

the seventy-fourth year of his age, tortured by suspicion, oppressed with melancholy and partially insane, the old monarch sadly died, the glooms of remorse darkening around his dying bed. He left the diadem to his grandson, Atalaric, a boy but ten years of age, under the regency of his daughter, Amalasueta, the widowed mother of the child. The boy, heir to wealth and a throne, grew up, almost as a matter of course, an unmitigated profligate. He soon died through the excesses of inebriation and debauchery. Theodotus, who had become the husband of the regent, seized the scepter, after strangling his spouse.

The emperor Justinian, at Constantinople, having reconquered Africa, turned his eyes to Italy, resolved to rescue that beautiful country from the Goths, and annex it to the eastern empire. With a chosen troop of about five thousand cavalry and three thousand infantry, the intrepid general Belisarius, who was intrusted with the command, landed at Catana, in Sicily, where they were cordially received by the inhabitants. With but little difficulty they effected the conquest of the island. Palermo made a short resistance. But Belisarius anchored his fleet in the harbor, raised his boats with ropes and pulleys to the heads of the masts, and from that elevated position commanded the ramparts of the city. The reduction of the island cost but one summer's campaign. In the autumn he entered Syracuse in triumph, and spent the winter, the undisputed master of Sicily, occupying the palaces of the ancient kings.

In the spring, embarking his troops at Messina, he landed them at Rhegium, in Italy, without opposition. He marched along the coast to Naples, followed by the fleet near the shore. Naples, was then a beautiful rural city, to which the lovers of literature and philosophy had retired from the confusion of Rome. The barbarians here were strong, and the siege was fiercely contested. At length, by stratagem, through the dry channel of an aqueduct, an entrance was effected into the city.

The strife was short, and Naples surrendered to the conqueror; and the Gothic garrison there with alacrity enlisted in the service of Belisarius.

Theodotus, appalled by the ruin thus suddenly overwhelming him, gathered all his available force, to make a desperate stand behind the ramparts of Rome. But the Goths, dissatisfied with his want of energy and success, in a tumultuous military gathering, declared him unworthy of the throne; and raising upon their bucklers, their general Vitiges, pronounced him king. Theodotus endeavored to escape, but was pursued along the Flaminian way, and slaughtered while crying for mercy. Vitiges, conscious of his inability to cope with Belisarius, ordered a retreat. The conquerors now marched rapidly, by way of Cumæ and Capua to Rome, and entered the city in triumph.

During the winter Vitiges at Ravenna, and Belisarius at Rome, were preparing with great vigor, for the campaign of the ensuing spring. With one hundred and fifty thousand men Vitiges commenced his march, and traversing the Flaminian way, arrived at the Milvian bridge, within two miles of Rome. For a year Belisarius was besieged, within the walls of Rome, by this overpowering host. With but five thousand veteran troops he defended a circle of twelve miles against the legions of Vitiges. In one desperate assault, the Goths lost thirty thousand of their number in slain, and an equal number wounded. Hardly an arrow was thrown from the Roman ramparts which did not accomplish its mission.

But the genius of Belisarius prevailed. The whole military force of the Ostrogoths had been rallied around Rome, and in the long and bloody siege nearly the whole force had perished. After an almost incessant battle, of one year and nine days, the Goths burnt their tents, and precipitately retreated, pursued by their indomitable foes. Vitiges found shelter within the walls of Ravenna. Belisarius, receiving recruits from Constantinople, pitched his tents around the

walls, and, in his turn, commenced the siege of Vitiges. At length the city surrendered, and Belisarius, in triumph, entered its streets; and Vitiges was sent a captive, in chains, to Constantinople.

