT, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur des Mittelalters im Abendlande*, 3 vols., Leipzig, 1880-1889. There is a French translation of this admirable work, *Histoire générale de la littérature du moyen âge*, Paris, 1883-1889.

For the economic conditions, see, especially, LEVASSEUR, *Histoire des classes ouvrières avant 1789* (2 vols., 2d ed., Paris, 1901, 25 fr.), Book I, especially Chapter III, on slaves and the villa.

References for the highly important history of the law will be found at the end of Chapter III; those for the development of the Christian Church under the Roman Empire, at the close of Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

THE GERMAN INVASIONS AND THE BREAK-UP OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

I. THE MOVEMENTS OF THE HUNS FORCE THE WEST GOTHS ACROSS THE DANUBE INTO THE ROMAN EMPIRE, A.D. 376

The retired soldier, Ammianus Marcellinus, writing not more than ten or fifteen years after the battle of Adrianople, thus describes the Huns and the passage of the Goths into the Empire.

The people called Huns, barely mentioned in ancient records, live beyond the sea of Azof, on the border of the Frozen Ocean, and are a race savage beyond all parallel. At the very moment of birth the cheeks of their infant children are deeply marked by an iron, in order that the hair, instead of growing at the proper season on their faces, may be hindered by the scars; accordingly the Huns grow up without beards, and without any beauty. They all have closely knit and strong limbs and plump necks; they are of great size, and low legged, so that you might fancy them two-legged beasts, or the stout figures which are hewn out in a rude manner with an ax on the posts at the end of bridges.

They are certainly in the shape of men, however uncouth, and are so hardy that they neither require fire nor well flavored food, but live on the roots of such herbs as they get in the fields, or on the half-raw flesh of any animal, which they merely warm rapidly by placing it between their own thighs and the backs of their horses.

They never shelter themselves under roofed houses, but avoid them, as people ordinarily avoid sepulchers as things

10. Description by Ammianus Marcellinus of the Huns and of the movements of the Goths

not fit for common use. Nor is there even to be found among them a cabin thatched with reeds; but they wander about, roaming over the mountains and the woods, and accustom themselves to bear frost and hunger and thirst from their very cradles. . . .

There is not a person in the whole nation who cannot remain on his horse day and night. On horseback they buy and sell, they take their meat and drink, and there they recline on the narrow neck of their steed, and yield to sleep so deep as to indulge in every variety of dream.

And when any deliberation is to take place on any weighty matter, they all hold their common council on horseback. They are not under kingly authority,¹ but are contented with the irregular government of their chiefs, and under their lead they force their way through all obstacles. . . .

None of them plow, or even touch a plow handle, for they have no settled abode, but are homeless and lawless, perpetually wandering with their wagons, which they make their homes; in fact, they seem to be people always in flight. . . .

This active and indomitable race, being excited by an unrestrained desire of plundering the possessions of others, went on ravaging and slaughtering all the nations in their neighborhood till they reached the Alani. . . .

[After having harassed the territory of the Alani and having slain many of them and acquired much plunder, the Huns made a treaty of friendship and alliance with those who survived. The allies then attacked the German peoples to the west.] In the meantime a report spread far and wide through the nations of the Goths, that a race of men, hitherto unknown, had suddenly descended like a whirlwind from the lofty mountains, as if they had risen from some secret recess of the earth, and were ravaging and destroying everything which came in their way.

And then the greater part of the population resolved to flee and to seek a home remote from all knowledge of the new

¹ The Huns in Attila's time had a king and appear to have lived in houses and huts. See account given by Priscus below, pp. 46 sqq.

The Goths
decide to
cross the
Danube.

barbarians; and after long deliberation as to where to fix their abode, they resolved that a retreat into Thrace was the most suitable for these two reasons: first of all, because it is a district most fertile in grass; and secondly, because, owing to the great breadth of the Danube, it is wholly separated from the districts exposed to the impending attacks of the invaders.

Accordingly, under the command of their leader Alavivus, they occupied the banks of the Danube, and sent ambassadors to the emperor Valens, humbly entreating to be received by him as his subjects. They promised to live quietly, and to furnish a body of auxiliary troops if necessary.

While these events were taking place abroad, the terrifying rumor reached us that the tribes of the north were planning new and unprecedented attacks upon us; and that over the whole region which extends from the country of the Marcomanni and Quadi to Pontus, hosts of barbarians composed of various nations, which had suddenly been driven by force from their own countries, were now, with all their families, wandering about in different directions on the banks of the river Danube.

