on political prosperity. The literary genius of this people, their progress in philosophy, their eminence in the fine arts—in all of which departments they became the models of imitation and the instructers of the ancient world,—these subjects, furnishing much matter of useful speculation, will be treated in separate short disquisitions at the conclusion of the historical detail.

Hitherto the leading object of attention is the history of Greece, to which, as may be observed, may be referred, by a natural connection, that of all the other nations whose history is in those periods deserving of our acquaintance.

The conquest of Greece by the Romans entitles this latter nation to rank as the principal object in the subsequent delineation of ancient history. Without regard to the offence against chronology, we now return back above four hundred years, to observe the origin and rise of this remarkable people. We contemplate them in their infancy; we observe the military character which they derived from their incessant wars with the neighboring states of Italy; the nature of their government and internal policy under the kings; the easy revolution effected by the substitution of the consular for the regal dignity, without any substantial change in the constitution. We next remark the causes of the subsequent change; the people uniting themselves to resist the tyranny and oppression of the patrician order; the advantages they gain by the creation of the popular magistrates; the continual encroachments they make on the powers and privileges of the higher order, till they obtain an equal capacity of enjoying all the offices and dignities of the commonwealth.

We now view the gradual extension of the Roman arms; the conquest of all Italy; the origin of the wars with foreign nations; the progress of the Punic wars, which open a collateral view of the history of Carthage and of Sicily; we trace the success of the Roman arms in Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, the opulence of the republic, from her conquests; and the corruption of her manners. In fine, we behold the extinction of patriotism; the endless discords between the orders, loosening all the bands of public virtue; the progress of faction and inordinate ambition, terminating in the civil wars and ruin of the commonwealth.

At this remarkable period, which naturally allows a pause in the historical detail, I shall devote some time to the examination of those particulars which are characteristic of the genius and national spirit of the Romans; their system of education; their laws; their literary character; their art of war; their knowledge in the arts and sciences; their private and public manners; and their predominant tastes and passions. I shall close the remarks on the Roman history during the commonwealth, with some political reflections naturally arising from the subject, and illustrated by examples drawn both from that history, and from the preceding account of the states of Greece

We then resume the outlines of the Roman history under the emperors. We observe the specious policy under which they disguise an absolute authority, till it is no longer necessary to keep on the mask. We remark the decline of the ambitious character of the Romans, and their easy submission to the entire loss of civil liberty; the progress of corruption; the venality of the imperial dignity; the mischievous though necessary policy of the emperors, who, to secure their own power, industriously abased the military spirit of the people; the effect of this ruinous policy in inviting the barbarous nations to attack the frontiers of those extensive dominions, which were now a languid and unwieldy body without internal vigor; the weakness of the empire still further increased by its partition under Diocletian, and subdivision under his successors; the triumph of Christianity, and the extinction of paganism in the age of Theodosius.

We mark now the progress of the barbarian nations, who attack the provinces on every quarter, till the Western empire becomes entirely their prey; Africa seized by the Vandals, Spain by the Visigoths, Gaul by the Franks, Britain by the Saxons; Rome and Italy itself by the Herulians, and afterwards by the Ostrogoths. We shall then observe, as the last flashes of an expiring lamp, a short but vigorous exertion from the East, by the generals of Justinian; the temporary recovery of Italy; and its final reduction by the Lombards.

At this period, of the fall of the Western empire, we are naturally invited to enter into some short inquiries regarding the manners, the genius, the laws, and government of the Gothic nations; and the distinguishing characteristics of those northern invaders, both before and after their establishment in the provinces of the empire.

Thus, Ancient History will admit of a perspicuous delineation, by making our principal object of attention the predominant states of Greece and Rome, and incidentally touching on the most remarkable parts of the history of the subordinate nations of antiquity, when connected with, or relative to, the principal object.

In the delineation of Modern History, a similar plan will be pursued. The leading objects will be more various, and will more frequently change their place: a nation at one time the principal, may become for awhile subordinate, and afterwards reassume its rank as principal; but uniformity of design will still characterize this moving picture; the attention will always be directed to the history of a predominant people; and other nations will be only incidentally noticed, when there is a natural connection with the principal object.

