

political disintegration into an organ of political union. The worship of Christ and the service of the empire formed two powerful bonds of association between the members of discordant races, and even proved strong enough to break up several tribes into two sections,—one of which was Christian and imperial, and the other pagan and barbarian. But even in the reign of Constantine the frontiers were with difficulty maintained: he had himself to resume the contest more than once with several powerful Germanic peoples. Before long, the whole of the outer world to the north-east was in motion. The Visigoths, or West Goths, were pressing on the lower Danube; behind them, in the countries of the Bug and Dnieper, lay the East Goths; and further east were the warlike, horse-loving Alans in the country of the Don and the Volga. Other German tribes or confederations—Franks, Saxons, Alemanni, Longobards—had settled or were settling along the upper Danube and the Rhine, and had crossed or were crossing into Roman territory. Far to the east, over the country now known as Russia, the Scythians and Sarmatians were nomadizing; and in the outskirts, along the Ural, we can dimly distinguish the Magyars, the Avars, the Petchenegs, and other tribes that were afterwards to force their way westward. In the reign of Valens a new impetus was given to the barbarian hordes. The Huns, a wild nomadic people, suddenly appeared on the lower Don, subjugated the Alans and the East Goths, and drove the defeated West Goths across the Roman frontiers. As a Christian people the fugitives obtained permission to settle on the south of the Danube; but the treatment they received from the Roman officials drove them to rebellion; they defeated Valens in the great battle of Adrianople, and threatened to invade Italy itself; and it was not till the reign of Theodosius that they were persuaded by important concessions to take peaceful possession of lands in Mœsia, Dacia, and Thracia.

Hitherto the empire had, in spite of all the confusion of rival emperors and intrusive tribes, maintained a theoretical unity; in 395 A.D. a division was effected which practically proved definitive. Arcadius, the eldest son of Theodosius, became emperor of the East, with his capital at Constantinople; and Honorius his brother became emperor of the West, with his capital not at Rome but at Ravenna. Had the Roman territory been confined to Europe the division would have been extremely unequal, as Arcadius only received the country to the south of the Danube and east of the Drinus, or, in other words, little more than European Turkey and Greece; like the sultan's, his possessions were mainly in Asia and Africa.

Instead of tracing the gradual disintegration of the Western empire, with its monotonous detail of invasions, concessions, repulses, &c., it will be well to pass down to the 6th century, and see what has been effected in the interval. We now find the German race almost everywhere in the ascendant. England is in the hands of the English; the kingdom of the Franks extends from Brittany to Thuringia; the West Goths are dominant in the greater part of Spain and nearly all the country to the south of the Loire; the Suevi are in possession of the remainder of Spain; the Burgundians occupy a compact territory, which includes, besides the basin of the Rhone and Saone, parts of the contiguous basins of the Rhine, the Seine, and the Loire; and the East Goths, under the sanction of the emperor of the East, hold sway in the rest of western Europe, from Provence to the Danube and from the Alps to the Sicilian Strait. Outside of the old frontier the Gepidæ (also German) have established a kingdom in the country to the north of the Danube; on the north-west they are conterminous with the Lombards; the Thuringians are established to the west of the Böhmerwald; the Saxons lie between the Meuse and the Oder; the Danes are in

possession of Denmark, and the other Scandinavian peoples hold the country from which they derive their name. It would seem as if Europe were in a fair way to become a German confederation, or, it might be, a German empire. But all over the old Latin area the Germans are ceasing to be Germans; and beyond that area, both in Europe and Asia, there are other peoples destined to play a part in the settlement of the West. The Bulgarians, a Mongolian tribe, have reached the country between the Dnieper and the mouth of the Danube; the Czechs or Bohemians, already occupy the country which now bears their name; the Croats are to the north of the Lombards; and other Slavonic tribes have pushed south to the coast of the Adriatic.

If we again pass down for about two centuries, the whole scene is changed. The West Goths and East Goths have almost disappeared,—the former only living on in the little kingdom of Asturia in the north of Spain; to the south of the Ebro and the Douro the country is in the hands of Arabs, or Moors, who first crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in 711; the king of the Franks is that Charles the Great, or Charlemagne, who is the mightiest monarch Europe has seen since Constantine, and he has not only extended his kingdom on all sides, but he has been chosen emperor of the West, and his authority is acknowledged from the Ebro to the Elbe, and from the North Sea to the Tiber. A new political power has arisen in the pope, or bishop of Rome, whose spiritual supremacy is beginning to be widely recognized. The Eastern or Byzantine empire is more and more exposed to the intrusion of Slavonians: they have under the name of Servians established a considerable kingdom between the Adriatic and the middle Danube, and, mingled with other races like the Bulgarians and the Avars, they occupy a large region to the north of the Danube. In the country to the north of the Black Sea, as far east as the Volga, has grown up a great kingdom called the kingdom of the Khazars, with its capital at Balangiar or Astrakhan; the people is mainly of Ugrian stock, but it has accepted the Jewish religion, and, allowing complete religious toleration, is mingled with representatives of many nationalities; politically it continues important for centuries as a bulwark against the advance of the Slavonic tribes from the north. Of all these states from the Atlantic to the Volga the one that showed most powerfully at the time, and which has lived most prominently in historic record, is undoubtedly the empire of Charles the Great; but of all it was the first to perish: even the nucleus of his kingdom was divided into two—that of the West Franks and that of the East Franks.

By the end of the 10th century the map again presents great modifications. The Mahometans are still in possession of a great part of Spain, and the northern region has been broken up into several independent states—the kingdom of Leon, the little kingdom of Pampeluna, and the countship of Castile or Burgos. The western Franks now form the kingdom of France with its capital at Paris, and since 987 have been ruled by the dynasty of Capet, which will continue to modern times. The duchies of Gascony, Aquitaine, Burgundy, and Normandy, and the countships of Flanders, Champagne, and Toulouse, have been gathering strength, and will maintain for centuries a certain amount of independence. Germany has recently become the representative of the Roman empire through the coronation of Otto the Great of Saxony; and Otto III. is forming plans for the increase of the imperial power. His authority is recognized by the dukes, not only of Lorraine, Alemannia, Bohemia, and Carinthia, but by those of Spoleto, Benevento, and Salerno, as well as by the minor potentates of Italy, with a few exceptions in the far south. The duchy of Poland and the kingdom of Hungary are less formally and