At first this intelligence was lightly treated by our people, because they were not in the habit of hearing of any wars in those remote districts till they were terminated either by victory or by treaty.

But presently the belief in these occurrences grew stronger and was confirmed by the arrival of ambassadors, who, with prayers and earnest entreaties, begged that their people, thus driven from their homes and now encamped on the other side of the river, might be kindly received by us.

The affair now seemed a cause of joy rather than of fear, according to the skillful flatterers who were always extolling and exaggerating the good fortune of the emperor. They congratulated him that an embassy had come from the farthest corners of the earth, unexpectedly offering him a large body of recruits; and that, by combining the strength of his own people with these foreign forces, he would have an army absolutely invincible. They observed further that the

News of the
movements
of the Goths
reaches the
Roman gov-
ernment.

payment for military reinforcements, which came in every year from the provinces, might now be saved and accumulated in his coffers and form a vast treasure of gold.

With Valens' permission great numbers of Goths pour into the Empire.

Full of this hope, he sent forth several officers to bring this ferocious people and their carts into our territory. And such great pains were taken to gratify this nation which was destined to overthrow the Empire of Rome, that not one was left behind, not even of those who were stricken with mortal disease. Moreover, so soon as they had obtained permission of the emperor to cross the Danube and to cultivate some districts in Thrace, they poured across the stream day and night, without ceasing, embarking in troops on board ships and rafts and on canoes made of the hollow trunks of trees. . . .

In this way, through the turbulent zeal of violent people, the ruin of the Roman Empire was brought about. This, at all events, is neither obscure nor uncertain, that the unhappy officers who were intrusted with the charge of conducting the multitude of the barbarians across the river, though they repeatedly endeavored to calculate their numbers, at last abandoned the attempt as hopeless. The man who would wish to ascertain the number might as well (as the most illustrious of poets says) attempt to count the waves in the African sea, or the grains of sand tossed about by the zephyrs. . . .

The Goths are misused by the Roman officials.

At that period, moreover, the defenses of our provinces were much exposed, and the armies of barbarians spread over them like the lava of Mount Etna. The imminence of our danger manifestly called for generals already illustrious for their past achievements in war; but nevertheless, as if some unpropitious deity had made the selection, the men who were sought out for the chief military appointments were of tainted character. The chief among them were Lupicinus and Maximus, — the one being count of Thrace, the other a leader notoriously wicked, — both men of great ignorance and rashness.

And their treacherous covetousness was the cause of all our disasters. . . . For when the barbarians who had been

conducted across the river were in great distress from want of provisions, those detested generals conceived the idea of a most disgraceful traffic; and having collected dogs from all quarters with the most insatiable rapacity, they exchanged them for an equal number of slaves, among whom were several sons of men of noble birth. . . .

After narrating the events which led up to the battle of Adrianople, and vividly describing the battle itself, Ammianus thus records the death of the emperor Valens:

So now, with rage flashing in their eyes, the barbarians pursued our men, who were in a state of torpor, the warmth of their veins having deserted them. Many were slain without knowing who smote them; some were overwhelmed by the mere weight of the crowd which pressed upon them; and some died of wounds inflicted by their own comrades. The barbarians spared neither those who yielded nor those who resisted. . . .

Battle of Adrianople and death of Valens.

Just when it first became dark, the emperor, being among a crowd of common soldiers as it was believed, — for no one said either that he had seen him or been near him, — was mortally wounded with an arrow, and, very shortly after, died, though his body was never found. For as some of the enemy loitered for a long time about the field in order to plunder the dead, none of the defeated army or of the inhabitants ventured to go to them.

II. HOW THE WEST GOTHs BECAME ARIAN CHRISTIANS; HOW ALARIC TOOK ROME IN 410

The following account is by Jordanes, himself a Goth, but unlike most of his people not an Arian, but an orthodox Christian. He wrote about 551, nearly a century and a half after the events which he here narrates:

11. Jordanes describes the conversion of the Goths to Arian Christianity.

The West Goths [terrified by the victories of the Huns over the East Goths] requested Emperor Valens to grant

them a portion of Thrace or Moesia south of the Danube in which to settle. They promised to obey his laws and commands and, in order still further to gain his confidence, they engaged to become Christians if only the emperor would send to them teachers who knew their language. When Valens heard this he readily agreed to a plan which he might himself have proposed. He received the Goths into Moesia and erected them, so to speak, into a sort of rampart to protect his empire against the other tribes.