After the fall of the Western empire, the nation which first distinguishes itself by its conquests, and the splendor of its dominion, is that of the Saracens. The progress of the arms and of the religion of Mahomet, the rise and extent of the empire of the

caliphs, are singular and interesting objects of attention. The Franks, though settled in Gaul before this period, do not attract our notice till afterwards—when the foundation of the new empire of the west by Charlemagne naturally engages us to look back to the origin of their monarchy. Thus we have briefly before us, in one connected view, the progress of this remarkable people from their infancy under Clovis, to their higest elevation under Charlemagne ; and thence to the reduction and dismemberment of their dominions under his weak posterity.

The age of Charlemagne furnishes some interesting matters of inquiry with regard to laws, literature, manners, and government ; and we shall endeavor to trace the origin of that remarkable policy, the source (as has been justly said) both of the stability and of the disorders of the kingdoms of Europe,—the feudal system.

The collateral objects of attention during this period are, the still venerable remains of the Roman empire in the East ; the beginning of the conquests and establishments of the Normans ; the foundation and progress of the temporal dominion of the church of Rome ; the separation of the Greek and Latin churches ; the affairs of Italy, and the conquest of Spain by the Saracens.

We now direct our attention for the first time to the history of Britain, postponed to this period, that we may consider it in one connected view, from its rudest stage to the end of the Anglo-Saxon government.

As the history of our own country is of more importance to us than that of any other, the British history, as often as it is resumed, will be treated with greater amplitude than the limits of our plan allow to other nations ; and while we note the progress of manners, literature, and the arts, it shall be our endeavor, without prejudice, to mark those circumstances which indicate the progress of the constitution, its successive changes, and its advancement to that system of equal liberty under which we have the happiness of living. We shall see in the Saxon *Wittenagemot* the rude model of a parliament ; and in the institutions of the English Alfred, we shall admire, in an age of barbarism, the genius of a great politician and legislator.

While the history of Britain to the Conquest is the primary object of attention, a collateral view is taken of the state of the continental kingdoms of Europe. France, under the first sovereigns of the Capetian race, presents us with very little that is worthy of observation. The Normans carry their arms into Italy, and achieve the conquest of Sicily ; while the maritime states of Venice and Genoa, rising into consequence, become the commercial agents of most of the European kingdoms. The dissensions between the German emperors and the popes, and the gradual increase of the temporal authority of the see of Rome, are not unworthy of a particular attention.

The British history is again resumed as a principal object ; and

we pursue its great outlines from the Norman conquest to the death of King John. In the tyranny of William the Conqueror, and in the exorbitant weight of the crown during the reigns immediately succeeding, we shall observe the causes of that spirit of union among the people, in their efforts to resist it, which procured for them those valuable charters, the foundation of our civil liberty. Under the reign of the second Henry, we shall observe a most important accession of territory to the English crown, in the acquisition of the ancient and early civilized kingdom of Ireland.

At this period, the whole of the nations of Europe, as if actuated by one spirit, join in the Crusades, a series of fatal and desperate enterprises, but which form an important object of attention, from their effects in the formation of new kingdoms, new political arrangements, and a new system of manners. We shall trace with some care those effects in the changes of territorial property in the feudal governments—in the immunities acquired by towns and boroughs, which had hitherto been tied down by a species of vassalage to the nobles—and in the aggrandizement of the maritime cities. The moral as well as the political effects of those enterprises must be particularly noticed ; and we shall find a subject of entertaining disquisition in tracing the origin of chivalry, and its consequences in the introduction of romantic fiction.

A short connected sketch of the European kingdoms, after the crusades, naturally follows ; in which a variety of interesting subjects solicit our attention :—the rise of the House of Austria ; the decline of the feudal government in France by the introduction of the *Third Estate* to the national assemblies ; the establishment of the Swiss republics ; the disorders in the popedom ; and the memorable transactions in the council of Constance.

These shortly considered, Britain again resumes her place as the leading object of attention. We remark the progress of the English constitution under Henry III., when the deputies of the boroughs were first admitted into parliament, the real date of the origin of the House of Commons : the strengthening of the liberties of the people under Edward I. whose military enterprises, the conquest of Wales, and the temporary reduction of Scotland, lead us, by an easy connection, to the history of the latter kingdom. We shall here behold the many noble and successful struggles made by that ancient nation for her freedom and independence, against the power of the three first Edwards. We consider the claim of right preferred by Edward III. to the crown of France, equally ill-founded, but more ably and gloriously sustained : and the multiplied triumphs of the arms of England, till the kingdom of France itself is won by Henry V.