But while these final scenes were being enacted, Justinian, jealous of the renown which Belisarius was acquiring,—for the Goths were actually in treaty with him, offering him the crown of Italy,—entered into a hasty treaty of peace with the Goths and recalled Belisarius. Embarking at Ravenna, the obedient general returned to Constantinople, taking with him his illustrious captive Vitiges. The departure of Belisarius revived the courage of the Goths. They chose Totila, a nephew of Vitiges, to the supreme command, and he, collecting five thousand troops at Pavia, commenced the reconquest of Italy from the dominion of Justinian. Belisarius had left garrisons in Italy, under eleven generals, to hold command of the country as a province under the eastern empire.

The Romans soon found themselves imprisoned in their fortresses, while the Goths, who had invited other foreign tribes to their assistance, under Totila marched defiantly through the kingdom and laid siege to Naples. Naples, Cumæ, and all the southern provinces were speedily subjugated. The Goths were now nominal Christians, and earnest advocates of the Catholic church, in antagonism to what was called the Arian heresy. Totila, the new king, possessed many Christian virtues. He was chaste, temperate, and his moral integrity no one questioned. At this time every clergyman in the east was called in Greek *papa*, (*πάππας*) father. The bishop of Rome, then called *papa*, and subsequently *pope*, had been banished by Belisarius. The sympathies of the church were consequently with the Goths, rather than with the Greeks from Constantinople. Totila liberated the slaves, and thus secured their enthusiastic support. In the progress of the war he inexorably punished with death, the violation of female chastity. In earnest harangues to the troops he urged upon

them that national vice was the sure precursor of national decay.

From the conquest of southern Italy, Totila proceeded to the siege of Rome. The inhabitants conspired against the garrison, threw open the gates, and at midnight the Goths marched in and took possession of the city. The Gothic king, in the morning, devoutly went to church to return thanks for his victory. Totila demolished a large portion of the walls of Rome, dragged the senators away as captives in the train of his army, exiled most of the citizens, men and women, and left Rome comparatively a solitude.

Justinian, alarmed, had again sent Belisarius to take command of his troops in Italy. But Belisarius found himself without an army, and could never face Totila on the field of battle. New armies were sent from Constantinople to southern Italy, and Totila entered into alliance with Theodebert, king of the Franks, to strengthen him in northern Italy. Belisarius was again recalled, and the renowned eunuch, Narses, with a strong force entered Italy and offered battle to Totila. The hostile armies met in the vicinity of Rome. The Goths were vanquished, and Totila himself fell pierced through the body by a lance. The victory of Narses was obtained mainly by his barbarian allies, whom he had enticed to his camp. Unrelentingly he ravaged the conquered land.

But the Goths, though vanquished, were not subdued. They retired north of the Po, and chose one of their heroes, Teias, to be their king. Selecting Pavia for his head-quarters, and gathering around him his allies the Franks, in a rapid march he advanced from the Alps to Mt. Vesuvius, and there in as savage a fight as time has witnessed, he fell. Still his troops, avenging his death, fought still more fiercely, till, in the darkness of the night, friends could not be distinguished from foes. But with the early dawn the battle was renewed, and was continued until again the sun had disappeared in the west. The Gothic army was then effectually destroyed. Most of the

survivors capitulated, though a small but determined band cut their way through their foes and retreated to the walls of Pavia. With the death of Teias, in March, A. D. 553, the Gothic kingdom in Italy passed away forever.

The fragments of the old Roman empire were gradually being organized into new and independent kingdoms. Britain, abandoned by the Romans and overrun by the Angles, became Anglia, or England. The Franks took possession of Gaul, and it was called France. Spain, subjugated by the Suabians and Vandals, retained its ancient name. Pannonia, occupied by the Huns, became Hungary. In all these kingdoms the native inhabitants and their conquerors rapidly blended into a homogeneous race.

While Narses was endeavoring to consolidate his conquest, seventy-five thousand Franks came rushing down through the defiles of the Rætian Alps into the plains of Milan. Like an inundation they swept through northern Italy. These Franks were nominal Christians, imbued with many of the superstitions of the church, though with but little of the spirit of Christ. A protracted war ensued, in which the majority of these bands perished through pestilence, famine, and the sword. Italy was thus again left, a war-scathed province, attached to the eastern empire of Justinian. But the renowned emperor Justinian died, and Narses died, and the feeble Justinian II. ascended the throne of Constantinople.