Now, since Valens was infected with the heresy of the Arians and had closed all the churches which belonged to our party [i.e. the orthodox], he sent the Goths preachers of his own infection. These missionaries poured out for the newcomers, who were inexperienced and ignorant, the poison of their own false faith. So the West Goths were made Arians rather than Christians by Emperor Valens. Moreover, in their enthusiasm they converted their kinsmen, the East Goths and the Gepidae, and taught them to respect this heresy. They invited all nations of their own tongue everywhere to adopt the creed of this sect.

Jordanes' account of the death of Valens.

We have seen how, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, the forces of the emperor maltreated the poor Goths and drove them to revolt.

When news of this reached the emperor Valens at Antioch, he hastened with an army into Thrace. Here it came to a miserable battle in which the Goths conquered. The emperor fled to a peasant's hut not far from Adrianople. The Goths, according to the custom of the raging enemy, set fire to the buildings, having no idea that there was an emperor hidden in the little hut, and so he was consumed in his kingly pomp.¹ This was in accordance with God's

¹Zosimus, a pagan historian, probably of the fifth century, also reports that Valens perished in a hamlet which had been set on fire by the enemy. Jordanes' tone in speaking of the death of Valens is but one of the many indications of the bitterness of feeling with which the Catholic Christians viewed the Arians.

judgment that he should be burned with fire by them, since when they asked for the true faith he misled them with false teaching and changed for them the fire of love into the fire of hell.

After the great and glorious victory, the West Goths set themselves to cultivate Thrace and the Dacian river valley as if it were their native soil of which they had just gained possession.

[There they remained, hostile to the Empire, and a perpetual menace. Finally Theodosius the Great, the brave and stern, the wise and liberal, ended the war between the Goths and the Romans by a treaty. By his presents and his friendly bearing, he won the friendship of Athanaric, king of the West Goths, and invited him to go to Constantinople.]

When the West Goth entered the royal city he was astounded. "Now I see what I have often heard without believing — the glory of this great city." Looking here and there, he admired the site of the city, and the number of ships, and the magnificent walls. He saw people of many nations, like a stream flowing from different sources into one fountain. He marveled at the martial array of the soldiers and exclaimed, "Doubtless the emperor is a god of this earth, and whoever has raised his hand against him is guilty of his own blood."

The king of the West Goths visits Constantinople.

A few months later, Athanaric, upon whom the emperor heaped his favors, departed from this world, and the emperor, because of his affection for Athanaric, honored him almost more in death than he had done in life, gave him worthy burial, and was himself present beside the bier at the funeral.

After the death of Athanaric, all his army remained in the service of the emperor Theodosius, submitted to the Roman power, and formed, as it were, one body with its soldiers. They resembled the allies whom Constantine had had, who were called *Foederati*.

After Theodosius, who cherished both peace and the Gothic people, had departed this life, his sons [Honorius and Arcadius], through their lives of indulgence, began to

Alaric leads the West Goths into Italy.

bring ruin down upon their empires and withdrew from their allies, the Goths, the accustomed gifts. The Goths soon grew disgusted with the emperors, and since they were fearful lest their bravery in war should decline by too long a period of peace, they made Alaric their king. . . . So, since the said Alaric was chosen king, he took counsel with his fellows and declared to them that it was preferable to conquer a kingdom through one's own force rather than to live in peace under the yoke of strangers.

He thereupon took his army and advanced, during the consulate of Stilicho and Aurelianus, through Pannonia and Sirmium into Italy. This country was so completely deprived of forces that Alaric approached without opposition to the bridge over the Candiano, three miles from the imperial city of Ravenna. . . .

The Goths sent messengers to the emperor Honorius, who was at Ravenna, requesting that they might be permitted to settle quietly in Italy. Should they be allowed to do this, they would live as one people with the Romans; otherwise they would try which people could expel the other, the victor to remain in control. But the emperor Honorius, fearing both suggestions, took counsel with his senate how they might rid Italy of the Goths. He at last concluded to assign the distant provinces of Gaul and Spain to the West Goths.¹ He had, indeed, already nearly lost these districts, for they had been devastated by an incursion of Genseric, king of the Vandals. If Alaric and his people could succeed in conquering the region, they might have it as their home.