We now turn our attention to the East, to remark an interesting spectacle : the progress of the Ottoman arms retarded for a while by the conquests of Tamerlane and Scanderbeg ; but pros-

ecuted under Mahomet the Great, to the total extinction of the Greek or Constantinopolitan empire. The manners, laws, and government of the Turks, merit a share of our consideration.

Returning westward, we see France in this age emancipating herself from the feudal bondage; and the consequences of the pretensions made by her sovereigns to a part of Italy. These pretensions, opposed by Ferdinand of Spain, naturally call our attention to that quarter, where a most important political change had been operated in the union of the sovereignties of Arragon and Castile, and the fall of the Moorish kingdom of Granada.

Returning to Britain, while England is embroiled with the civil wars of York and Lancaster, we pursue the great outlines of her history down to the reign of Henry VIII., and the cotemporary history of Scotland, during the reigns of the five Jameses. At this period, presenting a short delineation of the ancient constitution of the Scottish government, I shall endeavor to point out those political principles which regulated the conduct of the Scots with respect to their neighbors of England, and to foreign nations.

The close of the fifteenth century is a most important era in modern history. The signal improvement of navigation by the Portuguese, who opened to Europe the commerce of the Indies—the rapid advancement of literature from the discovery of the art of printing—and the revival of the fine arts—present a most extensive field of pleasing and instructive speculation. We shall mark the effect of the Portuguese discoveries in awakening the spirit of enterprise, together with the industry, of all the European nations; and shall here introduce a progressive account of the *commerce of Europe* down to this era, when it was vigorously and extensively promoted. We shall in like manner exhibit a view of the progress of *European literature* through the preceding ages of comparative barbarism, to the splendor it attained at this remarkable period. The consideration of the progress of *the fine arts* we postpone to the succeeding age of Leo X., when they attained to their utmost perfection.

After a short survey of the northern states of Europe, which is necessary for preserving the unity of the picture, the capital object of attention is the aggrandizement of the House of Austria, under Charles V.; intimately connected with the history of France under Francis I.; and incidentally with that of England, under Henry VIII.: a period meriting particular and attentive consideration from two events of the utmost moral and political importance—the reformation of religion in Germany and England, and the discovery of America. On this period is likewise thrown an additional lustre from the splendor of the fine arts in Italy.

After bestowing on these varied and interesting subjects the attention which they merit, the state of Asia, which, from the period of ancient history, had attracted occasionally only a slight

degree of notice, becomes for awhile a principal object of attention. The empire of India, highly important in modern times, the singularity of its political arrangements and national character, which have suffered no change since the age of Alexander; the political and moral history of the Persians; the revolutions operated on that immense continent by the Tartar successors of Gengis-Khan, are all worthy of a particular share of our consideration. The establishment of the Tartar princes on the throne of China calls our attention to that extraordinary monarchy, which, till this period, was almost unknown to the nations of Europe. We shall here examine at some length the ground of those opinions which it has of late become customary to entertain, with regard to the prodigious antiquity of this people; their wonderful attainments in the arts and sciences; their alleged early acquaintance with the chief modern discoveries of the Europeans; and the boasted excellence of their laws, their government, and political economy.

Returning to Europe, the object which, in the close of the sixteenth century, first demands our notice, is the reign of Philip II. of Spain, distinguished by the revolt of the Netherlands, and the establishment of the republic of Holland. The constitution and government of the United Provinces merit here a brief delineation.

France now takes her turn, and holds the principal place in the picture during the turbulent and distracted reign of Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III., till we witness her happiness, tranquillity, and splendor under the great Henry IV.

The transition thence is easy to the era of England's grandeur and prosperity under his cotemporary Elizabeth. The affairs of Scotland, too much connected at this period with those of the sister country, call our attention to the interesting reign of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the progress of the Reformation in that kingdom. Hence we pursue, without interruption, the outlines of the English history during the reigns of James I., of Charles I.—during the Commonwealth—and the subsequent reigns of Charles II. and James II.—to the important period of the Revolution.