There was a powerful nation called Lombards dwelling in Hungary. Their king, Alboin, a ferocious warrior, cast wistful looks toward Italy, and resolved to attempt its conquest. Leading his army across the Julian Alps he speedily overran the territory, and nearly the whole country, with the exception of Rome and Ravenna, was soon in his hands. Assuming the title of king of Italy, Alboin assigned the conquered provinces to his captains, who under various titles of nobility such as counts and dukes were bound to render him feudal service, by paying him tribute, and obeying his summons to the field

of battle. But Alboin was a true savage, drinking in revelry from the skulls of his enemies. He was at length murdered, at the instigation of his queen in revenge for an outrage he had inflicted upon her.

Clevis, one of his captains, who had the title of a duke, succeeded him. But he was a miserable despot, and after a reign of seventeen months, he was assassinated by one of his servants while he slept. There were now thirty-six of these Lombard warrior chieftains, with the title of dukes, scattered over Italy. Each had his allotted territory, more or less distinctly defined, over which he had undisputed domain, subject only to feudal service to the sovereign. So long as war raged, a sovereign was necessary, around whom they might rally against a common foe. But Italy was now supine at the feet of its conquerors, and the eastern empire crumbling also to decay, had relinquished all attempts at the reconquest of the Italian peninsula. The dukes, under these circumstances, were not disposed to choose a master, each wishing to retain his independence. They, therefore, formed a federal aristocracy, each one being supreme over his own territory.

For ten years Italy continued in this state, when, upon some indications of an attack both from Greece and Gaul, the dukes judged it necessary to be better prepared for war, and they, therefore, chose one of their number, Autharis, who was most highly distinguished for valor and abilities, as their king. The wisdom of this measure was immediately apparent; for in three successive waves of invasion the Gauls rushed down upon the plains of Italy, where they were arrested and driven back by the energy of Autharis.

At this time Pavia was the recognized capital of the kingdom, and Gregory the Great was bishop, or papa, at Rome. He was an ambitious ecclesiastic, and was as ambitious and successful in gathering into his hands the reins of spiritual power as Autharis proved to be in grasping secular dominion. This renowned clergyman was nobly born. He had been both

senator and governor of Rome. From inheritance and lucrative office he had acquired enormous wealth. John, another very distinguished ecclesiastic, was at that time bishop or papa at Constantinople. There was a very stern struggle between them as to which should have the supremacy, and hence commenced the schism between the Greek and Latin churches, which continues to the present day. The bishop of Constantinople, with the title of Patriarch, is the head of the eastern church; and the bishop of Rome, with the title of Pope, is recognized as the sovereign of the church in the west. Many are the anathemas which, during the last thousand years, these patriarchs have hurled against each other. Under Gregory, the idolatrous Britons were converted to nominal Christianity; and not a few became the sincere and humble followers of Jesus Christ in both heart and life. The forty missionaries sent to England, in less than two years reported the baptism of the king of Kent, and of ten thousand of the Anglo-Saxons.

The dukedoms now began to assume importance, and to take their position in the procession of events, as individual dukes, by their achievements, arrest the observation of history. After a short but energetic reign, Autharis died, probably of poison, and his beautiful widow, Theodelinda, married Agilulph, the Lombard duke of Turin. With her hand Agilulph, though then a pagan, succeeded in obtaining the crown and scepter of Italy. He soon, however, embraced Christianity, and engaged very zealously in his endeavors to promote the welfare of the church. Several of the dukes of Turin succeeded him in brief, uneventful reigns. Some were tolerably good, and others were intolerably bad. Each one of these undistinguished sovereigns was eager to add to the prerogatives of the crown, while the rival dukes were combining to resist every encroachment upon their power and independence. In the course of sixty years nineteen sover-

eigns occupied the throne. Their names even are not worth recording.