[The Goths agreed to this, but on their way thither were treacherously attacked by Stilicho, the emperor's father-in-law (402). The Goths, however, held their own in the battle

¹ The brief account which Jordanes here gives of the eight or ten years that Alaric spent in northern Italy before finally marching upon Rome is probably incorrect. Historians naturally prefer to rely upon the pagan historian Zosimus, who probably lived a generation or two earlier than Jordanes and who gives a very detailed account of the movements of the West Goths. He says nothing of the emperor's offering Gaul and Spain to the barbarians.

Incorrect statements of Jordanes.¹

which followed. They turned back, full of wrath, towards Italy, and wasted the northern part of the peninsula during the following years; then moved south into Tuscany.]

Finally they entered the city of Rome and sacked it at Alaric's command. They did not, however, set fire to the city, as is the custom of the wild peoples, and would not permit that any of the holy places should be desecrated. They then proceeded into Campania and Lucania, which they likewise plundered, and came then to Britii. . . .

Sack of Rome by the West Goths, 410

Alaric, the king of the West Goths, also brought hither the treasures of all Italy which he had won by plunder, and determined to cross from here over to Sicily and thence to Africa, which would offer him a final abode. But a number of his ships were swallowed up by that fearful sea, and many were injured; for man is unable to carry out his wishes when they are opposed to God's will.

While Alaric, discouraged by this misfortune, was considering what he should do, he was struck down by an early death and departed this world. His followers mourned the loss of him they had so dearly loved. They diverted the river Busento from its ordinary bed near the town of Consentia—this river, it may be added, brings salubrious water from the foot of the mountains to the town—and had a grave dug by captives in the middle of the channel. Here they buried Alaric, together with many precious objects. Then they permitted the water to return once more to its old bed. Moreover, in order that the place might never be found, they killed all those who had helped dig the grave.

Jordanes tells of the death and burial of Alaric.

The Goths transferred the rule to Atavulf, a relative of Alaric's, and a man of fine figure and lofty spirit, who, although he was not distinguished for his size, was remarkable for his figure and face. When Atavulf had assumed the rule he turned back again to Rome, and what had been left there from the first sack was now swept clean away, as a field might be devastated by grasshoppers. He robbed not only individuals of their wealth in Italy, but he also took that of the state, and Emperor Honorius was able in no way

to restrain him.¹ He even led away prisoner from Rome Placidia, the sister of Honorius, and daughter of Emperor Theodosius by his second wife.

[Later he married Placidia and strengthened the Gothic cause by this royal alliance. He then moved on to Gaul, where he engaged in a struggle with the other barbarians.]

12. St. Jerome laments the destruction wrought by the barbarians.

The deep impression which the influx of barbarians and the sack of Rome made upon one of the most distinguished scholars of the time is apparent from several passages in the writings of St. Jerome (d. A.D. 420).

Nations innumerable and most savage have invaded all Gaul. The whole region between the Alps and the Pyrenees, the ocean and the Rhine, has been devastated by the Quadi, the Vandals, the Sarmati, the Alani, the Gepidae, the hostile Heruli, the Saxons, the Burgundians, the Alemanni and the Pannonians. O wretched Empire! Mayence, formerly so noble a city, has been taken and ruined, and in the church many thousands of men have been massacred. Worms has been destroyed after a long siege. Rheims, that powerful city, Amiens, Arras, Speyer, Strasburg,² — all have seen their citizens led away captive into Germany. Aquitaine and the provinces of Lyons and Narbonne, all save a few towns, have been depopulated; and these the sword threatens without, while hunger ravages within. I cannot speak without tears of Toulouse, which the merits of the holy Bishop Exuperius have prevailed so far to save from destruction. Spain, even, is in daily terror lest it perish, remembering the invasion of the Cimbri; and whatsoever the other provinces have suffered once, they continue to suffer in their fear.

¹ This alleged second sack of Rome is probably a gross exaggeration, as will appear below. Jordanes is our sole authority for the strange burial of Alaric, and there is no particular reason to suppose that he is any nearer the truth in this matter than in the many instances where he can be shown to be in contradiction with more trustworthy writers.

² The names of modern cities here used are not in all cases exact equivalents for the regions mentioned by Jerome.

I will keep silence concerning the rest, lest I seem to despair of the mercy of God. For a long time, from the Black Sea to the Julian Alps, those things which are ours have not been ours; and for thirty years, since the Danube boundary was broken, war has been waged in the very midst of the Roman Empire. Our tears are dried by old age. Except a few old men, all were born in captivity and siege, and do not desire the liberty they never knew. Who could believe this? How could the whole tale be worthily told? How Rome has fought within her own bosom not for glory, but for preservation — nay, how she has not even fought, but with gold and all her precious things has ransomed her life. . . .