Here, after a connected sketch of the progress of the English constitution, and a particular examination of its nature at this great era, when it became fixed and determined, we close our delineation of the British History.

But the affairs of the continent of Europe, at this time in a most active and progressive state, admit not of the same termination. We look back to France, which, under the splendid and politic administration of Richelieu, yet embroiled with faction and civil war, presents a striking object of attention. We remark the declension of the power of Spain under Philip III. and Philip IV., and Portugal in the latter reign shaking off its yoke, and establishing an independent monarchy. We see the Austrian power attacked by the Swedes under Gustavus Adolphus, declining under Ferdinand II. and III., and humiliated by the peace of Westphalia, in which

the French and Swedes gave laws to the empire; a treaty, however, salutary in the main, as settling the ruinous quarrels between her contending princes.

We see France, in the minority of Louis XIV., harassed with the disorders of the Fronde, originating in the unpopular administration of Mazarin. After his death, we remark the genius of Louis displaying itself in a variety of splendid enterprises; his views seconded by the abilities of his ministers and generals; while the excellent order of the finances enables him easily to execute the most important designs. The opening to the succession of the Spanish crown, while it increases for awhile the glory of his arms, leads finally to the mortifying reverse of his fortune; and we behold the latter years of this memorable reign as unfortunate, as the former had been marked with splendor and success.

Meantime, two rival powers of high celebrity call our attention to a variety of interesting scenes in the North of Europe. Russia, till now in absolute barbarism, becomes at once, by the abilities of a single man, a powerful and polished empire. Sweden, under the minority of its prince, ready to be torn in pieces by the powers of Russia, Denmark, and Poland, becomes, in a single campaign, the terror of the surrounding kingdoms. We see this prince, a second Alexander, in a career as short and as impetuous, carry those heroic virtues which he possessed to an extreme as dangerous as their opposite vices.

At this period we close our delineation of modern history, with a view of the progress of the sciences, and of the state of literature in Europe, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Such is the plan to be pursued in the following Commentaries. Of the merits or defects of the arrangement, those who possess an extensive knowledge of history, and who have prosecuted that study to its best purposes,—instruction in political and moral science,—are best fitted to form a judgment. To the general reader, I trust it will at least be found to possess the qualities of simplicity and perspicuity.

With regard to chronology, it is necessary to remark that, without entering into any discussion of the merits of the different systems, I have chosen to follow the chronology of Archbishop Usher, or that which is founded on the Hebrew text of the Sacred Writings; and this for the sole reason, that it has been most generally adopted by the writers both of our own and of foreign nations.

CHAPTER II.

Earliest Ages of the World—Early History of Assyria—Of Egypt—Invasion of the Shepherd Kings.

PROFANE History, agreeing with sacred, joins in the establishment of this great truth, which reason itself, independently of authority, must have clearly evinced, that this visible system of things which we term the Universe has had its commencement.

All accounts of the early history of single nations trace them back to a state of rudeness and barbarism, which argues a new and an infant establishment; and we must conclude that to be true with respect to the whole, which we find to be true with respect to all its parts. But to delineate the characters of this early state of society, to trace distinctly the steps by which population extended over the whole surface of the habitable globe; the separation of mankind into tribes and nations; the causes which led to the formation of the first kingdoms, and the precise times when they were formed—are matters of inquiry for which neither sacred nor profane history affords us that amplitude of information which is necessary for giving clear and positive ideas. But while we travel through those remote periods of the history of an infant world, making the best of those lights we can procure, we have the comfort of thinking that, in proportion as man advances from barbarism to civilization, in proportion as his history becomes useful or instructive, its certainty increases, and its materials become more authentic and more abundant.

The Hebrew text of the sacred writings informs us that a period of 1656 years elapsed between the Creation of the world and the Deluge. The Books of Moses contain a brief detail of the transactions of that period, and are the only records of those ages. With regard to the state of the antediluvian world, speculative men have exercised their fancy in numberless conjectures. Various notions have been formed concerning the population of this globe and its physical appearance—probable causes conjectured of the longevity of its inhabitants—inquiries into the state of the arts—and theories framed of that process of nature by which the Almighty Being is supposed to have brought about the universal deluge. These are, no doubt, ingenious and interesting speculations; but they can scarcely be said to fall within the department of history, of which it is the province to instruct by ascer-