The Lombards were established mainly in Northern Italy, and the emperor, in Constantinople, still held a shadowy authority over southern Italy. The Grecian power was, however, rapidly vanishing before the encroachments of the Lombard kings. During the eighth century, Italy was frequently invaded by the Franks. Toward the close of the eighth century, their renowned sovereign, Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, swept over Italy and completed the destruction of the Lombard monarchy, which had governed Italy for two hundred years. Then forming an alliance with Pope Leo III., who had attained vast temporal as well as spiritual power, he organized anew a western empire. In the cathedral church erected by Constantine, he crowned himself emperor of the west. This memorable event took place on Christmas day, A. D. 800. For forty years this illustrious monarch, as king and emperor, governed Italy, in connection with his other vast realms, and perhaps better than it had ever been governed before. Eight kings of the family of Charlemagne ruled over Italy. The great empire which the military genius of Charlemagne created, and his great statesman-like qualities so long held together, consisted of France, a part of Spain, Italy, Germany, and Hungary. He was a powerful sovereign, but a licentious, ferocious, cruel man. This dynasty was closed in Italy by the indignant deposition of Charles the Fat.

For the sixty years then ensuing, wretched Italy was torn by internal wars, and by the incursions of foreign foes. The Lombard duchies, by family alliances, and conquests of the weak by the strong, were reduced to but five or six. Among these the beautiful duchy of Tuscany, separated by a chain of mountains from the rest of Italy, was perhaps the most prominent and prosperous. The dukes of Adalbert administered this province for a century and a half, and their court was re-

nowned as one of the most brilliant and sumptuous among the great feudatories. The other great dukedoms were those of Friuli, Spoleto, Ivrea, and Susa. The strife between these dukes for the supremacy was bitter and interminable. Berenger, duke of Friuli, at length obtained the election, and was crowned at Pavia by the Archbishop of Milan. The diadem he wore proved to be truly one of thorns.

The reader would but be wearied with the narrative of the petty intrigues, and incessant conflicts between these rival dukes, for the nominal sovereignty of Italy. Passing over the dreary record of treachery, wars, poisonings, and assassinations, in which but little can be found either to interest or instruct, we find, in the year 961, a foreign prince, Otho, king of Saxony, invading Italy. He conquers the realm, dethrones Berenger II., and sends him to end his days in a German prison, and Otho is crowned sovereign with the title of emperor. Thus Italy, after having been annexed as a subjugated kingdom to Greece, and then to France, is now grasped by Germany. The country was now covered with castles. Each duke was a petty sovereign over his domains, which he divided into smaller portions administered by vassal counts who paid him tribute, took the oath of fealty, and obediently followed his liege lord in his wars. The dukes owed the emperor of Germany feudal service, and took the oath of allegiance to him. The counts, in their turn, divided the land apportioned to them among their captains. The condition of the people, robbed at every point, was depressed and miserable in the extreme.

For half a century the three Othos, father, son, and grandson, were acknowledged emperors and kings of Italy. And then, when the house of Saxony became extinct, for eighty years more the succeeding German emperors held sway over Italy, promulgating laws, and exacting homage and feudal rents from the subjugated realm. Southern Italy still remained partially subject to Constantinople. Rome,

with its appertaining territory, was organized into a dukedom, governed in its temporal matters by a duke sent by the emperor from Constantinople. The pope of Rome had, however, now, far more power than the civil magistrate. He was recognized as the head of all the western or Latin churches. The papacy had become the highest object of ambition to the whole sacerdotal order. Piratic barons, and young libertines, whose claims were urged by the Roman ladies, not unfrequently attained the pontifical chair. The church, in its state of corruption, operating upon the fears of an ignorant and superstitious people, had acquired immense wealth, and was making rapid strides toward the subjugation of the popular mind by the powers of superstition, in which there was adroitly blended the most potent elements of the old pagan and of the Christian religion.