Who could believe [Jerome exclaims in another passage] that Rome, built upon the conquest of the whole world, would fall to the ground? that the mother herself would become the tomb of her peoples? that all the regions of the East, of Africa and Egypt, once ruled by the queenly city, would be filled with troops of slaves and handmaidens? that to-day holy Bethlehem should shelter men and women of noble birth, who once abounded in wealth and are now beggars?

In regard to the conflicting impressions which we derive from the writers of the time, Mr. Dill in his *Roman Society* makes the following sensible observations:

It is probable that the slaughter and material damage inflicted by Alaric have been exaggerated. The ancient authorities give very different accounts of the matter. According to some, there was wholesale massacre, and senators were tortured and put to death in large numbers; the city was ravaged with fire, and most of the great works of art were destroyed. On the other hand, Orosius,¹ writing only a few years after the sack, states that, while some buildings were burned down, Alaric gave orders to his soldiers to content themselves with plunder and to abstain

13. Dill's criticism of our information in regard to the sack of Rome.

¹ See below, p. 58.

from bloodshed. Jordanes even asserts that the Goths did not set fire to any buildings, and that by Alaric's command they confined themselves to pillage. The probabilities of the case are all in favour of the less tragic view of the catastrophe. The three days, during which the Goths remained within the walls, were short enough for the collection of the enormous spoil which Alaric carried off in his southward march. . . . Even if Alaric had not been restrained by policy from a wholesale and wanton destruction of great masterpieces of art, his Goths could not have wrought such havoc in so short a time.

Rutilius Namatianus, a poet of the early fifth century, says nothing of the destruction of Rome by the Goths.

But the most convincing argument is derived from the poem of Rutilius Namatianus, who, as he bids a reluctant farewell [six years after Rome's sack by Alaric] to the city which he regards with a passionate love and reverence, sees only the crowded monuments of her glory, and has his eyes dazzled by the radiance of her glittering fanes. . . . The temples of the gods are still standing in their dazzling radiance under the serene Italian sky. The cheers of the spectators in the circus reach his ears as his ship still lingers in the Tiber. He feels a passionate regret at quitting "this fair queen of the world," so mighty, so merciful, so bounteous, whose visible splendour is only the faint symbol of her worldwide and godlike sway. Certainly there is here no querulous and faint-hearted lamentation over a crushing and appalling disaster. The troubles of the time, referred to in a few vague phrases, are treated as merely vicissitudes of fortune, such as Rome has known before, and from which she has always risen with renewed vitality.

III. ATTILA AND THE HUNS

14. Priscus describes the court of Attila, king of the Huns (448).

A description has already been given of the Huns when they first drove the Goths into the Empire.¹ Seventy years after the battle of Adrianople, Priscus,² who actually visited the Huns and conversed with Attila,

¹ See above, pp. 35 *sqq.*

² See above, p. 30.

received a very different impression of the people from that given by Ammianus Marcellinus. We may however infer that the Huns had been a good deal changed by their contact with the European peoples.

Priscus and a companion, Maxim, were sent by the Roman government with messages to Attila in 448. Priscus first tells of their long journey from Constantinople to Scythia, the territory then occupied by the Huns north of the lower Danube. After some difficulty the messengers obtained a first interview with Attila. Then, as the king of the Huns was about to move northward, he and his companion determined to follow him. After describing the incidents of their journey and their arrival at a large village, Priscus continues:

Attila's residence, which was situated here, was said to be more splendid than his houses in other places. It was made of polished boards, and surrounded with wooden inclosures, designed not so much for protection as for appearance' sake. The house of the chieftain Onegesius was second only to the king's in splendor and was also encircled with a wooden inclosure, but it was not adorned with towers like that of the king. Not far from the inclosure was a large bath built by Onegesius, who was the second in power among the Scythians. The stones for this bath had been brought from Pannonia, for the barbarians in this district had no stones or trees, but used imported material. . . .

Attila's fine house.

The next day I entered the inclosure of Attila's palace, bearing gifts to his wife, whose name was Kreka. She had three sons, of whom the eldest governed the Acatiri and the other nations who dwell in Pontic Scythia. Within the inclosures were numerous buildings, some of carved boards beautifully fitted together, others of straight planed beams, without carving, fastened on round wooden blocks which rose to a moderate height from the ground. Attila's wife lived here; and, having been admitted by the barbarians at